

The *Sojourner's* Truth

Volume 58, No. 4

"And Ye Shall Know The Truth..."

October 23, 2019

Grace Community Center Celebrates 50 Years of Service



Grace Executive Director Elaine Page and Board Chairman Bryce Harbaugh

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The Style of Substance

By Rev. Donald L. Perryman, PhD

The Truth Contributor

I want to trace the comings and goings of my people on the invisible plane of existence where so much of the substance of black life resides.

— John Edgar Wideman



Her brash and sometimes boisterous style has been often criticized by the uninitiated. Yet, the tone and volume of Toledo City Councilwoman Yvonne Harper's political voice is often necessitated by the complex needs among her District 4 constituents, and reflects the passion of a politician who is in tune with the spirit of a community desperately needing to draw attention to its plight.

I finally caught up with the busy (and hoarse) Harper to talk about her political experiences as she campaigns for reelection.

Perryman: You've only been on City Council since 2015 but it seems as though you have been active in the community forever. So, tell me a little bit about your political formation and early influences.

Harper: The influence really came from the late George Davis, who approached me about becoming involved in the NAACP and the Democratic Party and he encouraged me to stick with my church which was True Vine in those early days.

Perryman: What time period did this take place?

Harper: I'm gonna say in the 70's and then I ran for my first elected position — people don't realize it — and it was a precinct chair and then I was a ward chair. That was my very first political position.

Perryman: You've also participated with many civic groups.

Harper: Yes. I was the secretary of the NAACP and under WilliAnn Moore, I was a program chair of our Freedom Fund banquet for many years. I got a chance to meet a lot of people and learned how to do fundraising through training I got when I was part of the Junior League. Also, I was a member for almost 30 years with the Perry Burroughs Democratic Women's club. That's the oldest black women's club in the city, the oldest in the State of Ohio and we still follow their doctrine which requires you be a registered Democrat and you must vote and declare yourself, so you have to vote in the primaries and we still use their doctrine and bylaws.

Perryman: What have you learned since arriving on council in 2015?

Harper: I've learned to be up front and transparent. Since I've been on council, I go to every meeting, even if I'm not on the committee. And, why do I go? People like you might call me and ask me a question. I don't wanna get back with you, I want to tell you that I was in the meeting and this is what happened.

Perryman: What has contributed to this drive to be transparent?

Harper: Because when I'm in the community, even before Yvonne ever did anything, people will always talk about how council passed stuff and don't nobody know about it. So, when I got on council, I said 'I'm gonna learn and keep people informed so that they will know the things that are happening.'

Perryman: You have a new slogan, which says: "I'm in the community." Please tell me what that means.

Harper: I'm in the community because I visit various churches; I go to every block watch if somebody invites me; I go over to the Grenadier, which is "the 1343" (Avondale); I go to The Quality; and I used to go to The Elks. I have not stopped doing what I was doing before I became a council person.

I've sat with some people, some gentlemen, that are retired that are over at McDonald's. I go in there early in the morning because if you want to know what's going on, go to any McDonald's and see the retirees and they can tell you everything. I listen to them.

I'm also involved in the community. When a person calls me, I go out there and listen to what they have to say. I take pictures of their concerns and come back and put it in Engage Toledo and then I follow up and give them the six-digit number and explain to them that they can call. But I even take it a step further.

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Councilwoman Yvonne Harper

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Community Calendar

October 23

UT's "Tricks Treats & Dunks:" 6 to 8 pm; Savage Arena; Trick or treat for kids from 6 to 7 pm; Costume contest at 7; Rockets players at various games

October 27

Calvary MBC 90th Church Anniversary: 4 pm; Speaker Northwestern Baptist Area Moderator LaMont Monford, pastor of Lima Philipians MBC; "Remembering the Past, Celebrating the Present, Looking to the Future"
Indiana Avenue MBC Trunk or Treat: 4 to 6 pm; Family, fun, food; Games, arts and crafts, pony rides, music face painting
Breast Cancer Awareness Forum: 3 to 5 pm; YWCA; Guest speakers, question and answer session, light refreshments

November 1


Braden United Methodist All Saints Day Community Festival: Toledo area youth invited for an evening of fun activities, treats and prize; Friendly costumes welcome: 419-386-2700

November 16

The Junction Coalition 7th Annual Health and Wellness: 10 am to 3 pm; Frederick Douglass Center; Massage therapy, financial advice, healthy food options, medical screenings, stress tests and evaluations, disaster preparedness and water democracy: 567-255-4601 or 419-408-0998

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Kaptur Statement on the Passing of Chairman Elijah Cummings

Congresswoman Marcy Kaptur (OH-09) released the following statement in response to the tragic passing of Chairman Elijah Cummings of Maryland:

"Today, I join a grateful nation in mourning the death of an exceptional American - Chairman Elijah Cummings," said Rep. Kaptur. "There was so much to Elijah - a magnanimous human being, a devoted patriot, a man of faith, a man whose heart for others never stopped beating. I have had the privilege to know well and serve alongside Elijah for many years, but it is the greatest privilege of all to be able to call Elijah my friend. The word great is often overused in our society - without question, Elijah was a great man. He served his district in a way that made clear to every person his unshakable love for the City of Baltimore and its people. It is with deep sadness as well as a heart full of gratitude that I extend my deepest condolences to his family, his devoted wife Maya, extended family, his friends, and the people of greater Baltimore for sending a man of such substance and bearing to serve the people of the United States."



Elijah Cummings
1973

Toledo-Lucas County Health Department Observes National Lead Poisoning Prevention Week

The Toledo-Lucas County Health Department is pleased to recognize National Lead Poisoning Prevention Week, October 20-26, 2019. TLCHD will host and participate in outreach and educational activities designed to raise local awareness about the danger of lead exposure and poisoning and educate parents on how to reduce exposure to lead in their environ-

ment, prevent its serious health effects, and learn about the importance of testing children for lead.

National Lead Poisoning Prevention Week is a joint initiative of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The goal is to encourage organized, local community events, and to empower families and other stakeholders to take action. "We are working to educate the community on the dangers of lead exposure while encouraging families to get their child tested," said Eric Zgodzinski, Health Commissioner.

About 3.6 million American households have children under 6 years of age who live in homes with lead exposure hazards. According to the CDC, about 500,000 American children between ages of 1 and 5 years have blood lead levels greater than or equal to the level of blood reference value, the level at which CDC recommends public health actions.

Lead can be found inside and outside the home, including in the water that travels through lead pipes or in the soil around the house. However,

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Lead Poisoning... continued from page 4

the most common source of exposure is from lead-based paint, which was used in many homes built before 1978. Adults and children can get lead into their bodies by breathing in the lead dust (especially during activities such as renovations, repairs or painting) or by swallowing lead dust that settles in food, food preparation surfaces, floors, window sills, and other places, or eating paint chips or soil that contain lead.

Children can also become exposed to lead dust from adults' jobs or hobbies, and from some metal toys or toys painted with lead-based paint.

