



Volume 62, No. 6

"And Ye Shall Know The Truth..."

July 15, 2020



Sierra Adebisi, Firefighter Trainee

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Do You Have The Courage To Take A Stand?

By Anthony Bouyer, PhD

Guest Column

Education is power; a good education develops critical thinking skills that help people make decisions in their lives, makes them good citizens and helps them contribute to the overall betterment of society.

Education provides us with knowledge about the world. Education paves the way for character-building, leads to enlightenment, and enriches people's understanding of themselves. Thus, the quality of life tends to be highly correlated with one's educational attainment. Moreover, many people see education as the potion for achieving social mobility in industrialized societies.

The goal of education is not mastery of subject matter, but of one's person. Subject matter is simply the tool. Much as one would use a hammer and chisel to carve a block of marble, one uses ideas and knowledge to forge one's own personhood. A direct effect of education is gaining knowledge. Education gives us knowledge of the world around. Education develops in us a perspective of looking at life. Education helps us form opinions and develop a point of view.

Information we encounter cannot be converted into knowledge without the catalyst called education. Education helps create a clear picture of things around, and erases all confusion. Education kindles the flame of curiosity and helps awaken the abilities to question and reason.

Education has allowed me to expand my world view not only through knowledge, but has also put me in the position to have experienced a verity of occupations; therefore, education has kindled the flame of curiosity and helped awaken my abilities to question and reason, and knowledge to speak on social issues.

So before I go further in my discussion on the article, I want to share my educational background not from a bravado boastfulness, because I understand that I was able to overcome many obstacles and I do not think less of those who obstacles may have been too high to overcome, but to show that my opinion comes from a well-informed, expert point of view.

I have firsthand experience in the areas of social issues. I have been a police officer, a parole officer, a probation officer, a mental health professional, and a counselor, both with adolescents and adults. I currently hold two licenses with the State of Ohio, the Ohio Chemically Professional Board and I'm a Licensed Professional Counselor with the State of Ohio Counselor and Social Worker Board and I held a LSW, Licensed Social Worker. I have the expertise to and life experience to share a qualified opinion about social conditions that Black Americans have faced and continue to face.

So, the new buzz words that have resulted from the current crisis are systemic racism, explicit bias, conscious and unconscious bias. These words are being thrown at the American public, as if to explain the reason for the mistreatment of Blacks not only by police, but also by other institutions. Let us not forget how America got its first wealth and power, which derived from the institution of slavery. The key word is institution; it is through institu-

tional discrimination that allows continuing denial of rights of Black people and subjects them to a different quality of life.

Racism, sexism and elitism are systems of interdependent cultural, individual, and institutional behaviors, which affect a pattern of negative socioeconomic discrimination based on race, gender, and class. This discrimination is rationalized through a network of prejudice founded largely on myths, stereotypes, and biases which are passed on consciously. The formula for institutional discriminations proceeds in this manner.

During my academic studies, the most descriptive definition of institutional discrimination was developed by Vega, F. (1978) the effect of human and intergroup relations on race/sex and attitudes. The Vega model describes institutional discrimination as "Cultural Bias" (The values, norms, and standards of the dominant culture "White" which reflect what is prized, normal and customary in our society and which are transmitted to the individual through the socialization process).

The next step in the process of institutional discrimination is "Individual Prejudice" (The beliefs, attitudes and opinions which reflect the cultural values, norms, and standards of the dominant cultural "White" transmitted to social institutions through interaction). The last part of the formula is "Institutional discriminations" (The policies, practices, and standard operating procedures that reflect the public beliefs opinions, and attitudes which perpetuate the original cultural values (The institution of slavery), norms, and standards of the dominant culture "White."

Police abuse in Black and Brown communities is generations old. It is nothing new.

Law enforcement was used as a monitoring tool of Blacks right after slavery, during reconstruction, the civil rights movement and to present day. Putting a face on Institutional racism one only has to look at what happened to the great mass of ex-slaves, threatened with arrest for "vagrancy" and leased as convict laborers if they refused, to signed their contracts and returned to work in the fields, much as they had before emancipation.

Blacks were declared ineligible for U.S citizenship in the Supreme Court's 1857 Dred Scott decision, remained a disfranchised peasantry, laboring under conditions that differed little from, slavery " (The policies, practices, and standard operating procedures that reflect the public beliefs opinions, and attitudes which perpetuate the original cultural values (The institution of slavery), norms, and standards of the dominant culture "White."

... continued on page 4



Anthony Bouyer

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Community Calendar

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July 18

The Flanders Road Church of Christ, 5130 Flanders Road, will be hosting a clothing giveaway from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. each day.

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Courage.. continued from page 2

Michelle Alexander's (*The New Jim Crow*, 2010), gives a pungent illustration of institutional discrimination in our criminal justice system. She notes that in *McCleskey v. Kemp*, the Supreme Court held that racial bias in sentencing, even if shown through credible statistical evidence, could not be challenged under the Fourteenth Amendment absent clear evidence of conscious, discriminatory intent, thus comes the justifiable language of unconscious bias.

The Court's opinion was driven by a desire to immunize the entire criminal justice system from claims of racial bias. According to Justice Jackson the best evidence in support of this view can be found at the end of the majority opinion where the Court states discretion plays a necessary role in the implementation of the criminal justice system, and that discrimination is an inevitable by-product of discretion.

Racial discrimination, the Court seemed to suggest, was something that simply must be tolerated in the criminal justice system, provided no one admits to racial bias. The policies, practices, and standard operating procedures that reflect the public beliefs opinions, and attitudes which perpetuate the original cultural values norms, and standards of the dominant culture "White."

In 1994, John Erlichman affirmed Nixon's racist agenda to the journalist Dan Baum. Erlichman told Baum that "the Nixon campaign in 1968, and the Nixon White House after that, had two enemies: the antiwar left and black people. You understand what I'm saying? We knew we couldn't make it illegal to be either against the war or blacks, but by getting the public to associate the hippies with marijuana and blacks with heroin, and then criminalizing both heavily, we could disrupt those communities. We could arrest their leaders, raid their homes, break up their meetings, and vilify them night after night on the evening news. Did we know we were lying about the drugs? Of course we did."

The beating of Rodney King by the Los Angeles police department in 1994 had many defenders of law enforcement stating that this was an isolated incident and that, overall, Blacks are treated no different than any other groups. Looking back in history, the majority of Black rioting in the U.S. have been tied to police misconduct, with the exception of few.

Martin Luther King Jr. stated: "Riots are the voices of the voiceless." The

Black Panther Party was born out of police misconduct against Blacks in Oakland, California. Black communities all across America were besieged with White police departments that used brutality with impunity. Social scientists study society and social relationships, and it is through social conditions that leadership is born, hence the civil rights movement and now Black Lives Matter.

Technology has only proven what Blacks have been saying for decades about institutions, schools, hospitals, social service agencies, and particularly police departments in the mistreatment of Blacks in their daily lives. Nevertheless, many Americans believe that police officers are generally good, noble heroes.

