

The *Sojourner's* Truth

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"And Ye Shall Know The Truth..."

February 3, 2021

Shantae Brownlee - YWCA Milestones Honoree



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A Welcome Change

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

The Truth Contributor

Look beyond changing the rules. It may be time to change the game.

- Thema Bryant-Davis



Systemic racism and its pursuant assault upon African Americans' mental health never takes a day, hour, or minute off. Not ever.

Black clients continue to suffer mental health-related tragedy after tragedy. Their families constantly live with the burden of attempting to care for them while distressingly waiting to see what the next crisis will bring.

Kudos to Scott Sylak, executive director for the Mental Health and Recovery Services Board (MHRSB), for initiating a thoughtful, competent process to seek effective and radical change in the system. The final results could be a game-changer for mental health crisis system reform.

The MHRSB is the agency responsible for providing mental health and substance abuse services to Lucas County taxpayers. In truth, the system is complicated and includes many players working on the frontlines of the battle, including law enforcement, hospital emergency rooms, psychiatric hospitals, stabilization units, and the mental health system.

Thus, it made sense for the MHRSB to engage this community of caregivers, along with individuals and families with lived experiences, to ask the question: Is our crisis response system providing the best possible service to the people, or could it be improved?

The answer to that question led the group to develop a new model for crisis response, which conforms with best practices from around the United States. A Request for Proposals (RFP) was issued seeking a provider who can implement that system.

Three applications were received and will be reviewed by a committee of people who work in the crisis care system and mental health clients, peers, and family members. The MHRSB expects to have a new vendor selected by mid-2021.

There are three notable elements of this story.

First, the process undertaken by the MHRSB reflects the "importance of the task at hand." Almost every hour of every day, someone in our community experiences a crisis related to their mental health or a substance abuse disorder. Sadly, this fact is not news to many. Too many families continue

to experience mental health-related pain and loss.

The MHRSB's rigorous process engaged people from throughout the community on this project. They spent nine months reviewing data, holding focus groups, conducting interviews, and reviewing best practices. From those months of work came a recommendation for a new way of handling crisis response in Lucas County.

Second, the MHRSB engaged an independent consultant to facilitate the process, develop the RFP, evaluate the RFP and help guide the previous system's transition to a new system. The company, TBD Solutions of Grand Rapids, Michigan, is a nationally-recognized expert on projects such as the system in Lucas County. Their knowledge and skills allowed our local leaders to understand and adapt the very best thinking in this field from around the United States.

Third, the new system includes a crisis care center. Currently, most people who experience a mental health or substance abuse crisis are taken to the Lucas County Jail. The jail is not equipped to care for mental health clients and is a place where they will be charged with a crime, which goes onto their record.

The new system is built on the "Solution Center" that was part of the campaign to build a new jail in 2018. Instead, the new system includes a "separate facility" where people will be taken if they are experiencing a crisis. Here, they will receive the help they need and the criminal justice system would not be involved.

I am excited about the life-saving possibilities in this radical system of crisis services reform. This, to me, leads us to the most significant part:

A Recovery-Oriented Crisis System:

As a caregiver and relative of someone in the mental health system, I have experienced times in my life when a crisis – though not welcomed – was the catalyst for change. Indeed, a crisis is often a "red flag" that tells us that we cannot continue along the path we are going.

The goal of a crisis care system is first to abate the crisis. Currently, the only options for those having a mental health or substance abuse crisis are jail, hospital, or a quick release. The system envisioned here, however, takes the next step by using the time spent in the crisis care center to refer the individual to appropriate, culturally-competent, peer-assisted, professional clinical care in the community. The plan enables the system to accelerate treatment and facilitate recovery for those experiencing crisis.

The Bottom Line:

Sometimes you have to either "go big or go home." The new system is an ambitious undertaking. It is the most substantial RFP ever issued by the MHRSB. It is also vitally important to the people in our community. They were under no mandate to undertake this challenge. The Board, its staff, and the stakeholders within the system were motivated to act proactively on this issue by their compassion and commitment to the people of Lucas County, mental health clients, and clients' family members.

Executive director Scott Sylak gets it. The MHRSB and its stakeholders did the right thing by initiating radical mental health reform. The reform provides the life-saving services that the community envisions.

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Is the GOP Becoming the Party of Wingnuts?

By Lafe Tolliver, Esq

Guest Column

If you were an aspiring screen writer and wanted to break into the business of writing scripts for made for TV movies; and if you were to write that the GOP was morphing into the party of wingnuts, conspiracy kooks, white nationalists and brainwashed white evangelicals, you would win first prize.

When you survey the volatile political landscape since the attempted In-surrection of January 6, you may have read the plethora of articles, coast to coast which evidence that the GOP is circling the wagons and only the true and righteous are allowed entry.

If you show the least bit of dishonor or cannot pass a loyalty litmus test, your GOP street cred is in serious doubt and you may be cast as a questionable soldier in the fight for the purity of America and all things cherished and noble.

The GOP operatives in states such as Hawaii Oregon, Texas, Arizona are teeing up their energy to purge their respective state parties of any laggards who are not in lock step with the personality cult of Herr Trump.

Although Trump has been exorcised from the White House, his presence and "power" [?] is still an overwhelming influence on his base which howls, in union, to the moon when their dear leader makes his presence known.

Time will tell as to the success of the voting machine company, Dominion Voting System's, lawsuit against Attorneys Rudy Giuliani and Sidney Powell for their repeated coarse and baseless lies that the company was engaged in massive voter fraud and that the company was the brainchild of the late dictator Hugo Chavez of Venezuela (he died in 2013).

Trump has hit the motherlode with his ceaseless year in and year out lies about democracy, voting, equality, racial hatred and just pure vileness against those whom he has deemed enemy of the people, including the media that rebuke his foolishness.

Tragically, his base, seemingly not able to extricate themselves from their mis-information bubble about what is up and what is down and even believing, for purposes of exaggeration, that water is really dry and not wet, have knighted Trump their hero who will save them from all of those who would ask them to simply objectively repudiate the nonsense about an election being stolen.

Remember...it was not Trump who has caused these Grand Canyon divisions in the culture. He only exacerbated what was lying beneath the thin level of America's civility and their (not all) latent hostility about all things racial.

Trump was the proverbial canary in the coal mine but in this instance, he survived the coal mine and sanctioned America's unresolved racial animus; and especially so when one reckons that the attempt to overturn the election results centers around five to six urban black areas in several swing states.

The GOP is not winning converts to its cause and coupled with the declining birth rate of white America and the party becoming a mostly all white and older party, that will doom them to minority party status unless they can suppress the black and brown vote and maintain the Electoral College which is skewed towards white rural America.

For all practicable purposes, the presently constituted GOP is now the Party Of Trump (P.O.T.) and because of his narcissism and cynical view of democracy, he will continue to cause mind rot wherever he speaks and will not tame his voracious appetite to cause chaos and division whenever it suits his purposes.

