

2021-12-09

The Weekly Challenger : 2021 : 12 : 09

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The Weekly Challenger

KEEPING YOU CONNECTED TO YOUR COMMUNITY

VOL. 53 NO. 08

DECEMBER 9 - DECEMBER 22, 2021

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This year's 'The Family Blessing' production boasts Grammy Award-winning singer Paul Anthony (of the 90s group Full Force) and Montell Jordan (of "This Is How We Do It" fame). In its 22nd year, audiences are about to be thrilled Dec. 19 at the Mahaffey Theater.

Jai Hinson's staying power and 22 years of 'The Family Blessing'

BY J.A. JONES
Staff Writer

CLEARWATER – Jai Hinson's nonprofit, Artz for Life, Inc., has brought arts training, live performance, and high-energy afterschool programming for more than 30 years.

Hinson's dancers and drummers have also brought dance classes and performances to programs in St. Pete, recreation centers, and of course, the annual performance of "The Family Blessing." In its 22nd year, audiences are about to be thrilled Dec. 19 at the Mahaffey Theater.

While Hinson acknowledges that the arts are often at the bottom of people's lists when they consider where to share their

charity dollars, she can testify to the difference Artz for Life has made in the lives of her students over the decades.

Many of her students have gone on to travel and perform internationally and make it to Broadway. This includes Sir Brock Warren, who spent weeks prepping students for the Artz for Life's end of summer presentation before beginning rehearsals for "Ain't Too Proud to Beg: The Life and Times of the Temptations," which he's now performing in on Broadway.

Warren started studying with Hinson at the age of 8 and soon began traveling with her West African Dance troupe, the Dundu Dole Urban African Ballet.

"It was such a great experience as a child to be traveling to different cities — New Orleans, Atlanta, Virginia — all these different places in the country doing West African dance and drums," Warren shared.

Now based in New York City, Warren said he comes back as often as he can to continue to give back to the community. He also comes back because "the kids need to see people that look like them, who are from the neighborhoods that they're from, who are successful, and that they still love where they're from, and that they still want to be a part of helping other artists flourish and shine."

See **BLESSING**, page 14

Jewelry designer on creative inspiration, success online, and giving back

BY J.A. JONES
Staff Writer

ST. PETERSBURG – Tiffany Elizabeth Elliott – whose initials make up the "Tee" in her jewelry design company, Tee Sankey Designs – always had a passion for making jewelry, starting with the designs made out of recycled materials when she was younger.

Her mother encouraged her to pursue jewelry making since she was "a natural" at creating beautiful pieces out of throw-away items.

"As time progressed and I got older, I took community classes for soldering and actually came to PTEC (now Pinellas Technical College) to learn fine jewelry making about five years ago," shared the South Florida native.

The design company has become a family business, with her boyfriend helping, and her

mother – whose maiden name is Sankey – also helps when things get hectic.

Elliott acknowledged that creating her intricate pieces could take days. She uses small tools to carve her designs, initially crafting them in wax before casting them in metal. The casting process, which happens in an oven, takes anywhere from five to 14 hours.

The designer noted that her creations often develop around themes and most often come from something that catches her eye.

In the case of her delicate "Akrafena Sword" pendants, inspiration came from learning about Queen Nanny of the Maroons in Jamaica, where Elliott's family originally hails from.

Escaping enslavement in Jamaica during the 1600s, Queen Nanny herself is worthy of an honorary piece of



Tiffany Elizabeth Elliott,
owner
Tee Sankey Designs

jewelry for freeing over a thousand enslaved Jamaicans in her lifetime. However, the Akrafena sword can be traced back to Ghana, where Queen Nanny was stolen from.

See **JEWELRY**, page 10

Watson Haynes II honored with key to the city



Rev. Watson Haynes II and Mayor Rick Kriseman

BY RAVEN JOY SHONEL
Staff Writer

ST. PETERSBURG – Mayor Rick Kriseman presented long-time city leader Rev. Watson Haynes II with a key to the city last Thursday during the Dec. 2 city council meeting. This honor has been a long time coming, given his many contributions to the political, business, and social arenas for more than 50 years.

"Now, whether through the Urban League or simply on his own, I'm hard-pressed to think of an area of our city where the voice and the work of Watson Haynes has not been heard and felt," said Mayor Kriseman.

Haynes grew up in the Gas Plant neighborhood and went on to become the first African American elected as senior class president at St. Pete High. He earned degrees in managerial leadership, public administration, and theology. He is an alumnus of both Eckerd College and St. Petersburg College.

In 2012, Haynes took the reins as president of the Pinellas County Urban League (PCUL), where the organization has grown by leaps and bounds. He is the immediate past chaplain for the Eta Rho Chapter of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity and an associate pastor at New Pleasant Grove Baptist Church.

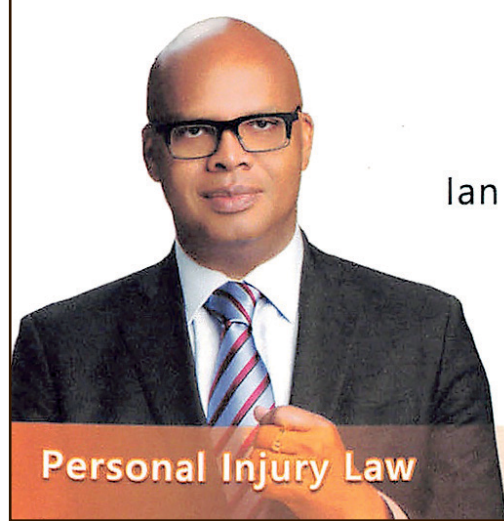
Throughout the years, he has worked with both Democrats and Republicans to advance his beloved city. Former Gov. Jeb Bush appointed Haynes to the governing board of the Southwest Florida Water Management District, former Gov. Charlie Christ appointed him to the Florida Commission on Human Rights, and former Gov. Rick Scott reappointed him in 2011.

In 2016, Kriseman appointed Haynes to the committee that selected architects to do the visioning of the Tropicana Field site and continued to lean on him for advice and guidance throughout his tenure as mayor of St. Petersburg.

Highlighting a few of Haynes' accomplishments, Mayor Kriseman mentioned his service as the

See **HAYNES**, page 2

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- Program Planner Analyst (Project 10) (Job Opening Id 29073)
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Pinellas County

2020-2021 Consolidated Annual Performance & Evaluation Report

Pinellas County's Consolidated Annual Performance & Evaluation Report (CAPER) for the 2020-2021 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME), and Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) programs, including Community Development Block Grant Program – Coronavirus Response (CDBG-CV) and Emergency Solution Grant – Coronavirus Response funds (ESG-CV), is available for viewing and public comment from December 12, 2021 through December 26, 2021. The CAPER is available at www.pinellas-county.org/community and at the Housing and Community Development office, 440 Court Street, 2nd Floor, Clearwater, FL 33756.

The CAPER is comprised of statistical and financial statements, narratives and maps regarding activities carried out during the 2020-2021 program year to meet previously identified goals and objectives. Approximately \$19,724,955 in Federal CDBG, HOME, and ESG, including CDBG-CV and ESG-CV, grant funds and program income was available to carry out activities of which \$5,255,878 was expended. Additionally, \$2,148,209 in Federal Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) grant funds and program income was available to carry out activities and \$8,934 was expended. CDBG, ESG and NSP funded activities were located within the Urban County (unincorporated areas and 19 cooperating small cities). HOME funded activities were located within the Consortium (the Urban County and the City of Largo).

Comments on the CAPER may be made in writing to Pinellas County Housing and Community Development at the above address through December 26, 2021, or by email to cdplanning@pinellascounty.org. The report, including a summary of public comments received, will be sent to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development no later than December 29, 2021. The summary of comments will also be available after December 29, 2021.

PICK OF THE WEEK!

33 40 17

CASH 3

285 109 672

DOG DAYS

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Watson Haynes II honored with key to the city

HAYNES, from front page

chair of the St. Petersburg Charter Review Commission, the chair of the Social Action Funding Committee, the chair of the Pinellas County Foundation, and a trustee for the Gulf Coast Legal Services Community Law Program.

The mayor could have spent a few hours mentioning the list of boards, commissions, and other areas of service Haynes has labored on, such as the environment, education, affordable housing, economic development, and so much more, but he wrapped up his praise by saying:

"Rev. Watson Haynes continues to serve as an example to which we should all aspire. And that's why I am pleased to present him with not just a key to the city of St. Petersburg, but the last key that I get to present as mayor."

Haynes could have mentioned more of his accomplishments; instead, he gave thanks to those who came before him, such as former NAACP presidents attorney Morris Milton and educator Garnell Jenkins. He continued with former PCS District Administrator Vyrle Davis, former school administrator and community activist Adelle Vaughn-Jemison, former State Representative and Secretary of the Departments of Education and Labor Doug Jamerson, Rev. Bragg L. Turner, Rev. Alvin Miller, and so many others.

"Each and every one



Mayor Rick Kriseman, Rev. Watson Haynes II, and Councilwoman Deborah Figgs-Sanders last Thursday, Dec. 2 at City Hall.

of these individuals lived a life of service to this community, and their examples were thoroughly ingrained in my desire to follow suit," said the president of PCUL.

Haynes said he has many blessings to count, such as having known so many Black luminaires and trailblazers in St. Pete's history.

"Their legacies are firmly established in the history of our city," he stated, adding that he has used their examples to forge his path forward. "I shared this honor with a legion of stalwarts. Certainly, I count the honor of receiving this key as a blessing, and I am truly grateful."

City Council Chair Ed Montanari said when Haynes speaks, things happen, and the city, state and country need more people like him.

Councilwoman Deborah Figgs-Sanders expressed how she cherishes and respects Haynes and appreciates his support throughout her lifetime.

"Continue to walk this journey because I would not be here if it weren't for giants such as yourself," Figgs-Sanders said.

"You have a room full of people who adore, respect, and admire you, but I'm going to take point of privilege and claim that number one fan."

City Council Vice-Chair Gina Driscoll reminded Haynes that he is now the luminary that so many people look up to and receive guidance from.

"You have cultivated and nurtured and mentored an entire generation of leaders in our city," commended Driscoll. "And it's because of that commitment that you have that shines through the Urban League, and through so many other things that you're involved in..."

Councilwoman Lisa Wheeler-Bowman could not speak because of recent mouth surgery, but she prepared a statement read through Figgs-Sanders. She wrote how she loves and appreciates Haynes for all he has done for the community and looks forward to continuing working with him.

Congratulations, Rev. Watson Haynes II from *The Weekly Challenger!*

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DEC 12 / 1-6PM

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Kiva Williams
Director, @mahoganykidsfineartsfoundation

Mahogany Kids FINE ARTS FOUNDATION

music by DJ Don Rock

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The Weekly Challenger

is distributed in the following cities:

**St. Petersburg • Clearwater • Largo
Tarpon Springs • Dunedin • Safety Harbor**

P.O. Box 35130, St. Petersburg, FL 33705

Phone: (727) 896-2922

Fax: (727) 823-2568

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PUBLISHED WEEKLY

on Thursdays

READERSHIP

100,000 monthly

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

\$50 for 1 year (local only)

SINGLE COPY 50 cents

ATTN. POSTMASTER:

Send all address changes to:

The Weekly Challenger

P.O. Box 35130

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All news items, advertising copy and related art submitted for publication on Thursday must be received no later than 4 p.m. Monday.

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**Volume 53 • Number 08
Published Thursday,
December 9, 2021
18 pages • 1 section**

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Midtown Development announced as Trop site developer

BY RAVEN JOY SHONEL
Staff Writer

ST. PETERSBURG – Thursday morning, Mayor Rick Kriseman announced that Midtown Development would serve as the developer of the Tropicana Field Site. This selection is the next step in a more than five-year process of extensive community engagement, visioning, and master planning.

“We have worked hard to ensure that this has been an inclusive, community-driven process,” said Kriseman, stressing that the city will honor the past while pursuing the future.

“That future includes a development that provides jobs, mixed-income housing, office space, entertainment, and emphasis on the creek, the natural environment, and the Pinellas Trail,” he said.

Mayor Kriseman



Mayor Rick Kriseman announced at a press conference on Thursday morning in Campbell Park that Midtown Development was selected to redevelop the Tropicana Field site. Pictured is Creekside Banyan Village: Retail, micro-retail, dining, and entertainment in the surrounds of nature.

stressed it is “critically important” that the City of St. Petersburg honors the promises made more than 40 years ago.

Those promises began on Sept. 7, 1978, when city council passed a resolution declaring the African American Gas Plant neighborhood a redevelopment area and adopted a written proposal that included affordable housing and an industrial park that would create between 620 and 688 new jobs.

