

# The *Sojourner's* Truth

Volume 60, No. 6

*"And Ye Shall Know The Truth..."*

March 11, 2020

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## Linnie Willis Gets Her Degree - 50 Years Later



University of Mississippi Provost Noel Wilkin Hands Linnie Willis Her Long Overdue Diploma

# TOLEDO CHILDREN DESERVE

(HIGH-QUALITY)

## PRE-K

Transforming Our Kids and Our Community



### Why Pre-K is Important for Toledo's Children

According to the Ohio Kindergarten Readiness Assessment, only 18% of Toledo children enter TPS ready to learn. Too many of Toledo's approximately 4,000 4-year-olds are not enrolled in Pre-K programs that result in successful kindergarten readiness. Factors such as highly trained, compensated and supported teachers, evidence-based curriculum, six hours of enriched learning time per day, routine developmental assessments and low teacher-child ratios, all play an important role in a child's early learning and development. They help ensure children will grow, thrive and be ready to succeed in kindergarten and beyond.

For the child, the first few years are when their brains are developing at a rapid pace. In fact, studies show that from birth to age five, a child's brain develops more rapidly than any other time in life. During this time, a child's cognitive and social development is forming—they learn how to share, how to wait their turn, how to form relationships. They learn how to manage their impulses, emotions and behavior. And they should be introduced to language, reading and math.

There are challenges to offering the kind of high-quality Pre-K our kids deserve. The kind our educators know they need to provide to prepare our children for kindergarten. The kind defined as a 3-star or better rating in the Ohio Step Up to Quality (SUTQ) system.

We know that many of our Pre-K providers are trying to offer the high-quality programming our children deserve, but they simply don't have the budget or other resources needed to increase their SUTQ rating. And, with nearly 40% of our 4-year-olds living under the federal poverty level, many families cannot afford the going rate of tuition-based preschool—even with government funding that helps defray these costs.

When we don't provide high-quality learning experiences prior to age five, we've lost perhaps the greatest opportunity to lay the foundation for a child's success in kindergarten and beyond. A foundation that ultimately sets them up for a successful career and life.

**"Providing a high-quality early childhood education for our youngest citizens is essential for their educational success. Research has consistently shown that these early years hold the greatest potential for optimal cognitive and social development, resulting in long-term positive outcomes. When we invest in our community's children through education, we are investing in a strong future for our next generation."**

**Elisa A. Huss-Hage**

Professor, Teacher Education and Human Services  
Owens Community College

**"Most of us as parents remember our children began asking question after question around age 3-4. They talked and wanted to know about everything. Imagine a setting for all 4-year-olds in our community learning and developing with high educational standards that will prepare them for a life-long learning journey—that's universal Pre-K!"**

**Lisa McDuffie**

President/CEO, YWCA Northwest Ohio

### What Early Childhood Learning Means for the Community

#### DOLLARS INVESTED IN PRE-K PAY DIVIDENDS IN WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT.

According to the Washington Center for Economic Growth, "Pre-K programs are among the most effective public investments. For every \$1 invested in early childhood education, there is up to \$8.90 returned to the community." Over half of the nation's largest cities, and every other major city in Ohio, now have publicly funded Pre-K programs.

The United States Department of Education, in *A Matter of Equity: Preschool in America* (April, 2015), noted that "studies show that children who attend high-quality preschool programs are less likely to need special education services and be held back a grade

level. They are also more likely to graduate from high school, attend college and have successful careers." In addition, there is a direct correlation between poverty, crime and lack of educational attainment.

Unfortunately, there are currently 13,992 children (from birth to age 5) in Lucas County who are living below the poverty line. High-quality early childhood education helps break generational poverty and transforms communities. Kids who attend high-quality early childhood education programs throughout their youngest years, and in particular attend Pre-K, are more likely to succeed throughout their educational career.

**"No matter a person's age, relationships matter. A high-quality Pre-K experience is important for children so they experience life with others. Skills such as communicating, problem solving, listening, disagreeing, persevering, valuing self and others, thinking, deciding and caring will be capabilities that will be with them forever."**

**Karen L. McCoy, PhD**

President, Toledo Day Nursery

**"Investing in the education and success of young children is critical to the well-being of every community. Well educated children become well educated adults. Simply put, education leads to a higher quality of life. A life that generates social and economic prosperity...not only for the individual, but for the community as a whole."**

**Dr. Raymond Witte**

Dean, Judith Herb College of Education  
University of Toledo

**It is time for Toledo to join the other major cities in Ohio and throughout the nation that have provided high-quality Pre-K to all of their children. We owe it to Toledo's children. Pre-K will pay big dividends not only for them, but for the future of our community.**

**ON MARCH 17<sup>TH</sup>, VOTE ISSUE 1**

Learn more at [prektoledo.com](http://prektoledo.com).



# The Power Behind the Throne

By Lafe Tolliver, Esq

Guest Column

This is a letter to all political historians and those whom in the past have been dismissive of the power and reach of the so called, "Black Vote."

If you had been watching the saga of former Vice President Joe Biden being pummeled about by the media talking heads and nay-sayers commenting that Joe was a dead man walking and he was a, "has been" and his time had come and gone, take a breather.

If anything is certain in politics, it is that nothing is certain. The good die young. The old become new. Up is down and down is up. Everyone's collard greens ain't good and all chocolates are not made equal.

With that said, Joe Biden is the new definition of the Phoenix, the mythical bird that arises out of the ashes of defeat and ignominy and flies once again to touch the sun.

After Joe was seemingly knocked out and on the canvas in the Iowa and New Hampshire and Nevada primaries, Joe staggered to his feet in South Carolina and took a heavy dose of smelling salts and went back into the ring, bloodied but unbowed.

But wait! There is more! Who was Joe's cornerman, his cutman? Who was the dignified political giant who got up from his ringside seat and quieted the raucous crowd and told everyone who would listen that Joe, his Joe was his friend and Joe, his Joe was a good man.

What black politico made history for the ages when he took his cape or mantle of authority and stage presence and laid it across the bruised shoulders of this white prize fighter named Joe Biden?

Who went to mat for Joe Biden on principles of who is fair and deserving of the all important "Black Vote" in South Carolina?

That's right! It was Congressman James (Jim) Clyburn who answered the bell for Joe Biden and by the sheer magnitude of his stature acquired by decades of public service and his reputation as a civil rights icon in the South, it was Clyburn who singlehandedly turned the tide for Joe.

Make no mistake about it and do not be fooled by any political gibberish that would diminish the 10,000 volts of political power that Clyburn zapped into Joe Biden's flagging career.

It was James Clyburn who tore off his own shirt and underneath that shirt was the SUPERMAN costume that not many politicians are entitled to or are even able to wear with any clout or deserved right.

James Clyburn is one of those giants in politics who can wear the SUPERMAN costume with agility and grace and Clyburn was willing to share that power and confer on Joe Biden with steely determination, that Joe was the best candidate for the White House.