As you may have heard, there are published statement from the GOP faithful that the recent invasion of the Capitol Building was in fact a,

"false flag" (a staged event, planned by the political opposition) undertaken done not by Trump supporters but by those who wanted to shame and discredit the followers of Trump! Go figure.

Ten dollars to a donut that the feckless GOP senate will not convict him of encouraging sedition because those pusillanimous members are terrified of being primaried and losing a fat cat job that they know that they cannot replicate in the real world.

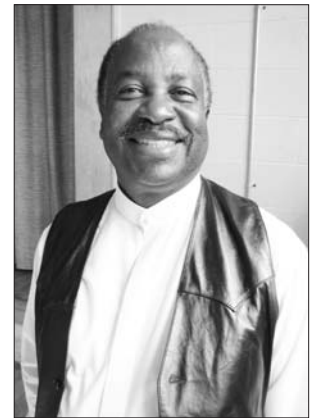
If I were to compose the oath that these sycophants were to take in allegiance to Herr Trump, it would recite as the following:

"I (insert your name) before both nation and flag commit my resources and body to the furtherance of the P.O.T. I solemnly pledge that I will faithfully pledge my time and efforts to the making of America as it was before. I will defend and fight any person or institution that will assert itself against the P.O.T.

Furthermore, I will promote the glorious goals of the P.O.T. in all my endeavors and will strive to be a loyal member to this great cause that has been given divine direction."

We live in interesting times.

Contact Lafe Tolliver at tolliver@juno.com



ProMedica to Make Community Investment in the Junction Neighborhood with Support from the Owens Corning Foundation

The ProMedica Ebeid Neighborhood Promise and ProMedica Foundation announced a resident-driven \$2.8 million community grant investment in the Junction neighborhood in Central Toledo. The goal of the investment is to help support a neighborhood that traditionally has experienced disinvestment, which has disproportionately affected people of color. Reinvesting in neighborhoods like the Junction is a critical step in creating infrastructure and opportunities for all the area residents.

To support this community, the Owens Corning Foundation helped fund the grant investment program. "We realize the positive impact this investment will have in the neighborhood and the greater community, and we are pleased to join forces to help make a lasting difference," said Don Rettig, president of the Owens Corning Foundation.

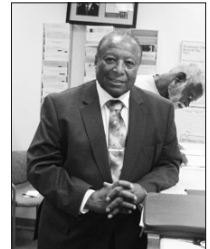
Kicking off the program in fall of 2020, ProMedica sought grant applicants that could help in the areas of education and training, health and wellness, jobs and finances, stable housing and basic needs for the Junction neighborhood.

To ensure the grant application review process included resident input, ProMedica engaged community partners and neighborhood leaders through several community meetings. The stakeholders were instrumental in the process, reviewing neighborhood-level data and plans and administering a survey to gauge neighborhood need.



Shantae Brownlee, a Junction neighborhood *Shantae Brownlee*

resident and stakeholder who participated in the community meetings, said, "The process of selecting the programs that would make the most impact on our community was extensive, but I'm proud of the selections and looking forward to real change."



Harvey Savage, Jr

ProMedica received more than 40 applications. Twenty projects and 18 organizations were identified to receive funding based on the goals, predicted outcomes and programming that addressed specific health and human service challenges facing the Junction community.



Doni Miller

The MLK Kitchen for the Poor is among the organizations receiving funding. The Kitchen currently serves meals to more than 200 people each day, from school-aged children to the elderly. The grant investment program will fund its food box and hot meals program. "This past year, more than ever, we have been seeing people in need of basic necessities. Providing hot meals and food boxes makes a tangible difference in the health of our community. My late father opened the Kitchen in 1969, and this funding will continue his legacy," said Harvey Savage, Jr., executive director, The MLK Kitchen.

Another organization to receive grant funding is the Neighborhood Health Association, which provides access to quality medical care for anyone in need. The grant program will fund the "Saving Ourselves" program, which seeks to staff a full-time community organizer. The organizer will connect Junction residents to basic needs and organize residents in the development and implementation of a strategy for changing the health status of the community. "Providing the right access allows us to empower and educate while aggressively working to eliminate health care inequities," said Doni Miller, chief executive officer, Neighborhood Health Association.

The first installment in the grant payments for the two-year cycle will start January 2021, enabling organizations to begin programming at the beginning of the year. Funding is for a minimum two-year period and contingent upon successful, demonstrable achievement of outcomes.

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University of Toledo Hosts Dialogue on Diversity

By Tricia Hall

Sojourner's Truth Reporter

The University of Toledo's faculty and staff served as discussion panelists for the January 26 dialogue on diversity session that was held virtually. The discussion focused on the events surrounding the January 6 riot at the Capitol building in Washington, D.C.

"We are quite fortunate to have such distinguished scholars here at the University who are able to help us better understand the constitutional questions and concerns raised by the events of January 6. Higher education has an important role to play in defending our institutions and our modern democracy," explained Charlene Gilbert.



Charlene Gilbert

Gilbert, dean of College of Arts and Letters, served as discussion facilitator. The session was titled The Path Forward -The Constitution and the Fragility of Democracy. The session included the following panelists: D. Benjamin Barros, dean of the College of Law; Benjamin Davis, law professor; Monita Mungo, PhD, sociology assistant professor; Sam Nelson, PhD, Department of Political Science and Public Administration chair and associate professor and Jeff Newton, University of Toledo Chief



D. Benjamin Barros

of Police and Director of Public Safety.

According to various media sources on January 6, the United States Congress gathered inside the Capitol to certify the electoral votes from the November 2020 election. That session of Congress was chaired by Vice President Mike Pence.



Benjamin Davis

Simultaneously a rally was held, where speakers including former New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani and then President Donald Trump engaged rally attendees. The rally turned into a march to the Capitol that eventually led to individuals causing property damage to the Capitol grounds and building, while members of Congress were evacuated from their chambers and secured in safer locales within the building.



Monita Mungo

At least five individuals have died in connection to that event and Federal Bureau of Investigation offices around the country are investigating and charging individuals with connection to crimes connected on January 6th.

"We need to pay attention to the dramatic parts that happened on January 6, but political scientists have been waving the red flags since Trump first ran for office," noted Nelson.

"January 6 was years in the making. It's easy to denounce racism. We need to understand what were the social conditions that led to competent people being influenced by conspiracy theories," added Mungo.

"It's already been a difficult day. The funeral of [Toledo] Officer [Brandon] Stalker was this morning. It's been a dark and emotional day, but I still wanted to engage this conversation. It's also been a dark year for law enforcement. It's awful what the officers on January 6 went through, they faced violence and did the best that they could to protect the legislatures and the building," said Newton.



Sam Nelson

The conversation shifted as the panelists commented on community healing and the upcoming impeachment proceedings which will continue with the Senate trial in February.



Jeff Newton

"The race to heal is unfortunate. This rapid race to heal without accountability for those involved in unimaginable. It's a false sense of healing," shared Davis.