Children are not exposed equally to lead, nor suffer its consequences in the same way. These disparities unduly burden minority families and low-income families and their communities.

The problem is largely preventable with increased testing and education. Stakeholders can use the digital toolkit (http://hud.gov/program_offices/healthy_homes/nlppw), to assist with building awareness and implementation at the local level.

The Health Department offers lead screenings for children through age 6, Monday-Friday 8:30 am until 4:00 pm, free of charge. For additional information, please call 419-213-4100.

Perryman... continued from page 2

When I get all that information and gather it together, I inform the mayor, the 22nd floor. I let him know. When I go to his directors, his commissioners and his managers, I inform him and I include him on every e-mail that I send to his employees.

So, I take the time to tell people that I'm in the community all the time. I go to press conferences when the mayor or anybody invites me, I go. I go to the Scott Power Hour every quarter and I'm on the list that principal Dr. Carnell Smith has. I take all the Toledo City Council meetings, anything that's going on. I also take in voting too, because I work with the voting on the Board of Elections when I'm not on the ballot. And, as far as myself running for office, I put out my own signs. I've had people help me, but I can put up my own signs.

It's important for people to know that I'm in this to win, but also, that I'm not asking you to do something that I wouldn't do. I've helped clean alleys; I've gone door-to-door with the code enforcement to tell people that they need to clean up the alley cause we're coming through there and that you're responsible to maintain that property from the sidewalk to the street, you keep it clean. So, all of that has helped me be familiar. People know me. I'm in the community.

Perryman: What is your agenda for the community should you be re-elected?

Harper: I want to get people more involved. To explain, like the CDBG funding, for instance, that there are guidelines. For example, you need to have a 501c, you need to be in business for 3 years, you need to keep records of your board meetings, who is on there and they have to individually sign them. People don't know that. It's my job to educate them.

The other thing that I want to work on, is I want to follow up with youth engagement. When a youngster comes to me, a student that wants to shadow me, I have them sitting right by me on council with me because

they can't learn anything out there in the audience. When I say yes, I show them, this is why.

Another thing that I want to work on is the mobile food trucks. You just can't buy a food truck and just park on the street. People don't understand that. They think it's public and I'm constantly out there explaining. They don't like it, but I'd rather tell them up front so you won't get fined.

Perryman: What about these high-profile claims of police brutality in Toledo?

Harper: And I'm glad you asked me about that. I'm like every other person. When you hear it on the news, you get upset, but I go to policemen that look like me and they give me a different perspective. So, I have to work and make sure when I'm out there in the community, like somebody asks me a question, I say listen, I know what you're thinking because I saw the same thing, but there's two sides to every story. So, we have to make sure that our policemen realize that all of us that look like me are not bad people. We need to educate them, and I think the best education is people that look like me to train or have them train the police. Just like any job in the city, there's good and bad. All policemen are not bad. Also, I'd like more transparency with the police and I would like police on every block, but we don't have it.

Perryman: Last thing. Council is pretty old, what do you think about getting more youth elected?

Harper: I would love to see more young people elected, but you just can't wake up in the morning and think you're immediately gonna be an elected official. The first question is how are you going to raise the money? That's the problem, people that want to run, I just can't put you in there, you've got to convince the community that you're worthwhile, so I would recommend that council hopefuls first go through a training and mentorship.

Perryman: Thanks Councilwoman Harper!

Contact Rev. Donald Perryman, PhD, at drdnperryman@centerofhope-baptist.org



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Goodwill Industries Will Increase Aid to Returning Citizens

By Asia Nail

Sojourner's Truth Reporter

Goodwill Industries of Northwest Ohio is the recipient of a Department of Justice, 2nd Chance grant totaling \$999,974. These funds will support a workforce development program for returning citizens entitled, Stay the Course. The program will target medium to high risk incarcerated individuals who need help preparing to rejoin the community which includes getting and retaining a job.

We all want to "Stay Woke," yet with constant propaganda and hidden

media agendas it can be difficult to find the guiding light on the path to #MakeAmericaSmartAgain.

However, if you, "think before you donate," we think you'll donate to Goodwill.

And for good reason.

... continued on page 7

TARTA Seeks Renewal of Property Tax Before Seeking a Sales Tax

Sojourner's Truth Staff

"We have support for a sales tax," says Amy Mohr, director, Community Relations for the Toledo Area Regional Transit Authority. That sales tax, which up to now has been stymied by the opposition of the Sylvania Township trustees, is seen by the transit authority as the answer to funding issues that have plagued public transportation riders for years.

A study commissioned by TARTA concluded that the years old property tax funding model was no longer sustainable and that a sales tax made more sense. A sales tax, however, requires the approval of the voters in all the member communities – and, first, the approval of the towns' trustees, or executives, to be placed on a ballot.

In 2018, when TARTA attempted to gain that approval, two of the three Sylvania Township trustees blocked them, by declining to place the issue on a ballot for their constituents to consider even though polls showed that most voters in the Township would have approved.

Nonetheless, however strong they might estimate the support for a sales

tax might be, the conclusion of TARTA management is that they will need at least until next November – 2020 – to educate voters on the need for the sales tax and to gain approval at the polls from all the member communities. At that point, the plan is to seek approval for a .05 percent sales tax.

However, the current 10-year property tax levy of one millage, which brings in about \$5.3 million annually, is due to expire in 2020 and, therefore, TARTA can't afford to wait for the extended campaign that a sales tax would involve. Therefore, the transit system is planning to ask for the renewal of the property tax in March 2020 and place on the ballot in November 2020 a request for a sales tax to replace the property tax.

The big task for the transit authority will be in overcoming confusion among voters as they request back-to-back funding approvals – as distinct as those requests might be. In November 2020, on a crowded ballot in particular, the message of how the authority is seeking a change in funding, rather than adding on more funding, may well get lost among so many other campaign messages.

None of this will be finalized until the TARTA board gives its approval during the November 2019 meeting but until then, management feels, according to Mohr "we have support in places we haven't had support before."

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Goodwill... continued from page 6

While most of you know Goodwill Industries as the place to donate your used household goods, many of us are still unaware of their mission.

Goodwill works to enhance people's dignity and quality of life by strengthening their communities, eliminating their barriers to opportunity, and helping them reach their full potential through learning and the power of work.

"Goodwill's mission of helping people with barriers to employment, linked with a job that can turn into a career, is a perfect fit for this funding and grant opportunity," said Goodwill Industries of Northwest Ohio President and CEO Amy Wachob.

"Returning citizens have barriers that many of us take for granted; such as a driver's license, a birth certificate, work clothing or a resume detailing work experience. We are grateful that the Department of Justice has taken notice of the workforce challenges that exists for returning citizens and has recognized our hard work in the reentry space by awarding us this grant," said Wachob.

Goodwill was founded in Boston by Reverend Edgar J. Helms, an early social innovator who coined the Goodwill philosophy of "a hand up, not a handout."

There is a need for a deeper understanding of the relationship between prison, people, and places. Community organizing is all about building grassroots support. When everyday people come together with a common goal, exceptional things happen.

