

Af-Am

# POINT OF VIEW

Our Community News Magazine

Your VOICE

Your COMMUNITY

Your POINT OF VIEW

www.afampov.com

august 1, 2020

## WHEN THE BUILDINGS STOP BURNING

"In the blink of an eye, white people were forced to realize the fragility of lives across racial lines."

By Dr. Bridgette Baldwin – 5

## BLACK LIVES MATTER

"We are living through a historic moment and helping our children stand up for what is right, to speak out against injustice and to value diversity..."

By Nicole Blais – 7

## BLACK LIVES MATTER RALLY

"For hundreds of years, Black people have been over policed, overrepresented in jails and prisons, and endured longer and harsher criminal sentences than people of other races."

By Hampden County Defenders – 8

## VOTE EVERY YEAR FOR EVERY SEAT...

"Young people who are just starting to vote cannot do what our generation did and stop voting after a few elections."

By Zaida Govan – 9

## GARDEN OF HOPE

Every plan to kill is fertilizer...for those who believe...that Black Lives Matter..."

By Renay Intisar Jihad – 10

## BLACK LIVES MATTER-TO WHOM?

"It's an enormous battle cry with years of injustice, inequality, and institutional racism behind it that everybody talking about it can't possibly know its depth..."

By Willette Johnson – 11

## PERCEPTIONS...

"I immediately noticed that the majority of passengers were unconsciously or consciously avoiding this one passenger. He was a young, African American man..."

By Zelmon Johnson – 17

## NO MENTHOL KNOW WHY.

"It's no coincidence that so many people of color smoke menthol – it's by design."

By Sara Moriarty – 18

## ANONYMOUS

"There is a lot of concern about how the Springfield Police Department treats minorities in the community and rightfully so."

By "Anonymous" – 25

# VOTE TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 1<sup>st</sup>

## PRIMARY TIME IS ELECTION TIME

By Frederick A. Hurst



Frederick A. Hurst

It's voting time again. And I don't mind reminding folks of their obligation to take a few minutes out of their day to fulfill their obligation to vote on September 1<sup>st</sup> for candidates of their choice. I must admit my frustration, however, at past low voter turnouts where the vote in communities of color was simply unforgivably low especially in primary elections.

Yet, I must admit, I understand how difficult it is to vote when voting so often yields so little from candidates who promise the moon and all but disappear after they are elected. It happens altogether too often.

vote is your voice. And if you do not exercise it, and are known not to exercise it, then you can forget about getting the attention of people in power or those who aspire to be in power. You simply won't count.

*continues to page 2*

### VOTE

**JOSEPH P. KENNEDY III**  
UNITED STATES SENATOR

**ALEX MORSE**

UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

**ADAM GOMEZ**

HAMPDEN STATE SENATOR

**DENISE HURST**

9<sup>th</sup> HAMPDEN DISTRICT STATE REPRESENTATIVE

**JACOB OLIVEIRA**

7<sup>th</sup> HAMPDEN DISTRICT STATE REPRESENTATIVE



Joseph P. Kennedy



Alex Morse



Adam Gomez



Denise Hurst



Jacob Oliveira

# VOTE TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 1<sup>st</sup>

## VOTE, TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 1<sup>ST</sup>

### Election Time

*continued from page 1*

The election on September 1<sup>st</sup> is the primary election which is more important than ever because the winners of the primaries of many election contests will automatically win in the November 3<sup>rd</sup> final election either because they have no November opposition or because their opponents are too weak to mount a serious challenge. So, if you put off voting until the final election, as altogether too many so often do, you will, in effect, waste your vote. Voting in the primary election is extremely important.

We at *Point of View* have some preferences who we urge you to vote for. For United States Senator we enthusiastically endorse Congressman Joseph P. Kennedy III who shows up and has demonstrated the compassion and understanding that makes for a good elected official. We equally as enthusiastically support Holyoke

Mayor Alex Morse for United States House of Representatives.

For State Senator in the Hampden District, we endorse City Councilor Adam Gomez, a long-time community activist who has spent several active years on the Springfield City Council. And for State Representative in the 9<sup>th</sup> Hampden District, we endorse Springfield School Committeewoman Denise Hurst whose broad experience, political activism and people skills will serve the people of the 9<sup>th</sup> Hampden District well. Likewise for the 7<sup>th</sup> Hampden District, we endorse candidate Jacob Oliveira whose record of public service is extensive.

Each of the candidates endorsed by *Point of View* has a distinguished background that makes each unequivocally qualified for the offices they seek. For more information, simply Google the name of each and you will

understand the reasons why they all have earned our respect and endorsements.

But an equally important reason for our endorsements is that our endorsees are fresh faces who have labored selflessly for years doing face-to-face good things for people in their districts. We believe that they will not forget where they come from and whom they serve, which altogether too many incumbents often do.

Two serve on school committees (Denise Hurst and Jacob Oliveira) where the work is hard and the accolades few. One serves as a city councilor (Adam Gomez) who has no qualms fighting against the status quo for the good of his constituents. Another, Alex Morse, is the effective mayor of one of the more challenging cities in the Commonwealth. And, Joseph P. Kennedy III is well known for his hardcore, unassuming approach to service in Congress and his constant contact with the people in

his district while his primary opponent is more known for his absence. We think our choices will all bring necessary new life to both state and federal government and we urge you to vote for them.

We want to re-emphasize the importance of voting in the September 1<sup>st</sup> primary. If Adam Gomez and Denise Hurst win their respective contests, they will automatically win office because they have no opposition in the November elections. If Joseph P. Kennedy III wins his primary Senate contest, he will coast to victory in November as will Alex Morse if he wins. So don't forget to vote on September 1<sup>st</sup>. Jacob Oliveira's opponent in the September primary dropped out of the race but he will face a Republican opponent in November.

There are other primary races but these are the ones we chose to focus on and we hope you will do the same. ■

## NOT VOTING IS NOT AN OPTION

### John Lewis Made America a More Perfect Union

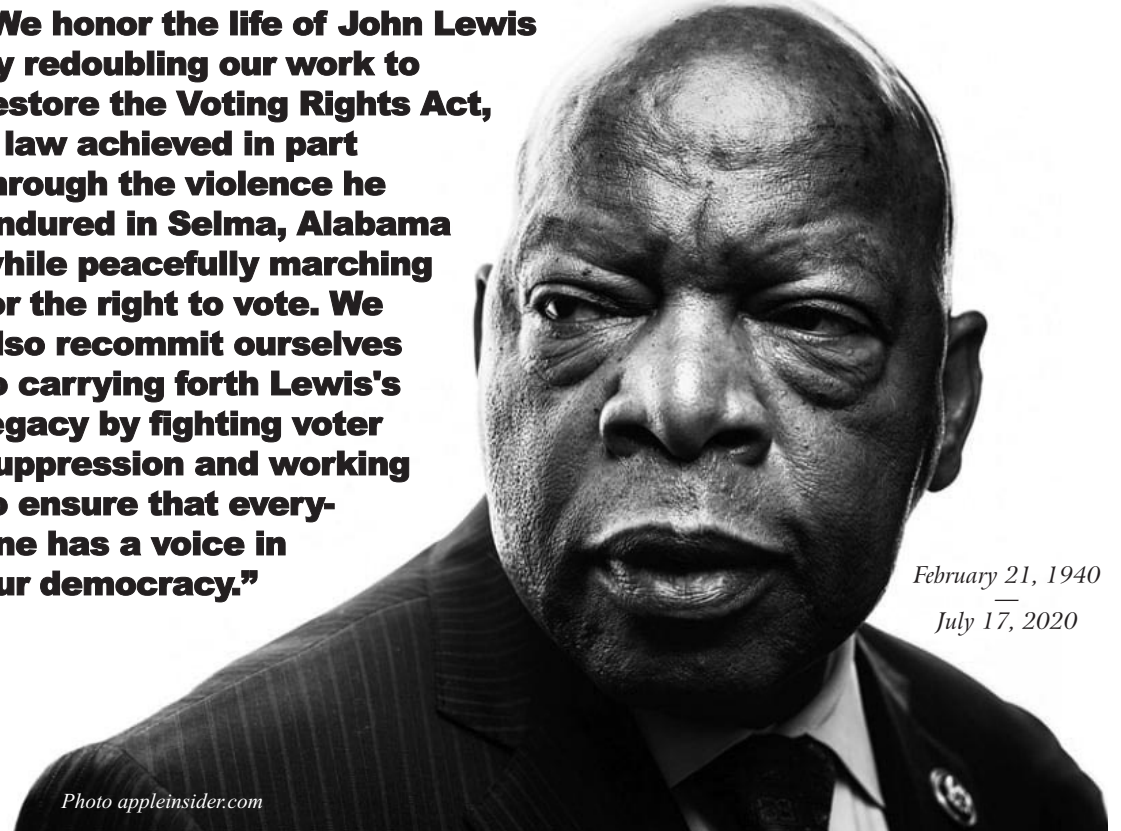
WASHINGTON, DC – July 18, 2020 – The nation awakes to the overwhelmingly sad news that Congressman John Lewis of Georgia, a champion for democracy and civil rights, has passed. The following is a statement from Kristen Clarke, president and executive director of the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law:

"From marching in the streets to fighting in the halls of Congress, John Lewis literally dedicated his life to the project of making American democracy stronger, more open and equal to all. Because of his sacrifice, Black people have had greater access to the ballot and have had the ability to serve in elected office at every level in our country. He was fearless, tireless and a dedicated voice of conscience for Congress and the nation. The world has lost one of its most enduring voices on civil and human rights.

#### **Background:**

*In 2017, the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law honored John Lewis with the organization's highest award, its Robert F. Kennedy Justice Prize. While accepting the award, Congressman Lewis said, "When you see something that's not right, not just, you have to stand up. You have to speak out. And you have to get in the way."*

**"We honor the life of John Lewis by redoubling our work to restore the Voting Rights Act, a law achieved in part through the violence he endured in Selma, Alabama while peacefully marching for the right to vote. We also recommit ourselves to carrying forth Lewis's legacy by fighting voter suppression and working to ensure that everyone has a voice in our democracy."**



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AN AFRICAN AMERICAN *Point of View*

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## LOCATE OUR ADVERTISERS

Alden Baptist Church -----	27	Mt. Zion Baptist Church-----	27
Alex Morse for Congress -----	9	New Jerusalem C.O.G.I.C. -----	27
Alterations & Dressmaking by Lewins-----	12	Progressive Community Baptist Church -----	27
Arise for Social Justice -----	15	Real Living Realty Prof. – Roberta B. Johnson--	39
Bright Futures Early Learning Center -----	35	Revival Time Evangelistic Center -----	27
Canaan Baptist Church of Christ -----	27	Shiloh Seventh-Day Adventist Church -----	27
Center for Human Development (CHD) -----	31	Solid Rock Community Baptist Church-----	27
Committee to Elect Denise Hurst for State Rep-----	5	Springfield Public Schools--We are Hiring!-----	12
Ed Cohen Photography -----	35	Springfield Technical Community College-----	36
Family Church -----	27	St. John’s Congregational Church -----	27
HCS Head Start, Inc. -----	7	Third Baptist Church-----	27
Home Inspections by Marco, Inc. -----	39	Visionary Realty, LLC - Seneca Slaughter -----	39
Hurst & Hurst, P.C. -----	39	WEIB 106.3 Smooth FM-----	34
Keller Williams Realty - Brandi Gamble -----	39	Wesley United Methodist Church-----	27
MBC Realtors, LLC - Migdalia Khatib -----	39	WTCC FM 90.7 -----	30
Maplegate Rehab Inc.-----	19	Zion Community Baptist Church -----	27
Mason Wright Senior Living -----	11		
Mount Calvary Baptist Church -----	27		

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## CLASSIFIED/REAL ESTATE PROFESSIONALS .....39

## COMMUNITY

Community Beat .....	17
Community Calendar .....	39
Community Information .....	13,15,16
Community Perspectives .....	6
Congratulations .....	34-38
Connecticut Community Focus.....	22
Food for Thought .....	9
From the Springfield City Council .....	14
Good News.....	31
Law Notes .....	23
Leadership Pioneer Valley.....	11

## EDITORIAL

AF-AM Newsbits .....	4
Letters to the Publisher .....	24,25
My View .....	24
Op Ed .....	17,25

## EDUCATION

Early Education & Care.....	7
Education & Hope.....	12

## FEATURES

John Lewis by Lawyers' Comm. for Civil Rights Under Law ....	2
When the Buildings Stop Burning by Dr. Bridgette Baldwin.....	5
Black Lives Matter Rally .....	8
Black Lives Matter–To Whom by Willette Johnson .....	11
The MLK Jr. Family Services, Inc.-Part II by Ed Cohen.....	32

## HEALTH

Health Matters.....	18
Your Health - Baystate Medical Center .....	1-19

## LIVING

Got H.E.R.S. ....15

## PHOTO GALLERY

## RELIGION

## RELIGION

Religious Point of View .....26

Religious Directory.....27

## THE ARTS

Artist in Residence .....	28
Children's Book Corner .....	28
Entertainment Review .....	30
Pen & Ink .....	10, 29

**VOTE**    **VOTE**    **VOTE**    **VOTE**   

**LAST DAY TO REGISTER TO VOTE FOR SEPTEMBER 1<sup>ST</sup>  
PRIMARY IS SATURDAY, AUGUST 22<sup>ND</sup>**

# AF-AM NEWS bits

By Frederick A. Hurst

## A DEVASTATING REPORT

If you still need to understand why the Springfield Police Department, like many around the country, is being castigated for its treatment of Black and Brown people, you need only read the United States Justice Department's 28 page report on its investigation of the department's Narcotics Bureau. It is a powerful testimonial to the blatant, regular, random and institutionalized violence against Springfield's Black and Brown residents that extends – the report found – well beyond the Narcotics Bureau as a regular part of the culture of the entire Springfield Police Department. The report leaves no doubt that we who are critics of the department have been absolutely correct in our conclusions that the rot is much deeper than “a few bad cops” and will only be corrected by a wholesale reformation of the manner in which policing is conducted in Springfield. And the proposed comprehensive state law passed by the state Senate would be a good start because it appears that it won't happen on the local level. (See full report at <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/justice-department-announces-findings-investigation-narcotics-bureau-springfield>)

## NATHAN BILL RESTAURANT HAS SHOWN ITSELF TO BE A RACIST CANCER IN SPRINGFIELD

One would think that the owners of Nathan Bill Restaurant on Island Pond Road would have learned a lesson from recent events in which two of its owners are under indictment for assisting the five White police officers for assaulting four of its Black patrons, especially after the recent demonstration outside of its location in protest of the rehiring by Mayor Sarno and Commissioner Clapprood of five police officers indicted for helping to cover up the investigation into the incident. A recent racist posting on social media suggests they haven't learned anything. Not only was the posting a confirmation of their racist orientation and a cause for another demonstration but it also showed their ignorance of the state Public Accommodations Law that makes it illegal to discriminate against people because of their race. The restaurant posted new rules describing people who would be banned from the property based upon their dress and appearance that were clearly directed at a Black and Brown audience. The owners probably considered themselves clever by not expressly stating their intent to discriminate but by masking their racial intent in neutral language. But that only shows their ignorance of the law regarding “pretext” and “disparate impact,” which penetrates such duplicity. Whether or not they continue to cater to police clientele, who seem to like beating up on Black and Brown people, they

should also keep a lawyer on hand whom they might pay with the thousands of dollars in Community Development Block Grant money the city gave Nathan Bill even while its owners remained under indictment.

## WHAT IS THAT ALL ABOUT?

The Springfield City Council cut \$800,000 out of the city budget that was intended for a firing range for city police. The \$800,000 was the city's first payment on a 20-year lease for a building that was purchased from Smith and Wesson by a private group for less than \$800,000. To make the record clear, the city entered into the lease to pay \$800,000 for each of the next 20 years without informing the city council, which had to approve the first payment as part of the annual budget and will be required to approve each of the remaining nineteen payments each year. After purchasing the building, the buyers made substantial contributions to Mayor Sarno's campaign before the contract with the city was signed. The rationale for entering into a contract that will eventually cost the city \$16 million dollars was that the buyers had to spend several million dollars to renovate the building. Nevertheless, given the numbers, no mathematical calculation can justify such a lopsided deal and the council was right to cut it out of the police budget. (See pg. 14)

## WAS IT RIGHT OR WAS IT SPITE?

I couldn't help but suspect that Springfield police Commissioner Cheryl Clapprood terminated police detective Florisa Fuentes out of spite after she reposted her niece's participation in a Black Lives Matter protest on Facebook. Unfortunately, her niece was holding a sign containing an anti-police slogan. When Fuentes began receiving angry calls from fellow officers, she immediately removed the post and apologized profusely explaining (very credibly) that her intent was to highlight her niece's activism and not to insult police. The 30-year-old Fuentes grew up in Springfield's North End neighborhood and joined the police department last year and succeeded in advancing to detective before the end of her first year. Although her post was not directed at her fellow officers, she was instantly terminated by the commissioner who had recently come under criticism by Black and Hispanic councilors. Commissioner Clapprood's petulance has been on display before and it is not unfair to suspect that her instant termination of Fuentes for an innocent mistake, while coddling other officers who have committed far more serious intentional offenses, was an act of spite. Springfield Mayor Domenic Sarno typically defended Commissioner Clapprood saying, “I concur with Police Commissioner Cheryl Clapprood's decision...” Of course, he was equally as dogmatic in support of Clapprood's recent decision to

rehire five officers who were under indictment. That didn't work out too well.