"Impeachment is just a political act and courts don't intervene with the process. What will be the political consequences and how will the Senate vote? Trump is already out of office. Truth is our great challenge and what does that even mean. This isn't about politics but about the attack on our government and

baseless election fraud claims," said Barros.

"We must have our finger on the pulse of our departments and officers. It's a sad state of affairs, I've heard from officers in other cities that members of their departments had to conduct an inquiry. I hope there is are aggressive investigations, we have a responsibility to our communities," shared Newton.

The University of Toledo launched the dialogue on diversity series following the death of George Floyd, and the January 26 panel discussion marked the 10th event in the series.

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A YMCA Community Update

By Eric Williams, Executive Director, Wayman Palmer YMCA

"The Wayman Palmer YMCA is open again!"

Our operation hours are 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. Our business hours are 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays so that new members can join and any member adjustments can be addressed in person. Other than the designated business hours, there will not be a staff member at the desk. All members will self-scan upon entering the building.

The building is in the best shape it could possibly be short of construction work/renovation. The floors were stripped and waxed; painting has also been done in order to make things brighter and more inviting. (The secret weapon was my wife Victoria.) She made the building look like it looks today. A new rubberized floor has been installed and three new state of the art pieces of Matrix equipment have been installed.

Due to COVID-19, we are following all of the State of Ohio requirements as it relates to disinfecting the building on a daily basis, wearing masks and social distancing in order to keep members, program participants and guests safe.

Membership/Programming

Members are beginning to return slowly but surely and are very pleased with the overall upgrades. We will be moving from a zip code based price structure and implement a structure that will keep the membership at close to the same rate.

Sports

Wayman Palmer YMCA and the Ottawa Park Tennis Association collaborated in order to bring organized tennis to the Wayman Palmer YMCA and the central city. Kids will learn to play tennis taught by past tennis players on Saturdays from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Kids not only get tennis instruction, they also receive nutritious snacks during that time and a weekender snack packs so that they can have a snack during the weekend.

21st Century/Schools as HUBS

Staff has been secured in order to deliver programming and services to students and families in the program by dropping of supplies during home visits. In terms of the Riverside HUB, an area has been set up so that families can

get donated clothes and shoes. During the holidays, several families took advantage of this opportunity.

Healthy Living

Silver Sneakers Classic

Seniors will return to the building on Tuesday, January 19th for the class. The class will take place from 10:00am to 11:00am on Tuesdays and Thursdays at the branch.

Programs and Screenings

Many Healthy Living Programs will be offered including Diabetes Prevention, Blood Pressure Screening, and Smoking Sensation this year.

Healthy Living Screenings will be held on January 28 at 11:00am. (See attached)

Childcare

There are currently (30) children in our childcare. Children are being assisted with virtual learning which has been a challenge in many aspects, yet our goal is to make certain that the children are doing the best that they can during these times.

Community

Turkey dinners were distributed to the community prior to Thanksgiving and ham dinners were also distributed prior to Christmas. The Angel Tree Program provided many children in our program and in the community with toys for Christmas. We were able to supply toys to the children in our childcare program, children in our offsite programs, children in the community and just as importantly, we also provided gifts to the children of ex-employees who have not yet secured employment.

We also have a food pantry in place for families in need. More information to come!



Eric Williams

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Shantae Brownlee Achieves Excellence Against the Odds

By Linda Nelson

Sojourner's Truth Reporter

Shantae Brownlee has accomplished a lot in the 25 years she has been in Toledo.

Brownlee is the Senior Vice President for Operations at the Lucas County Land Bank, and the 2021 YWCA Milestones Awards Social Services recipient- an honor reserved for just seven NW Ohio women each year.

Her education and experience have steered her into some prominent places in her career, gotten her accolades and earned her a place of trust among her peers, but her focus remains on the differences she makes in the lives of the people behind the paperwork.

"My entire professional career has been working in nonprofit," said Brownlee. "For me each project is more than the budget. It's about making connections with people and how I can actually connect those numbers to faces where we had an impact on individuals and families and their quality of life."

The YWCA Milestones Awards nomination, which is designed to highlight women who are exceptional leaders and mentors in the community, came as a pleasant surprise to Brownlee.

"When I found out that I was nominated I was honored," she said. "There are many women that I admire who have received the award and this recognition gives energy to the promotion of professional black women."

While Brownlee is grateful and honored to receive praise for her achievements, her course in nonprofit work manifested her own needs.

"I wanted to be a nurse," said Brownlee who originally plotted a course in the medical field before life rerouted her.

The Cleveland, Ohio native who calls Akron her home, says that she kind of wandered into nonprofit work when she came to Toledo after a divorce and no clear work prospects.

"I was a single mom with three kids and I just needed to work," she said.

Brownlee showed up at Toledo's Wayman D. Palmer YMCA and took the first job that was available.

That job was a customer service representative and it allowed Brownlee to form her first liaisons in nonprofit and to make personal connections with the clients she served.

"I learned about budgets and program integrity," said Brownlee. "But I also fell in love with the families and the workers. They were mothers and blended families just like me."

Soon Brownlee would find herself immersed in nonprofit work. She was promoted to administrative assistant then to branch director working long



days and odd hours so that she could juggle her schedule between her four kids, which included a child with a learning disability, and the management of the Y's \$1.7 million budget.

In the midst of it all, Brownlee found time to go back to school, earn dual bachelor degrees, and graduate with honors from Franklin University in Columbus, Ohio.

"Because of my professional experience, school was easy for me," said Brownlee.

With an education added to her resume Brownlee was primed for her next opportunity.

"Some of the board members at the Frederick Douglass Center approached me," Brownlee recalled. "They needed my help and wanted me to fill an open position for executive director to help with restructure after a shakeup."

But the move didn't come easily for her.

... continued on page 8

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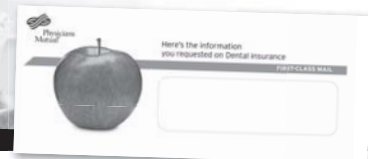
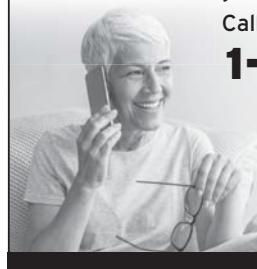
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A Black History Moment: Cicely Tyson and Hank Aaron

By Fletcher Word

Sojourner's Truth Editor

The post civil-rights era of the early 1970s was filled with contradictions – a major war winding down yet extended for political purposes, cultural upheaval in entertainment and fashion, groundbreaking political achievement for African Americans, uncelebrated by establishment politicians.

In 1970 Kenneth Gibson was elected mayor of Newark, New Jersey, and was the first black mayor of a major northeastern city. His election was followed, in the 1970s, by a slew of such black urban elected achievements – Tom Bradley was elected mayor of Los Angeles in 1973 and Maynard Jackson of Atlanta later in the same year.