The profession — the endeavor — is noble. But this myth about the general goodness of cops obscures the truth of what needs to be done to fix the system. It makes it look like all we need to do is hire good people, rather than fix the entire system. Institutional racism runs throughout our criminal justice system. Its presence in police culture, though often flatly denied by the many police apologists that appear in the media now, has been central to the breakdown in police-community relationships for decades in spite of good people doing police work.

Hiring minority people and White women as police officers and increased responsibility changes color and sex composition but does not necessarily change its oppressive use. It takes courage and a strong sense of morality to not follow the crowd, and it takes courage to turn in fellow officers who has violated his/her oath.

The idiosyncrasy of some police officers is extremely disturbing, and the oxymoron to police misconduct is, if you are hired to stop law breakers, how do you break the law in the performance of your duties? I graduated from Saginaw Valley State College in 1982 with my undergraduate degree; I completed Michigan Law Enforcement officers Training Council Academy in November 1982.

During my training at the academy officers were trained not to use excessive force, including striking suspects in the head with batons, choke holds, and other illegal deadly force procedures that do not clearly justify the use of deadly force. We were also instructed that if we witnessed officers using excessive force, or violating our oaths, that we were to report their behaviors.

We spent a day on cultural diversity, as if that was significant time needed to address cultural diversity. During our training we were trained that no matter what people say to you, or what names they called you, this was not an excuse to retaliate with physical violence.

Many will say that citizens should respect the police, granted disrespecting police officers is wrong, also officers should not verbally disrespect citizens, and respect goes both ways. Police officer should hold themselves to a higher standard, no one should become police officers who have anger issues and poor control of their emotions, if you cannot take being called names then you should not become a police officer and choose another profession.

After completing the academy, I was hired as a compass police officer at Grand Rapids Junior College, in Grand Rapids, Michigan. I was one of two Black officers in the department. I was tested right from the beginning of my employment, when one of the white officers made an insensitive ethnic joke about Polish Americans, even as 24-year-old young man, I knew the comment was inappropriate. I stated if I was not present that joke would have been about Blacks, which social scientist calls White bounding.

One day as I reported to work and stepped out of the evaluator, I encountered a scuffle of three of my White co-workers handcuffing a Black suspect

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Ohio Civil Rights Commission Once Again Finds Fire Department Guilty of Discrimination

By Fletcher Word

Sojourner's Truth Editor

For the second time in a month, the Ohio Civil Rights Commission has ruled in favor of an African-American firefighter trainee who had been dismissed by the Toledo Fire Department. The Commission held that the dismissal was a result of unlawful discrimination.

On July 2, 2020, the Commission, in a Letter of Determination, stated that it had conducted an investigation into trainee Sierra Adebisi's allegations against the City of Toledo and that, as a result of that investigation, found that "the information gathered does support a recommendation that Respondent [City of Toledo] unlawfully discriminated against Charging Party [Sierra Adebisi]."

"With this probable cause [finding], I feel I can finally exhale," said Adebisi at a press conference last week during which she and her representative, Earl Murry, announced the findings of the Commission.

The language of the determination is almost exactly the same as the language of the Letter of Determination on June 4 in which the Commission found that the City of Toledo has also unlawfully discriminated against Randall Fuller, another African-American firefighter trainee, who was dismissed on May 3, 2019.

However, while the Commission determination is a critically important first step for the firefighter trainees seeking redress from the City for the unlawful dismissals, it is not the end of the road. The Commission now recommends mediation between the parties which would presumably lead to reinstatement and the payment of back wages for the charging parties.

However, as past examples have shown, mediation is not likely to happen, says Norman Abood, an attorney who represents both Fuller and Adebisi. The city, says Abood, has not traditionally been responsive.

Murry echoed that thought during his press conference. "We want to try to mediate and conciliate but the City has in the past not been responsive."

"It's like talking to the wall," Abood says more pointedly of that lack of responsiveness and the City's unwillingness to come to the table and mediate. Indeed, all the City needs to do in response to the Commission's finding is ultimately reinstate Adebisi (and Fuller) and provide back pay.

When the time runs out for the mediation – which it will 10 days after the Commission's findings, the firefighter's option is to file suit, in which case she will be seeking more than just reinstatement. Compensation and punitive damages will be on the table in court, says Abood, who has already filed such a suit on Fuller's behalf and will undoubtedly be doing on Adebisi's behalf.

Adebisi, says Abood, would prefer to take the simpler route. "Her goal is not money," says her attorney, "it's reinstatement."

Adebisi was admitted to the Fire Department's training academy on February 27, 2019. On August 22, as she was ready to graduate the following day having passed "every test that [the department] had given me," she recalled,

she was informed via a letter from Chief Brian Byrd that "due to your overall unacceptable performance in the academy" she was being terminated immediately.

Attorney Abood has already filed on behalf of his client, Randall Fuller, a case that followed closely on the heels of another dismissed Toledo firefighter, Major Smith III, who was terminated on June 12, 2018, because of his inability to properly cut a hole in a roof "in a manner which assured he would fail and, at a minimum, required him to overcome artificial obstacles not required of any other trainee fireman," wrote Murry in a guest column to The Truth last year.

The Smith case also could not be mediated because of the City's obstinacy and is currently in the U.S. Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals after a summary dismissal by U.S. District Court Judge Jack Zouhary.

Court is not quite enough for Murry. Adebisi's representative wants heads to roll.

"In view of the Ohio Governmental Agency Probable Cause rulings, now and previously rendered, it is clear the Toledo Fire & Rescue Department needs an enema of ranking officers who continue to perform illegal acts through their behavior and decisions," said Murry during last week's press conference. "Chief Byrd should resign or be replaced; other ranking officers known to practice racial and sexual discriminant should be replaced or terminated immediately ... I am calling for the Mayor of Toledo to resign from office. He has failed to act when confronted with indisputable facts, has fostered discrimination against African Americans, levels of discrimination in the Fire Department which have not been seen since the 1970's and 80's."

Abood is not fazed by the upcoming court battle, noting that his clients have an advantage now that the Ohio Civil Rights Commission has been so detailed in its research.

"I can't speak highly enough about the investigation work the Civil Rights Commission has done in these cases," he says.



Sierra Adebisi and Earl Murry

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Courage... continued from page 4

for trespassing. I do not know how the scuffle started, but this individual had been trespassing in the college. He had his hands cuffed behind him, and to take him to the holding area in the department there were two heavy doors that had to be pushed open.

The officers used his face to open the heavy glass doors. The suspect looked me in the eyes and said you see what they just did too me. The following day I received a call from the man's mother and she asked if I witnessed what my co-workers did to her son. My reply to her was "yes I did see what they did to your son." She asked me if I would testify in court and I told her "yes." I testified against those officers in open court, regardless of the blowback I received from my co-workers.

Several weeks later one of the officers who I testified against asked me if I wanted to go hunting with them, my reply to him was that I don't hunt, more than likely if I did hunt and went with them I probably would have been an accident.

So I say to police officers, it does not matter what your race, gender or ethnicity is, do you allow or are you yourself implicit in the excessive use of force and violating the rights of Black people? Where is your courage? It has not been too long ago that many cities across the country had to submit to federal decrees to hire Black police officers and Black fire fighters.