When future politicians look back on the events of February 2020, the most singular and momentous event that shook the walls of the White House, will be James Clyburn anointing Joe Biden as the titular head of the Democratic Party and the next occupant of the Oval Office.

Because of the seismic tremors that Clyburn set in motion, Joe Biden gobbled up most of the Super Tuesday states in an astonishing fashion (winning 10 of 14) leaving the dumbfounded Bernie Sanders' camp grasping for answers about what hit them.

James Clyburn hit them, that's who! Make no doubt about it. James Clyburn caused Joe Biden to win in North Carolina and in the other Super Tuesday states because Clyburn's voice and affirmation of Joe Biden resonated in those other states.

Without a second thought, it was a black man, James Clyburn, who turned the political tide for Joe Biden and practically, single handedly guaranteed that Joe Biden goes on to the Oval Office next year.

My only hope is that Joe Biden, realizing what his friend did for him in his moment of acute crisis, will show his gratitude and praise by implementing policies that directly and positively affect the aspirations of minority communities across the country.

In my humble opinion, James (Jim) Clyburn should be sitting on the shoulders of Joe Biden when he enters the White House and speaking into his ear, names of those persons who should occupy



Rep. James Clyburn

positions of power in the White House and in engineering legislation that will benefit the country as a whole and black people specifically.

Without a Jim, there would be no Joe.

Contact Lafe Tolliver at [tolliver@Juno.com](mailto:tolliver@Juno.com)

## Honor Black History Month by EXERCISING YOUR RIGHT TO VOTE!

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*2020 Census Invitations Arrive March 12-20*

Ninety-five percent or about 143 million households in the country will receive an initial invitation to respond to the 2020 Census in their mailboxes between March 12 and 20. The U.S. Census Bureau released informational copies today of the invitations, the enclosed materials, and the subsequent reminders households will receive. These materials can help the public know what to expect and avoid potential scams.

Households are encouraged to respond when they receive their invita-

tion. Depending on how likely the area is to respond online, households will receive either an invitation encouraging them to respond online or by phone (about 112 million households), or an invitation along with a paper questionnaire (about 31 million households).

All invitations will include a short phrase in English and 12 additional languages inviting people to respond online or by phone in their language. In areas where 20 percent or more of the households need Spanish assistance, the invitations will be in both English and Spanish.

All households receiving an invitation in the mail will receive a second letter in the mail shortly after reminding them to respond. Then, households that still haven't responded will receive a series of additional reminders, including a paper questionnaire in mid-April. Census takers will follow up with households that don't respond to collect responses in person.

**GLASS CITY GRIND**

State Rep. Lisa Sobecki (D-Toledo) highlighted flaws with the current State Report Card and why we need fair school funding during a community meeting on Monday, March 2 at the Cohn-Weissenberger Legion Hall in Toledo, Ohio.

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"The current State Report Card is flawed and does not accurately reflect the hard work and dedication of our school staff, teachers, and students. It unfairly paints schools that are doing a great job at educating our kids as failing," said state Rep. Sobecki. "Instead, our State Report Card should be changed in order to truly inform parents about the great things happening in our public schools."

## Rep. Sobecki Highlights State Report Card Flaws

*Makes case for fair school funding during community meeting*

In addition to presenting about the State Report Card, Rep. Sobecki invited Rep. John Patterson (D-Jefferson) and Rep. Bob Cupp (R-Lima), as well as Perrysburg Superintendent Tom Hosler, Washington Local School Board Member Mark Hughes, and Toledo Public School Board Member Sheena Barnes, to talk about the importance of adopting a fair school funding formula. Reps. Patterson and Cupp are joint sponsors of House Bill 305, currently pending in the House Finance Committee, which would overhaul K-12 Education Funding in Ohio.

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\* Joan Lunden, journalist, best-selling author, former host of Good Morning America and senior living advocate.



# City Leaders Make the Case for Issue 1

By Fletcher Word

Sojourner's Truth Editor

Issue 1 will raise the city income tax for Toledoans to 2.75 percent if approved by voters on the March 17 ballot. City leaders have spent the past several weeks urging voters to support the measure and gathering like-minded individuals and organizations to help them make the point.

"Issue 1 will ask citizens to make an investment in themselves," said Mayor Wade Kapszukiewicz during a press conference at Savage Park last week.

The mayor addressed what the additional funds will mean for the city's infrastructure.

"We will resurface 70 miles of road, every year, for a decade," he said of the annual increase in road repair – an increase from the current average of five miles a year. He also addressed the rumors that such an increase would not necessarily go to the infrastructure.

"They are incorrect," he said noting that the Issue 1 approval would require that most of the funds go to roads. "A yes vote will require that most money must be spent on roads."

There are, however, some other notable benefits to be gained from an increased income tax according to the mayor and the other past and present elected officials who spoke at Savage Park.

City pools can remain open from Memorial Day to Labor Day, the city will have six times its current money to spend on youth recreation programming and there will be "funding to help fix the scourge of lead paint," Kapszukiewicz added stressing the importance of the added investment in "our children and our neighborhoods."

...continued on page 6



# Love and Support

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

The Truth Contributor

*Romance without finance  
don't stand a chance.*

- Traditional Folk Saying



To me, it is a no-brainer. There should always be a willingness to support that which we love. Too often, however, we claim a love of country or city but are not willing to support it financially.

Issue 1, authorizes the City of Toledo, Ohio to increase the local income tax from 2.25 percent to 2.75 percent for 10 years beginning July 1, 2020 through December 31, 2030. The revenue from the tax would be leveraged in the bond market to generate approximately \$660 million to upgrade our neglected residential roads and \$220 million to be allocated to "improve emergency services, parks and recreation, and pre-kindergarten education."

Below are the relevant details of this "must-support" income tax measure which is on the March 17, 2020 ballot.

**Improve Residential Roads:** Toledo's roads have been left to deteriorate as a result of funding streams that we used to rely on from the State of Ohio's budget. Central city residential streets have declined disproportionately as, in the words of one unnamed politician talking about the need to raise taxes, "we've been pushed into this beggar's banquet where something falls off the table and then we all scrap each other for it, where the king is eating filet mignon and we're trying to pick up a French fry."

**Why it Matters:** The city was able to scrape enough funds to pave four miles of residential roadways in 2018 and a mere 1.6 miles in 2019. Should Issue 1 pass, the administration calculates that roughly \$660 million will be spent on roads over the course of 10 years. Thus 70 miles of residential roadways are expected to be paved per year rather than less than two miles.

**Universal Pre-K:** Approximately \$4 million per year will go towards universal pre-K and another \$6 million per year added from private industry. This investment helps young Toledoans enter school prepared to succeed and later become a valuable asset to themselves, their families and our community.

