

The *Sojourner's* Truth

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"And Ye Shall Know The Truth..."

April 14, 2021

Can Toledo Reduce Gun Violence?



JoJuan Armour, Commissioner, Initiative to Reduce Gun Violence

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Winning on Diversity and Inclusion

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

The Truth Contributor

The real radical is that person who has a vision of [equity] and is willing to do those things that will bring reality closer to that vision.

- Bayard Rustin



Expect extraordinary numbers when the City of Toledo announces the demographics of its upcoming fire class. The class, 70+ percent diverse, including women, will be the most diverse non-court ordered fire class in Toledo's history.

Here is the breakdown by race or ethnicity and gender, subject to final medical exams:

- 1 Lebanese
- 1 Asian
- 3 Latino females
- 6 Latino males
- 9 White females
- 13 White males
- 2 Black females
- 15 Black males

According to recent statistics provided by the Harvard Business Review, ninety-six percent of career firefighters in America are men and 82 percent are White. The Toledo Fire Department (TFD) is approximately 76 percent White. Although African Americans comprise 27 percent of Toledo's population, Black firefighters only account for about 13 percent of active TFD personnel. These numbers clearly paint the department as one that is not representative of the people it serves.

I have witnessed previous City and TFD administrations fail miserably to achieve diversity in its public safety forces. There have also been lawsuits and allegations of racial discrimination and a racially charged hostile culture within TFD.

So, kudos to Chief Brian Byrd and Battalion Chief Danny Brown-Martinez for recognizing the Toledo Fire Department's abhorrent homogeneity and the commitment to increasing racial and gender diversity.

What accounts for the difference in the most recent exceptional outcomes?

The overwhelming proportion of emergency calls to which TFD responds are medical emergencies (64 – 80 percent) rather than fires (four-15 percent). In an era where U.S., Ohio, and local demographics are changing rapidly, Byrd and Martinez understand that the "browning of America" brings more complex service demands.

Today's successful firefighters must demonstrate a complex mix of skills. Chief among these is social emotional competence, needful in building trust among those experiencing emotional trauma, a situation frequently encountered among diverse communities. Fire departments, then, must speak the language and have cultural knowledge of the communities they serve. Firefighters must have empathy and be able to communicate with the people they serve; many of whom need someone to hold their hand or listen to them as they release suppressed grief and anxiety.

Therefore, the more diverse the fire department, the more effective it will be to serve diverse communities. This perspective was not truly considered in the past, according to those familiar with TFD culture.

Also, the recruiting strategy has completely changed from the processes used in the past.

"Before, we used to have a handful of recruiting people that we called a recruiting team that were only recruiting for four and a half weeks – the very minimum amount of time," said an unnamed source familiar with the procedure. "This time, we created a community engagement bureau that put people out in the community doing things year-round. The team was visible in the community and involved in community activities, actively and passively recruiting," the source added.

The extra time and resources enabled TFD recruiters to bring enough qualified people across all demographics to take the written test. This resulted in the most diverse eligibility list than the fire department has ever had. "This job is not a regular job, and we have to take the time and put the effort into getting qualified and quality people to the table. People who understand what we're here for – that this is a community service job; people that understand the physical and academic requirements of the job. When you recruit in such a way that

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Help! I See Black People Everywhere!

By Lafe Tolliver, Esq

Guest Column

There was a recent report regarding the January 6 attempted coup at the Capitol in which it was noted that the majority of the "attendees" and rioters were from parts of the county in which White voters are quite anxious about Black and Brown people making progress at their expense.

Such angst should come at no surprise to anyone who has studied American History in which it has demonstrated that whenever people of color made any meaningful economic or political progress, there is, "Trouble in de land!"

A case in point was when back in the 1930's and 1940's, in Alabama (among other Southern states) when poor Black and White sharecroppers were being organized to fight against the regional fat cats who held them down, the powers that be, campaigned on racial themes to divide them against each other... and it worked.

The astute Southern Planter and racist politicians knew from experience that if you can convince a poor White sharecropper or farmer that the same poor Black farmer or sharecropper is not your friend but your competitor, race wins out every time.

Sow the seeds of disharmony based upon skin color and the poor White bolts for the door and the safety of the lie that his equally poor Black farmer is not his friend.

Appeals to race as opposed to one's better economic interests (in spite of race) was tragically lost upon the poor White farmer or sharecropper.

The race baiters whispered to the poor White farmer that his best bet was to align his hopes and upward mobility with White folks and to leave those Black folks alone because they were troublemakers or at worse, socialists or communists!

Although the rich land barons were not making life easier for the poor White farmer or White sharecropper, that person was pummeled with messages that said if you race mingle or throw your lot into the mix with poor Black folks, you will be marginalized and will sink to their depths.

It worked and any budding Black and White farm alliances were doomed.

Once you sow the animus of race with certain economically challenged White voters and they are fed a constant diet that they are not making any upward economic progress, they will vote their racial self-interests and not the vote of collective racial upward mobility.

Once you put out a message of grievance that the "American Pie" is shrinking and there is not enough to go around for all, the tricked poor or middle-class White voter will get edgy if he or she believes that they are being left behind; and all the economic goodies and perks are being shoveled into wheelbarrows and are delivered to those "others."

The same can be said of the economic background of many of the Capitol Hill rioters who came to upend a duly constituted election based on the outrageous lie by Donald Trump that the election was stolen from him and in turn, stolen from his base of support.

Donald Trump was notorious and crass in his spouting of racial dog whistles to his base and the loudest whistle was when Herr Trump tried to convince certain key states with critical minority voting concentrations

that "those" people were the cause of they being cheated out of he being re-elected.

So, what does a race monger do? Simple. You call for your mis-treated base to act and march on the Capitol and stop the farce of an election that you claim was stolen.

Of course, there was no credible evidence of any such theft, but why would anyone let facts interfere with a noble cause?

When those insurrectionists stormed the gates of democracy, they were both Trump supporters and a wide variety of right wing supremacist's groups, hell-bent on Making America Great Again.

Like the poor White farmer who is repeatedly told that his lot in life is being diminished by Black and Brown people, the rioters were told by right wing media that "others" were engaged in chicanery that resulted in their loss of status in life.

Remember, Black Capitol policemen somberly retold stories of being called the "N" word by these White terrorists. These rioters took out their racial vitriol and fears on Black law enforcement officers.