When the federal government ordered these decrees, many in the Black communities thought, finally, we will have police officer who looks like us and maybe the brutality will stop: One's race and ethnicity does not make for good character as there are many brutal Black, Hispanic and other racial minority police officer as there are Whites. It's what's in an person he art that counts. So I ask how you can be a police officer if you witness another police officer breaking the law, and refuse to report his /her behavior?

There is a debate that people who live in urban areas have a code of not snitching when crimes are committed and the police have on many occasions called out this behavior. The same goes for police officers when they see their co-workers breaking the law and refuse to "snitch."

I spent the majority of my professional career as a probation officer – 21 years with Toledo Municipal Court. Institutional discrimination provides every area of the criminal justice system. Most Black males can attest to experiencing institutional discrimination. A White female probation officer stated to me that I looked like a defendant due to having a hat on during January. When this was brought to the assistant chief attention who happened to be Black, she replied maybe she did not know she was being offensive.

Now let's talk about changing institutional racism. Racism is woven into the fabric of our nation. At no time in our history has there been a national consensus that everyone should be equally valued in all areas of life. We are rooted in racism in spite of the better efforts of Americans of all races to change that. Because of this legacy of racism, police abuse in Black and Brown communities is generations old. It is nothing new. It has become more visible to mainstream America largely because of the proliferation of personal recording devices, cellophane cameras, video recorders — they're everywhere. We need police officers. We also need them to be held accountable to the communities they serve.

The one thing that is clear is in order to change the current racial climate in this country, institutions have to change and in order to change institution, and we must address cultural biases, to reflect what is just for all of society. This process can be transmitted through

individual socialization, beliefs, attitudes that reflect none bias perspectives. The policies, practices, and standard operating procedures must reflect the improvement of life for all citizens. As the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis and countless others proves, we still have a long way to go before we attain anything close to justice in this country. But we can work toward it, every day.

Water Equity Toledo Applauds City of Toledo for Continuing Moratorium on Residential Water Shutoffs

Last week, the Ohio EPA's March 31 order prohibiting public water utilities from shutting off and restoring water service to homes due to inability to pay will end. Water Equity Toledo applauds the City of Toledo and the Department of Public Utilities for their statement ensuring that the moratorium of water service terminations and restoration of services will remain in place, amid growing concerns around the continued rise of COVID-19 in Ohio.

The following statement can be attributed, in whole or in part, to Pastor Randall Carter, spokesperson for Water Equity Toledo:

"Today, the Ohio EPA lifted their March 31 order which placed a statewide moratorium on water shutoffs in response to the COVID19 pandemic. Water Equity Toledo wants to thank the City of Toledo for ensuring that Toledoans will not go without access to clean water during this critical time. Water Equity Toledo is committed to working with the Department of Public Utilities as they take on efforts to address water access and affordability within the City of Toledo.

"Access to clean, safe, and affordable water is a fundamental foundation for public health and safety. Toledo's moratorium on water shutoffs underscores the principle that water is a basic need and essential to life, health, and human dignity. Water Equity Toledo looks forward to continuing to work with leadership to develop an equitable system of water distribution where all people will be provided access to clean, safe water at a price they can afford."

The following statement can be attributed to Oscar Hill, City of Toledo resident and water customer:

"As a 50 year resident and water customer we are still under the COVID-19 pandemic and it would be a very bad idea to start implementing water shut offs again so soon. It's important to make every effort to keep families safe in their homes and be good stewards of their welfare. I want to personally say thank you to the Department of Public Utilities for your decision to keep Toledo water turned on."

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Health and Education Are Topics of Virtual Meeting

By Tricia Hall

Sojourner's Truth Reporter

State Representative Paula Hicks-Hudson sponsored a virtual chat on July 8, 2020. The 75-minute conversation included Doni Miller, CEO of Neighborhood Health Association, and Sheena Barnes, Toledo Board of Education member. The meeting is connected to a series of digital summer events where local statehouse lawmakers provide updates, called the Ohio Promise Virtual Town Hall Tour.

State Representative Hicks-Hudson opened the virtual meeting by introducing both guests and explaining their credentials. "I want to thank each of you for joining me for this virtual chat. I want to welcome my two friends, Doni Miller and Sheena Barnes. Today we're going to have a conversation. We're going to talk about what's going on at the statehouse and how legislative decisions are hitting on the local front."



Rep. Paula Hicks-Hudson

The first 15 minutes provided Hicks-Hudson with the opportunity to explain to the viewers the actions taken by the legislature and provide the discussion framework. "In the statehouse we want to deliver results to the taxpayers. We have passed 13 priority bills, one of those was mine and reduces sentences for drug offenses. We have passed a bill that invests in our children but the budget was hit hard due to COVID-19. We are still attacking systemic racism, which has rose to the forefront in the last few months," explained Hicks-Hudson.

The conversation shifted to the first of two topics: healthcare. Hicks-Hudson described House Concurrent Resolution 31 to the audience. According to The Ohio Legislature website, the resolution would declare racism a public health crisis and promote racism equity. Representatives Stephanie House of District 11 and Representative Erica Crawley of District 26 are the primary sponsors.

The following representatives are listed as co-sponsors: Gill Blair, Kristin Boggs, Janine Boyd, Juanita Brent, Richard Brown, Jack Cera, Randi Clites, Jeffrey Crossman, Sedrick Denson, Paula Hicks-Hudson, Catherine Ingram, Brigid Kelly, David Leland, Michele Lepore-Hagan, Mary Lighbody, Beth Liston, Joe Miller, Jessica Miranda, Michael O'Brien, John Patterson, Phil Robinson, John Rogers, Allison Russo, Michael Skindell, Kent Smith, Lisa Sobocki, Bride Sweeney, Emilia Sykes, Terrence Upchurch, Casey Weinstein, and Thomas West.

Doni Miller explained to the viewers that people must take care of their health, especially if they are at risk, and explained the healthcare system must improve. "I want to talk about healthcare for black folks in Ohio, what we



Doni Miller

can do for ourselves and what we can demand from those elected to represent us. Black folks are dying at amazing rates from diabetes, heart disease and high blood pressure. We live in communities with housing that makes us sick. Racism in healthcare is structural and impacts medical services, provider training, facility design, and even facility placement. Those are designed to hurt us, but we can't die waiting on this system to change," said Miller.

Neighborhood Health Association is one of the key Covid-19 testing partners and according to Miller these common concerns:

- Patients can't catch coronavirus by taking the test,
- Coronavirus is not the flu,
- Testing is important for the patient and the family,
- Serious cases of coronavirus can impact a patient for three months,
- Call the Lucas County Health Department or Neighborhood Health Association for test sites.

"COVID-19 is three times more likely to impact a black person or person of color. We are dying daily, and we aren't making health issues a real priority," said Miller.

The conversation shifted to the final topic: education in Ohio schools. Sheena Barnes, newly elected Toledo Public School board member, discussed House Bill 197. Hicks-Hudson described this bill as, "a way to suspend third grade reading towards grade promotion."

