

Volume 44, No. 8 *"And Ye Shall Know The Truth..."* May 17, 2017

Matt Bell



Matt Bell Takes A Journey to Hell and Back

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Governing in a Complex World

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

The Truth Contributor

In a great city, City Hall must be a beacon to the people's aspirations, not a barrier.

- Thomas Bradley



Toledo's leadership faces current and future challenges that are much more complex, perhaps, than any time in history. Certainly, then, voters in Toledo's 2017 local elections will do well to choose those leaders with "adaptability, flexibility, and the ability to change."

Leading in a complex world also requires diverse perspectives and experiences. Yet, from a generational standpoint, local city leadership has remained consistently similar – baby boomer and older - for far too long.

Nick Komives, endorsed candidate for an at-large seat on City Council, is a millennial who is seeking to bring just the diverse thinking and creativity needed for the complex issues faced by our municipal government. Recently, Komives talked with me about his thinking, experience and vision.

Perryman: While you represent a fresh political face to many voters, you have an extensive background in political activism and campaigns. Please tell our readers about your experience.

Komives: So I grew up nearby in Genoa, Ohio. After high school I moved immediately to Columbus, and started volunteering on campaigns and attending protests at the height of the Iraq happening and when the nation was about to go into Afghanistan. And I also had my start with Senator Sherrod Brown's campaign. And while volunteering in those efforts, I met some people that worked for an organization called America Votes and I started out in voter registration and working to ensure that everybody has access to the polls. So I was registering voters in Columbus and being shipped all around the state of Ohio at first, and then I would go to places like Louisiana and North Carolina and I met tons of people from all walks of life. I was in rural communities and urban communities and got to hear some pretty interesting stories.

Once, I met a woman who was 92 years old and had never voted, but I got to know her because I drove her from her home for over one hour so she could get her state issued ID so she would be able to vote. But that's where I really got my start by trying to get people involved in the process and what's happening in their government.

I did a pretty good job and America Votes started to send me to work on specific campaigns. I started by working first on school levies and would build field plans and make sure they were being executed properly and looking at the numbers and data and that kind of thing. And then I started working specifically with labor unions and fighting back on right to work statutes and ensuring that people have the right to organize. And

then I finally got the opportunity to start working on LGBT issues, which was always my passion. I launched campaigns in several states across the country, and when they asked me where would you like to go next, I said home.

And so I came back to Toledo and worked on marriage equality and I was in charge of 44 counties in northern Ohio, essentially the upper half of the state, and then there was an opening with Equality Toledo and I was asked to become the executive director and I did. So now I have been working on various legislative efforts and also educating our community, and that includes LGBT people and allies and other community members as well.

So I have always thought running for office was something that I wanted to do because I had been so intimately tied to the political process for so long. I've met so many people and heard their stories and I always wanted to do something about it, to try to make people's lives better.

Perryman: What do you perceive to be our city's strengths?

Komives: I've watched what happens in Cleveland, Cincinnati and Columbus for a long time. Politically, economically, people care about those places and forget that Toledo exists, but the people here fight back at every instance, no matter what, and they work together in a unique way that I've not seen elsewhere, and I love that about Toledo.

I also think that there's movement, there's energy, there's action. People are hungry for change at this critical moment where Toledo is either going to thrive soon or it's going to fail, and that comes down to decisions that are being made now that are going to impact us over the course of the next 20-30 years. And as a younger person, I am concerned and think that younger

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The Sojourner's Truth

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Community Calendar

May 17

Phillips Temple CME Monthly Food Bank: 10:30 am to 12:30 pm;
All are welcome

May 20

Josh Project Splash Bash: 10 am to 2 pm; St. Francis de Sales;
Lots of activities including Ohio DNR Jet Ski simulator and Toledo
Safekids Fire Prevention Smoke House: 419574-2799
Search Lite CBC 3rd Annual "Women in Purple" Ceremony and Service: 10 am to noon; "Healing Hearts and Mending Souls"

May 21

Braden UMC 93rd Annual Women's Day: 10:30 am service and luncheon; Guest speaker Mayor Paula Hicks-Hudson; "But a woman who fears the Lord shall be praised"
Greater St. Mary's MBC Ushers' Ministry 5th Anniversary: 4 pm; Guests Rev. John Walthall and Mt. Ararat MBC: 419-536-5155

May 27

1st International Covenant Connection Regional Leadership Workshop: 10 am to 1 pm; End Time Christian Fellowship; "Empowered to Serve & Lead;" Host Bishop James Williams, Sr; Co-Host Pastor Edward Turner: 419-787-7466

May 28

Ebenezer MBC Women's Day Service: "Christian Women with Inner Beauty;" 11 am service – guest speaker Min. Latasha Henderson of St. Marks – Mattison, IL; 4 pm service – guest speaker – Min Yvonne Traywick of Minneapolis: 419-242-2581
United Church of God Free Fish Fry Community event: After 10 am service: 419-810-6335

June 10

True Vine MBC Career and Health Fair with Community Partners: Noon to 3 pm; Face painting, bounce house, DJ K-Luv; Free health screenings

This Is How The End Begins... Money!

By Lafe Tolliver, Esq.
Guest Column

Well, for those who are still able to even look at a TV screen and with all of the unbelievable missteps, untruths, lies, hypocrisy and "alternate facts" of Trump's hypnotized minions who still do his bidding, the end is mercifully near.

The dark drama of this country watching a mentally-unhinged president try to circle the wagons before he is lifted out of his Oval Office chair and brought up before a federal judge on money-related charges, let it be known that his "god," the god of money or mammon will also cause his downfall.

It now appears from several reported sources that the Department of Treasury is ramping up its own investigation as to possible collusion charges vis a vis money irregularities with some Russian fat cats and even possible money laundering charges via Trump properties and/or loans to Trump or his associates and family members.

If proven to be true, Trump could face these charges apart from any possible and future impeachment charges; and these possible money laundering charges or questionable banking practices involving yet to be named Russian plutocrats could be the final and last act for a man that the former FBI head called "crazy."

The gist of these charges may stem from acts done before he became president and while or even before he ran into financial difficulties with some prior business bankruptcies that may have left him obtaining needed funds from "dark" sources (not black people but questionable Russian billionaires who would only be too happy to loan their monies in order to have Trump in hock to them).

Much more will be developed on this tantalizing angle as more news media outlets re-direct some of their resources to fleshing out this report from the treasury department.

This is the department of the US Treasury that specializes in crimes of money and money laundering and shifty banking practices.

They purportedly "stumbled" across these possible tie-ins to Trump when they were investigating other possible financial crimes and which crimes cross international borders.

Knowing how Trump thinks that he is impervious to outside attacks since he is president, it will be a most interesting development to see how the feckless Republican GOP Congress will react or not react to any proven allegations that their "Chosen One" is in "cahoots" with the Russkies.

If it is proven to be true, then you can understand why Trump decried every report regarding Russia and any collusion as being, "fake news!"

Trump, I think, is coming to realize that the gig is up and with the firing of FBI Director James Comey not having the outcome that he vainly hoped for, this investigation of the Russkie money trail well may prove to be his undoing.