**Why it Matters:** Toledo, unlike many other municipalities of similar size, does not offer universal Pre-k at a time that 81 percent of children enter school lacking key elemental skills and are not kindergarten-ready. This communicates to our community that

...continued on page 6

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# Election Day Employment Opportunities

The Lucas County Board of Elections is in need of Election Day workers, and Precinct Election Officials (P.E.O.) for the March 17, 2020 Primary Election cycle. Every Election Day, thousands of Ohioans play an important role in our democracy by working for the Board of Elections. These Election Day workers and P.E.O.s work hard to ensure that their neighbors can vote with ease, while also helping to safeguard the process so that all Ohioans can have confidence in the results.

*Perryman... continued from page 5*

"children don't matter," and that young black and brown lives, in particular, are not valuable or of "no account."

**Safety Forces:** Since taking office, Mayor Wade Kapszukiewicz has sought to expand the police department with the intention of getting officers out of their cars and onto the streets interacting with people. The U.S. Justice Department guidelines recommend 25 officers for every 10,000 citizens. That means that there should be 725 officers in Toledo, far above our current staffing level. In addition to new personnel, we also desperately need new police cars, fire rigs and equipment for our safety forces.

**Why it Matters:** The most recent police and fire classes were the most diverse since 1983. Cleveland, Ohio's safety leadership has recently called Toledo to learn how they can also become more successful in recruiting a more diverse team of safety forces. In addition, passage of the tax measure propels us towards community policing, a model which improves police-community relations.

**Parks:** We have 130 parks in Toledo, and 83 percent of the current parks' budget goes towards grass cutting. Although recent investments at Wilson

Park are an exception, The City is only able to upgrade one or two basketball courts with the remainder of the budget.

**Why it Matters:** Wilson Park is only one of 130 throughout the city that has recently received major, regular improvements. However, with the passage of Issue 1, upgrades will take place in every single corner of the city.

**Neighborhood Stabilization:** The tax increase also promises to provide "neighborhood stabilization," a term that suggests the implementation of a financial strategy to counter the structural disinvestment that has occurred in the central city over the past several decades.

**Why it Matters:** In the past, the City's administrative leadership has responded to requests for investments in central city area (such as 43607) with pitiful claims of "We don't have the money." Should the measure succeed – and it cannot pass without black support – the minority community will be shouting "Where's ours?!" Although street paving is important, the investment in African-American wards will have to exceed that of street upgrades and include grants to minority businesses and other community development initiatives.

Issue 1, then, is an opportunity for the citizens of Toledo to invest in themselves. It enables us to create a community we want to live in and are "able to thrive in rather than merely survive." Most of all, passage of the tax shows that our city is one that we love.

Contact Rev. Donald Perryman, PhD, at [drdperryman@centerofhopebaptist.org](mailto:drdperryman@centerofhopebaptist.org)

*City Leaders... continued from page 5*

"I'm supportive," added Councilwoman Cecelia Adams, PhD. "I'm looking at what it can do in the parks and in education, especially preschool education – [the children] will be ready for school. This will help police, fire and roads. I'm supporting for what it does for the soul of the city – the parks."

"This is probably the most comprehensive levy I've seen in 20 years," said former State Rep. Michael Ashford. "This is different because it touches everyone – from pre-K on. It's a kitchen table issue and it's a standard of living issue. We have to afford it."

Also speaking in favor of the issue were Councilwoman Yvonne Harper, Micheal Alexander, secretary of the NAACP and businessman Blair Johnson.

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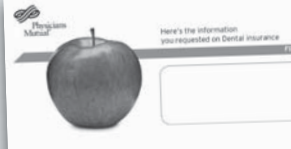
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# Fifty Years Later, Linnie Willis Finally Receives Her Diploma

By Fletcher Word

Sojourner's Truth Editor

Picture this! It's February, 1970 and a handful of college students walk across a stage, disrupt a performance by a nationally acclaimed group of performers by briefly facing the audience and thrusting their clenched fists into the air in a black power salute – a salute popularized several years earlier by Tommie Smith and John Carlos in the Mexico City Summer Olympics.

And the performers, the internationally renowned, multi-ethnic, Up With People, break into a rendition of "What Color Is God's Skin."

Off the students go, after that brief silent statement, out of the university's Fulton Chapel, into the Mississippi night air and into the waiting arms of ... ARMED state troopers?? Wait! The Mississippi Highway Patrol?

Yep! And then, some were taken into custody and hauled off to the Lafayette County Jail (the lucky ones) and, since capacity there was reached, some were taken to the infamous and very violent Parchman State Prison (the unlucky ones) to await bail and release.

In all, 89 students were arrested, the fifty or so who took part in the walk across the stage, and several dozen fellow travelers. Most of the students in the county jail were released after 24 hours, the ones in Parchman after 48 hours. The state dropped charges, but the University of Mississippi was not so forgiving. Eighty-one students were suspended for a day and placed on academic probation. Eight students, the ones who could be identified as ring leaders in the photographs, were expelled.

One of those eight students was Linnie Willis, now a long-time Toledo resident, former executive director of Lucas Metropolitan Housing Authority, current first lady of St. Paul Missionary Baptist Church and the lone senior among the group of eight.

Linnie Willis, formerly Linnie Liggins, was a "hometown girl," she says, having grown up not far from the Oxford, Mississippi campus of the state university and having witnessed, in her early teen years, the very famous integration of the campus by James Meredith in 1962.

After high school, Willis headed off to Tougaloo College. Her plans changed after her freshman year at Tougaloo when her grandmother talked

to her about transferring to Ole Miss.

"I would be the first in my family to graduate from college," she recalls. "And because I was a hometown girl, it does send a message. This was something I should do because I could do it."

When Willis arrived on the Oxford campus, she was one of about 200 black students, but such a number doesn't reflect the lack of interaction Willis would have over the next three years with people who looked like her. A number of those 200 were graduate students, the undergraduates were in different classes, different dorms and had different majors.

Willis had a black roommate, in an otherwise all-white dormitory. She rarely saw other black students in her classes or in the dining hall. A black student union was the way in which the students could meet, interact and,



Five of the Ole Miss 8 and their attorney at the time John Brittain: Front Row - Willis, Henrieese Roberts, Brittain; Back Row - Dr. Theron Evans, Attorney Kenneth Mayfield, Dr. Donald Cole

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Rev. James H. Willis Sr and First Lady Linnie Willis



Linnie Willis and Ole Miss Provost Noel Wilkin

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# UToledo Student Becomes First Black Editor-in-Chief of 52-Year-Old Law Review

*Special to The Truth*

Second-year law student Damon Williams made history as he was selected to be the next leader of The University of Toledo Law Review.

Williams will be the first black student to hold the prestigious position of editor-in-chief in the publication's 52-year history.

"I am extremely grateful for the opportunity that I have been afforded," Williams said. "Becoming the first editor-in-chief with African-American heritage is an amazing milestone, and I am beyond honored."

The law review, which was first published at the UToledo College of Law in 1969, is a student-run journal written by law professors, judges and students.

"I am delighted that Damon was selected as editor-in-chief of The University of Toledo Law Review," D. Benjamin Barros, dean of the College of Law, said. "He's exceptionally bright and will be an excellent leader. Although we wish this milestone would have happened sooner, his selection is encouraging as it reflects progress."