"We received the Department of Labor grant for re-entry in 2016. This is when we launched into the re-entry world," shared Karyn McConnell, Goodwill's Director of both Mission Services and Workforce Development.

The 2016 Department of Labor grant was to help returning citizens who were yet in halfway houses find employment and training, while helping with wrap around services directed at tackling anything posing a barrier to potential employment for the citizens.

"We have been helping people in halfway homes faithfully here at Goodwill Industries for some time now, and very successfully, might I add," chimed Wachob humbly, during our interview.

This new 'Stay The Course' grant is an opportunity to expand on Goodwill's previous work.

The 2019 Department of Justice grant will impact 150 individuals over the next 48 months as Goodwill and Toledo Correctional partner to better understand the challenges and identify path- ways to potential workplace reentry solutions. The new initiative will target both those in halfway houses and now include those who are in prison transitioning back to the workforce.

"The grant states we have a hard number of 150 but with a 48-month term we have the chance to truly transform individual families and our communities in tandem," said Wachob.

This project is positioned to stimulate a more thorough understanding of today's reentry citizen. The primary use of the funds' allotment is to allow wrap around services with the end goal being employment.

"The citizens we help with reentry will model and reflect what the prison population looks like. Our 2016 grant represented an almost equal ratio of African-Americans to Caucasians and although Goodwill does not make this determination, we will service anyone based on the grant criteria and its non-discriminatory nature," said McConnell.

Goodwill is also a part of the ReEntry Coalition, placing key employees as board members as they work collectively. Every first Wednesday of the month, they have a free resource fair for returning citizens.

They are using every resource available to help individuals. "If child support is an issue, if counseling is an issue, if addiction arises...we have referring partners housed within the coalition we can use to help individuals. Ohio Means Jobs is a strategic partner as well and must not go without mention," stated McConnell.

"Some individuals may wonder why Goodwill is the recipient of this grant because most members of our community know us for our stores being a great place to donate, but we are most proud of being recognized as premiere workforce development provider. We have been providing workforce development services since we've been here in Toledo since 1933, so this grant which really does specialize and allow us the opportunity to perform very in depth workforce development services for individuals reentering our community. This blends perfectly with our mission here at Goodwill of helping people with disabilities and barriers to employment get jobs, said Wachob, excitedly.

When asked how locals can help, Wachob shared,

"The community can HIRE individuals who are reentering the workplace.

Part of Goodwill's 'Stay The Course' initiative is to break down the stigma surrounding community members having a police record of convictions.

Community business owners can show your support by opening your doors and providing an opportunity for HIRE to returning citizens. This is one HUGE way the community can help Goodwill's effort with this DOJ grant.

To put this into a different perspective, this award was given under the second chance act.

The Second Chance Act in its title is giving individuals a second chance at life.

"Understand, we are helping people returning from prison but we cannot do this without the community's help! We must not place a stigma on these citizens. Even if it may be a citizens' third or fourth chance...people deserve another chance. Allow people to live in society without this stigma and help employ them so they can get back on track and have a productive future," stated McConnell.

"One of the great things about this grant is that it is 1 person or 1 family at a time. Our navigators will work individually with returning citizens to find out their interests and what career they want to have within their community. Then it is our job to navigate through any barriers they may have personally so they can ultimately have success garnering employment," said Wachob.

There are incentives and employer tax credits for interested businesses willing to hire returning citizens. Contact Goodwill if you are an owner who would like more information.

Goodwill Industries' top program initiatives include two job connection centers here in the Toledo area. Their services are FREE for any job seeker who feels they may need help learning new skills such as: resumes, online employment navigation, interviewing, dressing for success, etc. These are walk-in services and you will be assigned a personal navigator to assist you.

Their Job Connection Center in collaboration with ProMedica Ebeid Neighborhood Promise (ENP) is located in on Madison Ave in downtown Toledo. The other Job Center is embedded within the Goodwill retail store located at the Deveaux Village Shopping Center.

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Recruitment and Retention of Medical Students at UT

Sojourner's Truth Staff

University medical students of various ethnic backgrounds and disciplines gathered for a new student mixer on Friday, October 18, 2019 at the University of Toledo's Medical Campus Mulford Library café. The event was organized by the university's President's Committee on African American Recruitment, Retention and Scholarship Support (PSARS).

"The University of Toledo is on top of the medical issues and disparities that impact our communities. The success of these medical students is one vital goal of PSARS and The University of Toledo," said PSARS president Jan Scotland.

The mixer opened with an ice breaker activity, which encouraged students to interact and mingle with fellow medical students, PSARS members, and community members who support PSARS.

About 30 African, African-American and other under-represented ethnicity students have entered the university's graduate programs of medicine, nursing and pharmacy.

"We want to give them a nice practical foundation, Said Monica Holiday-Goodman, PhD, associate dean of Student Affairs and Diversity and Inclusion in the College of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences.. "And the opportunity to meet people from the other colleges and connect with them."

In addition to the students, also present were PSARS committee members, and community supporters such as Scotland and Rev. James Willis, pastor of St. Paul Missionary Baptist Church. Mixer attendees enjoyed refreshments and door prizes.

The program consisted of a short address from Dr. Michelle Boose, MD, a family medicine practitioner who completed her medical studies at UT. She encouraged the students to embrace the challenge ahead of them but also to seek help when necessary.

"You are here for a reason, you are worthy of being here," she told her audience. "We have the resources for you, to help you overcome the struggle."

Also addressing the incoming students were four students from the various colleges who shared their experiences of coping with the twin challenges of taking on a more rigorous academic challenge while often feeling isolated as one of a few students of color.



Monica Holiday-Goodman, PhD, and Rev. James Willis



Dr. Michelle Boose, MD



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Community Organizations Sponsored a Candidate's Forum to Address Local Concerns

By Tricia Hall

Sojourner's Truth Reporter

Community agencies collaborated to organize a candidate's forum on Sunday, October 6, 2019 at the YMCA on Jefferson Ave. The two-hour forum brought together candidates to explain their platforms or opinions about downtown Toledo, current traffic patterns and concerns, police relations in the black community, human trafficking, resident involvement in government decisions and to share information about themselves.

The forum's structured outline allowed candidates to respond within two minutes to one or all questions that were asked.

The forum was organized by The National Association of Negro Business and Professional Women's Club, the Toledo Club and the Maumee Bay Club; Top Ladies of Distinction, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Incorporated, Phi Delta Kappa Sorority Incorporated and YWCA of Northwest Ohio.

"It's important for us as voters to know what's going on in our community," explained NANBPWC Maumee Bay President Pattie Poston.

All candidates were invited. The attendees included: City Councilman Tyrone Riley, incumbent for District 1; Shaun Strong, candidate for District 1; Tom Names, candidate for District 5; Councilwoman Yvonne Harper, incumbent for District 4; June Boyd, candidate for District 4; Toledo Clerk of Court Vallie Bowman English; Tom Puffenberger, candidate for Municipal Court judge; Stephanie Eichenberg, incumbent for Toledo Public Schools board, and Sheena Barnes, candidate for Toledo Public Schools board. Candidate responses are listed in order of their first response to a submitted question from the facilitator.