Since Trump worships the almighty dollar, he in turn had to give up something to this god for it to give him its perks and goodies and that something was his conscience and any shred of acceptable moral behavior.

Trump is finding out something that people who worship these man-made gods have found out and that is they are fickle and will turn on you on a dime or a whim and will leave you bare naked before a laughing public.

My theory about Trump is this: he ran for the office of the presidency because he was bored and wanted the thrill of the headlines and the applause of the people. He did not really count the cost if he were to win.

That is why he said that if Hillary won, the election was rigged. That was his out for him losing since I think he was shocked as anyone else when she lost since all of the pollsters had her waltzing into the White House with Bill Clinton in tow with visions in his head of seeking out docile and shapely interns to bamboozle with his Southern charms.

So, for Trump to have to bear down and actually govern, it was not his Apprenticeship style since now he had to contend with co-equal branches of government who could stifle him in his agenda of treating America as a trinket or a bauble to do with as he pleased.

When he was rebuffed for his repeated agenda and legislative failures, the facade and the sheen of being president quickly wore off but he still lived and acted as if he was in the boardroom of the Apprentice program, firing whomever he wished at his sole whim.

So, now the financial sharks from the Treasury De-

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Ashford Announces State Release of over \$2.5M in Funding for UT, Regional Development

Funds to help campus research facilities, energy efficiency upgrades and small business technology

Special to The Truth

State Rep. Michael Ashford (D-Toledo) last week announced the release of some \$2.5 million in state funds to several projects for the University of Toledo (UT) and a local business start-up's technology commercialization. The funding was approved today by the state Controlling Board, a panel tasked with oversight of state spending.



Rep. Michael Ashford

The University of Toledo received \$1,617,800 to upgrade seven existing buildings with the most critical need for weatherproofing, new roof replacements and façade restorations. The university also received \$811,920 to improve close to one-third of North Engineering, a classroom and laboratory building on the main campus, to make it more energy efficient and cut down on energy costs.

"As one of Ohio's leading public institutions, the University of Toledo is making strides to provide our community, students, faculty and staff with state-of-the-art facilities through these smart investments," said Ashford. "I am always excited to see our region develop and grow with an eye on

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Senator Edna Brown Condemns GOP Budget Amendment that Poisons Ohio's Children, Introduces Counter Amendment

Last week, State Senator Edna Brown (D-Toledo) condemned an amendment to the state budget offered by Republican State Representative Derek Merrin (R – Monclova Township). The amendment usurps local control over lead regulation. It will poison Ohio's families. Brown will introduce a new amendment to remove this dangerous provision from the state budget bill.

"Representative Derek Merrin introduced a last-second budget amendment that further destroys local control and risks further poisoning Ohio's children," said Brown. "In fact, *The Cleveland Plain Dealer* Editorial Board referred to Rep. Merrin's amendment as the 'Poisoning Ohio's Children Act.' In my district, Toledo's City Council worked with an array of community and business leaders to pass a lead control ordinance. Representative Merrin's proposal would reverse those efforts."

Merrin inserted his amendment into the main operating budget, Substitute House Bill 49, in April. It attacks local control by removing the ability of local governments to regulate anything lead related. This ensures that children in Toledo and beyond will continue to live in homes and attend daycares contaminated by lead paint.

"Instead of making reasonable efforts to contain lead paint in rental homes and daycare centers, Representative Merrin's budget amendment does the exact opposite," added Brown. "I am introducing an amendment to remove his changes."

Brown will soon introduce an amendment that removes the language inserted by Merrin. It will allow local governments to continue to take reasonable steps to stop lead exposure in homes and daycares.

"Legislators are supposed to be working to make Ohio a better place to live and raise a family," said Brown. "We should make sure local and state governments work together, not against one another. If allowed to stand, Rep. Merrin's amendment does nothing less than ensure Ohio's children continue to be exposed to lead poisoning and all the terrible effects that has on young minds and bodies."



Edna Brown

Kaptur Statement on President Trump's Firing of FBI Director James Comey

Congresswoman Marcy Kaptur (OH-09) a senior member of the House Defense Appropriations Subcommittee and Co-Chair of the Congress' Ukraine, Hungary and Poland Caucuses issued the following statement, on the firing of FBI Director James Comey:

"The firing of Director Comey is a very troubling, in fact, alarming action.

It casts a deep shadow on the Trump Administration's willingness to continue aggressively pursuing the truth about Russia's meddling in our internal elections and affairs, attempting to disrupt our international alliances, and building a web of connectivity to Trump confidantes.

"With the President and many in his inner circle demonstrating significant ties to foreign interests, especially Russia and China, the American people are owed an impartial, exhaustive, and honest investigation into whether Russia or other predators have an undue influence over this Administration.

"If for example, General Flynn who sought immunity from prosecution is

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partment, career employees who are pledged to the nation and not to a personality like Trump, smell blood in the waters and they are readying their harpoons (a/k/a: subpoenas) to catch their prey: Anyone with financial ties to Trump whom are seen as dubious and suspect and in violation of the laws regarding negative money collusion and money laundering.

I always say, "When in doubt, follow the money trail!"

My prediction? Within six months or less, the evidence will be sufficient to bring federal charges against either Trump or his business empire or family members for crimes against the US government regarding illicit use of money, either foreign or domestic.

So, the next time Trump screams, "fake news!" or everything about this Russian collusion is a, "hoax!", just remember, "Follow the money trail, it will never fail you!"

Contact Lafe Tolliver at tolliver@Juno.com




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Matt Bell: Helping Himself and Others to Recover One Day at a Time

By Linda Nelson

Sojourner's Truth Reporter

What do you think of when you hear the phrase "heroin addict?" Perhaps you won't picture someone who desperately wants to live but doesn't know how. And most likely you won't envision a person who has climbed out of the lowest imaginable places in order to break free from a life of dependence, mend a shattered life, heal broken relationships and begin the long arduous process of assimilating back into a society that doesn't understand addiction and sometimes doesn't care.

And you probably won't think of Matt Bell: president and co-founder of Team Recovery – a rescue and recovery nonprofit addiction advocacy group; the COO and co-founder of Midwest Recovery Center – an inpatient addiction treatment center scheduled to open in August and a former heroin addict who has committed his life to bringing light into the darkness of addiction and creating a place of hope and success in the midst of hopelessness and failure.

Unfortunately Bell's story echoes those of many others as he describes the series of events that led to the day he wanted to end his life

"I had so much potential," Bell said. "I experienced a lot of good early on in my life. I was raised in a loving family, and went to private schools." He would graduate from St. Francis de Sales High School with a 4.0 GPA, then enroll at the University of Toledo on a full athletic baseball scholarship, where he looked forward to earning an international business degree and a future playing professional baseball.

"College was good. I was being scouted by three major league teams," said Bell. But just two years in, he tore his rotator cuff and needed surgery. "Ninety Percocets turned into a Percocet addiction," he said.

It was soon after that Bell would drop out of college, lose his scholarship and sell everything that he had. "That was the beginning," he remembered. "And then it was nine years of in and out and doing what I had to do.

He says that it only got worse from there as he racked up misdemeanor charges, was arrested for some home invasions trying to support his heroin habit.

