

**A TRIBUTE...**

"I dedicate this article to the awesomely committed and passionate women on the Parent and Community Engagement Team. Without them, the inroads that have been achieved would not have been possible!"

By Patricia Spradley – 6

CITY LIBRARY WILL NOW MANAGE...

"The Springfield Library will continue to encourage and enhance the work of Reading Success by 4th Grade already begun by the Davis Foundation."

By Sally Fuller – 9

STCC, ELMS COLLEGE COLLABORATE...

"Springfield Technical Community College and the College of Our Lady of the Elms in Chicopee are partnering to offer accelerated online degree completion programs in Computer Science and Computer Information Technology and Security."

By STCC and Elms – 10

KNOW THE FACTS...

Roughly 89% of unvaccinated female and male adults will get HPV at some point in their lives. Over 40 distinct HPV types can infect the genital tract. Many infections are asymptomatic, meaning the infected person will not have any symptoms."

By Kimothy E. Jones – 12

WHO WILL SPEAK FOR YOU?

"One conversation can make all the difference. Yet, according to the Kaiser Family Foundation Serious Illness in Late Life Survey, while 97% of people say it's important to put their wishes in writing, only 37% have actually done it."

By Baystate Health – 13

PARENT VILLAGES ENCOURAGES FAMILIES...

"Listening to the needs of these families, while also educating them on the needs of their children, is what we know can make an impact on the status quo, and further make an impact on the future."

By Parent Villages Founders – 14

"NEVER AGAIN" – AGAIN IS ALREADY HERE

"The 'Leader of the Free World' is a predator in every sense of the word, and every cowardly, self-protecting, self-serving politician who does not stand up to him, tacitly bends to serve him—Democrats and Republicans alike."

By Magdalena Gómez – 16

MOTHERING...

"What are we to do when in addition to all that we're contending with on a day-to-day basis, we are also burdened by fools in palaces, fools in pulpits and fools at our tables? We take the lead!"

By Beverly Guerrero-Porter – 28

CARPENTERS UNION TAKES THE DIVERSITY LEAD

By Frederick A. Hurst

There was a time when I would have had nothing good to say about construction unions, especially back in the days when I served as Commissioner with the Massachusetts Commission against Discrimination where I was regularly exposed to the routine discrimination practiced by locals throughout the state.

In those days, most construction unions were not interested in promoting Black folks or other people of color or women in the workplaces and, when required to do so by local or state or federal laws, they routinely thwarted the intent of the laws by involving the bare minimum minority numbers and keeping them at the lowest levels in the workplace.

And the city of Springfield was never enthusiastic about compelling contractors who used union labor to complete public or private contracts to comply with weak city contract compliance requirements. In fact, the city of Springfield was notorious for looking the other way—partly be-



L to R: Lisa Clauson, Katurah Holness, Dave Martinez and Tyeka Robinson

cause of cronyism and partly because of insensitivity of top officials who often hid behind claims of color blindness and partly because the unions were so resistant to change. And those they designated to enforce the city's tepid discrimination and contract compliance laws were never empowered to do any more than the bare minimum. I know, among other

reasons, because they told me so.

For the most part, not an awful lot has changed but there has been some progress worth talking about and the Carpenters Union, which has worked with cities throughout the Commonwealth and New England to bring minorities and women into the construction field, has taken the lead.

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100 WOMEN OF COLOR GALA

By Willette H. Johnson

L to R: Madeline Landrau, Lynnette Johnson, Evelyn Trinidad, Lydia Martinez-Alvarez, Yindra Dixon, Samantha Edwards, and Clinesha Johnson (formerly of Springfield).

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CARPENTERS UNION TAKES THE DIVERSITY LEAD

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In an article in Boston's *Bay State Banner* (January 15, 2014), New England Regional Council of Carpenters Executive Secretary Mark Erlich said something that rang true to me because it fit so well. He said: "We all know that historically the building trades, including the carpenters, were exclusionary, parochial, country club, racist organizations. There is no point in saying anything other than that and being honest. The reality is that, with the carpenters union in particular, in the last generation that has changed dramatically and is continuing to change."

But Erlich said something else that rang even more true to me because, until I met Lisa Clauson, I still held my belief that nothing had changed. And I'm reasonably well informed.

He said: "And the frustration is that the perception has not yet caught up with the reality. We still have a long way to go, but this is a union that thrives on a diverse membership, welcomes a diverse membership and is committed to reflecting the demographics of the city we work in."

Remember, Erlich's words are from 2014, a time, I now know, when the seven local Carpenter's Unions that covered Boston had been 32% minority for four years and two of its statewide local unions, the Floor Coverers and the Wood Framers, were majority minority. And in 2019, I knew nothing about such progress and nor did most people I know who reside in western Massachusetts, especially in Springfield, where the rarity of minorities – Black, Hispanic or otherwise – and women in the building trades was legendary and once cast in concrete.



Lisa Clauson

So, I was pleasantly surprised when I recently received a call from Lisa Clauson, Director of Strategic Partnerships for the Carpenters Labor Management Program which is a program that reaches across the state through the "Diversity Program" created by the New England Regional Council of Carpenters (NERCC).

Needless to say, when Lisa, a married mother of two teenagers and a nine-year-old, first started talking to me about the Carpenters Union Diversity Program that she was promoting in the Springfield area, it was the first time I had heard anything about the tremendous work the Carpenters Union is doing throughout the state to recruit minorities and women into its membership and to provide

them with genuine opportunities to develop the skills needed to prosper in the building trades through apprenticeship training under journeymen carpenters.

Springfield, as usual, has been behind the trend. I recall back in the mid '80s when, as MCAD Commissioner, the Commission required every Commonwealth municipality to develop contract compliance programs that "mandated" diversity at every level of construction. It was like pulling an eye tooth without sedation to get Springfield to comply on paper. It finally did but it never complied in fact. White contractors were experts at hiring phantom minorities and shifting them around from place to place in the lowest labor levels and laying them off as soon as Springfield's contract compliance officers completed their perfunctory inspections. It was always a scam through and through and the contractors would always claim that few qualified minorities were available. Of course, the unions gave the claim solid credibility because they kept minorities out or discouraged them from joining.

And that has been the situation up until recently in Springfield when real change began taking place. And the Carpenters Union has been the catalyst.

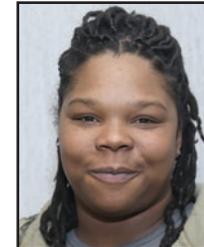
Thanks to Lisa Clauson, I had the pleasure of meeting and interviewing the Carpenters Union members in these photographs. Each has a unique story about how the Carpenters Union reached out to them to bring them into its fold. The stories are heartwarming but, more important, they demonstrate the success of the Carpenters Union's efforts to recruit, train and direct minorities to gainful employment.



Katurah Holness

Thirty-one-year-old Katurah Holness, a Black female, has lived in East Springfield for about a year. She grew up in Providence, Rhode Island where she graduated from Classical High School and after one year of college, she joined the Westover Air Force Reserve and eventually returned home to Providence. She had no career plans and her biggest passion was to leave home, which she did with no idea of where to go until she received direction from the local Veterans Administration on Bond Street in Springfield. She was directed to "Soldier On" in Leeds where she moved into one of its apartments for veterans and began to drive for Uber and she joined the Carpenters Union as an apprentice. She saved

up enough money to move with a friend to Springfield. She is now in her second year as a paid apprentice working under experienced journeymen carpenters who are teaching her the trade and guiding her to a career as a journeyman carpenter where she will earn an even more comfortable living and one day, in the distant future, she will eventually retire with a comfortable union pension.



Tyeka Robinson

Tyeka Robinson's path to the Carpenters Union was different but contained similar elements. She was born in Mt. Vernon, New York, moved to Pittsfield with her family when she was young, ended up in many foster homes, had some legal encounters and was struggling to make a living when she met a Carpenters Union member on a party bus to a concert in New York who suggested she become a member of the union and showed her how to apply, which she did. Immediately upon being accepted, she moved to Springfield to begin work as an apprentice. That unplanned encounter happened seven years ago. Today Tyeka is a journeyman (journeywoman?) carpenter. She purchased her own home in 2014 and has an eight-year-old son attending school at Springfield Prep, which is most known for its high MCAS scores. Notably, Tyeka was also the union steward responsible for the rehabilitation of the MGM Head Start day care facility in downtown Springfield.



Dave Martinez

Forty-three-year-old Dave Martinez took a direct path to the Carpenters Union. He joined in 1994 right after graduating from Putnam Vocational Technical High School. He was raised on Franklin Street in Springfield which was a much tougher area than it is today. His father was a military man and his mother was deeply religious, a combination that kept Dave and his siblings on the straight and narrow. Gang life was out of the question. Dave is a journeyman and was the only carpenter steward working on the MGM casino construction. He is working in continuing education for the union and he is the only minority on its executive board. Dave also teaches carpentry at the Westover Job Corp pre-apprentice program where students have two years to get their high school diplomas, driver's licenses and to develop employee skills. He said he has never seen

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AF-AM NEWS bits

By Frederick A. Hurst

TURN IT DOWN TIGER

We love the fact that Tiger Woods has roared back with a win at the Masters but wouldn't it be nice if he turned down Donald Trump's offer of the Presidential Medal of Freedom. It would say a lot about Woods' character growth.

IT DEPENDS UPON WHAT YOU MEAN BY "FEW"

I was flabbergasted by Mayor Domenic Sarno's comments on the most recent indictment of 14 Springfield cops who were complicit in the Nathan Bill conspiracy against three Black victims. As reported in *The Republican*, he said he and (Cheryl) Clapprood "will continue our efforts to root out these negative actions by a few...." Of course it depends upon what the mayor means by "few." He can certainly argue that 14 is a few. But I would argue that it is "many." And when added to the steady stream of incidents involving cops who misbehave and lie about their misbehavior while assaulting mostly minorities and falsely charging them with crimes, I would argue that it is a much deeper internal cultural problem. Springfield's police department needs a big change and one wonders how many police commissioners selected by the mayor from within will it take for him to figure out that the necessary change will not come from within?

HERE WE GO AGAIN!

We don't know the facts yet. But we know the pattern. That's what came to mind when reading about veteran Springfield police captain Richard LaBelle who, while off duty, drew his gun on a civilian in the Boston Road Walmart parking lot during what is being characterized as a road rage incident. Captain LaBelle reportedly cut another driver off. The driver confronted him and, at some point, LaBelle drew his service weapon. So far, the only thing recovered from the Walmart cameras is said

to be the drawing of the weapon. That is very strange.

MY THOUGHTS ARE SHARED THOUGHTS

In a guest viewpoint column in *The Republican* (March 18, 2019), Brian Rizzo wrote: "If Springfield can ever regain its former luster, and no longer be a city with a reputation as one of the most violent with a population under 200,000, and confront the issues responsible for Department of Justice Civil Rights Division investigation it must change. In order to turn things around the local political culture must be at the forefront of that change to professionalize the department, and change the SPD's organizational culture, quite simply, make the SPD a modern 21st Century police department." Are you listening Mayor Sarno?

GIVE MAYOR SARNO CREDIT WHERE CREDIT IS DUE

Whether or not one agrees with Mayor Sarno's stubborn insistence on a single police commissioner selected from within, his recent proposals for restructuring the civilian review board and making it more powerful have merit. It at least shows that he is beginning to take the need for compromise and serious internal change seriously.

THE EMERGING RACIAL DIVIDE IN LOCAL POLITICS

Everybody is asking the question: "Will Mayor Sarno divide city government along racial lines with his newest proposal that would nullify the council's most recent vote for a civilian police commission?" But the reports coming my way suggest that what motivates the divisions are more sinister than racial.

A JACOBY VIEW ON REPARATIONS

Columnist Jeff Jacoby wrote: "Slavery was a toxic evil, and its

bitter impact didn't end with emancipation. But any attempt to discharge the moral crimes of the 18th and 19th centuries with monetary payments in the 21st century is doomed to fail. The logistical and definitional obstacles alone would be a nightmare. The vast majority of white Americans have no ancestral link to antebellum slavery – they are descendants of the millions of immigrants who came to the United States after slavery had been abolished. Of the remainder, few had any slaveholding forbears: Slavery was abolished in most Northeastern states within 15 years of the American Revolution, while in most of the West it never existed at all. Even in the South at the peak of its "slaveocracy," at least 75 percent of whites never owned slaves." (*Boston Sunday Globe*, March 31, 2019)

IT IS MUCH MORE THAN A "GREAT SHAME"

Jeff Jacoby's version of reparations is a pure White man's version. He writes: "It is a great shame that General William Tecumseh Sherman's laudable efforts to provide former slaves with grants of land ("40 acres and a mule") was never implemented, and the collapse of postwar Reconstruction in the face of ferocious Southern resistance is one of the colossal tragedies of American history. But aching unfairness is a leitmotif of the human condition. And so is the statute of limitations on the sorrows and cruelties of the past....The time for reparations is when the victims who suffered can still, in some sense, be "repaired" – when those who *themselves* were abused or enslaved or cheated can be offered a measure of redress." (*Boston Sunday Globe*, March 31, 2019) Without arguing for or against reparations, I must say that Jacoby's treatment of history as though it all occurred and has long passed without extended and direct future consequences is weak. The collapse of post-war reconstruction included decades of lynching, economic discrimination, the Black Diaspora from the South that lasted up through the sixties, the formation of Black northern ghettos and de facto

segregation in jobs, housing, lending, redlining and more. Our parents and grandparents (for the most part) were not slaves but they paid the price of slavery and many of them and many of us were still fighting for our freedom during and well after the Civil Rights Movement, the success of which opened up possibilities that have yet to be fully realized because of the residual barriers that continue to block Black progress.

I NEVER FAIL TO BE AMAZED BY THE GALL OF IT ALL

Jacoby really stretched his argument to the breaking point when he wrote: "To demand compensation for African Americans who were never slaves is not a demand for individual justice but for racial group entitlement. To insist that white Americans in 2019, by virtue of their color, owe a debt for the slavery and repression of centuries past is to preach collective guilt. Few heresies are more antithetical to our aspirations to equality, tolerance, and individual rights. Few are more likely to inflame tribal resentment and contempt." Jacoby is right about that last sentence but not about much more. It would be fairer to say that America owes a debt to African-Americans although nobody seems to be able to articulate a just way to pay it or who should pay it or what the payment should look like. Not even African Americans. One thing though is clear: Turning a blind eye to the need for a debate over reparations has served no useful purpose and, in fact, has caused deep pain. To make a picky point, Jacoby's reference to "entitlement" really stripped him of all credibility. We all know who most benefits from entitlement in America.

WHITE FEAR

After listing many examples of irrational White fear of Black folks that caused many innocent Black folks to be accosted by authorities, *The Boston Globe* columnist Joan Vennoch gave some context to White folks' reaction to the charges being dropped against Jussie Smollet, the Black actor who faked a racial at-

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CARPENTERS UNION TAKES THE DIVERSITY LEAD

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so many women and minorities on a construction job as he observed at MGM. He's been around long enough to know.

Brian Arnold's story is different. He grew up in Springfield, joined the Marines, and when he left the Marines, became a barber. You may have seen him at Exclusives on Boston Road where he continues cutting hair after 20 years. Being a married father of two, he wanted a bit more security and a more stable income so, at the suggestion of a friend, joined the Carpenters Union at 40-years-old. He has been an apprentice for three years. He will become a journeyman in a few more years. He worked on the construction of MGM for the duration of the project. His simultaneous careers keep him busy but he is proud of both.

These are just some of those who have found a home in the Carpenters Union which is continuing to reach out to women and minorities. I didn't get a chance to meet with Stephanie Stephens and Samantha Clinto-Aimable but both grew up in Springfield and are now in the Carpenters Union. Stephanie joined the Army at 17 and served for three years including two combat tours in Kuwait and Qatar. Afterwards she obtained a community college degree and became a mechanic but couldn't find a job. She struggled to make a living but last spring joined the Carpenters Union and has had steady work since. Samantha attended Putnam Vocational Technical High School in carpentry and is now a carpenter's apprentice.

The good stories are growing because efforts by the Carpenters Union to recruit minorities and women are continuing in more than just recruitment. On March 14th, Lisa Clauson, whose main focus is to encourage women to join the building trades as part of the Massachusetts

Girls in Trades, hosted their third annual Conference and Career Fair at Springfield Technical Community College. The affair linked up to 300 girls from more than a dozen vocational technical schools across Central and Western Massachusetts to 30 apprenticeship programs, contractors, owners and state agencies. The girls got to meet Pathfinder's Cherylann Skyrocki, STCC President John Cook, Mass Building Trades Council President Frank Callahan and Coughlin Electrical Contractor's President Sue Mailman. And at 12:00 noon of the 9-to-12 conference, they were greeted by MA Department of Labor Secretary Rosalin Acosta, Springfield Mayor Domenic Sarno and Lt. Governor Karyn Polito. In between they perused nine career booths and were introduced to most trade unions and their apprenticeship programs and a dozen contractors through a program designed specifically to assure young women that if they wished to pursue a career in the trades, they would be welcomed.