## CLAPPROOD/SARNO/MOSS RULES

Because of a social media posting on Facebook, the Springfield Police Department revoked Kashawn Harris' gun license and confiscated his two guns without as much as a hearing. Harris is a well known DJ who runs a business called DJ Boogy Entertainment. He obtained a license to carry and purchased two guns because he travels to many different venues with very expensive equipment often very late at night...guns he had never even fired before except once at a firing range. Some of his postings were of old iconic photographs of armed Black Panthers, photos that are very public and have been viewed by millions and millions of people for years and years... “vintage” photos as described in an article in *The Republican* (July 8, 2020). He posted other comments that might have been insulting to some but nothing that would be outside of his constitutional right to free speech and nothing that would justify the cancelation of his license to carry or the confiscation of his guns...except, it seems, in the minds of the police, his blackness. But Harris protested. And things happened, including inquiries made to the Commissioner as to police policy by some concerned elected officials that remained unanswered...that is until in the same article, Mayor Sarno, who inaccurately dramatized the postings as a threat on him and his family, became involved in a puzzling way that nobody will fully understand. Part of his comment was, “Police officials followed their usual procedures in this matter and to the best of my knowledge this matter has been resolved.” Oh, yeah! Resolved how? Well, the mayor's aide, Darryl Moss, called the executive aide to Commissioner Clapprood and informed him/her that he was coming to the station with Harris to retrieve his license and guns, which he did. Just like that! In spite of the fact that, by law, Mr. Harris was required to file an appeal before a judge within 90 days of the revocation. Somebody, or maybe everybody in their official capacity broke the law... the mayor, Domenic Sarno, if he ordered his aide, Darryl Moss, to use his political clout or Darryl Moss if he acted without the mayor's instructions, Clapprood's executive aide if he/she acted on his/her own or Commissioner Clapprood if she gave the okay to reverse the revocation without following proper procedure. We'll never know quite what happened because nobody's talking. But one thing we do know, if Kashawn Harris had not been wrongfully targeted in first place, none of this keystone cop foolishness would have happened.

## MAYBE, JUST MAYBE, THINGS ARE CHANGING FOR THE BETTER

I am trying so hard not to be cynical about current events suggesting that “racial reckoning” is really

*continues to page 24*



## FEATURE ARTICLE

# When the Buildings Stop Burning

## Corporate America in the Wake of the BLM Movement

By Dr. Bridgette Baldwin, Professor of Law, Western New England University School of Law



**Dr. Bridgette Baldwin**

**W**e must recognize that blacks have been utilizing popular culture to explore issues of racial justice and democratic possibility since the rise of this medium. But even in the most recent history, things ranging from Young Jeezy's "My President" after the inauguration of Obama to "#OscarsSoWhite" campaign have existed. What I think is critically prescient right now is that the global pandemic has created a relative sense of parity or at least empathy. In the blink of an eye, white people were forced to realize the fragility of lives across racial lines.

Let's be clear, the proliferation of camera phones and social media has widely circulated the "tragedy porn" of black death before. Sandra Bland died in police custody after being arrested for

refusing to put out her cigarette. And Minnesota officers killed Philando Castille even after he told them he was a registered gun owner on tape. But after Covid-19, things were different. In an instant, people had lost their jobs, workers were in food lines, citizens faced state-sanctioned lock downs. Americans were forced to confront just a fraction of what it means to be black in America. And then with nowhere to go, they couldn't look away from the 8 minute and 46 second clip of George Floyd's life being snuffed out by the knee of a state agent who was charged with serving the public. All of a sudden after years of attacking Colin Kaepernick, people began to see why he took a knee. And then there was Ahmaud Arbery and Breonna Taylor and Christian

Cooper and Rayshard Brooks and on and on and on.

A nationwide reckoning with the ravages of racial oppression has impacted our popular culture. It has even touched the top offices in our cultural institutions. Corporate America began to flash "Black Lives Matters" across their website masts; soccer players across the world began to take a knee; and everyday Americans started asking questions about this "strange new event called Juneteenth," going as far as to recommend it become a national holiday. So, in this brief recounting of the last month we could walk away assuming there has been a drastic change in our popular culture. However, with all of these popular culture landmarks, the regressive counter position holds fast.

For every Colin Kaepernick, there is a Candace Owens. For every Juneteenth, there is a Trump rally in Tulsa without any regard for social distancing or health care. For every Nascar ban on the confederate flag, there is a private plane flying over head with a confederate banner that reads "defund Nascar." There are no guaranteed victories here—popular culture remains a site of struggle.

And when it came to the global pandemic, black cultural commentators were clear: our current administration was okay with the quarantine until they found out the health crisis was disproportionately impacting black people at a higher ratio than white Americans.

*continues to page 13*



Denise is a long-standing advocate for:

- 1.) Quality Public Schools and Affordable Higher Education
- 2.) Mental Health and Substance-Use Treatment
- 3.) Scaling our Infrastructure and Community Revitalization
- 4.) Workforce Opportunities and Economic Development

These are the pillars of a great leader and your next State Representative.

**Be sure to Vote Hurst on September 1st!**

## #BeHeardWithHurst

*"You don't make progress by standing on the sidelines... You make progress by implementing ideas" -Shirley Chisholm*

## COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

# An Open Letter to Springfield Police Commissioner Cheryl Clapprood

*Dear Commissioner Clapprood,*

I have been on the forefront of the fight for justice in the city of Springfield, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and across the nation for the better part of 30 years. I have worked diligently on advocating for police reform, voting rights, access to health care, women's rights, political reform, and criminal justice reform to name a few. From pushing for the divestment of the University of Massachusetts out of apartheid South Africa as a student to being an integral part of the coalition that brought about ward representation in Springfield, my entire adult life has been a long string of efforts to bring about justice and to bring into existence the beloved community espoused by Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

My efforts have come at a great sacrifice. As you are well aware, I consistently receive death threats and threats of bodily harm as there are currently ongoing investigations by your department and the FBI. My family has been threatened. I have been profiled by our local police department and have received hateful communications from them. My children have had opportunities denied because those in decision making positions have disagreed with stances taken by their father. I make no complaints about the indignities I have suffered because I understand they come with the territory of being a freedom fighter and a warrior for social justice.

I have worked to better police community relations in Springfield my entire adult life. Those efforts have often resulted in strained relations with mayors and police chiefs/commissioners who were uncomfortable with my uncompromising positions and penchant for brutal honesty when it comes to police brutality/misconduct, white supremacy, racism, and anti Black bigotry. Again, that comes with the territory. I worked with your predecessors John Barbieri, William Fitchet, Edward Flynn, Paula Meara, Daniel Spellacy, and Ernest Stelzer. While we never fully agreed on matters regarding police/community relations, there was a mutual respect regarding the very different roles we played in the community.

As a local pastor, jurisdictional bishop of the largest African American Pentecostal denomination in America, and the president of the Greater Springfield NAACP, I represent the interests and speak the sentiments of thousands of constituents in our city and across the region and nation. I'm convinced that how you handle an individual also speaks volumes about what you think about the people the individual represents.

I was somewhat taken aback by your public declarations to a group of residents who interacted with you at the police department to express their concerns regarding police accountability. During that discussion, the topic of building trust came up. You took that as an opportunity to slander my efforts and paint me as a problematic leader who's not 'helping to bridge the gap' between the community and the police. While you have the right to your opinion, venting your obvious frustration with my advocacy for accountability was unprofessional, counterproductive, and divisive.

I'm not the problem, corruption within the department you lead is the problem. I'm not the problem, reinstating rogue cops under indictment for lying on police reports to cover up a crime is the problem. I'm not the problem, lack of true civilian oversight is the problem. I'm not the problem, police who lie on police reports and Brady cops kept on the force are the problem. I'm not the problem, cops who threaten to crush the skulls of suspects during interrogations are the problem. I'm not the problem, cops who push 15-year-old Black boys into traffic, causing their deaths are the problem. I'm not the problem, a lack of accountability and a nepotic relationship between the police department and the district attorney's office is the problem.

It seems that blaming community leaders was a natural progression for you in the videotaped conversation. Yet, you took no responsibility for any of the concerns the residents brought to you. You blamed me for 'creating my own narrative and twisting' what the police are trying to do.

I ask you Commissioner Clapprood, what did I twist? What narrative did I 'create'?

Did off duty police beat 4 Black men at Nathan Bill? YES

Did on duty police lie on police reports to cover up the crime? YES

Did the police collude to ensure no charges would be filed against the officers by the DA? YES

Is the only reason the 14 current and former officers got charged because Attorney General Maura Healy launched an investigation and indicted the cops involved? YES

Did you reinstate 5 cops under criminal indictment for falsifying police reports to cover up a crime? YES

Did you defend the reckless decision to reinstate the officers? YES

Did you and the mayor ignore pleas from the city council, Urban league, NAACP, FBI, and the community to re-suspend the officers? YES

Did you and the mayor agree to participate in a digital town hall on police accountability sponsored by the Pioneer Valley Project and the NAACP? YES

Did you and the mayor pull out of your commitment to participate in our digital town hall and subsequently plan one where you could control who was invited, who could speak, the agenda, etc? YES

Did the police and the mayor attempt to spin a protest we planned at Nathan Bill as potentially nonpeaceful? YES

Did the police instruct the city's towing contractor to tow cars from Nathan Bill in an attempt to disrupt our protest? YES

Did the mayor request the officers be re-suspended only after tremendous community pressure and the climate of civil unrest in the nation? YES

Did you claim to support the mayor's request to re-suspend the officers, yet defend your original decision to reinstate them? YES

Do we have a problem with police officers who lie on police reports and Brady cops on the force? YES

Is there a problem with trust between the Black community and the police that has been exacerbated by the recent actions of reinstating and seemingly protecting indicted police officers? YES

Did the department suspend Officer Bigda for 60 days (a slap on the wrist) for threatening to murder a Latino suspect during an interrogation? YES

Is the only reason Bigda is facing accountability because of a federal indictment after your department failed to properly discipline him and investigate his crime so charges could be filed by the district attorney? YES

Did the same department that failed to initially fire Bigda or fire the 5 officers currently under indictment that it reinstated, recently fire a Latino officer for a social media post supporting Black Lives Matter (a far less egregious infraction than those of the officers protected by your department)? YES

Where is the spun narrative, Commissioner? Where is the lie?

The only way police/community relations can be improved in our city is by mutual respect and honest dialogue. You have my personal number and I have yours. You've been invited to my church to address the community on more than one occasion. If at any time you have concerns with my 'narrative' or want to provide information that will clarify matters, you're free to contact me directly.

Until we meet again, Be blessed.

Bishop Talbert W. Swan, II  
Senior Pastor, Spring of Hope Church of God in Christ  
President, Greater Springfield NAACP  
July 2, 2020



# EDUCATION

## EARLY EDUCATION & CARE



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# Black Lives Matter

By Nicole Blais

**B**lack Lives Matter. It is an affirmation and a movement that HCS Head Start fully supports. We will continue to make sure that children feel safe, feel seen and feel secure when they are in our care.

As adults, processing the current events that have transpired over the last several weeks has been difficult, to say the least. If we are parenting, how do we help our little ones make sense of what is happening in the world around them?

Children need to feel safe and be offered a space to talk about the images they may see on television or the

words they may hear when adults discuss current events within earshot. Check in with your preschooler and ask if they have any questions about what is going on and reassure them that they are safe at home with you. Different families will be having different conversations but making room for those discussions will be important for your child. As children get older, the complexities of these topics can be further explored but for little ones, breaking it down into developmentally appropriate bite-sized pieces will be helpful. For example, talks around fairness, being a good friend and helping each other are concepts that preschoolers can make connections to topics such as racism, equity and social justice.

We know that Head Start is most effective when the systems and services in place support the cultural diversity of enrolled families. Moreover, we know that individual staff members must be able to demonstrate their respect for and respond to the different cultures in their communities and among their co-workers. This is the work that needs to be done to support our children, their families and the communities in which we live. Our diversity is our strength and it is a value that anchors us as an organization. We hold on to the *Multicultural Principles for Head Start Programs Serving Children Ages Birth to Five*, that asserts:

- Children need the cultural identi-

ties of their families to be recognized and honored.

- Children need to learn a variety of skills in order to function effectively in a diverse society.
- Children have the right to grow up in environments where differences are expected and respected.

We are living through a historic moment and helping our children stand up for what is right, to speak out against injustice and to value diversity is the work we will continue to do in our classrooms. Head Start's diversity and inclusion is its strength, and we stand in solidarity with our Black families, staff, colleagues, and friends. ■



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# COMMUNITY

## BLACK LIVES MATTER RALLY



*Speaker Joe Smith III, a criminal defense and civil rights attorney.*

*The Black Lives Matter Rally was organized and led by criminal defense lawyers, legal aid workers, social workers, and community-based organizations.*

**SPRINGFIELD, MA – July 13, 2020** – The Hampden County Defenders will hold a Black Lives Matter rally in Court Square in Springfield, Massachusetts at 1:00 p.m. The march is organized and led by criminal defense lawyers, legal aid workers, social workers, and community-based organizations. Speakers will include Allison Wright, a public defender in Springfield; Joe Smith III, a criminal defense and civil rights attorney; Rose Webster-Smith, a community organizer with Springfield No One Leaves; Kedar Ismail, a criminal defense attorney, and others.

While courts across the Commonwealth will reopen to the public on July 13, members of the legal community understand that there is no returning to the racist status quo; that Black Lives Matter must live on in the work that goes on inside and outside of the courthouse. This reopening takes place amid a global pandemic that continues to worsen in the United States and disproportionately harm people of color. According to the CDC, American Indian, Black people, and Latinx people are hospitalized for Coronavirus at rates 4 to 5 times that of nonhispanic whites. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/racial-ethnic-minorities.html>.

The disproportionate effect of COVID-19 is nothing new for Black people. Rather, it is precisely the outcome one could expect from a racist court system that all but ensures difficult living conditions and health outcomes. For hundreds of



years, Black people have been over policed, over represented in jails and prisons, and endured longer and harsher criminal sentences than people of other races. The outpouring of Black Lives Matter protests around the world goes beyond combating racist policing and beyond the demand for accountability of the murders of people like George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and Tony McDade. It is a call demanding for real and meaningful change in the criminal system, in healthcare, in education, employment, and housing.

As the largest court in Hampden County, the Springfield Hall of Justice is center stage to where

this meaningful change can happen. This rally reminds members of the legal community that as the courts restart the wheels of justice, those wheels cannot continue to grind down the lives of Black people. Rather, each party in the legal community must be held accountable for their share of responsibility for the racist system, and push for change in every courtroom.

July 13 marks a new day. A day where courts must never go back to a racially biased and oppressive system that disproportionately harms, kills, and destroys the lives of Black and Brown people. ■



COMMUNITY

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Vote Every Year For Every Seat

Until The System Changes

By Zaida Govan



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

It’s been over 200 years since slavery ended and over 50 years since Martin Luther King, Jr. marched in Selma. So whenever I hear that there is a “first Black man” or the “first Latina woman” doing something, I get enraged all over again. Of course, I am happy for them and very proud. But in 2020!?

Some people complain about affirmative action because they feel it gives an unfair advantage to people of color (POC). Announcing the first POC in 2020 proves affirmative action continues to be only partly successful. I heard a statistic the other day that said of all the Fortune 500 companies, 7 out of 10 are run by White men. There have been only 18 Black men since 1999 and currently there are only 2 Latina women running them. Those are facts not my opinion. My conclusion is that White people, specifically White men, have their own affirmative action advantage. They benefit from a system set up to help them succeed. They have friends and family who have benefited fully from this system for 401 years. They have been allowed to buy property and own things. POC weren’t allowed to buy property until the late 1960s.

Black Wall Street was burned down in 1921 because White men were afraid of POC’s successes. This system continues to be in place and is made stronger by the policies that say we (the economic system) don’t have to pay women the same amount we pay men. We don’t have to pay Black or Brown people the same amount we pay White people. There are policies that allow for this because there are no policies that say

we can’t. The last real POTUS tried to equal the playing field with the Ledbetter Act; however, why did we need to do that in 2009? Because we still don’t have equality among POC.

The legislators at the federal level believe it’s ok to have a minimum wage of \$7.25 an hour. Many states are fighting for \$15 an hour even though you can’t live on that working full time. You would not be able to pay for housing, transportation, healthcare, and food for one person on those wages. Meanwhile, big corporations paying \$15 an hour to their employees are raking in millions in profits and paying little to no federal taxes. But we attack someone who works at McDonalds and earns \$15 an hour because we have a degree and are making not much more than they are. Instead of looking at each other, we should be looking to big corporations and demanding that they pay living wages and their fair share of taxes. They must take good care of their employees who are creating all that wealth for them.

Sadly, most major corporations in this situation will not “do the right thing” on their own. Therefore, we have to legislate that they “do the right thing.” The only way we are going to do that and the only way this is going to change is if we elect policy makers who have you and me at the center of their platforms instead of big corporations and systems. I’m not talking about just one election and one political seat. No, you have to vote in EVERY election EVERY year for the next 20 or 30 years. Young people who are just starting to vote cannot do what our generation did and stop voting after a few elections. They have to continue to resist and one day they will have the future they deserve. Elections have consequences. Vote every year for every seat until the system changes. ■

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— JUSTIN HURST  
CITY COUNCIL PRESIDENT  
SPRINGFIELD

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## PEN &amp; INK

## Garden Of Hope

By Renay Intisar Jihad

City grounds around dusk  
 Freshly grown protests to toil  
 Blades of people, faces  
 green, yellow, red, white,  
 black, brown, and blue  
 Emotions run high  
 amongst each of you

Activists rally on the  
 farm of possibility  
 to produce change  
 They harvest the fruit of their labor  
 to breed a call to reform

Meanwhile, dead pests dump  
 bricks to field unrest and turmoil  
 but nobody can sap  
 the life out of this sacred crop

Copped cropped barbed barriers  
 drive to abort budding stems  
 Truth's birthroot anchors  
 the committed; they store  
 energy from the sun's rays  
 Moonlight fuels destiny  
 and activists land a win



Photo submitted by Koshu Kunii

Protestors refuse to bend, wilt,  
 or perish under the weight  
 of a four-hundred-year-old  
 chokehold crying, "Let us breathe.  
 Give us space. Give us air."