During that time, he says that he overdosed on heroin three times, went through rehab 28 times, and was arrested 13 times in four states and convicted of felonies in two. He says that he even spent five days on an ICU ventilator but still hadn't fallen far enough.

"It was all bad but it was nowhere near the worst," he said. "I remember calling my mom multiple times and I'd say mom could you please just leave a sandwich on the front porch? I know you're not going to let me in the house but please leave a sandwich out there, I haven't eaten in four days."

His mother's response was "Matt if you come over here I'm going to call the police."

Another time Bell describes a phone call to his mother, "It was during the winter. It was a blizzard and I was cold, and on the streets," he said. "I said

mom could you please just let me in."

Again, his mother told him, "Matt if you come over here I'll call the police."

He says that he knew it had been hard for his mom to get to that point. "I'm a mama's boy through and through," Bell said. "In fact she was my biggest enabler in my addiction. My mom had gained weight and became depressed. The only time she slept well was when I was in jail.

"I know that it tore her apart to say 'no you stay out in that blizzard.' I have a six year-old and I can't imagine saying no to him. It's hard enough taking his Pokémon cards away. I found out later that after she hung up she would just cry.

"I'm the kind of person I love people. I like relationships. I like community. I like friends. I like partnerships. I love collaboration. I love life. I love my family, but I've never been a person that wanted to die. And at the end it was literally to the point where I couldn't call anybody and have them answer the phone. I didn't have any friends. I was homeless in Toledo and I wanted to die.

"My son was taken away by that point. I couldn't talk to him. I couldn't see him. I couldn't provide for him. It was just all negative. I looked at all of the things that I had to overcome to get my life back and I thought, I have no license, I have no phone and if I did have a phone nobody would answer. I can't get around.

"Then there was child support, family court, felony warrants, and I was like it's going to take forever. I'm not going to ever overcome this stuff even if I do get clean I'll just probably be so depressed I'll just go right back out. That's what I thought and I just did not see any light at the end of the tunnel."

Bell said while his mom was at work, he snuck into her garage to end his life. "I'd done the last of my heroin and I thought alright now I'm going to kill myself in peace where I'm comfortable," he said. "I was suicidal and I was in my mom's garage and I had a gun in my mouth. I wanted to die because I didn't think that I could stop using."

But Bell said his love for his mother kept him from pulling the trigger that day.

"I thought my mom's going to come home and open the garage door and see her son with his brains all over the garage," he said. "That's the reason I didn't do it."

Today Bell is clean and sober and committed to helping others get through it. "It's been a process," he said. "Sometimes the hardest part of the process is getting out of the addict mentality." And he said that even during treatment he continued to identify himself as a junkie, and a thief and a cheater and a liar until his counselor helped him to see things differently.

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"The counselor reminded me that if I could live as man of character everything would take care of itself," said Bell. "It blew my mind. Wow, I thought, if I could just do the right thing people would start to trust me again."

Part of the process involved the transition back into everyday living. "I had to learn how to get a license, and how to pay bills and open a bank account. All of the things that seem so simple," Bell said.

Meanwhile Bell was also able to incorporate the things he and his group of friends had learned during the recovery process that not only helped them to regain their own lives, but would also become a foundational principle for Team Recovery.

"We were all coming off of heroin and I don't know why but I just wanted to leave," Bell said. "I felt like I wanted to go and use heroin and I would look at somebody who had been there longer than me and I would be like how is that person doing pushups right now when I can't even get out of bed?"

"And I remember looking at him and seeing that he was doing better. And I was like if he can get there and he's only four days clean then I know I've just got to hang on another day, just another day. Then there was another kid that was sober a day less than me who did the same thing with me. He saw me starting to feel better and he was like 'you know if he can do it I can do it.'

"That's what we did for each other. We were all in there at the same time and that's basically what we did. We loved each other until we could love ourselves. If we would have been in separate places or if I had just been at home or in a jail cell I wouldn't have made it.

"It was how do I get through this fight with my child's mom without going back out and using? I had to call someone who had been through it, and then learn how to get through. It was literally baby steps of learning how to live and to build some self-confidence and some self-worth."

It was 2015 when Bell said he and his friends were headed to an NA meeting when they happened upon an addict standing by the freeway. "We were in detox together and we were like a month clean and we were on our

way to a meeting," said Bell. "There were about 10 of us in my friend's jeep because none of us had cars or licenses at the time, and we saw someone holding a sign asking for money."

Bell said he recognized the man from a previous treatment and didn't want that sign to represent the face of addiction. "So we decided that we would go down to Cherry and Summit and hold up signs saying, Heroin is Killing Our Town- Free Hugs, and We Do Recovery, Recovery is Possible so that people would know that we were heroin addicts but we were not using heroin and yes heroin is bad but we're not all bad people, and that there is hope for people like us.

"We took pictures and put them on Facebook and we woke up the next day and there was like a half a million views and 200,000 likes."

From there Bell says they created a phone line, an email address and a website, then formalized the project through the Secretary of State for \$99. "We were getting all these phone calls from people asking for help and we were like only 90 days clean," he said. We thought, we need to do something to take that extra step, so we decided to turn it into a nonprofit. We found an attorney who donated time, but we were all still living in a half-way house and we were all still in treatment.

"But our goal was: to give back to the community, change the stigma associated with heroin addiction, bring more treatment into the community, make treatment more affordable and get people to understand that once you get clean you can still have fun in life. Putting down drugs and alcohol seems like a death sentence to a lot of people but it's literally the beginning of your journey."

Today Team Recovery operates under three areas of service. The awareness component takes the nonprofit team inside of schools in Michigan, Indiana and NW Ohio where they speak to students ages 10-18 about life. "We don't talk about heroin," said Bell. "In fact 85 percent of our talks have nothing to do with drugs or alcohol." He says instead they talk to the kids about issues that are important to them such as how to deal with drama on Facebook or how the relationships they have can influence decisions.

The second service Team Recovery offers is treatment referral. Bell says that he works to make vital connections throughout the area so that no one is turned away from treatment. "If someone calls us then I call D.A.R.T. – the Lucas County addiction resource unit – and if they say that there is a wait I'll call a different county," said Bell. "That's what we do, we create connections with all Ohio counties so they can send people to us and we can send people to them."

The third division of Team Recovery is FAD (families after addiction or death), a family support group that Bell started because he'd seen the kinds of things that his own family had experienced when he was using drugs. Here the principles of the organization continue.

"An addict can help another addict and a student can help another student so a family member can help another family member," said Bell. He says that groups are held in an open forum that is supportive and consists of people who love someone struggling with addiction.

"These are family members who have witnessed an overdose or are enablers and are looking for resources," he said. "Or those who don't know how to trust loved ones yet and may question whether they should give the car back."

Also on the horizon for Bell is the opening of Midwest Recovery Center – a 38-bed in-patient rehabilitation center located in Maumee where Bell said the focus will be on a totally drug-free treatment and recovery program.

"There won't be any opiate medications like Suboxone or Methadone because we want to focus on the problem and stop the dependence on all meds." He said he wants people to experience freedom from the medications that keep them tied to some outpatient facilities and he knows the challenges that exist.