"I am proud of what Toledo Public Schools is doing for social education justice, this is connected to what we're talking about here, and connected to the number of jail cells for African Americans. Reading levels are connected to the number of school resource officers needed and disciplinary problems," explained Barnes.

Toledo Public Schools mobilized resources once the state announced the stay-at-home order in March, these resources included: buses that carried WiFi, computers, WiFi hotspots, and weekday lunches. According to Barnes, TPS still couldn't provide resources to every student due to homelessness.

"We have the highest percentage of youth homelessness in Ohio for any school district. We feel short feeding the kids during COVID, but it's not because of TPS but because some of these kids are so mobile and move from place to place. We need the state to assist us with this and get to know the kids in this community," said Barnes.

"Northwest Ohio is different than other parts of Ohio, and it's important that these voices are heard. I want to thank my sisters in the struggle and thank each of you for taking this time to join us today," concluded Hicks-Hudson during her final remarks.



Sheena Barnes

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Growing: Meet Andre Miller

By Mariah Hicks, Brothers United Coach

Special to The Truth

"I was a dad before I was a dad. I had to take responsibility for my siblings, nieces and nephews, and neighborhood kids. It taught me that you will never love anything else more than you love your kids."

Andre Miller was 28 when he first became a father. Initially, him and his co-parent weren't really getting along, but he had a good relationship with his kids. Most of his time was spent working and taking care of his family.

He heard about Brothers United from seeing flyers and billboards all over the city. An alumnus, Ricky Luster, also gave him some information on the program.

"I wanted to join to see if I could grow, and I feel like I did."

Brothers United helped Miller's communication skills grow, which enabled him to communicate better with his co-parent. He realized there are some things he needed to be more aware of, and took what he learned and put it to use in his everyday life.

"The program helped me be more understanding to her side. It helped me utilize time outs for conflict resolution."

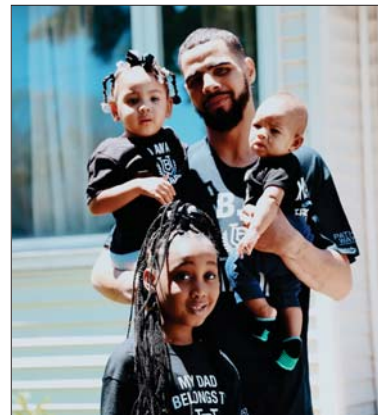
Miller expressed that his understanding of how to handle different situations improved. He learned how to check on his mental and physical health

so that he could function better as a father.

Life after the program has been good for Mr. Miller. He thanks Brothers United for helping him to become a better man and a better father.

"It is a very helpful program because I was able to help other fathers."

If you are interested in joining The Brothers United Program or have someone you want to refer: Call us at (419) 279-6297 or www.pathwaytoledo.org.



Andre Miller

A Selfless Father: Meet Curtis Strode

By Mariah Hicks, Brothers United Coach

Special to The Truth

"I was 25 when I had my first child. Pretty much at that point, it was no longer about me. It was about him. I went through a situation with his



Curtis Strode

mom. She was on drugs so I had to take my son. I had to be a father."

When Curtis Strode became a father, selflessness was a trait that he had to adopt and practice daily in order to be engaged in his children's lives. Though he had complications with his first son's mother, Strode was mar-

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In Memoriam

Leola Green-Haynes August 12, 1929- July 5, 2020

Heaven has earned another angel. Our Mother, the Matriarch of our extended family has transitioned from labor to reward. Leola Green-Haynes passed away on Sunday, July 5, 2020 at ProMedica Flower Hospital. The last surviving member of a family of four children, Leola was predeceased by her father; Oliver Woodard, her mother; Idelle Woodard and sisters; Myrtis (Marvin) Parker, Dora (Leon) Jones and brother, Frank Woodard.

The Matriarch of the Corbitt Family that includes the Russell, Stovall, Boyd, Galloway, Pearson and Woodard families, Leola was born on August 12, 1929 to the union of her parents in Bruce, Mississippi. The family migrated to the north Toledo area in the 1930s.

Leola married her first husband, Leemon Green, on November 18, 1950. Leemon predeceased her in March of 1988. To their union three daughters were born: Sharon Diane (Jimmy) Gaines, Pamela Lynn (Carlton) Jones and Paula Sue (Phillip) Hamilton. Leola was a pillar of the community having sat on numerous boards: EOPA, The Toledo Symphony, Advocates for Basic Legal Equality (ABLE), The Toledo Museum of Art, the Area Office on Aging and the Neighborhood Block Watch. She was a devoted educator having taught kindergarten and sixth grade at the former Stickney Elementary and retiring in 1997 from Riverside Elementary of the Toledo Public Schools.

A life member of The Indiana Avenue Missionary Baptist Church, she was Director of the Junior Church, a position that she proudly served for several decades. Leola actively maintained membership in the Black Nurses, the Black Family, Phi Delta Kappa International Sorority of Educators, the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, The National Association of Negro Business and Professional Women (NANBPWC) Toledo Club where she worked with the Debs-in-Waiting of the annual Debutante Cotillion until illness. She also served diligently as an annual ambassador of the American Cancer Society.

She is survived by husband, Oscar Haynes; daughters Sharon Gaines, Pamela Jones and Paula Hamilton; grandchildren Jimmy, Jr. (Takesha) Gaines of Columbus, Ohio; Andre' (Lauren) Gaines of Los Angeles, California;

Britny and Collin Jones of Toledo and Taryn (Marcus) O'Neal of Chicago, Illinois. Great-Grandchildren Jaedyn, Julian, Josiah and Wesley Gaines. Step-sons Lester (Vera) and Darryn Haynes; step-daughters Gwendalyn (Michael) Lawler, Ingrid and Karren Haynes. Ten step grandchildren, a host of cousins, other relatives and friends.

Wake and funeral are being handled by the C. Brown Mortuary. Memorial contributions to the organization of the donor's choice. A foundation is being established by her daughters in her memory.



Leola Green-Haynes

Curtis Strobe.. continued from page 8

ried to his now wife by the time his son was two years old.

"That's who he knows as mom. He didn't have motherly love right away growing up."

Strobe's son's birth mom passed away when he was 10 years old.

"That void was kind of filled, not having his biological mom, but having a woman that was strong enough to be there for him as a mom."

Strobe heard about Brothers United from his brother-in-law who advised him to join. The program gave him an opportunity to get involved and hear other men's stories and troubles about being a father. He joined because he wanted to know that he wasn't the only father going through things he was dealing with.

Initially, he was only interested in attending the group for job opportunities, but Brothers United soon became something more for Strobe.

"When I got there and was going through the classes, it was more to it. It was more like a brotherhood at the time to help you talk about

... continued on page 10

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Toledo Zoo and TARTA Enter New Partnership

Two Toledo institutions are proving the age-old adage of together everyone achieves more. Toledo Zoo and TARTA have entered into a new partnership to help keep the community connected.

On Mondays, beginning July 13 and going through August 31, Toledo Zoo will contribute to covering TARTA services from the downtown TARTA hub to the Zoo's Main Entrance. Rides will begin at 9:30 a.m. and end at 2 p.m. each Monday.