These Black police officers were a convenient and close up reminder that "they" were the chief cause of the rioter's complaints and that was the reason they were storming the Capitol for their dear leader, Herr Trump.

The Capitol Insurrection was fomented by a demagogic liar who, without conscience, fed his base the slop that minority people were not their friends, and they should stick with Herr Trump and his racially divisive messaging.

Yet, and get this, over 72 million Americans wanted four more years of Herr Trump and his base calling the shots.

Divided by race, again. De ja Vue, all over again.

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AIRPORT

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Congressional Black Caucus Mourns the Passing of Congressman Alcee Hastings

The Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) issued the following statement on the passing of Vice Chairman of the House Rules Committee and Congressional Black Caucus Member, Congressman Alcee L. Hastings (FL-20).

The Congressional Black Caucus is heartbroken and mourns the loss of our colleague and brother Congressman Alcee Hastings, a fearless fighter for his District and a leading voice in the fight for civil and voting rights.

First elected in 1992, Alcee Hastings was a longtime Member of the powerful House Committee on Rules. Congressman Hastings never forgot where he came from and continued to fight up until his last breath. Diagnosed with Stage Four Pancreatic Cancer in 2018, Alcee brought his same indomitable fighting spirit to his battle against that devastating illness.

Congressional Black Caucus Chairwoman Joyce Beatty said on behalf of the CBC, "While we mourn the loss of our brother, his life and legacy will continue to be a part of our power and our message, and will serve as

a motivation for those who will follow in his footsteps - as leaders, fighters and advocates who represent the best of what our nation has to offer."

May his memory serve as a comfort to his loved ones and those who join us in mourning his passing. Rest well, our dear brother... we'll take it from here.



Rep. Alcee Hastings

YWCA and Lucas County Children Services Sponsor Anti-Racism Event

As part of its ongoing effort to end structural racism in our community, the YWCA of Northwest Ohio, in partnership with Lucas County Children Services, will hold its annual Stand Against Racism conference, April 22 and 23, from 1 to 5 p.m.

This year's conference will focus on, "The Trauma of Systemic Racism on Black Families." Thursday's keynote speaker will be Barbara Love, EdD, author and professor emeritus of social justice education at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. She returns to Toledo to discuss liberation, individual and societal transformation, and social justice.

Love's presentation will be followed by discussions led by Michael

W. Waters, DMin, founding pastor of Abundant Life A.M.E. Church in Dallas, Texas, and the author of the award-winning books, *For Beautiful Black Boys Who Believe in a Better World*, and *Stakes Is High: Race, Faith, and Hope for America*.

His wife, Yulise Reaves Waters, Esq., will address incarceration and criminal justice reform. Waters is deputy director of the Lone Star Justice Alliance, a nonprofit legal organization in Texas that improves the lives of youth and emerging adults in the justice system and addresses racial disparities in the criminal legal system.

On Friday, Jawanza Kunjufu will provide the keynote address. He is the author of more than 25 books about the challenges and obstacles that Black boys encounter in education and American culture, including *Raising Black Boys*, and *200 Plus Educational Strategies to Teach Children of Color*. His work has been featured in *Ebony* and *Essence*, and he has been a guest on *BET* and *Oprah*.

His presentation will be followed by a "fireside debrief," with Toledo-area leaders from child welfare, education, mental and physical health, law enforcement, and criminal justice. The panel will discuss the ways that racism plays out for children and families YWCA of Northwest Ohio 1018 Jefferson Ave., Toledo, Ohio, 43604 P 419.241.3235 YW-CANWO.ORG in their individual circles.

The final presenter will be Adrienne Elhai, Ph.D., of Toledo's Cullen Center and an expert in treating childhood trauma.

Due to the continuing COVID-19 pandemic, this event will be held virtually. Tickets are \$50, and include both the Thursday and Friday sessions. Tickets are available at <https://vinyu.us/ywca>. Sponsorship opportunities are available, contact Lisa McDuffie for details.

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JoJuan Armour: Addressing the Root Causes of Gun Violence

By Asia Nail

Sojourner's Truth Reporter

Since the killing of George Floyd and America's 'racial reckoning,' everyone has had to stop and examine the soul of our nation as it pertains to systems and democracy in America. Black and Brown communities are cautiously optimistic that we will begin taking some critical steps as we heal the divide and move forward with a sense of equity in this country.

As part of the City of Toledo's comprehensive approach to address the root causes of gun violence as a public health crisis, JoJuan Armour, a Toledo native and former professional athlete, has been appointed to lead the Initiative to Reduce Gun Violence.

The goal of the new Initiative to Reduce Gun Violence is to connect at risk people to mentoring, employment, healthcare and other supportive services. In addition, the city will also be hiring Violence Interrupters. These interrupters are not law-enforcement personnel, rather they are people within the community who are well known, well respected, and can help to keep the community safe.

Armour brings a wealth of practical experience to the table. After graduating from Central Catholic High School, he was a third team All-American football player at Miami University in 1998 and went on to play in the NFL for the Cincinnati Bengals from 1999-2002.

Armour previously worked as Quality Assurance Program Manager for the Urban Minority Alcohol and Drug Abuse Outreach Program (UMADAOP) as well as a Defensive Quality Control Coach for the University of Toledo football team. Both of these positions uniquely qualify Armour for his new role.

When asked how, he shared, "The goal always comes first and I know how to reach goals. In football we have offense, defense, special teams, and many different personalities. The goal is to produce and work together to achieve the common goal of winning the game. Our initiative will operate similarly to how a well-drilled team would work together."

Toledo recorded 61 murders last year compared to 38 the year before. This new initiative will initially focus on the Junction, Garfield and Lagrange corridor neighborhoods. The Junction area is the first community to benefit from the rollout of this program.

There are specific and measurable factors that contribute to gun violence. Many of these issues intersect with gun violence and they ALL must be addressed. "The problem is very comprehensive so we must develop a multi-tiered approach to address all the aspects of gun violence," said Armour.

How will the gun reduction initiative get community buy-in from both adults and young kids?

"Well, for any effective team, you must model the behavior that you expect to see. I have had issues and run-ins with the law in the past, but I continue to display my reformed behavior daily. It shows my community that change is possible," said Armour.

Armour emphasizes providing jobs, reentering citizens from incarceration, helping people obtain education, and providing mental health services all produce positive results.

"My expectation is that these individuals will be our biggest advocates within the community," shared Armour.