Additionally, the Carpenters Union has worked with the city of Springfield and the University of Massachusetts to conduct a "disparity study" and to develop a strong diversity program that commits the city to guarantee that its Responsible Employer Ordinance (Springfield's pseudonym for a contract compliance program), first passed in 2008, now has real teeth. Any contractor or subcontractor participating in city construction projects of more than \$500,000 must now meet certain hiring percentages for women and minorities and veterans and enforcement procedures under two new empowered city employees are real.

Lisa has focused more emphasis on women in the trades for the simple reason that studies show they are the most underrepresented and although she spends time in the greater Boston



area, her geographical emphasis is Central and Western Massachusetts where the need is greatest. She works closely with the Policy Group on Tradeswomen's Issues (PGTI), a regional collaboration of construction industry stakeholders, to open up good jobs in the construction trades to women.

While some might question the need for a costly disparity study to confirm answers to questions that are obvious to most of us and have been accepted in most major cities and their metropolitan areas, cities like Springfield that lag behind the trend

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EDUCATION

PARENTS & COMMUNITY

A Tribute to Parent Facilitators

(A female dominated team)

By Patricia Spradley



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Parent Facilitators play a key role in the promotion of parent engagement at the schools and throughout the community. And it just so happens that these positions are primarily filled by women.

I dedicate this article to the awesomely committed and passionate women on the Parent and Community Engagement Team. Without them, the inroads that have been achieved would not have been possible!

District funding allows for a 15-hour per week position at each school. However, there are very few of these women who only work 15 hours. They come in early, stay late, never complaining because they realize the need for the connections that they make between families and school staff are essential to student achievement. And while some of the key responsibilities of their job include assessing the needs of families, connecting families to resources, promoting student success, and building relationships with families, they go above and beyond what is required!

Because of their innate ability to establish and build relationships with parents, they are frequently asked to make calls regarding the attendance of students with absenteeism and tardy concerns. And since many of them are also parents, they take care with how they engage, treating families the way they want to be treated. They are extremely resourceful and have relationships with community organizations, many of which they

had before taking these positions, that they connect to the schools, creating strong partnerships. They also support each other by collaborating on events for families and by sharing what they learn in any venue in which they participate. These are just a few examples of the many ways in which they foster positive parent engagement.

Clearly, they are not in these positions because of the compensation. Some may have chosen them because of the part-time, flexible hours, but the majority do so because of their compassion for our children, especially in a predominantly brown district.

Their existence oftentimes fades to the background. It doesn't seem to matter because they simply go about

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SPRINGFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Springfield Public Schools, Sodexo Cut Ribbon on \$21 Million Culinary and Nutrition Center



L- R: Mark Jeffrey, Sodexo District Manager; Elizabeth Wills-O'Gilvie, Chair of the Springfield Food Policy Council; Tim Gray, SPS Food Service Administrator; Patrick Roach, SPS Chief Financial Officer; SPS Superintendent Daniel Warwick; TaMya Romero, a senior in the Putnam Design and Visual Arts program who designed the Home Grown Springfield logo; Mayor Domenic Sarno; and Christopher Collins, Vice Chair of the Springfield School Committee cut the ribbon

SPRINGFIELD, MA—Representatives of the City of Springfield, Springfield Public Schools and the school system's food service provider Sodexo, recently held a Ribbon Cutting for the new Springfield Culinary and Nutrition Center, a 62,000-square-foot, \$21 million facility located at 75 Cadwell Drive in Springfield.

Menu items, all freshly made locally for the first time, will start making their way to students' plates and palates later this month.

Remarks were offered by Mayor Domenic J. Sarno, SPS Superintendent Daniel Warwick, Sodexo District Manager Mark Jeffrey, Director of the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Office for Food and Nutrition Programs Robert Leshin, and others associated with the project.

The Ribbon Cutting also featured a performance by the Sci-Tech Band; a presentation from Putnam Vocational-Technical Academy's ROTC; and recognition of the Putnam Visual Arts Department, developers of the Home Grown Springfield brand. Refreshments were provided by Home Grown Springfield and tours of the facility followed the Ribbon Cutting ceremony.

The first-of-its-kind culinary program in Massachusetts will operate in the new Cadwell Drive Springfield facility, preparing and providing meals to over 30,000 Springfield students every day, and has created employment for 40 new positions.

The Home Grown Springfield brand was created by the Putnam Design and Visual Arts department. Some 72 students participated in the

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EDUCATION

EARLY EDUCATION & CARE



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



Yasmin Ibrahim, Parent Educator at HCS Head Start, Inc.

I had the distinct pleasure of sitting down with parent group facilitator extraordinaire Yasmin Ibrahim to

Staff Spotlight

By Nicole Blais

ask her about her work here at HCS Head Start. Yasmin was hired by Head Start in 2008 as a Parent Educator to help support the Healthy Relationships program. She quickly proved her worth as one of the best parent facilitators we have ever seen. Her demeanor is gentle and kind and she possess a confident disposition which are key attributes to being an effective group leader.

I asked her to recall what made her apply for the position. "I was actively looking for work and I had just graduated from Westfield State College then, now Westfield State University, with a Bachelor's Degree in Women Studies and I had missed a call from a potential employer which meant I had lost the opportunity to secure that particular job. So, I applied to an ad for Head Start and the rest is history." Well, the rest is *herstory*.

I told Yasmin that I, for one, am happy that she missed that call. Prior

to Yasmin working for HCS Head Start, she was a wife, mother and homemaker and decided during a life changing moment that she would go back to school. Yasmin knows all too well what it is like to juggle home and school life as an adult, which is one of the reasons she easily connects to parents. As a student she had always thought that she would be a social worker not an educator and she never imagined that this type of work would shape her career.

A natural facilitator, Yasmin has a very high retention rate for her groups completing the course. As an observer, Yasmin creates a safe space, a no judgement zone that participants pick up on right away and I asked her to reflect on that and why she thinks people come back week after week. She shared some advice that she received from Marlies Zammuto, a mentor and fellow group facilitator, that has stayed with Yasmin over the



years. Marlies said, "The work we do really isn't about us, it is about us in relationship to others, which is how I feel about the relationships I create with the families." It is evident that the families appreciate Yasmin for the way she works with them and for them.

So, what is the secret to a healthy relationship? "Meet people where they are at, listen because sometimes it's about what you don't say, value effective communication, safeguard trust and devote time to love and commit to one another," Yasmin said. She also made it a point to say that in relationships of any kind, "It's not about who is right, it's about what is right for the relationship to be healthy."

Everyone looks for someone to help put the pieces of our lives together and we are lucky to have a woman like Yasmin in our community educating, empowering and encouraging us to work to be happy and to have healthy relationships. Thank you, Yasmin, and Happy Mother's Day! ■

PARENTS & COMMUNITY

A Tribute to Parent Facilitators

continued from page 6

their daily responsibilities, requiring very little. For me, they are indispensable! The small gains we have achieved in the parent engagement arena are primarily because of them!

During our professional development opportunities, I learn more from them than I prepare to deliver. They are very articulate, specific and genuine and, for that, I am eternally grateful. They consistently make me bring my "A" game!

I am also very proud of the diversity of these women. Not only are they comprised of Latino, African American and Caucasians, but they have very diversified backgrounds. They are mothers, foster parents, grandmothers, pastors, business own-

ers, political advocates, and much more! They chose to utilize their expertise within the Springfield Public Schools to positively affect and help build the necessary relationships that directly impact student learning!

This small acknowledgement of how happy and grateful I am to be associated with these women cannot begin to express how I truly feel, but I ask that you join me in saying "THANK YOU" for all they do for the parents, families and caregivers in the city of Springfield!

If you know of any individuals that can fit the bill, please refer them to us at: spadley@springfieldpublicschools.com or ruscittie@springfieldpublicschools.com

CONGRATULATIONS



Surrounded by family and friends at a press conference at the South End Community Center, Putnam Academy track & field and basketball standout Naishaun Jernigan announced he would be attending Division One Indiana Tech University in the fall.

EDUCATION

EDUCATION & HOPE



Gianna Allentuck is a Mother, Educator, and Community Volunteer. To connect with Gianna regarding Education and Hope topics discussed herein, please contact her at gallentuck@aol.com.

Trivial Pursuit

By Gianna Allentuck

There is a game called Trivial Pursuit wherein you ask and answer questions in order to score points and win the game. With hundreds of questions and variables, you never know how the game will go but you always know that you are in a constant quest for answers. And sometimes – no matter how hard you search – those answers never come...

After I was diagnosed with cancer at the age of twenty-five, I mostly received love and support from family and friends. There were one or two, though, who asked questions or made comments such as: *How could you let this happen? You work too hard. You don't take care of yourself. How come you didn't notice? You should have gone to the doctor sooner.* Though unintentional, these questions and comments made me feel guilty for getting cancer.

Guilty.

In a sad and ironic twist of my life's fate, I have been asking myself similar questions and taking blame for my father's stroke that left him debilitated for seven years – eventually killing him; for my brother's initial cancer and then for the fourth battle to which he succumbed; and for my beloved Patti who died from an aggressive cancer. *How come I didn't notice? How did I let this happen? Was she working too hard? I should have made him go to the doctor sooner.* Also unintentional, these questions make me feel responsible for those I love getting sick and dying.

Responsible.

During high school and in the years since, I have known youth and

adults who have died by suicide. Most recently, I lost a dear friend from high school to suicide. And even more recently, my husband lost a friend and inspiration to suicide. This friend was a leading neuroscientist studying brain health and the impact on violent acts, including suicide. In March, he had just discussed "brain research that can help people identify signs and symptoms of someone who might perform a violent act against themselves or others." These deaths and those of others – whether famous, young, old, rich, successful, or "troubled" – leaving others and me questioning...

Why? He seemed so happy. What happened? Did she say anything? Was there a note? How did I miss this? I wish he had said something. Asked for help. What could be so bad? She was only thinking of herself. He must have been looking for attention. Was she using drugs? Were there any signs? Did he seem depressed? Sad? It's not his fault. Someone must have made her do it. But he was so successful? She had it all. I'm so mad at him. She should have had faith. Did he have a mental health disorder? I should have noticed. Reached out. Done something. Some sentiments placing blame on the victim of suicide. Some placing blame on ourselves or others. In either case, the end result is that someone is shamed. For action. Or inaction.

Shamed.

Though I did research for this piece, I didn't have to dig deep for the above questions and comments often spoken after a suicide. I know these words and sentiments because I myself have asked and uttered them. I also know I am not alone in this thought process.

Not alone.

For this reason, I chose to write this article. Because I want each of us – all of us – to realize we are not alone. Not in pain that contributes to suicide and not in our questioning after the suicide. And in our unity, we should understand that we must teach our youth and ourselves to ask questions before, so that we don't have to ask questions after. Check in randomly. Love and hug often. Assess body language or changes in habits. Communicate. Attend. Consider highs and lows. Watch for isolation. Be brave. Insert yourself.

Question.

This concept is not profound in any way, but merits reiterating time and again. And again. In honor and respect of those we have lost, including a brilliant neuroscientist dedicated to research in this field, we must conclude that we don't need the answers after. We need them before. So that our questioning in pursuit of health and wellness – for ourselves or for others – is not at all trivial...

Author's note:

For information regarding suicide awareness and prevention, including questions to ask and ways to check in with family, friends, colleagues, strangers and anyone else with whom we engage, please visit these websites and/or contact the respective organization.

The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP) is a voluntary health organization that gives those affected by suicide a nationwide community empowered by research, education and advocacy to take action against this leading cause of death. AFSP raises awareness,

funds scientific research and provides resources and aid to those affected by suicide. [Learn more about AFSP's mission and history](#) or select one of the items below to discover how we accomplish our work. Visit www.Afsp.org or call Toll-Free: 1-888-333-AFSP (2377) or (212) 363-3500.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: We can all help prevent suicide. The Lifeline provides 24/7, free and confidential support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones, and best practices for professionals. Call 1-800-273-8255 or visit <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>

Reference: *Autopsy confirms Sandy Hook father Jeremy Richman's death as suicide; Hartford Courant; March 27, 2019; Nicholas Rondinone.*

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EDUCATION

READING TO SUCCEED



Sally Fuller, retired community lead for Reading Success by 4th Grade, still committed!

City Library Will Now Manage Davis Foundation's Reading Success by 4th Grade Initiative

By Sally Fuller

I'm optimistic. I'm encouraged. I continue to feel the energy we at the Irene E. & George A. Davis Foundation have generated through our community-wide grade-level reading proficiency initiative, Reading Success by 4th Grade. When we began our focus on this important milestone for children in 2009, we had no idea how much community engagement and enthusiasm would be generated in support of this important milestone for children's school and life success.

I have seen the daily work of the 90+ community agencies and partners who strive to make an impact, each in their own way, on the lives and success trajectory of Springfield's youngest citizens. I have seen an increased level of parent involvement in daily reading and talking to their children, as they have realized that they are their children's first and best teachers and doing so really helps to prepare their children with the foundational reading skills they need to enter kindergarten.

When I retired from the foundation, I was thrilled that the Davis's commitment to our children would not go away. They will continue to support the programs and opportunities that will change outcomes for children and prepare them for success, but felt it was time for the work to be lead by a community organization.

So in my mind there is no better place for the Reading Success by 4th Grade community initiative to be than in the hands and hearts of the Springfield City Library. There has been no better partner and champion than the folks at the Library.

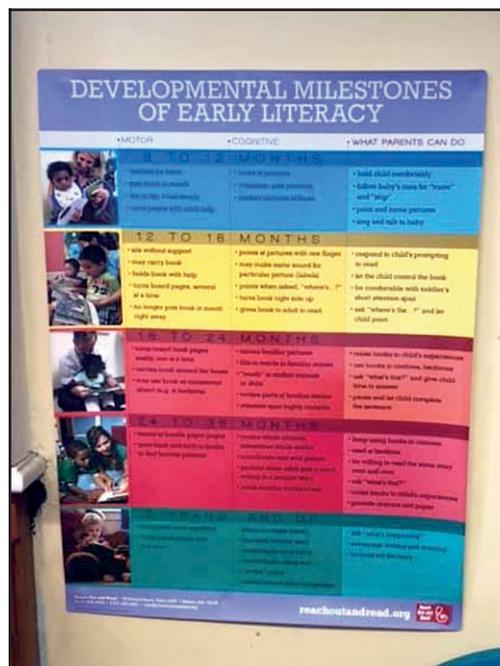
In late March there was an official

announcement by the Davis Foundation that the initiative will move to the Library and a new Campaign Manager will be hired to lead the work.

Whenever we have had new ideas for supporting children and families or new opportunities for partnership with community organizations, the Library has been at the table. They have shared in the initiative's vision that every child in Springfield will read proficiently by the end of third grade.

The Library's programs and community outreach efforts have the same mantra as Reading Success by 4th Grade—that a love of reading is the key to achieving reading proficiency—and the Library works at this by helping books get into the hands and homes of children and their families.

So many programs they offer support children and families. Storytimes at every branch library. The Small Talk program for parents with children under 30 months of age which helps parents prepare their children with early reading skill development. The Early Childhood Resource Center which offers materials for early childhood educators. The Early Literacy Coalition convened by Library staff to support collaboration among organizations whose focus is just that—early literacy. Summer and winter reading programs. Their participation in 413 families text messaging



campaign.

The Springfield Library will continue to encourage and enhance the work of Reading Success by 4th Grade already begun by the Davis Foundation. The shared ownership of the work that supports this important child development milestone will be carried on with energy, enthusiasm and a strong commitment.

I am deeply grateful to the Davis Foundation for all the support it has given to children in this initiative of many years. And for the continued commitment demonstrated by their support for the Library as the ongoing champion in the march toward the goal of all children reading proficiently by the end of third grade.

Did I say I was optimistic? ■

EDUCATION

LOCAL COLLEGES IN THE NEWS

HOLYOKE
COMMUNITY
COLLEGE

STCC
Springfield Technical Community College

New HCC Student-Mentoring Program Opens Campus Office



SHOUTS mentors welcome visitors during a grand opening of their new HCC campus office March 27.

HOLYOKE, MA – People often twist themselves silly trying to invent clever acronyms that are both readable and descriptive. Most attempts fail, leaving the confused masses tripping their tongues over seemingly random associations of letters, like those you might find stuck inside an empty can of alphabet soup.

SHOUTS, though, is a winner, an acronym that works as a powerful verb and an apt summary of the organization it represents – **Students Helping Out Students**.

This new mentoring group comprises students from two distinct but related Holyoke Community College support programs with their own acronyms: **STRIVE** (Students Together Reaching Individual Visions of Excellence) and **OSDDS** (Office for Students with Disabilities and Deaf Services).

“We’re like guides helping students find the right facilities and services,” says SHOUTS mentor Valeria Flores of Holyoke. “I like helping people.”

Although SHOUTS has been operating since the fall 2018 semester, the group recently celebrated the grand opening of its office on the first floor of the HCC Donahue Building, which it shares with the Assistive Technology Center.

The door is hard to miss, marked on both sides by colorful cartoons – original art courtesy of SHOUTS mentor Nevalle Ward of Springfield – and large letters that visually

shout, “Welcome All Students!”