Their posture is a stance  
 they must make  
 They know that no one  
 can mow their garden down  
 Nurtured by the root  
 of ancestral soil,  
 they kneel on a perennial stake

No one can poison the earth  
 on which their garden stands  
 Sprouts encrusted by nature's instinct  
 is intuition born out of the  
 dusty origin of ancient dirt and clay

On the Appointed Day  
 justice will alter what  
 hatred has housed  
 Water will douse what  
 history has refused to prune



Photo submitted by Gayatri Malhotra

Even as winds blow  
 fragile seedlings to the sky,  
 and rain drowns  
 frail roots in this fight,  
 potent spores anchor  
 and bloom, not die  
 Brazen hearts continue  
 to sustain this war

While hailstones may pounce  
 on infinite infantile forms  
 leaving a trail of innocent saplings  
 and withered weeds,  
 these spirited ones warn us –  
 "Earth's underworld bleeds  
 The soul of the plant pleads  
 We will answer the call  
 of those in need"

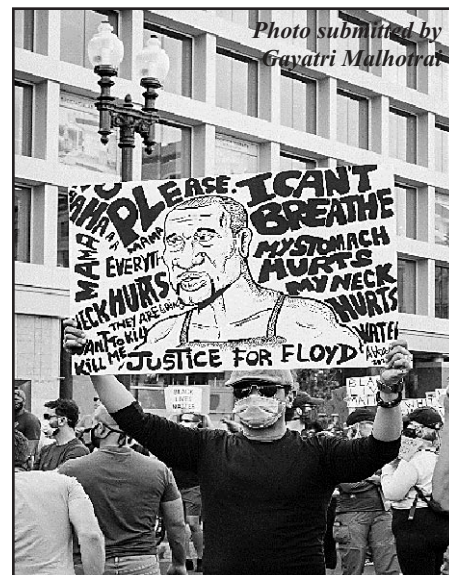


Photo submitted by Gayatri Malhotra

The stone-hearted scatter  
 like blowing graveled debris  
 sowing pits of dissension  
 intent to degrade the  
 movement's increase

Every plan to kill is fertilizer  
 for those who believe  
 that Black Lives Matter—  
 A final decree  
 yelled in the gardens of the world



Renay Intisar Jihad

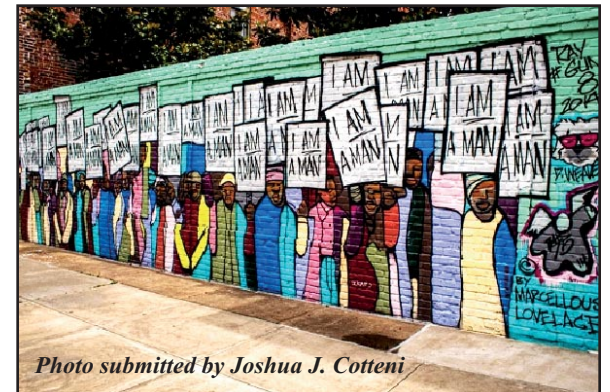


Photo submitted by Joshua J. Cotteni

Everyone understands  
 Everyone can see  
 Stiff-necked stalks reject  
 bowing to their barren appetite  
 Even they can see that  
 buried within the unseen  
 is a birthing of pure light

Now is our season – Intend!  
 Now is our season – Sow!  
 Now is our season – Reap!  
 Our harvest will thrive  
 The result of our labor is our crowning prize.

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VOTE



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# COMMUNITY

## LEADERSHIP PIONEER VALLEY

### Masked Leadership

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](http://www.leadershippv.org)

I don't have to tell you that this summer is like no other that I've ever experienced. Thoughts of vacation have evaporated while many of us continue to work at home. Businesses are beginning to reopen while others haven't survived. My kids are at home 24/7 and complaining about how bored they are. There are very few summer camps open and we're not sure that we want to take the risk anyway. Meanwhile the rest of the country is dealing with a virus surge that makes the spring in the Northeast look like a picnic. All while our national leaders are showing little leadership.

I grew up in the Midwest with a tough-it-out mindset in the time before seat belts and helmets. I'll admit that I initially thought "how bad can the coronavirus be, the flu kills thousands every year." My mindset quickly changed when I looked at the data and the exponential growth of cases and death rates. As leaders we are often presented with contradictory information and changing circumstances. We have to set our own preconceived notions aside. The "reasonable" leader must work to make sense of changing reality and change course when necessary. It is not a sign of weakness to change course, especially when lives are at risk. Yet too many governors are reluctant to change in light of a new reality. They don't want to look indecisive or weak. Yet that thinking is literally killing people.

Before the state began requiring masks, our local mayor put out a

proclamation for mandatory mask wearing. There was definitely some resistance, but our mayor and her staff make a point to always wear masks. Recent data confirms that states with mandatory mask orders decreased the curve faster and have continued to keep infections low. California took early stay at home precautions, like Massachusetts, but unlike us did not have a statewide mask order. Their caseload is now rising dramatically (I recognize that there are also other factors). Our local and federal elected officials wear masks to model the importance of this behavior. This is a vital leadership capacity. People are unlikely to follow a leader who does not follow their own advice. I know that if I want

*continues to page 13*

## FEATURE

### Black Lives Matter— To Whom???

By Willette Johnson

We are inundated with news, and all of it is "Breaking". My local (and cable channels) are flooded with stories that capture our attention, evoke an element of pathos, pique our curiosity, disrupt our peaceful existences, and simply rattle the very nature of our being. It is difficult, some days, to figure out which story climbs to the top of the food chain. (COVID 19 has taken its place!) For everything else, it depends on one's perspective and life experiences. I choose to advance the cause of Black Lives Matter. Could it be that living the life of an African American female triggers my hierarchy?

It's satisfying to hear the discourse about the journey of Black

Americans in this country by all of the people who are engaged, at some level, in the conversation. In my opinion, some people are spot on in their thinking, dialogue, historical references, and their cry for change. Unfortunately, others have absolutely no clue about which they speak. I've concluded that from some of the nonsense that has passed through some lips which clearly exposes true feelings and demonstrates a complete and total disregard for the people at the center of the controversy. For me, saying Black Lives Matter doesn't make it so. It's an enormous battle cry with years of injustice, inequality, and institutional racism behind it that everybody talking about it can't possibly know its depth for so many. Let me be clear—I do not want to discard anybody's efforts to help promote change. I just implore people to be authentic in your words and deeds.

The movement of today is reminiscent of past efforts to improve the lives of disenfranchised Americans left out of the success equation by the forefathers of this country. The most memorable for me is the Civil Rights Movement of the 60s and early 70s. It was painful and confusing to watch the nightly news and see Black people being beaten, hosed, attacked by vicious dogs, and tortured by other Americans because of the color of their skin. Places like Watts, Selma and Birmingham are indelibly stamped on the history of American racial conflict. (We need to add Tulsa to this list and remember the destruction of "the negroes' Wall Street" in 1921). It suffices to say that Black Lives Didn't Matter. Many of us from then are still here raising a fist, taking a knee, and cheering on the

*continues to page 13*



**Willette Johnson**

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# 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](mailto:gallentuck@aol.com).*

### Your story. My story. Our story.

*By Gianna Allentuck*

The Broadway production by Lin-Manuel Miranda of *Hamilton* is brilliant. Genius. Perfect. And every other adjective that describes beyond amazing... from the writing to the music, costumes, casting, singing, choreography, set, staging, acting, and energy to the million and one additional aspects in a show of this import and magnitude.

Aside from the mesmerizing nature of the theatrics, I am especially grateful for the purpose of *Hamilton* in the sharing of Alexander Hamilton's story. Not that I knew anything about Hamilton or felt that he had an

especially interesting story to tell, but the pure devotion of one person to sharing the story of another is inspiring.

I imagine the infinite amount of time researching, analyzing, considering, consulting, and collaborating on this project, coupled with the boundless passion to not just tell the story, but to educate and inspire through the story. Perhaps I am particularly touched by this purpose because I love writing in a way that celebrates and appreciates the people who inspire me personally and professionally. Or the people who share their own story in a way that makes me feel. Or perhaps because as a School Counselor whose role is to support, encourage, and advocate for children in seeing that their story is

told and that their needs are met, I believe in the power of storytelling to engage. Connect. Empower. And – in the case where there are shadows of darkness – to find light. And hope.

Among the forty-six amazing songs in *Hamilton*, one song titled *Who Lives, Who Dies, Who Tells Your Story* is my favorite. With the song performed by an incredibly diverse ensemble cast singing to the glory of Hamilton – including his truths, faults and flaws – I was awed.

Intrigued by the questions of life...

*Who lives, who dies, who tells your story? But when you're gone, who remembers your name? Who keeps your flame? We tell your story. She tells my story. And when my time is up, have I done enough? Will they tell our story? In their eyes, I see you, Alexander. I see you every time. Who lives, who dies, who tells your story?*

These words compel me to ponder my own story and wonder whether I am doing enough. Learning enough. Growing enough. With all the pain, division, fear, crisis, and overall malaise plaguing our Country, I wonder what my contributions will be. Will I have listened. Helped. Healed. I also consider how I have

the power to control my own destiny. Make my own choices. Act by my own mind and heart. To write my own story. And I recognize that this is a blessing for which I should be grateful.

I would relinquish this fortune, however, for the chance to have Lin-Manuel write my story. Your story. Our story. Because though his words would be woven with the brilliance of the complexities and powerfulness of diversity, his theme would be simple. One nation. One heart. Thriving and pumping from the beat of the voices of millions. The way it should be...

*Who lives, who dies, who tells your story?*

**Author's Note:** In July 2020, we launched an initiative called *Side by Side* for people to share feelings and experiences to raise awareness, educate, and promote positive and purposeful action with family, friends, neighbors, community members, and strangers alike. Please visit our website at [www.sidebysidevoices.com](http://www.sidebysidevoices.com) and Contact Us to share your voice. To tell your story. We need you. We need to hold aloft and keep your flame in order to light the way for others... ■



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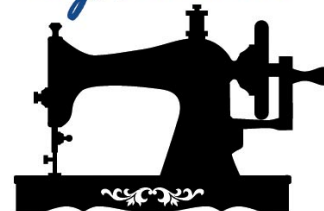
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# COMMUNITY

## COMMUNITY INFORMATION

### Make-It Springfield Names Roberta Wilmore as First Executive Director

**SPRINGFIELD, MA – June 10, 2020** – Make-It Springfield, the downtown Springfield community makerspace, announced that it has hired Roberta Wilmore as its first Executive Director. Wilmore joins an already growing staff and will lead the organization into its next phase of growth, including a transition to a larger space.

“Roberta joins us with decades of experience in nonprofits, commercial real estate, creative entrepreneurship, and the equity and inclusion work that is so fundamental to our mission. Make-It will certainly benefit from Roberta’s veteran leadership, but Springfield at-large will benefit as well,” said Laura Masulis, co-founder of the makerspace.

Specifically, Wilmore’s consulting and training practice specializes in conflict management, board development, employee management, transition planning, and social justice. She has served as a trusted advisor, executive coach, and Board member for dozens of nonprofit organizations throughout the region, ranging from creative arts organizations, to academic institutions and philanthropic organizations. Additionally, in 2001, Wilmore founded the Children’s



*Roberta Wilmore*

Equestrian Center, connecting underserved families and children of color to the world of equestrian sports.

“The search committee was especially impressed by Roberta’s deliberate and thoughtful approach to leadership, team-building and partnerships. We believe Roberta will lead Make-It Springfield forward and skillfully navigate the COVID crisis and any other challenges we might face in the future,” said Michael DiPasquale, another co-founder.

Wilmore said, “It is incredibly exciting to see that Make-It Springfield has outgrown its original location. I am honored to join them and to be part of growing this resource for the benefit of the city and its residents.” ■

## BLACK LIVES MATTER

### To Whom???

*continued from page 11*

angry, determined protesters demanding change. From those days until now, we can document some changes in our country that positively helped promote equality for a portion of Black America, i.e. the right to vote, affirmative action, the dissolution of redlining, to name a few. But, RACISM remained.

I am encouraged by the lawmakers, CEOs, and countless allies who are lifting their voices to discredit four hundred years of an ac-

ceptable way of life: a widespread culture of white privilege that has discounted the need for improved race relations, protection of equal rights, quality education, reform of policing, fairness in the pursuit of happiness and termination of crimes against Black Humanity. My prayer remains that these perpetual voices will continue to join with ours to compel changes that will eventually solidify the notion that Black Lives Matter. ■

## FEATURE ARTICLE

### When the Buildings Stop Burning

*continued from page 5*

Then Trump immediately rushes to his Twitter page, America’s public square, to tell his MAGA hat army in Michigan to storm the capitol and liberate the country. All of a sudden, public health and safety looked like white oppression. And a white judge in Wisconsin even had the audacity to compare the quarantine to the American Japanese internment camps in the 1940s.

It is important to celebrate the rise of cultural sensitivity in corporate America, the taking down of confederate statutes, and the rebranding of Aunt Jemima. However, all of these gestures mean little if the focus is on simply protecting the brands of consumer culture. These gestures must be embedded within a broader social movement cause for the transformation of the institution that produces this popular culture and our entertainment. These gestures are not changing our popular culture apparatus if the institutions that produce them are not transformed. We still con-

tain spaces for a racist cultural entertainment even if there seems to be a declining tolerance for that activity. There still remains deep and dark corners of the web where we can still find “black face” performances and even in more mainstream venues, there remain artifacts of American racism.

The movement is potentially exciting, but the jury is still out on substantive change. Some of the change is being fueled by brand management in the desire to appear political yet remain safe. Black faces in high places and bland gestures to diversity and inclusion are co-existing with the actual exclusion of the relevant African American stakeholders that could contribute to these institutions of culture. This is not a contradiction; this seems to me to be by design. Right now, cultural critics and black figures are en vogue. Everyone wants to get the black perspective and carry a “Black Lives Matter” sign. But we will see if people are still listening when the buildings stop burning. ■

## LEADERSHIP PIONEER VALLEY

### Masked Leadership

*continued from page 11*

my kids to wear bike helmets when I’m not watching, I can’t require them to wear one if I ride without one. The same is true for masks. Leaders have to be willing to do what they are asking others to do.

During World War II, London was relentlessly bombed during the Blitz. To protect themselves, the government asked the citizens of London to turn off their lights and go dark each evening. Citizens and businesses turned off their lights and kept them off for six years. Leaders worked with the local citizens and held them accountable for keeping the lights off. This act saved thousands of lives and untold number of structures. As someone who wears glasses, I cannot figure out how to keep my glasses from fogging up

when I wear a mask. Yet is it worth exposing other people and myself to keep my glasses clear? I can’t imagine Americans doing what Britain did today, when it seems like wearing a mask for 5 minutes is too much to ask to protect others.

I, like most everyone, am anxious and fatigued by the state of our world. I have no idea what the fall will bring when our kids return to school and many non-essential offices reopen. When will I be able to offer face-to-face programs or in-person meetings? I miss lunch with my colleagues. I recognize the role that leaders play in modeling the way and being reasonable even when it is hard. As leaders we have to make difficult decisions to keep others safe, even when it is inconvenient. I hope more leaders will mask up. ■

# COMMUNITY

## FROM THE SPRINGFIELD CITY COUNCIL

### PRESS RELEASE ON CITY OF SPRINGFIELD FY'21 BUDGET



**Council President  
Justin Hurst**

Last night (July 1, 2020), Springfield City Councilors approved the FY21 budget, but not before making \$1,000,000 dollars in cuts.

We feel strongly that the residents of Springfield should know why the cuts were made and, in addition, what we would like to see that money used for. The first cut was in the amount \$800,000 intended for the Facilities Department to fund the first year of a 20-year lease for a shooting range for the Springfield Police Department. While we all support our officers and want to make sure they are well trained, investing in a shooting range that will cost the city 16 million dollars over the next 20 years is not a good use of tax payer dollars and sends the wrong message as the country demands more accountability from our officers. Furthermore, the City Council was only made aware of this potential expenditure last week, yet conversations and contract negotiations have been taking place by the administration over the last year. Just as the residents of Springfield were left in the dark over this investment so too was the City Council and we feel it would be fiscally irresponsible for us to approve this expense without fully vetting the project. Finally, we are adamant that there should be NO CUTS TO SERVICES OR PERSONNEL in the Parks, Recreation and Building Management's budget as a result of our cuts specific to the shooting range.

Our second cut to the budget was in the amount of \$200,000 dollars to reduce the police overtime line item from 1.8 million dollars to 1.6 million dollars. The purpose behind this cut was not an effort to defund the police department, but to reallocate money within the police department in hopes of increasing the line item budget for seminars, education, and training, which stands at a woefully inadequate amount of \$131,330 for fiscal year 2021. In fact, the training line item for fiscal year 2021 was cut by close to \$60,000 at a time when police departments need training most.

#### **Council President Justin Hurst**

"I'm extremely proud of our City Council. The cuts to the budget illustrate that they have the courage to not be silenced and shows that they will continue to make tough decisions that are in the best interests of the community and law enforcement. It is clear that our City Council is committed to being on the right side of history during these trying times."

#### **Councilor Orlando Ramos (Chair of Public Safety)**



"While I wholeheartedly support our public safety officers, and while as chairman of Public Safety it is my goal to ensure that our officers have the proper tools and training they need to keep our communities safe, there were several reasons why I could not bring myself to support a \$16-million lease for a gun range. In the end, I felt that it was a waste of taxpayer money, and it would have sent the wrong message to the public. I also felt that it was necessary to reduce and reallocate a small amount from the overtime budget. It is my hope that the administration listens to the clamor of the public and takes the Council's advice by re-purposing a portion of these funds for youth summer jobs and more training for police officers."

#### **Councilor Tracye Whitfield (Chair of Finance)**



"The million dollar budget cut was needed for a couple of reasons. First, it is the Council's fiduciary responsibility to understand how taxpayer's money is spent and communicate that information back to the Springfield residents. In the case of the \$800,000 added to the facilities department budget...that communication just didn't happen. The administration was less than transparent about an already signed 20 year contract with Smith & Wesson. The lack of details related to the contract and the funding being sprung on us at the last minute just didn't sit well with me. Councilors understand the police department needs a new firing range location and we are not opposed to funding it. We would just like conversations with the administration ahead of time to ensure taxpayer funds are spent appropriately.