Councilwoman Yvonne Harper

"There aren't too many things I would change about my district, but let's talk about the downtown parking. I listened to the people because, but on November 1 the free parking between 11:00 a.m. will be replaced with meter payment. I do enjoy the activities that are held downtown. When businesses come before Toledo City Council asking for funding, I have questions. If you are a silent partner with The City of Toledo, I question that. I'm not willing to sell out District 4, because building a drug rehab is not economic development.

Our streets are bad and we're trying to fix them. However, streets located in the suburbs are state routes, and the state takes care of those routes. We must figure out a way to work with the engineers, because the traffic is so bad right now. We're facing several problems, street conditions are a problem because they are crowded, houses are being built, there are sewers backups, and more. We are working on all of that.

You can't have it both ways. If you call the police to settle something in your house, you must follow the law. When the police stop you, the police are the judge and jury because they run it. I personally got stopped by two white police officers. One officer had his hand on his gun, and the other was standing there trying to be rough. He pulled me over to the side of the road. I don't know if the officer knew who I was when he asked for my driver's license, but I knew what was going on. I said that my purse was in the back seat of the car, and asked the officer if he would grab it for me or could I. We must deal with the police. It's our fault that our children aren't responsive to orders. I know that the police need more training and our parents need to work with our kids. It bothers me, because it starts in the home. There was a law that didn't pass that would have required police to live in the city. We lost. They offered this to the police and sheriff, and they chose not to live in the city. I think they should live in the city, but they chose not to live in the city. When I used to work for Municipal court, I had to live in the city of Toledo. However, now they got around that requirement. Community police has always been on the table for discussion. I would love to see the police walking down the street.

Human Trafficking frightens me because it's silent but growing rapid in our community just like suicide. I came close to human trafficking while working as a bailiff, we did an eviction and saw four cages. I didn't know what was going on. Later we found out the cages were holding youth. It is close to you. I need to be trained on how to recognize it. We as city council should be trained on this and suicide, also working with the police to figure out how to recognize the signs. We also need those nosy neighbors. I had an incident that neighbors called me about. There was a gentleman selling cars on the street, people couldn't park on their own street. As a result, 21 cars were towed.

I have cleaned alleys, picked up trash and visited houses. Once residents see that their city council person will work with them, they support you. Serving as a councilmember is not for the weak.



Candidates - seated - with representatives of organizing agencies



I will continue to work on Community Development Block Grant and explain how you can get the money. The city receives \$7.2 million-dollars, but only \$1.7 million-dollars goes to the community. We need to work on that. I will continue to work on absentee landlords. They come here, buy the prop-

...continued on page 10

"As an attorney and your former Mayor, I know that Democrat Tom Puffenberger is the best candidate for judge."

- State Representative Paula Hicks-Hudson

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Candidates... continued from page 9

erty, rent it, and the cycle continues. Third, I will work on the Special Use Permit ordinance that Tyrone Riley is working on. It allows us to have some control in our community."

Councilman Tyrone Riley

"Councilwoman Harper was one of four councilmembers that voted against the new parking policy for downtown. I think the decision to eliminate the free lunch parking was a bad decision, it will hurt businesses. Downtown Toledo will be okay, even though business workers are complaining about the decision. I say that because there will be an increase of money coming into downtown, through grants and taxes. We don't want downtown Toledo to grow at the expense of the neighborhoods. Downtown Toledo won't be this great without the neighborhoods.

I agree with Councilwoman Harper about the roads and construction, you can't have it both ways because we must take the bitter with the sweet at this time. Residents want roads paved and repaired, which means we're going to have to suffer for a little bit with the congestion. Certainly, the engineering department must do a better job of routing the traffic, but we must make sure the streets are repaired. If roads aren't repaired, that's when you blame city council and the government claiming we're not doing our job. Construction in some aspect is good, that means we have the money to pay for the construction. We must ask the Engineers and Department of Transportation to design a better way to handle the traffic flow so people can get to where they want to go easier.

The issues between the black community and police can be bridged by educators and training. Educating must happen on both sides, the police and the community. Educating on how to respond when a police officer stops you and educate the officers on what we as the community are looking for. This breaks down to respect and not knowing the expectations of each other. When the police enter a situation, they are coming in to take command. If they stop my vehicle or an average citizen's vehicle, the first thing that a citizen will say is 'why did you stop me.' That one encounter will determine what happens next. Education must play a role on how you respond because not every officer has the same upbringing or experiences or that when you ask why you were stopped it's just a question and not meant to be disrespectful. We must also understand what the law requires if you don't have a front license plate on your vehicle than the officers have probable cause to stop your vehicle. If it's one or two o'clock in the morning coming from a crime infested area or even a party, and don't have a front plate that's probable cause.

We must have discussion like this to address and bring awareness to human trafficking, inside our homes, churches and schools. We must act, realizing the problem does exist. There are so many young ladies that are exposed to human trafficking and we must have resources available. Law enforcement officers



Sheena Barnes, Councilwoman Yvonne Harper, Clerk of Court Vallie Bowman-English



Tom Names, Councilman Tyrone Riley

know where the problem is, like the I-80 truck stop which operates as a human trafficking hub. Let's stop trying to control attitudes and just eliminate it.

Neighborhood development has been mu mission, and one of the best ways to increase that mission is through community engagement. I have established five different block watch organizations, that are called neighborhood improvement associations. The residents who attend don't want to be perceived as snitching, but they are talking about neighborhood problem solving. We established one at Bethlehem Baptist Church, Zion Lutheran church, St. Paul Church, and Redeemer Church. We must get the people out of the government center and come into your neighborhood. Let them travel down the same roads that you travel and see what you see. That's why they were established so we can work together, neighborhoods and city council, to improve neighborhoods. It's working there is now an illegal dumping task force.

I would like to continue to improve our educational system, by encouraging and supporting it. The system has an impact on everything that we do. We can't improve technology without those students learning those skills. Jobs must be accessible to men who look like me, we must give jobs to male so they can support these families and make a decent living. This will also address crime. There is a correlation between crime and education, black males are jailed at a higher rate. A stable community and families are possible if we address crime."

Tom Names, candidate District 5

"The Toledo Mudhens announced they were relocating to downtown Toledo and claimed that parking would be better than the Lucas County Recreation Center. That promise wasn't kept. The new parking policy will cause problems for people who visit the municipal court and disenfranchise people visiting family court. I think if you pay a meter for parking, you should receive a receipt. There are cities like Ann Arbor and Columbus that will give you a receipt for meter parking. There has been too much development and focus on downtown Toledo, it's too crowded. I would like to see development move out of downtown, and into the neighborhoods. Why does Levis Park deserve a \$1 million-dollar improvement plan. All they did was tear it down and rebuild it the same as it was before. I grew up in New Jersey and have lived in Toledo for 24 years. I say that because the traffic patterns are not bad here, you can jump and travel from one side of Toledo to the other in 20 minutes. It's amazing. It's beautiful.