SHOUTS does not have regular hours, but is staffed at least several hours every day by shifts of SHOUTS mentors, who are all volunteers. Students can fill out a short form to be matched with a mentor and set up an appointment, or they can drop by anytime the office is open, and you’ll know it’s open because a string of blue holiday lights will be draped around the door.

“When the blue lights are on, people can just come on in,” says Denise Roy, a STRIVE learning specialist and a SHOUTS adviser. “The mentors will give them any type of support they need.”

SHOUTS started as a mentor club exclusively for STRIVE, an academic support program that serves first-generation, low-income and disabled students.

“But we felt we were missing people,” says Roy, “so that’s when we reached out to OSDDS. Now it’s both our programs working together to

continues to page 35

STCC Cosmetology Professor Receives STCC’s Dorothy Jordan Pryor Award



STCC President John B. Cook stands with Ruth Butler, a STCC cosmetology professor who received the Dorothy Jordan Pryor Award.

SPRINGFIELD, MA – An instructor in the Cosmetology Department at Springfield Technical Community College is the recipient of the 2019 Dorothy Jordan Pryor Award, which honors “living treasures” within the local community.

“This is an extremely special honor for me,” said Ruth Butler, of Granby, who has taught at STCC

since 2012. “I’m overwhelmed and delighted by the honor of just having been nominated.”

The Dorothy Jordan Pryor Award was established in 1994 by STCC professor Cecelia Gross. The award is given in honor of Dorothy Jordan Pryor, who was an English professor at the college and later served as the college’s affirmative action officer. Following her retirement, Pryor was appointed by the governor to serve on the STCC Board of Trustees for two five-year terms and was elected vice chairman of the board.

“Throughout Ruth’s 23 years in the field of cosmetology, she has put her heart and soul into going the extra mile to help others and to ensure student success here at STCC,” Perry said. “She has been an outstanding faculty member who has demonstrated admirable dedication. She has always been engaged in helping others and our student, and creating collaboration between the cosmetology program and the community at large.” ■

STCC, Elms College Collaborate on Pathway to Computer-related Degrees

SPRINGFIELD, MA– Springfield Technical Community College and the College of Our Lady of the Elms in Chicopee are partnering to offer accelerated online degree completion programs in Computer Science and Computer Information Technology and Security.

In a ceremony on April 4, John B. Cook, Ph.D., president of STCC,

and Harry Dumay, Ph.D., MBA, president of Elms College, formally signed an agreement that eases the coursework transfer between the two colleges for students seeking degrees in the computer-focused programs.

The bachelor degree programs are completely online and accelerated, which means students can earn their degree in 14 months after ob-

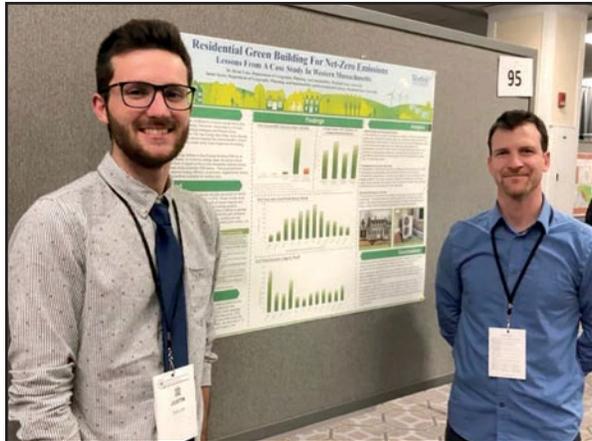
continues to page 35

EDUCATION

LOCAL COLLEGES IN THE NEWS



WSU Student and Faculty Member Co-Present Research



Student Justin Taylor of Attleboro and Associate Professor Brian Conz, Ph.D.,

WESTFIELD, MA – Student Justin Taylor of Attleboro and Associate Professor Brian Conz, Ph.D., co-presented their research at the American Association of Geographers (AAG) Annual Meeting Conference in Washington, D.C. April 3–7.

Taylor, a senior majoring in environment science and regional planning, attended the conference with three faculty members of the University's Department of Geography, Planning & Sustainability: Chair and Associate Professor Dr. Conz, Associate Professor Timothy LeDoux, Ph.D., and Assistant Professor Dristi Neog, Ph.D.

The Conference hosted over 7,000 geographers from around the world, highlighted by 5,000 presentations, posters, and workshops from leading scholars, experts, and researchers in the fields of geography, sustainability, and GIScience.

“As the largest gathering of geographers in the world, the conference provides a unique opportunity [for students] to network with sustainability professionals, academics, organizations, non-profits, and possible

employers [in the field].”

Taylor and Dr. Conz presented their research, titled “Residential Green Building for Net Zero Emissions: Lessons from a Case Study in Western Massachusetts.”

“[The presentation] analyzes the efforts to achieve net zero emissions in the construction of a new [single family] house in Western Massachusetts,” said Dr. Conz. ““Net zero emis-

sions’ means the energy produced on site is equal to or greater than the greenhouse emissions of the site. We centered our research in Russell, Massachusetts.”

Taylor’s travel to the conference was supported by a University travel grant, the SMARTS Grant, or Seed Money for Academic or Research Travel for Students. SMARTS is a competitive grant program sponsored by Westfield State for all students working on research or other scholarly and creative activities off-campus beyond the materials and curriculum of their typical undergraduate coursework.

“It was an honor to represent Westfield State [at the conference],” said Taylor. “It was amazing to meet fellow geographers from around the world and to see their fascinating work on display alongside my own research. Working with Dr. Conz widened my perspective and knowledge on sustainable building practices, and I’m so grateful for the experience.” ■

WSU continues to page 38

SPRINGFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

SPS Culinary and Nutrition Center

continued from page 6

design process to help SPS and Sodexo name the program. TaMya Romero, now a senior at the school, created the winning logo design and

was recognized at the ribbon cutting.

In addition to providing lunch for all of Springfield’s students, Sodexo also serves “breakfast in the classroom,” one of the first comprehensive



The front of the new SPS Culinary and Nutrition Center



Attendees tour the new SPS Culinary and Nutrition Center

breakfast programs in the United States and a primary reason for expansion, as well as the district’s Farm-to-School program. Sodexo also serves summer meals throughout the community.

The new facility will not only be used to feed Springfield students, it will serve a dual role as a training center. SPS will involve students at Roger L. Putnam Vocational Technical

Academy in on-the-job culinary and food service training. The facility will also be available to other schools within the district.

Sodexo has a 10-year agreement with SPS and recently won a five-year renewal, allowing for an expansion of the in-school meals program and requiring the move to new and larger facilities. ■

HEALTH

HEALTH MATTERS

Know the Facts About Human Papillomavirus (HPV)

By Kimothy E. Jones, MSPH, Consultant, Baystate Women's Health Network Project



Doris Sexton-Harris,
Health Consultant,
Doris can be
contacted at
dorharris77@hotmail.com

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Human Papillomavirus (HPV) is the most common sexually transmitted infection in the United States. Roughly 80% of unvaccinated female and male adults will get HPV at some point in their life. Over 40 distinct HPV types can infect the genital tract. Many infections are asymptomatic, meaning the infected person will not have any symptoms.

HPV is transmitted through intimate skin-to-skin contact. You can get HPV by having vaginal, anal, or oral sex with someone who has the virus. Condoms and dental dams provide

some protection against HPV and offer good protection from many other sexually transmitted infections.

Most HPV is invisible and can be transmitted even when an infected person has no signs or symptoms. There is no single HPV test, such as a blood test to check for HPV at multiple body sites. Often, HPV is harmless and causes no symptoms. It's uncertain how long the virus remains and for many people the virus is either suppressed or cleared by the immune system. However, you can develop symptoms years after being infected and it can cause health problems like genital warts and cancer and, possibly, death.

According to the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, between

2004 to 2014, HPV-associated cancers included anal, cervical, oropharyngeal (base of tongue, tonsils, and soft palate), penile, rectal, vaginal and vulvar. In this timeframe, 5,130 females were diagnosed with a HPV-associated cancer. The incidence rate for oropharyngeal cancer in men and anal cancer and vulva cancer in women has been increasing in Massachusetts by 1.3% each year from 2004 to 2014. The age group with the highest incidence rate is among people in their 70's and White, Black and Latino women had very similar incidence rates at approximately 11/100,000.

Although Massachusetts rates are lower than U.S. rates, between 2008 to 2014, 956 females died from a HPV-associated cancer of which 374

were due to cervical cancer, 234 were oropharyngeal cancer, and 221 were cancer of the vulva. The age group with the highest mortality (death) rate was among people in their 80's and Black women died at higher rates than their White and Latino counterparts.

Routine cervical and breast cancer screenings are so very important! Call your doctor and schedule your annual physical today! You can ask your doctor about the HPV vaccine, which protects against 7 HPV strains, and discuss whether it is a good option for you.

Remember, Your Health Is Your Wealth! ■



Kimothy E. Jones

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HEALTH

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Who Will Speak For You?

SPRINGFIELD, MA – They are conversations that need to be had at the kitchen table, not in a hospital's intensive care unit, before it's too late.

National Healthcare Decisions Day occurs each year on April 16 and aims to help people across the country get the conversation going about their wishes for end-of-life care. (Although the date has passed, the need remains. *The Editor*)

"It's all about being prepared for any healthcare emergency by understanding the value of advance healthcare planning. The goal is to reduce the number of tragedies that occur when a person's wishes are unknown, and improve the ability of healthcare facilities and providers to offer informed and thoughtful guidance about advance healthcare planning to their patients," said Dr. Diane Dietzen, medical director, Palliative Care Services at Baystate Medical Center.

Why get the conversation going right now?

"It's never too early. All adults over the age of 18 should have a healthcare proxy, so that they have a decision maker prepared in the case of an emergency or they are unable to speak for themselves," said Dr. Dietzen.

One conversation can make all the difference. Yet, according to the Kaiser Family Foundation Serious Illness in Late Life Survey, **while 97% of people say it's important to put their wishes in writing, only 37% have actually done it** (emphasis added).

"We are always surprised by how many people we see in the hospital who have not made their wishes known to family about how they want to be treated in a variety of situations," said Dr. Dietzen.

Dr. Dietzen noted that is important to make sure the person you identify as your proxy is someone who understands your wishes.

"We often think of our spouse or parents as being able to make those decisions for us, but they may not be the right person because of the emotional burden their decision will carry. That's why it is so important to put your wishes in writing, and to select someone who is emotionally able to carry out your wishes and who can answer any questions the doctor may have about your care," she said.

Do you know the difference between a health care proxy and an advance directive?

- **Health Care Proxy** – A simple legal document allowing you to name someone you know and trust to make healthcare decisions for you if, for any reason and at any time, you become unable to make or communicate those decisions.
- **Advance Directive** – Also known as a Living Will, it is a legal document in which you state your wishes regarding end-of-life medical care — including the types of treatments you do and do not want such as "do not resuscitate (CPR) "or "intubate" to help the patient breathe — in case you are no longer able to make decisions or communicate your wishes.

"We are committed to ensuring that all adults with decision-making capacity have the information and opportunity to communicate and document their healthcare decisions. Making your wishes known in advance by completing a health care proxy and an advance directive is extremely helpful to physicians in knowing whose direction to follow in the event of family controversy over treatment, which could otherwise lead to the courts becoming involved," said Dr. Dietzen.

For more information, visit baystatehealth.org. ■

GOT H.E.R.S.

Criticism...Take it or Leave it?

By Latoya Bosworth, PhD



Dr. Latoya Bosworth
dubbed herself
Brenda's Child in
honor of her late
mother. She is an edu-
cator, author, speaker,
and self-esteem expert.
www.brendaschild.com

Part of personal growth is reflecting on your patterns of behavior, seeing things from the perspectives of others, and accepting criticism. But how can you tell when you should take criticism to heart or tell the person to take their criticism and stick it somewhere?

Here are a few questions to ask yourself when faced with the challenge.

1. Who said it?

Is it someone whom you respect? Who respects you? If you can't answer "yes" to both, then it really doesn't matter because it may not be constructive. If you don't have a relationship (personal or professional) with that person where you feel valued, then their opinions shouldn't be valued.

2. What is their motivation?

Is the critique meant to help you grow in some capacity? Is it because you may be negatively impacting others and they want you to see it? Or... Is it to diminish you? To insult or embarrass you? To make you pause on your path to greatness because they are envious? Receiving criticism isn't easy, and it can hurt the ego. However, ask yourself, does it hurt because it's true, or because the person is a HATER? (NOT EVERYONE IS A HATER.)

3. How was the criticism delivered?

It was Mary Poppins who sang, "A spoonful of sugar helps the medicine go down." You know what helps

you to swallow criticism? When sandwiched in between praise and viable suggestions then topped with tact and respect. In a recent study conducted by PychTests.com, close to 30% of 3,000 participants reported feeling the criticism they received was meant to hurt them, not help them, and about 40% got into an argument in response to criticism. This is likely due to how it was delivered. Tone and word choice are important, but when people offer you feedback, it may be constructive if they also offer suggestions or resources for improvement. In other words, they don't just tell you to do better, but they tell you how. And to really soften the blow, they will also tell you what you are doing well.

4. What is the frequency?

If you hear the same criticisms from different people, in different areas of your life, repeatedly over a course of time, there may be some truth in the criticism. It may be time for you to pause and reflect. As you reflect, refer to your responses to questions one through three. If five different people say it every day, and they don't respect you or their motivation is shady, they can shove it. On the other hand, if it comes from a few who value you and want the best for you, it may be time to grow.

Deep down inside we know when we need to make changes. However, having someone else express it to us can create feelings of inadequacy, shame, and embarrassment. Those feelings can subside when we positively reframe the feedback as support instead of insult, and then work to make changes.

COMMUNITY

COMMUNITY FOCUS

Parent Villages Encourages Families to be Transformative Change Agents for Their Children's Education

Parent Villages is an organization created by mothers, for families, and has been active since February 2018. School Committeewoman LaTonia Naylor, Cindy Gaynor, Ayanna Crawford, and Page Monroe found themselves very concerned about the state of education in Western Massachusetts. This concern led to an extensive conversation between the four, which further led to the birth of an organization that would remedy the matter by focusing on the root: the home.

Naylor discovered 2017 data which shows that only 7% of students who enter kindergarten are ready for kindergarten. This statistic is both astonishing and disheartening because it shows that the problem of the education gap does not start in schools alone but can also begin within the home. Considering the age of a kindergartener, we see that this is a very crucial age for learning because these formative years really shape the trajectory of the child's educational career. Students who start school unprepared will find themselves falling even further behind as they go along throughout the years. The students will spend significant time, effort, and resources trying to catch up, rather than staying on track or even getting ahead. This damage can further discourage students from continuing their education throughout high school, increasing the number of dropouts, and decreasing the number of those who go on to pursue a college degree. As mothers, this concerned us heavily, and thus we found it highly important to ensure that families were equipped with the resources needed to prepare their child to begin the learning process at an early age.

There are already so many organizations doing transformative work within the community. When we started Parent Village, we did not



L to R: Founders of Parent Villages — Ayanna Crawford, LaTonia Naylor, Cindy Gaynor and Page Monroe

do so with the intention of stepping on anyone else's toes or undermining anyone else's work. We did so with the intention of pooling resources and further bridging the gap between or-

ganizations, both old and new, that can further impact the community. The goal is to bring change to the community by brainstorming and implementing strategies that will edu-

cate families, not just children. Listening to the needs of these families, while also educating them on the needs of their children, is what we know can make an impact on the status quo, and further make an impact on the future.

Over the past year Parent Villages has met throughout the city at various libraries and community centers. It has brought hundreds of individuals together through partnerships with organizations such as Baystate Health, South End Community Center, Davis Foundation, Springfield Education Association, Pioneer Valley Project, Square One, and Springfield City Libraries. This has also been possible through support from businesses such as Springer's Oil and Iona's Cafe.

Parent Villages will increase the work that was done over the past year with a goal of seeing the changes impact the education system and our community. Its first *Education Matters* Scholarship Brunch will be held on **Saturday, May 18th at 10:00am at La Quinta Inn and Suites** and will provide needed financial support to five high school seniors. Awards will also be given to these unsung heroes of education: Bishop Leonard Naylor (Holy Redeemer Cathedral), Gianna Allentuck (Elias Brookings Elementary School), Sherleen Crespo (Westfield Bank/Credit for Life), Sally Fuller (Reading Success by 4th Grade), George Johnson (Putnam Vocational Technical Academy) James Lightfoot (Springfield Technical Community College), Adrian Monroe (Springfield Red Sox), Danielle Roy (White Street Elementary School), Young Scholars Fund, Inc., and the Young Scholars Program. Also, a Prestige and Legacy award will be given to former State Representative Raymond A. Jordan.