Hundreds of homes were razed, along with businesses, churches, schools and cemeteries. The city did not keep its promises and built a baseball stadium atop Black lives.

“We have done much these past eight years to achieve our goal to create a more equitable St. Pete, but there remains much work to do. That means moving forward with the process to redevelop the

Tropicana Field site, with or without a baseball stadium,” Kriseman said.

Alex Vadia, principal of Midtown Development, said they are excited to work with Mayor-elect Ken Welch, city council, Pinellas County, the Rays, the Pinellas County Urban League (PCUL), community groups, and leaders to implement the 21 principles in their plan.

For the 86-acre site, the developer’s “Creekside” plan is slated to cost \$2.7 billion (mid-density) or \$3.8 billion (high-density). Mid-density would include 6,220,068 square feet of residential space, with high-density clocking in around 8,509,534 square feet.

The square footage should yield approximately 6,000 and 8,000 homes in terms of units. The affordable units will be the greater of 1,000 units or 20 percent of the overall housing units.

Of the first 1,000 units delivered, 100 units will be at or below 30 percent AMI, 700 units will be at or below 80 percent AMI, and 200 units at or below workforce housing level (120 percent AMI). This proportion of affordable and workforce units will be applied to any additional units over the first 1,000.

The mid-density development program will generate approximately 16,000 jobs, creating direct, indirect, and induced jobs of 39,784 and economic output of \$7.4 billion. The high-density model will generate about 20,000 jobs, creating direct, indirect, and induced jobs of 49,667 and economic output of \$9.1 billion.

Midtown Development will purchase the property for \$60 million and spend \$168.8 million in infrastructure, including the city’s \$75 million TIF contribution. Community benefit programs are allotted \$22.5 million, bringing the net financial impact to the city of \$176,317,912.

Property tax revenue to the city will result in approximately \$17,600,000 - \$24,000,000 annually, depending on density, which will result in property tax revenue of \$352 - \$480 million over 20 years, at full buildout.

“This is only the beginning of a multi-generational project for the future of St. Petersburg,” said Vadia. “Most importantly, we’re eager to continue our engagement efforts together with the PCUL, our strategic part-



“This is not a mayoral project; this is a St. Petersburg project. It is the biggest and most important one yet,” said Mayor Rick Kriseman on Dec 2.

ners, to begin unlocking benefits to the community as soon as possible.”

The PCUL is Midtown Development’s strategic partner in the redevelopment of the Tropicana Field and will be the lead stakeholder for equity and inclusion for the project. The PCUL will oversee and administer Creekside’s local hiring and training programs, equitable development modeling and initiatives, housing programs, and “Unlocking Opportunities,” a \$10 million grant for minority and BIPOC-owned small businesses, to name a few.

“Our mission at the Pinellas County Urban League is to empower and create and foster economic and social opportunities for our community,” said Rev. Watson Haynes II, PCUL president. “We decided to work with Midtown because their long-term approach to real estate investment and development aligns with what we believe benefits communities the most.”

Haynes, whose childhood sat where third base is currently, said instead of Midtown Development showing them “their vision for the redevelopment of the site, they asked us to build that vision with them.”

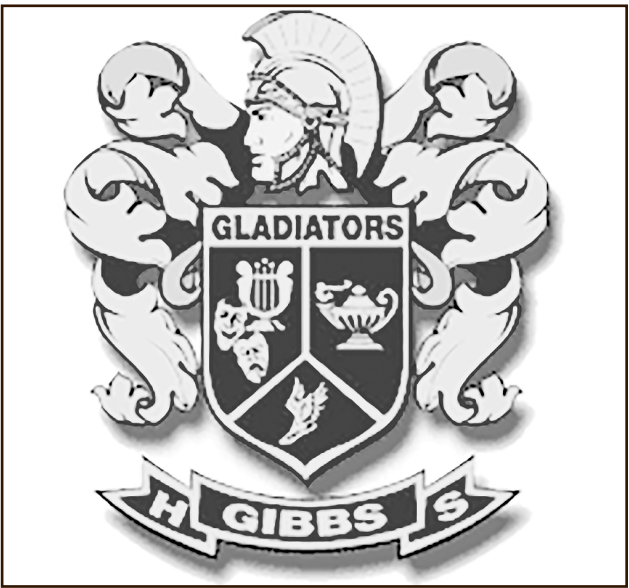
Kriseman said redeveloping the site is a generational project that will transcend administrations. “I may be the first mayor to hand this off, but I won’t be the last.”

Mayor-elect Welch issued a statement regarding Kriseman’s recommendation for a Trop site development plan.

“Mayor Kriseman has worked hard to develop thoughtful and promising plans for the future of the Tropicana Field site. As mayor, I plan to put the same amount of effort in evaluating those plans as well as new ideas and moving forward with a version that capitalizes on St. Petersburg’s incredible momentum and re-connects our community.”

Attention: Calling all Gibbs Senior High School class presidents!

The Gibbs Gladiator Alumni Association invites you to participate in an important planning meeting for the rebuilding and reorganization of the Alumni Association
December 14 at 1:00 pm
Enoch Davis Center, 1111 – 18th Avenue South, St. Petersburg, FL 33712
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Let us come together and do wonderful things for our historic Alma Mata, “Dear Gibbs High School!”



V W W W . T H E W E E K L Y C H A L L E N G E R . C O M

USF Brewing Arts program joins forces with Yuengling to enhance diversity in the brewing industry

ST. PETERSBURG – The University of South Florida, in partnership with D.G. Yuengling & Son, Inc., America’s Oldest Brewery, announced today that applications are now open for its \$5,000 Diversity in Brewing Scholarship.

The financial award will be given to an individual from a traditionally underrepresented population and cover the cost of tuition to USF’s St. Petersburg campus Brewing Arts Certificate program for the upcoming spring semester.

“Working with Yuengling, we hope to continue to enhance the brewing industry in Tampa Bay while also improving diversity in our field,” said Jennifer Sedillo, program director of the Brewing Arts program.

The Brewing Arts program is a collaboration between USF’s College of Arts and Sciences and several local and national breweries. Launched in 2015, the online program is designed for brewers ranging from hobbyists to enthusiasts looking to make a career in the industry by working in or opening a brewery one day.

“As Yuengling’s sixth generation, my sisters and I are proud to continue the family brewing tradition of America’s Oldest Brewery that began 192 years ago. We understand the importance of supporting the passions of every individual who wants to pursue a career in the brewing industry,” said Wendy Yuengling, chief administrative officer, and sixth-generation family

member, D.G. Yuengling & Son, Inc. “We’re raising our glasses to a more inclusive brewing industry and are proud to help support the development of the next generation of brewers.”

Craft brewing is one of the fastest-growing industries in the United States. According to a study by the Florida Brewers Guild, the state of Florida could support more than 500 craft breweries, leading to a total economic output of \$2.5 billion and 40,000 jobs.

Despite these economic benefits, a 2019 survey completed by Brewers Association members showed that brewery employees are disproportionately white in relation to both the general U.S. population and where breweries are located. Brewery

employees also skew heavily male. The survey was conducted based on the information of 5,300 U.S. brewery members and 46,000 members of the American Homebrewers Association.

“Diversity has been an ongoing concern of ours for our program and the industry at large,” Sedillo said. “We are certainly aware of this issue and have been successful in getting more female students into the program recently and hope to continue progress on this front with more underrepresented groups.”

The online coursework covers the entire process of brewing education, from learning the base ingredients to the science and business of craft beer. Led by professionals and academics in the field, the



The \$5,000 Diversity in Brewing Scholarship seeks to create new opportunities for the next generation of aspiring brewers.

program incorporates traditional classroom instruction and hands-on training experiences at the brewery to apply the knowledge learned. Since 2017, Yuengling has also sponsored a student veteran award for the Brewing Arts Program.

Students interested can apply now through Jan. 9, 2022. The spring semester cohort will begin on Feb. 7. For more information, contact Jennifer Sedillo at jsedillo@usf.edu, or visit stpetersburg.usf.edu/brew.

Delores Jackson: Mother, sister, community activist and Laurel Park hero

The Gas Plant/Laurel Park Reunion Series

BY JEFFERY L. PEATEN III
Contributor

ST. PETERSBURG – When construction began on the Florida Suncoast Dome, now known as Tropicana Field, more than 30 years ago, Delores Jackson lived in what was the Laurel Park neighborhood. She was, however, more than just a resident. She was a leader and a powerful voice in the African-American community, always ready to offer a helping hand to others and stand up for what she knew was right.

“She loved life and would do anything to help anyone,” remembered Nadine Merriweather, one of Jackson’s five surviving siblings. “She was a great woman who loved her family and extended that love to other people.”

Jackson, affectionately known as “Dee Dee” to family and friends, was the daughter of Otis and Nora Bell Jackson. Born on Sept. 25, 1947, the fifth of

nine children, she had six sisters and three brothers. Graduating with the Gibbs High School Class of 1966 and moving to the Laurel Park neighborhood in 1974, she raised two sons, Corey and Christian. During her time as a Laurel Park resident, she developed a reputation as a leader and community advocate.

“If I had to pick two words to describe my sister, I’d say she believed in fairness and integrity,” said Daisy Lawson, Jackson’s eldest sister.

Originally known as the Royal Court Apartments, Laurel Park was a public housing complex built in the 1940s. It was acquired by the city in 1988 and would ultimately be demolished so the land could be used as a parking lot for Tropicana Field.

Along with the Gas Plant neighborhood, Laurel Park was in the heart of St. Petersburg’s African-American community. Both areas were thriving

communities and had rich histories.

Jackson’s legacy is a crucial part of that history. She fought tirelessly for her community and was a champion in the struggle to save Laurel Park from demolition. Above all, she was consistent and unwavering as an advocate for the poor, the uneducated, the elderly, and anyone else in need.

“Dee Dee believed everyone should be treated equally regardless of financial status or education,” continued Lawson. “She was a motivator and shaker.”

Although living conditions in Laurel Park had deteriorated by the time the city broke ground for Tropicana Field in 1988, Jackson never stopped fighting to ensure her fellow residents were treated with dignity and fairness. Jackson was amongst the last remaining Laurel Park tenants when she began a petition drive for medical coverage after learning of the high levels of asbestos in the neighborhood’s apartment units.

When tenants were finally forced to relocate, and the city provided a fraction of what was promised for moving expenses, again, it was Jackson who stood up for her fellow residents and demanded that the city keep its promises.

Even after most of the residents departed, as president of the Laurel Park Tenants Association, it was Jackson who pushed Jack Kemp, then secretary of the Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development

(HUD), to investigate allegations of misuse of federal dollars by the St. Petersburg Housing Authority.

“Dee Dee advocated for anyone who was being treated unfairly,” asserted Lawson. “She was an advocate for parents whose kids were being treated unfairly. She’d even go to the schools with the parents. She’d stand and speak for parents, senior citizens. She was eloquent, tasteful, and determined.”

Now former residents and their direct descendants of Laurel Park have a unique opportunity to talk about the neighborhood’s history and honor the legacy of community leaders such as Jackson.

Voices Heard, Voices Matter of the Bloomberg Harvard group has partnered with the African American Heritage Association, the Foundation for a Healthy St. Petersburg, the Institute on Black Life at the University of South Florida, Premier Eye Care, and the Rays Baseball Foundation/Rowdies Soccer Fund to organize a reunion of the Laurel Park and Gas Plant neighborhoods.

Like Laurel Park, the Gas Plant neighborhood was demolished to make way for Tropicana Field.

This Sunday, Dec. 12, the reunion will celebrate the rich history of these two African-American neighborhoods. The reunion also takes place as the city prepares for the transition of mayoral administrations.

Current Mayor Rick Kriseman is preparing to



Delores Jackson with one of her two sons.

leave office, and Mayor-Elect Ken Welch is organizing his incoming team. The timing of the reunion also coincides with Mayor Kriseman’s announcement last Thursday that Midtown Development, a real estate investment firm based in Miami, is his pick to redevelop Tropicana Field and the land surrounding it.

Her sisters agree that Jackson would be overjoyed about the Gas Plant/Laurel Park reunion. They also believe that she would be humbled to be honored as a leader in the African American community.

“She would be really happy,” said Jacqueline Anderson, one of Jackson’s younger sisters. “She would be so humbled and thankful.”

Anderson and her sisters also believe the reunion is a great way to ensure that the community knows about Laurel Park and those, like her sister, who lived there and stood up for what was right.