There is an issue with construction. One example is Monroe Street and Secor. I mention those two streets because that's my district. It's taken the entire summer to lay one mile of pavement, Monroe and Secor is one of the busiest intersections in the city. There isn't an excuse for construction workers to place the orange barrels out and not complete the work in a quicker amount of time. I recently attended a Wednesdays with Wade and listened to our mayor as he spoke the streets, even with his plan and budget we may not caught up to all the needed repairs. I'm still waiting to hear back about a new plan.

I attended a meeting at the Frederick Douglas Center a few months ago and the police's outreach was wonderful. The police also have an outreach program called, Explorers, where students can prepare themselves to become police officers. I hear the Fire Department is attempting to reach out more to increase diversity and Interfaith Council of churches is developing ways for people to break down this adversarial conversation between citizens and police officers.

While attending a block watch meeting, I heard a city council officer claim that human trafficking is not an issue in Toledo, but an issue on the toll road

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Candidates... continued from page 10

I-80 and I-90. I disagree with that statement, in order to deal with human trafficking, we must connect more with law enforcement to understand what the signs of human trafficking are in our neighborhoods. This can happen at block watch meetings. It's important that our neighborhoods are a part of the solution in this problem.

If elected, I would address our water system. The water system should be interconnected, so the suburbs who don't trust us can feed us water and vice versa. I would focus on neighborhoods, fixing the streets and houses, making neighborhoods safer, and encouraging kids to become homeowners and job holders. This will keep people and commerce in the community. I would also make sure that special interest doesn't move our views. City council spends money and makes laws, but I would make sure that those two functions don't always address special interest but the community at large."

June Boyd, candidate District 4

"District 4 is a part of downtown Toledo, so I am interested in the development of downtown Toledo. Let's not forget that downtown is also a neighborhood because residents live there too. Even if you think that the elimination of the free lunch parking is a bad idea, we need the money to improve the neighborhoods. Take a moment to look at the central city. There is a lot of crime and is the only neighborhood that doesn't have businesses like Little Caesar's Pizza, a sports mall, and so many different things. If there are tax dollars, we need to share those with every neighborhood but especially the central city.

Everything that is going on in this country, including cities and towns are a matter of black and white. Let's talk about the white police officer that shot the black man in his living room, it was on the news. One of the key witnesses, a young African-American man was murdered. So, there is a problem. I want to encourage the word respect. I would like to see more of your young men and women join these local police force, but you must stay away from drugs and clean. There isn't enough of that being done. Traditionally we used to have Caucasian fathers, sons, and uncles on the police force. I was around when they used to write dirty and racist things on the walls. It's up to us as parents and grandparents to start teaching these children if you want to become a cop, you must keep yourself clean.

Stephanie Eichenberg, incumbent Toledo Public School board

"It is important that we are reviewing our own safety forces that are hired for the schools. We want to make sure that they have the training and building relationships inside the school buildings with students. The safety officers that we have are a diverse workforce, and I think that is a critical piece because relationship building with teenagers is important. I will never experience the fear that people have talked about and can't pass any judgement on that. I hope that there are things that we can do to educate our officers, one training that was conducted covered implicit biases.

We're fortunate to have the teacher of the year who still passionate about the topic of human trafficking, and teachers' others in the district. She is focusing on reaching higher risk students by getting the word out to lower risk students. We have health centers at two schools and mental health services also offered, that is an important piece that allows us to screen signs of human trafficking. It is about grooming, who's associating with our students, and even dealing with bad situations at home. It's important for those who interact and care about our teens to know the signs, it's important to have those safe spaces like the health center where a student can ask for help. They can receive support during the school day and when they go home.



Tom Puffenberger, Shaun Strong, June Boyd

I agree with Ms. Barnes that we need to offer wrap-around services to our students. I was at Rogers high school visiting and saw children in the clinic waiting room. I was worried about why the children were there, but than I saw the mother. When mom is sick the entire home is sick, kids need to get to school. We were able to provide health services to that family so mom can get better. If our families aren't successful and we aren't offering these wrap-around services than we might not be able to help our children. I would like to see health services and mental health services grow. We have even partners with OhioMeansJobs to ensure that parents have opportunities to apply for jobs that are available. We also need to improve our graduation rate, this is our number one deliverable. We do have some fledgling initiatives within TPS including the Student Voice, and Diversity and Inclusion. I would like to see both become permanent and thrive in our district. We need to hear and listen to our students and know what's going on. We also need to make sure we're delivering cultural relevant curriculum for our students and trainings for our staff."

Shaun Strong, candidate District 1

"Community policing is one issue that I brought up to the police union. We should have community policing. Officers should live in the neighborhoods that they patrol instead of the suburbs. When they live in the neighborhoods that they patrol, officers get to know their neighborhoods better, there is less aspersions on both sides, and property values may increase. Both sides will say that I don't have to fear you because you live down the street. They will begin to come together, and crime reduction. People won't try to break in a property if they knew a cop lived in that neighborhood. Stereotypes will decrease, and fear barriers broken down.

Elected representatives should enact the people's will. I want to canvass, hold town hall events, and ask what they think about issues that are presented before city council. Once I hear back, it is my job to return to city council and decide based on what the people want.

I would like to make sure that there are functioning block watch group and neighborhood organizations, because they are two separate things. A neighborhood organization has the options to apply for a 501c3 and solicit dollars for neighborhood improvements in their area and are tax deductible to individual donors. There are several neighborhood organizations within District 1 and ask each neighborhood which they prefer a block watch or neighborhood organization. When a neighborhood has both organizations within a District,

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Candidates... continued from page 11

the neighbors can come together and realize they have more similarities than differences. They will become more committed to local government and local issues with an increase in participation. I would also like to work on an affordable housing plan, where people with jobs can own a house instead of renting a house. If you're able to afford the house, you'll have fewer issues with landlords, dumping, or tenant evictions. Monroe Street has a great neighborhood plan and I'm excited about it. There are so many people who want to own their own company but may not know how to write a business plan or seek grants. I want to partner with organizations like the library, because we're better when we work together. I want to teach them how to apply for grants or business plans to receive the funds to start their own business or organization. These businesses or organizations can then hire the community and decrease unemployment."

Vallie Bowman English, current Clerk of Courts

"I plan to increase technology in electronic records, this will make the court paperless. The supreme court requires that certain files are kept by the court for up to 50 years. There can be 100,000 cases that come through the courts every year, we don't have a building capacity to keep those records on site. We must pay for offsite storage and would like to make those records completely electronic. That would allow me to decrease the cost of storage, so I can increase the pay of the workers at municipal court. It is hard for me to compete for a workforce, when people can make more money per hour working at Five Guys or Sam's Club. The records that we deal with are so important to our community, but we don't value our workers enough to pay them a competitive salary. I would also like to increase access to the courts. There are people in the community who believe the court is inaccessible, like the attorneys or advice. I would like to continue to encourage people by encouraging them to take care of these things on their own. There is rent escrow, and even small claims court. I have placed that information on our website, so people have great accessibility."