The Congressional Black Caucus was founded in 1971 by 13 representatives, including Louis Stokes of Ohio. President Richard Nixon refused to meet with them. The next year, Barbara Jordan of Texas and Andrew Young of Georgia became the first black congressional representatives from the South since 1898.

Also in politics, Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm (D-N.Y.) became the first black person to campaign for the presidential nomination of a major political party in 1972

With few exceptions, it was not a period filled with glory in the film business for black-themed motion pictures – black exploitation films were the norm.

One of the few exceptions was “Sounder,” a film released in 1972, starring the luminous Cicely Tyson who would become a star, *...continued on page 16*



Shantae Brownlee... continued from page 7

“I was afraid,” Brownlee said about making the transition from the YWCA.

“Everybody thought that I was crazy. The Y had people and a lot of supportive structures. The Doug was in crisis and it wasn’t a standalone organization like the Y. These were a lot of things for me to consider.”

The turning point for her came after a respected colleague tried to dissuade her from making the move.

“I just remember him saying ‘If you go over there with those people...’ and I thought to myself, I am those people. I lived in that neighborhood. I



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prayed in that neighborhood. I raised my children in that neighborhood.”

“That’s when my faith kicked in, and I heard God speak to my heart- ‘Why are you fearful? If you want to serve, now is the opportunity.’”

With the support of her husband and her friends Brownlee worked through her fears, joined the Frederick Douglass Center team, and set about slowly rebuilding the trust that had been shaken.

“It was so hard,” she said. “But it was rewarding. The community was disappointed and felt let down. It took some time to rebuild trust with the community and with partners but we were able to make a lot of changes internally so that outside funders felt confident in us again. By the time I left we had accomplished a lot. We had earned back partnerships with Children’s Services, the YWCA, and we had Head Start in there.”

But just when things were looking up for the Frederick Douglass Center, tragedy struck close to home for Brownlee.

“My brother was murdered,” said Brownlee. “I hadn’t been able to process my grief and I just needed to reassess my life. I resigned with no other job for the purpose of healing. I needed to really figure out what life was really about.”

During that time Brownlee says she continued to help with various nonprofits when they asked but she wasn’t ready to commit to a job, until she received a call from the Lucas County Land Bank.

Today Brownlee is back doing what she has loved to do- helping people, helping families, and making communities better.

The Lucas County Land Bank’s vision encompasses the entire Lucas County area with a focus on restructuring vacant, abandoned, and blighted properties that affect neighborhoods and decrease values.

She says recent conversations with Land Bank CEO David Mann has led to the creation of the Neighborhood Justice Fund. A \$1.5 million investment allocated to help grow wealth and foster health in black and brown communities.

“We have a commitment to the community,” said Brownlee. Community and people come first. The building is secondary.”

Somewhere in Brownlee’s five-year plan is earning her MBA and spending more time being a mentor to others.

“I want people to know that you can be who you are unapologetically,” said Brownlee. “Work hard even if you have to start from the bottom and let your will determine your success. Being a single mother at the age of 25 with three children I had to not buy into society’s stereotype of being a single mother. I had a responsibility to my children to change some of the generational cycles that I saw my parents try to change. They embedded in me to do better.”

The 2021 YWCA Milestones Awards will be held virtually on March 26.

For more information about the Lucas County Land Bank visit their website: <https://lucascountylandbank.org/about>



Strong at Heart

By Patrice Powers-Barker, OSU Extension, Lucas County

The Truth Contributor

What do Toni Braxton, Red Foxx, Hank Gathers, Star Jones, Reggie Lewis and Jackie Robinson all have in common? All of them have or have had some form of heart disease.

Heart disease is the leading cause of death in men and women in the United States. Even if you do not have a personal or family history, it is likely that you will still be impacted in some way by heart disease during your lifetime. Whether it is a friend, a co-worker, a professional athlete, a celebrity, a neighbor, or a loved one, if you don't already know someone who has been diagnosed, you likely will. Chances are, we all know people who have been diagnosed with heart disease right now, but we do not always know about their diagnosis. Heart and health problems are often a private topic. Fortunately, some of the celebrities listed above have made their personal story of heart disease a public topic.

What can we learn from health advocates like Star Jones and Toni Braxton? As a National Volunteer for the American Heart Association, Star Jones admitted, "I thought heart disease was an old white guy's disease," and she was surprised to learn it's the No. 1 cause of death among women. "We need to change the face of heart disease."

Toni Braxton has shared a similar idea, that we picture an older, retired guy. As frightening as the statistics might be for an old white male, the risks for heart disease are higher for African Americans. Please know that the risks are for men and women and all ages. The good news is that the odds to prevent and beat heart disease can be improved by taking steps to address them. Toni Braxton has described herself as a "poster girl for heart disease" and promotes the following.

- Make healthy food choices. It seems like a lot of work to learn about fat and sodium, and maybe even about foods you've never tried before. For some people it might mean eating smaller serving sizes. For others it might mean choosing leaner options of meat. For many of us, it means choosing more fruits and vegetables (minus the high-fat and high-sodium sauces)
- Move more. This is also a tip that we are all familiar with. Exercise is a great way to control cholesterol numbers as well as stress. The American Heart Association reminds us that we are not required to do a marathon! Aim for at least 30 minutes of walking a day. If that seems like a lot, it is fine to start with 10 minutes of walking a day and increase the length of time.
- Don't smoke. It increases the risk of heart disease and stroke by two to four times and can reduce life expectancy by 13 to 14 years. Quitting smoking can cut the risk of heart disease and stroke in half in just one year.
- Know your numbers. Keeping track of your blood pressure, cholesterol, blood sugar levels and body-mass index can help you determine your risk of having a heart attack or stroke. Work with your health care provider to keep track of your numbers and to make small changes to meet your target goals for healthy numbers.

Granted, it may seem "easier" for someone with celebrity status and income to keep up with healthier practices (especially if they have help from professional chefs and coaches) but it also shows that celebrity status cannot protect anyone from heart disease. We cannot change our personal and family health history, but we can become educated on our

best options now to keep a healthy heart into the future.

Are you interested in learning more throughout February about being Strong @ Heart? The OSU Extension, Live Healthy Live Well Team invites you to sign up for the February – March 6-week email challenge. You may be thinking, yeah, yeah, yeah, but I don't want a bunch of medical jargon thrown at me. Great! The Strong @ Heart email challenge will give you some information about heart disease and some tips on how to help you stay healthy, but it will be relatable. Many of the writers for the email challenge have personal stories as to why this topic is so important to them. The challenge starts Feb 1st but you still have time to register for the free email challenge until the end of this week. You can go directly to go.osu.edu/LHLWLucas to sign up or to read more information, visit the OSU Extension, Lucas County website at lucas.osu.edu.

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President Biden Signs Executive Order Opening a Special Enrollment Period for Obamacare

Special to The Truth

The Biden-Harris Administration has opened a Special Enrollment Period for Americans to sign up for health coverage and roll back attacks on the Affordable Care Act, Medicaid, and access to reproductive health care

After four years of attempts by the previous administration to strip health care from millions of Americans, President Biden signed two executive actions that will begin to restore and strengthen Americans' access to quality, affordable health care.