“Delores truly was an advocate,” continued Anderson, “Our mom raised us to have a relationship with the Lord and to love the Lord. We held onto that. We were raised in the church, and when you’re grown, that stays with you. With that, my sister knew the right way to treat others and respect others.”

According to her sisters, Jackson’s leadership and willingness to help those in need was not all that she was known for. She was, like their mother Nora Bell Jackson, an excellent cook.

“Her turnip greens. Everybody wanted that!” remembered Anderson as she and her sisters smiled. “And she made the best sweet tea. These places now can’t compare.”

“Dee Dee’s cooking was a way to make people comfortable and open up,” added Barbara Stockton, Jackson’s youngest surviv-



The Gas Plant/Laurel Park Reunion is scheduled this Sunday, December 12, from noon until 3 p.m. Participants will have the option to attend in person in Parking Lot 4 of Tropicana Field or virtually via Zoom or Facebook.

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ing sister. She fondly remembers spending Friday nights with her older sister eating seafood.

“I was in college and spent a lot of time with my sister. She made the tea, and we had crabs every Friday. She would call and say, ‘Barbara, don’t forget the crabs.’ I ate so many, I don’t like eating them anymore,” recalled Stockton as she and her sisters laughed. “She would say to her neighbor, ‘You want some crabs?’ even though we didn’t have enough for a third person. Whatever she had, she’d always share with others.”

And when a neighbor needed help with the rent?

“If a neighbor were short on rent,” recalled Stockton, “she’d go in her purse and help.”

Lawson said her sister believed in financial responsibility. Rent had to be paid on the first of the month even though many elderly residents were

constrained budgets.

“Their checks didn’t always come in by the due date, so Dee Dee would help any way that she could,” stated Lawson. “She’d advocate for residents who needed a few extra days to pay rent. She stood up for and took the lead on helping with financial inequities.”

Jackson passed away on Nov. 2, 2006. In addition to her sisters, Lawson, Merriweather, Anderson, and Stockton, she is survived by a younger brother and her sons, Corey and Christian.

“Her legacy will live on,” concluded Stockton, as she and her sisters smiled. “She loved to laugh and cook.”

“Dee Dee loved people,” added Merriweather. “She loved life, and more than anything, she loved the Lord.”

The Gas Plant/Laurel Park Reunion is scheduled this Sunday, Dec. 12, from noon until 3 p.m.



Sisters, left to right, Barbara Stockton, Jacqueline Anderson, Nadine Merriweather, and Daisy Lawson remember their sister Delores Jackson as an advocate and powerful voice in the Black community.

Participants will have the option to attend in person or virtually via Zoom and Facebook livestream.

Onsite activities will occur in the Tropicana Field Parking Lot 4 and will include entertainment, food (served on-site and delivered to virtual attendees) and resident sharing of memories and photographs.

The winners of the Gas Plant & Laurel Park Reunion essay contest for students from John Hopkins Middle School, Gibbs, and St. Petersburg High Schools will also be announced. The event will also include unveiling a commemorative Gas Plant/Laurel Park mural painted by students of the after-school program at Campbell Park Recreation Center in collaboration with renowned local artists and muralists Carlos Culbertson (Zulu Painter), Jabari Reed (iBOMS), and Reid Jenkins.

“We will be there,” proclaimed Anderson when asked about attending the reunion, as she and her sisters beamed with anticipation.

Those who wish to attend can register at bit.ly/GasPlantReunion or call (727) 371-6153 for more information. The registration deadline is Dec. 10. There is no cost to attend.

“My sister loved people, no matter how young, how old, or what color they were,” continued Anderson. “Didn’t matter where you came from.”

“If she were still with us,” added Lawson while her sisters made gestures in agreement, “Dee Dee would still be advocating. She’d still be advocating for people, for fairness.”



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What can we do from crisis to hope: How COVID-19 has critically affected our Black children

BY DR. LASONYA L. MOORE & DR. LATIENA WILLIAMS
Contributors

For years, early childhood education programs have successfully increased opportunities for the advancement of vulnerable Black children and their families. These positive benefits associated with early childhood education programs have included strong outcomes in social, emotional, and educational gains of children living in vulnerable families and impoverished environments.

The COVID-19 pandemic caused most early childhood education programs to close their doors. Some states mandated the provision of remote learning; however,

some did not. This became catastrophic for children and families living and learning in marginalized communities.

For state-funded early childhood education programs, there was a significant difference in what programs were required to provide to students. Did the state-funded program policymakers not see the students who lived and learned in marginalized populations as a sense of urgency?

During the pandemic, the absence of family supports, health needs, and in-person educational options disadvantaged many children, particularly Black children in lower-resourced communities who were already at an academic and social disadvantage. Many students

had less access to technology that could have been used to offset classroom learning during the onset of the pandemic, not to mention the lack of urgent sustainable resources such as meal programs, basic health care, counseling, and afterschool programs.

Consequently, these students fell further behind and became isolated when the school doors closed. Children from certain racial and ethnic minority families carried a disproportionate burden of illness and severe outcomes from the pandemic.

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) Florida chapter, to date, the state has seen 17 child deaths due to COVID-19. This

past August, Florida saw an overall 63 percent increase in new child infections as children began returning to classrooms and amid the ongoing debate between the parents and school districts regarding student mask mandates.

A year and a half into the pandemic, children worldwide face a devastating new normal. An estimated 1.5 million children around the globe have experienced the death of a parent, custodial grandparent, or other relatives who cared for them because of COVID-19.

Black people are the second-largest racial/ethnic minority group in the United States, representing 14 percent of the national population. Among children who lost a parent to COVID-19, 20 percent were Black children, which means that Black children were more likely than average to be left parentless.

The Journal of the American Medical Association published a study that estimated approximately 7,600 of the 37,300 who lost at least one parent to COVID-19 were non-Hispanic Black children between 0 and 17. Thus, experiencing a loss of a parent at this juncture may cause permanent psychiatric consequences, including



Dr. LaSonya I. Moore

post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety, psychosis, depression, delinquency, and even suicidal tendency.

The gaps and opportunities revealed by the pandemic serve as a roadmap for developing a comprehensive early childhood system that puts families first, focuses on health-care, education, affordable aftercare services, housing, jobs in an equitable manner. Therefore, providing adequate funding to coordinate state and community level supports, thus bridging the gaps between the many services that support children and families.

The pandemic has provided an opportunity to consider what comes next when attempting to build a broader system of systemic care. Further, early childhood education programs should begin to



Dr. Latiena Williams

focus on strengthening staffing and partnerships, making teaching and learning relevant, and empowering teaching teams to rebuild and reimagine sustainable support systems.

A child's health and wellness are inextricably linked to their parents, caregivers, educators, leaders, and community. The overwhelming priority that emerged is the need for greater community awareness related to targeted early childhood mental health and the availability of educational supports and opportunities – among our most vulnerable populations.

Dr. LaSonya L. Moore is an assistant professor at the USF College of Education. Dr. Latiena Williams is a faculty member in the USF College of Nursing and Public Health.



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CampQuest: A summer journey of love and hope

ST. PETERSBURG – A little girl sat scared and confused about the future. How would she be able to go back to school? What would she do for the summer? What was going on with protest and the nightly news filled with uncertainty? A surge of emotions rushed through her 10-year-old mind as she pondered these questions as life unfolded.

Her summers were filled with friends, field trips, and at least two pool days a week in past years. As she attended camps such as the Childs Park YMCA and Lake Vista, summer was always a special treat.

This year would be quite different. With a pandemic on one hand and social unrest on the

other, she needed a break from the chaos of the current climate. She'd attended a protest earlier this year and longed for ways to express herself, trying to make sense of the world from her view.

Kenadi Smith, a sixth-grader perplexed by a world she only came to know just a decade ago, needed someplace soft to land for the summer.

Fortunately, she was blessed to land in the arms of a graceful camp director named Denise Ford. The founder of Camp Quest, Ford is no stranger to love and support. A mother who once home-schooled her children embarked upon a virtual summer camp, and Kenadi welcomed the opportunity.

Filled with bible study, education, and entrepreneurship, Camp Quest was an amazing online experience. Wednesdays were coined "Wellness Wednesdays" when Dr. LaDonna Butler and her team from The Well immersed the attendees in mindfulness, self-reflection, and wellness methods.

Ford is an active community member, always willing to give a helping hand and a listening ear. Kenadi loved the comfort of bible study, complete with puppetry. She awakened each morning knowing that with Mrs. Ford, somehow, things would work out just fine.

In Camp Quest, Kenadi also became an entrepreneur. She started making masks.

Under the leadership of Nakena Cromartie, Kenadi and attendees of Camp Quest learned valuable lessons to help the community. Cromartie molded young leaders with her business, Sustainable Shift, a sustainable fashion company on a mission to reduce textile waste through providing services that shift our awareness and practices and sustain our wardrobes.

Cromartie also holds an MBA from Florida A&M's School of Business and Industry. She now brings her expertise and love for fashion to young minds eager to learn.

There were also speakers, leaders, and experts. Through Zoom meetings, emails, clicks, and computers, Ford



managed to keep Camp Quest moving right along, virtually.

Kenadi enjoys making masks for a worthy cause. She didn't understand how a virus could kill so many people in such a short amount of time. Watching the news and reading articles seemed to make her more determined to continue her efforts. She donated her first 10 masks back to the community.

Sharing her feelings with her family and watch-

ing the news unfold daily, she wanted to make sure her grandparents, John and Catherine Smith, were safe. After learning they were a part of the most vulnerable population, she made them special masks. They appreciated her kindness and encouraged her to continue.

Kenadi also made masks for family and friends for birthdays and special surprises. Her customers include family, firefighters, nurses, and

anyone who would like to place an order. Her motto is: "I want to keep the community safe."

She is on her way to becoming the best she can be. This year, she'll never forget. Through her fears and uncertainty, she landed in love. Last summer will always be a rhythm in her heart and a depth in her soul. She is thankful beyond measure for Ford and Camp Quest, virtual memories to last a lifetime.



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GAS PLANT/ LAUREL PARK NEIGHBORHOOD REUNION

CELEBRATING THE PAST,
ENVISIONING THE FUTURE
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 12TH
TROPICANA FIELD, LOT 4
NOON - 3 P.M.

This reunion is for former residents and family members of both neighborhoods. It will be a fun time for all with free food, entertainment, opportunities to see old friends, and sharing of memories and photos of both neighborhoods.

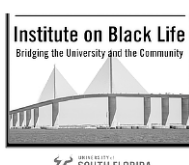
Stay tuned for more information regarding registration and how you can get involved. There will also be scholarship opportunities for middle school and high school students.

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Mayor-elect Ken Welch names transition director and transition co-chairs

ST. PETERSBURG – Mayor-elect Ken Welch announced on Tuesday his transition director and key leaders of his transition team. These qualified individuals will closely advise on efforts to ensure his incoming administration is filled with top talent and well-prepared to lead the city when he takes office in January.

Stephanie Owens, who served as Welch’s campaign manager, was announced as the director of the transition team.

“We are working tirelessly to ensure the seamless continuity of operations, building a strong network of advisors, and collecting critical information that enables the mayor-elect to

make key strategic policy and budgetary decisions,” said Owens. “It is my primary goal to make sure the mayor-elect and his senior advisors have the information they need to handle any opportunity or crisis on day one.”

Owens has more than 20 years of public service. She served as an appointee of both President Barack Obama and President Bill Clinton, holding senior positions in the White House, Departments of Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, Commerce, and the Environmental Protection Agency.

Owens is a St. Petersburg Housing Authority commissioner and princi-

ple of Dolphin Strategies, LLC in St. Petersburg.

The transition co-chairs include:

- Trevor Burgess, President & CEO of Neptune Flood Insurance
- Ric Davis, business executive, leader of Concerned Organization for Quality Education of Black Students (CO-QEBS)
- Leon Jackson, Member of Courageous 12
- Will Packer, Founder and CEO of Will Packer Media
- Melissa Seixas, President Duke Energy Florida
- Lorna Taylor, President and CEO of Premier Eye Care
- Troy Taylor, Chairman and CEO of Coca-Cola Beverages Florida
- Tonjua Williams, St. Petersburg College President
- Cynthia Johnson, director of Pinellas County Economic Development, will serve the transition team as an Economic Development Advisor.

“These are accomplished leaders who have been successful in the private sector, in the public sector, and in their civic endeavors, and they have significantly contributed to our community,” Welch said. “I deeply appreciate their willingness to help me assemble a great team and ensure we are ready to hit the ground running when I take office.”