For more information, contact parentvillages@gmail.com or 413-285-3757. ■

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COMMUNITY

LEADERSHIP PIONEER VALLEY

Representation

By Lora Wondolowski



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

A recent conversation has me thinking about representation. We were working on a flyer and included a photo of a group of LPV alumni. The photo was taken at a community event where I came upon a number of alumni from different classes in the same place. The photo includes four women and one man. Three are African-American, two Latinx and one is Caucasian. We chose the photo because they look happy and represent our commitment to diversity without being a staged photo. A conversation ensued about whether people would think LPV is a program only for women or people of color. If you don't see yourself in the photo, can you see yourself in the program? Would (mostly) white decision-makers see LPV as a place for their staff? It was a fascinating and frustrating conversation.

Representation and lack thereof in imagery is nothing new for folks not in the majority. "He" or "man" is used throughout our language as both referring to males and as a catch-all for all genders. I sat through a business presentation recently where the speaker repeatedly used male pronouns and PowerPoint icons that were clearly men. Was he implying that the concepts didn't apply to me? No, I was supposed to understand that "he" is inclusive of all. Women are used to making the leap all the time, but when "she" is used in the same way, it is often seen as political. There are studies that show that girls read and enjoy books with both male and female lead characters but most boys

won't read books with a female lead.

I grew up outside of Chicago, so Jesse Jackson was a fixture in politics before he reached the national stage. I saw him speak at a national environmental conference when I was in college and was captivated by his message and vision. I remember being on my feet and not remembering standing up. When he ran for president in 1988, we had a conversation in my family about his candidacy. I distinctly remember my mom being concerned about his ability to represent everyone. Fast forward nearly 30 years to when I was working for the League of Conservation Voters. We were working to elect a little known state senator for U.S. Senate in Illinois. We ran ads in the Chicago suburbs featuring our white Executive Director speaking about clean water and did not show the African-American candidate. The strategy worked. We knew then that the voters we were targeting needed to see themselves in the candidate. Thank goodness that a few years later voters across the country were able to make the leap and elect the same candidate president.

I don't claim to know the answer to how we can begin to get those in the majority to make the leap and see themselves in faces that don't look like them. The only way to start that process is to begin using the photos and new pronouns more frequently. Over time, the images and language won't seem as shocking and controversial. ■

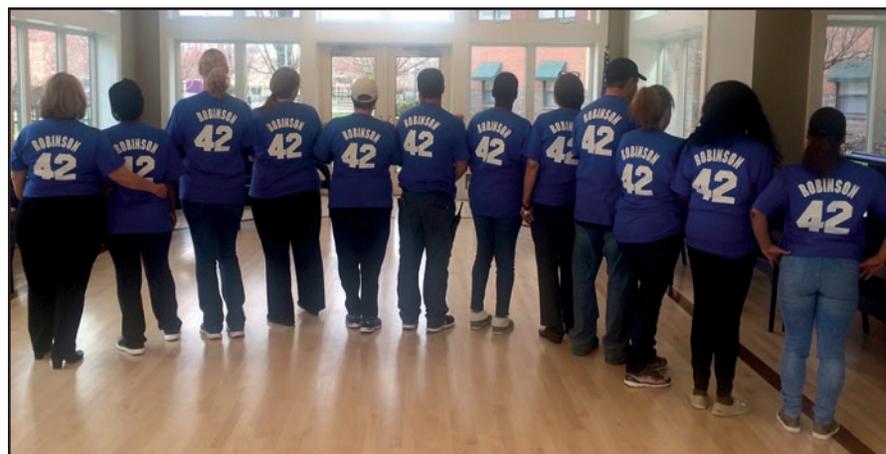
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COMMUNITY FOCUS

Mason Wright Celebrates Jackie Robinson Day



On April 15th, Jackie Robinson Day was celebrated on the Mason Wright campus in Springfield. More than 60 employees of Mason Wright Senior Living, Colony Care at Home and Bright Futures Early Learning Center wore #42 jerseys and celebrated the day with peanuts, popcorn and Cracker Jacks, along with hot dogs and a stirring rendition of "Take Me Out to the Ball

Game."

It was April 15th, 1947 when Jackie Robinson broke major league baseball's color barrier as he debuted with the Brooklyn Dodgers. His .311 batting average, 197 stolen bases and six All-Star Game appearances ensured his enshrinement in the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1952, five years after his retirement. ■

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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.

“Never Again” – Again is Already Here

By Magdalena Gómez

RaicesTexas.org is a nonprofit agency that promotes justice by providing free and low-cost legal services to underserved immigrant children, families, and refugees. From their website:

“RAICES has seen more than two dozen clients held at the Karnes Detention Center in Texas in the last five months who are less than three years old; the majority are less than 18 months old, and two are just a year old.

This is the youngest population we have ever documented in immigrant detention, and our staff members have seen children even younger.”

As of this writing, 15,000 migrant and refugee children have been separated from their families at the Mexican border and taken to “detention centers” in over one hundred facilities across the United States. Besides being ripped from their families, even as infants they are subjected to prison-like conditions; poorly nourished; denied play and positive stimulation; and dehydrated at best. CNN reported and photographed infants bruised from sleeping on gravel, and it has been well documented that children are being sexually assaulted; raped; considered subhuman. Some are living in cages with nothing but a mylar blanket for comfort – the equivalent of being wrapped in tin foil, with a thin mat or concrete for their bed.

The tent city that was created on the isolated border town of Tornillo, Texas was meant to last for a month and swelled to 3,000 children who endured the prison-like conditions



there for seven months. Although no abuse was ever documented or reported, all workers (who were paid \$18 an hour, high pay for that area) had to sign non-disclosure agreements about their experiences at the facility. Children were strictly supervised, at all times. There is no record of abuses at Tornillo, but there remains the shroud of secrecy.

Reports have surfaced from other facilities, where children have been dreadfully abused and sexually assaulted; some children have died while in custody. The Tornillo site was finally dismantled seven months after it was created, mostly due in part to the efforts of a 67-year-old Brooklyn activist, Joshua Rubin, who began the Witness Tornillo Movement by camping outside the facility in his RV. The Witness Tornillo movement currently has over 5,000 members on FB, and they update on conditions and news regarding other facilities – there are 100 detention centers across the country. Rubin is an inspiring example of what just one person can activate.

15,000 children are being traumatized in ways that will scar them for a lifetime. We as a nation value least those on whose backs this nation

was built. Were they valued, our nation may actually have been great and still would be. There is nothing great about the ongoing slaughter of Black men and boys; the Chinese Exclusion Act; the dismembering of 500 First Nations; the Japanese Internment; the NINA laws; Jim Crow; the ongoing slave mills of corporatized prisons and having the highest incarceration rate in the world; the violence and sexual offenses perpetrated against women; the discarding of the elderly and their wisdom denied; and the brutality against children without protected status; the criminalization of poverty; the endless abuse and exploitation of Puerto Rico as the world’s only extant colony; and so much more. We are indeed a nation in peril and decline. As a Nation, wasteful consumption, apathy and a lack of mindfulness makes us Capitalism’s machinery and its victims.

It’s no revelation that The Rule of Law and any semblance of human civility are being violated from the Oval Office. The “Leader of the Free World” is a predator in every sense of the

word, and every cowardly, self-protecting, self-serving politician who does not stand up to him—Democrats and Republicans alike. Proven war criminals, Bush, Rumsfeld and Cheney, never held accountable, live in the luxury of their plunder. Until Trump is brought to justice, our younger generations are witnessing that crime does pay for those who can afford its upkeep.

Children do not receive the full protection of the law in the United States. This country is the ONLY one in the world that has not ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child. If it had been ratified, Trump could possibly be held accountable on his treatment of refugee and migrant children.

“The Convention defines children as any person up to the age of 18

continues to page 18

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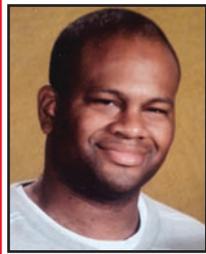
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COMMUNITY

COMMUNITY BEAT



Ken Harris is a former Special Police Officer and Corrections Officer. He is a graduate of STCC. Follow him at shadowedu.blogspot.com

Recently, my heart was filled with adoration for the Write-Up Springfield group held at the Springfield Central Library. I found this free creative platform a unique way for talented writers of different genres to gather together, write, and listen to those who were willing to share their thoughts or imaginations.

This foundation of community writers, open to anyone, was started by Tara Bronner and Kateri Walsh just over a year ago. Both of them believe in the many local talents and sought to organize this artistic community in collaboration with Matthew Vasquez Jaquith, head of adult programs at the library. Together, the three of them put together a monthly meeting on the 2nd Saturday of each month from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. in the community room.

Here, writers of all backgrounds and experiences, published or unpublished, are invited to come. There is no pressure for one to read his or her written work, but if you choose to do so, comments about the piece from fellow writers will only center on the strengths of the material. This is a fantastic way for writers to learn more about themselves and to hear the point of view of others.

So far, cofounders Tara and Kateri are satisfied with how things are smoothly coming along. When this group started, it had only four participants. Now on a given month, attendance can be as high as 20. It continues to grow in part because this diverse group, ranging from a teenager to a 70-year-old, is determined to make the writing experience a domain to practice art in solitude or in conjunction with a supportive base that is likely to grow in the coming months.



Write-Up Springfield cofounders Tara Bronner and Kateri Walsh

For me, it was soothing to sit at a table and hear a mix of poets, fiction and nonfiction writers share stories that matter to them in a positive, constructive discussion.

I even found the story appealing of how Tara and Kateri came up with the idea of creating the writers group after attending an open mic at the Central Library in March 2018. Similar, existing groups in Northampton and Amherst require writers to pay fees. But this Springfield organization was started with the intention of making it

Write-Up Springfield!

By Ken Harris



"Write-Up Springfield" members

free and accessible to the creative community.

In addition, the facilitators are utilizing marketing through the Springfield Library website at <https://www.springfieldlibrary.org/library/> and Facebook along with the Western Massachusetts poetry newsletter to get the word out about Write-Up Springfield. This month they are planning to do a free reading open to the public like they did last fall.

It's refreshing to see individuals from Springfield with the time, energy, resources, and motivation to pro-

mote the creative spirit lingering in this section of the Pioneer Valley. Bronner and Kateri have received many positive feedbacks on their endeavors and thanks to Mathew, this team effort is seeing results that are steadily rising.

Those interested can sign up for these monthly meetings through the Springfield Central Library. While writers sometimes show up without signing up, no one is ever turned away. However, signing up ahead of time helps Tara and Kateri properly prepare. ■

THANK YOU!!

THANK YOU!!!

The Miller family and the Committee that organized the benefit for Lt. Reggie Miller as he battles Amyloidosis wants to express their appreciation for the support that was shared on Saturday, April 6.

Thanks again to everyone for making the benefit such a tremendous success.



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FOOD FOR THOUGHT



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

No Flowers for Mother's Day

By Zaida Govan

May is the month that we celebrate our mothers. I, of course, do not send my mother flowers or candy on Mother's Day. She is a Jehovah Witness and it would be disrespectful but I do honor and celebrate her every day because of the sacrifice she made in raising me and my brothers. I remember being around 10 years old and for some reason we knew she turned 30 and I thought she was so old. I had three brothers at that time and she stayed home and took care of us while my father went to work at Columbia Bicycle in Westfield, I think it was. Not sure if anyone remembers

that company.

Even at that young age I didn't think I wanted to be like my mother. I did not want to stay home and raise kids. I wanted to be a businesswoman. Today when I think about it, my mother was the businesswoman. She ran a household and kept the budget. She managed us (me and my 3 brothers) and my father with precision. I never thought we were poor or that we needed something. Sometimes I think she became a Jehovah Witness as a way to save money by not celebrating birthdays or Christmas and stuff. Maybe she did and maybe she didn't. My father was not a Jehovah Witness when we were growing up but now he is.

My mother went through some stuff with my dad. He was not always

the best father in the world. Of course, they had their issues and I realize now, as we all do when we grow up, that our parents weren't perfect.

As a social worker I know my mother may have been depressed during our upbringing. Post-partum depression is real and I am sure she must have had the diagnosis at times especially when she had 3 children in 3 years and then skipped a year and had another. She also had a still birth. A girl. Through all that I am sure her mental health may have been compromised, especially since we have mental illness in our family. The adjustment of coming from Puerto Rico and starting a new life here must have been devastating.

But my mother never showed any signs of being unstable like I did

when I grew up and had children and struggles. She is a rock and so strong. When I was younger I thought I did not want to be like her and today I am elated when I look in the mirror and see glimpses of my mother. I smile when I say the things to my children that she used to say. I have not turned into my mother but I am striving to be just like her. I already raised my kids and I didn't stay home while I did it so I can't be like her in that way but I can try to emulate her values and morals. She never really talked about them; she showed them in the way she lived. I love my mother and I'm glad that I still have her in my life to continue gleaned words of wisdom from her.

Happy Mother's Day to all the mothers out there. ■

LATIN@ GROOVE

"Never Again"— Again is Already Here



photo by Jim Lescault

continued from page 16
years, and establishes in international law that States/Parties must ensure that all children—without discrimination in any form—benefit from special protection measures and assistance....It clarified that immigration detention is a child rights violation, and that the principle of

'detaining as a last resort' does not apply to children in the context of migration.'

Our country still postures as a democracy. That train's been rolling over bodies since it left the station, and will keep going until it runs out of track or someone has the knowledge and guts to pull the switch.

In the meantime, every person has the power to do something, from a note of thanks to the attorneys who represent our children, to letter writing campaigns, marches, demonstrations, and fundraising – even in our living rooms, and in our places of worship. Every action counts.

On March 31, a few of us got together at Art for the Soul Gallery, (thank you, Rosemary Tracy Woods, for donating your beautiful space) and in two hours raised \$700 dollars for the Corpus Christi office of RaicesTexas. There was live music, food, raffles and intergenerational poetry performances. Nothing fancy,

everything in abundance. Youth volunteers from Ign!te the M!c expressed gratitude for the opportunity to support incarcerated children. Folks came from: Vermont, Westfield, Cambridge, Chicopee, Northampton, Amherst, Holyoke, Longmeadow,

Florence, Conway, Shelburne Falls and Springfield. Friends and strangers alike came together in love and empathy. We gathered in joy to be able to face the horror and do our small part. We refuse to look away from egregious acts perpetrated against thousands of innocent children.

Please consider donating for the legal defense teams of RaicesTexas.org. You can donate right away online on their site. No amount is too small.

Take action and know that you are part of the solution. Let's make NEVER AGAIN a reality. ■

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COMMUNITY FOCUS

YMCA Announces Transition to Tower Square



New Wellness and Child Care Centers to be Created

SPRINGFIELD, MA – The YMCA of Greater Springfield announced that it will proceed with the development of an all-new, state-of-the-art facility at Tower Square to house its wellness and child care programming, targeted to open this fall.

According to YMCA of Greater Springfield incoming Board Chair Jeff Poindexter, “We appreciate our loyal members who have been with us at our Chestnut Street facility, and we are excited to be able to offer them the same quality programs at a new, first-class facility at Tower Square. We believe this move to brand new facilities in the center of the city will allow the organization to continue to fulfill its mission and, more importantly, to grow. We are as committed as ever to meeting the needs of greater Springfield for years to come.”

Child Care Center

The new home for the Springfield Y will include a 15,000 square-foot education center, serving infants through elementary school students, with bright new classrooms and other state-of-the-art amenities. The plans also include an outdoor playground on the sixth floor of the building with brand new playground equipment and an indoor playroom. The YMCA will continue to operate afterschool programs in various schools throughout the region.

Child Care Center amenities include curbside pick-up and drop-off for preschool and school-age children; free parking; newly-furnished classrooms; and technology centers in every room.

Wellness Center

The Y will continue to offer its popular fitness and health programming in a brand new 12,000 square-foot wellness center on the mezzanine level of Tower Square, adjacent to the air walk connecting Monarch Place. A variety of premium strength and conditioning equipment will be available in a



bright, inviting space featuring a view overlooking the city.

Amenities for the Wellness Center include free garage parking for all YMCA members and visitors; an open floor plan, including a view of the city; a new group exercise room with all classes included in the membership; new state-of-the-art spin room; new sauna and locker rooms; and a walking track.

The Strategic Decision

The current Chestnut Street facility has been the home for many Y members and programs for over 50 years. However, it is no longer able to attract the membership needed to sustain a facility of its size. Data provided by strategic consultants showed that the membership base would not reach a level that could support a building that large.

YMCA leadership determined that the move to Tower Square is the most economically-feasible alternative to upgrade its facilities while continuing to serve downtown Springfield. The YMCA child care and wellness center will now be in bright new space with easy access, se-

curity and close proximity to the current location.

“We believe that in the new space in Tower Square, the Y will be joining and contributing to the revitalization now underway in Downtown Springfield. Our new facilities are right across from the Innovation District, in the same building as UMass Springfield Center, and a close distance to the nearly 3,000 employees at MGM with access to a large and growing Downtown workforce,” Poindexter said.

The owners of Tower Square are working in partnership with the YMCA to help finance the cost of the buildout of the Tower Square facility. In addition, the Y is launching a capital campaign to help pay for furnishing the space.