The Biden-Harris administration will re-open enrollment to the Health Insurance Marketplace, take additional steps to strengthen Medicaid and the Affordable Care Act, and protect women's health.

The White House said that these actions demonstrate a strong commitment by the Biden-Harris Administration to protect and build on the Affordable Care Act, meet the health care needs created by the pandemic, reduce health care costs, protect access to reproductive health care, and make our health care system easier to navigate and more equitable.

"For President Biden, this is personal," the White House noted in a statement released last week. "He believes that every American has a right to the peace of mind that comes with knowing they have access to affordable, quality no longer have to worry that an insurance company will deny coverage or charge higher premiums just because they have a pre-existing condition. Roughly 20 million additional Americans obtained the security that comes with health insurance, and young people transitioning from school to a job can stay covered by their parents' plan until age 26.

"As we continue to battle COVID-19, it is even more critical that Americans have meaningful access to affordable care. The actions the President is taking today complement the commitment he made in the American Rescue Plan to make health insurance coverage more affordable for millions of Americans. Reliable and affordable access to health insurance doesn't just benefit families' health; it is a critical source of economic security and peace of mind for all."

Last week's actions included:

Strengthening Medicaid and the Affordable Care Act. This Executive Order takes critical steps to reverse attacks on and strengthen Medicaid and the Af-

fordable Care Act, so they can continue to provide access to life-saving care for millions of Americans. Based on this Executive Order, it is expected that the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) will open HealthCare.gov for a "Special Enrollment Period," from February 15, 2021 - May 15, 2021. This Special Enrollment Period will give Americans that need health care coverage during this global pandemic the opportunity to sign up.

The President also directed federal agencies to reconsider rules and other policies that limit Americans' access to health care, and consider actions that will protect and strengthen that access.

Agencies are directed to re-examine:

- * Policies that undermine protections for people with pre-existing conditions, including complications related to COVID-19;
- * Demonstrations and waivers under Medicaid and the ACA that may reduce coverage or undermine the programs, including work requirements;
- * Policies that undermine the Health Insurance Marketplace or other markets for health insurance;
- * Policies that make it more difficult to enroll in Medicaid and the ACA; and
- * Policies that reduce affordability of coverage or financial assistance, including for dependents.

As part of their reviews, agencies will consider whether to take additional actions to strengthen and protect access to health care.

Protecting Women's Health at Home and Abroad. Across the country and around the world, people -- particularly women, Black, Indigenous and other people of color, LGBTQ+ people, and those with low incomes -- have been denied access to reproductive health care.

President Biden is also issuing a Presidential Memorandum to protect and expand access to comprehensive reproductive health care. The memorandum reflects the policy of the Biden-Harris Administration to support women's and girls' sexual and reproductive health and rights in the United States, as well as globally.

As with memoranda issued by President Clinton and President Obama before him, it immediately rescinds the global gag rule, also referred to as the Mexico City Policy, which bars international non-profits that provide abortion counseling or referrals from receiving U.S. funding. In recognition of the additional work necessary to protect access to reproductive health care, President Biden's memorandum also directs the Department of Health and Human Services to take immediate action to consider whether to rescind regulations under its Title X family planning program.

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A Mental Health Moment

African Americans in Mental Health – Black History Moments

By Bernadette Joy Graham, MA, LPC, NCC, Licensed Mental Health Therapist

The Truth Contributor

Welcome to February! Besides red balloons and boxes of candy, we reflect and celebrate black history this month. African Americans have contributed and continue to do so in fields of mental health. Many have made quite an impact on our history in providing contributions to racial identity and biases' that African-American people experience. Mental health is just as important as medical and dental health. Many healthcare fields have an underrepresented presence of African Americans. So, who were some early African-American pioneers in mental health?

Mamie Phipps Clark (1917 – 1983) was the first African-American woman to receive a doctorate degree in psychology from the University of Columbia. Her most famous research was conducted with the now well-known Doll Test in researching the effects of discrimination and racial identity. Her research was a key component in the Brown v. Board of Education Supreme Court case that changed state laws about separating black and white children in the public school system as unconstitutional.

Herman George Canady (1917 – 1983) conducted studies about racial bias in IQ testing. He was a Psychologist at Howard University studying self-concept of African Americans. His research led to him being an expert witness for the NAACP in segregation and employment discrimination.

Solomon Fuller (1872 – 1953) was the first African-American psychiatrist to become recognized by the American Psychological Association. Dr. Fuller graduated from Boston School of Medicine in 1897 and continued on to study

neurodegenerative diseases to include schizophrenia, Alzheimer's and manic depression. Over his career, he made groundbreaking discoveries on how Alzheimer's physically changes the brain.

While the list goes on, the presence of African Americans in mental health has grown and chances are you will now find an African American mental health provider listed in your area and in your insurance group. If you utilize a search engine such as www.psychologytoday.com you may filter out your provider by gender, race, zip code and other specialties.



Mental health is a most important aspect of one's overall health. Any part of one's health that is misinterpreted or misunderstood due to racial bias can be detrimental in one receiving the best care and one returning to continued care. Mental health is often seen as a stigma in African American culture. Don't allow it to be a roadblock to your overall health.

Bernadette Graham is a Licensed Professional Mental Health Counselor, National Certified Counselor and Certified Grief Recovery Specialist. Provide feedback or reach out at graham.bernadette@gmail.com For appointment information please call 419.409.4929 (Telehealth is available for ongoing and new clients at this time as well as in person appointments available on Tuesdays and Fridays only). Office location is 3454 Oak Alley Ct. Suite 300 Toledo, OH 43606 www.bjgrahamcounseling.com

Four Ways Black Women Can Prioritize Self-Care for Improved Heart Health

Special to The Truth

High blood pressure -- the leading risk factor for heart attack and stroke -- continues to disproportionately affect communities of color. Addressing this health inequity is especially important right now, as people with hypertension and serious heart conditions are at an increased risk for more severe outcomes if they acquire COVID-19.

According to the American Heart Association, the prevalence of high

blood pressure among Black adults in the U.S. is among the highest in the

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Six Reasons to Start a Home Healthcare Career After Age 50

Special To The Truth

With unemployment rates nearly twice as high as their pre-pandemic levels reported in February 2020, the prospect of starting a new career after age 50 may seem unrealistic. However, industry experts say that it's actually a great time for those in this age bracket to consider making the leap.

"Whether you're inspired by the healthcare heroes helping patients on the COVID-19 frontlines or you're looking to take control over your career and future, the recession-proof home healthcare industry may be right for you," says Jennifer Sheets, president and chief executive officer of Interim HealthCare Inc., which is actively recruiting caregivers nationwide.