Secondly, the community needs to know we hear you! We hear you loud and clear about defunding the police department's budget and reallocating the funding. Defunding is a new concept to me and I personally do not agree with taking police officers off the streets. However, I do think more culturally sensitive, anti-racism, mental health, de-escalation and community policing training for officers is needed. Therefore, I proposed a \$200,000 budget cut from police overtime budget to be reallocated to those and other much needed training. The \$200,000 amount averages to about \$333 of additional training per officer. That's really just a start."

#### **Councilor Adam Gomez (Chair of Economic Development)**



"There has to be more communication between the Mayor's office and the City Council when it comes to investing in projects of this magnitude. It is problematic that as the Chair of the Economic Development Committee, I was never notified that a 16 million dollar project was in the pipeline.

The budget cuts are a direct result of the administration's inability to be transparent and communicate with the legislative arm of government. Our citizens deserve better and we should see it as our obligation to ensure that citizens have a voice at that table when we spend this type of money. I'm confident that citizens would prefer this type of money be invested in our community as opposed to a gun range."

#### **Councilor Marcus Williams (Chair of Maintenance and Development)**



"It's not about defunding the police in my humble opinion. It's about reallocating revenue within the department to serve a greater purpose. This administration has an obligation to the taxpayers of the City to find more practical and creative ways to spend their dollars. The first priority is ensuring

our police officers have the resources needed to receive additional training as it relates to first, de-escalation and racial/cultural sensitivity training and instruction.

When the time comes to discuss the supplemental budget in the coming months, it will be the Mayor's responsibility to ensure appropriations are, in fact, supporting the idea that more training is essential. That sends a stronger message than rubber stamping a lease, worth up to 16 million dollars of your tax dollars over a 20-year period, for a gun range. Especially, during these times."

#### **Councilor Victor Davila (Chair of Audit)**



"The recent cuts totaling 1 million dollars from the Police Dept. is a relocation of funds to help address the ongoing social issues that need a civilian approach. It is my hope that the administration would consider a gun buyback program to help us get more illegal guns off the streets."



# LIVING

GOT H.E.R.S.

## On Being Self-Assured, Black and Female

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](http://www.brendaschild.com)

"Quiet, unassuming," "lady-like mannerisms," "creative; could benefit from more social interaction" were all comments made by my elementary school teachers. For those who know me more intimately, creative may be the only description that still accurately describes me today. I am still initially quiet (observant of facial expressions, body language, energy). In settings outside of family and close friends, I will only speak when I have something important to say. However, in the words of comedian Amanda Seales, "To be a black woman is to be judged on tone before you open your mouth."

A culmination of painful professional experiences has taught me the truth in this statement. Being young, Black, female, I was judged before I ever uttered a word. It wasn't the bamboo earrings, the Malcolm X T-shirt, bi-weekly changes in my very Black hairstyles. Nope. It was that fact that I walked in the room with unmistakable, unwavering confidence, evident in the sway of my hips, the way my shoulders pushed back, and how I held my head, high like I wore an invisible crown. That was problematic and continues to be because when you are a Black woman, confidence is often misconstrued as arrogance, intimidating because let's face it, Black women aren't supposed to be confident.

Ladies, if you walk your melanated self into a room like you own it, no matter how much you

smile and exchange pleasantries, you may not be received positively because it goes against what the world says about who we should be. Being anything other than modest and passive often equates to "overconfident," "extra," "too much," or "thinking you're all that." When you finally open your mouth and your tone and passion match your swagger, well then, that is entirely too much. ... your own people will shun you.

This loathing of confidence in Black women could be explained from psychological, sociological, and historical lenses. But in a nutshell, downplaying our flyness is a survival tactic passed on to us generation after generation, as a result of... you guessed it slavery. There was logic behind keeping a Black girl quiet and unnoticeable, with the hope of protecting her developing body from rape and assault. But what history has taught us is that there is nothing we can avoid doing that will protect the Black body from harm inflicted upon us by the people in power.

Therefore, to aid in the healing process of our generational trauma, I say we walk in *our power*, confidently. From now on, we receive compliments without embarrassment, wink at our sister when *she* walks in the room like she owns it. Let us not feel less for being more like a shot of tequila than somebody's cup of tea. And if we are a bit more mellow, like tea, be just fine with not being someone else's favorite flavor. Let's hold confidence in Black women in high esteem so that we may, in fact, increase our collective esteem. ■

# COMMUNITY

COMMUNITY INFORMATION

## Getting Safer, Respectful Technology Teleconference

**Springfield, MA.** The Springfield Cultural Council is sponsoring a remote teleconference event for Springfield residents on safer technology for a healthier society. Kirstin Beatty, a former Springfield public school teacher and co-chair of Last Tree Laws, will be speaking on how to move towards safer, more respectful technology at 3 p.m. on Saturday, August 1, 2020.

According to Beatty: "There will be an overview of issues including wireless exposures, surveillance, and marketing, as well as suggestions for changing the conversation around technology. I intend to provide simple suggestions and resources for home, schools, and business for safer, respectful technology use, including in the context of Covid19."

Wireless exposures are a heated topic. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC), which sets rules for wireless communication, currently faces several suits charging its rules neglect public safety concerns as well as local zoning control. The City of Boston made an incendiary statement in a recent submission to FCC docket 19-226: "Boston believes that the concerns of the public are real and that the

Commission has done a disservice to itself, local government, consumers, and even the wireless industry in failing to understand and respond to the broadly shared mistrust of the safety of RF [or wireless] emissions." Locally, Representatives Richard Neal and James McGovern have each signed onto S. 2012 to reassert local zoning control over cell towers.

Beatty, who put forward relevant state legislation that was sponsored by state Rep. Carlos Gonzalez, adds, "I hope this event leads to a groundswell of support for legislation for an Electromagnetic and Digital New Deal."

Questions are welcome in advance online at LastTreeLaws.com. The teleconference may be joined by dialing the telephone number 1 (302) 202 - 1104 and entering the conference code 483409. Afterwards, access to a recording may be available online at Last Tree Laws.

Sponsor Springfield Cultural Council  
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# COMMUNITY

## COMMUNITY INFORMATION

### Springfield's 6 Bricks Receives Coveted State Provisional License From the Massachusetts Cannabis Control Commission.



*Payton Shubrick, CEO*

**SPRINGFIELD, MA** – 6 Bricks, LLC. was chosen yesterday, July 9, 2020, to receive a State Provisional License from the Massachusetts Cannabis Control Commission. Last year, in July, 2019, the city of Springfield awarded 6 Bricks one of just four licenses to operate a cannabis dispensary in the city.

For more than a year before the award by Springfield, 6 Bricks had been preparing for the city application process, engaging and working with architects, industry and profession experts, security professionals and others as to how best to propose

a community-oriented facility and operation that would include and benefit the city and surrounding neighborhood community.

MA CCC Commissioner,

***6 Bricks, was selected by Springfield as a successful applicant for a recreational cannabis dispensary last year. 6 Bricks will be one of a handful of minority-women owned operations in Massachusetts.***

Shaleen Title, prior to voting on the 6 Bricks' application, noted the uniqueness of the family-owned company's social-impact plan and diversity plan as a women-minority owned business.

6 Bricks incurred substantial expense and invested significant time securing data, information and planning strategies to put forth a winning application to the city and the state, including hiring and working with the recognized engineering firm, Vanhasse Hangen Bustin, Inc. (VHB), to produce traffic and other studies. 6 Bricks worked extensively with former Springfield Police Officer John Delaney on a security plan for operation that is one of the best in the commonwealth. Delaney assembled a

team of former law enforcement professionals who have advised the project from the idea stages to today's award from the MA CCC.

Achieving the MA CCC Provisional License status means that 6 Bricks, LLC has moved one more significant step closer to actually being able to open a facility in Springfield. Of the four Springfield applicants, 6 Bricks is the first to be awarded this status.

"I and my family are so appreciative of the state and Springfield's recognition of our hard work, of our plans and positive community impact

Shubrick, CEO of 6 Bricks.

"It was an especially proud moment for me, my family and our supporters to hear Commissioner Title's recognition of our efforts in creating a positive social impact/diversity plan. We have listened to our community and will continue to stay focused on how to best create a positive impact for those we will serve and our neighbors. To be recognized as one of the few women-owned minority entities in this industry in the entire state is a responsibility and a trust that we will never take for granted," said Shubrick.

"6 Bricks is six members of the Shubrick family. It has been a dream of ours to be able to take our vision; to connect people and product for the best experience every time, encouraging visitors to come to us and visit Springfield," said Shubrick.

"The Coronavirus Pandemic has greatly impacted all of the cannabis industry. We are continuing to review our plans as to how to best serve the customers who need the product we will offer as a healing and therapeutic addition to their health and well-being regimens," said Shubrick.

"We will be making some changes in our plans that will take into account these new challenges that must include curbside-pickup per the state and what an in-store experience may actually have to be in keeping with local, state and federal health regulations for the future. We will make those changes public. We have been transparent in all of our efforts and have benefitted greatly from the involvement, endorsement and continued guidance of the McKnight Neighborhood Council," said Shubrick. ■

**PEOPLE, PLANT, PURPOSE.**



# COMMUNITY

OP - ED

## Perceptions Can Be Tricky!

By Zelmon Johnson, reprinted from October, 2017

Many of you know me as Zee Johnson, owner of Olive Tree Books-n-Voices, who frequently writes articles on black-owned businesses. However, this month I decided to write on the “perception of being a young African American man.”

Over the last few months, a personal matter has caused me to travel out of state numerous times. However, on one particular flight, I really recognized the “perception of being a young African American man.”

I traveled with Southwest Airlines where seats are categorized alphabetically/numerically. Upon entering the plane, you can select any available seat. Well, as I entered the airplane, I immediately noticed that the majority of passengers were unconsciously or consciously avoiding this one passenger. He was a young, African American man, approximate age 28-35, wearing a dreadlock hairstyle, over 6 feet tall with a muscular built, using earplugs to listen to music and wearing sunglasses. While everyone tried to find a seat avoiding him, I wanted to sit by him. I will be the first to admit, I had a certain perception of him.

This passenger whom I will call “Bill” was seated in the aisle seat, so he allowed me to move into the middle seat. In the window seat was an African American high school senior named Alison. So here we were, three very different multi-generational African American passengers doing our own thing—Bill listening to music, Alison reading a magazine and me trying to understand why passengers were looking at Bill.

Bill never conversed with me. He

concentrated on listening to his music and snoozing a little. However, Alison and I talked about her goals, etc. While we talked, I noticed how passengers continued to lean over to look at Bill. While they were looking at Bill, I was looking at them. I can’t explain their interest in Bill, but I suspect it was fear or suspicion. Otherwise, they would have made eye contact with him or engaged him in conversation. Furthermore, if he was a celebrity or well-known, I assume they would have asked him for a selfie.

**...the majority of passengers were unconsciously or consciously avoiding this one passenger. He was a young, African American man.**

While sitting in the middle seat, I mentioned to Alison that both she and Bill could be my children, and I felt very safe sitting between them. If Bill had not been listening so intensely to his music, I would have told him the same. Frankly, my perception of Bill was a feeling of safety vs. fear. I felt very secure sitting by Bill **because of his size and appearance.** My sense was that if there were any disruptions or discords, Bill could and would handle the matter, and I would be very proud sitting next to him. I shared my perception of Bill to Alison and she agreed—that he appeared to be a protector vs. a threat, and she was glad to be sitting in this row of seats as well. However, when the flight was over, many passengers continued to look over at Bill, and I continued to look at them.

Perceptions can be tricky, especially when it comes to African American men. Both the passengers and I had a perception of Bill, but clearly on opposite ends of the spectrum. Although we never interacted, I did not fear Bill at all—but had a degree of comfort that he was there.

What perception would you have had of this African American man? ■

COMMUNITY BEAT

## Weak Passwords

By Ken Harris



Ken Harris is a member of Puppeteers of America and a graduate of STCC. Follow him at [shadowedu.blogspot.com](https://shadowworldpresent.wixsite.com/safe) <https://shadowworldpresent.wixsite.com/safe>

How often do you think of the significance of passwords to your personal and business accounts? Are you complacent in properly managing safeguards to crucial networks that matter to you? If none of these thoughts have any weight in your daily life, perhaps you should reconsider.

It’s actually no different than the importance of ensuring our homes are properly secured when we are away. A weak password is like an open door to a willing cyber thief.

Here are some basics to keep in mind about passwords:

- Create a strong password by making it long. Every character makes it strong.
- Ensure your chosen password is difficult to guess.
- Avoid using birthdates, pet names, or anything that you shared on social media.

You might consider using a phrase as it is one of the simplest ways to create a strong password. This is made up of many words such as: “I need to go to the bank” or the use of random words like “cloud-mountain-thunder-journey.” Just select one that is easy for your to remember.

When creating a password, you might be prompted to include an assortment of symbols, numbers or upper and lowercase numbers.

Whatever you do, always use a different, unique password for each account. In event your account is compromised by a hacker, you will have some peace of mind knowing your other accounts are still secured.

If remembering many passwords poses trouble for you, you should consider utilizing a password manager. This is a special program that securely stores all of your passwords. You only need to remember the actual password manager.

Your password is a secret and it should stay a secret. Don’t share it with coworkers or your supervisor. If anyone knows, it is no longer a secret and so much for your peace of mind.

I would not use public computers to log onto online accounts such as checking emails at hotels or libraries. Since anyone can access these computers, they may be infected with malware. It’s best to log into accounts from computers or mobile devices that can be trusted.

Some websites use security questions for your accounts. You offer answers to personal questions in case you forget your password and need to reset it. Here’s the problem with that. Some of these questions or answers can be found online or on your social media accounts. Only use information that is not publicly known about you, or simply make up answers to questions.

Some accounts offer two-step verification also called two factor authentication or multi-factor authentication. This requires a one-time code in addition to your password to log in. A unique code is generated in a special app on your smartphone that is used with your password to log-in.

Whenever possible, enable two-step verification so that your accounts are protected by more than just a password by itself. Weak or compromised passwords are one of the most common ways cyber attackers break into organizations or online accounts.

If you believe you accidentally shared a work-related password or believe it may have been hacked or stolen, be sure to change it right away. Afterwards, notify your technical support team asap.

I use family friendly puppetry to spread cyber security awareness and scam prevention.

Check out my website at <https://shadowworldpresent.wixsite.com/safe> for funny educational videos. ■

# HEALTH

## HEALTH MATTERS



**Doris Sexton-Harris,**  
Health Consultant,  
Doris can be  
contacted at  
[dorharris77@hotmail.com](mailto:dorharris77@hotmail.com)

As of June 1, 2020, flavored tobacco, including menthol cigarettes like Kools and Newports, are no longer sold in Massachusetts stores. This means that flavored tobacco products are no longer sold at retailers like corner stores, gas stations and smoke shops. To learn about why, watch the one-minute video at [NoMentholKnowWhy.org](http://NoMentholKnowWhy.org).

The tobacco and vaping industries have targeted youth, LGBTQ populations and communities of color with their deadly products, causing many health consequences for these populations specifically. Flavors, like mint and menthol, are a leading reason that young people start vaping and using tobacco.

The law, which took effect on June 1, 2020, means that:

- Menthol cigarettes and all other flavored tobacco products like flavored cigars, flavored chewing tobacco, and flavored e-cigarettes and nicotine vaping products will no longer be widely available in Massachusetts.
- E-cigarettes and nicotine vaping products will increase in price.

As you'll learn at [NoMentholKnowWhy.org](http://NoMentholKnowWhy.org), Massachusetts updated its tobacco laws to improve health in the communities that have been historically and unjustly targeted by the tobacco and vaping industries.

They targeted advertising and displays of flavored tobacco products in Black and Latinx neighborhoods. They offered discounted prices of products like menthol cigarettes in communities

of color. They placed young people and people of color in their advertisements to make their products seem cool and appealing. And in the past few years, vaping companies purchased ad space in places visited most by young people like YouTube, The Cartoon Network and online learning websites for kids.

It's no coincidence that so many people of color smoke menthol—it's by design. These tactics were highly effective in creating big industry profits by addicting people to tobacco and nicotine products. Such targeted, aggressive marketing practices, combined with pressures related to racism, food insecurity, unemployment and other daily stressors contribute to worse health outcomes in these communities.

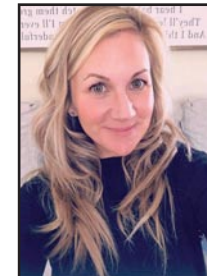
The Tobacco-Free Community Partnerships in Massachusetts want to build awareness about the law and pro-

vide information about the many resources available to help people quit smoking and vaping.

You can help spread the word in your community by visiting [NoMentholKnowWhy.org](http://NoMentholKnowWhy.org) to learn more, to share your menthol story and to find tools and resources to share.

Help for those who want to quit vaping, smoking or using other tobacco products is available for FREE at 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669) and [KeepTryingMA.org](http://KeepTryingMA.org).

Contact me, Sara Moriarty, at the Hampden County Tobacco-Free Community Partnership at [smoriarty@gandaracenter.org](mailto:smoriarty@gandaracenter.org) to learn more about the law, how you can support people in quitting and to find out how you can partner with us. ■



**Sara Moriarty**

## YOUR HEALTH

### Baystate Health

## The New COVID-19 Debate

### *Is the Virus Transmitted by Respiratory Droplets or by Aerosolized Droplets*

**SPRINGFIELD, MA** – July 8, 2020 – There is a new international debate surrounding COVID-19 and the spread of the infection.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and other health organizations have long thought that the novel coronavirus is spread mainly from person-to-person between people who are in close contact within one another (approx. 6 feet). This spread is through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes or talks. These droplets can land in the

mouths, noses or eyes of people who are nearby or be inhaled into the lungs. Some recent studies have suggested that COVID-19 may be spread by people who are not showing symptoms.