Armour and his team are building with a sense of urgency to create the correct relationships to execute their plan. A balance must also take place. Considering the juxtaposition Armour said: "We are working at a steady pace. We just can't rush our plans to the extent of short changing our efforts."

Many wonder what the psychological impacts are for youth after watching countless unarmed Black

people being killed by police officers? How does one have a sense of life and purpose if they can be killed for no reason? How do we expect the youth to care and value each other's lives when many of the visuals they see show them that very few people value black life?

The Harvard School of Public health found in a study that we must give children a sense of importance and self purpose. One of the best ways kids can learn to work through feelings of helplessness is to be taught emotional intelligence.

Studies also show when you teach a child emotional intelligence, they are better equipped to deal with issues such as misogyny, homophobia, stereotyping and discrimination in general.

The world will try to feed us all racism and discrimination. Change what you are willing to consume to ensure you can help kids to deal with the depression that can often come from living in a world with systems that were not built to



JoJuan Armour

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YWCA Stand Against Racism The Trauma of Systemic Racism and the Black Family

A discussion of the impediments that Black families and children face in society today, and effective strategies to address them.



Day 1 — Thursday, April 22

Day 2 — Friday, April 23

Dr. Barbara Love
Racism and Social Justice Expert
• Followed by Dr. Michael Waters and Yulise Waters, Esq.

Jawanza Kunjufu
Author, "Raising Black Boys"
• Followed by a roundtable discussion among local leaders and comments by Adrienne Elhaj, Ph.D.

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Gun Violence... continued from page 5

serve them.

Instead, "model the behavior you want to see," as Armour reminds us. May that behavior also include joy. There is something that happens on a molecular level when black youth, see other black youth live positively on purpose. There is no liberation without joy.

"People are accustomed to solving problems in a linear fashion, but this problem has been allowed to grow so significantly that only a comprehensive plan will work," explained Armour.

We must all learn how to process our biases in healthy ways. In doing so, police must make the decision that they are no longer going to allow officers to be afraid of the same people they are sworn to serve.

At this point it's not a divided issue of #blacklivematter vs. #bluelivesmatter. Senseless shootings affect everyone and band-aid models for underserved communities will no longer suffice. Toledo police have been given the opportunity to actively work with the Mayor's initiative towards addressing solutions where ALL communities can thrive.

The *Group Violence Intervention* and *Cure Violence* models are two of the most well-known strategies for reducing gun violence. Both models aim to identify those at greatest risk for violence, to interrupt conflicts before they escalate or continue a cycle of retaliation, and to engage community organizations and members in the strategies.

Both approaches are rooted in the *Concentration of Violence Theory*, which suggests that a large proportion of violence in any given community is driven by a small number of people.

However, these intervention models accomplish these outcomes in two very different ways.

Research in cities across the country including Chicago, Newark, New Orleans, and Oakland has found that the majority of gun violence is committed by a single digit percentage within those cities' populations. The same is true for Toledo.

Research has also found that there is considerable overlap between those who commit violence and those who become victims of it due to similar geography, social and peer networks, and risky behaviors.

Many local organizations will be positioning themselves in tandem with Armour's initiative. The Toledo Department of Neighborhoods, Neighborhood Health Association of Toledo, Toledo's Arts Commission, Frederick Douglass Community Center, Center of Hope Family Services, City Park League, and the Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance of Toledo are just a few of the initiative's allies.

"All we can do is put different accountability measures in place, and hope that different communities embrace a multicultural reality where people can have greater appreciation and understanding," shared Armour.

This model relies on the threat of law enforcement intervention to those who

do not heed warnings of severe consequences if gun violence continues. The strategy entails the formation of a cross agency enforcement team including local police, city, state and federal prosecutors, federal law enforcement agencies, and parole and probation departments.

The enforcement team then develops a strategy to influence the behaviors of those individuals and groups by using all possible legal sanctions against them. Some say, those that only advocate for the jail system model have a rather short-sighted singular lens.

Though the GVI model has evolved over the past 20+ years, it seems to be most impactful when its focus is on a specific behavior of gun violence perpetration, rather than criminal behavior or group identity more broadly. Many feel a need for fundamental shifts in this policing strategy, to include more engagement within communities that are already often distrustful of law enforcement.

On the other hand, the Cure Violence model Mayor Wade Kapszukiewicz is trying here in Toledo is built on a much different approach to violence deterrents. Originally known as Cease-fire Chicago where it was first applied, this model entails three specific components:

1. Interrupting violence transmission by mediating conflicts and limiting the likelihood of retaliation.
2. Identifying those at greatest risk for violence involvement and reducing their risk through behavior change and linkage to needed services.
3. Changing community norms around violence through community mobilization and anti-violence messaging.

"My biggest attraction to using a public health model is it directly addresses the community and the individuals within it from a holistic viewpoint," shared Commissioner Armour.

This model employs street outreach workers to develop relationships with the individuals at the highest risk for violence. Outreach workers have often themselves had criminal or violent histories and are well-known in each of the pilot communities.

Workers have also undergone personal transformations, and desire to steer the individuals with whom they work with away from violence based on their personal experience. Being previously engaged in, or familiar with the very behaviors and activities they hope to change, increases the likelihood that the outreach workers will be seen as credible messengers and eventually trustworthy resources.

The model also employs special outreach workers who operate primarily as Violence Interrupters working to identify, mediate, and de-escalate potentially dangerous conflicts that could lead to shootings.

Because of the need to build genuine and trusted relationships with those at greatest risk for violence, in order to mediate conflicts and effectively help provide support, it is critically important that the outreach workers and violence

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UToledo's Inclusive Wall of Honor Inaugural Inductees

Sojourner's Truth Staff

The University of Toledo's Office of Diversity and Inclusion recognized its inaugural class of honorees in the Inclusive Wall of Honor ceremony on Thursday, April 8. The Inclusive Wall of Honor is intended to acknowledge individuals who have made significant contributions as employees or are exceptional alumni, said Willie McKether, PhD, vice president for Diversity and Inclusion and vice provost, as he opened the ceremony.

Five individuals were honored for their accomplishments and their plaques were placed on an Inclusive Wall of Honor both in University Hall and the Student Union. The installation in University Hall is located outside the Office of Diversity and Inclusion on the third floor.