Here are six reasons to consider home healthcare at this point in your career:

1. To boost happiness. The pandemic has created new sources of stress and unhappiness for many people. Your career is one area of your life where you can take back some control. And the right career can actually make you happier. Research from The University of Chicago shows that jobs that help
2. To stay sharp. Brains are like muscles -- they have to be used to stay fit. A change in career flexes your brain "muscles" by encouraging you to learn new things, step out of your comfort zone and stay challenged. Medical experts also believe that staying cognitively active may even reduce your risk of Alzheimer's disease and dementia. With a home healthcare career, every day is different, offering a diverse array of experiences that use every facet of your skillset.
3. To make extra money. In uncertain economic times, earning extra money can make a big difference for nearly every family, and home care careers often allow you to bring in extra income in a way that aligns with your schedule and priorities.
4. To meet new people. Loneliness is tied to depression and anxiety, and it can even have negative impacts on heart health. Unfortunately, the pandemic has exacerbated this issue for many people. A new career that requires getting out and interacting with new people can alleviate some of this.

5. To make a difference. With headlines touting healthcare heroes, you may be feeling the pull toward a career that allows you to give back. Helping individuals who can't (or shouldn't) go out due to a high risk of COVID-19 complications is a valuable way to make a difference in your community.

6. To mix things up. There are job opportunities in home healthcare available for people of all backgrounds. However, for those already working in healthcare, this is a path offering an opportunity to get back to the heart of caregiving by providing personalized care to patients, with all the flexibility and autonomy that go with it.

To learn more about the industry and explore job opportunities available through Interim HealthCare, which has been connecting individuals to rewarding opportunities that advance their career for more than 50 years, visit ihcmadeforthis.com.

Time for the next chapter in your career? Consider whether home healthcare is the right step for you.

Courtesy StatePoint

Lucas Metropolitan Housing to Extend Eviction Moratorium

Consistent with the agency's commitment to reevaluate the need for an extension on its eviction moratorium 30 days prior to the expiration of the current date, President and Chief Executive Officer Joaquin Cintron Vega has authorized an extension that is applicable locally until Friday, April 30, 2021.

LMH understands that housing insecurity was already at a crisis level nationally and locally before COVID-19. Under Joaquin Cintron's leadership, LMH proactively issued its own eviction moratorium that extended

... continued on page 13

Self-Care... continued from page 11

world, with the prevalence of high blood pressure in Black women nearly 40 percent higher than white women in the U.S.

While many long-standing inequities and stressors produced by structural racism have created and continue to exacerbate these conditions, there are steps individuals can take to prioritize self-care for improved blood pressure.

This is why the American Medical Association (AMA), the AMA Foundation, Association of Black Cardiologists, American Heart Association, Minority Health Institute and National

Medical Association have launched the "Release the Pressure" campaign with ESSENCE. The campaign is aimed at partnering with Black women to help improve their heart health and be part of a movement for healthy blood pressure, with a shared goal of engaging more than 300,000 Black women.

As part of the campaign, the AMA and this coalition of national health care organizations encourages Black women to take a pledge to be part of a healthy blood pressure movement at ReleaseThePressure.org. Specifically, the pledge encourages Black women to take the following four steps:

1. Set a blood pressure goal: Schedule an appointment with your physician or other health

care professional, in-person or virtually, to work in partnership on understanding your blood pressure numbers and knowing your goal for optimal blood pressure.

2. Monitor blood pressure numbers at home: Once you learn your blood pressure numbers, take and keep regular records of your blood pressure.

3. Activate a personalized wellness plan: Identify specific goals for fitness and heart healthy eating and connect virtually with family members and friends from your "squad" to keep you on track.

4. Make regular check-ins with your "squad": Lean on your family and friends to help you achieve your heart health goals by checking in with them on a daily basis.

"Preventive care is vital to breaking the devastating impact of high blood pressure within the Black community, particularly during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic," says Patrice A. Harris, M.D., MA, president of the AMA. "It starts with understanding blood pressure numbers and taking action to manage blood pressure."

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Black History Books for Kids ages 3 to 18

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When you're a kid, there are so many things to learn.

Someone has to teach you your A-B-Cs, and to count to a hundred. You have to learn to tie a knot and set the table and stay safe. And this month, you should learn more about Black History, and that can be fun with these great books...

For the littlest reader ages three to five, *The ABCs of Black History* by **Rio Cortez**, illustrated by **Lauren Semmer** is a great way to start the lesson. This most fundamental book includes holidays, cities, people, and music that forms the base of Black History, in colorful drawings and a format that's fun.

Slightly older kids ages four to about seven – those who still love picture books – will want *Stompin' at the Savoy* by **Moir Rose Donohue**, illustrated by **Laura Freeman**, which is a book about the life of famed drummer Chick Webb; or *Life As You Climb: The Story of Ella Baker* by **Patricia Hruby Powell** and **R. Gregory Christie**, the tale of activist Baker and her inspirational work.

Also look for The Teacher's March! *How Selma's Teachers Changed History* by **Sandra Neil Wallace** and **Rich Wallace**, illustrated by **Charly Palmer**. It's the story of Reverend F. D. Reese and his co-workers in Selma, Alabama, in 1965.

For middle graders, *This is Your Time* by **Ruby Bridges** is a quick but impactful book, perfect for Black History Month. Bridges, of course, is a Civil Rights worker and this is the story of her life, and the day she was six years old and was escorted by federal marshals, a little Black girl heading to a white school. Her tale will inspire young readers to help create justice in their classrooms and neighborhoods.

Also for older kids ages 12 and up, *Ida B. The Queen* by **Michelle Duster** looks like it might be a storybook. The truth is that it is a story – it's a bunch of stories, in fact – first, of Ida B. Wells, crusader, writer, and suffragist, but not just her. The book is also about the people she inspired, the singers, lawmakers, inventors, thinkers, and others. Keep in mind that this is a big book, with lots of side-bars in a skinny cover; having a bookmark and notebook nearby might be handy.

And finally, for high school readers, *Separate No More: The Long Road to Brown v. Board of Education* by **Lawrence Goldstone** begins more than

c.2021
Bloomsbury Publishing
\$30.00 / \$39.99 Canada
387 pages

100 years ago with a landmark ruling on education for Black citizens and ends with another one that turned the first one upside down. Not just a story of an event, though, this book also looks at the people involved: judges, parents, teachers, politicians, citizens, and students who merely wanted to go to school.

If these books don't quite fit your child's interests, ask your librarian or bookseller for ideas. There's sure to be a book that you and your child will love to read and share because, when it comes to Black History, there's really so much to learn.

LMH... continued from page 12

beyond federal mandates. This moratorium applies to evictions for non-payment of rent. The agency has extended the moratorium several times already and will continue to do so as necessary into 2021.

The temporary moratorium on evictions for nonpayment of rent and fees and penalties related to nonpayment of rent, applies to all tenants, regardless if employment was affected by COVID-19. LMH alerts its residents that any rent missed during the moratorium will accumulate and still be due when the eviction moratorium is lifted. For any unpaid rent during the moratorium, the family must repay LMH or sign a repayment agreement to pay any amount owed after the moratorium has ended. LMH is working with our residents to educate them about the process.