Now in a letter sent to the World Health Organization (WHO) signed by over 200 scientists, they claim that aerosolized droplets floating in the air can cause infection. They urged WHO to react to what they claim is “mounting evidence.”

“They are raising the specter that COVID-19 could theoretically be transmitted by the airborne route,”

said Dr. Sarah Haessler, lead epidemiologist and infectious disease specialist for Baystate Health.

Aerosols are small particles that can remain suspended in air for longer periods of time than most respiratory secretions and are small and light enough to sometimes travel longer distances. Certain viruses such as smallpox and measles, and bacteria, such as the agent that causes tuberculosis, are expelled as aerosols and can therefore be transmitted by the “airborne route.”

Most respiratory viruses are transmitted by the “droplet” route, which means that they are expelled as larger particles that are heavier and fall to the ground in a span of 3-6 feet from an infected person. This is from where the social distancing recommendation of 6 feet derives, noted Dr. Haessler. For these agents, a facemask is appropriate protection (along with eye coverings, gloves, gowns, etc. especially for healthcare workers).

“In the hospital, we use a special type of respirator mask called N95, which is required for protection when treating patients whose viruses can become aerosolized,” said Dr. Haessler.

According to Dr. Haessler, the letter to WHO predominantly represents the opinion of laboratory scientists and researchers, many of whom are from “particle science” and other engineering-type disciplines and basic, but importantly not clinical – science positions.

“While it may be accurate that under certain laboratory conditions, the COVID-19 virus can form aerosols, there is scant data to present to suggest that this infection is generally transmitted that way,” said Dr. Haessler.

“In fact, the preponderance of actual clinical and epidemiologic information – including data from our own experiences at Baystate over the

*continues to page 19*



# HEALTH

## YOUR HEALTH

Baystate  Health

## Allergies? Or COVID-19? Understanding the Signs and Symptoms

**SPRINGFIELD, MA** – July 13, 2020 – When COVID-19 arrived in the United States earlier this year, the country was at the height of its flu season.

Since there is an overlap between some symptoms of the novel coronavirus and the flu, many people at the mere sign of symptoms were concerned that they might have COVID-19 and not simply the flu.

Now similar questions are arising as allergy season is in full swing and will continue into the fall.

“For the most part, those who already suffer from allergies should know whether or not they are experiencing typical seasonal allergy symptoms. They will have a stuffy nose that disappears and returns, and that gets better on allergy medications and they are not ‘ill.’ Typically they are not short of breath or have a cough, unless they have asthma,” said **Dr.**

**Arnando Paez**, chief, **Infectious Diseases**, **Baystate Medical Center**.

Watery, itchy eyes, an itchy nose, and itchy skin are also sure signs of an allergy.

According to the **American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology**, an allergy is a chronic condition involving an abnormal reaction to an ordinarily harmless substance called an allergen, such as dust mites, tree weed, grass pollen and more. If you have an allergy, your immune system views the allergen as an invader and a chain reaction is initiated. White blood cells of the immune system produce IgE antibodies which attach themselves to special cells called mast cells, causing a release of potent chemical such as histamine. These chemicals cause symptoms such as:

- Itching in the nose
- Sneezing
- Itching in the roof of the mouth, throat, eyes

- Stuffy nose
- Runny nose
- Tearing eyes
- Dark circles under the eyes.

According to the **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)**, among the many symptoms of COVID-19 that have been reported are:

- Fever or chills (common)
- Cough (common)
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing (common)
- Fatigue (common)
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Loss of appetite (common)
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea.

“Over time new symptoms have been added to the list, including al-

tered mentation or confusion, toe swelling or redness which we refer to as COVID toes, rash, which is part of the multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children, and neck pain,” said Dr. Paez.

“Remember, there are those without symptoms, referred to as asymptomatic, who still may have COVID-19,” he added.

A chart on the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology offers a comparison of symptoms for COVID-19, allergies, flu and the common cold. The chart is available at:

<https://www.aaaai.org/Aaaai/media/MediaLibrary/Images/Promos/Coronavirus-Symptoms.pdf>

“If you are unsure about your symptoms and what is causing them, whether COVID-19 or your allergies, it’s a good idea to check with your doctor,” said Dr. Paez. ■

## YOUR HEALTH

### The New COVID-19 Debate

*continued from page 18*

past four months of the pandemic – strongly suggest that this virus is primarily transmitted by respiratory droplets,” she continued.

Dr. Haessler has reassurance for the public who may have read about the debate and the letter sent to WHO, and who are worried about their protection from the virus.

“Universal masking, hand hygiene and social distancing are still the main ways to prevent the spread of COVID-19 since clinical data strongly suggests the virus is mainly transmitted through respiratory droplets, as we have known since the

early beginnings of the novel coronavirus data,” said Dr. Haessler.

“To further stop the virus and protect yourselves and others, remember to wear a mask when around others, keep a safe distance from others, cover your coughs and sneezes, and to wash your hands often,” she added.

For more information on Baystate Health, visit [baystate-health.org](http://baystate-health.org) and follow us on our social media channels:

[Facebook/BaystateHealth;](#)  
[Facebook/Baystate Children’s Hospital;](#)  
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# Around Town & . . .



*Family and friends gathered at Smokey Joe's for a small retirement party for Chef Wayne Hooker of Big Mamou's fame that recently closed after 25 years of operation.*



*The Massachusetts Military Support Foundation partnered with the Bilingual Veterans Outreach Center in Springfield to hold a FOOD4VETS program at the Center recently.*



*(Left) The CREW organization presented scholarship recipient Kiam Rennix with a \$1,000.00 scholarship recently. CREW members from L to R: Jimmie Mitchell, President Wayman Lee, Brian Thomas and Andrew Keaton. (Right) The CREW presented scholarship recipient Ajanay Hill with a \$1,000 scholarship. Ajanay Hill poses with her parents and CREW members.*



*Springfield Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority recently held their Violet & Pearl Scholarship Award Ceremony in the Walmart parking lot due to the Covid-19 restrictions. L to R: President Willette Y. Johnson, members Regina Evans-Cox, Ashiah Richeme-Alcide, Mary Worthy, Crystal Senter-Brown, Doreen Sneed, scholarship recipients Ajanay Hill, Samara Smith and Jeisanelly Hernandez, members Dena Cooper, Kara Woolridge, Min. Kimberley Strother, Tamara Dodds and Gail Walls.*



• • •

In The Community

*The New North Citizens Council Good Vibes Program held a march against Gun Violence from the Forest Park Middle School to Johnny Appleseed Park and held a speak-out.*



*Springfield School Committee member LaTonia Monroe Naylor accepted the 17th Annual Commonwealth Heroine Award from State Rep. Carlos Gonzalez who nominated her for the award. L to R: daughters Naomi and Patience, husband Mah'dee, Sr., LaTonia, Gonzalez, daughter Melodie, and son Mah'dee, Jr.*



*Springfield School Committee member LaTonia Monroe Naylor and members of the Parent Villages organization along with members of the New North Citizens Council Good Vibes Program, Families Against Violence, MORE Inspiring Change Fighting for Justice, Holy Redeemer Cathedral and others held a Rally Cry for the youth of Springfield at Springfield City Hall recently. Parents of youth killed by gun violence spoke at the rally.*



*Strong Young Minds program Graduates and their family members with Springfield City Councilor Adam Gomez (back far left) and Program Executive Director Tika Jones pose for a group photo at their graduation at Agawam's School St.*

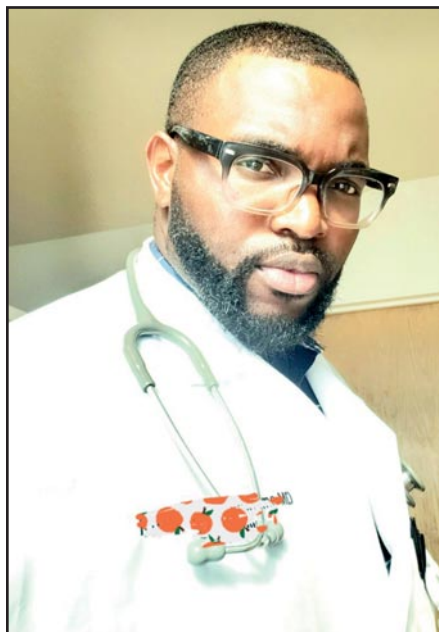


# COMMUNITY

## CONNECTICUT - COMMUNITY FOCUS

### Eastern Alumnus: One of the Unsung Heroes on the Front Lines in the Battle Against COVID-19

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



**Dr. Rukevwe Ehwarieime**

As I write this (June 14th), the number of people who have succumbed to the Coronavirus has reached 117,000 and is climbing daily. This Eastern alumnus—Dr. Rukevwe Ehwarieime '08—is among the millions of health care workers—doctors, nurses, researchers and more—across the nation who have answered the call for help. Dr. Ehwarieime—or “Ruk” as we call him—is working tirelessly and selflessly to save lives. Ruk and others are the unsung heroes who, at great personal risk to their own lives, often work 12-hour shifts four to five days a week to protect the health of those in their communities.

Ruk works with a team of specialists as a physician-Hospitalist, providing direct patient care, including ICU care of COVID-19 patients. He serves as a locum Hospitalist,



**Dr. Rukevwe Ehwarieime with  
Dr. Yaw Nsiah**

traveling across the country—to Texas, New Hampshire and Connecticut, serving areas in need of a Hospitalist due to the increasing COVID-19 cases.

Ruk is a dedicated, committed physician. He and his fiancé postponed their wedding and honeymoon due to COVID-19!

They both are serving as locums at hospitals across the nation, helping patients. Prior to traveling to areas of need, Ruk served in a similar capacity at W. Backus Hospital in Norwich. He is currently in Fellowship Train-

*continues to page 23*

### Andrea Brown-North Haven Black Girl Magic! Rockin' it with the NBA ORLANDO MAGIC!

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



**Andrea Brown**

**COVID-19** may have created social distancing for Eastern Connecticut State University students, faculty and staff, but the virus did not stop some Eastern alumni from doing a terrific job of staying in touch with their former professors. I caught up with Andrea Brown '08, who, using the Microsoft Teams video conference platform, recently interacted with students in classes taught by Kinesiology and Physical Education Professor Charlie Chatterton.

Just before final exams, Brown called into Chatterton's Entrepreneurship, Marketing and Communications in Sports class, part of his depart-

ment's Sports and Leisure Program. Brown serves as director of premium services for the Orlando Magic NBA professional basketball team. A **Dwight Bachman** director of premium services does just that—treat customers like pure gold! Brown leads a team of eight people in developing strategies that provide legendary, world class service to all premium account holders on multiple levels of the Amway Center in Orlando. She helps to increase the retention of her customers, generate revenue and also to create long-term enthusiasm among Orlando Magic fans.

Brown, who said she has “always wanted to work for an NBA,” told the students to “Take advantage of ALL opportunities!” At Eastern, she was a resident assistant, which helped her transition into a hall director role in graduate school at Old Dominion University, where she earned her Masters of Education degree. “This opportunity allowed me to have a portion of my college tuition paid for as well as free room and board. Internship opportunities at the Connecticut Sun WNBA, UConn Athletics Operations and ESPN Wide World of Sports also led me to gaining more skills in my field and helped me build the foundation for my career.”

Brown started working with the Orlando Magic in 2010 as a client *continues to page 23*





# COMMUNITY EDUCATION

## LAW NOTES



*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.*

**B**orrowing money is a common financial transaction in which most adults engage. Wealthier individuals may borrow larger amounts of money for real estate. While, less wealthy individuals may borrow money on credit cards for everyday necessities, such as food, prescriptions, and utilities/rent. In fact, the Federal Reserve recently reported that Americans now owe almost a trillion dollars in credit card debt.

Banks set interest rates based on risk. Therefore, higher risk loans (like credit cards) made to people deemed less likely to repay, will in turn be charged the highest interest rates. Credit card interest rates average 20%. So even if using a credit card for only minor purchases, a small purchase can cost significantly more in the long-run and might need to be repaid over months or even years. Simply put, the higher the interest

## Cyclical Debt Harms Minority Populations in Massachusetts

*By Professor Justin Dion*

rates, and longer the time needed to repay, the more profitable for the bank. Banks make the most money by maximizing the use of high interest credit card debt to often-desperate people with no better borrowing options, and who cannot otherwise immediately pay the debt off. The longer someone holds a balance on a credit card, the more money the bank makes. As the high interest rates increase the amount owed, it also makes the debt increasingly harder to pay off.

These high interest loans entrap people into a cycle of permanent financial servitude that for many becomes impossible to escape. They just pay a little each month, and essentially owe the debt forever. This system of financial repression harms individuals, families, and the communities in which they reside.

This unfortunate business model targets poorer people who otherwise may lack savings to pay the debt off

and need emergency credit to help pay for monthly necessities. Demographically, the impact of these lending strategies has resulted in debt discrepancies based on race, age and gender, with younger minority women faring the worst. Although private individuals are not permitted to loan money at dangerously high interest rates, current laws have exceptions that allow banks to do so.

What can be done?

- **Legislation.** Lawmakers need to identify debt and predatory loans as a significant community problem that restricts people from becoming economically stable. Pass laws that restrict the amount of interest that banks can charge.
- **Education.** Schools should be required to include fiscal education in their curriculum to combat predatory lending. It is just as important to be fiscally healthy, as it is physically and academically healthy.



*Attorney Justin Dion is a Professor of Legal Skills and Director of Bar Success Programs at Western New England University School of Law.*

- **Negotiation.** If caught in a credit card tailspin, reach out to the bank and negotiate a lower interest rate, or request a balance reduction if you pay the debt off completely.
- **Bankruptcy.** As a last resort, a bankruptcy generally allows you to keep your property while discharging (getting rid of) most of your debts. The idea of bankruptcy is to give you a fresh start, and allow you to engage in better financial transactions in the future.

Ultimately, equitable financial services can exist in poor and minority communities if there is regulatory restructuring of these practices. ■

## CONNECTICUT - COMMUNITY FOCUS

### Dr. Rukevwe Ehwarieme

*continued from page 22*

ing in Infectious Disease at University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio, where he is furthering his education and research in infectious diseases.

Ruk, a former soccer star at Eastern, said his liberal arts education was “just what the doctor ordered, if you will, for my career. Studying science, especially, the way Dr. Yaw Nsiah taught me biology, helped provide a strong basic foundation for medical school.” He said Nsiah, now chair of Eastern’s Health Sciences Department, taught him the value of working with others.

“This particular Coronavirus is new. None of us knows it all, so we have to collaborate with a wide range of specialists to ensure that proper protocols are in place to properly treat patients fighting for their lives. When you are trying to save someone’s life, teamwork takes on new meaning. It is wonderful and joyous to see someone recover from this deadly virus.”

Ehwarieme earned his MBA in Health Care and Administration from Davenport University in Michigan and his medical degree from the Saint James School of Medicine in Anguilla. He completed his Residency at Michigan State University. ■

### Andrea Brown

*continued from page 22*

service representative, managing general season ticket holder accounts. In 2013, she transitioned into a premium club level manager, and in 2018, into senior premium service manager. Last August, she was promoted to director of premium services.

Brown said Eastern’s liberal arts education taught her “organization, critical thinking, professionalism, communication skills and service to community, all of which prepared me well for my professional and personal life. She told the students to “Create a plan and vision for yourself and don’t ever give up!” You can read

more on the fun Brown is having in sunny Florida, visit [www.orlandomagic.com](http://www.orlandomagic.com)

“It was a pure joy to see happy, successful alumni show their love by expressing gratitude to Eastern,” said Chatterton. “They were happy to help on short notice. They provided great insights to the students as professionals in the field. They are talented professionals and their willingness to continuously share their experiences, expertise, perspective and time is truly appreciated.” ■

# EDITORIAL

## FROM THE PUBLISHER'S DESK

MY POINT  
OF VIEW

Frederick A. Hurst



### ANONYMOUS DOESN'T COUNT

By Frederick A. Hurst

The letter on the opposite page addressed “To Whom It May Concern” and copied to *Point of View* was signed “Some of the Minority Officers of the Springfield Police Department.” Unfortunately, whether or not the substance of its contents proves to be accurate, the anonymity of its authors renders it useless.

Normally we would not even print an anonymous letter. We made an ex-

ception in this instance for two reasons. The first involves the history of the Springfield Police Department. Discrimination against minorities is well known and remains to be fully ad-

dressed both in employment matters within the department and in the way

the law is enforced outside the department. This is not speculation but well documented fact. (Note that we have deleted the names revealed in the letter which were not the names of the letter’s

authors.)

The second was to send an important message to those who wrote the article and refused to reveal their names out of fear of retaliation. Your identities

are far more important than the contents of your letter as is your willing-

ness to openly bear witness to the events described in your letter. You need to understand that your refusal to do both – for whatever reason – makes you an accomplice and as much a part of the

problem as those you claim to accuse.

The good you could do by coming forward far outweighs the risk. Ironically, your complaints will remain unresolved and the system will remain the same so long as you remain anonymous. Your fate is in your own hands and an anonymous letter will not change conditions for you or your fellow minority officers or for all those minorities to come.

So when you summon the courage to come forward, we assure you we will write your stories and support you on every step of your journey. ■

## AF-AM NEWS bits

By Frederick A. Hurst

continued from page 4

happening in America. So many things are happening at one time that listing them all is impossible but Nascar has banned the confederate flag; Mississippi has removed the confederate flag symbol from its state flag; football Commissioner Roger Goodell has apologized for his previous insensitivity to Black players’ peaceful protests against Black killings by police; the Washington Redskins have removed the “Redskins” from their name and their Indian logo; polls show that White folks are now pro Black Lives Matter and demonstrations against unnecessary police killings of Black folks have been attended by as many White folks as Black folks; confederate statues are being pulled down around the country; and former San Francisco Black quarterback Colin Kaepernick, who started the kneeling during the playing of the national anthem, is popular again. And even more significant, the racist rants of Trump are causing his poll numbers to tank nationwide in most of the election battleground states thereby causing many of his fellow Republicans to create political distance from him. Maybe!