"This wall ensures that students see representation on the campus of people similar to them and serves as a reminder of hope and encouragement during their time at The University of Toledo," said Kyndra Gaines, a public health graduate student for the Office of Diversity and Inclusion. Gaines is the individual who conceived of the idea of the Inclusive Wall of Honor and shepherded the concept to conclusion as part of the organizing committee.

Honored this year were Helen Cooks, PhD; Margarita De Leon, M.A, MBA; Deb Flores; Anthony Quinn, PhD and Susan Telljohann, PhD.

Helen Cooks, nominated and introduced by David Young, director of UT's Toledo EXCEL and Special Projects, was the founder of EXCEL 33 years ago. Young spoke of Cooks extensive accomplishments at UT and the community at large. A professor in the College of Education, Cooks also started the Conference for Aspiring Minority Youth at the university.

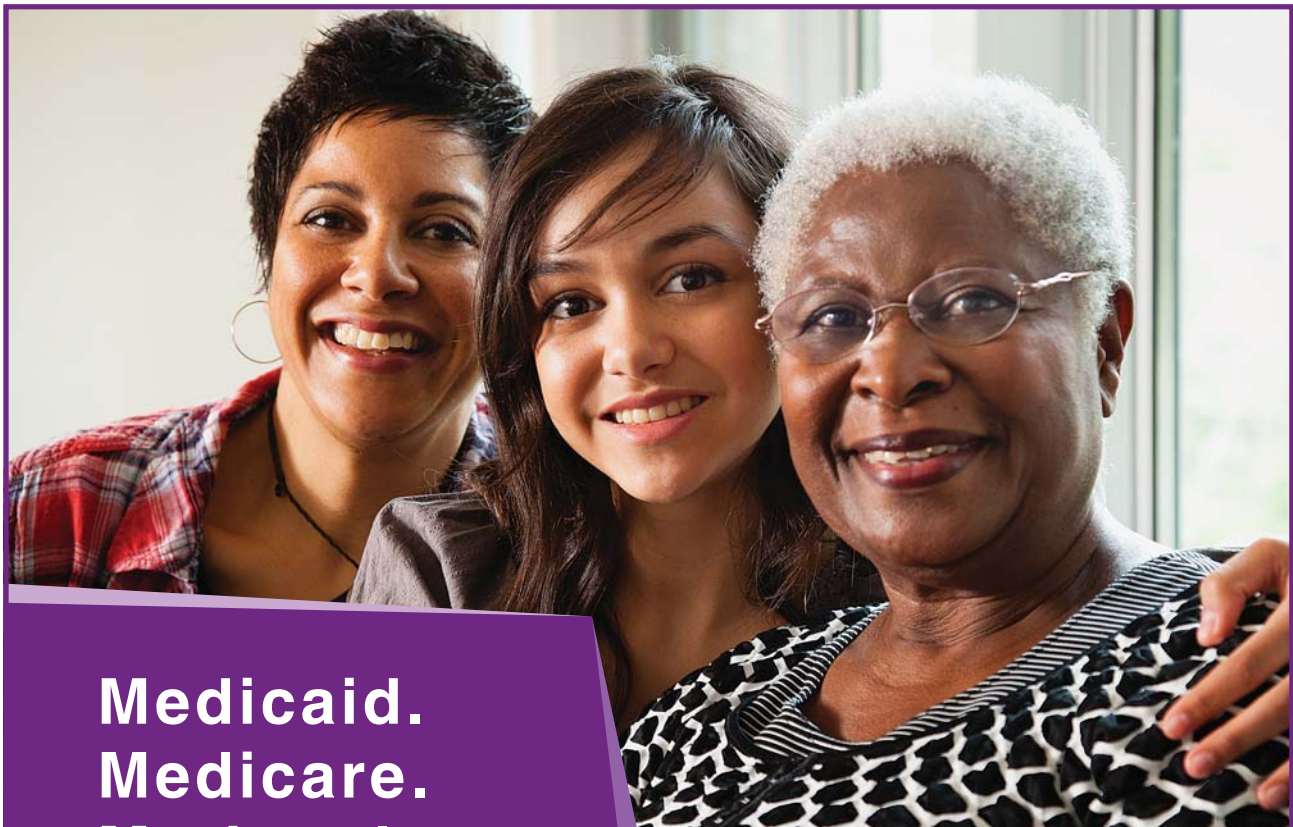
"She was an easy person to nominate," said Young. "She had a passion for introducing EXCEL Students to global experiences."

Cooks is currently ill and was unable to accept the honor herself. Her



Helen Cooks

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Gabrielle Dennis Named Beering Scholar by Purdue University.

Special to The Truth

The Purdue University Honors College in West Lafayette, Indiana has announced that Gabrielle Dennis has been awarded a Steven C. Beering Scholarship, which covers the full educational expenses for a bachelor's degree and the opportunity to pursue two other graduate degrees at Purdue.

Gabrielle, a Toledo native and an honor student at Ohio Virtual Academy, has decided to become a wildlife biologist and researcher. This career path has been her goal for most of her life now, as far back as the second grade, in fact, when she was often reading her favorite books – books about animals.

Later, during her high school years, she began to put those interests into practice when she started working as a volunteer at Nature's Nursery and at the Toledo Zoo. Nature's Nursery is a wildlife rehabilitation and education center in Whitehouse.

She has also had internships in the care of animals in southern Ohio and the Big Sur region of California. During her junior year, she was one of 100 teens from around the nation chosen to participate in the "Disney Dreamers" program in Orlando – a series of educational sessions that converts the amusement park into a classroom for students with a wide range of interests and studies.

During her California internship, Gabrielle had an opportunity to work in a site that specialized in assisting the endangered California condor.

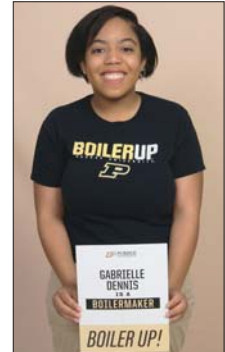
The Beering Scholarship is a tremendous value as it provides a "full ride" covering the average cost of education (tuition, room and board) for one bachelor's degree, one master's degree and either a Ph.D. or professional degree in medicine, veterinary medicine or pharmacy. It also includes funding for a study abroad experience.

Students are selected based on high school credentials and leadership skills. The program was created by Purdue's ninth president, Steven C. Beering, PhD, who raised private funds for the endowment.

Scholarship recipients are selected through an invitation-only process once students are admitted to Purdue University. A committee then reviews applications and determines the recipients.