As of July 13, Toledo Zoo will restart Free Lucas County Admission on Mondays from 10 a.m. – noon with valid proof of residency. Zoo gate hours will be 10 a.m. – noon and the park will close at 2 p.m.

"The best partnerships add value to all of the partners. By partnering with TARTA, the Zoo can now facilitate a safe, public transportation op-

tion for access to the Zoo on Mondays. It will be exciting to see how this partnership could grow in the future, said Toledo Zoo's president & CEO, Jeff Sailer.

"As we continue rebuilding TARTA from the inside out, community partnerships with both public and private organizations will be critical to the revitalization of a robust public transit system in our region. Our partnership with the Toledo Zoo is a prime example of TARTA's renewed commitment to excellence, a new business model and to providing the transportation that our region deserves," said TARTA General

Manager, Kim Dunham.

Please visit <http://tarta.com/routes/> for more route information.

Curtis Strobe.. continued from page 9

issues and deal with things."

While in Brothers United, Strobe learned a lot of information, especially practices for how to be a better co-parent.

"Sometimes you have to let things be what they are and come to a mutual ground even though things may not be perfect between you and your co-parent. I do have a daughter outside of my home and co-parenting was very hard. I even had to go to court. BU Nation showed up to let them know that I was trying to be a father."

To this day, Strobe still struggles with co-parenting with his daughter's mother. Due to attempting to go for full custody of his daughter, which Strobe believed was the right thing to do at the moment, their relationship is now strained. Even though his daughter and his co-parent seemingly don't want him in their lives, he continues to try to communicate and show that he's there for them.

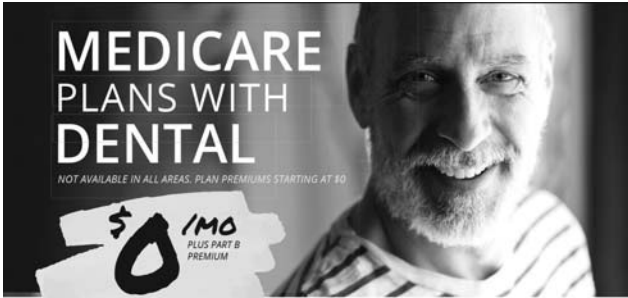
Brothers United reminded Strobe of his strength, which encouraged him to continue pressing on.

"Brothers United taught me that pretty much you have to stand up. You have to own up to your discretions, whatever it is that's standing in your way. You have to stand up and fight for it to do what you need to do. And that goes back to my childhood, what I was taught as a child."

Mr. Strobe continues to carry what he learned from the program and apply it to his life, thankful that he had an opportunity to be part of a program dedicated to the betterment of fathers.

"Brothers United is a good program for young black men who are struggling with how to be a father or how to get a job or how to get through the system of being a father. They're a good program for young men that are growing up. At this point I'm 38. I've been through a lot that taught me how to be a father a long time ago. I understand what the program stands for. It's still men my age who didn't have that growing up, so they wouldn't know. Some of us didn't have fathers growing up, so we were never taught how to be a father. This program came along for a lot of us."

If you are interested in joining The Brothers United Program or have someone you want to refer : Call us at (419) 279-6297 or www.pathwaytoledo.org



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Taxpayer Advocacy Panel (TAP) Want to improve the IRS? SPEAK UP

By Andrea Price, TAP member representing Ohio

Guest Column

The Taxpayer Advocacy Panel is comprised of civic-minded citizen volunteers from all walks of life representing each state, D.C., Puerto Rico and an international member (citizens living, working or doing business abroad). TAP is a Federal Advisory Committee whose mission is to listen to taxpayers, identify taxpayers' issues and make suggestions for improving the IRS service and customer satisfaction.

Everyone has something to say about taxes and the IRS. Please take a moment to give us your suggestions for TAP to consider by contacting one of the following:

TAP Ohio member: tapohioandreaprice@gmail.com

Call Toll-free at: 1-888-912-1227

Website: www.improveirs.org

Should taxpayers tell the IRS how they want their tax dollars spent?

The National Taxpayer Advocate released the National Taxpayer Advocate 2020 Purple Book to Congress. In it, she presents a concise summary of 58 legislative recommendations that she believes will strengthen taxpayer rights and improve tax administration. Recommendation #3 REQUIRE THE IRS TO PROVIDE TAXPAYERS WITH A "RECEIPT" SHOWING HOW THEIR TAX DOLLARS ARE BEING SPENT.

Present Law

Internal Revenue Code (IRC) § 7523 requires the IRS to provide taxpayers with very basic information regarding federal taxes and federal spending. Specifically, the IRS is required to include pie-shaped graphs in its instructions for Form 1040 that show the relative sizes of major budget outlay categories and major income categories. In the 2018 Form 1040 instructions booklet, the IRS published two graphs on page 112 depicting Major Categories of Federal Income and Outlays for Fiscal Year 2017.

Reasons for Change

IRC § 7523 was enacted for tax years beginning after 1990. The purpose was to help taxpayers understand the connection between the taxes they pay and the benefits they receive. Taxpayers who perceive that connection may be more compliant with their tax obligations.

However, the National Taxpayer Advocate believes the information required by IRC § 7523 is too cursory to achieve its objective. It would be more helpful to provide each taxpayer with personalized information regarding the taxpayer's own contributions, such as the taxpayer's marginal tax rate, effective tax rate, and tax benefits claimed.

In addition, the value of even this cursory requirement has diminished over time. In 1990, almost all taxpayers filed their tax returns on paper, so the instructions booklet was widely available and widely used. Today, about 90 percent of individual income tax returns are filed electronically, and the instructions booklet is much less visible. For those reasons, far fewer taxpayers see the Form 1040 instructions booklet today.

If the statute is modified, e-filing has the potential to enhance the value of the requirement. Specifically, tax software is capable of computing and displaying personalized tax information, including the taxpayer's marginal tax rate, effective tax rate, and tax benefits claimed, and can show how much of each taxpayer's tax payments go toward major categories of federal spending. If required by Congress and programmed by software companies, this information can be presented in far greater detail than was possible when the statute was enacted in 1990.

To further promote public engagement, once taxpayers are given information regarding their tax payments and their contribution to federal spending, taxpayers could be given an opportunity to voice their opinions about how their tax dollars should be spent in the future. This could be achieved by inviting taxpayers to "vote" on their tax returns regarding how much and on what programs the government should spend its money and by requiring the IRS to report the results of that "voting." The "voting," of course, would be non-binding. But this exercise in public engagement could help Americans gain a better understanding of the connection between the federal taxes they pay and the federal benefits they receive. And, as noted, when taxpayers have a clear understanding of the benefits, they receive in relation to the taxes they pay, tax morale and tax compliance are likely to increase. Read more at www.taxpayeradvocate.irs.gov.

Taxpayer Advocate Service (TAS) is an independent organization within the IRS lead by the National Taxpayer Advocate, Erin Collins. TAS mission is to protect your rights as a taxpayer and help you with tax problems you can't resolve on your own.