"This is but a step in, what I hope to be, a continuing process for The University of Toledo," Williams said. "I am striving to help foster subsequent diversity milestones and continued Law Review success, and I look forward to my future collaboration with community members."

Law review members are selected as editor-in-chief after a highly-competitive, in-depth interview process. The elections committee considers academic performance, writing ability as demonstrated by their academic writing and editing throughout the year, and leadership potential.

"From a technical perspective, Damon's formal yet graceful writing style and his superior academic performance made him a competitive candidate among his peers," said Lindsey Self, law student and the current editor-in-chief of The University of Toledo Law Review. "He demonstrates conviction in his vision for the journal but is unafraid to take calculated risks. Damon's writing and leadership demonstrate a unique balance between sensibility and



Damon Williams

practicality with inventiveness and ingenuity – a balance that is difficult to find in practice, let alone law school."

Williams, who also serves as president of the Black Law Students Association, was born and raised in Toledo. He earned his bachelor's degree in criminal justice and master's degree in forensic science at Bowling Green State University.

He hopes his law degree will help him facilitate the social and political changes he wants to see in the world. Although he is still figuring out his next steps, Williams is considering a federal clerkship or doctor of juridical science.

"This is much bigger than me alone," Williams said. "I have a fantastic executive board in Hayley Mise, Cameron Morrissey, Kate Murray and Morgan Isenberg. Their continued excellence and support are essential to the success of the law review. In addition, Lindsey Self has been a shining north star, guiding me toward the path to success."

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# Annual Toledo Chapter Coalition of Black Trade Unionist Banquet

By Tricia Hall

Sojourner's Truth Reporter

The 31st annual Black History Banquet was sponsored by the Toledo Chapter Coalition of Black Trade Unionists (CBTU) on Saturday, February 29 at the Radisson Hotel in Toledo.

Cheryl Folsom opened the banquet with a welcoming statement, then Anita Madison recognized all elected officials and labor leaders and Micheal Alexander led an invocation before dinner was served.

"I'm happy to see all my laborer brothers and sisters. We're here to share this moment with each of you," shared Folsom.

The banquet featured keynote speaker David Fleetwood, the business manager of Laborers' International Union of North America Local 500. In addition to his years of labor service, Fleetwood serves as an auditor to the Ohio

... continued on page 10



John Folsom, Sgt at Arms, Lenette Holden, Womens Committee Chair, Willie Hall, Board member, Sharon Roch, Membership



Anita Madison, Erika White, and Cheryl Tyler-Folsom



David and Michelle Fleetwood, Cheryl Folsom, Anita Madison, Erika White



Toledo CBTU officers and banquet honorees

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2020 is our 50th year of service to this community and we'd like to say "thank you" for your service to your community and for helping to ensure that affordable health care is available to everyone in our community.

Please send your name and contact information to: Lisa Matthews at [Lmatthews@nhainc.org](mailto:Lmatthews@nhainc.org). We will contact you soon with further information. Information should be submitted to Ms. Matthews prior to June 1 2020.

Thank you for all you have done in service of this community.

# Toledo Library Announces Writing Contest

The Toledo Lucas County Public Library is proud to announce the 2020 Ruth Blank Venner and Mary Jane Blank McCormick Writing Contest. Students (grades K-12) are invited and encouraged to write about someone who makes a difference in their life, the community or the world.

What makes this person extra special? What makes them a superhero? Big and small actions make a difference—what does their superhero do? Students can enter this annual writing contest hosted by the Toledo Lucas County Public Library now through April 4.

## Categories and Prizes

Participants will be entered by grade in one of the following categories: grades K-2, 3-5, 6-8 and 9-12. The following prizes will be awarded in each grade category:

- \* 1st Place = \$200
- \* 2nd Place = \$100

- \* 3rd Place = \$50
- \* Honorable Mentions (6 winners) = \$25

## Guidelines

To enter, the student's story must:

- \* Be an original work, which comes solely from the student's imagination
- \* Include three parts: a beginning, middle, and end
- \* Be 500 words maximum
- \* Be hand-written or typed (12+ point font) and stapled with entry form
- \* Winners must have parent/guardian permission to receive prizes

## Media Contact:

Kelsey Cogan, (mailto:kelsey.cogan@toledolibrary.org) Media Coordinator  
419.280.5271

## Unionist Banquet... continued from page 9

Laborers District Council's Executive Board, associate pastor at The Body of Christ Church, and member of the board of directors on the Toledo-Lucas Port Authority.

CBTU selected three individual honorees and one business honoree to publicly recognize during the banquet. Pierrette Talley earned the Trade Unionist Award, Doni Miller earned the Community Service Award, Congresswoman Marcy Kaptur earned the Political Action Award, and ASSETS Toledo also received recognition.

"We are blessed to have a dynamic keynote speaker and our inspirational honorees," said Folsom.

Talley has served as Ohio AFL-CIO secretary-treasurer, launched the Ohio Voter Protection Coalition in 2004, coordinated WE RISE in 2016, led the 2006 Labor take back Ohio program, and an active member of NAACP and several labor organizations.

Miller serves as the CEO of Neighborhood Health Association that operates 14 federally-qualified health clinics, pharmacies, three dental clinics and two senior centers. Miller has earned the ATHENA award, the State Democratic Women's Caucus Award, the YWCA Milestones award, the African American Legacy Award, and 2016 NAACP Freedom Fund Award.

Congresswoman Kaptur represents Ohio's 9th Congressional District. ASSETS Toledo was launched in 1999, it offers a 13-weeks series for business-minded participants. Since inception, ASSETS has graduated over 2900 students.

"Tonight is all about celebrating our laborer family. I'm so excited to see everyone here for this special occasion," said Erika White, the banquet program facilitator.

CBTU officers: Cheryl Tyler-Folsom, chairperson; Anita Madison, vice chairperson and 2020 banquet co-chair; Pierrette Talley, secretary; Henry McCoy and 2020 banquet co-chair, treasurer; and John Folsom, Sgt. at Arms.

## Linnie Willis.. continued from page 7

express their frustrations with an institution that declined to recognize them.

Gathering with the other black students gave Willis a sense of hope – "this is an atmosphere I can survive in," she felt.

But her initial optimism faded during her three years as she witnessed the university failing to make any progress towards incorporating the black students into campus life. Black students were not included, for example, in the Associated Student Body, the campus student organization that interacted with administration and faculty and voiced student suggestions and concerns.

"We were on the campus but not a part of it," she says.

Ultimately, Willis and others in the Black Student Union put together a list of 27 demands that they presented to the administration – requests for black professors and counselors, opening the athletic programs, for example. Their demands were ignored.

In February 1970, the university brought in Up With People for a concert performance. Up With People was a group formed in the late 1960s – a feel-good assembly of young performers of different ethnic and racial backgrounds singing songs of peace, love and harmony.