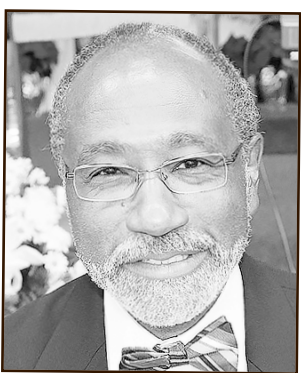
Lorna Taylor leads Premier Eye Care, one of the 75 largest privately-owned companies in Florida. She is involved in



Stephanie Owens



Trevor Burgess



Ric Davis



Leon Jackson



Will Packer



Melissa Seixas



Lorna Taylor



Troy Taylor



Tonjua Williams



Cynthia Johnson

a variety of community and nonprofit causes, and has board positions with The Dali Museum, Tampa Bay Business for Culture & the Arts, Preserve Vision Florida, and The Foundation for a Healthy St. Petersburg.

“Ken ran a forward-looking campaign, and he will be a great mayor,” Lorna Taylor said. “I’m excited about the opportunity to help him lay the groundwork for a fast start and to help build a diverse, thoughtful team to bring with him to City Hall.”

Troy Taylor leads the third-largest privately held and sixth-largest independent bottler of Coca-Cola products in the

nation. It’s also one of America’s largest Black-owned businesses. Troy is a former board member of the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta/Jacksonville Branch and was named EY Entrepreneur of the Year in Florida for the consumer products category in 2018.

“Ken recognizes the importance of continuing to advance the city’s economic resurgence while keeping its hometown feel and protecting the environment, which all make the city a special place,” said Troy Taylor. “I have no doubt that Ken will be a great mayor for St. Petersburg.”

Welch is inviting residents to help shape the

city’s vision and future. Welch is holding a series of “Community Conversations” in December. Two of the sessions will be held at the University of South Florida St. Petersburg Student Center, 200 Sixth Ave. S. The third session will be virtual.

Residents are asked to sign up by clicking here for one of the three sessions, with each in-person session accommodating 245 people.

- Friday, December 10: 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. USF St. Pete
- Saturday, December 11: 9 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. USF St. Pete
- Monday, December 13: 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. (virtually)

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WE ENCOURAGE LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Entrepreneur Cynthia Milhouse opens Tru Essential Skincare Spa

BY KARIN DAVIS-THOMPSON
Staff Writer

ST. PETERSBURG – When Cynthia Milhouse moved to Florida from Georgia, she noticed changes in her skin almost immediately.

“The heat and the sun were brutal,” she said. “I had to see a dermatologist and esthetician.”

Throughout the process, she learned more about the importance of sunscreen and began to educate herself on the different ingredients companies use in sunscreen and how it all impacts the skin.

“I went on a journey

learning about the effects of the sun and its aging capabilities to the skin and how damaging it could be if we do not protect our skin,” said the 51-year-old.

The more Milhouse learned, the more her passion began to grow. She realized she wanted to sell skincare products and teach people how to properly care for their skin and the importance of a skincare regimen.

After much research and determination, Tru Essential Skincare Spa was born, with Milhouse opening for business in July. But getting to opening day took a lot of dedi-

cation.

“I had been taking classes and writing plans and handling the administrative duties for months,” the mother of three said.

After getting the business permits, licenses, and business plan complete, it was time for Milhouse to find a location. She was wait-listed for rental spots, but once she found a space that worked for her business, things seemed to begin to move at warp speed.

“It only took four weeks to set up the room and have it ready for clients in July,” said the Georgia native.



The St. Petersburg Greenhouse celebrated her grand opening with remarks from the mayor and a ribbon-cutting last month. The Greenhouse is an organization that provides local small business owners and entrepreneurs with the tools, resources, and education they need to grow their businesses.

During the ceremony, Milhouse thanked everyone for their support and explained why helping clients with their skincare journey is essential to her.

“It’s my passion,” she told the crowd. “It’s my desire to create a welcom-

ing space where we can just go on the journey together.”

Milhouse, who is a licensed esthetician, said she loves the opportunity having a business affords her to invest in herself and her dreams. She encourages anyone thinking about starting a business to get up and go for it.

“It’s just like starting a job except you are the boss,” she stated. “If there is an overwhelming day, you get to tell yourself to step back and take a break. Starting my business is one of the best decisions I’ve ever made.”

As she continues to work a full-time job, Mil-

house works with four to seven clients a week as she builds clientele. She said educating those she serves is the best part of her business.

“I like how I can change my client’s perspective regarding how they feel about their skin,” she said.

Tru Essential Skincare Spa offers various services, including facials, peels, lip and eye treatments, and microdermabrasion. The spa is located at 6920 22nd Ave. N suite 109.

To make an appointment or for more information, visit truessentialskincare.com or call 727-251-7040.



Deputy Mayor Dr. Kanika Tomalin and Mayor Rick Kriseman congratulated Cynthia Milhouse on her new venture as a business owner.

Jewelry designer on creative inspiration, success online, and giving back

JEWELRY, from front page

The pendant collection is inspired by the beautiful black iron and gold gilded sword use by the Akan people, from present day Ghana, called an Akrafena. The Akan people were known for inscribing symbols on their swords that reflected different messages. These messages were either for their enemies during warfare or for the tribe during their ceremonies.

A super-popular item from the Tee Sankey De-

signs collection is her selection of one-of-a-kind and unique grillz. “South Florida is known for rocking grillz; all the cool kids wore grillz, and I didn’t have an opportunity to because I had strict Caribbean parents,” she laughed.

But when her brother asked her to make some for him, she realized she could make her own style. As more people saw her grillz, they wanted them, and they are one of the most popular

items on her site.

Currently, her favorite thing to do is 3-D printing on her wax-resin-based 3-D printer specially made for jewelry design and the line of engagement rings that she’s crafting. The process involves designing the “tester” rings in sterling silver; the final rings will be rendered in gold.

Social media has allowed her to reach a wider audience. “My customers are from all over the place, which is what really cool

about the internet,” said Elliot, who has customers as far away as Australia.

Elliot has offered free community classes at Venus St. Pete and through park-based NOMAD Art Bus Micro-Camps, as well as offering online jewelry-design courses. But she said her ultimate goal is to have a jewelry bus.

“Growing up, I didn’t think I could make jewelry — that wasn’t in my head. Coming to St. Pete and

seeing that [learning jewelry making] was accessible and that I could make jewelry, my art, and still make money made me wonder how many kids are like me and think that they can’t do these different things.”

Elliot wants to show youth that creating jewelry is not necessarily about wanting to become a jewelry maker.

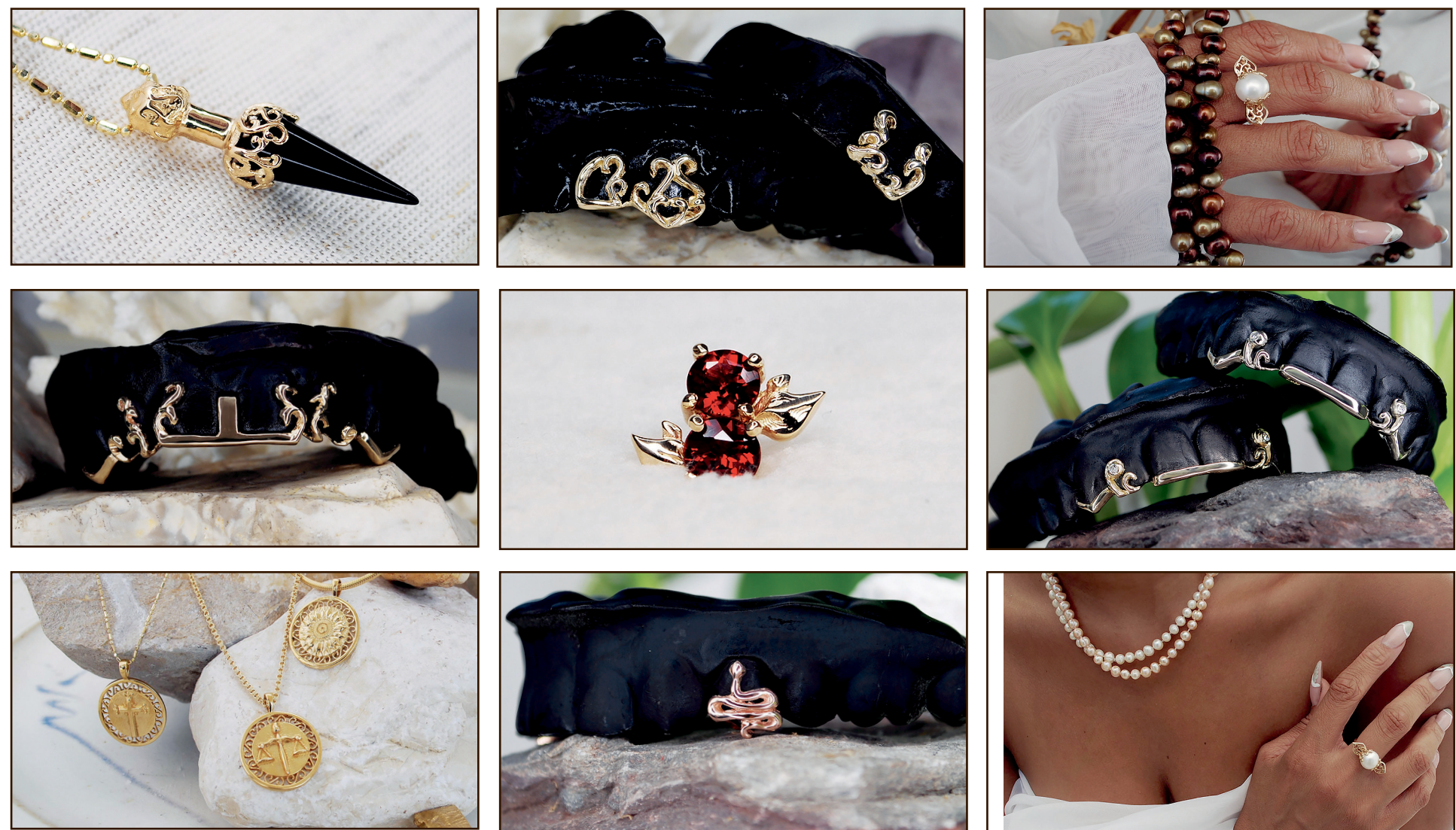
“I want to have a bus that I can bring the workshops to them. It’s not so

they want to be a jeweler; it’s just to open their mind to something else.”

Tee Sankey Designs also has a sustainable jewelry-making model that uses recycled metal, eco-friendly packaging, and their stones come from second-hand sources whenever possible.

To learn more about Tee Sankey Designs, visit teesankeydesigns.com.

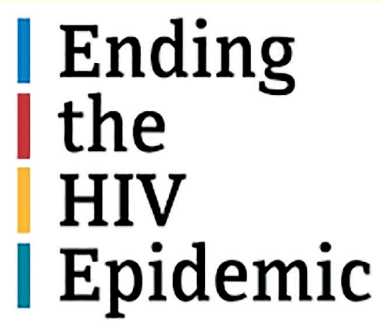
To reach J.A. Jones, email jjones@theweeklyphallenger.com



“Take a stand for Health Justice: Have the Conversation”

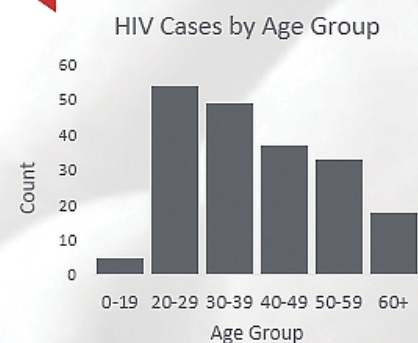
J. Carl Devine, Founder, The Banyan Tree Project, Inc.:

“We want to educate people about HIV and AIDS and educate people about the disparity in health equity in our communities ... because our communities are not getting all the healthcare and information that they need.”



Pinellas County

NEW HIV INFECTIONS IN 2019



In 2019, black people were **5.9x** more likely to be infected than white people. Over the past 10 years, black people were **6.4x** more likely to be infected than white people.



86% OF NEW CASES WERE MALE

Risk Factors



2019 Data Summary

- **20-29 Age group** continue to lead the new HIV cases.
- **86%** of all new infections were **Male**.
- **MMSC** is the highest risk factor for new HIV cases.
- Black people made up **36%** of new HIV cases in 2019.