A New Boilermaker



Gabrielle Dennis

"One of my goals is to help the animals that need help the most," said Gabrielle. "I'd maybe like to teach at some point, but I definitely want to do research. I've always wanted to go to the Galapagos Islands and maybe do research somewhere like that."

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interrupters maintain a clear distinction from law enforcement.

"It's important to note it is not my role to provide information to the police. Thankfully I'm not tasked with the responsibility of solving crime. My role is to provide mediation, prevention, and resources to the people I respect in the Toledo community," said Armour.

The initiative is also intended to increase the community's confidence in general with police to intervene when violence does occur.

There have been important lessons from the implementation and eval-

... continued on page 11

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daughter, Hope Bland, PhD, TPS, Diversity and Inclusion Department, administrator on Special Assignment, accepted on behalf of her mother. "She is the quintessence of grace, fortitude, brilliance ... and badass," said Bland calling EXCEL "a program designed for students to succeed."

Margarita De Leon was nominated by, among others, Aleiah Jones, manager of the Office of Multicultural Student Success at UT. De Leon, said Jones, is the founder of Bravo Magazine, Image of Northwest Ohio, the Diamante Awards and co-founder of Latino Fest.

She earned her undergraduate degree from UT and her master's of business administration there also.

The Diamante Awards, which started in 1989, honors local citizens and also raises money for local colleges and organizations. Over one million dollars for scholarships have been donated to UT, Bowling Green State University, Lourdes University and Owens Community College over the years.

"She has been a mentor and friend to numerous Latinos in the area and has affected the lives of many," said Jones of De Leon.

"We are better together," said De Leon in acknowledging the honor. "We need to join hands and partner with other communities."



Deb Flores

Deb Flores, who earned her bachelor's and master's degrees from UT, is the executive director of the Zepf Center. She was nominated and introduced by Michelle Soliz, PhD, the assistant vice president for UT Student Success and Inclusiveness, Multicultural Student Success Team.

"She is a trailblazer, mentor, community leader - she is truly an outstanding alumna," said Soliz of the inductee.



Margarita De Leon

Flores, who became an administrator at UT after earning her degrees there, eventually went on to lead Lucas County Job and Family Services. She left her executive director position there to move to the Zepf Center to manage 400 employees and a \$45 million budget.

Benjamin Davis, JD, a longtime law professor at UT until his retirement this year, nominated his friend and colleague Anthony Quinn for the Inclusive Wall of Honor.

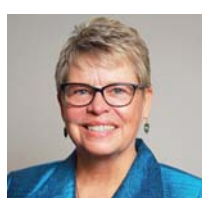
Quinn, a research immunologist and a UT associate professor, died in 2018.

"He was soft spoken, humane and insistent," said Davis of his friend. "His time on earth was cruelly cut short."

Quinn's field of study was microbiology and immunology exploring connections between immunity and diabetes. He was also an assistant dean for diversity and inclusion and was known for encouraging minority students to pursue their studies in the sciences.

When Quinn died the university announced that a program he created in 2015 would be called the "Tony Quinn We Are STEM Initiative."

Belinda Quinn, Anthony's widow, accepted the honor in his stead.



Susan Telljohann

"He would be proud and humbled," said Belinda. "UT was not only a job but his passion. He was truly an amazing, gifted man."

Susan Telljohann was nominated and introduced by Amy Thompson, PhD, senior vice president for Academic Affairs. Telljohann earned her doctorate from Indiana University with an emphasis on school and health education and joined the UT faculty in 1987. During the course of her 25-year career with UT, Telljohann won the 1993 UT Outstanding Teacher Award, said Thompson.

Telljohann, said Thompson, had "an immense impact on those in the LG-

... continued on page 15



Anthony Quinn

THE STRUGGLE IS REAL

Mental Health affects 4 in 10 adults, and communities of color experience these symptoms at almost a 10% PERCENT HIGHER RATE THAN WHITES, according to the Kaiser Family Foundation.

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Our weekly virtual story times usually have some catchy tunes and you can sing along! Visit toledolibrary.org to see what's coming up next.

Tips to Pay for College This Fall

Special to The Truth

What does paying for college during life's "new normal" and current economic climate look like? A new survey highlights parent plans and concerns regarding the upcoming 2021-2022 school year.

The College Ave Student Loans survey of parents of undergraduate students conducted by Barnes & Noble College Insights found that of those planning to help their child pay for college, 52% said the pandemic will make it more difficult to pay this fall and 45% said it's changed how they plan to pay, with 51% using more savings, 45% borrowing more in student loans, and 27% taking out a parent loan.

Despite new challenges, the commitment to higher education remains steadfast: 93% of families agree obtaining a college degree is more important than ever.

"The pandemic has presented new obstacles, yet as this survey highlights, families are incredibly resilient and determined to help their child obtain a higher education," says Angela Colatrisano, chief marketing officer of College Ave Student Loans.

If higher education costs are on the horizon for you, the survey results suggest keeping these tips

in mind:

- Anticipate spending more. Parents across the board reported college expenses being more than they expected, including college tuition and fees (81%), room and board/rent and food (77%), school activities and fees (61%) and books and supplies (57%). Plan and budget accordingly.

- Plan to use multiple sources. While 78% of parents put money aside for their child's education, only 17% said savings could cover the full cost. Be prepared to look at a variety of funding sources.

- Maximize financial aid. Complete the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) every year your child attends college. This important form is the gateway to scholarships, grants, work-study and federal student loans. If your financial situation has substantially changed since last year, reach out to your school's financial aid office for help and resources.

- Search for scholarships. Grants and scholarships were the top method used to pay for college, ahead of parent savings and income. One easy one to consider is the \$1,000 monthly scholarship sweepstakes from College Ave.

- Tune up your credit. Of those surveyed, 53% plan to use student loans and 26% plan to use parent loans. Get a copy of your credit report and review your credit score, particularly if you think you may need private student loans in addition to federal. Reach out to the credit reporting agency to address any errors. Credit history and credit score will impact whether you're approved for a private student loan, as well as the interest rate.

- Encourage your child to contribute. Sixty-nine percent of parents expect their child to help chip in and 52% expect their child to find a job while in college.

- Balance other financial commitments. When it comes to balancing other commitments, you can take comfort that you're not alone. Fifty-eight percent of parents are stressed about balancing their retirement and paying for college. Look at your balance of retirement savings, obligations, and goals to give you a clearer picture on where you stand and what you can afford to contribute towards college.