Tom Puffenberger, candidate Municipal Court judge

"Judicial candidates cannot talk about issues. There are three things I would like to do with the court. I would like to save the court money by cutting down on court appearances. People may have to come to court six times before their case is resolved, but I would like to change that with just offering a pre-trial and a trial. It will cut down on the number of court resources. I would have to check with our current Clerk of Court, but I would like to see our courts offer digital notices on cases instead of sending people mail. Why not send a text message or email? That alone will cut down on court costs and missed court

appearances. I would like to put that money towards resources to help curve the opioid crisis going on right now. It's one of our biggest issues going on right now in our city and extends to every area of the city right now. I am not an expert in the opioid crisis, but I know that people are. I would like to divert those resources that we're saving at the court to hiring more experts and providing more programs for people who know what they are doing in that area. The third thing I want to provide is a domestic violence docket, it may not be feasible in common pleas court. One problem we can help through a specialized docket is a domestic violence docket, it's done in Cleveland where there are experts trained on how to deal with domestic violence."

Sheena Barnes, candidate Toledo Public Schools board

"The reopening and renovation of the new Mott Library and Main Branch Library are beautiful because I work with economically disadvantaged youth who don't have computers at home and may not understand how to research. Providing accessibility to that demographic is amazing. We have events going on in downtown Toledo that we are overlooking because we want free lunchtime parking. Even though it is important to some folks but look at all the development that we are gaining that is benefiting our young people."

When we're talking about harassment from the police, we also need to talk about trauma that affects the youth. An organization had a forum with police officers and youth. One of the officers that looked like us that if you don't dress like this or behavior like this than you won't get harassed. That statement bothered me, as a community member who advocates for youth and a parent. I have an eleven-year-old who was riding his bike in the new neighborhood that we moved into by the police. Let's be honest when we're talking about police. It may even be uncomfortable for some folks. Let's be honest about the tone that Officer Amber's trial has set for African-Americans. I agree that we need classes and education for the police officers. Officers should not have demands from our youth when they are addressing them in community forums. These officers should learn how to listen to our youth. I work with some amazing young people, and they still achieve."

I volunteer as a sexual assault victim outreach worker. We need to start having honest classes, education about sexual health, healthy relationships, and body respect. Human trafficking continues because people think it's a white man in a van who is kidnapping kids. However, statistics say, it's really girlfriends, boyfriends, and friends of students that are recruiters. The youngest person that I have seen personally was fifteen years old and conditioned because she was human trafficked. Human trafficking victims are male and females, sexual workers and migrant workers. It's not just the white girl in the shorts, but the African-American male who's cleaning kitchens."

I was shocked when I attended my last few school board members, because I

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Six: You are at a park with your two girls when you see two police officers approaching you. You nervously wonder what this is about to be. The cops say that two women reported that there is a black man chasing around two little girls who are screaming.

You tell the cops that those two girls are your kids and you are playing hide and seek. The officers tell you to get on your knees so they can cuff you, but you resist saying that you have done nothing wrong. You reach inside your coat for your picture ID showing that you are an assistant professor at Toledo University. Bad move! One officer thinks he saw a butt of a gun and fires three shots. One hit

their mark.

Moral of the story: Do not go to public places and make fun with your kids. It can be very dangerous.

Seven: Your brother is accused of shoplifting by a store security detective. You are across the store floor but start to come to the scene of the incident. The cop tries to put your brother in a choke hold and you protest and struggle to free your brother, but you do not touch the cop. The cop yells and the other store cop comes over and shoots you thinking you were trying to reach for the detective gun. Moral of the story: Whenever possible, shop alone.

Eight: You are in your backyard listening to a ballgame. Suddenly, a person runs into your yard being chased by three police officers. You sit there and wonder what is going on!

You get up and go into the house to get your cellphone to record to what is happening. When

you return and raise the camera up, one of the cop yells, "Gun!" You wake up later in a hospital with no feeling from your neck on down. Moral of the story:

It is better to listen to sport programming inside a house...not outside.

As you can see, police can and will invent practically any excuse to use deadly force when other least drastic means are available to the officer to defuse the situation.

But these cops seemingly would rather rely upon deadly force than engage themselves into a fray so that innocent lives are not lost.

What does all this mean? Simple: Any confrontation with police can be a deadly encounter and for reasons that you had nothing to do with. Remedy? Demand how police are taught at the academy on the use of deadly force and other means of control that do not involve your family meeting with members of The Day Funeral Home.

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Sweet Taste of Liberty: A True Story of Slavery and Restitution in America by W. Caleb McDaniel

By Terri Schlichenmeyer

The Truth Contributor

Home Sweet Home.

Be it ever so humble, there's no place like it. It's where your family is, where you hang your coat, where you keep your stuff. Even the word "home" equals safety and comfort, and in the new book *Sweet Taste of Liberty* by W. Caleb McDaniel, getting home could mean payback, too.

For many years, Zebulon Ward bragged about being "the last American... to pay for a slave," but that wasn't quite true.

He paid her, not for her, and Harriet Wood made sure he did.

Born in a small town in northern Kentucky, Wood guessed that she entered the world in 1818 or 1820, but no one knew for sure. Moses Tousey owned her then and when he died in 1834 after a series of misfortunes, she was sold to a Louisville man named Henry Forsyth. She toiled two years for him, and when Forsyth's business fell on hard times, he sold Wood to William Cirode, a French immigrant who was living "a version of the American dream."

Cirode purchased Wood in Lexington and, because he was "restless," he moved to New Orleans shortly afterward, taking her with him. Although he seemed to prosper there for a time, Cirode found himself in dire financial troubles in early 1844, so he abandoned his family and sailed to France. His wife, Jane, took the slaves she'd retained and returned to Kentucky, and then she took Wood to Ohio, which was a free state.

Agreements between Kentucky and Ohio meant that Harriet Wood was still a slave until Jane Cirode freed her, which happened at some point in 1848. Finally, Wood was free and she had the papers to prove it.

c.2019
Oxford University Press
\$27.95 / \$30.95 Canada
340 pages

She didn't have them with her, though, when Zebulon Ward conspired to kidnap her and take her to market to sell back into slavery. The papers never surfaced during a lawsuit challenging Ward's ownership of Wood. She didn't have them when he sold her down the river to Natchez.

And for 17 years, she burned at what he'd done...

Don't be surprised if, as you're reading *Sweet Taste of Liberty*, you begin to feel rather overwhelmed. There's a lot going on inside this book.

The names, firstly, may cause you to page back and forth to remember who's who; that this is a highly-peopled account is only a part of the issue, never mind the similarity of some surnames. You'll truly have to take your time here – which you won't wish to do, since it's a story you'll want to gobble up.

Author W. Caleb McDaniel tells a breathless tale with an ominously dark feel through many of its pages, because the monsters here were real. Yes, it's a complicated tale that races from north to south, but the righteous audacity that ultimately occurred in Ohio in 1870 makes it worthwhile, fist-pumping, and satisfying.