Local organizational psychologist has helped NASA, Google, Microsoft improve their corporate culture

BY J.A. JONES
Staff Writer

DUNEDIN – With over 40 years of working with organizations ranging from large tech firms and college universities to the National Security Administration and the Library of Congress, Michael F. Broom, Ph.D., is an expert in helping companies, organizations, and businesses “manage change.” Broom resides in Dunedin, but his clients are located across the nation, from Silicon Valley to Washington, D.C. Broom’s background as an organizational psychologist has developed into a company called The Center for Human Systems, focused on helping organizations increase their productivity and employee engagement. In other words, Broom helps “fix” problematic corporate cultures by assisting organizations in getting to the root of what’s creating challenges, dysfunctional behaviors and attitudes, and division within teams. As a self-described stuttering, asthmatic, puny child, Broom studied people from a young age. He became a psychotherapist but quickly learned “sitting in one chair hour after hour listening to sad stories” didn’t appeal to him. “Working with organizations, you have a much

larger impact than one person at a time,” he affirmed. Broom entered the organizational consulting world determined to “learn from the folks at the top” and took the time to gain know-how from several mentors over the years. After graduating from Johns Hopkins with a degree in managing change in human systems, he became a faculty member and initially started his practice working with boards of small not-for-profit clients. Broom said there are several keys to managing change in organizations, large and small, with three immediate areas closely tied together. The first, he stated, “is to understand human systems.” A human system is any group of people that impact each other – whether an organization, a family, or a group of friends. Eventually, said Broom, the individuals will operate in such a way that that the group, entity, or human system begins to take on characteristics of its own, which are separate and distinct from the individuals in it. “You, like the rest of the world, have been to meetings that repeatedly suck with the same people. And all those people are fundamentally bright people. They all want the organization to work, and they probably even have a



Michael F. Broom, Ph.D., is an expert in helping companies, organizations, and businesses ‘manage change.’

good deal of respect for each other.” The issue, said Broom, is that a systems problem exists. Our inability to see systems problems results in team members pointing fingers and laying blame. “We don’t see it as a systems problem. We say, ‘Oh, Gary was the leader of that meeting. He really does not know how to lead a meeting.’ And of course, we never say that to Gary.” Broom noted that because no one, including Gary, sees it as a systems issue, it takes on a life of its own. Of course, some systems create positive synergy, working together as a group of people making wonderful things that none of the individuals could create by themselves, relayed the organizational expert. However, negative synergy could create an opposite situation – and a circumstance where team members “might have been much better off if they were working by themselves,” Broom chuckled. He noted that the sec-

ond key is “conscious use of self.” To manage change in any system, we must govern ourselves effectively. Because whatever that system is doing, each individual contributes to that — for better or for worse. “If I can begin to notice how I’m contributing to this dysfunction, even it’s just me sitting there and not saying anything so I can stay out of trouble, that is contributing to the destruction of that system.” Broom said that if we can instead acknowledge that what we’re doing isn’t helping, our goal should instead be to help the system to improve itself. To do that, he recommended finding allies who can support that vision of improvement. And to find allies, “I have to manage myself, get off of automatic because our automatic is to blame – ourselves or somebody else. Neither one works.” Instead, he said, building a consensus with others that grows among the team is what will increase the synergy toward changing the system positively, which, said Broom, is when “the whole system ships.” The third key, he stated, is approaching differences differently. “I’ve never had a client where conflict wasn’t some somehow or another. Anytime there’s a dysfunction in the human system, there’s a conflict going on somewhere. And those conflicts are coming from some set of differences being used in a win-lose fashion,” asserted Broom. When we approach our differences in that way, the fundamental value of differences is lost. Broom explained, “Difference is the only source of learning we have... Tell me something that you’ve learned that wasn’t different?” Broom shared that it’s how we process new and different information that determines whether we will grow out of the conflict with new tools and skills or allow our conflicts to develop into playing “win or lose.” He shared that that automatic tendency is the fundamental root of our society’s issues. Dr. Broom, a 2015 recipient of the Organization Development Network’s Lifetime Achievement Award, is the author of Power, The Infinite Game (co-authored with Dr. Donald Klein), and The Infinite Organization, which celebrates the positive use of power in organizations. To learn more about The Center for Human Systems and Dr. Broom’s work, visit chumans.com. To reach J.A. Jones, email jjones@theweeklychallenger.com



BY JEEVA M
Tamil Nadu Textile and Common Labour Union

Jeyasre Kathiravel was a 21-year-old member of my union, the Tamil Nadu Textile and Common Labour Union (TTCU). She worked 10-hour shifts as a garment worker every day at Eastman Exports, from late evening to early morning, producing clothing for major U.S. and European fashion brands to pay for college. She was the first woman from our village to enter the local university. She was murdered this

Dream Defenders:
The Freedom Column
Justice for Jeyasre

past January by her supervisor after facing months of sexual harassment from him. Gender and caste discrimination played a part in her murder, and she was one of 13 Dalit women murdered every week in India. In our union’s fight demanding #JusticeForJeyasre, we’re seeking justice from the global fashion brands who depend on a system of exploitation, sexual harassment, and violence to create cheap clothes fast. American and European fashion brands demand low prices and high production

from their factories, creating an environment where suppliers must make workers produce quickly for low wages, often through abusive methods. Workers in the garment industry have reported that “physical discipline practices spiked after second-tier management came out of meetings with senior management driving production targets.” Supervisors at Eastman Exports have even hurled heavy bundles of clothing at workers. Women garment workers are often subjected to insults, unwanted touch, and verbal abuse. And, in some supplier factories, women are made to perform sexual favors in exchange for fundamental rights such as breaks, overtime pay, and scheduling needs. This combination of pressure from above and power disparities on the shop floor leads to a culture of bullying and coercion. It can ultimately result in sexual harassment, rape, and even femicide.

I would know. I’ve seen it play out with my fellow union members and former co-workers. At Eastman, after Jeyasre’s murder, 25 other women came forward with reports of sexual harassment, bravely breaking their silence and highlighting how widespread sexual harassment is within the factory and the garment industry overall. This culture of sexual harassment had been allowed to fester at Eastman Exports for far too long, becoming deadly. Supervisors use rude or abusive language toward women workers to try and speed up production. If they continue without consequences, it signals that they can go farther. In time, they start coercing women workers to perform sexual favors that can eventually lead to rape, femicide or suicide. Jeyasre experienced multiple acts of violence and harassment along this spec-

trum before she was murdered. Had these acts of harassment been prevented or penalized early on, Jeyasre would most likely be alive today. Management at Eastman Exports must take responsibility for their managers and their working conditions, period. However, the global fashion brands ultimately profit most from high production and low wages in these factories. And it’s these purchasing practices that drive worker exploitation and gender and caste-based violence and harassment. As the General Secretary of the TTCU, I’m organizing alongside other Dalit women garment workers to demand enforceable binding agreements to end gender-based violence from Eastman Exports and the global brands that source from them. Such agreements would provide women workers and TTCU with the ability to monitor, prevent and remediate gender and caste-



Jeeva M based violence and harassment in the factory. Enforcement from the top would ensure workers have the right to freedom of association and would reverse the purchasing practices that drive suppliers, like Eastman, to exploit and coerce workers. Through the #JusticeForJeyasre campaign, we’re demanding real protection against the violence and harassment that have plagued and even killed our fellow workers. We’re demanding an end to global fashion brands’ exploitative purchasing practices because we can’t allow any more of our friends and neighbors to be murdered. Jeeva M is the general secretary of Tamil Nadu Textile and Common Labour Union (TTCU), a Dalit women-led trade union, representing 11,000 women workers in Tamil Nadu, India.



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Young Adult Charrette helps promote community health

ST. PETERSBURG – The atmosphere was charged and buzzing with nervous energy as 10 influential young adults, along with event organizers and facilitator Loretta Monroe Calvin, arrived Nov. 20 at the Campbell Park Recreation Center to discuss the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on local community health.

Kyandra Darling, grants program manager for the Foundation for a Healthy St. Petersburg (FHSP), welcomed the group and briefly explained the active role that she and the Foundation are playing in focusing attention on the serious threat to the health of young adults and other age groups posed by COVID.

Darling said the Young Adult Charrette was unique because it was the first setting she knew of where the youths in St. Petersburg were convened to be heard and not merely lectured to about wearing masks, vaccination mandates, social distancing, etc.

Six female and four African-American male influencers gathered to do this vital work for the charrette. Ninety percent of the participants had a family member or close friend officially diagnosed with COVID. Eighty percent wear masks inside most of the time, and 50 percent wear masks outside most of the time, and more frequently if required.

Six out of 10 of the young adults had been vaccinated. Even those vaccinated expressed hesitancy primarily because no one knows the effects of the vaccination over a long period of time.

The Young Adult Charrette was planned and organized by the “I Took The Shot!” (ITTS) team of the local faith-based nonprofit the Collective Empowerment Group of the Tampa Bay Area, Inc. (CEGTBA).

ITTS team members include former Pinellas County Health Department employee Mamie Slaughter and Vannetti Carter, who previously worked in St. Petersburg City Hall.

“In response to the ravaging disproportionate impact of COVID on our families, businesses, and normal lives, we temporarily shifted from our main mission of collaborating with faith leaders and others to bring about collective economic empowerment to assist the community in mitigating the effects of COVID-19,” said Imam Askia Muhammad Aquil, who serves as Chairman of the CEGTBA board of directors and ITTS campaign director.

“A charrette is a working session to harness the best thinking of interested parties representing all sides of the issue,” said Dr. Katurah Jenkins-Hall, a community faith leader and volunteer with

the CEGTBA ITTS Campaign. “We chose these young adult influencers from our community to participate in this exciting learning opportunity, acknowledging that there are different views about vaccinations, mask-wearing, testing, and other prevention strategies as the world, the United States, Florida, and our city battle with this deadly unexpected emergency.”

Dr. Jenkins-Hall continued. Dr. Jenkins-Hall is also a licensed clinical psychologist who has spent over 30 years teaching on the college and university level.

CEGTBA used its broad network of faith and other community leaders to secure resources to launch Mask-up St. Pete!, a campaign that encourages wearing face masks. The campaign distributed over 65,000 free masks plus thousands of educational flyers, hundreds of t-shirts, and yard signs.

Funded by the FHSP, the CEGTBA and its ITTS campaign collaborated with many other groups and agencies involved with the “Beat COVID Pinellas” initiative in messaging to and motivating African-American residents 65 and older who live and work in zip codes 33712, 33711, and 33705 to get vaccinated.

As the information and knowledge about the COVID-19 rapidly evolved, it soon became apparent that people in the 65 plus age group were at risk primarily because of their exposure to unvaccinated infected younger adults, according to most research studies. Concurrently, the ages of those eligible for vaccinations quickly decreased from week to week such that the current focus of ITTS is on young adults ages 18-30.

Ironically, results from a survey of the charrette participants verified that though they are the most likely spreaders, young adults are the most hesitant for vaccinations.

Nearly 90 percent of the young adults believed that to be or not to be vaccinated is a matter of individual choice. Only 40 percent believed that mask wearing should be a choice. More importantly, the participants believed that young adults know the risk they are taking.

The entire room was able to state the pros of wearing masks: Mask wearing protects you and others from COVID-19, feels safer in public spaces, and also protects from cold, flu, and other illnesses. The discussion of cons was lighter, centering around inconveniences. There was also a general concern for the environment—masks are randomly disposed of and are seen everywhere.

However, when the discussion shifted to vaccinations, the pros and cons were more sensitive.

Not everyone is eligi-

ble to receive the vaccination; for example, it may not be indicated medically, or may be against one’s religious beliefs. There remain questions regarding the effectiveness of vaccinations, especially when one considers known stories of breakthrough cases, media emphasis on mutated strands, and other anomalies.

There were also concerns about what may be “endless booster shots.” Long-term side effects are still being questioned, such as the effect on future fertility.

Many real-life considerations are at hand when companies or institutions require fees for unvaccinated students, vaccination passports, and impose travel restrictions. People also must weigh if they will work for a place that requires vaccinations.

For many, requiring vaccinations is an infringement on personal rights, for example, the right not to disclose medical records. Political infringements such as the inability to sue Big Pharma were also discussed.

Still, there are social consequences for others — vaccinated people are not as likely to wear masks. Sometimes, within the same household, there are perceived social pressures to become vaccinated. Being vaccinated adds very little to practical advantages that help us get back to normal for some. For example, requiring one to quarantine if exposed, despite being vaccinated.

Yet, most understood the overwhelmingly positive impact of vaccinations, including increased immunity, reducing symptom severity and Covid related hospitalizations and deaths, a quicker return to normalcy after “herd immunity is reached, which will include less restricted travel, less mask-wearing mandates, and overall, less stress and anxiety.

*** There is hope with the right approach to vaccinations. “Messages to young adults should focus on this hope, not with a single focus on vaccinations, but the on health in a larger sense,” said Aquil.