Dexter Johnson, President and CEO of the YMCA of Greater Springfield, said with the formal announcement about plans to move to Tower Square, the YMCA will make the Chestnut Street property and adjacent parking lot available for sale. Home City Housing recently acquired the second floor of the tower at the YMCA after previously purchasing

the third through sixth floors. Renovations are currently underway in those areas of the building, as Home City Housing expands its housing footprint with 104 units of single-room occupancy residences. Johnson said the YMCA at Chestnut Street would stay open to serve members until the new facility is completed.

Johnson said, “We are excited about developing dynamic new space that will help the YMCA grow. We understand that the pool and basketball gym will be notably missed from the new location. We will initiate new partnerships with Boys & Girls Clubs and other community organizations that will allow us to maintain learn-to-swim programming. It is crucial for young people to learn how to swim and we look forward to providing this program at other locations.

“We will also continue to provide youth sports programs at the Dunbar Community Center. Our dedicated staff will work hard to make the transition seamless for our current members, and we look forward to the opportunity to grow afforded by our new location in the heart of the city. At its core, the YMCA is about the programs that are offered and the people who serve and are served. The YMCA has a rich legacy here in Springfield, and we remain focused on providing opportunities for youth development, healthy living and social responsibility.”

In addition to these Springfield-based programs, the YMCA of Greater Springfield operates the Scantic Valley YMCA, Wilbraham Early Learning Center and Stony Brook Acres Camp in Wilbraham, Camp Weber in West Springfield and youth development programs throughout the Pioneer Valley. The YMCA in Springfield was established in 1852 and has been a way of life for thousands of youth, teens, families and seniors throughout the region. ■

Around Town & . . .



A Recognition and Proclamation Service was held for Reverend Dr. James L. Gill, Jr. who recently ascended to the position of Bishop-Elect of Harvest Covenant Ministries International.



Participants of the Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity 11th Annual Senator Edward W. Brook III Oratorical Competition from L to R: Christian Kelly (Sabis International School), Jarius Hayes (High School of Science & Technology), Kendrick Long (Springfield Renaissance School), Djongo-Alan Tchatchouang (Springfield Commonwealth Academy), Oliver Figuereo (Springfield Renaissance School), Jerry Moore III (Hampden Charter School).

*Winners of the competition were:
1st Place—Djongo-Alan Tchatchouang;
2nd Place—Jarius Hayes;
3rd Place—Christian Kelly and Kendrick Long.*



W.I.S.E. (Women Inspiring Self Love & Excellence) presented the third annual How to Wear Your Crown Girls' Summit at Springfield College. L to R: Anokhee Dave, Atty. Talia Gee, Kira Bibbs, Brianna Johnson, Krystal Bravo, Clinesha Johnson and Racquel Davey.



Shawn Merriman and daughter Shalynn participated in the Father/Daughter Dance presented by the Springfield Boys & Girls Club Family Center and held at the Delaney House.



The Springfield Department of Health and Human Services held their annual Public Health Month Kick-off at Springfield City Hall. Pictured is the Committee with Commissioner Helen Caulton Harris (far right).

. . . In The Community



The Motown Mamas of WTCC celebrated their 14th Anniversary at Elegant Affairs Glass Room in Springfield. L to R: Lisa McLaurin, Angela Thorpe, Valerie King-Jackson, Dolores Mumin and Javonne Majors-Thadison.



Performers who participated in the Motown Mamas of WTCC celebration L to R: TC Eckstein Vocalist, Monty Montgomery, Donny Wright, KALIYAH, and Ugo The Music Lover



Drummer Billie Arnold recently held a book signing at Art for the Soul Gallery.



Mason Square C3 recently held their annual community award recognition event at the Mason Square Library. Grants to community agencies were distributed by the event facilitators Tracye Whitfield, Sgt. Devon Williams and Richard Johnson. Mini grant recipients included Celestial Praise Church, Mason Square Library, Young Scholars Program, Dunbar Community Center, Springfield College /Mirkins Cleaners Coat Drive, SYF Tigers Football, Springfield Lady Ballers, Springfield Wrestling Program, Miracle Mark Foundation Youth Swimming and Stone Soul Inc.



Vietnam Veterans Memorial Program



COMMUNITY

CONNECTICUT - COMMUNITY FOCUS

Want to Improve Race Relations? Connecticut Supreme Court Justices Say “Turn Off the Auto-Pilot!”

By Dwight Bachman, Public Relations Officer, Eastern Connecticut State University

In almost any environment, racism is a difficult subject to discuss. However, on April 2, a packed house of more than 500 people in the Betty R. Tipton Room of the Student Center at Eastern Connecticut State University heard two of Connecticut’s top legal minds say future discussions and encounters can be made simple, knowledgeable and even friendly.

Connecticut Supreme Court Chief Justice Richard Robinson and Supreme Court Justice Maria Araujo Kahn offered solutions to this challenge during their keynote speeches at Eastern’s Social Work Program’s First Forensic Conference. The conference marked the 20th anniversary of Eastern’s Social Work Program.

Eastern President Elsa Núñez greeted the justices and the huge crowd, noting the 20th anniversary conference was a joyous occasion because students and outstanding faculty in the Social Work Department have and are dedicating their careers to social justice. “In those 20 years, more than 600 students have graduated from Eastern and gone on to support families and communities as social workers in state agencies, healthcare organizations, school systems, child welfare and family service agencies, mental health programs, hospitals, community agencies and domestic violence programs. Others have been admitted to Master of Social Work programs at prestigious programs across the country.”

To better deal with the delicate issue of racism, Robinson and Kahn said people simply need to “Turn Off the Auto-Pilot.” “Turning Off the Auto-Pilot” is a program the two justices present to audiences that focuses on the challenges that arise when members of the public are from different cultures, not proficient in English, or have a disability.



Chief Justice Richard Robinson



Justice Maria Araujo Kahn



A capacity audience at Eastern listen to Chief Justice Richard Robinson discuss implicit biases.

Implicit biases are the culprit, said Robinson and Kahn. All people unwittingly hold implicit biases: i.e., stereotypical beliefs and attitudes about social groups—men and women; white and black; old and young; majority and minority; fat and thin; liberal and conservative and more. These beliefs and attitudes can affect one’s perception, behavior and judgment about the people in those groups.

“Implicit biases—the autopilots—leave people blinded by their own prejudices. People don’t even realize what they are saying,” said Robinson. “The autopilot leaves them culturally incompetent, and they make

decisions that negatively impact the decision-making of hiring staff in all areas, work assignments and promotions. We need to get off autopilot. We need to grow our awareness of the nuances of cultural issues, language barriers, and disabilities generally.”

The justices presented the interactive discussion in a non-threatening way, mixing compelling pictures, cartoons and humorous, entertaining videos while totally capturing the attention of more than 500 students, faculty and staff and Windham area residents. They offered a set of skills and resources for people to use when interacting with individuals in an increasingly diverse community.



Dwight Bachman

“Implicit biases,” says Kahn, “are a person’s gut justice, an autopilot that compels one to look for shortcuts throughout the day in one’s interactions.” She cited numerous implicit association studies and television commercials, showing how one’s brain interferes with one’s head as the person assesses people who do not look like them. “Example: When people see a Black person and say ‘I don’t see color,’ Oh yes, you do! You take information about Black people already in your head, which rejects notions of you opening your mind more to being a more transparent human being.”

To support her research, Kahn revealed an overwhelming list of double standards resulting from hidden biases that stereotype women on a daily basis in almost every social or professional environment, including her own place of work. “These micro-aggressions, these unintended slights, these cultural shortcomings have a powerful impact on our daily interactions. Unfortunately, this is the precise nature of the racial anxiety.”

The conference also featured social work scholars who conducted several breakout sessions on issues social workers address in their daily profession. “The purpose of this Forensic Social Work Conference was to increase student awareness of all the different ways in which social workers can interact in the legal system,” said Logan. “Many times, social work education does not focus on how to navigate adversarial settings. I believe it is important for our students to know that as social workers, they will interact with the court system sometimes in civil, family, criminal, or juvenile matters.

continues to page 23



Dr. Bridgette Baldwin is a Professor of Law at Western New England University School of Law with areas of interest in criminal law and procedure, international criminal law, evidence, critical race theory, cybercrime and welfare law.

According to a recent *Washington Post* poll, 72% of respondents listed education, second only to terrorism, as a top priority. Historically, education has been the most influential factor to economic and social mobility, especially for underrepresented populations. It is often the single biggest factor determining if children can achieve or surpass the economic success and stability of their parents. Therefore, we must pay attention to recent Congressional proposals that may have a profound impact on educational accessibility, safety, and cost.

These new proposals circulating through Congress address policies such as loan repayment programs, loan caps, and the safety of children on school campuses. We need to educate ourselves and respond to the proposals before their potential passage, not afterwards.

One recent proposal by Senator Lamar Alexander, chairman of the Senate Education Committee, would automatically deduct student loan payments from borrowers' paychecks. The proposal would also streamline

the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) process by reducing the number of application questions from 108 to approximately 24. Additionally, the proposal would reduce pay back plans to only two and attempt to create an accountability system for colleges to prove whether students are actually paying off their loans. Furthermore, the White House has proposed caps on some student loan borrowing which may force some students to turn to private loans. Currently there is no limit on graduate level borrowing for cost of attendance. We have to ask will these proposals put graduate or professional studies financially out of the reach for low-income students or will this force colleges and universities to lower tuition rates.

Another Department of Education proposal will make changes to Title IX guidance that affects how schools respond to sexual harassment and assault both on and off campus. The proposal may also change how schools handle reasonable accommodations during the investigation, who

can interview the victim, rights to an appeal, response timeline, and when a school is required to investigate. These are all important factors to safeguard our children and the rights for the victims and accused.

We should also keep informed about the Harvard vs. Students for Fair Admissions court case which many feel could negatively impact affirmative action policies. In this case, a group of Asian-American students sued Harvard for its admissions policies. The group alleged Harvard's use of race in its admissions policies negatively affected Asian-American applicants by admitting those from other underrepresented groups with lower standardized test scores and GPA's.

LAW NOTES

The Battle over Higher Education in Congress and the Courts

By Michael A. Johnson, Associate Dean



Michael A. Johnson serves as the Associate Dean for Law Student Affairs and Enrollment Planning at Western New England University School of Law in Springfield, Massachusetts.

Harvard aggressively defends its policies based on a holistic review of each applicant and the importance of diversity in the classroom.

These proposals and cases may have a deep impact on educational accessibility, safety, and cost. And I am certain these will not be the only proposals that arise in the future. We must research the proposals, understand how they will affect citizens and students, and we must all contact our local, state, or federal representatives to voice an opinion. Education is a top priority and only we can make a difference. ■

CONNECTICUT - COMMUNITY FOCUS

Connecticut Supreme Court Justices

Say "Turn Off the Auto-Pilot"

continued from page 22

The nearly day-long conference was fun-filled, and the audience gave Robinson and Kahn thunderous applause. Robinson said, "I believe there is hope. We want you to become culturally competent, to open up your minds to be able to communicate with and serve people from all cultures with respect, professional integrity and fairness in a manner that recognizes the individual dignity of each person. If we all turn off that autopilot, those implicit biases, maybe we all can become friends. If not friends, we, at least,

have better knowledge to guide us."

Kahn agreed: "We hope we have engaged you in a sensitive manner that values and encourages thoughtful reflection and awareness, to hopefully supplant implicit stereotypes that we all have. If you can just be nonjudgmental in your daily interactions. That is so unfair. It's wrong! Work hard not to go with your "gut feelings" and, instead, dig deeper. In the final analysis, much of relieving racial anxiety comes down to kindness—treating others the way you want to be treated.

New MOCHA Classes



MOCHA

-STIPENDS FOR ELIGIBLE PARTICIPANTS-

Introduction to University of Massachusetts School of Public Health and Health Sciences and MOCHA's Collaborative research project.

Qualifications: Men who are between 35-70 years old and identify as Black and/or African American.

SATURDAY MAY 11th 2019
10AM-1PM
 Tower Square, UMass Center Springfield
 1500 Main Street, Springfield, MA 01103

EDITORIAL

FROM THE PUBLISHER'S DESK

CARPENTERS UNION TAKES THE DIVERSITY LEAD

MY POINT OF VIEW

Frederick A. Hurst



continued from page 5

by decades, require a bit more of a stimulus to break down their chronic resistance to change even when local demographics make the need obvious. Besides, the U.S. Supreme Court in *City of Richmond v. Croson* has made disparity studies necessary to avoid legal challenges.

I was most impressed by the simplicity of the requirements for becoming a union member. Once the simple requirements are met, new members become apprentices after a relatively brief pre-training program and are sent to work on building projects under the guidance of journeymen carpenters and are paid a set

dollar amount with full benefits. And within 3-5 years an apprentice becomes a journeyman (or journeywoman). For more information, you may contact Lisa Clauson at 413-505-5051 or lclauson@neclmp.org.

This article was originally intended as a biographical sketch of Lisa Clauson whom I interviewed extensively. She subsequently asked me to not focus my article on her and her many years as an organizer. Suffice it to say that she is superbly qualified and an extremely experienced organizer who gave me the insight I needed to understand the progress that the Carpenters Union has made in integrating the building trades around the entire New England area. It is a story of positive change that all should know. ■

AF-AM NEWS bits

By Frederick A. Hurst

continued from page 4

tack. She wrote: And that's just a tiny sampling of what my colleague, Renee Graham, describes as "irrational white fear" of black people merely living their lives. Besides that fear factor, there's also an irrational white desire to believe things aren't as bad as black people say they are... That explains our great relief when an alleged hate crime turns out to be a hoax, or a possible hoax, as in the confusing case of Jussie Smollett. The "Empire" actor said he had been attacked by two men who taunted him with homophobic and racial slurs. Then, to the great relief of white people everywhere, Smollett was accused of staging the attack and charged with 16 felony counts. When all the charges were dropped, white people had a new reason to be angry about the injustice of it all: How dare a black person be found neither guilty of a

crime nor exonerated?" (March 28, 2019)

TRUMP EFFECT

"Mr. Trump has broken almost every economic promise he made. He promised to look out for the middle class but signed a massive tax give away to the top 1%. He promised health insurance to everyone via an Affordable Care Act replacement, but the number of Americans without insurance has risen by seven million during his presidency. He promised to look out for the American worker, but his trade war has caused massive layoffs and the largest trade deficit in history. Unemployment may be low, but voters in Middle America are a lot more concerned that their cost of living has gone up over the past year while wage growth is lackluster." (James Carville and Jim Messina, *The Wall Street Journal*, March 11, 2019) ■





Nancy Shendell-Falik, RN, MA became the first female president of Baystate Medical Center and senior vice president for Hospital Operations at Baystate Health in 2015.

At right, the first class of nurses at Springfield Hospital in 1892.

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CONGRATULATIONS

Martin Luther King Jr. Family Services held their Third Annual Social Justice Awards Program “Justice Above Self”



Honorees from L to R:

- *Dr. Frank Robinson,*
- *Paul Robbins,*
- *Rosemary Tracy Woods,*
- *Burt Hanson – representing Action Centered Tutoring,*
- *Kathryn Kirby,*
- *Maria Ligas – representing the New North Citizens Council,*
- *Ben Swan, Sr.,*
- *Raymond Berry,*
- *Joyce Calhoun,*
- *Lenny Underwood and*
- *Teka Jones with MLK Jr. Family Services President & CEO Ronn Johnson.*

RELIGION

RELIGIOUS POINT OF VIEW



Dr. Atu White, Editor, serves as Pastor of the Mt. Zion Baptist Church, 33 Oak Street, Springfield, MA and as First Vice President of the United Baptist Convention of Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and New Hampshire. atuwhite@gmail.com

Mothers, Keep Standing

By Rev. Dr. Atu White

John 19:25 NLT:

“Standing near the cross were Jesus’ mother, and his mother’s sister, Mary (the wife of Clopas), and Mary Magdalene.”

During this month, we celebrate the invaluable contributions of mothers. We pay homage to women who nurture the greatness of God housed in growing children. We esteem all women (biological and adopted mothers, aunts, sisters, mentors, etc.) who create a safe environment for our children to laugh, learn and experience life. In the above narrative, Jesus is maximizing His purpose on Calvary’s rugged cross. The paradox of the moment is Jesus physically reaches His lowest point in life, and spiritually, He is at His highest. Standing near His cross were Mary His mother, His auntie, Clopas’ wife, and Mary Magdalene. These dynamic women invested in His life and ministry.

Jesus’ aunt, perhaps gave Him advice that the Gospel writers were not privy to. Aunts are great at listening and giving the exact advice our mother’s would give but it sounds better coming from an aunt. No doubt, she stepped in at moments when Mary had her fill of Jesus’ youthful shenanigans. Maybe, she asked Joseph and Mary to cut Jesus some slack when they frantically searched for Him, only to find Him teaching in the temple. Aunts are great!

Mary the wife of Clopas served as a mentor to this young prophet. She believed in Him. Some assert she assisted in financing His ministry endeavors. Perhaps, she added a fresh perspective to His plight and purpose.