Andrea Price

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Toledo Reaffirms Support for International Students

The University of Toledo last week issued the following statement on the new U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement guidance regarding international students:

The University of Toledo has devoted significant resources over the past months to plan for and promote a safe return to campus for fall semester.

We appreciate these are difficult, uncertain times and we have done our best to provide clarity and assurances for all of our students. Unfortunately, the guidance issued by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement regarding international students has created additional uncertainty for our

international students.

UToledo is fully committed to providing on-campus instruction for our students this fall, alongside remote and online instruction modalities. This flexible approach to learning fulfills the new requirements for our international students.

While our Rocket Restart plans are subject to change based on the pandemic's spread and the guidance from local, state and federal public health experts, as well as our own health and safety experts, we understand the importance of an uninterrupted educational experience. UToledo is currently making plans to ensure that no student

would be impacted mid-semester by these new federal guidelines.

A diverse student body is a core value of UToledo. Every year, we welcome hundreds of international students from around the world into our Rocket family. Any policy that makes it more difficult for bright young minds to complete their education at UToledo is concerning. As always, we continue to monitor the potential impact of immigration laws, policies and practices on our campus community and pledge to offer our international students our full support now and always.

Reflections... continued from page 16

itated at first but called and spoke with Annette Reed. She answered my questions and reassured me that WBW was a good program and legit.

"I started classes in 2009 and received my GED in 2011. After I received my GED I went back to WBW and volunteered and tried to help empower current women striving to achieve their GED. I returned back to Davis College to continue my education and graduated May 9, 2014. I was unable to walk for graduation due to the death of my husband Minister Hutchen. I was truly blessed by Women Blessing Women staff and classes.

"I currently am employed at Mercy St. Vincent hospital as a medical technician. I am also a member of Eastern Star Missionary Baptist Church. Ms. Glenda also known as "Ms. G" She has blessed and helped a lot of broken women"

Terryann Simpson said: I attended WBW while I was working part-time at McDonald's restaurant. I was a single parent but my goals were high. After receiving my GED I began volunteering at Sunset Nursing Home and later was employed. I attended Chamberlain University where I received my Bachelor's Degree in Nursing. I graduated Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing in July 2010. I just accepted a new job as a Clinical Manager.

I will be transitioning from my Nursing Instructor position in the next week. I have a Bachelor's in nursing and working on my Master's Degree in nursing at Chamberlain University. I moved to the USA almost 13 years ago

Kenneice Kelley received her GED under Friendship New Vision (SOS). "During that time I was having a rough time focusing and staying on

task. I continued although many obstacles got in my way. I received my GED June 2013. I was surrounded by family and friends. I was crying and overjoyed because I couldn't believe I passed my test. My hard work was worth it. I continued my education by attending Ultimate Medical Academy and I graduated with a Billing and Coding Certificate.

"I am currently working at Vibrant Life Senior Living. My job is wonderful and the residents are a part of my family. This fall I am planning on going back to college for Medical Assistant. I want to obtain my dream job at Toledo Hospital or the University Alabama Birmingham Hospital. I want to learn as much as I can to provide for my family.

"Thank you to all the teachers, speakers and mentors that help us to obtain our GED!"

Angel Tall attended Friendship New Vision (SOS) GED program at the Frederick Douglas Center and received her GED in 2012.

"The program taught me so much and the support was enormous. I am forever grateful. Without God and the program I would still be lost."

"I went on to further my education and graduated from Professional Skills Institute in December 2019.

"I am currently a LPN (Licensed Practical Nurse). The program was a true blessing to me. I wanted to better myself but I didn't know how to go about it. I am employed at Elmwood of Fremont."

Yahana Ramsey-Evans, a single parent, attended WBW before the doors closed. Determined to reach her goal she attended Friendship New Vision (SOS) program at the Collingwood Arts Center, the Frederick Douglas Center and then at Friendship Baptist Church. Yahana received her GED in 2012.

"The WBW family was and still is a blessing to not just me but my family. Many doors have been

opened and even my children are to accomplish things that I never thought possible. Most times I would doubt myself or want to give up or slack off cause life got too hard and two important ladies Glenda Brown and Nickie Hutchen would tell me that's not an option. The staff always told us to never do it for others but do it for you!

"I am thankful I pushed through and got my GED. I was over-joyed for it was the best feeling ever to know at thirty-four years old I was making my dream come true by enrolling in college."

Yahana just recently completed her Associates Degree in Contemporary Business Management at Stautzenberger College on April 2, 2020. Due to the COVID-19 ceremony was canceled. "I am currently working toward obtaining my Braiding and Manager's License to pursue my dream of becoming a hair and nail boutique/daycare owner in the future!" Yahana is currently married and both of her children have graduated from high school.

Christina Russell attended Friendship New Vision (SOS) GED program at the Collingwood Arts Center and received her GED in 2012.

Able held the graduation at Owens Community College, where you see Christina with her daughter in the photo.

After receiving her GED Christina focused on her goals and achieved her Certificate of Excel-

...continued on page 13

Tolliver... continued from page 3

To my utter amazement, President Trump answered none of the questions correctly except for question 47! People, we are in trouble. Deep trouble.

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Pauli Murray: A Personal and Political Life by Troy R. Saxby

By Terri Schlichenmeyer

The Truth Contributor

Life, if you think about it, is somewhat like a necklace.

Imagine the first bead is birth, starting off a chain. This bead represents your fifth birthday, here's your tenth, graduation, your first job, your first home, your firstborn. Some beads are larger but the smaller ones are not unimportant. And so it goes, but when building that metaphoric chain, as in the new book **Pauli Murray: A Personal and Political Life** by **Troy R. Saxby**, be aware of the links.

Almost from the day she was born, Annie Pauline Murray was challenged.

When she was three years old, her pregnant mother died, leaving six children to a husband who was abusive and mentally ill. Shortly afterward, Murray's father entered a "psychiatric facility," where he died when Murray was 12; between those losses, Murray was taken in and raised by an aunt in a poverty-affected but "respectable middle-class" household that contained more mental illness.

Though many of Murray's Black family members "passed" as white, her closest guardians "gloried in the achievements of African Americans." Young Murray had a "rebellious streak," but she embraced the education her elders demanded, and was driven to excel: at college, many officials doubted that she could do the work required to succeed, and they told her so – but that "streak" made her more determined, which helped her achieve several college degrees, including one in law. Her accomplishments were many: Murray was an early feminist, she worked tirelessly and ingeniously for the Civil Rights Movement and for social justice, but her successes didn't buoy her.

Always a "tomboy," Murray had love affairs with women through the years, but furtively, given the times and lack of tolerance for homosexuality. She seemed to embrace that love, but it also seemed to bother her: she asked doctors if there was something inside her that was more male than female, as if she were a "hermaphrodite." This, perhaps, as well as racism, self-pressure to succeed, confrontationalism, and mental illness that plagued her family caused "almost annual breakdowns..."

While it starts out fascinating, with descriptions of the era in which Murray's forebears lived and of her earliest years, Pauli Murray be-

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comes too much, too quickly. It's comprehensive, that's a fact – author Troy R. Saxby seemed to leave no stone unturned – but infinitesimal details of Murray's life are abundant here, every argument, movement, and visit, and that can be overwhelming.