Our future messaging will include these critical takeaway concepts: Remain open, do your own research, consult your physician, focus on staying healthy, and know your health is your wealth! The ITTS campaign is grateful for Charrette participants who contributed to this messaging.

As an influencer, what do you tell a young adult about staying healthy as it relates to COVID-19? Participants said:

La Tonya Nikki Hill, PCS educator

“Vaccinations have been mandated since



your birth. Polio and other fatal childhood diseases were eradicated by vaccines. I understand your hesitancy, but you should consider how you may impact your parents, grandparents, and other loved ones who may have weakened immune systems.” La Tonya Nikki Hill, PCS Educator

all safer.”

Demetrius N. Taylor, PCUL Young Adult Professional

“COVID-19 has life-altering consequences that are equally as devastating as medical side effects. If you contract the virus, it will impact your ability to work, get paid, and support your family.”



Ashley Aquil

Sergio Curry, City of St. Petersburg
“Consult your doctor.”



Sergio Curry

Caprice Edmond, PCS Board Member
“Ask them, what do they do to stay healthy?”



Caprice Edmond

“Wear your mask, if you’re very susceptible talk to a doctor about getting vaccinated, avoid crowds, get tested as soon as you have worrisome symptoms, pay attention to the latest reports, do your research, take vitamins and supplements, drink water, eat less junk food, get adequate rest”- JakeAnn Jones, Managing Editor, TWC



JakeAnn Jones



La Tonya Nikki Hill

Bro. John Muhammad, community organizer

“Get as much information as you can and trust yourself to make the decision you feel is in the best interest of you and your loved ones.”



Bro John Muhammad

Sheryl Henry, licensed mental health counselor

“Consider the effects of getting COVID vs. the effects of taking the vaccine. I would highlight not just the impact on themselves but also the impact on our larger community & how getting vaccinated helps to keep us



Sheryl Henry



Demetrius N. Taylor

Mhariel Summers, political activist

“As you decide, be respectful to others and wear a mask! Don’t remain undecided forever, be intentional about educating yourself.”



Mhariel Summers

Jabaar Edmond, President, PCUL Young Adult Professional

“Know your own health status and the status of those around you



Jabaar Edmond

Ashley Aquil, PCS Educator

“Do your own research.”

WE ENCOURAGE LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

CONNECT WITH US!

Mamie Hall: 90 years and counting

BY KARIN DAVIS-THOMPSON
Staff Writer

ST. PETERSBURG – In 1931, technology, pop culture, and major life-changing events were happening all over the United States and around the world. RCA placed a transmitter for more broadcast TV at the top of the Empire State Building; in Chicago, the city ran out of money and was unable to pay its teachers for the last few months of the school year. The "Star-Spangled Banner" was officially adopted as the national anthem, Australia gained independence from Great Britain, and on Oct. 1, 1931, Mamie Hall was born.

To celebrate her 90th birthday, her family had a little something up their sleeve – something Mamie would be talking about for days after. Knowing how much the birthday girl loved a particular food, they threw her off by telling her they would celebrate her that morning with one of her favorite dishes.

"We told her we had decided to have a fish fry for her birthday," said Catherine Smith, Mamie's daughter.



"I love fish," Mamie said. "All I knew about was the fish fry; the rest of it was truly a surprise."

The "rest" was a big birthday parade with cars stopping by to wish Mrs. Mamie a happy birthday. The birthday line began with a fire truck and police cars, including Mamie's godson, who worked in the K9 Unit and brought some of his former co-workers to the celebration. At least 50 people stopped by to wish Mrs. Mamie a happy birthday.

"She was totally surprised," Smith said. "She couldn't believe it was all for her."

Mrs. Mamie, who has five children (two deceased), said she was absolutely shocked by it all.

"I didn't know what to think," she was. "It was really a surprise."

Along with community members, family, and friends coming out to wish her a happy birthday, Mrs. Mamie had relatives from Gainesville and Williston who made the trip for her milestone birthday.

"I think it was so beautiful that they were thinking about me on my special



Chanda Smith and Toni Smith

day," Mrs. Mamie stated.

After the birthday parade, family and friends joined Mamie in her backyard for a piece of her favorite cake – yellow cake.

And, after living for nearly a century, one might think things like witnessing the election of the nation's first Black president or living through segregation or the Great Depression might be the experiences Mrs. Mamie looks back on as those that have stuck with her the most. But for her, the one experience that has had the most lasting impact is that she had the opportunity to see her 90th birthday.

"I am truly blessed to be 90 years old, and I thank Jesus for blessing me," said the grandmother and great-grandmother of 25.

"That is such a true statement for my mother," Smith said. "All of her siblings are gone; she is the only one that's left."

But while Mamie took the time on her birthday to reflect on the past 90 years, she still looks forward to each day and her daily routine.

She starts every morning by reading her Bible, then, at 9:30 a.m. sharp, she

participates in her fitness program on TV. The fitness show, Sit and Be Fit, is designed especially for seniors and allows them to sit in their chairs and follow the instructor through a series of exercises.

"I really enjoy it, and I need the exercise," she said.

Then after breakfast, it's time for her favorite shows. Smith said the family knows not to bother mom during her Bible time or when "Wheel of Fortune" or "Young and the Restless" are on.

Mrs. Mamie said her life is good, and she knows that she has a lot to be grateful for. Her daughter



Denise Wesley, Mamie Hall, and Linda Dixon



The birthday girl with her godson, retired K9 Officer Chris Cooper

ter said although her mother isn't one who always has a lot to say, her birthday celebration still makes her smile, and it's something she still talks about.

"She just keeps talking about how wonderful it all was," Smith relayed. "We are glad it made her happy."



Mamie Hall celebrated her 90th birthday with friends and family with a drive-by birthday bash. Family members left to right, Daisha Martin, Larvell White, Catherine Smith, Mamie Hall, Donahue Smith, Toni Smith, and Chanda Smith.

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get through it
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2022 Professional Artist Grant

PINELLAS COUNTY – Each year, Creative Pinellas recognizes up to 10 Pinellas County artists who have excelled in their artistic practice through our professional artist grant program. Each selected artist receives a \$5,000 grant, and they're encouraged to decide how to best use this award for their benefit and growth as an artist.

Through this grant program, Creative Pinellas wants to support and build meaningful relationships among outstanding creative artists in the county. They hope that this grant funding provides a strong foundation for nurturing the creative community and elevating Pinellas County as an arts and cultural destination.

Funding focus

The purpose of the

professional artist grant is to support and build meaningful relationships among the outstanding creative artists in Pinellas County, to provide a strong foundation to nurture the creative community, and to elevate Pinellas County as an arts and cultural destination.

With this purpose in mind, Creative Pinellas provides up to 10 grants for artists who have excelled in their artistic practice. Grantees are encouraged to decide for themselves how to use the award for their benefit and growth as an artist.

Grants of \$5,000 each are open to artists doing work in the following areas:

- Dance (of all kinds)
- Choreography
- Interdisciplinary (a combination of more than

one type of genre of art, often technology/digital arts are involved)

- Literature including poetry, fiction, creative nonfiction (does not include journalism)

- Media arts such as film, photography, computer/digital arts, audio, interactive media, etc.

- Musical performance

- Music composition

- Acting

- Theater creation, including playwriting, directing, musical direction, stage design, stage lighting, etc.

- Visual Arts including 2D and 3D visual arts of all kinds

Do I qualify for this grant?

Creative Pinellas considers the following things when determining eligibility for this grant.

To be eligible for the Professional Artist Grant Program, an applicant shall:

Be a current resident of Pinellas County for at least one year before Dec. 1, 2021, and must agree to maintain their residency for the duration of the grant award period

1. Be at least 18 years of age

2. I am not currently enrolled in any high school, undergraduate, or graduate degree-seeking program with the same or similar focus to the artwork I create and WILL NOT be during any portion of the grant award period

3. Submit a completed online application and all required support documents

4. Not have received a Creative Pinellas Professional or Emerging Artist



Grant within the last three years or twice in the past 10 years

5. An additional \$5,000 Artist Laureate Grant may be presented to one of the grantees who Creative Pinellas recognizes as being a model partner and collaborator sharing their skills and expertise and supporting the organization's mission over the grant period. Artists must indicate on their application that they would like to be considered for the Artist Laureate award. For more details and a

copy of the full grant guidelines, visit bit.ly/ArtistGrant22.

Interested artists can apply now through Feb. 14, 2022, at 11:59 p.m. Edits to your application can happen after you have submitted the application through Feb. 14, 2022, at 11:59 p.m.

Please contact support@smapply.io for technical and online application support. For general questions, contact Creative Pinellas at grants@creativepinellas.org.

Jai Hinson's staying power and 22 years of 'A Family Blessing'

BLESSING, from front page

And, Warren added, even if the children do not want to be artists, Artz for Life allows them to express themselves and encounter new creative experiences.

For Hinson, art is not "fluff" or about "gratuitous" experiences. She said the life-affirming qualities arts offer help build resiliency, and she can attest to the power of art from her own life.

"Art has been a major force in my life. It has brought resiliency to my life throughout my life. It's been with me longer than my children. It's outlasted my marriages," she relayed. "I find that it always provides an opportunity for me to rise above the issues and challenges, to be reinforced and strengthened and have a place where I can go to be creative and start anew."

Hinson, who has worked in social services and education for decades alongside her arts practice, also attested to how art supported children in building resiliency.

Arts, she said, help youth find inner strength and enable them "to continue to be strong despite all the challenges and obstacles. It's important for them to have someplace to go inside themselves and

say, 'this is something that makes me feel good. This is something I do well. This is something that I know that when I put my energies into it at the end, it will be a great thing.'"

Hinson added that art is incredibly empowering for children who feel like they don't "fit in." Exposing youth to art is the key, she noted, "Because you never know what your real talent is until you have the opportunity to experience it."

Artz for Life provides a daily afterschool program, providing homework assistance, tutoring, STEM activities, and performing arts activities. It also offers the Explore Arts Summer Camp that introduces students to professional artists and offers classes ranging from choral singing to theater, provides field trips, and offers literacy programs to help decrease summer learning loss.

The afterschool program has two buses that pick up an average of 70 children a week from Clearwater schools and brings them back to the building on Kings Highway. The outreach pro-

gram brings classes and performance to other organizations, including the Boys and Girls Club, Shirley Proctor Puller Foundation, Enoch Davis Center, the CAP Neighborhood Family Center, and many others.

Hinson said that through the organization's many programming arms, they often have children who want to perform in the upcoming holiday extravaganza "The Family Blessing," a spinoff of "The Chocolate Nutcracker."

"The Family Blessing" is cast with program students who want to be exposed and immersed in a multicultural, diverse production. Musical and dance styles range from ballet to modern, hip hop, jazz, tap, African Brazilian, and Mexican.

The multicultural, multi-ethnic production reflects Hinson's family background.

"When I'm looking at performing arts and diversity, I welcome it all because I recognize all of these things as part of who I am. And there are a lot of people out here that

have that diversity, and I would never say one is better than the other."

This year's production boasts Grammy Award-winning singer Paul Anthony (of the 90s group Full Force) and Montell Jordan (of "This Is How We Do It" fame).

When asked what has enabled her to continue the holiday show for 22 years, Hinson said that in the end, it's about the children involved.

"When I see their smiling faces, and I see them interacting, and so excited about being exposed to something and learning something that they didn't know that they're becoming good at and that they're enjoying," Hinson said thoughtfully. "Their expression, that is an image in my mind all the time."

For more information or to purchase tickets to "The Family Blessing," visit www.artz4life.org/.

Artz for Life, Inc is located at 1751 Kings Hwy in Clearwater. Call (727) 216-3519 to learn more about the organization.



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10 great things about 'Soul Train'

BY FRANK DROUZAS
Staff Writer

It was 50 years ago this past October that the TV variety show "Soul Train" first chugged its way through the cultural landscape of Black America and became a runaway hit.

Though this urban classic started life on a local station in Chicago in 1970, it was only when creator and host Don Cornelius expanded it nationally from Hollywood. A year later, it transformed into the influential show the country came to know.

The "Train" rolled on for a 35-year run, always featuring new sounds, hip dance moves, and crazy fashions. Here are ten things that made it great:

#1
The intros never failed to energize you. As the show's funky, uplifting theme song played—kicked off with the jubilant, soaring exclamation of "Sooooouuuul Traaaaaaiiin"—an animated locomotive came heaving and puffing through an urban backdrop.

Picking up steam, multi-colored smoke spewing from its smokestack, wheels turning furiously, it headed into a tunnel before finally arriving at its stop—the "Soul Train" set with music and dancing already in full swing.