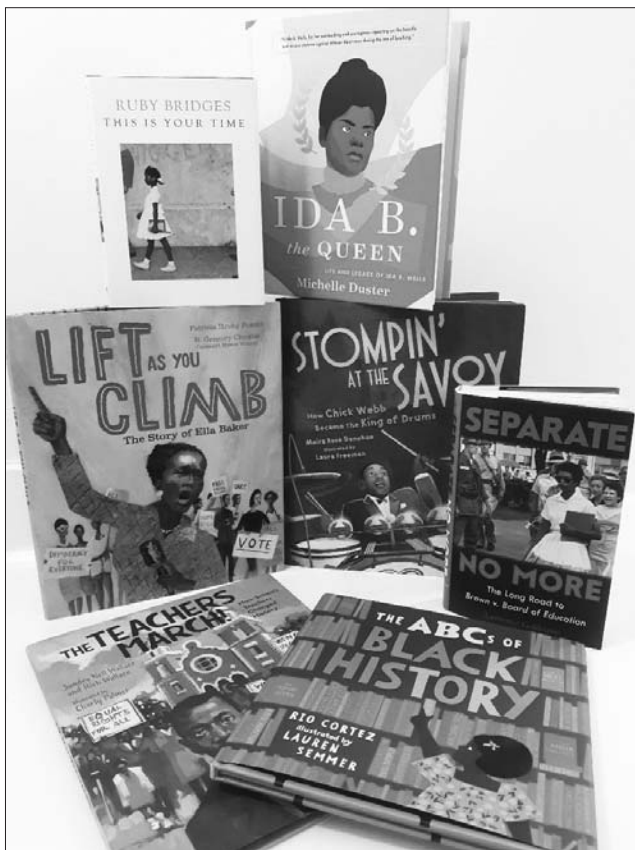
LMH understands the critical importance of providing stable housing, now more than ever, and is committed to working with its residents to do everything it can to keep them in their homes.

"LMH understands that eviction has a serious impact on community homelessness and housing instability. As an anti-poverty organization, LMH has many safeguards in place to ensure that the individuals and families it serves remain housed," said Cintron Vega.

During the pandemic, LMH continued providing housing, services, and support programs critical to its residents, serving with a sense of compassion. Not a single resident has had an eviction filed against them for non-payment of rent since the pandemic has started.

LMH has over 2600 units in the Low-Income Public Housing Program and serves approximately 17,500 residents across all its programs. LMH understands the cost of homelessness to families, children and to our community. It works hand in hand with community partners, like the Toledo Lucas County Homelessness Board, to provide housing resources for special population groups, for example, the chronically homeless. It will continue to find other resources that can ensure that everyone in Lucas County has a place to call home.

LMH will continue to reevaluate the need for an extension to this policy 30 days prior to the current expiration date.



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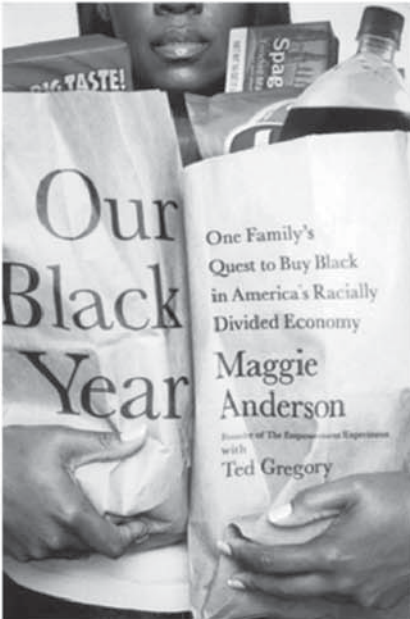
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Youth & Young Adult 4th Sunday
When: Every 4th Sunday
Time: 11:00 am
Where: Crusaders for Christ Church
919 Woodville Rd.
Toledo, Ohio


Pastor Joseph Mitchell Jr., Pastor Emeritus Laketae Mitchell-Jones
Crusaders for Christ Church • www.crusadersforchristchurch.org

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CLASSIFIEDS

February 3, 2021

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HUMAN RESOURCE OFFICER Toledo Municipal Court

The Toledo Municipal Court Judges Division is seeking an enthusiastic, high-energy, people-serving individual for the position of Human Resource Officer. Knowledge of general employment law and excellent written and oral communication skills, required. Ability to correctly interpret and apply personnel policies and good organizational skills, required. Ability to establish effective working relationships with others in a demanding and fast-paced environment, required.

Bachelor degree in business, public administration, human resources or a related field, required. Three years of intensive human resource experience, required. An advanced degree in business, public administration or law may be substituted for one year of experience. Prior experience with the court system or criminal justice, preferred but not required. Potential candidates must pass a background check. Starting salary is \$65,883.17. Full salary is \$73,203.52.

Submit cover letter describing how you meet the qualifications outlined above and a resume by 4:30 p.m., February 8, 2021 to the Court Administrator's Office, (Attn. HRO), Toledo Municipal Court, Judges Division, 2nd floor, 555 N. Erie Street, Toledo, OH 43604 or by email to tmchiring@tmcourt.org. Equal Opportunity Employer. For complete job description go to www.toledomunicipalcourt.org/docs/.

BAKERS NEEDED

Jera's Heavenly Sweet is seeking bakers who have extensive, professional, "from scratch" baking experience. Bakers should be passionate, able to cut or multiply a recipe with ease, multitask, and effectively communicate. To apply, send your resume to heavenandsweet@gmail.com

PARK SERVICES RANGER

Metroparks Toledo has openings for part time and full time Park Services Ranger for community policing and some park maintenance. Part time up to 24 hours per week, \$14.96 per hr. Full time Ranger, \$19.92 per hr. Certification as a Peace Officer in the State of Ohio is required. Go to www.MetroparksToledo.com <<http://www.metroparkstoledo.com/>> to view detailed position description, job requirements and to apply.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION SERVICES NEEDED

The Mental Health & Recovery Services Board of Lucas County (MHR SB) seeks to fund and invites proposals from qualified individuals or organizations for consultation and training services to provide diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) services. Proposed services will support the sustainable achievement of MHR SB goals throughout the next phase of its DEI efforts. Proposals are to be delivered no later than 5:00 p.m. ET on February 26, 2021. Submit all questions to crs@lcmhrsb.oh.gov. Find details regarding the upcoming bidder's conference, project deliverables, and submission criteria in the RFP Framework located on the MHR SB's website <http://www.lcmhrsb.oh.gov/publicnotice/>.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Lucas Metropolitan Housing (LMH), located in Toledo, OH is seeking experienced applicants for the following position(s): Vice President of Resident Services. For complete details, visit <https://www.lucasmha.org> and click on Careers. Deadline: 02/05/21. This is a Section 3 covered position. HUD recipients are encouraged to apply and are to indicate on the application if you are a LMHA Public Housing client or Housing Choice Voucher Program participant. Persons with disabilities are encouraged to apply. NO PHONE CALLS. Equal employment opportunity shall be afforded to all qualified persons without regard to age, race, color, religion, religious creed, gender, military status, ancestry, disability, handicap, sexual orientation, genetic information or national origin.