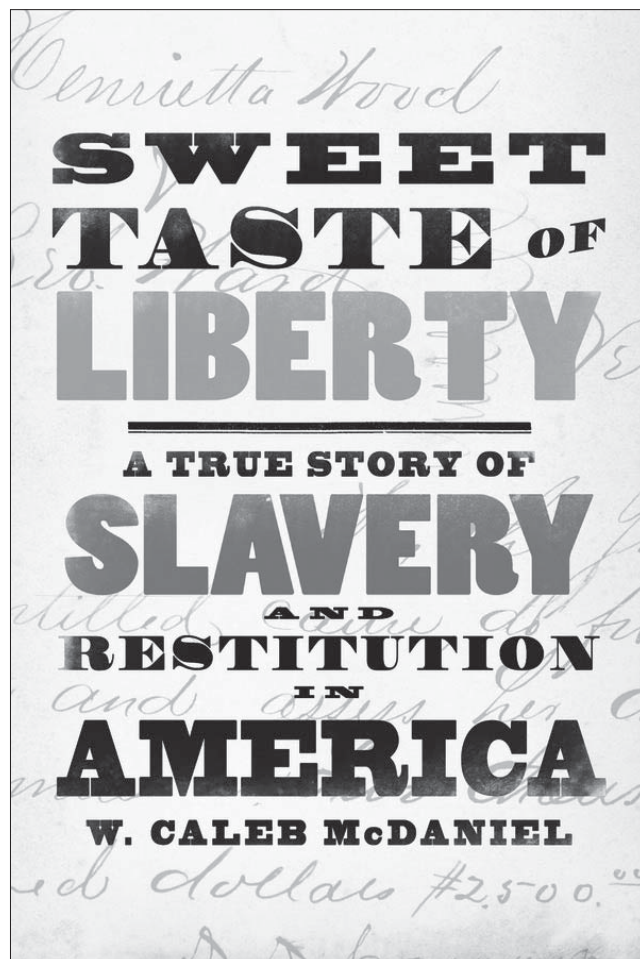
Historians, of course, will want *Sweet Taste of Liberty*. Feminists shouldn't miss it. Folks with an opinion on reparations should find it. All of you will want to take it home.

Candidates... continued from page 12

was only one of a few parents in attendance. The school board meeting where the Lady Rams received their award was standing room only, but afterwards everyone cleared out. We are involved when we want to be involved. School board meetings are at 5:30pm, when most parents get off work at 5:00pm. The question is are we providing that opportunity for parent involvement when that occurs. Let's use technology and smart phones, incorporating live streams. Why not video record teachers during their lunch break for ten minutes if they have a matter or topic to discuss for the school board meeting, instead of asking them to work all day and then attend the school board meeting. We could look at holding meetings on the weekends because I see parents at City League games, and Smith Park. There is parent involvement.

As a proud TPS mom and advocate I am willing to work on communication, equity and wrap-around services in TPS schools. I should know more than four days in advance, which school my child will attend in the fall. There should be equity, so every child feels welcomed in our schools. These students should feel restricted because of their zip code, race or gender identify. There should also be wrapped around services and connections with community resources. These things are needed to move us further along and higher education for all. Increase teachers, para-professional, and minority para-professionals."

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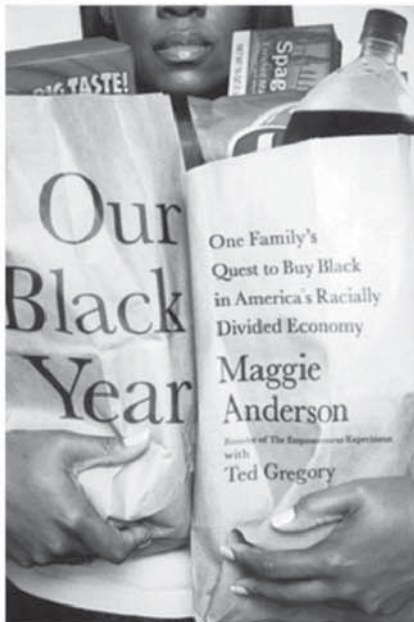
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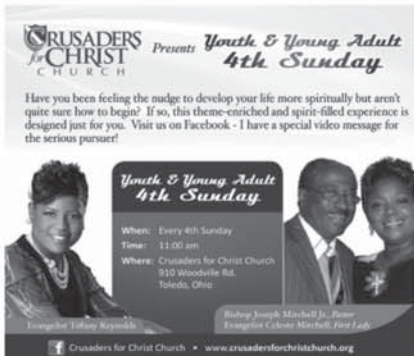
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Time: 11:00 am
Where: Crusaders for Christ Church, 910 Woodville Rd., Toledo, Ohio

Imagined: LaShay Reynolds

Bishop Joseph Mitchell Jr., Pastor
Evangelist Collette Mitchell, First Lady

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CLASSIFIEDS

October 23, 2019

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NOTICE TO BIDDERS

SEALED PROPOSALS for bidding on **Metroparks Toledo - Wabash Cannonball Trail North Fork Extension, Fulton County, Ohio** will be received; opened; and read aloud at the Metropolitan Park District of the Toledo Area, Fallen Timbers Field Office, 6101 Fallen Timbers Lane, Maumee, Ohio 43537 **Friday, November 15, 2019 at 3:00 p.m.** local time.

THE SCOPE OF WORK consists of construction of a 12 foot, 6.14 miles long multi-use trail along the abandoned Wabash Railroad from State Route 109 to the Lucas County line including railing upgrades on a bridge over Swan Creek. General construction includes earthwork, erosion control, aggregate base, asphalt pavement, wooden guardrail, pavement markings, signage, mulching and seeding. Bidders may obtain copies of plans, specifications, contract documents and plan-holder's list through Newfax Corporation, 333 West Woodruff, Toledo, Ohio 43604 between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Tuesday (check made payable to Newfax Corporation) or via the Newfax Digital Plan Room at www.newfaxcorp.com. Newfax can be contacted at 419-241-5157 or 800-877-5157. A non-refundable fee of \$40 is required for each set of full-size documents obtained. For additional information, please contact Jon Zvanovec @ 419-360-9184, jon.zvanovec@metroparkstoledo.com.

EACH BIDDER MUST FURNISH either (1) a bond for the full amount of the bid or (2) a certified check, cashier's check or irrevocable letter of credit in an amount equal to ten percent (10%) of the bid with its bid. The successful bidder must furnish a 100 percent (100%) Performance Bond and a 100 percent (100%) Labor and Materials Bond.

The bidder must be an Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) pre-qualified contractor. Pre-qualification status must be in force at the time of bid, at the time of award, and through the life of the construction contract.

The Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) goal for this project is minimum seven percent (7%).

No bidder may withdraw its bid within thirty (30) days after the actual date of the opening thereof.

THE BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS OF THE METROPOLITAN PARK DISTRICT OF THE TOLEDO AREA reserves the right to reject any or all bids, and to waive any informality in bidding.