After knee surgery Bell said he chose to opt out of any pain



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Matt Bell

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Headline: Library Welcomes Award-Winning Author of *Hamilton* to Close Authors! Authors! Season

Special to The Truth

To no one's surprise, the musical *Hamilton* absolutely cleaned up at this year's Tony Awards. For those eager to experience the phenomenon, the musical will be in Chicago through the end of the year. Whether you're looking for a good place to start or interested in taking a deeper dive into the life of Alexander Hamilton, look no further than *Authors! Authors!*

Ron Chernow's award-winning and celebrated biography was Lin-Manuel Miranda's muse and guide when he was writing the musical, and he himself is well known as an exciting and powerful speaker. The Library is proud to present his appearance at the *Authors! Authors!* series finale held at the **Stranahan Theater, May 31 @ 7:00 p.m.**

The author will discuss Alexander Hamilton and his resonance and importance to Americans today, and behind-the-scenes on how his book became a Broadway phenomenon.

Other best-selling books by Ron Chernow include *The House of Morgan*, winner of the National Book Award; *Titan: The Life of John D. Rockefeller*, nominated for the National Book Critics Circle Award; *Washington: A Life*, which received the Pulitzer Prize for Biography; and *Alexander Hamilton*, nominated for the National Book Critics Circle Award and adapted into the award-winning Broadway musical *Hamilton*. Chernow has served as president of PEN American Center, has received six honorary doctoral degrees, and was awarded the 2015 National Humanities Medal. He lives in Brooklyn, New York. For tickets or more information on the event, please visit toledolibrary.org/authors.

Future author visits to mark on your calendar:

Amor Towles

Friday, June 9 at 7 p.m.

Maumee Branch

Join us for a special after-hours event at the historic Maumee Branch Library, featuring the celebrated NYT best-selling author of *Rules of Civility*. Towles will highlight his recent success *A Gentleman in Moscow*.

Karen Robards

Wednesday, June 14 at 7 p.m.

Sanger Branch

Celebrate the Sanger Branch grand re-opening with best-selling author Karen Robards, who will discuss her brand new book and series *The Ultimatum*.

Tiffany Lewis

Saturday, June 17 at 1 p.m.

Kent Branch

Local author and confidence coach Tiffany Lewis will present her book *Need a Job? Then, DoSUMthing!* and workshop marketing methods and techniques.

Martha Conway

Wednesday, July 12 at 7 p.m.

Maumee Branch

Join award-winning author Martha Conway as she discusses the newest novel in her Ohio Trilogy, *The Underground River*.

Julie Rubini

Thursday, July 13 at 7 p.m.

Main Library

Join us for the release of an engaging new biography for middle grade readers featuring *Virginia Hamilton*, one of the most honored authors of children's literature in the twentieth century.

Special Open Book Event Addressing the Opiate Crisis:

Sam Quinones

Tuesday, October 3 at 7 p.m.

Main Library

Presented by the Library in special partnership with the Mental Health & Recovery Services Board of Lucas County, the author discusses his award-winning book

Dreamland: The True Tale of America's Opiate Epidemic.

For more information, please visit toledolibrary.org/open-book or contact:

Ben Malczewski, Media Relations Coordinator 419.259.5193.

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Books 4 Buddies Meet and Greet

Sojourner's Truth Staff

Judge Connie Zimmelman, Lucas County Juvenile Court, and Judge Lisa McGowan, Lucas County Domestic Relations, stopped by the Books 4 Buddies (B4B) Meet and Greet on Saturday, May 13 at the Holland Branch Public Library to applaud in general the work of the youthful Ambassadors for their efforts in raising money and distributing books to underserved portions of the Toledo area population.

In particular, the judges praised a recent program initiated by the Ambassadors to distribute books to youths being held at the Juvenile Justice Detention Center.

That part of the program came about as a result of a meeting with Ambassador Jordan Topoleski, a junior at Sylvania Southview; MENtor Christopher Smith and B4B Founder Laneta Goings with the administrator of the Lucas County Juvenile Detention Center

Books 4 Buddies is a campaign that encourages literacy and provides

leisure reading material, free of charge, to disadvantaged youth, especially boys, in northwest Ohio. The brainchild of Toledo native, Touré McCord and his grandmother, Goings, B4B receives support in the form of new and "gently used" donations from participating bookstores, local businesses and the general public.

Books 4 Buddies is represented by "Book Ambassadors," area male teenagers, who help promote the program at public appearances and special events that include guest speakers and outings with local leaders and celebrities.

This year, the ranks of the Ambassadors have been supplemented by the addition of two exchange students from Africa – Birama Ndiaye from Senegal and Abdul Rafiq Lartey from Ghana.

Books 4 Buddies has donated thousands of books that have been delivered throughout NW Ohio and beyond.



Ambassadors and guests



Judges Zimmelman and McGowan address Ambassadors



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St. John's 20/20 Program Offers Opportunities to a Diverse Group of Students

By Fletcher Word

Sojourner's Truth Editor

Twenty two years ago, St. John's Jesuit High School began its 20/20 program with the intent of offering the school's educational opportunities to a more diverse range of area youth – particularly the underserved – minorities, low-to-moderate income.

Two decades later, more than 230 scholars "have graduated from St. John's Jesuit, gone to college, are achieving in their careers and are doing service and leadership in their communities around the country," notes the school's literature on the 20/20 program.

The 20/20 Jesuit Scholars Program is an all encompassing plan of action that provides not only scholarship assistance to help defray the cost of a St. John's education but also academic assistance to ensure the young men stay on track.

The program includes a two-week summer session prior to freshman year, the monitoring of scholars' grades, structured study sessions and college counseling, among other aspects.

"Anything that could provide for their success, that's what we do," says 20/20 Student Life Director Mary Ann Barabino who has overseen the pro-



Director of External Relations Janet Galecki and 20.20 Student Life Director Mary Ann Barabino

gram for the past 14 years. That assistance, she notes, could include help with transportation, clothing and financial help with the costs of college application or college entrance examinations.

The 20/20 program is a "support system," says Barabino, that tries to ensure that participating students are successful academically and socially during their years at the school, as well as prepared for the transition to college or career after they graduate.

... continued on page 10



Julian Hill, Marcus Jarrett, Brian Pietz, Misael Beltran-Guzman

25¢ bus fare for bicyclists May 15-21.

May is National Bike Month and when riders "Bike-N-Bus" using the TARTA on-bus bicycle racks, fare is just 25¢ Monday, May 15 through Sunday, May 21, 2017. For a complete list of Bike Month activities, please visit TMACOG.org/BikeMonth



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Raising the Cap for Scholarships with the Toledo Mud Hens and NOSF

Special to The Truth

The Northwest Ohio Scholarship Fund (NOSF) will be hosting its 5th annual Raise The Cap event on Tuesday, June 13 at Fifth Third Field. Thanks to this year's Grand Slam Sponsors Morgan Stanley and Comfort Line guests can plan on a fun evening with Toledo's favorite Mud Hens as they take on the Gwinnett Braves.