For the black students, the concert smacked of hypocrisy on the part of the university administration that was, at best, indifferent to the needs of its own students of color even while Up With People asked "What Color Is

God's Skin?"

In the aftermath of the university's deci-

sion to expel the eight, appeals followed, a drawn-out process. Willis continued to attend classes and take exams and, before the final decision was made, she had completed her degree work that spring of 1970. She was denied a diploma, but she left Oxford with her transcript intact, showing her completed work and her bachelor's degree.

Willis soon thereafter moved to Toledo to counsel low-income families seeking affordable housing, married James Willis, raised a family, became executive director of LMHA, visited her family in Oxford regularly and never seriously contemplated that Ole Miss would try to make things right.

Ole Miss did, however, try to make things right. This past February, 50 years after her arrest by the state Highway Patrol, Willis and her fellow students were invited back to the campus and she was finally presented with her long-overdue diploma in a ceremony outside Fulton Chapel.

A few university faculty and administration members made an effort to correct the decades-old injustice led by Garrett Felber, a white assistant professor in the history department who, as part of his critical prison studies, came upon some Parchman Prison paperwork that referenced the university students.

Everything about her recent experience was an eye opener for the returning students, particularly for the expelled eight – two doctors, a university professor, the head of a huge public housing project and four lawyers. Willis, for one, never expected an outreach from the university and never sought any reconciliation.

And as pleasantly surprised as she was by the invitation and the long-denied diploma, Willis, as she stated during her speech at the ceremony, is not yet full of warm, fuzzy feelings for her alma mater. Maybe that comes later.

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# Are Communities of Color and Underdeveloped Countries at Risk for Severe Consequences Due to Climate Change?

By Anthony Bouyer, PhD

Guest Column

As I listen to the Democratic presidential debate in Las Vegas and the topic turned to climate change, Democrats savaged each other, but their attacks mostly stopped when the moderators shifted to a 15-minute discussion on climate change.

I wondered how many people of color pay attention to climate change and global warming. Climate change has been a discussion that has appeared and disappeared depending on the political landscape. Perceived economic implications have been associated with why elected leaders refuse to address climate change and global warming, particularly during campaign years.

Scientists agree the earth will be hotter by the end of the century, but their simulations do not agree on how much. There is no arguing that the climate has changed as society continues burning coal, oil and gas — the main source of heat-trapping gases such as carbon dioxide. Factors such as loss of jobs, standards of living and capitalism have directly influenced the political landscape when discussing climate change.

The past decade was the hottest on record, government researchers announced on Wednesday, February 19, 2020. The latest sign of global warming's grip on the planet. And 2019 was the second-warmest year ever, they said, just shy of the record set in 2016 (New York Times, 2020). The concentration of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) in our atmosphere, as of 2018, is the highest it has been in three million years. NASA and NOAA data show that global averages in 2016 were 1.78 degrees F (0.99 degrees C) warmer than the mid-20th century average. Seventeen of the 18 warmest years have occurred since 2000. 800 million people, 11 percent of the world's population, are currently vulnerable to climate change impacts such as droughts, floods, heat waves, extreme weather events and sea-level rise (Chapple, 2020).

Low-income communities already have higher rates of many health conditions, are more exposed to environmental hazards and take longer to bounce back from natural disasters. Children from communities of color have higher rates of asthma and these existing inequalities will only be exacerbated due to climate change. Climate change will hit low-income communities the hardest as it takes a toll on the U.S.

Low income and the poor have always been subjected to extreme conditions that adversely affect their way of life, so why would we not think that they would be disproportionately affected by climate change. Low-income communities in both urban and rural areas will be disproportionately impacted by climate change relative to other communities, according to a report, which was created by a team of over 300 experts from the government and the private sector tasked with analyzing the impact of climate change on the country.

Those communities already have higher rates of many adverse health conditions, are more exposed to environmental hazards and take longer to bounce back from natural disasters. These existing inequalities will only be exacerbated due to climate change, according to the report, which is known as the Fourth National Climate Assessment.

"Heart and lung disease, heat stroke and bacterial infections are just a few of the health consequences associated with climate change. Low-income populations "typically have less access to information, resources, institutions, and other factors to prepare for and avoid the health risks of climate change," the report says, leaving them especially vulnerable.

Lack of health insurance among the poor will also intensify the risks of illnesses caused by climate change. In urban areas, which produce 80 percent of greenhouse gas emissions in North America, the poor "live in neighborhoods with the greatest exposure to climate and extreme weather events," the report says. This includes living near pollution sites and in housing developments without sufficient insulation or air conditioning.

Additionally, disruptions to infrastructure during natural disasters can have an outsized impact on city residents who rely on public transportation. Rural areas often have agriculture-dependent economies, so the livelihoods of low-income residents are more vulnerable to changing environmental conditions. Many rural households also suffer from energy poverty, the report states, meaning they "are not able to adequately heat or provide other required energy services in their homes at affordable cost." As average temperatures continue to rise, people who cannot affordably cool their houses will continue to feel the impact of climate change.



Anthony Bouyer

The industrial revolution initiated human events that began to impact our ecosystems that will not be reversible. The industrial revolution did achieve its goals of simplifying life and producing great capital gains for those who wanted to become economic world powers during the 1800s.

Humans had no idea the catastrophic damage their inventions would cause to the earth. Just as it took hundreds of years to develop machinery to improve standards of living, it has taken time for scientists to understand what humans have done to our environment and what course of action is necessary to address damages to the environment.

Climate change is located deep in the infrastructure of current civilization and attempts to combat it may have substantial ramifications for social life. Interestingly, many scientists believe the phenomenon has boosted average temperatures nearly one degree from levels present before the start of the industrial age. This concern should be taken with a sense of urgency, as scientists predict the effects of global warming will result in limited access to fresh water for irrigation and cause heat, drought and disease, problems that could make it more difficult to meet world food demands and improve health (Toledo Blade, 2012, October 13, p.5)

The inaction of humans to act urgently on climate change is a matter

...continued on page 13

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# Elected and Community Leaders Announce Opportunity for Housing Providers to Help Renters Build Credit

The Lucas County Commissioners, the City of Toledo, United Way of Greater Toledo, and Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) Toledo announced last week the launch of the Esusu app in Toledo.

Founded by Samir Goel and Wemimo Abbey, Esusu is a savings and credit building app that can be downloaded on iOS and Android devices and helps users save money and build credit, either on their own or in groups of friends or family through what is called rotational savings clubs.

"Esusu was built to serve the needs of low-to-moderate income, immigrant, and minority populations based on the founding team's personal experiences of financial marginalization," said Esusu co-founder Samir Goel. "Esusu is centered on meeting people where they are and providing them with the tools they need to live their financial best. We combine world-class technology with a strong focus on the needs of the communities we serve."

The Esusu app allows group members to contribute funds into a pool at regular intervals and take turns withdrawing funds. Each contribution to the pool is reported as an on-time payment to the credit bureaus. Over time, this improves users' credit scores and increases access to mainstream financial products such as lower-interest vehicle or home loans and helps users practice good saving habits.