By order of the Board of Park Commissioners
METROPOLITAN PARK DISTRICT OF THE TOLEDO AREA

David D. Zenk, Director

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NOTICE TO BIDDERS

SEALED PROPOSALS for bidding on **Metroparks Toledo - Wildwood Resurfacing** will be received; opened; and read aloud at the Metropolitan Park District of the Toledo Area, Fallen Timbers Field Office, 6101 Fallen Timbers Lane, Maumee, Ohio 43537 **Friday, November 8, 2019 at 3:00 p.m.** local time.

THE SCOPE OF WORK consists of removal and replacement of approximately 59,645 square feet of asphalt pavement with ground tire rubber modified asphalt. General construction includes modest demolition, pavement planing, modified asphalt paving, pavement marking, and concrete walks. Bidders may obtain copies of plans, specifications, contract documents and plan-holder's list through Newfax Corporation, 333 West Woodruff, Toledo, Ohio 43604 between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday (check made payable to Newfax Corporation) or via the Newfax Digital Plan Room at www.newfaxcorp.com. Newfax can be contacted at 419-241-5157 or 800-877-5157. A non-refundable fee of \$15 is required for each set of full-size documents obtained. For additional information, please contact Jon Zvanovec @ 419-360-9184, jon.zvanovec@metroparkstoledo.com.

EACH BIDDER MUST FURNISH either (1) a bond for the full amount of the bid or (2) a certified check, cashier's check or irrevocable letter of credit in an amount equal to ten percent (10%) of the bid with its bid. The successful bidder must furnish a 100 percent (100%) Performance Bond and a 100 percent (100%) Labor and Materials Bond.

No bidder may withdraw its bid within thirty (30) days after the actual date of the opening thereof.

THE BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS OF THE METROPOLITAN PARK DISTRICT OF THE TOLEDO AREA reserves the right to reject any or all bids, and to waive any informality in bidding.

By order of the Board of Park Commissioners
METROPOLITAN PARK DISTRICT OF THE TOLEDO AREA

David D. Zenk, Executive Director

CHURCH CUSTODIAN

First Church of God has an immediate opening for a Church Custodian who has the basic knowledge and skills to perform daily duties consistent with the maintenance and general upkeep of the church facility. This includes routine tasks anywhere from daily in-house cleaning to minor repairs. Those interested please contact the church office at 419-255-0097

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

The Mental Health & Recovery Services Board of Lucas County (MHR SB) is issuing a Request for Proposals for a demonstration grant, and is seeking to fund innovative approaches to Assisted Outpatient Treatment services and/or prevention programming in targeted zip code areas. Proposals are to be delivered no later than 5:00 p.m. on November 20, 2019. All questions should be submitted to crs@lcmhrsb.org by November 18, 2019. Details regarding the project deliverables and submission criteria are located on the MHR SB's website: <http://www.lcmhrsb.org/publicnotice/>.

CUSTODIAN/CLERK/COURIER - PART TIME

WGTE Public Media seeks a responsible and reliable person for a part-time (approximately 20 hours per week) custodial, mail processing, courier and general maintenance. Previous experience needed providing basic building maintenance services: electrical such as changing light bulbs and ballasts, repairing outlets and switches, etc.; and plumbing such as repairing/changing faucets, toilet repair, cleaning drains, etc. Must have valid driver's license and be able to work days. Send your letter and résumé to: Human Resources, 1270 South Detroit Ave, Toledo, OH 43614, or employment@wgte.org. EOE/AD

ATTENTION AFRICAN AMERICAN VENDORS!

Join us for the 2nd Annual REAL BLACK FRIDAY TOLEDO! Black Business Expo. If you are an African American owned business looking to market your products or services to HUNDREDS of customers, register today to be a vendor at the largest Black Business Expo in Northwest Ohio.

The REAL BLACK FRIDAY TOLEDO! Black Business Expo is conveniently located within the central city of Toledo at The New Life Center on the campus of Bethlehem Baptist Church. This attractive, secure, one-level building offers 7,000 square Ft. of opportunity for vendors to have a wonderful and interactive experience with convenient and easy to access parking. The event is inside and will take place come rain or shine!

The event will take place November 29, 2019, from 11:00am until 5:00pm. Early bird registration is open now and you can take advantage of a 25% discount on the purchase of your table until September 27, 2019. Tables are limited, so don't miss out on this opportunity to sell on the hottest shopping day of the year.

Visit www.ivinstitute.org to register.

50 Years of Grace Community Center's Service to Toledo Central City

Sojourner's Truth Staff

In 1969, under the auspices of the United Church of Christ, Betty Amison opened the doors to the Grace Community Center. This past week end, on October 19, 2019, the Grace Community Center staff, along with its board of directors, community members and supporters, commemorated the organization's 50th Anniversary with a celebration at the First Church of God recognizing some key moments and the important accomplishments of some notable figures in Grace's history.

First and foremost, there is Betty Amison, without whom there would be no Grace Community Center. Amison founded the agency and led it for 42 years, until her retirement in 2011 and she is still active in the Grace Community Center neighborhood.

In 1977, Amison led the agency into the United Way family of social service agencies, allowing the hiring of additional staff and increasing the programming. In 1984, a successful capital fund drive raised the money to build a community center which stand in operation today.

Also, during her years, she established a neighborhood school (the Collingwood Learning Center); created the "Homemakers Program" cultivating carpentry skills in unemployed women and rehabbing homes in the Fulton Street neighborhood; established an Adopt a School program which evolved into today's Partners in Education program; established a personal leadership program for women called "Getting Ahead" which enabled dozens of local residents to set personal and business goals; revitalized the Toledo Olde Towne Community Organization, started a summer feeding program; established a summertime Educamp program and started the ever-popular Afro Ball for junior high youth.

Others recognized during the evening's program were current director Elaine Page, who assumed leadership of the agency in 2011 upon Amison's retire-



Grace Executive Director Elaine Page and Board Chairman Bryce Harbaugh



Councilman Larry Sykes and Juanita Greene

ment; Jay Shavers, the current youth director and facilities manager; Kathy Placzewicz, the longest serving board member and Mattie McAlister, the longstanding education director.

The keynote address was delivered by U.S. Congresswoman Marcy Kaptur who has been instrumental, over the years, in working with the agency to get some of those positive results – such as the Homemakers Program and the Getting Ahead program, to name a few.

Today, according to Harbaugh, the agency offers programs and services specifically designed to strengthen families, along with year-round education and social development programs for young people. There are also a variety of family case management, employment and career development training, youth leadership and numerous recreational programs.

During her eight-year tenure, Page has established a 10,000 square-foot coop garden, established an annual series of neighborhood gatherings and expanded partnerships supporting the provision of services at the Center.

The work of the Grace Center is family focused, striving to create self-sufficiency. The staff is dedicated to preserving the neighborhood, promoting the building and renovation of homes and ensuring safe streets and community cohesion.



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Katrina Barnhill



Betty Amison