A majority of families surveyed wish more planning resources existed. If that describes you, check out the savings strategies and insights from college and personal finance experts available at collegeave.com.

While funding the 2021-2022 school year may be more difficult than you previously anticipated, having a solid plan and knowing all your options can help ensure a college education remains within reach.

Courtesy StatePoint

Gun Violence... continued from page 8

uation of both models to reduce gun violence. We can reduce violence by focusing less on any one particular model and instead authentically engaging with communities while allowing for collaborative strategic planning and meaningful feedback.

Armour is meeting individuals where they are while providing wrap around services to address participants needs. They are integrating elements of life coaching, restorative justice, and community empowerment into a support network.

Knowing what we know, we can prioritize approaches that encourage positive police community engagement. Policymakers at every level of government - mayors, city council members, city managers, state governors and legislators, congress people and agency heads, should recognize that public safety starts before and extends far beyond police and emergency services.

Armour is authentically engaging residents while

developing public safety plans driven by the change they want to see. These strategies aid in lifestyle change while fostering both trust building and reconciliation between police and communities.

This approach is not only community driven, but community approved. "We will be evaluating all promising interventions for their impact and scalability," added Commissioner Armour.

We always have to have people willing to intercede in the gap. Whether through prayer, on the ground, in our education system, or in our policies. If you can't get involved physically, please consider donating your resources to this initiative or a participating organization.

"This is the first of many steps to move forward, working with the community to discuss the root causes, social determinants, and resources to best support the overall initiative," shared Armour.

Many are changing their focus from listening to ... continued on page 13



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TPS Summer School Opportunities

Toledo Public Schools will once again offer summer school for students in all grade levels. The Summer Success: Extended Learning Opportunities (SSELO) program will look different from past years, but the goal remains the same- support a student's educational needs.

Important Details:

- Classes will be held Monday through Thursday, beginning Monday June 7 and continuing through Thursday, July 1 2021
- Sessions are divided by the following grade levels:

- o Grades PreK-K, Grades 1-8 and Grades 9-12
- Locations for SSELO will be held across the district
- Transportation will be provided for eligible students
- Breakfast and lunch will be provided
- All COVID-19 safety protocols will be followed, including students and staff being required to wear face coverings and to practice social distancing. Daily cleaning of all utilized classrooms will be scheduled.

Focus on Overall Health and not the Weight Scale

By: Sarah Pratt, MD, ProMedica Weight Loss Surgery

Recently, there have been many headlines about pandemic weight gain after The Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) published a study that determined the average American gained just over seven pounds over the past year.

The pandemic has affected everyone a little differently. Many people have been dealing with a complete upheaval of their daily routine and have been experiencing a lot of extra stress. For some people, stress causes them to eat more. Some people are also getting bored in quarantine, which leads to eating to satisfy boredom. On top of that, many gyms have been closed, making it hard for people to get physical activity in, especially in the winter.

Our culture tends to focus on weight in association with appearance. The number on the scale is not the most important indicator of one's overall health. Instead, each person should determine his or her body mass index, which is one major indicator of one's overall health.

To determine body mass index, or BMI, divide your weight in kilograms by your height in meters squared. There are many calculators available online. A healthy BMI is between 18 and 25. 25-30 is considered overweight, and 30 and above is considered obese.

Obesity has been well-researched to indicate that it can lead to a shortened life span. Obesity is directly related to heart disease, diabetes, and many cancers. It has even been associated with an increased risk of more severe disease when contracting COVID-19. Obesity is also an inflammatory condition for the body, which causes impairment of the immune system and

susceptibility to other diseases.

People of color are disproportionately affected by obesity when compared to the general public. According to the National Institute of Health, African American women have the highest rates of obesity or being overweight compared to other groups in the United States. About four out of five African American women are overweight or obese.

The causes of obesity are complex, but we know there's a correlation between socioeconomic status and obesity. Access to healthy food choices and safe physical activity is a serious problem for many people. There are also environmental and genetic factors that play a role.

Making the lifestyle changes to eat healthier and get more exercise can have considerable health benefits. It is possible to reverse the course of diseases like hypertension and diabetes and prevent the long-term risks associated with them.

Lowering your BMI has been shown to cause an increase in energy levels and often a decrease in joint pain. Fortunately, overly strenuous exercise is not required to improve BMI, but some physical activity is recommended.

The weather is getting warmer, and walking is an ideal way to increase physical activity. Metroparks Toledo offers a wide array of trails and activities, and there is a Metropark within five miles of every front door in Lucas County. Individuals can contact Metroparks staff by calling 419-407-9700 if there are any accessibility needs. Additionally, there are several city and community parks across our region.

Outdoor exercise is not only good for your physical health, but it's also good for your well-being. It's a great social activity, as you can meet up with a friend and still allow for physical distancing. So, be sure to get out and enjoy the warmer weather!

Be Well Toledo... continued from page 16

Hope Center in Detroit who explained "feelings of mistrust are often an overlooked component and there is a negative stigma associated with depression and other mental health symptoms."

"Support is out there, and we need to connect more folks with it," said Perryman. "Access to services are for those who have clinical symptoms, which can leave out those who are struggling with the pandemic, but do not meet clinical thresholds.

Bottom line: This mental health campaign's focus is equally about awareness of how to recognize mental health symptoms, adopt wellness practices in daily living routines."

Both Perryman and Thompson agree: A big challenge to getting individuals the vital help they need is awareness. Thompson noted that while a lack of awareness about community-based support existed prior to the pandemic, it was exacerbated by the current health crisis. To combat this, community-based support is important, and that is what Perryman and her collaborators is looking to provide through this campaign.

Perryman stressed, "Knowing the warning signs of mental illness is key, including: fear or numbness; changes in appetite; difficulty sleeping; and, stomach problems, and skin rashes. Then, people need to change their behavior have to enhance their mental wellness. Simple actions like regular exercise, keeping a journal and staying connected with family and friends can make a world of difference."

The Be Well Toledo: Struggle No More campaign's mission is to get information about mental health and wellness, available services and providers to those in need. For help and support, contact Rescue Mental Health Services at 419-225-3125 or go to RescueMHS.com online.