"We are excited to have Esusu bring their financial tools to Lucas County. One of the largest barriers for people living in poverty is the lack of accessibility to banking and financial services, including a mechanism to report accurate credit scores. Low-income people who dutifully and punctually pay their rent are being denied a credit history that can raise them out of poverty,"

Lucas County Commissioner Pete Gerken said. "A common payment that everyone makes monthly is centered around housing. In the case of housing, those payments are in the form of rent. With Esusu Rent, we now have a system that allows rent payments to be counted toward their credit score, which builds a better path to stable housing

and financial inclusion. The Esusu Rent application is a significant tool new to our market that can help build credit for the poor."

Mayor Wade Kapszukiewicz said: "Esusu is an extremely useful financial technology platform that helps individuals save money and build credit, and we are very excited to welcome it to Toledo. There are roughly 45 million people in the United States without a credit score – thousands of whom call Toledo home – and this platform helps to score them, build their credit profiles, and will ultimately unlock untapped capital. Helping Toledoans manage savings and increase their credit scores ultimately leads to a stronger economy for our entire region."

"Last year, United Way invested nearly \$2.5 million in financial stability support programs across Lucas, Wood, and Ottawa counties – an investment we hope to expand. We are incredibly proud to call LISC Toledo one of our strongest partners as they continually bring thoughtful solutions to the table. United Way is excited to be part of showcasing products like Esusu so our community can move towards financial stability in new, innovative ways," said Wendy Pestruie, President & CEO of United Way of Greater Toledo.

Through a partnership between Esusu and the Toledo Financial Opportunity Center (FOC) network, Toledoans can use the Esusu savings app for free as long as at least one member of their rotational savings club is an FOC client. FOC clients receive one-on-one coaching to develop strategies for increasing income and accessing additional supports and resources as their credit improves.

"People with no or low credit scores pay higher interest rates and have a harder time accessing credit for large purchases or starting a business, which makes it an uphill battle to financial stability," said Val Moffitt, LISC Director of Financial Opportunities. "That's why building credit is such a major focus of LISC's FOC model."

Esusu is available for iPhone and Android. Individuals interested in connecting with an FOC coach to access the fee-free app can call 2-1-1 to find their nearest Financial Opportunity Center.

## About Esusu

Esusu is a mobile app that helps people create and manage Rotational Savings Clubs with their friends and family members. Based on the informal lending circle model and informed by the cofounders' personal experiences, the app aims to connect marginalized communities with opportunities to save, build credit, and improve financial health. For more information, visit <https://esusu.org/>.

## About LISC

Together with residents and partners, LISC forges resilient and inclusive communities of opportunity across America – great places to live, work, visit, do business, and raise families. It combines corporate, government, and philanthropic resources. Since 1980, LISC has invested \$20 billion to build or rehab 400,500 affordable homes and apartments and develop 66.8 million square feet of retail, community, and educational space. In Toledo, LISC has focused on a comprehensive approach to community development, investing \$160 million to fuel economic opportunity, and build stronger, healthier neighborhoods. For more information, visit [www.lisc.org](http://www.lisc.org).

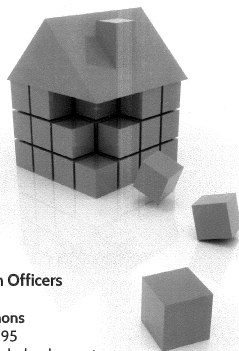
## About United Way of Greater Toledo

United Way of Greater Toledo envisions a world where all individuals and families achieve their human potential through quality education, financial stability, and health resources. By forging unlikely partnerships, finding new solutions to old problems, and mobilizing resources – we can inspire our community to join the fight against our most daunting social issues. United Way of Greater Toledo is proud to serve the residents of Lucas, Wood and Ottawa counties by locally raising more than \$9 million a year for those in need.

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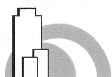
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# *Bread for Words: A Frederick Douglass Story* by Shana Keller, illustrated by Kayla Stark

By Terri Schlichenmeyer

The Truth Contributor

It's that time of day and your stomach's growling.

That's what happens when you're hungry and you need to eat: your body reminds you that a growing kid like you needs good food. Feeding your belly makes you stronger, and in the new book *Bread for Words: A Frederick Douglass Story* by Shana Keller, illustrated by Kayla Stark, a young boy finds something to feed his soul.

Little Freddy didn't know when he was born, but he knew where: he came into the world in a cabin in Tuckahoe, Maryland, and he lived there with his Grandma.

He did for awhile, anyhow, until the day Grandma sadly told Freddy that he had to leave the cabin because he was a slave and Old Master needed him at "the Great House Farm." Freddy didn't exactly know what a slave was, but he quickly learned that being one meant lots of work and he absolutely had no say-so about it.

The only reason for that, as far as he could tell, was that his skin was dark and Master's son, Daniel, was fair-skinned. This also meant that Daniel had a nice bed with blankets, while Freddy had nothing like that at all. Daniel also had schoolbooks, but when Freddy asked to learn to read and write, he was told that it was "Unlawful" and "Unsafe."

Maybe he shouldn't have asked: his questioning got him sent to Baltimore, where he was supposed to take care of a boy named Thomas. Once there, Freddy got a better bed and just a little education, thanks to Thomas's mother – but then Thomas's father became very angry when he learned that his wife taught Freddy some words! Thomas's father knew that if Freddy could read, he might try to reach for free-

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32 pages

dom.

It was right then that Freddy knew how reading "could loosen the chains of bondage." It was then that he knew he had to make a plan. "That moment" made him figure out a way...

No doubt about it: your child loves books. Most kids do; they love the pictures, the words, and the goodness of snuggling up with a new story. *Bread for Words* is one they'll love to share.

You'll have plenty to discuss with your little book-fan, too, once you've read this tale together. Author Shana Keller uses a small-but-momentous chain of events to introduce children to the life and work of Frederick Douglass, and it's all told quite minimally, starting with small slices of plantation life and ending with Douglass' search for learning. This brevity makes the story more powerful in its lack. Hint: don't bother with the afterword; it mostly just repeats the body of the book, but do read the author's notes. Properly introduced and explained in a kid-friendly way, they could send kids running for more information.