### CORONAVIRUS DOES NOT DISCRIMINATE

At some point I may tire of quoting Renee Graham but not yet. She is simply one of the best at articulating the nature of racism in America. In a recent *Boston Globe* article titled “Living in a racist country is a risk factor” (April 12, 2020), she wrote: “Coronavirus does not discriminate. It doesn’t need to. In a nation strategically built on racial and economic inequality, it was never going to be ‘the great equalizer’ some touted. Being a Black or brown person is not a pre-existing condition. Yet this pandemic is a lethal reminder that living in a racist country is.”

### WHO ARE THESE WHITE PEOPLE?

What amazes me most about Trump’s public racist rants is the number of White people who cheer him on. I find myself constantly asking, “Who are these crazy White people?” “Where did they come from?” “How did they become so prominent and powerful in a country like America?” And, “How in heavens name, after watching him in action over the

last three years, can they still adore and support him?” I’ve studied despots like Hitler and Stalin and Mussolini and many others who appealed to the worst in people and naively believed it couldn’t happen in America. What is it? I mean, the man loves Russia’s Vladimir Putin and Xi Jinping of China and the nut running North Korea. And he has all but destroyed our relationships with our post World War II allies for no apparent good reason. And he has tested every one of our major institutions to the breaking point and 45 to 50% of White people in America still love him. They don’t care that he is a gangster. They don’t even care that he looks down on them and considers them stu-

pid and fodder for his own twisted political and financial ambitions that don’t even include them except for at the most rudimentary level that won’t put money in their pockets or food on their tables. Who are these demented White people? How can a man like Trump whip them into such a frenzy with crazy rhetoric that shouldn’t fool a two year old? They won’t even wear masks to save themselves and their families and people around them! It is beyond me. It is frightening. Which is why, come election day, we’ve got to somehow force the social genie Trump has released back into the bottle and cap it with a concrete cork and never let it come out again. ■

## LETTERS TO THE PUBLISHER

I have been appreciating your paper for years. The June 1st issue is really excellent in its analysis of the Springfield Police Dept. I also loved the message from your grandfather, and I have passed it on to friends. I grew up in Sixteen Acres and I remember when the cesspools were connected to sewers. It was seen as a great technological improvement. I am a poet and storyteller. Thanks for the paper, I will subscribe.

Charlie Peck (6/15/2020)

Letters to the Publisher and other content MUST be sent electronically to: [mjhurst@afampov.com](mailto:mjhurst@afampov.com)  
(Please reference a subject matter or e-mail is automatically deleted.)



LETTERS TO THE PUBLISHER

June 20, 2020

To Whom It May Concern:

There is a lot of concern about how the Springfield Police Department treats minorities in the community and rightfully so. Has anyone taken the time to think about how the minority police officers are treated within the Springfield Police Department? Probably not, but we are hurting just as bad as the community is hurting. There is systemic racism within the Springfield Police Department.

A couple of weeks ago minority Officers and Supervisors were summoned to meet with the Police Commissioner about what improvements can be made for police officers to better relate with the community and improve community relations. We were discouraged and disgusted as we sat there. The Police Commissioner has been working for the department for over 40 years and knows the discrimination, very well, of both the community and against minority police officers within the department. How can she be the one that leads us to a new era with her history being tied to the past the way it is? If she continues to pretend that there is no problem or can't see that we have a problem, how can she fix the problem? Did she honestly think that we were stupid enough to really tell her the truth? We know how this system works and speaking the truth about race inside the Springfield Police Department is not healthy for our careers. This is a truth that is clearly known within the department. An email was sent out for us to meet at the Riverfront Park for a group photograph to show that we are united. This is a terrible attempt to pretend things aren't as they are. We took this photograph under duress. It was made well known that those who did not attend a mental note would be made of your absence.

Covid-19 is still prevalent and the Police Commissioner thought it would be a great idea to group hundreds of officers together shoulder to shoulder without masks or social distancing per CDC recommendations as well as Governor Baker. We are still under an order by the Governor to limit group gatherings. This was very irresponsible of her, all for a photo shoot. She not only put our health at risk increasing our chances of getting and spreading Covid-19 to others but she also put the Community at risk of having to be without law enforcement officers as this could result in increased cases of Covid-19 within the Springfield Police Department leaving the community without Law Enforcement Officers to patrol our streets. Is taking a photograph more important than our health and the safety of our Community?

If we have systemic racism throughout our Country, as well as the state and city, how can we be so naive to think it's not within the Springfield Police Department? We have a Police Commissioner who can't even testify in court because of

lies she told in the past while under oath. We still have several other Caucasian officers currently working who also can't testify in court due to, also, lying under oath but yet they are still members of the Springfield Police Department collecting checks and overtime from the City of Springfield. There are also many others that have been caught lying in reports to Internal Affairs and shouldn't be testifying in court either without Brady/Giglio obligations. Retired ..... wanted to correct this issue but was ordered not to by the past Police Commissioner. This is a disgrace and embarrassing to the Department.

We have ....., Caucasian man, who pulled a gun in the parking lot of Walmart on Boston Road pointing it recklessly all over the parking lot at adults and children. .... also lied on his report about this incident. ....'s written account of this incident that night did not match up with the video surveillance of the crime. There were no consequences for his actions. This same ..... was photographed sleeping on duty several times. A very intense investigation was conducted, not into why he was sleeping on duty (which he has done his whole career and this is a well known fact by everyone) but instead into who took the photograph. This investigation seemed to zero in on minority supervisors for some strange reason. .... was moved to the day shift as a reward for his actions. He still sleeps on duty in front of a staff of about 20 people often snoring very loudly. You'll see a pattern throughout our letter.

Retired ....., an African American, was run out of the police department based on lies. He was treated unfairly in the manner of which no other member of this department has ever been treated. If you look at the statements contained within this investigation, you will clearly see what we are talking about. This systemic attack was led by then Deputy Chief Clapprood. .... directed a white Sergeant to take a call, which he did not want to take. We implore you to contact ..... and have a conversation with him about how he was treated by the Springfield Police Department. Compare this to retired, white, ..... who sexually assaulted a female employee in the office in front of witnesses, who basically got a slap on the hand and was told not to do it again. In comparison, it is clear that there is favoritism based upon race.

We implore you to also contact ....., African American, who is also being driven out of the department with similar tactics that were used to force ..... out of the department. She was a victim of sexual harassment, filed a complaint, and unfortunately she was forced to attend weekly staff meetings with her harasser sitting directly across from her glaring at her every week.

Two minority police officers were involved in an off duty car accident and were suspended for their actions. An off duty, Caucasian police officer

during his probationary period was involved in a similar car accident, however, he was actually driving under the influence of alcohol. He identified himself as a police officer and then left the scene before police cruisers arrived to take a report. This Caucasian officer was not suspended or disciplined. He was taken care of by the good ole boy network. We could go on for days with stories such as these where minority officers are discriminated against within the Springfield Police Department on a daily basis solely based on our race.

Following is a rough breakdown of the number of minority Supervisors in the Springfield Police Department:

1. 42 Sergeants and only 9 are minority

2. 19 Lieutenants and only 8 are minority

3. 10 Captains and only 1 is minority

4. 3 Deputies and only 1 is minority

Out of approximately 74 supervisors, 19 are minorities. Where is the diversity in these numbers we ask? The low number of minority supervisors is, in part, due to the fact that positions are held for officers who meet the good ole boy network criteria based on the color of their skin. Hence, when ..... was first awaiting his promotion to Captain, he wasn't promoted. The day after the promotional list that he was number one on expired, the Commissioner decided now was a good time to promote a Captain from the list, which of course was a Caucasian officer. ....'s resume, life experience, and community dedication speaks for itself. The only reason he wasn't promoted was based on the color of his skin.

As you can see, racial injustices are not only a concern within the community but it is also very prevalent within the Springfield Police Department. This injustice needs to stop both within our department as well as the community. We love this city. We love this police department but if we don't take this opportunity to make a meaningful change, we stand to have the next George Floyd happen here in the City of Homes. We wrote this letter anonymously due to the fact that we are fearful for our safety and retaliation. We are hopeful that you will look further into these examples listed above as well as the inequalities within the Springfield Police Department. If no real actions are taken, it is possible for us to write more letters with worst details of treatments that have occurred within the Springfield Police Department.

Thank You,

Some of the Minority Officers of the Springfield Police Department

cc: Honorable Mayor Domenic Sarno

cc: MassLive

cc: Af-Am Point Of View

Jay (6/19/2020)



# 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](mailto:atuwhite@gmail.com)*

**W**e should be forever encouraged by the divine dialogue recorded in Exodus 3 between Moses and our Creator, God. Upon accepting his new community organizing assignment, Moses sought to clearly understand how he was to present a new and provocative paradigm of living to a people conditioned to live out their lives under adverse conditions for more than 400 years. Moses felt as if he needed to correctly present the source of his newly appointed authority and power, so he asked for the name of the One who was appointing him (Exodus 3:13-14). God answered, “I AM WHO I AM.”

Now, in the 400<sup>th</sup> year since the African was forced to endure slavery and many other forms of barbaric

atrocities under the burden and banner of hatred, greed and godlessness, we should be reminded of the source from Whom we are to take our authority in presenting the liberating message of our God.

The Church, in effect, is the sure footprint of God, and the believers are to demonstrate an effectual compassion toward the people of God. I am reminded of

what one minister friend stressed: The Church of Jesus Christ is called to be a radical power which bends toward a relational glory impervious to other opposing forces. Moses was called to speak truth to power in a divine intentionality of radical liberation. Such powerful plans are needed and cur-

rently available to the community of God’s children who are calling and crying for the Church of Jesus Christ to be radically relevant to their struggles and systems of oppression.

A community blessed of God cannot be a passive force in the realm of a compelling and focused demonic

***The Church of Jesus Christ must hear the call of God to move off the mountain and take to the streets to reintroduce the restorative nature and intent of God.***

agenda. To be blessed and highly favored suggest a certain approaching wrestling match with Satan and the spirits of high dark places.

Moses had a major assignment—to end the cries of the children of God who were in prayerful agony and growing hopelessness. God moved His man off the mountain and assigned him to a community that

may have forgotten God’s name and the promises bestowed upon their patriarchs. We are no less endowed with the promise of God, no less worthy of a salvific solution and resolve.

The Church of Jesus Christ must hear the call of God to move off the mountain and take to the streets to reintroduce the restorative nature and intent of God.

Jesus stressed to His ‘then’ audience and still to His ‘now’ audience the purpose of His father in the Gospel of Matthew 9:37, “*The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few.*”

Paul is sure of his source and authority as he elaborated in 1 Corinthians 15:10, “*Yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.*” The Whom in our community must be introduced even today. ■



*Pastor Samuel Saylor, Sr.*



*Women in Ministry held a prayer vigil, “A Call To Prayer,” praying for the community, an end of injustice and gun violence, and praying for a healing of our land at the Mason Square green recently.*



*Members of Pioneer Valley Project Youth Voices United led a march to protest police presence in Springfield public schools and to promote Black Lives Matter, starting at Commerce High School and marching to Springfield City Hall.*

**Pastors, Ministers, Professors and Theologians, please submit your articles for the “Religious Point of View” to Rev. Dr. Atu White at: [atuwhite@gmail.com](mailto:atuwhite@gmail.com)**



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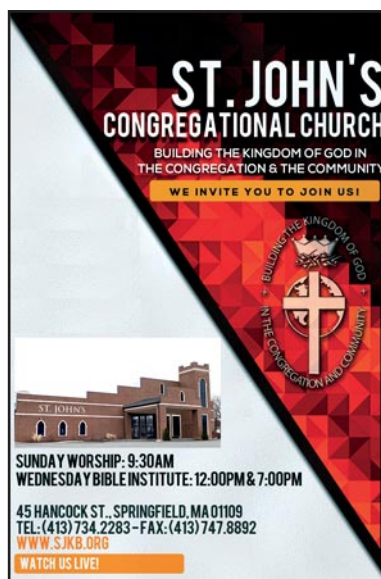


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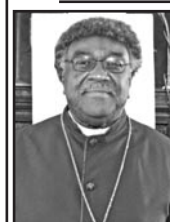


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# THE ARTS

## 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.*

**Y**ou can't. That's what everybody says to you, all the time. You can't ride your bike anywhere but the driveway.

You can't go to the store by yourself or go to bed whenever you want. So many things you can't do but in **"The Magical Yet"** by **Angela DiTerlizzi**, illustrated by **Lorena Alvarez**, maybe it's not quite the right time.

Some days, nothing goes right. You try and try to do something that everybody else in the whole world seems to be able to do and.... *you can't*.

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But wait a minute.

There's this "major game changer – a most amazing thought rearrange-er" that you have, and you don't even know it. You have "The Magical Yet!"

When you were a baby, you went from drooling to talking to walking, all because of the "Yet's magic." You learned to dress yourself because the Yet was with you. You learned to help Mom and Dad, to draw pictures, to play ball and fly a kite and run fast, jump high, sing a song, and have a dream – all because of the "Magical Yet."

With the Yet around, anything's possible because the Yet is okay with mistakes and oopies and do-overs. Your Yet doesn't care if you have to keep trying; in fact, trying is what your Yet likes best because by trying, "you're sure to get over" any problems you might have. And then soon, you'll be doing what you wanted to

## "The Magical Yet"

*By Angela DiTerlizzi, Art by Lorena Alvarez*  
c.2020, Disney Hyperion \$17.99 / \$23.49 Canada 40 pages

*Reviewed by Terri Schlichenmeyer*



do all along.

So keep practicing. Keep "leaping, dreaming, wishing..."

"Be patient." Everything you wish for will all work out.

"... with Yet you *can* get where you want to be."

It's the middle of summer and your whole family has been on some sort of not-normal for going on six months. Tempers flare. This isn't easy. "The Magical Yet" may be just what you need right this minute.

If you know a child who needs an infusion of patience, this book may make a difference. Author Angela DiTerlizzi lets kids pretend that "Yet" is a sparkly creature they were born with, one that paces the trials and events in their lives and

ultimately helps them accomplish their desires. With a cute, catchy, upbeat rhyme, the children in this book show that they can't do things "yet" because they haven't yet given it time. It's like being reminded to be patient, but without the heavy parental sigh that often accompanies it.

Even if that were all, your child would enjoy this book but what's a picture

book without pictures? Indeed, artist Lorena Alvarez keeps little page-turners occupied with appropriately-moody, sometimes-happy illustrations that are detailed, funny, and that make this book worth read-

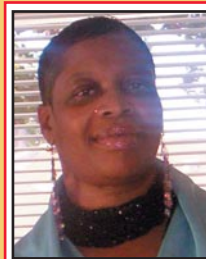


*Magical Yet author, Angela DiTerlizzi*  
**CREDIT Jim Gipe**

ing again.

And that's what you'll be doing, so beware: 4-to-8-year-olds will surely be able to muster the patience to want this book on repeat. With a tale like "The Magical Yet," your child can't resist.

## 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

## PEN & INK



**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](http://www.poetrytown.com)

### Terrace

By Juanita Torrence-Thompson

Gold sky all aglow.  
Terrace alive with flowers  
This is paradise.

### Peaceful

Savor strawberries,  
Melon, croissant by azure  
Lake, mountains. Peaceful.

### Chateau

Relax in chateau  
By Lake Geneva. Imbibe  
Beethoven, Shakespeare.

Copyright by Juanita Torrence-Thompson 2020

## Don't Let the Troubles of the World Take Your Eyes Off Me

By Berdia M. Brown

The signs of the times are here; be of good courage, don't fear,  
Destruction, evil, sickness, even death, is being felt all over the world.  
Don't become weary, anxious, or depressed,  
At best, these are things I have told you would be.

Did you not believe me?  
Haven't you heard? Did you not read my word?  
Did I not part the Red Sea so that people could be free?  
Don't worry about these things, they are destined to be.

It's been written, as you can clearly see  
Clear your mind as I am with you at all times  
I'm your father, your protector, your comforter, and guide  
I have never, and will never, leave you. I'm by your side.

Be at peace through these storms. I will protect you, don't be alarmed.  
What's happening in the world is meant to be.  
Keep the faith; simply put your trust in me.  
Don't let the troubles of the world take your eyes off me.

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Berdia M. Brown

## Nothing To Do and All Day To Do It

By John Tranghese

Nothing to do and all day to do it  
spells time on my hands if no pressing demands  
which dreadfully bores if I rest on my oars,

As idleness represents an impending disaster  
if permitted to rule and it becomes master,

So it will not twist me round its finger  
and control me as it puts me through the wringer,

For I will mind my P's and Q's  
as I really do not like to lose,  
I'll remain busy with no time to kill  
and in a tizzy for I won't be standing still,

Yes, I will keep my irons in the fire  
and not allow my sanity to expire,  
As my fertile mind will seize and bind  
and become captive if it is inactive,

So I plan to use it as I do not want to lose it  
and let it retire into a bottomless mire,

And I shall begin by twiddling my thumbs  
until the exercise numbs,

And I will pour over the local newspaper  
front to back in a long reading caper,

Then I will take an extended nap  
to fill in the open time gap,

Or play a game of solitaire  
and squander my time without care,

And I may leave my chores undone  
to bask in the healthful sun,

Or peruse the T.V. channels  
and muse over their biased panels,

Decisions, decisions on how to waste my time,  
considering anything and everything  
from ridiculous to sublime,

So if someone should care to share a sound  
suggestion,  
And help to get me through this awful session,  
Please do not delay and send it right away,  
as I will appreciate anything you have to say! ■

# THE ARTS

## ENTERTAINMENT REVIEW



*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.*

In March 2020, almost instantly, colleges, schools, bars, theaters, stores and arts centers all shut down. Because of this, opportunities disappeared

organizations and non-profits deeply impact their communities. And many are dedicated to their role as leaders.