And yet, there's so much to glean from this book, so many milestones Saxby says Murray set, that you almost can't stop reading despite watching the discomfort, obvious pain, and inner struggle she endured. Through letters and articles

she wrote, readers get to know Murray as she perceived herself; those personal peeks are engrossing, especially given the legacy she left when she died almost exactly 35 years ago.

If you have the patience, or the ability to skim when overpowered with minutiae, Pauli Murray is ultimately, absolutely worthwhile. Especially now, any reader who wants to know more about social justice pioneers should get a bead on it.

Reflections... continued from page 12

lence as "Senior Designer" in November 2019, at JC Penney Salon, which is located at the Shops at Fallen Timbers in Maumee, Ohio.

Antoinette (Toni) Thomas attended WBW before the organization closed. Afterwards she continued attending GED Classes and the Empowerment program which was now under Friendship New Vision-(SOS) Sisters of Strength. Antoinette received my GED on April 23, 2013.

"This was one of the happiest days of my life. This program changed my life in so many ways. The ladies and every volunteer for this program gave me the courage to keep moving forward, even when I doubted myself. I want to say a special thank you to Ms. Glenda Brown and Mrs. Sharon Cannon-Barrow for all those talks and encouragement.

"I received my Bachelor's in Human Services in August 2020. I have a GPA of 3.5 and I also am a part of the University of Phoenix Honor Society.

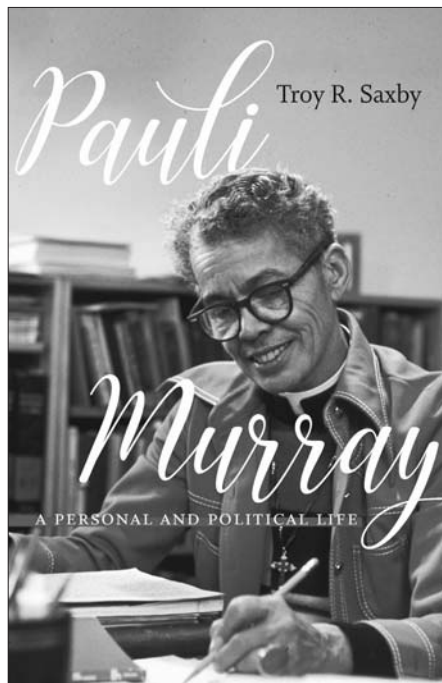
"I currently work for the Home Depot Distribution Center in Lucky, Ohio."

Tiffany Young attended Women Blessing Women located on Page Street. It didn't take her long at all and she received her GED in April 2011 before the doors closed. Tiffany had set high goals for herself.

Tiffany went on to college and graduated on May 20, 2013 with her Associates of Science, with Honors, as both a Phi Theta Kappa and a Chi Alpha Epsilon member. She went on to transfer to work on her Bachelors and then her Doctorate. (Tiffany is shown in the photo above with her husband and two children.

Tiffany received her Bachelor Degree in Psychology and went on for a Masters in Mental Health Counseling. She is a licensed counselor in the State of Ohio. She has been working for several years. She was working at Unison Health before finishing her Grad studies.

2020 Update: Tiffany is currently working at the Community Counseling Center in Ashtabula, Ohio.



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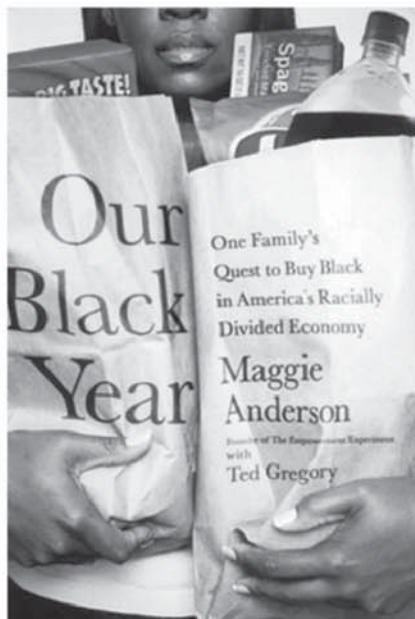
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CRUSADERS for CHRIST CHURCH Presents **Youth & Young Adult 4th Sunday**

Have you been feeling the nudge to develop your life more spiritually but aren't quite sure how to begin? If so, this theme-enriched and spirit-filled experience is designed just for you. Visit us on Facebook - I have a special video message for the serious pursuer!

Youth & Young Adult 4th Sunday

When: Every 4th Sunday
Time: 11:00 am
Where: Crusaders for Christ Church
910 Woodville Rd.
Toledo, Ohio

 Bishop Joseph Marshall Jr., Pastor
Emmanuel Lakota Marshall, First Lady

 Crusaders for Christ Church • www.crusadersforchristchurch.org

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Wedding Receptions, Book Signings, Birthday Celebrations, Special Celebrations, and much more!

Annual Membership available and receive complimentary Bookings Church and Organizational Bookings welcomed
Free Wi-Fi

BOOK YOUR EVENTS NOW!

CLASSIFIEDS

July 15, 2020

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ASSISTANT MANAGER OF HUMAN RESOURCES

Lucas County Children Services is seeking an Asst. Mgr. of Human Resources and to assist in creating a work environment that promotes personal growth and excellence of LCCS employees. Additional requirements can be viewed at www.lucaskids.net. No Phone Calls Please. EOE valuing diversity.

PARK TECHNICIAN

Metroparks Toledo has an opening for a full time Park Technician to provide maintenance of grounds, facilities and equipment at assigned park.

HS degree or equivalent required. Entry level experience in general turf, grounds and building maintenance. Valid driver's license required. Work schedule may include evenings, weekends and holidays. 40 hrs/week. \$13.50/hr. Full benefits. Go to www.metroparkstoleado.com to view detailed position description, job requirements and to apply. EOE



THE TOLEDO-LUCAS COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT IS HIRING!

Current openings:

Public Health Nurse- Reproductive Health & Wellness Clinic
Public Health Nurse- Adult & Travel Immunization
Community Health Worker- Healthy Start

The Toledo-Lucas County Health Department is an Equal Opportunity Employer. The Department operates in accordance with Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

For job descriptions and information on how to apply, please visit our website:

<https://www.lucascountyhealth.com/about/career-opportunities/>

Call to place your ad:

419-243-0007

www.TheTruthToledo.com

ADMINISTRATIVE SECRETARY

Lucas County Children Services is seeking an Administrative Secretary. If interested review requirements and apply at www.lucaskids.net. EOE Valuing Diversity

VICE PRESIDENT OF MINISTRY BUSINESS STRATEGY

Cherry Street Mission Ministries seeks to fill a full time (40), salaried position as Vice President of Ministry Business Strategy. Responsibilities include new business ideas and strategies, follow through with current business operating methods, work collegially to meet business targets and goals. The Vice President of Business Strategy oversees the Accounting, Human Resources and Quality Assurance. Minimum of bachelor's degree in Business or Finance with previous managerial experience of at least 5 years or more. Must be able to agree to the ministries' Statement of Faith. Full Benefits. Go to <https://cherrystreetmission.org/about/employment-in-our-ministry/> to submit your application.