The event will be held in The Roost, on the 3rd floor of the stadium that overlooks the field. Tickets are \$55 and include dinner and a reserved seat. To make a reservation visit www.nosf.org, call (419) 720-7048 or click on <https://tinyurl.com/RTC061317>

Proceeds for this annual event will go towards helping children in the northwest Ohio community receive an education that best meets their needs which may include private education or homeschooling. Raise the Cap helps make private education affordable for parents in need by raising funds for NOSF. NOSF provides scholarships for students in 19 counties across northwest Ohio including Allen, Crawford, Defiance, Erie, Fulton, Hancock, Henry, Huron, Lucas, Ottawa, Paulding, Putnam,

Richland, Sandusky, Seneca, Van Wert, Williams, Wood and Wyandot counties.

Event Co-Chair Rita Martin says of Raise the Cap, "Ken and I are thrilled to co-chair and sponsor this wonderful evening for families and friends. We are committed to NOSF's mission to help empower parents to make the best educational choices for their children with the support of a NOSF scholarship."

NOSF has assisted parents in providing private education or homeschooling for their children through need-based scholarships since 1999. Over 14,000 students have received \$12 million in scholarships. NOSF Alumni have a 100% high school graduation rate.

The Northwest Ohio Scholarship Fund is part of the Children's Scholarship Fund (CSF) national network of scholarship granting organizations. CSF and its partner programs are committed to empowering families in need with the ability to choose the K-8 schools that best meet their children's needs, regardless of their ability to pay or where they live.

St. John's...continued from page 9

"We are constantly monitoring them," she says, "and teaching them responsibility and maturity."

"It's a great school overall, I've made great connections with other students and my teachers," says Brian Pietz, a junior and 20/20 student who entered St. John's in his freshman year. Pietz maintains a 4.25 cumulative grade point average and in addition to his academic achievements has been involved in a variety of other activities during his years at the school. He is in the Ambassador Society, a student leadership group that assists at school events, and QuestBridge, a non-profit group that links high-achieving students with educational and scholarship opportunities at leading colleges.

Pietz is also a member of the National Honor Society and plans to go into a medical field, most likely at The Ohio State University.

Misael Beltran-Guzman, also a junior who entered the school in his freshman year, has top grades and is in the QuestBridge program and the National Honor Society. "I am grateful for the opportunity to come here," says Beltran-Guzman. That opportunity includes being able to go to Guatemala this summer with a model UN team and being elected, by his peers, to the post of class vice president.

Beltran-Guzman plans to major in education and will probably attend Case Western Reserve University.

Sophomore Marcus Jarrett entered St. John's in the eighth grade but, unlike most 20/20 students, Jarrett was well aware of the school and the excellent academic environment he would be undertaking. Jarrett's father is a St. John's graduate.

"I like it a lot," says the young man of the school, its students, faculty and staff. A member of Toledo EXCEL, a scholarship incentive program at the University of Toledo, Jarrett is on track to enter the UT on a full scholarship, if he so chooses. At St. John's he has played football and basketball and is also a member of the Ambassadors Society.

Julian Hill, a sophomore who entered St. John's in the seventh grade, is also a Toledo EXCEL student. He runs track, plays basketball and is an Ambassador. "It's a good school for both academics and athletics," says Hill who was leery, before he entered St. John's, of attending a school which was not proficient in both.

The St. Johns 20/20 Jesuit Scholars Program currently has 57 students enrolled and, according to Barabino, the school is anticipating 18-20 incoming freshman for the program's 2017-28 academic year.

If the past is any indication, several things are apparent about what the future holds for these incoming freshmen – if they apply themselves, they will succeed academically and socially at St. John's, they will graduate, they will go on to a top college, they will have an opportunity to ensure that their families' future generations opportunities are markedly different from those previous ones had.

For more information on the 20/20 Jesuit Scholars Program, call 419-865-5743, ext 0719, or email admissions@sjtitans.org.



Julian, Marcus, Brian and Misael



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Matt Bell... continued from page 6

medication. "We don't sugar coat anything. We're talking about life or death not about what places rank best in the country," he said.

Just recently, Bell received the Advocate of the Year Award from The Mental Health and Recovery Services Board of Lucas County for his efforts to provide resources and help to those who struggle with addiction.

"It's crazy," Bell said about how far he's come since that first post on Facebook. "We're recovering heroin addicts and we've developed this machine that works really well. I have my license back. I have my son. I have a vehicle that has insurance. I have bank accounts. I have businesses. I have a life. My mom who once said 'if you come over here I'm calling the police,' I now have the key to her house. I have the passwords to her security systems and she calls me for favors like, 'will you go get the mail or will you let the dogs out?'"

And while he continues to help those who struggle the way he struggled in the past, Bell is also working to maintain his own sobriety.

"At first, it was hard for me to be a normal person. But the only difference between me and a normal person is that I don't drink or do drugs - I can't. So I go to coffee shops instead of bars. I go to concerts. I go to movies. If I go to a bar for food I make sure I have a plan that I'm going in here to have some food and then I leave.

"It's a daily reprieve," he said. "It's clearly one day at a time and it'll be that way for the rest of my life. Honesty and Humility are the two things that help me stay clean. And the realization that I can't do it Matt's way - I have to do it God's way. I don't know exactly what God's will is for me and I don't know exactly what He wants me to do but I do know what He doesn't want me to do, and if I can just stay out of my own way I know that God has a plan. He brought me to it because He was going to bring me through it.

"I do meetings and I have a sponsor and the 12-step programs and those principles are what help me stay sober. Honesty, humility, justice, faith, service, brotherly love, these are the 12-step principles."

What he wants the community to know about addiction is compassion and understanding.

"The community needs to understand and learn about the disease of addiction," said Bell. "They need to realize that these people are sick. Yes, it was a choice at first, but when you've been doing this for a certain amount of time the structure of the brain changes. If people understood it a little more the stigma would change."

For more information about Team Recovery contact them at: 419-561-LIFE

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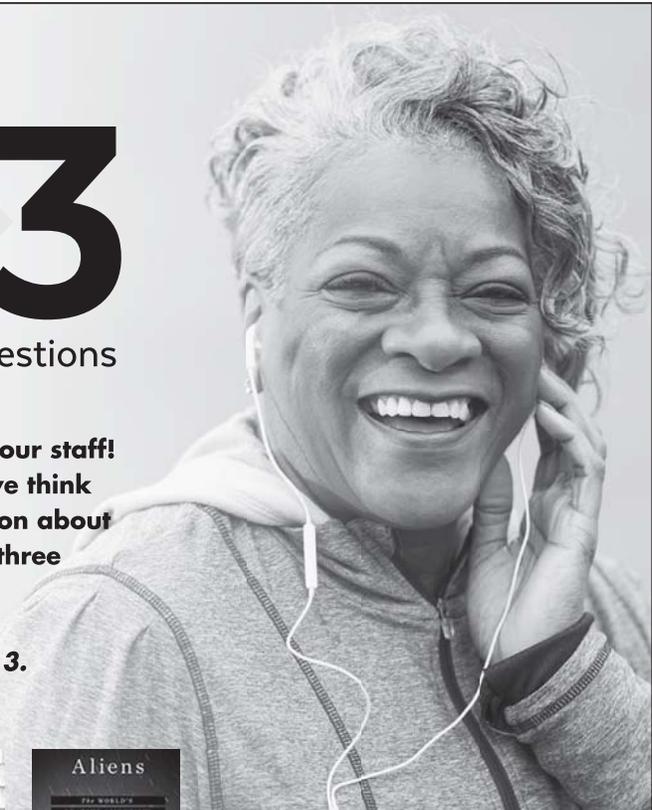


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Perryman... continued from page 2

people need to have a voice in what that future looks like.