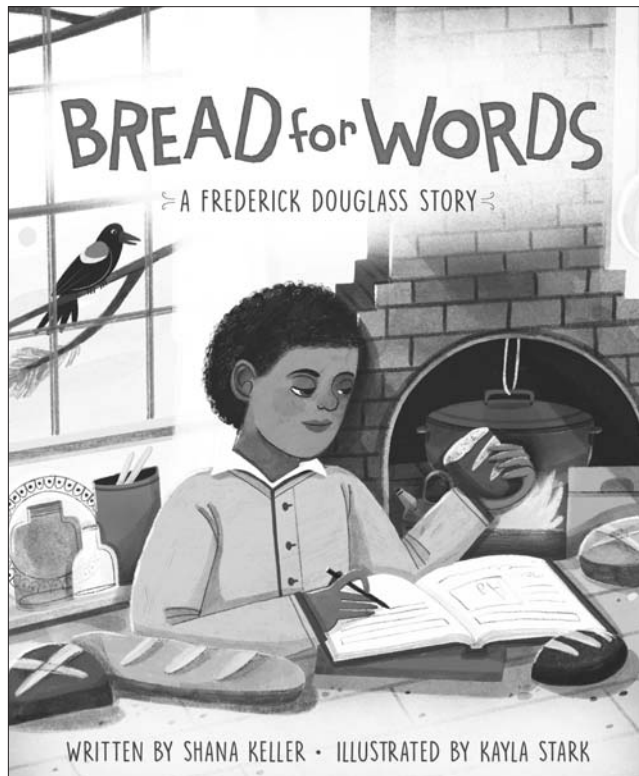
While illustrations by Kayla Stark could be fun for small children, this book is really more for early grade-schoolers who enjoy biographies and history. Introduce *Bread for Words* to your six-to-10-year-old, and she'll be eager to bite into it.

*Communities of Color... continued from page 11*

of ethical concern: ethical concerns matter in why and how we must act; and it is not only inaction that is morally wrong, but inappropriate action.

The idea that humans would believe that the earth has continuous sustainability and renewability capabilities is hubris. When human's actions and non-action change the environment in which we live, how important, moral considerability is and at what point moral considerability should guide are decisions on the environment.

Most Americans worry about social security being available for their grandchildren and great grandchildren. If climate change is not addressed, social security is the least of our worries. It is extremely vital that people of color and the poor make their voices heard in this election and vote for individuals who have their best interest not only in employment, healthcare, education, but in climate change, because none of those other areas matters if there is no "earth."



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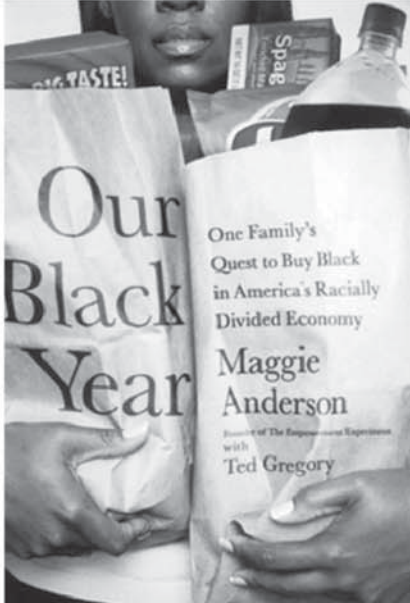
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# CLASSIFIEDS

March 11, 2020

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## FEEDBACK NEEDED

The Mental Health & Recovery Services Board of Lucas County (MHRSB) is seeking Lucas County Residents to participate in a short survey.

Please take a few minutes to provide feedback for the development of our 3-year strategic plan that will be focused on the direction, impact, and responsiveness of MHRSB's work in the communities we serve. Your candid feedback and insight will be used to develop the final strategic plan for the next three years. Complete the survey online in English or Spanish by visiting: [docs.google.com/.../1FAIpQLSfJN6abJNj\\_NSqee\\_sHFZtFMX.../viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1FAIpQLSfJN6abJNj_NSqee_sHFZtFMX.../viewform)

Printable versions of the survey are available in Arabic, English, and Spanish on our website: [www.lcmhrsb.oh.gov/publicnotice/](http://www.lcmhrsb.oh.gov/publicnotice/) We appreciate your willingness to participate in this process and look forward to the honest feedback.

## SYSTEMS ANALYST LUCAS COUNTY

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## NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION ASSISTANT

Metroparks Toledo has openings for seasonal Natural Resources Conservation Assistants. Must be 18 or older with high school diploma or equivalent and valid driver's license. \$11.00/hr. Some training or coursework in environmental sciences or natural resources management preferred. Some outdoor work experience with natural systems, forestry or horticulture preferred. Go to [www.MetroparksToledo.com](http://www.MetroparksToledo.com) to view detailed position description and job requirements. Must apply online. EOE

## PARK MAINTENANCE

Metroparks Toledo is looking for a qualified individual for Park Maintenance at Providence Metropark. High school diploma or equivalent and valid driver's license required. Moderate level of specialty maintenance experience required. Perform a broad spectrum of maintenance duties, including building equipment, maintenance, grounds maintenance, landscaping and construction. 40 hour work week. \$18.09/hr. Go to [www.metroparkstoledo.com](http://www.metroparkstoledo.com) for complete job requirements and to apply. EOE

## ADVERTISEMENT FOR PROPOSALS TOLEDO-LUCAS COUNTY PORT AUTHORITY TOLEDO, OHIO

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Sealed Bids will be received by the Toledo-Lucas County Port Authority for all labor, material, insurance, and equipment necessary for the Parking Structures Restoration 2020 project located at 334 N. Superior Street and One Government Center, Toledo, Ohio 43605, in accordance with the approved plans and specifications. The engineer's estimate for the Superior base bid is approximately \$211,300.00, One Government Center base bid is approximately \$180,390.00, and combined base bid of approximately \$391,690.00. Alternate bid 1 is approximately \$65,200.00. Bids will be received at the Port Authority's administrative offices on the 7th floor at One Maritime Plaza, Toledo, OH 43604 until Thursday, March 19, 2020 at 11:00 AM, at which time and place all bids will be publicly opened and read aloud. Plans, Specifications, Instructions to Proposers, and Forms of Proposal and Contract are on file and may be obtained by either (1) obtaining hard copies from Becker Impressions, 4646 Angola Road, Toledo, OH 43615, phone 419.385.5303, during normal business hours, or (2) ordering from Becker Impressions, via their website [www.beckerplanroom.com](http://www.beckerplanroom.com) at the cost of reproduction. Please note that there will be a pre-bid meeting for this project for all prospective bidders on Tuesday, March 10, 2020 at 11:00 AM at the Port Authority's administrative offices at One Maritime Plaza, 7th floor, Toledo, OH 43604. Attendance is suggested, but not necessary. Please submit all questions to the Port Authority, Tina Perkins, at [TPerkins@Toledoport.org](mailto:TPerkins@Toledoport.org) by Thursday, March 12, 2020 at 10:00 AM local time. Additional information can be found at [www.toledoport.org](http://www.toledoport.org). Toledo-Lucas County Port Authority Thomas J. Winston, President & CEO

Call to place your ad: 419-243-0007  
[www.TheTruthToledo.com](http://www.TheTruthToledo.com)

## PUBLIC NOTICE CITY OF TOLEDO ONE-YEAR ACTION PLAN

To all interested agencies, groups, and persons:

The City of Toledo is seeking comments on its **Draft** July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021 One-Year Action Plan to be submitted to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) on or before May 18, 2020. The One-Year Action Plan will be included in and is based on the HUD-approved Five-Year 2020-2025 Consolidated Plan submitted by the City of Toledo for housing, community, and economic development.