OUTDOOR SKILLS INTERPRETER

Metroparks Toledo is looking for an individual to be our Outdoor Skills Interpreter at Oak Openings Preserve Metropark. The person in this position will connect people to parks through the development, production, and presentation of high quality park programs, special events, and experiences. Bachelor's degree or equivalent combination of education and work experience. Moderate experience in educational and public program development, production, and evaluation and presenting public or educational programs. Some outdoor skills-specific experience required. Must be at least 18 years of age and have a valid driver's license. Full time position with benefits. \$18.45/hr. Go to www.MetroparksToledo.com <<http://www.MetroparksToledo.com>>/careers to view the job description, position requirements and apply online by Feb 5th. EOE



Police Officer Sylvania Township, Ohio Entrance Examination Announcement

Sylvania Township is testing to establish a pre-eligibility list for the position of Police Officer. The Township will be using National Testing Network to administer this test. Starting salary \$30.07 per hour. To review the requirements, qualifications and to schedule a test, go to www.nationaltestingnetwork.com/publicsafetyjobs

Testing centers are located around the country; you can choose a date, time, and testing center of your choice. Home/virtual testing is also available. You must complete the test and have your scores sent to Sylvania Township Police by March 19, 2021.

Please visit www.sylvaniametroparkpolice.com for more information on the application process. All potential employees will be required to pass a physical fitness test, interviews, background investigation, physical examination, drug and nicotine screens, and psychological evaluation. The Sylvania Township Police Department is an equal opportunity employer.



Account Executive

Buckeye Broadband is looking for a qualified candidate to fill an Account Executive position. The Advertising Sales Account Executive is responsible for prospecting new clients and the selling of multi-platform Buckeye Broadband advertising to local advertisers. The Advertising Sales Account Executive is responsible for achieving agreed upon productivity levels and revenue goals.

Minimum Requirements

- High school diploma or the equivalent – required
- Minimum 2 years of previous outside sales experience – required
- Intermediate computer skills with the ability to use the Internet – required
- Experience working with Excel, PowerPoint and Word – preferred
- Familiarity with contact management applications (such as salesforce or other CRM) – preferred

Core Competencies

- Agile – Embraces change; adaptable and flexible; sense of urgency;
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Black History Moment... continued from page 8

in spite of staying true to her values. She would avoid the blaxploitation films, she would refuse to play prostitutes, drug addicts and other demeaning roles.

It was still not a particularly comfortable era for black sports stars. White America was still very uneasy about the ascendancy of black athletes in the 1960's and the outspokenness of several – Jim Brown, Muhammad Ali, Bill Russell, for example, along with the fists raised by Tommie Smith and John Carlos at the 1968 Olympics. And many white Americans were not prepared to accept the idea of a Black man shattering perhaps the most revered of sports records – Babe Ruth's career home run mark of 714 that had stood for almost four decades by 1974 – a record that even the most casual sports fan knew by heart. White America was certainly not prepared for Black man to pass Ruth as Hank Aaron did in April 1974 before a national television audience.

Cicely Tyson, born in Harlem in 1924, grew up in poverty and became a fashion model before entering the film world at the age of 30. The film business proved to be a difficult choice; Tyson was often out of work for months, sometimes years at a time, even after her ground-breaking, Oscar-nominated role in "Sounder."

She would only accept roles displaying "strength, pride and dignity." In 1997, she said "I wait for roles – first, to be written for a woman, then, to be written for a black woman. Then I have the audacity to be selective about the kinds or roles I play. I've really got three strikes against me."

Along with "Sounder," a film about Depression-era black sharecroppers facing various crises, Tyson's significant work included a TV film, "The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman," and roles portraying Harriet Tubman, Coretta Scott King, Chicago educator Marva Collins, the mothers of Rosa Parks and Olympic track star Wilma Rudolph.

Tyson won three Emmys, a SAG Award, a Tony and an honorary Academy Award and continued working on screen and in Broadway roles past the age of 90.

Hank Aaron, born in Mobile, Alabama in 1934, also grew up in poverty – so poor his family could not afford baseball equipment. He would practice hitting bottle caps with sticks. He had his first tryout with a major league baseball organization at the age of 15 but did not make the team.



During high school, Aaron joined an independent Negro league team, the Mobile Black Bears, after a stint with the Pritchard Athletics, earning \$3 per game.

Finally, in 1951, a scout signed Aaron to a contract with the Indianapolis Clowns of the Negro American League. Aaron did so well that, after three months, he received offers from MLB teams, the New York Giants and the Boston Braves. The Braves offered \$50 more per month.

Aaron was called up to the major leagues in 1954 and was a model of consistency over the years. The Ruthian 714 mark was often discussed in the 50s and 60s but Aaron was not often in the discussion. Players with flashier yearly statistics, the Yankees' Mickey Mantle and the Giants' Willie Mays, for example, were given much better odds at topping the mark than Aaron. However, Mantle, then Mays, slowed down during the later years of their careers. The Twins' Harmon Killebrew was a dark horse candidate, but he also fell short over the course of time.

Aaron just plugged along, never hitting more than 47 home runs in a year, but his career didn't tail off. He hit home run number 715 in his 21st season and was immediately assailed by an increasing deluge racist death threats, hate mail and calls. Increasing, that is, because the vitriol had begun in earnest during the off season as racist baseball fans realized he was on the cusp of overtaking the beloved home run record.

"I didn't read most of them, but I wanted to have them as reminders," Aaron later wrote of his hate mail messages in his autobiography. "I Had a Hammer: The Hank Aaron Story."

"I kept feeling more and more strongly that I had to break the record not only for myself and for Jackie Robinson and for black people, but also to strike back at the vicious little people who wanted to keep me from doing it. All that hatred left a deep scar on me.

"I was just a man doing something that God had given me the power to do, and I was living like an outcast in my own country. I had nowhere to go except home and to the ballpark, home and to the ballpark. I was a prisoner in my own apartment. ... That whole period, I lived like a guy in a fishbowl, swimming from side to side with nowhere to go, watching everybody watch me."

After he retired, Aaron joined the Atlanta Braves in the front office eventually becoming the vice president of player development. In 1992, he was inducted into the baseball Hall of Fame with 98.2 percent of the ballots (second only to Ty Cobb). In 1999 Sporting News named him the fifth best baseball player of the 20th Century.

Dignity, grace and a sense of the positive impact they could make on their fellow African Americans marked the lives and careers of both Cicely Tyson and Hank Aaron.

Hank Aaron died on January 22, 2021; Cicely Tyson died on January 28, 2021.

May their memories be a blessing.



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