Mary Magdalene is a testament to Jesus’ ministry. She anointed Jesus with spice at the objection of onlookers. She listened and learned from His teachings. She was transformed from a sinful outcast to a prominent figure in His lifetime. In fact, Jesus stated, “I tell you the truth, wherever the Good News is preached throughout the world, this woman’s deed will be remembered and discussed” (Mark 14:9).

His Mother stood at the cross. The Gospels do not spend ample time with their private interactions, but sparse, yet telling inklings are given. Cast as a teenage mother of a boy child destined to be the world’s Savior, Mary delivered an Oscar-worthy performance. Her willingness to walk

with Jesus from conception to the cross is remarkable. Mary stood at the cross reflecting on her journey with Jesus from the cradle where she counted the fingers and toes of her newborn wrapped in soft, swaddling cloth. Mary pondered the messages given by Gabriel. Lovingly, she touched His face as Jesus nestled in the safety of her bosom, and she fervently whispered her intentions to protect and love Him. Even as the Magi paid Him homage, Mary snuggled and kissed His feet. The flashback ends and with proud tears in her eyes, she watches Him graduate from Jesus her son to Jesus our Savior. Mary was not alone at this celebration, for standing there with her were His Auntie, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. These great women continued to believe in Him as a son, a nephew, a prophet, and the Savior.

Mothers, keep standing. Our children need you to continue to believe in them. ■

CELEBRATING 100 YEARS

The History of Mount Calvary Baptist Church, Part III

By RuthAnn Hamilton-Stutts

Mount Calvary Baptist Church located at 17 John Street in Springfield, MA will celebrate its 100th Anniversary under the leadership and vision of its Pastor, Dr. Mark E. Flowers. Our anniversary theme is **“One on Solomon’s Portico”** Acts 5:12b.

As Dr. Flowers says, “Out of one comes many.” Not only did many families who lived on the North End prior to Urban Renewal attend Mount Calvary Baptist Church, two other churches formed out of Mount Calvary. After eight years as Pastor at Mount Calvary, Rev. James H. Hamer left to organize Faith Baptist Church. Rev. Herbert S. Sumpter resigned two years after the march from

Grays Avenue to its present location at 17 John Street and started Friendship Baptist Church. So “Out of One Comes Many.”

So that “One” is you! If you ever attended Mount Calvary as a child or adult, if you are a former member or relative or friend of former members, have family and friends who attend Mount Calvary now, come and join us on this happy occasion and help us to celebrate 100 years of serving, praising, praying and worshiping God. Walk down memory lane. Remember the soda machine that was downstairs in the church, or the Coca Cola plant that was across the street where McDonald’s is located now? Do you remember some of the re-

treats the youth went on, attending youth conferences out of town, singing in the choir, the bowling league, the girls and boys basketball teams, or the boys and girls scouts and the advisors and mentors? Many of you received your Christian foundation at Mount Calvary. So come out and give God the praise with us.

We will begin our celebration on Friday, May 3, 2019 at 6:45 pm with a Memorial Prayer Service and lighting candles to remember those who came before us and helped to pave the way. Candles will be available for \$2. Come out and join us in remembering your loved ones by calling out their names.

On Thursday, May 16, 2019 we will have a Soiree at Tower Square Hotel at 6 pm, with a short preview of some of our members who have gone on to glory. Will you recognize them? Tickets are \$35.

On Sunday, May 19, 2019 we will celebrate all day. Morning service will begin at 10 am and a former Pastor of Mount Calvary, Rev. Gordon C. O’Neal, Jr., will be the morning preacher. At 12:30 pm, we will have the unveiling of the new street name, Mount Calvary Way, with coffee and pastry immediately following.

The afternoon service will begin at 3 pm with Dr. Calvin J. McFadden, Sr. as the afternoon preacher. A soul food dinner will be served after service.

We invite you to join us as we celebrate 100 years of God’s blessing and thanking him for his grace and mercy through praise and worship. **Please contact the church for more information or for tickets for the Soiree at (413) 737-9583.** Praise God from whom all blessings flow. ■

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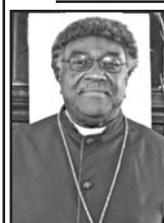
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Pastors, Ministers, Professors and Theologians, please submit your articles for the "Religious Point of View" to Rev. Dr. Atu White at: atuwhite@gmail.com

LIVING

LIFE'S CHALLENGES

Acknowledge When You Have Been Hurt

By Sweets H. Wilson, PhD



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

Betrayal happens to all of us at some point in our lives. Betrayal can occur with a spouse, a family member, a best friend or a co-worker. Most individuals who experience betrayal saw the signs, but continued to give that person the benefit of the doubt. The reality is that people will fail you. Only a small percentage of all betrayals occurs with absolutely no forewarning. This is by far the most difficult type of betrayal because it leaves you shell-shocked and devastated.

Betrayals are an unavoidable aspect of almost any close relationship. They range from the seemingly innocent flirtations with co-worker to the not so innocent one night stands and long term extramarital affairs. If you have been a victim of betrayal, you know the agony of feeling cheated on and used. Your work views are shattered because if you cannot trust your partners who can you trust? Your dismay, pain and despair can lead you to declare the relationship to be over, however, the pain continues.

Betrayal is an interpersonal trauma which shatters assumptions about how we view life and the people close to us. Shattered assumptions leave us feeling as though our reality has been blown apart. When we are betrayed our feelings alternate between a sense of numbness and feelings of disbelief. We may also find ourselves behaving erratically and

not like our usual selves. We feel victimized and our lives seem to be out of control.

In Psalm 55:12-15, King David's first experience with the pain of betrayal was not to minimize his sense of hurt. He poured it out to God. We also must acknowledge when we have been hurt. And then we need to share that hurt with someone who understands. God understands. Not only was Jesus betrayed in His time on earth, but God has been in a sense betrayed by His creation. He created us that we might glorify Him and enjoy Him. Instead of fellowshiping with Him, we sinned against Him, and He had to forgive us by redemption.

One way of overcoming betrayal is through forgiveness. When we forgive someone, we are really giving ourselves a gift. When people intentionally inflict pain on us, our withholding of forgiveness hurts us more than it does them. To forgive someone is to give up our right to vengeance. We acknowledge that their act was wrong and we might be more careful in trusting them with certain issues but we do not attempt to get back at them. We do not betray someone who has betrayed us. Betrayal is a robbing of security through a breaking of trust. We overcome the heartache it causes by giving our pain to God. If we have been betrayed by someone close to us and eventually we all will, our first response should be to cry out to Jesus who loves us, pursues us, and intimately understands the reality of that betrayal

We call the betrayal for what it is, reconsider our personal boundaries and recognize that only God is truly trustworthy. Tell The Lord your pain and allow Him to handle those who would hurt us. ■

LET'S CONNECT

Mothering in the Age of Poor Leadership

By Beverly Guerrero-Porter



Beverly Guerrero-Porter

The call of motherhood brings along with it much responsibility. Not only are we required to selflessly nurture and provide care, we're also tasked with creating a safe environment for our children, and guiding them in character development and identity formation. The work only becomes more complex as they grow, especially in seasons of uncertain times such as these. With so many demands of all we are expected to be and give, we are natural leaders in our home and outside of it.

As leaders, we understand that we need to cast our selfish agendas aside for the sake of the greater good. We work in harmony with personalities and perspectives that do not necessarily match ours, graciously creating community. We know how to be effective and get things done, even with minimal resources, without excuses and without belly aching. If we are at fault about something, we are humble enough to admit it and strong enough to make changes. We're not about shifting the blame. We are reflective and we are ever improving.

Being the strong leaders that we are, we recognize other strong leaders. We also spot weak ones. Unfortunately, we are in a dismal age of poor leadership—in our government, in our churches, in our communities and, for some, even in our homes. Our nation is on the line as are our congregations, our neighborhoods and our children. What are we to do when in addition to all that we're contending with on a day-to-day basis, we are also burdened by fools in palaces, fools in pulpits and fools at our tables? We take the lead!

I was recently reading a Biblical passage in the book of 2 Samuel about a foolish man, an offended king, and a wise woman who helped to circumvent certain disaster. In summary, the

king requested that one of his subjects, whom he once looked out for, return the favor by providing some goods for his soldiers. The man refused and even worse insulted the king's men. The king allowed his bruised ego to dictate his response: retaliation and destruction of an entire group of people. When the woman heard of what transpired, she immediately stepped up, gathered her resources, organized her team and orchestrated a treaty that saved an entire group of people. She rectified what the weak, egotistical man was about to destroy and reminded the king of the larger picture that he lost sight of when he got caught up dealing with a fool. She didn't pace around in helpless fear; she didn't just sit around and hope that change would come. She immediately worked out a plan and led an effort to solve the problem.

Like the wise woman, we are to use our skills of influence in order to foster change. If there is something that is off in the home, we're in position to address it. If we are spiritual mothers in a church under ungodly leadership, we have a mantle to call it out. We absolutely must not remain silent as there are souls on the line. If we are in government or are civically engaged women, we have a mandate to ensure that the laws of our city, state and nation are upheld and rightfully enforced and if there are those in power who are abusing their authority, we need to mobilize efforts for their removal either by way of voting or community organizing. Whether you are a natural mother, a spiritual mother or a community mother, it is imperative that we do what we must to restore order and effective leadership. We hold the key to bring about change. ■

THE ARTS

PEN & INK

MY FAVORITE AUNTS

(In honor of Esther Torrence Crum)
By Juanita Torrence-Thompson



JUANITA TORRENCE-THOMPSON: Pushcart nominee. Playwright. Published fiction, children's stories, feature articles, hundreds of her award-winning poems in dozens of U.S. and international journals, nearly 30 anthologies, 10 books including "Centos of Life". 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

Not many people can claim to have more than one mother. I was blessed with several. Two are my favorite aunts, alphabetically speaking, Esther Mae (Torrence) Crum, my father's youngest sister and Josephine Esther (Mapp) Edmonds, my mother's youngest sister. The interesting thing about these two aunts is that besides being related by the marriage of my parents, they are also great friends and have been since my parents were dating. Coincidentally, Jo and Esther were both born the same year only two months apart and even gave birth to their children only a month apart. I was just a naive, stringbean of a kid at the time, but I remember when my aunts glowed with maternal beauty. They both lived in New York City at the time and I was visiting Aunt Esther who drove me to see Jo and Nana at Nana's (my maternal grandmother) in Riverdale, New York. In fact, I remember that bright summery day when their pictures were taken. Esther wore a navy blue maternity dress and wore her hair pulled back, while Jo sported a beige and brown maternity ensemble. There was the scent of hibiscus and roses in the air, which Nana had so carefully tended.

I always considered my aunts role models when I was growing up. I knew even then how special Jo and Esther were as loving aunts, sisters, daughters, wives and mothers, but it wasn't until I reached adulthood that I learned just what intelligent, accomplished, caring and sensitive women they were. Their Massachusetts communities have honored them many times over for their Herculean contributions to humankind.

For example, Aunt Esther was honored in 2003 for outstanding service by the Massachusetts chapter of the NAACP in a televised ceremony and in the mid 80's she was named Massachusetts Nurse of the Year. Her certificate read in part, "In appreciation of your many years of dedicated service in nursing and for your dedication to the Youth of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts...Michael S. Dukakis, Governor of Massachusetts and Brian J. Donnelly, House of Representatives." Esther retired after nearly 30 years as staff nurse and then head nurse and received "high, exemplary praise" from the staff at the Brockton VA Hospital. In addition, she was and is passionately involved in numerous organizations such as the Brockton League of Women Voters, Women's Guild of Lincoln Congregational Church, Thomas J. Bell Center, Urban League Guild of Boston, The March of Dimes, National Black Nurses Association, National Association for Retired Federal Employees and AARP.

Aunt Jo was also an active community leader and a member of the National Urban League Guild, the Northern Education Service for Childhood Development and the Women's Auxiliary to the Manhattan Medical Society. After remarrying and moving from New York to Springfield, Massachusetts, Jo pursued art courses at the George Walter Vincent Smith Museum, Springfield College and the Hartford Art School. Her art has been exhibited widely at expositions, colleges, museums, libraries, banks, Pratt Institute and Symphony

Hall in Springfield, Massachusetts. She parlayed her art expertise into teaching art and organizing art programs for students at the American International College then became volunteer art coordinator, exhibiting the works of Black artists such as Gordon Parks, Jacob Lawrence and Benny Andrews locally, nationally and internationally. She has sat on dozens of civic and arts organizations, received numerous honors, including the prestigious Ubor Award in 1998 at the Museum of Fine Arts in Springfield and received recognition from Governor Michael S. Dukakis and citations from Governor Edward J. King, the Massachusetts House of Representatives and Springfield Mayor Theodore E. DiMauro who proclaimed June 3, 1982 "Josephine Edmonds Day."

I paint this background because I firmly believe that what you do with your life -- helping people and other acts of humanitarianism -- help to shape who you are. I believe this made both Aunt Esther and Aunt Jo the beautiful, vital, kind, organized, personable women they became.

I like to think that Esther and Jo thought I was their favorite niece, or at least they treated me that way. They often gave me their designer clothes they'd hardly worn or a piece of jewelry because they knew I loved it. As a young woman in those days, I was quite a clothes horse, so like many young girls I delighted in my gifts from both Esther and Jo which I knew were given from the heart. As a young girl growing up and living with my father and paternal grandparents, I didn't know it then, but in retrospect, I suppose I also thought of all my aunts, particularly Jo and Esther, as my other mothers.

It was very exciting for me to come from Massachusetts to New York City and visit my Aunt Esther and Uncle Frank who lived near City College. Esther would take her daughter Yvonne and me to Radio City, the Roxy Theatre (now defunct), movies and, of course, Broadway shows. I know that this was the beginning of my love affair with the theatre which flourishes today as my husband, Hugh, and I keep Broadway theatres and concerts, ballet and opera at Lincoln Center in business.

One thing I especially love about Jo is that when I have been feeling not quite 100%, I could call her and our conversation would start off matter of factly, like what have you been up to lately, and by the time the conversation was over, which was sometimes maybe a half hour or longer, we would both be in stitches. By that time, I'd forgotten I had a problem. All was well with the world and both of us had proved just how corny we could get. We knew we had a weird sense of humor but didn't really care. It made us laugh and that's all that mattered.

Aunt Esther became my confidante in more recent years and both Jo and Esther became velvet rocks when I was going through Hell with my mother's illness, which caused her to slip away from us May 12th the day before Mother's Day in 2001 -- that dreadful year in more ways than one. They were instrumental in helping me through probably the most difficult period of my life.

I hope my aunts weren't tired of me calling them before and after May 12, 2001, but I didn't know where to turn. My Aunt Janice, my mother's older sister, who'd been a staunch supporter of mine and a confidante for many years, was ill. My Aunt Ruthie, my father's sister who was two years older than Esther, had passed away in 1993. During this period I leaned on Esther more and more. Of course I had my son and husband, too, but they were hurting probably nearly as much as I but without the benefit of bereavement counseling that I had.

So for me to have been blessed with belief in God as well as both Auntie Jo and Auntie Esther was really my salvation. Even now I think, half jokingly, who do I want to emulate when I grow up? My answer is either Auntie Jo or Aunt Esther. Or better yet, how about both of them? I can't go wrong. ■

THE ARTS

PEN & INK

God Speaks Through Our Gifts

By *Berdia M. Brown*

The day we entered into this world, our destiny was already planned.
God gave, and blessed us, with his holy hands.
He gave us all gifts to use; through us he speaks.
Our purpose in life is never out of reach.

We are created equal, for this is true.
God gave us gifts to pursue.
He has given gifts to teach, preach, and goals to reach.
He has given gifts to the ones who perform, dance, writers, and speakers who encourage the discouraged.

He has given us skilled lawyers, doctors, and nurses to heal.
God speaks through our gifts, as daily they are revealed.
He has given gifts to the mechanic who uses his skills;
And caretakers to care for the disabled and ill.
He has given the love of a mother and father to love and discipline their children when they go astray.
God speaks through our gifts each and every day.
He has given us carpenters and farmers who use their skilled hands,
As they provide for us all over this land.

Whatever your gifts are, they are meant for you.
Give thanks daily, as God will see you through.
When you feel a bit discouraged, get a grip.
God speaks through our gifts.

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Berdia M. Brown

Hope Chest

By *Crystal Senter-Brown*

It was her great-great
grandmothers, a mix of oak
and pine, wide and deep

enough to store
everything a new wife
should need, plates, towels, sheets

own mother had taken
the time to fill it with things
she thought would help her

daughter to become
the wife and bride she knew she
could be, and after

she married, she sat
in front of the chest, sorting
through the towels and

dishes, and among
the necessities she found
a handwritten note

which simply said "always
have your own money. at least
enough to begin

again, should you
ever find yourself on your own. it
was signed "Love,

Mary"- the name
of her great-great-grandmother.
she didn't think much

of it until nine
years later when she awakened
to find the other

side of her bed empty
and cold. and she remembered
the note, written by

a woman who loved
her and knew her story
before she was even

born, making her
transition effortless, and
so much easier than

it was for the many women

who came

before her.