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Beyond the Sand and Sea: One Family's Quest for a Country to Call Home by Ty McCormick

By Terri Schlichenmeyer
The Truth Contributor

The brochures have been sitting on your counter for months.

Once, everything was planned: flight times, luggage restrictions, hotel reservations, tickets to the places you wanted to see. The pandemic put a halt to all that but you know you'll take the trip eventually. Maybe this year, maybe in five years. As in the new book *Beyond the Sand and Sea* by Ty McCormick, the journey is worth the wait.

Born in Dadaab, a refugee camp in northeast Kenya, to parents who'd fled the Somali civil war before his birth, Asad Hussein grew up in a makeshift shack that flooded every rainy season. With no ID, no birth certificate, and no way to legally get either from Kenya or Somalia, he was a person in-between.

McCormick met Asad "a day or two after Trump announced his travel ban." He was an editor for an American magazine then, assigned to cover Africa when he read an article in *New York Times Magazine* that was written "by a young man who had grown up in Dadaab." It never occurred to McCormick that the writer was "still... stranded in the camp."

Stranded physically, but not in his mind.

Ever since he was small, Asad had dreamed of getting a good education. As a child, he'd eagerly taken advantage of whatever formal schooling was offered at Dadaab. He devoured all printed material he could find and he seized every opportunity he could get to learn, becoming largely self-taught. Still, though Asad experienced a discouraging avalanche of educational setbacks in his lifetime, his tenacity attracted supporters and McCormick soon became one of them. It hadn't been easy, but it had finally appeared that a near-miracle was in sight and Asad's dream might be possible in America. With no personal paperwork and no country as anchor, would the travel ban – "an executive order... that changed everything" – put a stop to the journey?

Open the newspaper, click on the news, and you'll probably hear about immigration in pretty short order these days. You have opinions. Now read *Beyond the Sand and Sea*.

Step in, and that sand isn't pleasant: author Ty McCormick writes of its relentlessness, the heat, the squalor of camp and danger of war, a destructive rainy season. Or might sand be a metaphor for grit? Surely, that could be true for the laser-focused Asad, and more so with Asad's tough-

c.2021
St. Martin's Press
\$28.99 / \$38.50 Canada
279 pages

er-than-steel sister, Maryan, a woman who threw aside cultural laws to save her family. She's a big presence in this story, and you'll wish it was bigger.

Alas, the sea is choppy and so is the last half of this book. Not to be a spoiler, but it's a whirlwind of Asad's more recent past and his future and despite that it's inspirational, it's also uneven. Pay attention to the time-frame on chapter headings; that helps.

The inspiration, though, don't miss it.

Don't pass up a chance to be thrilled. If you need a book that'll make you stand up and cheer, *Beyond the Sand and Sea* is just the ticket.

Perryman... continued from page 2

you pull a diverse group of people to the table, and this is the end result."

Finally, diversity is key to establishing trust in communities of color. Byrd and Brown-Martinez, therefore, reached out to build relationships with the Black, Brown and other diverse communities as a recruiting tool. Most prominent outreach efforts include partnerships with Toledo Public Schools and community pillars such as Deon Thompson, Brazilian Jiu Jitsu Sports and Recreation owner.

Who gets the credit?

The buck always stops at the mayor's office and his administration, whether the results are good or bad. However, in addition to the people in the community engagement bureau, this was a department-wide effort. I am told that several firefighters – male, female, on duty, off duty – put in the time and effort to assist with this.

Lessons for others trying to improve their diversity?

Promoting and achieving diversity is not a mere flavor of the month undertaking. Organizations must first need to understand the community, its needs, and its culture. Then it is necessary to obtain community partners who also understand the community's need. Finally, it is critical to cast a wide net and legitimately put in the time, work, effort and resources.

That's an oversimplified way of stating it, but "it's the truth because what we were doing before was woefully deficient."

Contact Rev. Donald Perryman, DMin, at drdlperryman@centerofhopebaptist.org

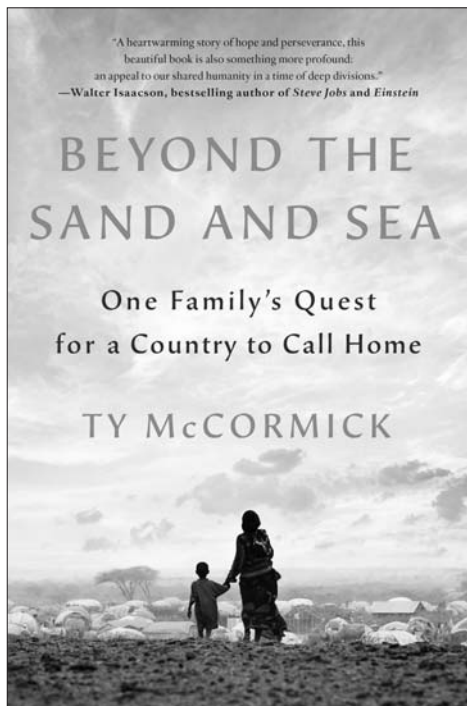
Gun Violence... continued from page 11

PR people on TV, to listening to the people on the ground doing the work. People over policies.

We often look for state legislators or elected officials to solve the challenges in front of us, while oftentimes forgetting grassroots mobilization. With issues like gun violence, 'on the ground efforts' are just as important in impacting change as anything else.

"Community Townhall Meeting on Gun Violence: A Conversation with Commissioner JoJuan Armour, The Mayor's Initiative to Reduce Gun Violence," is the first in a series of initiatives to get the community involved in strategizing best practices in gun violence prevention.

The town hall-style meeting will be at Scott High School, from 2 to 4 p.m. on Saturday, April 17. Residents may attend in-person or virtually. You can register for this event at [Eventbrite.com](https://www.eventbrite.com).



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NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Sealed Bids will be received by the Toledo-Lucas County Port Authority for all labor, material, insurance, and equipment necessary for the Remove Runway, Shift/Realign Taxiway C, and Rehabilitate General Aviation Ramp project located at Toledo Executive Airport at 28331 Lemoyne Road, Millbury, Ohio 43447, in accordance with the approved plans and specifications. The engineer's opinion of probable construction cost is approximately \$1,914,000.00.

Sealed bids will be received at the Toledo-Lucas County Port Authority's administrative offices, 1st floor reception area at One Maritime Plaza, Toledo, OH 43604 until Thursday, April 29, 2021 at 11:00 AM, at which time and place all bids will be publicly opened and read aloud via conference call. Conference call-in information will be shared in addendum no. 1.