Also, I think the people of Toledo are ready for change to happen and when it does happen, I think that everybody agrees that they want it to be fair and equitable. I'm concerned about what gentrification is going to look like in this process. I want to make sure that people, who have devoted their lives to these really strong neighborhoods that already exist, aren't displaced or impacted negatively throughout the process.

I think it's important that we have a strong and vital core. There's so much energy and momentum happening downtown and it's good for Toledo, but we need to make sure that the other neighborhoods are being lifted at the same time and that investments and jobs are coming to the city as a whole and opportunity is available for everybody.

Perryman: What are some of the challenges we have in Toledo, from your perspective?

Komives: I think that Toledo could use a little bit of an attitude adjustment. I constantly have to tell people that Toledo is a great place to live. But I think that many people feel negatively because they've watched failed promises come from politicians in Toledo for years and some of that has to do with we went through a recession, it wasn't good for Toledo, it's been difficult. People have been out of work and we just need to carry the momentum that's happening for some and ensure that it's spread out so that it's happening for all. So I think even many of our residents need to be committed and change that attitude and we'll see positivity as a result.

Perryman: What differentiates you from the other candidates and why should voters check the box for Nick Komives?

Komives: Well I think I represent change in many aspects. Some of the other candidates that are running have been on city council for a very long time already and haven't been effective, and perhaps could step aside and allow some other folks to have an opportunity. I think people should pick me because I've proven that I'm a fighter, that I stand up for people and dignity and respect and that carries through in everything that I do. Registering voters seems like a trivial thing, but once everybody's involved in

the process, that's when we do best. When everybody shares their ideas and feels engaged, when we have a diversity of voices, change happens quicker and change happens more effectively.

Also, unlike the other candidates, I've been on the ground. I've been doing the work within communities where people don't always have access. My work with the LGBT community is really about work that impacts all of us. Similarly, when I worked with workers on workers' rights, all of us are workers and we all deserve dignity and safety and good wages and benefits. On the income gap, I've led the people that are impacted the most by policies that are bad, and in particular, bad for minorities. And so, I've fought back and pushed back at every turn of my life and I will continue to fight back for the rest of my life, and I want to do that in city government. People should pick me because they will know that Nick Komives will fight for them always.

Perryman: Do you have a specific agenda for the African-American community or communities of color?

Komives: I think there are a lot of things that need to change. I was happy to see city council begin to tackle predatory lending. I had just finished talking about that with the African American Leadership Caucus. I think that we need to go after predatory loan companies, other large predatory businesses like Dollar General that go into areas that have heavy populations of African Americans, and we need to promote black-owned business owners. I think these are all functions that the government should be involved in.

I've been involved in working with Alicia Smith over the course of the last three years at the Frederick Douglass Center and I just think it's important that we continue to invest in places that are great for our community. My work with the Community Solidarity Response Network has shed a lot of light, to me, around the areas of police brutality. We have to do better. We need more and better comprehensive training for police officers. We also need to ensure that there is no racial profiling that's occurring.

Perryman: Finally, how do you respond to those who may label you as a liberal or perceive you as being confined to one social issue?

Komives: I think it's pretty simple. I stood up for the rights of LGBT people because it benefits everybody. When there's fairness and equity for one minority, then we have to ensure that it is for everybody. And so my goal as a human being is to care for others and to love others no matter what.

So if I'm asked what does Nick Komives stand for, I care about people. I want to see everybody thrive, and so that's the basis of who I am and how I got my start. I think once people get to know me and my background, that I've been fighting for workers, that I've been fighting for women's rights, I've been fighting for people's right to vote, they're going to see that I fight for people across the board and I fight for what's right, and I fight for justice.

And so justice doesn't always come as an immediate response to something negative that's happened. Sometimes it can take a longer period of time. However, I think that I see that pathway to justice in the larger sense, and I mean environmental justice, economic justice and racial justice.

So I really want to see justice come to fruition. And based on the principles that I live by, we will get there, and that is the vision that drives me.

Perryman: Good luck.

Komives: Yes. Thank you.

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Ashford... continued from page 3

the future, and that is exactly what UT is all about."

Ashford also announced that Toledo-based company, RegenFix, LLC, received \$150,000 in state Technology Validation and Start-Up Fund dollars to supplement matching funds for the development of custom prosthetic devices to assist in healing damaged bones.

The university received an additional \$100,000 in Technology Validation and Start-up Fund money for the testing and development of a compound to treat bone defects without multiple patient injections. Half of the funding will go toward a project to develop a specialized miniature medical device that stimulates the larynx of stroke victims and patients who have trouble swallowing.

"These investments help transition technology developments at UT and local non-profits to market, making us stronger and more competitive economically," said the Toledo lawmaker.

Validation and Start-Up Fund grants help transition technology developed by Ohio institutions of higher education, and other nonprofit research institutions, into the marketplace through Ohio start-up companies.

Summer Reading

By Terri Schlichenmeyer
The Truth Contributor

Five big X's.

That's what you've got on your calendar, running in a line right across the week you're on vacation. Yep, five days away and you're already planning on what to pack – so don't forget a book...

OUT IN MAY

Get ready for your Memorial Day with new novels by **Scott Turow, Dorothea Benton Frank, Lincoln Child, Michael Crichton, Clive Cussler and Graham Brown, Lee Child and Nora Roberts.**

For the sports-minded, **Kareem Abdul-Jabbar** has a new book out on Coach Wooden; or try the new book by **Lou Pinella.** The history buff will want **Dan Hampton's** new book on the Lindbergh flight; a new book on Apollo 8; a book about the creation of the U.S. Army; and the new book about Winston Churchill and George Orwell.

There's also a new look at the last half-decade of Rolling Stone magazine, a book about how we buy food, there are new books being released on being healthy, losing weight, and cooking right. Also look for **Al Franken's** new biography, and a new book about horses by **William Shatner.**

OUT IN JUNE

Start out your official summer with new novels by **Brad Thor, Lisa Wingate, Dean Koontz, Jane Green, Linda Greenlaw, Gena Showalter, Eric Van Lustbader, Karen Robards, Joseph Finder, Adriana Trigiani, Edward Kelsey Moore, Sharyn McCrumb, Janet Evanovich, Diana Palmer, Danielle Steel, and Diana Gabaldon.**

There's a new book due out for coffee lovers who want to lose weight; a new book being released on cheese; and a new cookbook for salad lovers. Readers who love history will want a new book about two female test pilots who worked for the Third Reich; or a book about stock market crashes in history; and a new book about Robert Smalls, who escaped from slavery and became a *Union Hero.*

Look for *Sea Power*, a book about the history and politics of the ocean; one about JFK and MLK; a new book for weird people and *Failures* who want a career that fits them specifically; a biography about Joni Mitchell and one about Van Halen; a look at the LGBT community and the Catholic Church; **Sherman Alexie's** new memoir; a book about the science of change; a "secret history" of the iPhone; and a book about how fake news affects you.