The One-Year Action Plan includes a description of the federal funds anticipated to be received, as well as other resources expected to be available within the City of Toledo during the 2020-2021 program year. The Action Plan provides a description of the activities to be undertaken when using these resources and the expected results of those activities. Also, the Action Plan depicts a geographic distribution of assistance, special needs activities, general and public housing actions, and activities specific to the 2020 46<sup>th</sup> Year Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), 34<sup>th</sup> Year Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG), 29<sup>th</sup> Year HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME), and the Neighborhood Stabilization Programs (NSP). In addition, the Plan will contain HUD-required certifications, as well as a summary of the community input received at the public hearings regarding the Action Plan.

The **Draft** One-Year Action Plan is available for review beginning March 20, 2020 at the following locations:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1) Department of Neighborhoods<br>One Government Center, 18 <sup>th</sup> Floor<br>Downtown Toledo, Jackson & Erie Streets | 6) Toledo Lucas County Homelessness Board<br>1946 N. 13 <sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 437<br>Toledo, Ohio 43604  |
| 2) Office of the Mayor<br>One Government Center, 22 <sup>nd</sup> Floor<br>Downtown Toledo, Jackson & Erie Streets         | 7) Toledo-Lucas County Public Library<br>325 Michigan Street<br>Toledo, Ohio 43604<br>(available at the Main Branch and by request at all other branches)                          |
| 3) Clerk of Council<br>One Government Center, 21 <sup>st</sup> Floor<br>Downtown Toledo, Jackson & Erie Streets            | 8) Lucas County Board of Developmental Disabilities<br>1154 Larc Lane<br>Toledo, Ohio 43614  |
| 4) The Fair Housing Center<br>432 N. Superior Street<br>Toledo, Ohio 43604   | 9) Dept. of Neighborhoods website:<br><a href="https://toledo.oh.gov/services/neighborhood-and-business-development">https://toledo.oh.gov/services/neighborhood-and-business-</a> |
| development  |  |
| 5) Lucas Metropolitan Housing Authority<br>435 Nebraska Avenue<br>Toledo, Ohio 43604                                       |  |

Public hearings on the **Draft** One-Year Action Plan are scheduled as follows:

**Monday, March 23, 2020, 4:00 p.m.**  
City Council Chambers, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor  
One Government Center, Toledo, OH 43604

**Wednesday, April 1, 2020, 5:30 p.m.**  
City Council Chambers, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor  
One Government Center, Toledo, OH 43604

The City of Toledo will also receive comments from the public in writing beginning Monday, March 23, 2020 through Tuesday, April 21, 2020, at the following address:

CITY OF TOLEDO  
DEPARTMENT OF NEIGHBORHOODS  
ONE GOVERNMENT CENTER, SUITE 1800  
TOLEDO, OHIO 43604

ATTN: 2020-2021 ONE-YEAR ACTION PLAN

For reasonable accommodations or additional information, please contact Monica Brown, Administrative Analyst IV, Department of Neighborhoods at (419) 245-1400.

# Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Celebrates Founders' Day and Honors Community Leaders to the Theme "Black Girls Rock and Exemplify Excellence"

*Special to The Truth*

On Saturday, February 29, 2020, the Zeta Alpha Omega, Alpha Lambda, and Iota Iota chapters of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated® gathered at the Heather Downs Country Club in Toledo to celebrate the sorority's 112th Founders' Day.

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated, the oldest Greek-lettered organization established by African-American college-educated women, was founded by 16 visionary women on the campus of Howard University in Washington, D.C. on January 15, 1908. Currently Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority is comprised of nearly 300,000 members in 1,012 graduate and undergraduate chapters internationally.

The area's first chapter, Alpha Lambda, was chartered on December 10, 1928 at the University of Toledo. The graduate chapter, Zeta Alpha Omega, was chartered on April 25, 1952 in Toledo and undergraduate chapter, Iota Iota, was chartered on March 15, 1975 at Bowling Green State University.

This year's Founders' Day theme was "Black Girls Rock and Exemplify Excellence." The program opened with the procession of dais sorority guests to the song "Black Girl Magic." Treva Jeffries, EdD, chapter vice-president and Founders' Day co-chairman, served as mistress of ceremonies for this year's program and Andrea Price, president of Zeta Alpha Omega, spoke to the occasion.

Tulani Black, president of the Alpha Lambda Chapter and Lisa E. Dubose, EdD, Northern Ohio/Western Pennsylvania Cluster Coordinator offered greetings. Felicia Roberts-Dunston, Founders' Day Committee chairman, honored sorority members with 50 plus years of service by reading an ex-

cerpt from 'We Speak Your Names' by Pearl Cleage.

The sorority recognized African-American women in our community who rock and exemplify excellence and promote the sorority's national programs: HBCU for Life, Women's Healthcare and Wellness, Building your Economic Legacy, the Arts, Global Impact and (CAP) College Admissions Process. The 2020 Black Girls Rock and Exemplify Excellence recipients were Maumee Bay Club, NANBPWC Inc. - Legacy of Excellence Award, Celeste Smith - Social Humanitarian Award, Ambrea Mikolajczyk - Shot Caller Award, Natalie Grey - Young, Gifted & Black Award, Sonia Flunder-McNair - Community Change Agent Award, Paula Hicks Hudson - Icon Award, and Julia Holt - AKA Pearl Award. Their acceptance speeches were uplifting, powerful, and expressed their black girl magic. The audience was entertained with an original selection written and performed by Sheila Brown.

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority's membership includes distinguished women who boast excellent academic records, proven leadership skills and are involved in the global community through advocacy and service.

The Founders' Day Committee who planned this year's event are: Chairman Felicia Roberts-Dunston; Co-chairmen Treva Jeffries and Katrina Barry; President Andrea Price; President Tulani Black; and members Lisa Dubose, London Weathers, Marcia Brown, Rosie Payne, Connie Okoye-Nantwi, Desiree McGee, Carolyn Lane Lewis, Lenora Barry, Patrice McClellan, PhD, Cheryl Wallace, Richelle Watkins, Donnetta Carter, Mary Dawson, Fionne Wright and Cheryl Slack.



**PRESENTS**

**CALLING ALL SOULS TO THE POLLS!**



SATURDAY: MARCH 14, 2020
SUNDAY: MARCH 15, 2020

8AM-4PM
13TH & MONROE ST.
1PM-5PM

**FREE FOOD & DRINKS, MUSIC**

**PARTY W/ A PURPOSE**

**ALL CHURCHES!**

**ALL HIGH SCHOOL ALUM!**

**ALL BUSINESSES!**

**ALL FRATS & SOROS!**

**ALL HAIRSTYLISTS!**

**ALL BARBERS!**





Past Chapter Presidents



2020 Chapter Founders' Day Committee



Black Girls Rock Awardees Founders' Day committee leadership