It gave you the adrenaline-rush feeling that a real party was underway, and everyone's invited. (This was the moment the TV audience often took to push furniture toward the walls, creating a makeshift dance floor at home.)

#2
At the show's opening, impeccably dressed Cornelius, somehow giving off

the vibe of an alderman about to speak at a fundraiser, announced, "Welcome aboard, you're right on time to another sweet ride on the Soul Train!"

His cool demeanor and rich, deep voice, coupled with the vibrant feel of the dancers in colorful garb, injected a shot of vitality into urban and suburban homes alike.

#3
The true stars of the show weren't so much the well-known musical performers like Michael Jackson, Diana Ross, or Wilson Pickett, but the everyday kids that really knew how to get funky.

They infused life into the telecast with an ebullience that was obviously not only in their creative dance steps but on their smiling faces. Their sheer enjoyment was real, and they could've been your sisters or brothers or cousins—they were the kids next door having the time of their lives on TV, and it showed.

#4
The show gave Black youth the chance to appear on television in a positive way, which was not that common of occurrence by the early 1970s. (If there were a bunch of young Black faces shown on TV back then, chances were that it was a news story

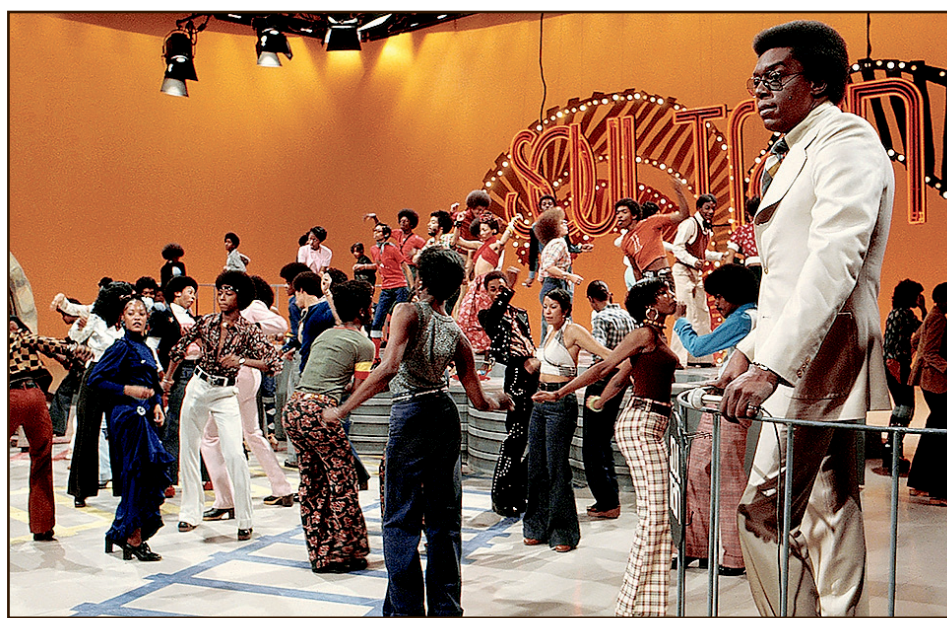
about the urban plight rather than a showcase of their talents.)

"Soul Train" allowed them to be brought directly into people's living rooms in a wholesome light, and they shined. Through the dancing and joyfulness, there was an undercurrent, intentionally or not, of Black empowerment in the age of racially-biased media and culture.

#5
Though mostly Black musicians performed on the show, everyone was welcome as white artists like Duran Duran, Michael Bolton, Sheena Easton, and Michael McDonald appeared, among many others. In a standout moment, English pop star David Bowie delivered inspired performances of his funky hits "Golden Years" and "Fame" in 1975, introducing Black youth in America to his own brand of "plastic soul."

#6
From high-waisted, yellow flared pants to silver, glittery catsuits, from dangerously high platform shoes to lethal-looking stiletto heels, from hotpants to funky hats to groovy collars—the diverse and distinct fashions were a reason so many tuned in.

Always reflecting the time periods, these chic duds often stole the spotlight



and served as the cutting-edge fashion pipeline to kids viewing at home.

#7
A regular feature was the Soul Train Scramble, where studio guests rearranged letters on a board to spell out the names of esteemed African Americans. Yes, it was mostly about the music and dancing, but there was at least a nod to heritage and culture amidst all that jollity.

#8
With the dancers and fashions taking center stage, "Soul Train" revolutionized the way we appreciate music. You couldn't just sound good, but you had to look good (or at least have good-looking people dressed in cool clothes shaking and grooving to your songs). The show helped visual presentation become an

integral part of pop music long before MTV came along.

#9
The "Soul Train" line was hands down the most enjoyable part of the show. Dancers formed two lines facing each other, leaving an aisle between them, then two by two kids took turns showing off their dancing chops.

They strutted, slid, bounced, and boogied their way through the aisle, displaying moves that would be imitated by countless youth on countless schoolyards. Cartwheels, hip grinds, spins, splits, kicks, even robot moves—nothing was off-limits, and everything was wildly entertaining.

#10
Chuck Berry, the Beastie Boys, James Brown, and Bell Biv DeVoe. The Commodores, Little Richard, Elton John, and the Delfonics. Aretha Franklin, Heavy D & the Boyz, Arsenio Hall, Richard Pryor, George Foreman... the hefty list of artists and personalities that made the show "the hippest trip in America" for decades goes on and on.

Funk, disco, rap, pop, jazz, even comedy—and of course, soul. "Soul Train" was a one-of-a-kind program that had something for everyone, and we'll probably never see anything quite like it again.

To reach Frank Drouzas, email fdrouzas@theweeklyphallenger.com



"THE AUDIENCE REACHES A FEVER PITCH!"
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Sunday Worship Service: 10:00 a.m.
Mid-Week Worship: Wednesday 7:00 p.m.



The Rev. Josie Rose,
Priest-in-Charge

Welcome – Bienvenidos
ST. AUGUSTINE’S EPISCOPAL CHURCH
Joyful Spirit, Joyful Jazz
2920 26th Avenue South, St. Petersburg 33712
727-867-6774
StAugustine@tampabay.rr.com

Sunday Communion and Worship Service 9:00 a.m.
Communion and Healing Service 11:00 a.m. Tuesdays



REV. ROBERT A. VINSON, JR.

FAITH MEMORIAL MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH
1800 18TH AVENUE SOUTH
ST. PETERSBURG, FL 33712
727-896-0351
FAITHMBC@YAHOO.COM
GROWING RELATIONALLY IN DISCIPLESHIP THROUGH CHRIST
MATTHEW 28:18-20, JOHN 15:4-5

FAITH In ACTION
FAITH MEMORIAL MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH

Please join us on our Zoom Ministry Line:
Meeting ID: 226-033-6850 Dial-in #: 1-929-436-2866
Sunday Prayer Service: 9:00 a. m.
Sunday Church School: 9:15 a.m.
Sunday Worship Service: 10:00 a.m.
Tuesday Bible Study: 7:00 p.m.



Rev. Wallace Elliott
Sr. - Pastor

First Mount Zion Missionary Baptist Church
1121 22nd Street South, St. Petersburg, FL 33712
(727) 327-8708

Sunday Worship Services 8:00 and 11:00 a.m.
Sunday School.....9:30 a.m.
Prayer Meeting (Tuesday)6:00 p.m.
Bible Study (Tuesday)7:00 p.m.
Baptist Training Union (Sunday) ..4:00 p.m.

“The Little Church Where Everybody Is Somebody”

*First Mount Pilgrim Evangelical
Missionary Baptist Church*
“But for me and my house, we will serve the Lord”
Joshua 24:15
2700 5th Avenue South, St. Petersburg, FL 33715
727-320-2709
lpdavismemorial@gmail.com

Sunday Worship Services
Sunday School 9:30 am • Worship Service 11:00 am
Prayer Meeting (Wednesday) 7 pm
Bible Study (Wednesday) 7:30 pm



Reverend
Darrel W. Davis, Sr.
Pastor - Teacher

Victory Christian Center Church
3012 18th Avenue South
St. Petersburg, Fla. 33712
(727) 321-0911
www.Victorychristiancenterchurch.org



Donn & Jean
Freshler

Schedule of Services
Sunday Worship*
10:30 a.m.
Wednesday Bible Study* -7:00 p.m.
Friday Prayer -7:00 p.m.
Intercessory Prayer - 9:00 a.m.
(except Wednesdays)

Victory Christian Center is a Word of Faith Church.
For more information about the other services and
ministries at Victory Christian Center, please call (727) 321-0911.
**Nursery and Youth Services Available*



Bro. Robert Smith

**20th Street
Church Of Christ**
825 20th Street South
St. Petersburg, FL 33712
Home: 896-8006

Sunday Bible Class (All Ages)8:30 a.m.
Sunday Morning Worship9:45 a.m.
Sunday Evening Worship6:00 p.m.
Ladies Bible Class Monday7:00 p.m.
Monday Evening Bible Class7:00 p.m.
Wednesday Morning Bible Class10:00 a.m.
Wednesday Evening Bible Class7:00 p.m.


UNITY
Temple of Truth
CHURCH

Sunday Worship Service 10:00 A.M. *

511 Prescott Street South
St. Petersburg, FL 33712
727-898-2457
www.unitytemplestpete.org
unitytruth1957@gmail.com

Helping People Live Healthy, Prosperous and Meaningful Lives thru Practical Christianity

*** Live Streaming on our Facebook Page**



INSPIRATIONS
BY DIERDRE DOWNING-JACKSON

Joy


Joy is the grace of GOD that gives us amazing strength; HE blesses our hearts to trust HIM so we do not ever forget.

We thank GOD for HIS joy and peace, that can not be replaced; our joy will be even greater, when we see HIM face to face.

Joy with gratitude for the season, of the celebration of our Savior’s birth; remembering that JESUS CHRIST made the ultimate sacrifice, to be with us here on this earth.

With Joy everlasting and the strength to endure; this Christmas let us remember that JESUS’ promises are sure.

Hold on to your joy and for the love that JESUS gives;
HE blesses all who are faithful and treasures hearts that forgive.



Pastor’s Corner
BY REV. DR. DORAL R. PULLEY,
SPIRITUAL LEADER
TODAY’S CHURCH Tampa Bay

Way of thinking

“But he, knowing their thoughts, said unto them, every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and a house divided against a house falls (Luke 11:17).”

Your mind is the thinking part of your soul. Like seeds sown in the ground, the thoughts that you hold in mind reproduce themselves in your health, finances, and relationships. You cannot stop ideas from coming to your mind, but you can decide how much energy you give to those ideas. Until you give an idea energy, it is simply a suggestion. You decide what suggestions to accept and what suggestions to reject. The suggestion does not become your thought until you accept and give it energy.

The Bible says, “Pray without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:17).” Every thought is a prayer. What thoughts consume your attention the most? Ideas focused on separation, perceived differences with people rather than your similarities? The Kingdom Principle of Divine Nature reminds you that every person is a spiritual being and God’s beloved offspring. Prayer changes your way of thinking and empowers you to think of each male as your brother and each female as your sister.

All people desire to be loved and accepted for who they are. Regardless of differences, God made each of us in the image and likeness of God. Therefore, everyone is worthy of love and respect. You can grow in consciousness to the point where there is no person or a group of people that you have challenges accepting because of their age, gender, race, orientation, socio-economic status, educational level, religion, or any other aspect of their personality. To have true fellowship, you must accept people who appear different from you because you have more in common with them than those differences.

ST. MARK MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH

1301 - 37th Street South, St. Petersburg, FL

(727) 321-6631 • www.stmarkch.org

Schedule of Services

Church School 9:30 a.m.

Morning Worship 10:45 a.m.

Baptist Training Union..... 5:00 p.m.

Prayer Meeting and Bible Study

Wednesday 7:00 p.m.



Rev. Brian K. Brown

THE ROCK OF JESUS MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH

SUNDAY SERVICES/WEEKLY ACTIVITIES

10:30 a.m. Worship Service

9:00 a.m. Breakfast (First Sunday only)

9:30 a.m. Sunday School (First Sunday Only)

Sunday School 9:15 a.m. / Devotion 10:15 a.m.

Praise & Worship 10:20 a.m. / Worship Services 10:30 a.m.

Saints of Prayer - Monday 12:00 noon

Weekly Bible Study - Tuesday 6:30 p.m.

Adult Choir Rehearsals - Thursday 6:30 p.m.

Van service is available by calling: (727) 327-0015

THE ROCK OF JESUS IS LOCATED AT:

3940 – 18th AVE. S., St. Petersburg, Florida

Telephone: 727-327-0015 • Fax: 727-327-0021

Email: rojmbc@knology.net

Office Hours: Tues. & Thurs. 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.