OUT IN JULY

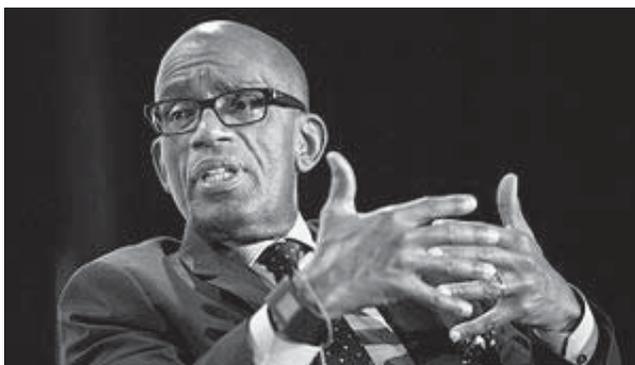
Halfway through the summer and there's still more....

Your vacation will be happier with novels by **Julie Garwood, Daniel Silva, Susan Mallory, Joshilyn Jackson, Suzanne Brockmann, Kathy Reichs, Linda Castillo, Alexander McCall Smith, M.J. Rose, Ace Atkins, Iris Johansen and Roy Johansen, and C.J. Box.**

Ben Mezrich looks at how science is trying to "de-extinct" the woolly mammoth. There's a new biography due on Sarah Vaughn that you can find in July. This month, you can read about the air we breathe, learn about Jews who escaped Nazi Germany and returned to fight against Hitler; and you can find out how to best become an "angel investor." You'll find several new books for your summer cook-out, books to make you beach-ready, and a new book for fans of the **Archie** comics.

OUT IN AUGUST

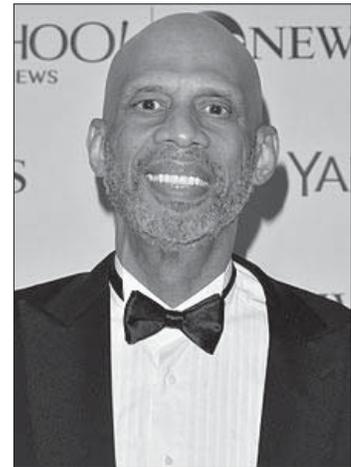
Hey, there's still a lot of summer left, and a lot of books to read!



Al Roker

Enjoy the season with new novels by **J.R. Ward, Fiona Davis, Sherrilyn Kenyon, Sgt. Jack Coughlin, Susan Wiggs, Debbie Macomber, Stuart Woods and Parnell Hall, Sandra Brown, Karin Slaughter, Tess Gerritsen, Andrew Gross, Robin Cook, T. Jefferson Parker, Erica Spindler, Sue Grafton's Y is for..., Jonathan Kellerman and Jesse Kellerman, Danielle Steele, and Louise Penny.**

Look for **Heather Harphum's** new book on happiness. There's a book due out about a college athlete and her tragic suicide, and one about a female code-breaker in World War II. Look for a new book on how to use your Liberal Arts degree. You'll find a new



Kareem Abdul-Jabbar

book about Buddhism this month; also, a book about Alzheimer's; one about how a father saved his son from ISIS; one by NFL team players, about their first coaches; and a business book on succeeding, by American counterintelligence expert **Robin Dreeke (with Cameron Stauth).** Also look for a book on scandals at America's elite colleges; a new book by **Al Roker** on the Johnstown Flood; and a book about how wonderful it is to be an adult who reads children's literature.

And on that note, there are many, many new releases for the kids and the kid in you!

BEFORE YOU HIT THE BOOKSTORE....

Remember that this isn't a final list, nor is it cast in stone. Releases may be cancelled or rescheduled. If you're excited about any of these titles, check with your favorite bookseller or librarian – they know what's up and helping you find exactly what you need is what they do best.

Happy Vacation, and Happy Reading!

Kaptur... continued from page 4

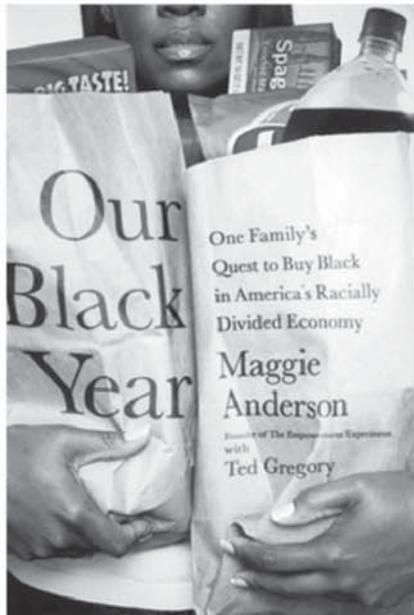
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CLASSIFIEDS

May 17, 2017

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PARK MAINTENANCE

Metroparks of the Toledo Area is looking for qualified individuals for Park Maintenance at Providence Metropark. HS Diploma or equivalent and valid driver's license required. Moderate level of specialty maintenance experience required. 40 hrs/wk. \$17.17/hr. Go to www.metroparkstoledo.com for complete job requirements and to apply by May 18, 2017. EOE

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH/ CRIMINAL JUSTICE (BH/CJ) COORDINATOR

The CJCC is accepting applications for a BH/CJ Coordinator (full time with benefits). Applications will be accepted until 5/26/17. See www.lucascountycjcc.org for additional information. Send resumes to: CJCC, One Government Center, Suite 1720, Toledo, OH 43604.

Notice to Bidders: Inquiry # FY17-64, (Project # 1130-17-169) for Accessibility / ADA Improvements for the University of Toledo. Sealed bids for this project must be clearly marked with the project number on all inner and outer envelopes and/or shipping containers. Bids must be addressed and delivered to the University of Toledo, Facilities and Construction, Plant Operations, Room 1100, 2925 E. Rocket Drive, MS 216, Toledo, Ohio 43606 before 2:00 p.m., Tuesday, May 23, 2017. Bids will be publicly opened that same day at 2:05 p.m. in the Plant Operations Building, Room 1000. Copies of Plans, Specifications, and Bid Forms may be obtained from Becker Impressions, 4646 Angola Road, Toledo, Ohio 43615. Call 419-385-5303 for an appointment to pick up bid package. A cost of \$75.00 will be charged per set. Any further information may be obtained from Mary L. Glowacki of Mary L. Glowacki, AIA Architect, LLC at 419-360-9820. One Pre-Bid Conference will be held on Tuesday, May 16, 2017 at 10:00 a.m. in the Plant Operations Building, Room 1000, at the University of Toledo, 2925 E. Rocket Drive, Toledo, OH 43606. Total Bid Guaranty and Contract Bond are required per section 153.54 of the Ohio Revised Code. EDGE Participation Goal: 15%. Project Estimate: \$400,000.00; Breakdown: General Const: \$400,000.00.

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Advocates for Basic
Legal Equality, Inc.