Plans, Specifications, Instructions to Proposers, and Forms of Proposal and Contract are on file and may be obtained by either (1) obtaining hard copies from Becker Impressions, 4646 Angola Road, Toledo, OH 43615, phone 419.385.5303, during normal business hours, or (2) ordering from Becker Impressions, via their website www.beckerplanroom.com at the cost of reproduction.

Please note that there will be a pre-bid meeting for this project for all prospective bidders on Thursday, April 15, 2021 at 1:00 PM, this meeting will be held online via Zoom Video Conference. Prospective Bidders interested in joining in the Pre-Bid meeting should contact Russell Boroski (Russell.Boroski@rsandh.com) at RS&H Ohio, Inc. for a copy for the meeting invitation to be used. This meeting invitation will include a link to the video conference as well as separate call-in numbers to join either by video or by phone. Attendance is suggested, but not mandatory. Please submit all questions to RS&H Ohio, Inc., Russell Boroski at Russell.Boroski@rsandh.com by Thursday, April 22, 2021 at 10:00 AM local time. Additional information can be found at www.toledoport.org Thomas J. Winston President and CEO Toledo-Lucas County Port Authority.

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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 Toledo office is available. Applicants requiring accommodation for the interview/ application process should contact the recruitment coordinator at the address listed above.

In Loving Memory Of

Dawn Nikee' Heffner – July 2, 1969 – April 4, 2021

Dawn Nikee' Heffner (affectionately known as Nikki) made her debut in Toledo, Ohio on July 2, 1969, to the union of James Paul and Faytha (Craig) Heffner. She is the youngest of two children. Nikki preceded in death by her Father.

Nikki attended St. Ann's elementary school and graduated from McAuley High School in 1987. She earned an Associate of Applied Business from the University of Toledo and her Bachelor of Arts from Spring Arbor University in Michigan. From the State of Ohio, she acquired her licensure in Cosmetology.

Receiving Christ at an early age, Nikki joined Friendship Baptist Church under Bishop Duane C. Tisdale's pastorate. The church to which her great grandmother, Juliette Peterson, was a parishioner. Nikki was a dedicated member for over 15 years and was the hairstylist to their First Lady Thelma Tisdale.

Nikki's extensive and successful professional career includes a human resource representative at Calphalon, an office manager at Heidtman Steel, and a project manager over special projects at the Toledo Urban Federal Credit Union. It's there where she received the Community Award for being the spearhead over the annual African American parade and festival.

Her blueprint is still being followed, and due to her commitment and creativity, her footprint is still very much a part of the Credit Union's culture. Nikki was a notable nail technician and natural hair stylist for her countless clients until her illness. Salons include; Great Lakes Studios, Reality Nails and Hair and Salon, and most recent Nevaeh Salon and Spa.

For any occasion, the fashionista always looked the part, inside and out, and enjoyed traveling with her girlfriends.

Nikki battled Thymoma, a rare cancer, for 20 1/2 years without complaint. She was given her wings on Easter, April 4, 2021, at Toledo Hospital with her Mother and Uncle Eugene by her side.

The family would like to extend a special word of thanks to; Vicki Lawshe, Godfather Edwin "Sky" Mabry, and Uncle Eugene Isaac.



Dawn Nikee' Heffner

UToledo Inductees... continued from page 10

BTQA community. "She was 'out' during a time when others thought it might be unsafe to be so."

When Tellhohann joined UT, she was, as she said in accepting the honor, 'closeted.' However, over time, she found her colleagues to be supportive which led her to become more outspoken over time enabling her to offer support to LGBTQA students, faculty and staff.

While this year's induction event was held virtually, McKether assured the audience that next year, and in the future, the honorees will be celebrated with live festivities.



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Be Well Toledo: Struggle No More Campaign Raises Awareness About Mental Health And Wellness Impacts of Pandemic

In a typical year, one out of every five adults struggle with mental health. No one could say 2020 was a typical year. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) revealed that 40 percent of adults described having challenges with mental health in 2020. Tracee Perryman, PhD, CEO of the Center of Hope Family Services, saw these statistics playing out in the lives of those around her, and decided to take action and gather critical, life-saving information on how to get help to Toledoans.

Perryman explained, "I'm closely connected to friends, family, and church members who have been personally impacted by the pandemic. With people all around me suffering from ripple effect of the pandemic, I felt compelled to get involved and serve as an instrument of change."

In late 2020, Perryman launched a campaign to encourage minority populations to wear masks to guard against coronavirus infections and help pave a path toward greater vaccine compliance as well. The premise of the "Mask Up Toledo" campaign was simple: use education and an upbeat music video to encourage more people to wear masks, especially among minority populations the virus is known to disproportionately affect. Since the pandemic's onset, National Center for Health Statistics data has shown that people of color are almost three times as likely to contract coronavirus compared to their white counterparts, and twice as likely to die from it.

Inspired by the success of the Mask Up Toledo campaign and wanting to further help the community, Perryman started to focus on understanding and spreading education on the deep and long-lasting impacts of the pandemic on individual's mental health and wellness.

"When launching this second public awareness campaign, I felt confi-

dent that addressing the mental health challenges and consequences of these lockdowns was imperative," said Perryman. "I couldn't stop thinking about the children being out of school for almost a year ... the stress the pandemic has put on parents trying to work and take on additional responsibilities ... the anxiety brought on by those now unemployed, not to mention the impact on those who have lost loved ones. It's a lot to process for everyone. So, I asked myself: how can I help?"


With Perryman leading the effort, the Center of Hope Family Services, the Ohio Mental Health & Addiction Services, and the Mental Health & Recovery Services Board of Lucas County, recently launched another powerful public awareness campaign called "Be Well Toledo: Struggle No More" emphasizing the need for mental health and wellness for minority populations."

Providing access to services is only half the solution according to Dr. Markita M. Thompson DNP, AGNP-C, PMHNP-BC, TBHP of Infinity



Tracee Perryman, PhD

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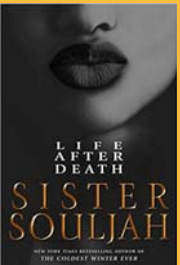
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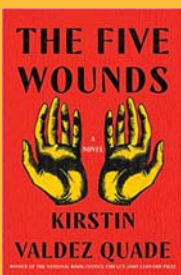
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