In the face of adversity is born innovation. Necessity dictated the need to

to embrace the opportunity and present the festival online. On August 15, starting at 11 am, the Jazz Fest will present excerpts from past concerts, with artist cameos and live local emcees hosting the event.

“We are dedicated to continuing our work in the region as an arts leader,” says Kristin Neville, co-producer and founder of the Jazz and Roots Festival. “It was unanimous among our board of directors that we master the technology to present this online concert event.” A sub-committee of the board, along with Focus TV Springfield met to review clips of past concerts and curate the day-long event. Artists include Joey De-Francesco, Tia Fuller, Jesus Pagan, Avery Sharpe, Cory Henry, Lizz

Wright, Eric Krasno, Donald Harrison, Terri Lyne Carrington and more. Organizers are hoping they can still build that sense of community within a virtual framework.

What is remarkable is that despite closures, a collapsed economy and the virus continuing to spread, arts centers, festivals and artists are dedicated to continuing their work of engaging audiences with the arts. There is a powerful force keeping music and the arts alive. No one knows what post-Covid landscape will be for any industry including the arts. But in the meantime, I urge you to seek out organizations using the technology to continue to bring high quality arts and artists to the public. And when they ask for donations, please give! ■



*Springfield Jazz and Roots Festival Second Line Parade from 2017, with students from Community Music School, Charles Neville (left) and Henri Smith (center). Photo by Ed Cohen.*

all over the world for artists and the arts industry. Arts centers and non-profits continue to feel the pressure of this collapsing economy. They are faced with economic distress as ticket revenues, sponsorships and donations dry up as businesses and individuals re-route their donations to their personal economic survival. And this also impacts artists who are also struggling for work.

But consider this: the arts are critical to our society. The arts have the power to change minds and hearts, create bridges between cultures, shed light on important social and community issues. Through their arts programs, workshops, lectures, performances, arts

master new ways of presenting and performing – a “new, virtual platform” for the arts. Locally, there have been many presentations online, from individually sponsored events and DJ parties to established organizations. The Vermont Jazz Center has presented several events online including their annual piano festival featuring master classes with Orrin Hatch, Toshiko Akiyoshi, and others. The UMass Fine Arts Center now lists their online offerings and artists’ videos on the homepage of their website.

Festivals throughout the region have been canceled including the Green River Festival and the Newport Jazz Festival. But the Springfield Jazz Festival ([springfieldjazzfest.com](http://springfieldjazzfest.com)), decided



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# COMMUNITY

## GOOD NEWS



**Jay Griffin,**  
Stone Soul Festival  
Program Chairman  
[hayjay252@msn.com](mailto:hayjay252@msn.com)  
Tel: 413-636-3881  
or  
413-739-2947



### STOP!

I have been marching and protesting for over 50 years. I have been involved in sit-ins, school busing protests, opposition to de facto segregation, and demonstrations against police brutality. I have faced the national guard, state police, and various other law and order agencies. My name, along with the names of many of my friends, was on the book that identified us as the fire brands in the city of Springfield and beyond. I made headlines and went to court for inciting a disturbance in Mason Square where I was charged with assaulting police officers. I was young and reckless. I torched businesses and looted stores. I have learned something over the years – stop, look, and listen.

**Stop! Look! & Listen!** were the fundamental instructions given to us by our parents or others who loved and protected us. The stop means you should have yourself under control before you step out into traffic or other dangerous situations or circumstances. We need to be in control of ourselves as we deal with the coronavirus, protests, and the anger of 2020. We are beginning to lose control over our anger and frustration and disgust with the powers that be (police, politicians, national guard, and national media).

We must be under control when we make broad statements, when we speak of defunding the local police department, destroying national monuments and statutes, removing certain flags, and

retaliating against anything red like a bull in a China shop. We need to get ourselves in control before we leap into the heavy traffic of retaliation. The purpose of protest is to make people aware of circumstances which cause unfair consequences to individuals/organizations. These conditions create a great wound which hurts and divides our nation. America, regardless of the mismanagement and drawbacks, is a living miracle. Our goal should be to protect and heal the wounds caused by injustice. We need to come together so we can love and protect our nation. This nation is so vast that we need a police department. We agree it needs to be improved via training and supervision but our goal should be to heal the wounds and join our great country together.

### LOOK!

We need to look at the great unrest which has permeated our nation. Look at the wild extremes we have come to: torching, looting, removing flags and statues, all of which has nothing to do with healing the wounds. Those statues that are up were put there for a purpose. They provided historical significance regardless of whose race or culture they represented. To destroy them will cause a great deal of pain and resentment. This does not aid the healing process. Right or wrong, blood was shed and as Abraham Lincoln said, “We must honor those who paid the ultimate price for what they believed in.” It is difficult to embrace symbols that have been associated with racism and white superiority.

Look at the protestors of 2020 – youth, middle age/millennium, and older folks joining together to protest. Look at the potential of bringing all these forces together for positive change. We must resist the opportunity to retaliate out of frustration and resentment. Look at what God has given us in this great country of America. Look at the possibility of healing the wounds

## GOOD NEWS

August 2020

and realizing the goals of our forefathers. Look before you leap into hysterical and nonsensical oratory. Look at the many people we have who are willing to work for the changes needed. Look for the talent that is needed to help make that change. Look at all the resources available to support the necessary changes. Look for the opportunity to bring this nation together despite our past history. Look at the various methods used to divide us and look for those methods and ideas that will bring us together. We as a people have great compassion. We must be willing to forgive.

### LISTEN!

We must listen to the worldwide demonstrations and protests. America is expected to be a model of freedom and opportunity. Listen to the words: “of the

people, by the people, for the people, so help us God.” Listen to the words that heal the wounds. Listen to the words which embrace. Listen to expressions of love for one another. Listen and support the new energy of 2020. Listen to those who speak of bringing our people, our programs, our policies and our politicians together.

America has gone through many changes in its 400+ years of existence. If we have learned anything, it is that time changes all things. It is time for us to come together as a nation. We were new to the North American continent. We had enemies who change from time to time. We fought England, France, Spain, Mexico, Germany, China, Japan, Korea, Vietnam, Somalia, Afghanistan, and Italy at one time or another. We are now attempting to join with these countries in a united nations organization. Listen to the people!

**God Bless America**

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## SPECIAL TO POINT OF VIEW

# The Martin Luther King Jr. Family Services, Inc.

## Part II

By Ed Cohen



*Ed Cohen*

As we got more and more contracts we grew bigger and we eventually grew out of the community center. Because we needed more and more staff, we bought the house on Wilbraham Road for our administrative offices; there was no room in the community center for staff and offices to run programs out of as well, and we leased a property on Bay Street for our Mental Health Services which were administered by Denise Stewart.” Martin Luther King Jr. Family Services also started to manage the contract for a family shelter, a congregated living shelter for mothers and their children that they received from the Children’s Study Home and that was later picked up by the Center for Human Development.

The Food Pantry that was originally part of the MLK Jr. Presbyterian Church Fellowship House and transitioned to the MLK Jr. Family Services greatly increased in size and the Board Volunteers were no longer able to manage it. Eventually Andrea Glenn directed the Food Pantry operations. Dora Robinson said “We grew a lot over a ten-year period because we needed a lot more staff for reporting, record keeping, and fiscal. The Board initially were volunteers keeping the books and so forth, we needed full time staff for book keeping, fiscal operations, administrative staff, and so forth, so that’s how we started growing this way; we couldn’t survive with just volunteers.”

The MLK Jr. Community Center and later MLK Jr. Family Services never deviated from their original mission. Dora Robinson added that “We are still a full-service commu-



*Group photo of MLK Jr. Family Services, Inc. staff and volunteers with President & CEO Ronn Johnson at the recognition event in 2019.*

nity-based organization with a social justice perspective. We launched the first city wide MLK community celebration at the Eastfield Mall as our first attempt to celebrate Social Justice, and did that for years.”

Dora Robinson also mentioned that “MLK Jr. Family Services ran an alternative school ‘The MLK Jr. School of Excellence’ when Art Serota was on our Board of Directors. Art Serota encouraged us to set up the alternative school focused on young Black Men; Art Serota had his alternative school the Learning Tree, but because there was such a great need he encouraged us to set up a class at MLK; that was the foundation for the MLK School of Excellence Charter School.”

After 18 years of stellar leadership and service Dora Robinson left MLK Jr. Family Services to accept the President/CEO a position with the

Pioneer Valley United Way in 2008. After several interim President/CEO’s Ronn Johnson became the President/CEO of MLK Jr. Family Services in 2012. In 2013 he and the Board of Directors led an effort to launch a successful Capital Fund Drive to purchase the land that the Center was built on from the United Presbytery Church, securing the property in 2014. They also guided MLK Jr. Family Services Inc. to develop the Martin Luther Jr Social Justice Awards to recognize & celebrate leaders from the community who have helped to make gains in the areas of Education, Health Disparities, Economic Development, Entrepreneurship and Race Relations.

Another program that Ronn Johnson and the 16-member Board of Directors representing multiple sectors of the community helped to start was the Clemente Course in the Hu-

manities, a free academic program in partnership with Mass Humanities. Adults from low-income communities in Springfield were now able to take free college-accredited classes in the humanities and receive 6 transferable credits from Bard College.

The community wide Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. birthday program was restarted under the leadership of President/CEO Ronn Johnson in 2013 at the Community Music School of Springfield in partnership with CMSS Executive Director Eileen McCaffery and DREAM Studios under the direction of Benjamin Smith. Since 2014 the program has been taking place at the Mass Mutual Center in Springfield with up to 3,000 people in the audience and 300 students on stage paying tribute to Dr. King’s legacy with performances in music, spoken word, poetry, prose,

*continues to page 33*



SPECIAL TO POINT OF VIEW

# The Martin Luther King Jr. Family Services, Inc. — Part II

*continued from page 32*  
and dance. Springfield College joined the collaborative effort as a co-sponsor in 2016.  
Recently Martin Luther King Jr. Family Services collaborated with

Common Wealth Murals, that organized the Fresh Paint Springfield Project, and Rosemary Tracy Woods, executive director and chief curator of Art for the Soul Gallery to have the “Say Their Names” mural painted on

the side of the MLK Jr. Family Services Building to honor George Floyd and other victims of police brutality.  
From a core group of dedicated volunteers, the staff grew to 32 staff members with 125 volunteers who

made it possible for the Martin Luther King Jr. Family Services to serve the large volume of consumers needing services.  
Project Mustard Seed is alive and well! ■



*Group photo at the Clemente Course graduation in 2019 with MLK Jr. Family Services, Inc. President & CEO Ronn Johnson, course administrators, faculty and graduates.*



*MLK Jr. Family Services, Inc. Social Justice Award recipients at the 2019 Social Justice Awards program.*



# COMMUNITY

## CONGRATULATIONS

### ACTS Awards Three Weinhold Scholarships

By Linda Howell & Willette Johnson

**A**CTS (Action Centered Tutoring Services) was pleased to award three Weinhold scholarships for 2020 to Springfield high school graduates. This scholarship has been awarded annually since 1999 in honor of Russ and Dot Weinhold, two faithful tutors who also were founders of the program in 1986. ACTS is in its 35<sup>th</sup> year of providing free one-to-one tutoring and mentoring to the elementary students of Springfield. Up until Covid 19 caused the sites to close, there were eight sites operating in various churches and one site in a community center.



**Kareem Wedderburn** is a graduate of Central High School and will attend Westfield State University, studying regional planning with a concentration in urban planning. He is one of eight children and three of his older brothers have gone through college. Kareem writes that his experience at the Sacred Heart site has made him “a more well-rounded person and student. I have learned to be more sensitive and aware

of the education and mentorship of younger students. In addition, I have learned about the importance of serving the community and ACTS has been an excellent and meaningful way for me to practice that.”

*Kareem has faithfully tutored at Sacred Heart Church through several transitions and upheavals at the site, including a change of location, of site directors, and of students participating. Kareem was recommended for the scholarship by Site Director Jeannine Ruccio.*



**Roberta Hannah** graduated from the High School of Science and Technology as valedictorian and will attend Columbia University, majoring in biochemistry and African American and diaspora studies. She is an outstanding student, having been accepted to all eight Ivy League schools. Roberta writes that her

experience at the Evangelical Covenant Site “amplified my passion for helping my community, especially as it relates to education. I was given a first-hand opportunity to help correct the gap in achievement that communities like Springfield face. I hope to take my experience as a tutor, as well as the patience and compassion I have acquired, to further help my community through my research.” She also says that Columbia has a mandatory student contribution of \$2,400 with scholarship restrictions that she must cover out-of-pocket.

*She tutored at Evangelical Covenant Church and was recommended for the scholarship by Site Director Frances Corgnati.*



**Chasity Cronin** graduated from Springfield Renaissance Academy and will attend Keene State College, majoring in psychology. She tutored at Christ Church Cathedral with Site Director June Watson and St. John’s Congregational Church with Site Director Jackie Blount. In addition, Chasity was also an ACTS student when she was in elementary school at St. John’s. She writes

that “ACTS helped me experience important community skills with my older tutors and helped me gain the skill and better time management and possible pursuit of child psychology.” She has already moved to Keene, NH, to prepare for college in the fall.

*Jackie Blount, Site Director at St. John’s Congregation Church, recommended her for the scholarship.*

ACTS will be evaluating how to resume its program in the Fall with Covid 19 restrictions. For more information about how you can get involved, please contact Executive Director, Burt Hansen at 413-731-9810, check out our website [www.acts86.org](http://www.acts86.org), and like us on facebook. ■

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# COMMUNITY

## CONGRATULATIONS

### Springfield City Councilor Tracye Whitfield Named 2020 'Commonwealth Heroine'



**T**racye Whitfield of Springfield was honored June 24th as a 2020 Commonwealth Heroine by the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women.

State Sen. James Welch (D-West Springfield) recommended Whitfield for the recognition based on her work as a Springfield city councilor at-large and tremendous commitment to the people of Springfield. The Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women virtually celebrated its Commonwealth Heroines Class of 2020 by sharing a slideshow on social

media on June 24, the date originally scheduled for the in-person event at the Massachusetts State House.

Whitfield has a long, respectable history of community work within the city of Springfield. She has served as a co-chair of the Mason Square C3, a board co-chair of Wellspring Cooperative since 2018 (board member since 2017), a board trustee of Association of Black Businesses and Professionals since 2015, and board trustee of Sabis International Charter from 2013 to 2018.

She also works as director of contract sales for the division of Business & Community Services at Holyoke Community College and is director of business development for Training & Workforce Options – TWO – a partnership between HCC and Springfield Technical Community College.

"Tracye has become a leader in the Springfield community by working closely with elected residents, local organizations, and elected officials to improve quality of life," said Sen. Welch. "I am grateful for her service and her compassion for the wellbeing of individuals and societies."



**C**ongratulations to **Kimberly Williams**, daughter of Frank and Dora Robinson and mother of Francesca "Frankie" and Beau Elise, who was recently promoted to the position of Vice President, Diversity & Inclusion of Stanley Black & Decker. "Since joining the Company in 2017, Kimberly has led the development and expansion of our company's diversity and inclusion strategy and initiatives. With a mindset of inclusivity for all people, Kim has been a strong proponent of understanding and managing unconscious bias as well as a cham-

pion for full-spectrum diversity – enriching our culture and employee experience with her thoughtful leadership of our D&I programs.

She has played an integral role in her first 2.5 years, elevating the strategic focus and awareness of D&I both inside Stanley Black & Decker and externally with our partners. With Kim and her team's support and thought leadership – as well as the strong support from CEO Jim Loree and other members of the leadership team – the Company has been recognized by distinguished organizations such as Forbes, Mogul and Comparably, among others, for our progress. *Taken from Stephen Subasic to Movers & Milestones.*

We at *Point of View* are proud to add our Congratulations to Kim as well and thank her for the many contributions she made to our newsmagazine from 2004 to 2008 through her monthly column, "Career Tips".

You go, Girl!!!

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# COMMUNITY

## CONGRATULATIONS



*Ms. Kendrea Salvador,  
Executive Director*

**SPRINGFIELD, MA – June 1, 2020** — The Board of Trustees of the Martin Luther King Jr. Charter School of Excellence is proud to announce that it has confirmed Ms. Kendra Salvador as the school's next Executive Director. Originally from New Bedford, MA, a first-generation immigrant and first-generation college graduate, Ms. Salvador earned a bachelor degree in political science from the University of Massachusetts Amherst. She also earned a masters degree in educational lead-

## Martin Luther King Jr. Charter School of Excellence Names New Executive Director

ership and human development from George Washington University and a certificate of advanced graduate study in leading change from Harvard Graduate School of Education and Harvard Business School.

Ms. Salvador brings many years of experience in educational administration. She has served as the Principal of the William R. Peck Community School in Holyoke, MA, Director of School Support with the Achievement Network, supporting school leadership teams in Springfield Public Schools, and was also a teacher and school leader in Hartford, CT. She began her teaching career in south Los Angeles, California, as a member of Teach for America. Since July 2018, Ms. Salvador has served as the Principal of the Martin Luther King Jr. Charter School of Excellence, maintaining the school's strong and rigorous academic program. In addition to her duties as Principal, she has been serving in the role of Interim Executive Director since February 2020.