Position Available: PERSON-CENTER CARE PROJECT OMBUDSMAN

Advocates for Basic Legal Equality, Inc. (ABLE), a non-profit regional law firm that provides high-quality legal assistance to low-income persons and groups in western Ohio, seeks a bright, creative, hard-working Ombudsman to fulfill the duties of the Person-Center Care Project.

The Ombudsman will advocate for and offer assistance and support to participating nursing facilities to enhance staff retention and engagement for improved resident quality care. The Ombudsman will be responsible for the development and growth of person-centered care practice in ten regional nursing homes through the use of relational tools, enhanced communication, and other foundational practices, such as: recruit ten Medicaid/Medicare certified nursing facilities to participate by June 1, 2017; assist facilities to perform initial self-assessment tool; attend quality assurance program improvement (QAPI) team meetings; assist facilities to create resident interviews and other duties that are detailed in the position job description.

The Person-Centered Care Project Ombudsman must be an Ombudsman Specialist or qualified candidate for specialist certification. The Project Ombudsman must work as a full-time equivalent employee for the regional program. Salary depends on relevant legal experience. Excellent fringe benefits.

To Apply: Send resume and cover letter electronically by Friday, April 21, 2017, in Microsoft Word format, to: Email: jobs@ablelaw.org

Subject: Person-Centered Care Project Ombudsman

ABLE is an Equal Opportunity Employer and places a high value on diversity in our workplace, including diversity in race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, and physical ability. We strive to create an environment welcoming to all individuals and we encourage applications from individuals traditionally underrepresented in the legal profession. Equal access to ABLE's office is available. Applicants requiring accommodation to the interview/ application process should contact the recruitment coordinator at the address listed above.

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Or

Are you looking for a way to be employed AND get training to obtain a Class A or B Commercial Driver's License?

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ODOT District 2 is now accepting applications for positions in our **Highway Maintenance Worker Apprentice Program**. As a Highway Maintenance Worker Apprentice you will receive on the job training in flagging & traffic control procedures, perform general labor using various hand tools in the maintenance & repair of highways, receive CDL preparation & training, & much more. Our Spring Apprentice Program will start soon. To apply & to learn more about our Apprentice Program, please go online to www.careers.ohio.gov

Once you arrive at this website, the **Ohio Hiring Management System**, click on search for **State Government Jobs**, then filter by **Department**, then scroll & click on **Transportation District 2**. Click on the job title **Highway Maintenance Worker 1 - Apprentice**. You will also find information on **How to Apply**. Should you have additional questions, please call the **ODOT District 2 Human Resources Office at 419 353-8131**.



ODOT is an Equal Opportunity Employer
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AKAs Honor This Year's Scholarship Recipients

Special to The Truth

On Saturday May 13, 2017, several young women and men were honored at the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated®, Zeta Alpha Omega Chapter, Scholarship Reception held at the Kent Branch Library. The awards ranged from \$150 for a book scholarship to \$1000 for academic scholarships.

The scholarship recipients were Mariam Aggrey, Kendall Edwards and Shantel Gray for \$1000 scholarships, Stephon Broughton, Brookelyn Cosper, Maya Jones and Benjamin Ogbonna for \$500 scholarships. Steven Thomas for \$150 book scholarship.

Alpha Kappa Sorority, Incorporated® was founded on the campus of Howard University in 1908. It is the oldest Greek-letter organization established by African-American women. The sorority has a legacy of "service to all mankind."

The Zeta Alpha Omega Chapter was founded in 1952 and has been awarding scholarships to Toledo area students for many decades. To qualify for the scholarship, students must have a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 and have been accepted to an accredited college or university the fall of 2017.

The 2017 Scholarship Committee members are: President Felicia R. Dunston, Vice-President Morgannia Wormely, Chairman Cheryl Slack, Co-Chairman Daphne Derden-Willis, Katrina Barry, Kimberly Fisher, Theo Simmons-Hampton, Julia Holt, Genevia Odoms and Denise Black-Poon.

Zeta Alpha Omega also received first place awards for "Outstanding



Scholarship Committee and recipients

Graduate Chapter" and "Outstanding Newsletter" during the 86th Great Lakes Regional Conference held April 5-9, 2017 in Cleveland, Ohio.

The chapter has made significant impact locally and internationally through the implementation of Targets such as, Education Enrichment, Health Promotion, Family Strengthening and Environmental Ownership.

The 2017 Awards Committee members are: Chairman Genevia Odoms, Co-Chairman Jeanna Odoms-Temple, Cheryl Slack, Daphne Derden-Willis and Margaret Huntley

YWCA Hosts Stand Against Racism Summit

Sojourner's Truth Staff

Candi Castleberry Singleton, the founder and chief executive officer of Dignity and Respect, Inc, and the keynote speaker at the YWCA Stand Against Racism Forum at the end of April, opened her address by asking attendees if they felt as if they should always be treated with dignity and respect.

Not surprisingly, all of the audience members – approximately 150 were in attendance at the Toledo Lucas County Main Library's McMaster Center – raised their hands in affirmation.

"It doesn't matter who you are," said Singleton. "Everyone raised their hands and says 'I deserve to be treated with dignity and respect.'"

Singleton then asked those in the audience to raise their hands "if you believe you treat everyone with dignity and respect." Far fewer hands were raised this time.

"Therein lies the challenge," she said. "There is always a circumstance in which we fail to treat everyone with dignity and respect. How many times have we disrespected someone and not even realized it?"

Dignity and respect are not actually hard to understand, Singleton continued. "It is a personal value or commitment to treat others in an appropriate manner."

Singleton then led the audience through a series of exercises designed to inform the listeners how to commit to treating others with dignity and respect and then how to follow up on the pledge.

Singleton, a Pittsburgh resident, was the first chief inclusion and diversity officer at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center. She earned a bachelor's degree in legal studies from the University of California Berkeley and an MBA from Pepperdine University. Prior to her move to Pittsburgh, Singleton led diversity departments at Motorola and Sun Microsystems.

After the keynote address at the YWCA Summit, two panel discussions followed. The first panel discussed the issue of confronting community disparities. Doni Miller, CEO of Neighborhood Health Association, was the moderator and the panelists were: Dr. Kent Bishop, who spoke of infant mortality and other health disparities; Wendi Huntley, on food and nutrition; John Jones, on corporate disparities in the board room and beyond.

The second panel discussed social determinants and social factors and was moderated by Emile Avery of United Way of Greater Toledo. Panelists were Patty Hernandez, who spoke on documented and undocumented workers; Ward Bennett, EdD, on education disparities; Rachel Gardner, on juvenile justice; Reem Subel, on Muslim discrimination.

Lisa McDuffie, CEO of the YWCA of Northwest Ohio closed the summit and issued the call to action.



Candi Castleberry Singleton



JOIN US FOR ART & SOUL AT THE TRUTH ART GALLERY: SOUL POWER.

An Artistic celebration of Black lives, Black, love, Black power and Black SOUL

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(Log on to Eventbrite.com – type Art & SOUL @ The Truth Art Gallery to order tickets)

A production of the L.J. Hamilton Group and The Truth Art Gallery