Rev. Frank W. Peterman, Jr.
Pastor

Friendship Missionary Baptist Church

3300 31st St. S., St. Petersburg, FL 33712

(727) 906-8300 www.friendshipstpetersburg.org

Email: fmbc3300@outlook.com

YouTube: FMBC The Ship



Dr. John A. Evans, Pastor

WORSHIP EXPERIENCES

Sunday Worship8:45 a.m. “The Hour of Power”

Sunday School.....8:00 a.m.

Wednesday in the Word.....

12:30 p.m. via ZOOM - ACCESS CODE: 599-819-6863 PASSWORD: 778769

7:00 p.m. via ZOOM - ACCESS CODE: 509-102-8823 PASSWORD: THESHIP

Our Mission: Friendship Missionary Baptist Church is a family of believers in Christ, reaching out to the world, preaching the gospel to the unsaved and teaching the saved to serve by demonstrating the Love of Christ.

TODAY'S CHURCH

Today's Church TAMPA BAY

ST. PETERSBURG
2114 54th Avenue North

TAMPA
5107 N Central Avenue

SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP
8:45AM Drive In Centering Service

SUNDAY AFTERNOON WORSHIP
2pm Cultural Integration Worship Experience

10:30AM CREATIVE EXPRESSION WORSHIP EXPERIENCE

WEDNESDAY NIGHT WORD
6:30 PM - COLLECTIVE CONSCIOUSNESS PRAYER

7 PM - BIBLE STUDY

WWW.TODAYSCHURCHTAMPABAY

ZOOM: MEETING ID 375 007 212 PASSWORD 5107



St. Mark M.B. Church

When Enough is Enough – II Corinthians 4:1-10

What we have experienced in this season of life has not always been easy. There have been some setbacks, situations, stresses, strains, sickness, sadness, and sorrows and if we were able, we would erase them from our lives. But before we erase these things we need to take another look at them because wherever we are today is a result of all we've been through. The person we are, the wisdom we've gained and the trust in God we have would not have been possible had it not been for the struggles and strife, stresses and strains we've faced. God is taking the good, the bad, the ups and downs and is working something good so that we can be who we are today.

Paul, not knowing what we've gone through in this era, penned a message for our consideration for today. Paul understood that there are things that will confront our lives that we didn't ask for. The things that we've been confronted with were allowed by God even in the face of our disdain or desire for them. Verses 8 and 9 of the text gives the thrust of where we find ourselves in this season. Paul says we are troubled on every side, yet not distressed, perplexed but not in despair, persecuted by not forsaken, cast down but not destroyed. We know the negative side of all Paul says. All of us could probably say that we're over all of 'this', whatever our 'this' may be.

So, the question is what do we do when we say enough is enough? Paul could have made the same statement as we,

enough is enough, but he chooses to show us how to handle things that are enough. He understood but suggests that there is more that we should listen to and more that we can be blessed by. In all that Paul went through he understood but he didn't say he'd had enough.

Paul says the first thing that helped him from verse 1 was to focus on the vision. Paul would tell us that God has let us in on what he is doing, and vision is what kept Paul from saying he'd had enough. Vision here is something God wants to do, or a picture of what God can do. When we reach the breaking point we should look for a vision, a picture of something God wants to do. When Paul realized that God let him in on what he was doing, he knew it was more important than what was being done to him. We must also realize that we did not go through what Jesus did so that we might be saved. So rather than give up ask God to show us what we can't see and help us with what we can't do and do for me what I can't do for myself. God wants to show us that we want know good until we go through grief. We shouldn't give up because God is more than enough.

Paul opens verse seven with, we have this treasure in earthen vessels and gives us the second point, which is to find a value. Paul says he was nobody, had nothing good about him but noted when he gave his life to God, God put value in something that had no value. Paul realized that the value in him was



Rev. Brian K. Brown, Pastor

put thereby God and since he got his value and knows his worth, everything is trying to rob him of what he knows is valuable. We should stop looking for value without and look within. The finding of value is our job, and our job is to find Christ in everything. We should stop worrying about insignificant things and put our hope and faith in that which is most important, Jesus Christ.

The final point, from verses 8 and 9 is you've got to finish the view. View here is a particular manner of looking at something. In these verses Paul wants us to stop looking at the first and look at the latter (i.e., troubled but not distressed). Stop looking at the negative and see the positive. Paul knew where and what was happening in his life but chose to look at the positive and realize that it could have been worse. Things may not go our way, but God is still the way. The things God allows in our lives are not to destroy us but to develop us. We are the better because of what God is doing. The full sermon is available for viewing on YouTube.

Join us Sunday mornings in the sanctuary or via live-stream on YouTube @ St Mark MBC at 10:20 for Sunday School, worship service at 10:45 a.m., and bible study on Wednesdays @ 7:00 p.m.



Dear Reader:

God is Not Removed – Adequate Sustenance and the Necessaries of Life
Scripture Study: 1 Kings 19:1-21

Dear Reader,
I'm not sure how my words will find you when you read them, but I pray that they find you well and bring you hope and perspective.

As we continue our conversation, I thought we would begin by talking about adequate sustenance. In 1 Kings 19:8, we find that Elijah was strengthened by the food that he had been given, so much so, that it allowed him to travel "forty days and nights to Horeb (Sinai), the mountain of God" (reference 1 Kings 19:5-8 AMP). Before we talk about what went on in the cave at the mountain of God, I would like to talk further about the details that allowed him to complete his journey there.

What does it mean to be supplied with adequate sustenance? To be given sustenance is to be "supplied with the necessities of life," and this, in fact, is the very act of sustaining. This, in fact, is also the very state of being sustained. We find the necessity of rest and we find the necessity of nourishment in Elijah's story, and just as these things were important to his journey, you will find that they will also be just as important to yours. You see, God's word is a necessity as well as the sustenance that He places before us. "It is written and forever remains written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes out of the mouth of God'" (Matthew 4:4

AMP).

You see, to be sustained is to be supplied with the necessities to survive. Your journey may not always be easy, but God will provide and strengthen you with the adequate sustenance to survive.

The definition for the word 'adequate' is: satisfactory or acceptable in quality or quantity.' I pray and hope that you will know both quality and quantity, because adequate rest, support, care, counsel, provisions, peace, and comfort are necessities to complete your journey. The effectiveness of these things must not only be found in quantity, but in quality as well.

So, allow God's touch and adequate sustenance to produce quality in your life, for there may be some things and people that He has to remove.

Mental illness doesn't have a face, a race, age, or religion; and, yes, it affects those who didn't ask for it nor ever want it to be a part of their life. You see, in our suffering we find our lot in life, and the only thing that we can do with this territory is to take possession of it and use it for God's glory. May you know His strength when your mountain seems too high, and may you know His courage deep down in your darkest valley. You will complete this journey, and you will make it to the promise of your destination. I believe in you and want you to know

that you should, too.

The Lord is your shepherd, you shall not want (Psalm 23:1). "And this same God who takes care of me will supply all your needs from his glorious riches, which have been given to us in Christ Jesus. Now all glory to God our Father forever and ever! Amen" (Philippians 4:19-20 NLT).

Dear reader, we all seek shelter from the storm, and God is not removed. He will provide you with the adequate sustenance and sustain you with the necessities of life. I want you to know that you are not alone, and it is my prayer that this column will make you feel as though you have a place to belong and somewhere to call home.

I pray and hope that you will continue to read the written content and stay connected with us over the next few weeks.

Blessings and favor to you until next time and until we meet again.

Share your story and prayer requests at SenecaHoward.com/contact, and our team will be sure to keep you lifted in our prayers.

P.S., Yours Truly,
The Writer Seneca Howard

www.SenecaHoward.com
About Seneca Howard
Seneca Howard is a pastor, author, mentor, and motivational speaker who inspires the lives of others through crisis ministry, counsel, and personal development.

The Priority of Thanksgiving – Luke 17:15-19

=Thanksgiving has passed so why talk about it now? 'Thanksgiving' has nothing to do with what happens at the table (turkey, ham, cake, etc.) and if you didn't have a feast of various traditional foods, there is still reason to tell God thank you. We the people of faith should give thanks to God every day of our lives, not just for food but for family, fellowship and even for so much more.. If God has blessed our lives, the least we can do is say thank you. Every day of our lives is a day that the body of believers should be thankful to God, for him and because of him.

The text is a reminder of the ten men isolated from society because of leprosy. They were relegated to the outskirts of town and if anyone came near them they had to let them know they

were 'unclean'. They saw Jesus passing by and cried out to him because they wanted him to bring healing to their condition. Jesus responds by telling them to go show themselves to the priest to validate that what they had, they had no more so they could be declared clean. As the men walked they realized they were healed of their leprosy. Out of the ten who were healed only one went back to say thank you. Before he went to show himself to the priest, he fell on his face and offered thanksgiving to Jesus and as a result of that, he experienced more than just a healing of leprosy.

Thanksgiving is paramount and a priority. It is not something we do now and then but becomes a part of our lives and we are compelled to offer thanksgiving. Out of ten who were healed

one man gave priority to give thanksgiving to Jesus.. Can we make giving thanks a priority every day of our lives, whether things are well or not? Whatever comes in our lives are to be thankful and make it a priority because God deserves our thanksgiving.

Pastor Brown asked the text and the one man in the text what happens when thanksgiving becomes our priority and gave the following three points from verse 19. First, there was a change in posture. In verse 16 the man fell down on his face giving thanks. As a result of his thanksgiving Jesus tells him to get up and go his way. Could it be that we haven't fallen to our knees out of gratitude? It has been a hard year for all but even in the midst of so much grief, we should lift our hands in gratitude to

God and tell him thank you. And as we give thanksgiving we can watch God pick us up from whatever has knocked us to our knees and tell us to live our lives with a view that God is still on our side. When we thank God, thanksgiving can not only change our physical posture it can change our physical posture and our mental posture.

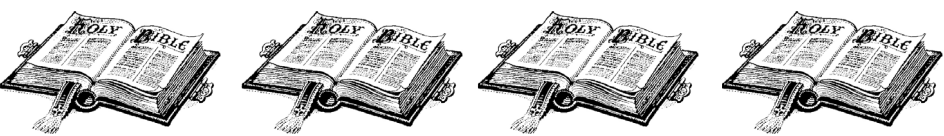
Secondly, there was a change in prognosis because the one made thanksgiving his priority. In verse 17 Jesus asked, were there not ten cleansed but in verse 19 Jesus tells the 'one' that he is now 'whole'. Ten were cleansed but only one was made whole. These words are not the same. We can be cleansed as the ten were but not be made whole. We can have surface and outer things changed about us but that does not change our

inner being. The real change we need is to experience a change in our heart. A prognosis is an opinion about one's recovery from illness or injury or a judgment about what will happen in the future. Jesus prognosis of the man was that his faith had made him whole. His outcome would be better than the nine. While all had been cured of leprosy, the one who gave thanksgiving was made whole. The one made whole had something deeper within that God would keep manifesting day after day.

The third point was there was change in his practice. Mercy was requested and as they walked there was a change. The one recognized that he had done nothing but the encounter with Jesus made him realize that believing in

Jesus (faith) made his healing possible. The man didn't know what his action was called until Jesus name it... thy faith had made you whole. If you want to keep things to keep being made whole, we need to tell God thank you and have a confident expectation that God will make the wholeness. As practice faith, we need to learn to God before the manifestation of wholeness shows up. God wants us to know that when we stay grateful and thankful we make thank you a priority. We then can walk in confidence that God can bring or take us where he wants.

Join us Sunday mornings in the sanctuary or via live-stream on YouTube @ St Mark MBC at 10:20 for Sunday School, worship service at 10:45 a.m., and bible study on Wednesdays @ 7:00 p.m.



GAS PLANT/

LAUREL PARK

NEIGHBORHOOD

REUNION

**CELEBRATING THE PAST,
ENVISIONING THE FUTURE**
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 12TH
TROPICANA FIELD, LOT 4
NOON - 3 P.M.

This reunion is for former residents and family members of both neighborhoods. It will be a fun time for all with free food, entertainment, opportunities to see old friends, and sharing of memories and photos of both neighborhoods.

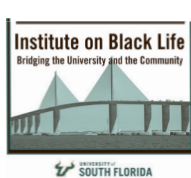
Stay tuned for more information regarding registration and how you can get involved. There will also be scholarship opportunities for middle school and high school students.

**SCAN TO
REGISTER FOR
THE EVENT**



Email: VoicesHeardVoicesMatter@gmail.com
Phone Number: 727-371-6153

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