Crystal Senter-Brown

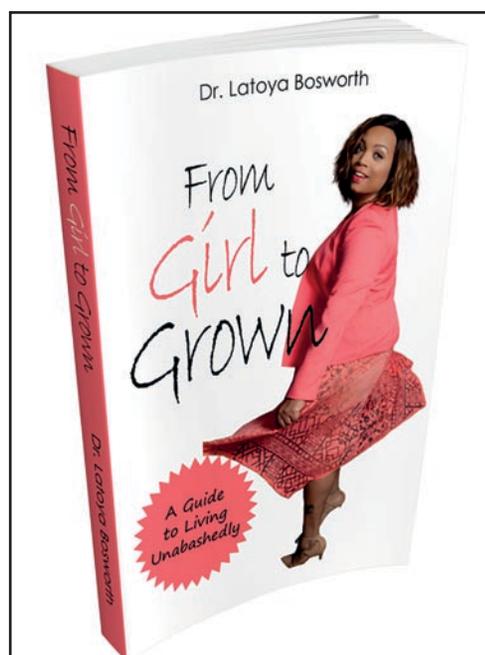
From Girl to Grown Gathering

Dr. Bosworth (Brenda's Child) is celebrating the release of her new book *From Girl to Grown ...A Guide to Living Unabashedly* with inspirational women's forum. Join us for a facilitated discussion, stories, games, light fare and cash bar as we discuss the

journey of blossoming from Girl to Grown. Ages 18 and over.

It's time for you to claim your rightful place on the throne. You are in control of your life. You make the rules and break them if you choose. Step into your destiny with joy and confidence. Learn to identify your truth and speak it. Fall in love with the brilliant being you are now and the one you are blossoming into. *From Girl to Grown* is dropping gems on how to find your purpose, build a strong support system, heal from your past, and put yourself first. True to her nature, Dr. Bosworth is transparent and authentic as she shares the personal lessons that helped her evolve into the self-proclaimed Queen of Self-esteem, then arms you with concrete steps for improving your life. Crown up Ladies...it's time to live unabashedly.

www.brendaschild.com



Thursday, May 2, 2019

5:30 AM - 8:30 PM

Elan Room

450 Memorial Drive, Chicopee, MA 01020

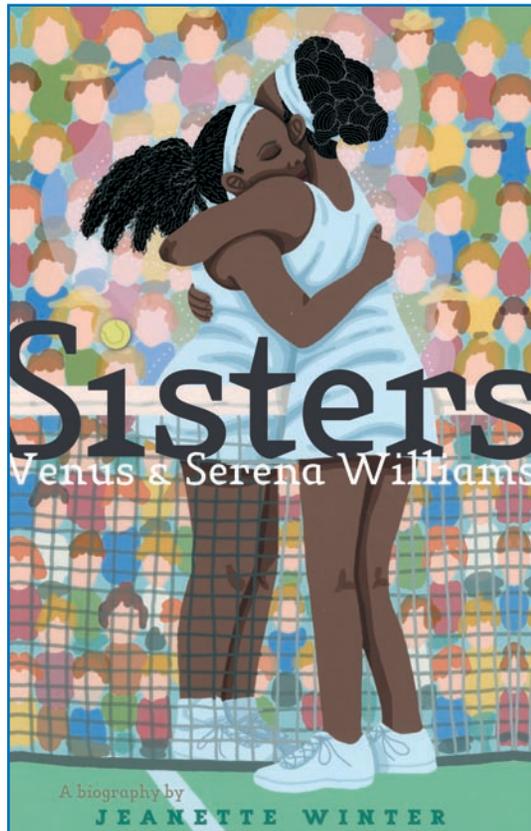
THE ARTS

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 caught it! The ball was thrown very high – so high that you lost it in the sky for a minute – and you weren't sure how you'd do it, but your hands were out and you caught it. Just. Like. That. Some balls are meant to be thrown or batted, while some are meant to bounce. In the new book **“Sisters”** by **Jeanette Winter**, you'll learn about two girls who don't just hit a ball, they *smash* it.



Ever since they were babies, Venus and Serena were very close.

They slept in the same bed, enjoyed the same books, and got up at the same time every morning, even though it was still dark sometimes. That's because their Mama and Daddy wanted their two youngest daughters to learn to play tennis so they could have a better future.

“Sisters”

By *Jeanette Winter*

c.2019, Beach Lane Books/Simon & Schuster \$17.99 / \$23.99 Canada 48 pages

Reviewed by *Terri Schlichenmeyer*

Each morning started with clean-up because the local tennis court was always littered. After clean-up, it was time for practice with equipment that was old and used. Venus and Serena served and volleyed, chased balls, and hit forehand and backhand, forehand and backhand while their Daddy reminded them to “Concentrate.”

Pretty soon, the girls could ignore the gunfire down the block. They could forget about the trash on

the tennis court, and the fact that their equipment was old and used-up, and that there was still homework to be done. They started to get *really good* at tennis and they started gaining respect from the kids in the neighborhood, from people around the country, and from folks who wanted to help.

With respect came new equipment and invitations to tournaments. Venus would win her game, then Serena would win, and they'd concentrate on winning again and again. Venus would cheer when Serena was on the court, and Serena would cheer when Venus was on the court. As the girls grew into better tennis players, they grew into women with fashion sense

and power, too. And when it was time for Venus and Serena to play one another on the court, they did it just like they did everything else all their lives: together.

Let's face it: when it comes to the lives of Serena and Venus Williams, there's really not much left to publicly tell. Certainly, author Jeanette Winter doesn't share any-

thing new in “Sisters,” so why would your child want this book?

Two words: the artwork.

Even if your child can't read the words inside “Sisters,” she'll be able to tell the story because Winter's vivid illustrations carefully follow the words, and then some: the telling of the tale is in the art but, more so than with many picture books, backgrounds matter. There's graffiti behind the characters on one page, tough boys hiding in another, and a definite sense that the Williams sis-



Jeanette Winter

Drawings by Jeanette Winter

ters didn't come from lives of luxury.

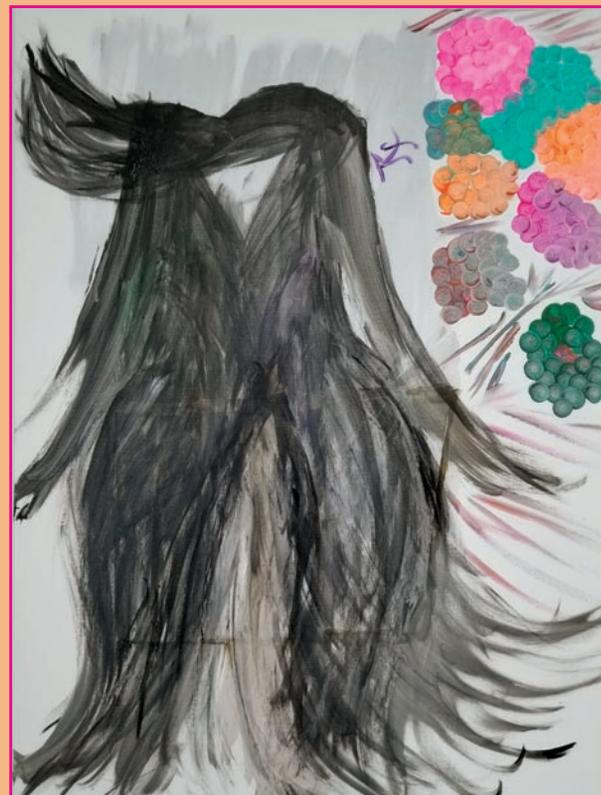
That gives browsing 3-to-8-year-olds a subtle sense of why this book, and it should give parents comfort that their children are learning about perseverance and “concentration.” For that, “Sisters” is a book you'll want to catch. ■

ARTIST IN RESIDENCE



Renée Flowers is Point of View's Artist in Residence. You can contact her directly at (413) 209-9882 to arrange a private viewing of her work.

Every month different paintings created by **Renée Flowers** are displayed at **Point of View**



THE ARTS

ENTERTAINMENT REVIEW

Wycliffe Gordon Wows the Crowd!

By Yvonne Mendez



Yvonne Mendez is the Director of Education & Engagement at the UMass Fine Arts Center. She produces events for the Valley Jazz Network, and also works with the Springfield Jazz and Roots Festival.

From the very first note until the very last, Wycliffe Gordon and His International All Stars commanded the stage with classy excellence. You can hear the gospel, you hear the blues, the classic ragtime, the swinging jazz music! There is a humbling jazz tradition at the center of Wycliffe Gordon's music. His repertoire/compositions touch on every part of the ontology of jazz music: from Negro spirituals like *Swing Low Sweet Chariot* and *Wade In The Water* to *I Got Rhythm* and *Baby It's Cold Outside*.

Gordon was born in Greensboro and grew up in Augusta, GA. His father was a minister and so Wycliffe grew up in this musical family listening to classical music and gospel. His first exposure to big band music was when the Army band visited his high school. Originally, he wanted to play drums but his mom said no to that. So his first instrument was the trombone. He went to college at Florida A&M, where Wynton Marsalis heard him play and two years later recruited him into his septet. His career grew wildly from that point. Wycliffe has performed with Billy Taylor's Jazz at Kennedy Center, with Jazz At Lincoln Center Orchestra, touring with his own septet as well as solo performances. He has written movie scores, is an accomplished composer and has arranged for countless ensembles. He composed and arranged the theme for *All Things Considered*, and has taught at Julliard, the Manhattan School of Music and Michigan State.

Wycliffe's trumpet sound is clear and strong. At this performance in the UMass Fine Arts Center Concert Hall, Wycliffe covered the legacy of jazz music, from the blues and ragtime to the swinging beat of New Orleans. His selection and balance of standards and his own original tunes was captivating. He definitely gives a deep nod to Louis Armstrong, singing a couple of his tunes including *When You're Smiling* and *Black and Blue*. He also brings to life a few Dizzy Gillespie and Duke Ellington tunes. In each instance, Wycliffe's version of these classics are clearly his own and



Wycliffe Gordon at the UMass Fine Arts Center Concert Hall

unique to his enormous talent and the talent of his "All Stars."

Adrian Cunningham's energy on reeds was spectacular; his saxophone solos were electrifying! Drummer Alvin Atkinson was spinning his drumsticks as he played the tunes. His drum solos were exceptional as he scatted along to the beat.

Both Corcoran Holt on bass and Ehud Asherie on piano also held the audience in awe of their musicality but, of course, Wycliffe himself was at his best, making it look so easy. He would sing in a smooth but raspy voice, reminiscent of Louis Armstrong. He also showed his sense of humor, cracking jokes and changing the words to some tunes, telling inside stories about his band members, as well as building in "call and response" on many of the songs, bringing that gospel and blues tradition right back into everything. People couldn't wait to sing along!

And, of course, the show wouldn't be complete without a NOLA

March-Bourbon Street Blues featured the combination of the oboe and the trombone to create that classic "ragtime" style. Nice and slow, and perfect!

Wycliffe Gordon and His International All Stars: a classy, professional and swinging performance! ■

Happy Mother's Day!

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COMMUNITY

NABVETS Corner



Anthony (Tony) Bass

Tony hails from Springfield and grew up in the Old Hill Historical District. As a matter of fact, he still lives in the house that he grew up in. He attended Tapley Elementary School where he learned to play the trumpet, Buckingham Jr. High School where he was in the Marching Band and the Classical Orchestra. Then on to Technical High School where he continued in the Marching Band and Orchestra. He also joined the Kool Review Plus 2 Band and later joined the GTX Unlimited Band before graduation. After graduating from high school, Tony attended Lincoln University in PA. There he was elected General Manager of WLIU FM Radio Station. As a young black man, he was faced with the conflicts of the encroaching war in Vietnam and racial tensions in the U.S. that had reached the boiling point in Springfield during the 1960s.

The impact on him was that he wanted to get away from Springfield so he decided to join the Marines. Un-

fortunately, he experienced some of the same tensions in the military that he was trying to get away from in civilian life. Tony spent four years in the Marines from 1972-1976. He completed basic training at Paris Island, SC; he then went to Military Police school in Augusta, GA and spent the next two years as an MP. He later joined the 2nd Recon and trained in Jacksonville, NC. This was his most rigorous training to date and included survival, amphibious, mountain climbing and a major focus on maps and compass skills. Even though this training was a major challenge to him, physically and mentally, Tony said it was a “phenomenal experience” that added a level of focus and confidence to his life that continue to serve him to this day.

Tony initially got involved with the NABVETS Springfield Chapter in 2016 as a computer consultant. We were in our new office on State Street for approximately one year and had lost contact with the gentleman who first set up our computers. Within a few months, Tony decided to join the National organization and the Chapter. He quickly got involved in all aspects of the Chapter and the following year accepted the nomination for the office of President/Chapter Commander and was voted in with a unanimous vote. He noted that the main attraction for him was working with a National Black Organization focused on helping black veterans.

Anthony “Tony” Bass, Commander

By Milton Jones

As our Commander and leader, Tony is very excited and optimistic about the future of NABVETS Springfield Chapter #00102. He is pursuing opportunities to grow our membership and increase the Chapter’s exposure and service to the community through events such as the “Honoring Springfield’s Black Patriots” event which was held in February commemorating 400 years of African Americans in America while continuing to collaborate with other Veteran Service Organizations. Tony added, “The Springfield Chapter of NABVETS is a wonderful organization. We are local yet we have an impact on veteran’s services across the country as well as helping to create opportunities for veterans to help other veterans.”

Tony has always been involved in the community in one aspect or another and makes himself available to assist others in need. In the mid 90s he started the City Beat Magazine with Tammy Sharif, began producing local access TV in Rhode Island and created City Beat Multimedia Group in 2015. He participates in the promotion of events and provides computer assistance (hardware & software) to those who need it. Along with being the Springfield Chapter Commander of NABVETS, he is also the Vice President of the Mass Senior Citizens Action Council which advocates for the rights of senior citizens and he serves on the Board of “Art for the Soul Gallery.” ■



Milton Jones



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COMMUNITY

GOOD NEWS - MAY 2019



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

THANK YOU

- We want to thank the C-3 Policing for their support under the superb coordination of Richard Johnson, the Police Department, and Sergeant Williams.
- Thanks to the Black Men of Greater Springfield under the leadership of My-Ron Hatchett.
- We want to acknowledge the MassMutual initiative under the guidance of **Keshawn Dodds**.

CONGRATULATIONS

- **Congratulations** to the recipients of the 2019 Annual Human Relations Award from NCCJ, National Conference for Community and Justice, a human relations organization that promotes inclusion and acceptance by providing education and advocacy while building communities that are respectful and just for all. Delcie Bean IV, Chief Executive Officer Paragus Strategic IT
- **Jose L. Claudio**, Chief Operating Officer New North Citizens' Council, Inc.
- **Ethel Griffin**, Associate Director Revitalize Community Development Corporation
- **Susan Goldsmith**, President Marcus Printing
- **Glenn Welch**, President and CEO Freedom Credit Union.
- They will be honored at the Annual Human Relations Banquet on **Thursday, June 13, 2019 at 6 p.m. at the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame.**

100 WOMEN OF COLOR WHO BELIEVE, ACHIEVE AND INSPIRE

continued from page 1



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

There should be more said about the art of trailblazing. Acknowledging people who make, do, or discover something new and nurture it into acceptance or popularity is always a meaningful step in the right direction for growth in our culture. So much of our lives have been impacted by the work of trailblazers that I am persuaded to pause periodically and speak my gratitude for those who "paved a way" in a multitude of arenas that we now enjoy and hopefully never take for granted.

Trailblazer June Archer, President & CEO of Eleven28 Entertainment Group, is responsible for creating one of the most amazing recognition initiatives that occurs for women residing within the Connecticut and Western Massachusetts zip codes. In 2015, Mr. Archer and his team founded **100 Women of Color**, a platform designed to honor females



who have displayed a long-term commitment which has had a positive effect in our communities. A gala is planned each year at the Bushnell in Hartford. Hundreds of people gather to witness and support a selected 100 Women who have demonstrated, in their work and service to their communities, a desire to influence the next generation of positive thinkers.

Among the honorees this year, as listed in the event program, were a handful of ladies recognized as Massachusetts dwellers: Tasheena Davis, Yindra Dixon, Beatriz Gonzalez, Lynnette E. Johnson, Madeline Landrau, Trish Lyons, Lydia Martinez, Vanessa Otero, and Shayvonne Plummer. Most assuredly, as I extend my congratulations to all of the honorees, I'm taking this opportunity to send a spe-

cial "proud Mommy moment" out to my daughter Lynnette. Not only was she an honoree, but she performed a slam dunk spoken word presentation to a standing ovation. While Natalie Dorm and I watched and listened as audience members, I paused for a moment to thank and praise God for allowing such a true family blessing.

As the 100 Women of Color each walked across the stage in their finery and splendor, friends and family members cheered and applauded and, no doubt, felt the same pride as I did. We heard biographies that spoke to incredible accomplishments of women in business, education, entrepreneurship, entertainment, athletics, government and public service, creating a Who's Who list to span the ages.