NOTICE OF JOB VACANCY

LICENSED SOCIAL WORKER OR REGISTERED NURSE

Care Manager- with one (1) year of paid clinical experience in home and community based service. To conduct care management, and assessments for individuals in need of community based long-term care. Benefit package. Knowledge of community resources and reliable transportation required.

Reliable transportation, successfully passing criminal background check (BCI/FBI), drug/alcohol screening, valid driver's license, insurance and the ability to satisfactorily undergo a Motor Vehicle Record check (MVR) on at least an annual basis

Excellent Benefits. EEO/AAP, Bilingual and minority applicants encouraged to apply

Deadline for application: Until position filled

Or

jobs@areaofficeonaging.com

This description is intended to indicate the kind of tasks and level of work difficulty required of the position. The title of this job shall not be construed as declaring the specific duties and responsibilities of the position. This position description and/or job vacancy notice is not intended to limit or in any way modify the rights of any supervisor to assign, direct, and control the work of employees under supervision. The use of this particular expression or illustration describing duties shall not be held to exclude other duties not mentioned.

Submit resumes to:
Samuel H. Hancock
Ed.D.

Vice President of
Human Resources
Area Office on Aging
of NW Ohio, Inc.
2155 Arlington Avenue
Toledo, Ohio 43609



CLINICAL DIRECTOR

Status: Independent Contractor

Date: May 28, 2020

ABOUT US:

Center of Hope Family Services, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation founded in 1997. Our mission is to improve the life outcomes of adults, children, and families in urban settings.

SUMMARY:

The Clinical Director is an independent contractor who will collaborate with the Executive Director, the Management Team and the Clinical Services Team. The Clinical Director is responsible for designing and implementing client services that address Center of Hope Family Services' mission and are provided in a manner consistent with Agency vision and values.

ESSENTIAL RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. Recommends a system of clinical programming for achieving budget goals and assuring quality of care by adhering to relevant best practices and State mandated requirements.
2. Ensures that clinical decisions are made in the best interest of the client.

REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS:

1. The Clinical Director must have a master's degree from an accredited college or university in social work, psychology, or other closely related human service field.
2. Must be licensed to practice in the State of Ohio in psychology, social work or professional counseling.
3. Must have demonstrated extensive experience in the treatment and care of individuals who have mental health, substance abuse or trauma related issues and/or children who have experienced these issues or child abuse / neglect.
4. They must have prior supervisory experience.

To apply, please email your resume to jobs@cohfs.org.

Some Reflections on the Women Blessing Women Program – “Where Are They Now?”

By Glenda Gamble Brown
Special to The Truth

Women Blessing Women (WBW) was a non-profit organization organized in 1998 by the Catholic Diocese of Toledo. The program served women with low incomes in Lucas County and who needed to obtain their GEDs, Job Readiness Skills and Empowerment Skills to better their lives. Due to lack of funding the board voted to close the doors in May of 2012.

Many volunteers, donors such as and community partners planted seeds of good faith for many women who came through the doors. For they knew from *Jeremiah 29:11 scripture which says, “For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, not of evil, to give you an expected end.”* Special thanks to Toledo Rotary Club and UPS!

Many women benefited from the program receiving their GED, Employment and Life Empowerment. From those seeds of Faith, donor dollars and thousands of hours of volunteer, time many women are blooming in life and I would like to share some of their success stories with you. I am so proud of these women!

Thank you to Bishop Duane C. Tisdale and Friendship Baptist Church for embracing the vision to help women and men achieve their GED. Thank you to the many WBW volunteers who continued after the doors were closed. With your sacrifice many of these ladies were able to achieve their GED, continue their education and work in their desired field. *“It is amazing that many of these women work in the medical field where they are caring for others.”*

Sue Nowak and Kay Shrewsbury, former WBW volunteers continue to volunteer at Friendship Baptist Church with the GED Program. So if you are interested in achieving your GED contact Friendship at **419—534-5437**. Leave a message and someone will contact you.

If you have received your GED from WBW or Friendship New Vision GED classes we would love to hear your success story!

Reconnect with us for reunion activities and empowerment. Contact us on Facebook **“Empowered Women”** (Friends of WBW & SOS). You may also contact **Glenda Gamble Brown**

Tracey Graves Steele attended Women Blessing Women on Page Street. After participating in the Empowerment Workshops and GED Classes, with determination Tracey received her GED in December 2011.

Tracey used to say in our empowerment classes that she couldn't smile and didn't like to look in the mirror at herself. Tracey learned how to smile and with empowerment and confidence has accomplished many of her goals. She obtained her driver's license and start driving.

Tracey became employed at Arista Home Healthcare. She is a Home Health Aide. To my surprise Tracey ended up taking care of my mother and this was a blessing for me for she is such a caring person. Tracey has not stopped smiling!

April Halterman, a single parent, attended Women Blessing Women on Page Street and received her GED in November of 2010. April participated in the program and continues to raise her children.

Her son has graduated from high school and her daughter will be graduating soon.

With confidence, she set goals and have achieved them for herself and her family. April is current working and has within the year obtained her driver's license and purchased a new car. April keeps in touch with former WBW women and also attends the WBW Reunion gatherings.

Keonna Hutcherson, a single parent, was working part-time while attending Women Blessing Women for the GED program. After WBW closed Keonna was determined and pursued taking the GED on her own and passed in 2013.

Keonna is seen in her photo here at her daughter's graduation. Both mother and daughter were pursuing their careers in Nursing. Keonna attended Stautzenberger College, where she graduated with a certification for a Practical Nurse in December 2019..

2020 Update:

On April 10, 2020, Keonna took her State of Ohio Board of Nursing and passed the first time! She is now a LPN (Licensed Practical Nurse) and currently employed at Park Terrace Nursing.

Nichelle Hutchen known as Nickie became a young mother twice at a very early age and says of those difficulties: “While in high school after having my second child and him becoming very ill I ended up missing quite a bit of school. I ended up dropping out with only a half of year from graduation. After the death of my son of my son, I went to achieve my GED. After completing the classes I acquired my STNA certificate, and years of working in the nursing field. I decided to attend Davis College for a year and a half only to then find out that the GED was not real.

“I was very hurt and confused. I thought all of my time and effort was lost. I didn't do anything for years then I thought about getting my GED again. I saw GED classes being offered in a community newspaper for WBW. I hes-

...continued on page 12



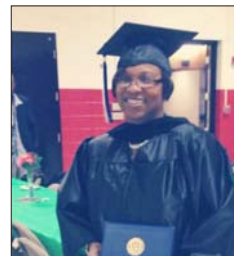
Tracey Graves Steele



April Halterman



Keonna Hutcherson at daughter's graduation



Nichelle Hutchen



Angel Tall



Christina Russell and Daughter



Kenneice Kelley



Antoinette Thomas



Yahana Ramsey
Evans



Tiffany Young



Terryann
Simpson