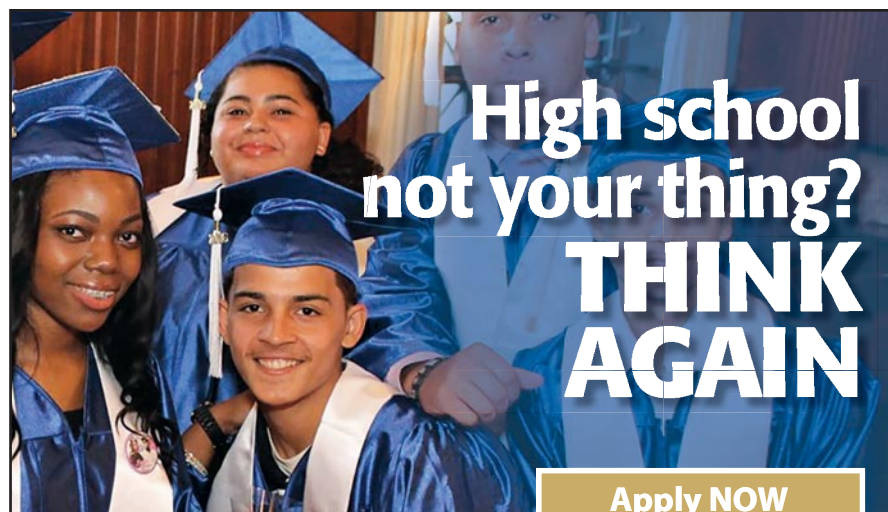
According to Jessica Putnam, Treasurer of the Board of Trustees and Member of the Executive Director Search Committee, "The Board of Trustees stands behind Ms. Salvador as the next leader for MLKCSE. In her time with the school, she has demonstrated a

strong ability to lead as well as significant expertise in educational development. She has also shown a deep commitment to our students and their growth, both academically and in following the principles fundamental to the school's culture. We strongly believe that she is well-suited for her new position and we can look forward to our students climbing to new heights under her leadership." Beth deSousa, Chairperson of the Board of Trustees, adds, "I am confident that the future education of our students is in very good hands with Ms. Salvador."

Newly installed Executive Director, Ms. Salvador states, "I am grateful for this opportunity. I look

forward to continuing to work as "a village" with our wonderful families and community partners to support and empower our students. We will remain focused on fostering an enthusiastic, creative community of learners by promoting social justice, purposeful academics, and character development. I look forward to leading our passionate and committed team at MLKCSE toward continued growth and academic success."

Ms. Salvador will be leading the Martin Luther King Jr. Charter School of Excellence, serving students from the Springfield area as the school's third Executive Director, after Dr. Calvin J. McFadden Sr. relocated to Houston, Texas. ■



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user\\_upload/mailInForm.pdf](https://www.springfield-ma.gov/elections/fileadmin/user_upload/mailInForm.pdf)



# COMMUNITY

## CONGRATULATIONS

### Special Delivery! Lawn Signs For Gateway To College Seniors

By Katara Robinson, Springfield Technical Community College  
Gateway to College Director



Springfield Technical Community College's Gateway to College staff recently celebrated the class of 2020 by delivering lawn signs to the

planning and time management, studying, tutoring, seeking extra help from her professors, and the many pep-talks she received from the Gateway staff.

Through a partnership with Springfield and Agawam Public Schools, STCC's Gateway to College program provides a pathway to a high school diploma and a meaningful college degree



**L to R: Anita Gallers (academic counselor), Talaija Lawson (graduate), Katara Robinson (Gateway to College program director) and Diana Cruz (Gateway to College food service worker)**

homes of each of the seniors, who are missing out on a traditional graduation as a result of COVID-19. Gateway to College students are unique in that they are dually enrolled high school students taking college courses while completing their high school graduation requirements at the college, so the staff wanted to acknowledge their special accomplishment.

Talaija Lawson, who was Gateway's student speaker at the Springfield Alternative High Schools' virtual graduation in June, was not sure she would graduate after experiencing some personal challenges and setbacks. In fact, when she started at Gateway she was not on track to graduate on time. However, through ongoing guidance, encouragement and support from the Gateway staff and her family, she is graduating a year early. She attributes her success to better

or field of work. It is a non-traditional high school program for students for whom the traditional high school environment was not working, and who are seeking an alternative setting. Gateway re-engages students and/or keeps them in school, thus reducing the dropout rate, improving students' futures through education, and supporting their imminent contributions to the workforce and community as educated young adults. The program values education, hard-work, goals, aspirations, second-chances, and providing hope, support, and opportunities for its students.

Gateway to College at Springfield Technical Community College is currently taking applications for the fall 2020 semester. For more information, visit their website at [stcc.edu/gateway](http://stcc.edu/gateway) or call 413-755-4581. ■

### STCC Student Accepted in NASA Summer Academy

**SPRINGFIELD, MA** – You might say Aminah Bergeron is over the moon about an opportunity this summer.



**Aminah Bergeron**

The Springfield Technical Community College student from Westfield was accepted to participate in the NASA Lucy Student Pipeline Accelerator and Competency Enabler (L'SPACE) Mission Concept Academy – Summer 2020 Program.

It's the second big opportunity Bergeron has had with NASA. In early March, Bergeron attended the NASA Community College Aerospace Scholars (NCAS) Onsite Experience at Wallops Flight Facility in Virginia. She learned about careers in science and engineering and worked with a team to design a prototype Mars rover, among other tasks.

Bergeron started the NASA L'SPACE Academy summer program on May 12. Described as an online virtual academy, the free 12-week program offers an interactive, project-based experience and workforce development training for students interested in working in the space industry. She is learning about NASA mission procedures and protocols from industry professionals. She meets virtually with fellow team members via video conferencing due to the health pandemic. They collaborate to complete mission-related team projects.

"This is an amazing opportunity," Bergeron said. "It could help me get in-

ternships. My dream is to one day work for NASA on their space missions.

Bergeron added that she and others in the program were invited to one of the upcoming rocket launches in October. She said she was excited about the prospect of seeing a live launch.

Bergeron, 26, is preparing for her second year at STCC. She recently changed her major to pursue a degree in Mechanical Engineering Technology. She likes the hands-on nature of the program. STCC in the fall will offer a combination of online classes and on-campus low-density labs following social distancing protocols. Mechanical Engineering Technology students train in a state-of-the-art machining lab and learn to use high-tech computer software and hardware.

Professor Beth McGinnis-Cavanaugh, chair of the Civil Engineering Technology program and advisor to the STCC chapter of the Society of Women Engineers, has been encouraging Bergeron to pursue her NASA dreams.

"I am impressed with Aminah's focus and resolve in pursuing these opportunities," McGinnis-Cavanaugh said. "These wonderful programs are available for STCC students. I encourage all of our students to 'shoot for the moon.' Too often, nontraditional and underrepresented students – especially women – are not encouraged or supported in science, engineering, technology and mathematics (STEM) fields. They're not seen – and don't see themselves – as future STEM professionals. Students like Aminah challenge stereotypes and move well beyond expectations and limits. And – as she works to achieve her own goals – she makes real the possibilities for other women who question their own identity and potential as future engineers and scientists. I'm proud of her. She has a bright future in STEM." ■

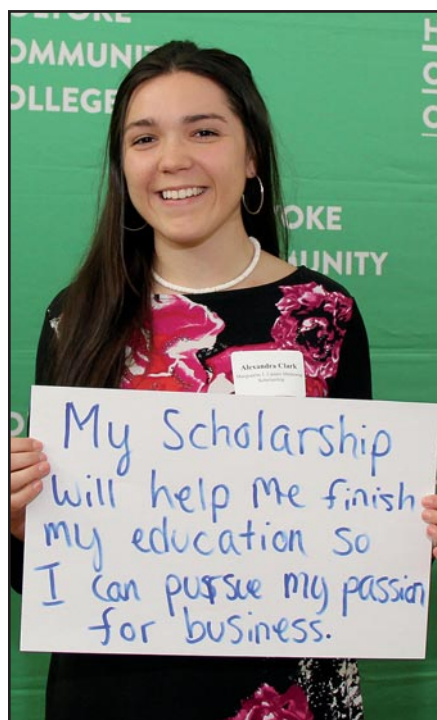


## CONGRATULATIONS

# 'The Greatest Gift I Have Ever Received'

## HCC Foundation awards \$210K in scholarships

**HOLYOKE, MA** – After Doris M. Kemble died in 1990 from cancer, her mother, Abbe, established a scholarship in her memory through the Holyoke Community College Foundation. Kemble had been a beloved member of the HCC nursing faculty, and her mother wanted to make sure her daughter's legacy continued.



**Alexandra Clark**

It does.

Since 1998, more than 60 HCC students have been awarded the Doris M. Kemble Nursing Scholarship. This year, one of three annual recipients is Versaviya Okhrimenko of Westfield.

"The scholarship means I can go another year at HCC and focus more on my studying and nursing skills rather than worrying about my financial status," said Okhrimenko. "It means I can finish my nursing degree and reach my dream. It is honestly the greatest gift I have ever received."

This spring, the HCC Foundation awarded nearly \$210,000 in scholarships to 200 incoming, current and transferring HCC students and will set a record for the number of scholarships it distributes for

the 2020-2021 academic year, 233.

Because of COVID-19, students need the money more this year than ever, says Amanda Sbriscia, HCC vice president of Institutional and executive director of the HCC Foundation. The number of applications for scholarships this year increased 22 percent, from 391 to 479.

"HCC students are always remarkable, but they have demonstrated incredible resilience this semester," Sbriscia said. "Many are working, but some have lost their jobs. Still, they are raising children, planning to transfer to four-year schools, changing careers, and blazing a path that for some no one in their family has taken before. When so much of our students' world was unknown as a result of a global pandemic, it was important to ensure they could still count on the HCC Foundation for scholarship opportunities that would inspire them to continue working toward their educational goals."

Over the years, the HCC Foundation, the nonprofit fundraising arm of the college, has provided more than \$3 million in student scholarships while also investing in classroom equipment and technology for select academic and student support programs.

Typically, the Foundation hosts a scholarship reception in May where scholarship recipients can interact with the donors responsible for their awards. But this year, of course, the reception was cancelled because of COVID-19 restrictions.

Instead, students were invited to record personal videos that were sent directly to donors.

"Thinking that someone is trusting me and investing in my career – thank you so much for that," Okhrimenko said in her video. "Through this award, you're helping a plain girl like me to become a nurse and save lives."

Below is a list of HCC Foundation scholarship recipients for 2020-2021:

**Agawam:** Christine Briggs, Mary Diaz, Danielle Eickelberg, Taylor Provost, Fereshteh Yousefi, Alina Yovenko.

**Amherst:** Fathima Amaniya, Marley Friedrick, Tyler Page, Margaret Schwartz, Xinhong Wu.

**Attleboro:** Shawn Viveiros.

**Belchertown:** Kathreen Collado, Katharina Griffin, Garret Hussey, Terice Kelly, Jonathan Mahaney, Laura Marks, Shelbi Moore, Joshua Morrison, Samantha Teschke.

**Bondsville:** Annalee Clough.

**Brookfield:** Johanna Bosen.

**Chicopee:** Lauren Bailey, Alexandria Bombardier, Cynthia Burgos, Evelyn Cruz, Joni George, Melissa Jenkins, Sumeyye Kirca, Tugce Kuruca, Felicia LaPointe, Nakkita MacDonald, Jordan Maroon, Sabrina McCullough, Jennifer Perez, Michael Polanco, Adam Randolph, Jacob Raymond, Brandon Ricardo, Annalisa Rizzo, Christopher Royster, Natalie St. George.

**Easthampton:** Noelle Fournier, Maya Grindrod, Sylvan Knight, Isabel Navarro, Melissa Rodriguez, Tai Schutz.

**Enfield, Conn.:** Jenelly Baez.

**Feeding Hills:** Ashley Ugolini.

**Florence:** Brent Blazej, Enette Claxton-Toliver.

**Granby:** Andrew Brunelle, Tianna Dwinell, Pegah Motazed, Hannah Sudsbury.

**Hadley:** Andrew Gnatek, Kimberly Russell.

**Hampden:** Brittany Brideau.

**Hatfield:** Leah Wilson.

**Haydenville:** Alexandra Pinschmidt.

**Holyoke:** Annmarie Arduino, Leonie Barkakati, Santyanee Chen, Jolene Christmas-Chase, Sharon Copes, Chamile Cruz, Nicole deJong, Erik Duni, Zachary Erwin-Stevens, Cate Boram Ha, Michael Kane, Emma Kane, Ellie Langlois, Jeannette Gia Mendez, Miren Neyra Alcántara, Diamar Oliveras, Sage Pasquale, Caitlyn Paul, Erick Rivera-Gonzalez, Naiomi Robles, Adelaida Rodriguez, Juan Rodriguez, Adelaida Rodriguez, Monica Rosa, Haley Saltares, Samacha Sam Marvin Santiago, Emma Schlegel, Bethany Serrano, Gladys Suero, Edgardo Torres, Deyanira Trujillo, Nathan Wytrwal.

**Huntington:** Alexandra Clark.

**Indian Orchard:** Danielle Bailey.

**Leeds:** Vanessa Oquendo.

**Ludlow:** Jade Blake, Audrey Pilon, Krystal White.

**Monson:** Dawn Rogers.

**Northampton:** Alia Alabsi, Todd Cummings, Maxwell Faytell, Elisabeth Laudone, Avery Rae Maltz, Aundrea Marschoun, Kya Stillson.

**Palmer:** Jenna Baruffaldi.

**Russell:** Kaitlyn Conway, Jordan Cooper, Lynn Mann, Jodie Paradis.

**South Hadley:** Mark Brown, Daniel Conway, Haley Dusseault, Maxim Ferdman-Hayden, Annalese Guerin, Rachel Irzyk, Matthew Lajoie, Matthew McLennan, Corinne Moskal, Zoe Moynihan, Sarah Poirier.

**Southampton:** Ashley Dalessio, Shelley Mather, Suzanne Surgen.

**Southwick:** Rachel Diamond.

**Springfield:** Safiyah Bey, Kyra Brown, Samantha Calvao, Heidi Cheng, Kayla Colby, Melanie Correa, Alison Coulombe, Yannelis Cruz, Daniel Cumba, Aniely Figueroa, Tyla Gervais, Joelle Gilliam, David Gonzalez, Jacqueline Johnson, Jessica Krolicki, Nanelle Le, Nelson Luciano, Alexis Martinez, Gabriella Miranda, Nusaiba Mohammed, Lindsey Place, Joseph Ramos, Nachaly Reyes Santos, Jennyliz Solis, Zadia Valenze, Alexandra Wallace, Coriann Willingham, Vanessa Wilson.

**Thorndike:** Jennifer Mason.

**Three Rivers:** Salina Aguilar, Samuel Farinloye.

**Ware:** Morgan Orszulak, Natasha Sawabi, Margaret Sullivan.

**West Springfield:** Lisette Antonmarchi, Chelsea Bergeron, Michael Bonafilia, Christian Castillo, Banen Mustafa, Maurice Ramogi, Mollyann Ryder, Melina Tzambazakis, Kristen Tzambazakis.

**Westfield:** Kara Adamites, Tania Alvalle, Nicole Argiro, Grace Cannady, Caleb Curd, Iesha Davila, Maksim Gelmudinov, Michael Gottardi, Zipporah Irari, Jaime Mason, Versaviya Okhrimenko, Kiley Pellegrini, Svetlana Shalygo, Dana Shambo, Olivia White.

**Westhampton:** Jessica LaFortune, Isabella Sacharczyk.

**Wilbraham:** Elizabeth Busker, Veronica Machuca, Piper Smythe, Destyni Watkins.

**Worthington:** Ann McGinley.



## COMMUNITY CALENDAR — AUGUST 2020



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

### August 6 (Thursday)

#### Eco Printing: Botanical Prints on Dyed Fabric

Massachusetts Horticultural Society

**Where:** 900 Washington St.,  
Wellesley, MA

**When:** 9AM-6PM

**Info:** [www.events.r20.constant-contact.com](http://www.events.r20.constant-contact.com)

### August 8 (Saturday)

#### Black Businesses Matter Day

Western Massachusetts Black Chamber of Commerce

**Where:** Court Square,  
Springfield, MA

**When:** 3PM-7PM

**Info:** [blackbusinessmatter.org/vendorsignup](http://blackbusinessmatter.org/vendorsignup)

### August 8 (Saturday)

#### Masked Paint & Sip

A Western Mass Tiny Homes Initiative

**Where:** State St., Springfield, MA

**When:** 5:30PM-11PM

**Info:** [www.eventbrite.com](http://www.eventbrite.com)

### August 8 (Saturday)

#### The Lights, Boston area

**Where:** Topsfield Fairgrounds  
207 Boston St,  
Topsfield, MA 01983

**When:** 5PM-9PM

**Info:** [register3.thelightsfest.com](http://register3.thelightsfest.com)

### August 15 (Saturday)

#### Springfield Jazz & Roots Virtual Festival 2020

**Where:** FOCUS Springfield  
Community TV

**When:** 11AM-10PM

**Info:** [springfieldjazzfest.com](http://springfieldjazzfest.com)

### August 20 (Thursday)

#### Western MA Child Care Round Table

**Where:** ZOOM call

**When:** 6PM

**Info:** 413-331-9355

### August 22 (Saturday)

#### 4th Annual Martin Luther King Jr. Social Justice Awards Luncheon

**Theme:** "The Time is Always Right to do What is Right."

**Where:** Chez Josef  
176 Shoemaker Lane,  
Agawam, MA

**When:** 11AM-1PM

**Info:** 413-331-9355

### August 23 (Sunday)

#### Milford Cars & Coffee Season Opener

**Where:** 58 River St., Milford, CT

**When:** 8:30AM - 11:30AM

### August 27 (Thursday)

#### 40 Under 40 Gala

Hosted By: Business West

**Where:** The Log Cabin  
500 Easthampton Rd.,  
Holyoke, MA

**When:** 5:30PM-8:30PM

**Info:** [www.businesswest.com](http://www.businesswest.com)

### August 29 (Saturday)

#### Virtual Celebration of 2020 Graduates

Springfield Technical Community College

**Where:** Streamed on Facebook & YouTube

**When:** 6PM

**Info:** [stcc.edu/commencement](http://stcc.edu/commencement)

### Tuesdays

#### Virtual Childbirth Education with Deep Relaxation

**Where:** ZOOM

**When:** 6PM-7:30PM

**Info:** [tinyurl.com/y394tpte](http://tinyurl.com/y394tpte)

### Thursdays

#### Holyoke Farmers Market

**Where:** Veterans Park,  
Holyoke, MA

**When:** 1PM-5:30PM

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