Each year that I've attended the

gala, it has delivered more than expected. I was first introduced to the work of June Archer when I was selected as one of the 100 Women of Color for the inaugural celebration in 2015. (I'd like to

give a shout out to Natalie, Juanita Beamon, Minister Maureen Brown, Dawn Leaks, and Lynnette who were there as my cheering squad.) Since then, I've supported other participants who have been honored and I'm thrilled to welcome my daughter into this august alumni association of empowerment and achievement as she is inducted into the class of 2019.

The evening was but a moment in time; however, it will leave an indelible, lifetime memory for those honored and for their families and friends who bore witness to their acknowledgement. June Archer, thank you for the recognition you bestow each year on the 100 Women of Color for Believing, Achieving and Inspiring the next generation. ■

HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE NEWS

STCC, Elms College Collaborate on Pathway to Computer-related Degrees

continued from page 10

taining an associate degree from STCC. They will need to earn an associate degree with at least 60 credits, which typically takes two years. A total of 120 credits is needed for the bachelor's degree.

STCC and Elms have been partners in two of the pathways since 2016. The colleges have updated those agreements and created two new pathways to a bachelor's degree in from Elms in Computer Science or Computer Information Technology and Security.

"We are thankful for the opportunity to enter into a partnership with Elms College on

these pathways to technical careers," Cook said. "Students enrolled in these online programs have an affordable and convenient way to develop computer information technology and computer science-related skills and earn a bachelor's degree."

"Computer information technology and computer science are rapidly expanding fields with many employment opportunities for our region," Dumay said. "We are pleased to extend our partnership with Springfield Technical Community College beyond social work to put a new field of bachelor's degrees and rewarding careers within reach for local students."

STCC, Worcester State University Form Partnership for Urban Studies Program

SPRINGFIELD, MA – Beginning this fall, Springfield Technical Community College will offer a new urban studies program to prepare students for careers that can help the growth of gateway cities like Springfield and Worcester.

After graduating from the program, STCC students can transfer credits to Worcester State University where they can pursue a bachelor's degree in urban studies. Alternatively, STCC graduates can transfer to sociology baccalaureate programs offered at four-year colleges or universities in Massachusetts.

In a ceremony on April 5, STCC President John B. Cook and WSU President Barry M. Maloney signed an agreement creating a partnership between the schools.

"With appreciation to our talented faculty, it is

very exciting to now have an urban studies pathway with Worcester State University, which has a well-established program," Cook said. "With a Springfield to Worcester option, we are excited to offer Western Massachusetts students with an affordable way to develop skills that will transform their communities. This agreement with Worcester State is truly unique, and opens doors to an important set of career choices."

Maloney said, "We seek partnerships that align with our strategic mission which benefit the student and serve the community. This urban studies pathway accomplishes both."

As part of the agreement, students who enroll in the two-year urban studies program at STCC and earn their associate degree can transfer to Worcester



Elms College President Harry Dumay, Ph.D., MBA, left, and STCC College President John B. Cook, Ph.D., sign transfer agreements during a ceremony at STCC.



STCC President John B. Cook, left, and Worcester State University President Barry M. Maloney formally sign transfer agreements during a ceremony on April 5.

State. At WSU, students can pursue a bachelor's degree in urban studies, which typically takes two years. They will have the option to continue their education and pursue a master's degree, which typically takes one year in a 4 + 1 track.

New HCC Student-Mentoring Program

continued from page 10

make sure students get the support they need from a student's perspective."

Inside the SHOUTS office, books dangle from the ceiling. The walls are awash with bright colors and a time-management clock. A banner proclaims "Good Vibes."

There are two computer terminals and lots of comfortable chairs. The mentors are trained not just to answer questions but to provide practical and meaningful support, such as helping students log into Moodle (HCC's internal network), find their grades, upload a video or document for a class,

make an appointment with an adviser, or find their way to HCC's Writing, Math or Tutoring centers.

"They're not tutors. They're really navigators," said Roy. "They all go through training so they understand what their role is, what the special programs are on campus, and how they need to work with students so they make sure they're directing them to the right place."

SHOUTS mentors also offer moral support and guidance, as suggested by the preponderance of motivational phrases affixed to the walls, such as:

"Yes, you can."

"Work hard. Dream big."

"Change your words, change your mind."

The decor, Roy said, reflects the students' vision and ideas.

"If one student says to another, you can do it,

they're more likely to believe it," she said.

Many of the 16 current SHOUTS mentors started as mentees seeking support and guidance. At the open house, Roy singled out SHOUTS mentor Kiara Taylor of South Hadley.

"When she first came to the group, she was very shy," Roy said. "She really wouldn't say a peep. Now she's leading campus tours. She's an NSO (New Student Orientation) leader. She's talking to tons of students all the time."

Taylor agreed. "This group is actually what helped me establish myself," she said.

Now she's hoping to do the same for others. "For many, it's a lifetime connection to the college," said Roy. "A lot of mentees become mentors, so they pass it on." ■

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COMMUNITY CALENDAR – MAY 2019



*Jynai McDonald,
POV Community
Calendar Editor
Please submit your events
with attn: Jynai in the
subject line to
info@afampov.com*

May 2 (Thursday)

Dr. Bosworth Book Release: From Girl to Grown

Where: Elan Room
450 Memorial Drive
Chicopee, MA
When: 5:30PM–8:30PM

May 3 (Friday)

A Community Celebration of Springfield Arts & Culture – Galleries, artists, musicians, downtown dining discounts

Where: 1550 Main St., Spfld., MA
(mult. downtown locations)
When: 5PM–8PM – ***FREE**
Info: Karen@springfieldculture.org
or 413-337-1713

May 4 (Saturday)

First Time Homebuyers Workshop Hosted by Springfield Neighborhood Housing Services

Where: Springfield College
Locklin Hall
263 Alden St., Spfld., MA
When: 9AM–5PM – ***Regist. fee**
Info: 413-739-4737 ext. 100 or
www.springfieldnhs.org

May 4 (Saturday)

Women's Power Breakfast

Where: Wesley United
Methodist Church
741 State St., Spfld., MA
When: 9:30AM – **FREE**

May 4 (Saturday)

Square One Derby Party 2019

Where: Mercedes-Benz of Springfield
295 Burnett Road
Chicopee, MA
When: 5PM–8PM ; **Tickets:** \$50
Info: www.eventbrite.com

May 9 (Thursday) & May 10 (Friday)

Anti-Racism Workshop

Where: NCCJ Office
820 A Prospect Hill Road
Windsor, CT

When: 8:30AM–4:30PM

***Regist. fee \$300/person**

Info: bmood@nccj.org

May 11 (Saturday)

The SiStar's of Enganijyani Invites

You: Wellness Day Retreat

Where: 1464 Parker St., Spfld., MA
When: 11AM–5PM
Info: www.eventbrite.com

May 11 (Saturday)

Plant Sale & Gardener's Gathering

Where: Gardening the Community
200 Walnut St., Spfld., MA
When: 9AM–1PM
Info: as355258@wne.edu or
413-519-8438

May 11 (Saturday)

Ward 3 Dems 2019 Caucus for Convention

Where: Joseph P. Gentile Complex
85 William St., Spfld., MA
When: 10AM
Info: 413-788-7649 or
ilike2travel@comcast.net

May 11 (Saturday)

Ward 2 Dems 2019 Caucus for Convention

Where: Boland School
426 Armory St., Spfld., MA
When: 11AM
Info: 413-244-7947 or
spmull06@yahoo.com

May 11 (Saturday)

First Time Homebuyers Class

HUD-Certified & CHAPA Approved
Where: Springfield Partners for
Community Action
721 State St., Spfld., MA
When: 9:30AM–3PM – **FREE**
***Registration required**
Info: 413-263-6500 ext.6546

May 11 (Saturday)

Queenin' & Brunch'n – Adult Ensemble

Where: 971 E Columbus Avenue
Springfield, MA
When: 11AM–1PM – **Tickets:** \$25
Info: www.eventbrite.com

May 18 (Saturday)

Parent Villages "Education Matters" Scholarship Brunch

Where: La Quinta Inn & Suites
100 Congress St., Spfld., MA

When: 6PM–9PM; **Tickets:** \$20–\$65

Info: www.eventbrite.com

May 18 (Saturday)

3rd Annual Scholarship Fundraiser Scramble Golf Tournament

Where: Westover Golf Club
181 South St., Granby, MA
When: 12:30PM–7PM
Tickets: \$125/per golfer
\$35/non-golfer dinner
Info: www.eventbrite.com

May 18 (Saturday)

Ward 4 Dems 2019 Caucus for Convention

Where: Highland House
250 Oak Grove Ave.,
Spfld., MA
When: 10AM
Info: sophiajeffery@aol.com or
413-627-5711

May 18 (Saturday)

Ward 1 Dems 2019 Caucus for Convention

Where: Chestnut Middle School
355 Plainfield St., Spfld., MA
When: 10AM
Info: ivettehernandez33@hotmail.com
or 413-328-4141

May 19 (Sunday)

Step into Action w/ Delta Sigma Theta, Sorority, Inc. Springfield Alumnae Chapter

Where: Chez Josef
176 Shoemaker Lane
Agawam, MA
When: 12:30PM–4:30PM
Info: www.eventbrite.com

May 22 (Wednesday)

Junior League of Greater Springfield Annual Meeting "Developing the Potential of Women"

Where: Longmeadow Country Club
400 Shaker Road
Longmeadow, MA
When: 6:30PM–9PM

May 22 (Wednesday)

Ward 6 Dems 2019 Caucus for Convention

Where: Sumner Avenue

Elementary School
45 Sumner Ave., Spfld., MA

When: 6PM–8PM

Info: 413-335-2536 or
ward6demsspsd@gmail.com

May 2 – 4

STCC College Theatre Workshop to stage "Motherhood Out Loud"

Where: Springfield Technical
Community College
Scibelli Theater (Bldg. 2)
1 Amory St., Springfield, MA
When: 11AM (Thur) ; 7PM (Fri)
7PM (Sat)
Tickets: \$8/adults, \$5/students and
seniors
Info: 413-755-4233 or
cclaudio@stcc.edu or
pcodonoghue@stcc.edu

May 6 – 24

Job Readiness Training

Where: Springfield Technical
Community College
1 Armory St., Spfld., MA
When: 9AM–1PM – **FREE**
Info: 413-552-2936 or
413-552-2027

Tuesdays

Adult Basic Education & SNAP Path to Work Enrollment (GED/HiSET Classes)

Where: Training Resources of
America
32-34 Hampden St., Gnd Lvl
Springfield, MA
When: 11AM – **FREE**
Info: 413-732-2223 or
jmcdonald@tra-inc.org

Tuesdays

Mason Square C3 Community Engagement Initiative Working Together for a Safer Community

Where: Mason Square Branch Library
765 State St., Spfld., MA
When: 11AM – **FREE**
Info: 413-263-6853

*For more events
happening in the
community,
please visit our website
at www.afampov.com*

CONGRATULATIONS CORNER

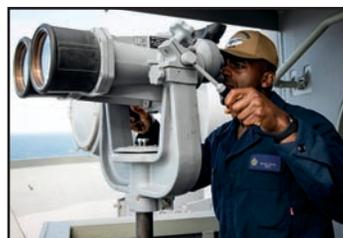


Congratulations to **Adam Abdelrahman**, HCC stu-

dent and Sudanese refugee, who will be honored May 3 at the State House in Boston as one of the “29 Who Shine,” an annual event that recognizes one student from each

of the 29 public colleges and universities in Massachusetts based on their academic achievements as well as their college and community service. The 23-year-old Springfield resident will graduate June 1 with high honors and his associate degree in criminal justice. Denise Roy, a learning specialist with HCC’s STRIVE student support program, will also receive an award that day in Boston as Abdelrahman’s staff mentor, whom he describes as a “second mom.” She in turn describes him as “heroic.” Abdelrahman witnessed his first murder at the age of six, two cousins shot by soldiers from the Sudanese army who attacked his village in Darfur. His family spent the next seven years living in a refugee camp where sickness and murder were all-too prevalent. “I lost a lot of family members and tribe members,” he says, including his grandfather, a local mayor. “I faced death many times too.” When he was 14, the family escaped, trudging for two weeks through the jungle to Khartoum, the capital of Sudan, before moving on to Cairo, Egypt, where they sought asylum through the United Nations. Three years later, the family – Adam, his mother, father and six younger siblings – were relocated to Springfield. Abdelrahman intends to study international law for his bachelor’s degree, then go to law school and work as a lawyer on issues relevant to refugees and

immigrants, possibly returning to the classroom as a professor.



Congratulations to **Seaman Devon Dixon**,

from Springfield, Mass., who looks through binoculars while standing forward

lookout aboard the aircraft carrier USS Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN 69). Ike is currently underway conducting flight deck certification during the basic phase of the Optimized Fleet Response Plan (OFRP). ATLANTIC OCEAN—April 8, 2019. U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Apprentice Trent P. Hawkins.



Congratulations to **Gloria Lopez** who was named

Westfield State’s new Vice President for Student Affairs following a national search. Dr. Lopez will oversee student affairs (campus center/wellness center, counseling

center, health services, student conduct, and student government), the Department of Athletics, the Career Center, Public Safety and the programmatic aspects of Residential Life. She is responsible for creating and maintaining an atmosphere that promotes the cultural, spiritual, social, and professional development of students, while enhancing the academic environment. She will assume her new role at Westfield State on June 28. Dr. Lopez joins West-

field State following her role as vice president for Student Affairs and dean of students at Hampshire College in Amherst. Prior to Hampshire College, she served as a senior level administrator at Northampton Community College in Pennsylvania and assistant dean of special programs at North Shore Community College in Lynn, Mass.



Congratulations to **Vanessa Otero** who was appointed

by Governor Charlie Baker to the eleven-member Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) Board. Ms. Otero, Chief Operating Officer at Part-

ners for Community, has led strategic planning, grant writing, program evaluation and risk management efforts. Since joining the organization in 2010 as a member of the executive team, her responsibilities have also included overseeing \$70 million in public and private grants and contracts. Previous to employment with Partners for Community, Ms. Otero held the position of Director, North End Campus Coalition. With the Coalition, Ms. Otero was responsible for developing and implementing community-based programming to address health indicators in the North End neighborhood of Springfield, organized stakeholders to engage community members and initiated policy development activities. Ms. Otero has a bachelor’s degree in Women’s Studies from Smith College, a master’s in Public Administration from the University of Massachusetts, and was a Massachusetts Institute of Technology Springfield Fellow in Urban Planning in 2012. ■

HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE NEWS



WESTFIELD, MA – The Westfield State University Art Department recently hosted an Empty Bowls Project, a soup serving event. For \$10, participants were able to enjoy a meal of soup prepared by the University’s on-campus catering service, Westfield State Dining Services. The event featured handmade clay bowls sold to raise money to promote awareness of hunger as an ongoing

Westfield State University Art Department Hosts Empty Bowls Project Event to Raise Hunger Awareness

issue. Those who attended also were able to select a handmade bowl to take home as a reminder of the hunger epidemic facing students, the local community, and nationwide.

The funds raised during the event benefited the F.A.C.E.S (Fostering a Culture of Empowerment and Success) program at Westfield State. F.A.C.E.S is an organization dedicated to supporting and empowering at-risk students to achieve their academic and career aspirations. The program serves current and former foster, homeless, or substitute care youth. The organization also provides affected students with access to stable housing, meals, and other basic needs in addition to financial, academic, and social/emotional aid.

The Empty Bowls Project is an international grass-roots organization established in 1990 dedi-

cated to fighting hunger. Co-founded by artists Lisa Blackburn and John Hartom, the organization aims to raise awareness for the fight against hunger.

Acting upon a suggestion by Lamis Jarvinen, Ph.D., director of the Westfield State University Center for Undergraduate Research and Creative Activity, the University’s Art Department Chair David Shapleigh took on the project. With Shapleigh’s support and leadership, Linda Siska, potter and adjunct professor of art, supervised the project in conjunction with her pottery course. Six sessions were held, inviting the campus community to make a bowl for the project. Some 150 bowls were created by approximately 50 individuals.

Musical entertainment for the event was provided by courtesy of Andrew Bonacci, chair of the Music Department. ■

The 2019 BusinessWest Difference Makers



Anthony Cignoli
Master of Ceremony



Joe Peters,
Vice Chairman
Former President
Universal Plastics



Carla Cosenzi,
Co-President
TommyCar Auto Group



Frederick and Marjorie Hurst
An African American
Point of View, LLC



The Springfield Museums
Kay Simpson,
President & CEO



Peter Gagliardi
President and CEO
Of Way Finders



**The Food Bank Of
Western Massachusetts**
Andrew Morehouse,
Executive Director

THANK YOU AND CONGRATULATIONS

- Congratulations to the 2019 Difference Makers.
- Thank you to BusinessWest for their acknowledgement of all of us.
- Thank you to Tony Cignoli who did a fantastic job pinch-hitting as Master of Ceremony in George O'Brien's absence.
- Thank you to our family and friends who joined us in the celebration.



Friends and family of Rick and Marjorie attend the BusinessWest Difference Makers celebration.

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