

# The Sojourner's Truth

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Volume 66 No. 1

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

March 24, 2021

## TTEC Is Accepting Students



Stephanie Boutté, President of Ternion Training and Education Center

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# Drama Returns to City Hall

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

The Truth Contributor

*Where there is money there is fighting.*

- Marian Anderson



The tension at last week's disputatious Toledo City Council meeting revealed the classic power struggle that often ensues when the legislative branch of municipal government independently proposes and passes legislation.

In late January, Councilwoman Cecelia Adams, PhD, proposed creating a new Department of Parks, Recreation, Youth Services, and Educational Engagement. The ordinance was passed March 2 with the mayor's support by a 9-3 vote. Then, on March 10, the mayor suddenly backtracked and vetoed the legislation. The veto ruffled feathers in the Black community and set the stage for last week's contentious vote to override it.

What caused Kapszukiewicz to veto the legislation after earlier supporting it?

While the mayor insisted that the Adams legislation violated the City Charter, I do know that "People sho' get funny when they get a little money."

Some point to the sweeping federal American Rescue Plan for the mayor's about-face. The \$1.9 trillion relief package recently passed by Congress will send \$190 million to the City of Toledo which, when added to the City's \$70 rainy day fund, will leave the Kapszukiewicz administration flush with cash.

After lobbying from former Mayor Carty Finkbeiner, the NAACP and other community leaders, the mayor came to last week's council meeting apologetic for a "three-week-long miscommunication between city council and the administration and my staff." He also brought with him a \$30 million dollar incentive to "invest in youth mentoring and large-scale summer work programs" if the legislation is sent to committee instead of voting on the veto.

However, Dr. Adams, who called the offer "disingenuous" and possibly insufficient, was not trying to hear that. "It bothers me," she said, "because no one in administration including [Kapszukiewicz] was anywhere talking to us as a body when the ordinance was introduced in January; when the ordinance was discussed during first reading; when the ordinance was discussed during second reading; when the ordinance was discussed during the third reading; and when the ordinance was discussed during the hearing, where nobody from the administration showed up. Council has already spoken on this matter and ... I don't think it is proper for us to give permission or relinquish our power to anyone or anything to take away the fact that the legislative branch can legislate and we did... There was no miscommunication; there is no confusion here, we've had plenty of time to study this and today is the day we've been forced and put into a position where we now have to vote again for something we already approved."

Adams' veto override effort failed when earlier supporters - Councilwom-

en Vanice Williams and Tiffany Preston-Whitman joined Councilman Sam Melden - each reversed course and supported Williams' motion to send the proposal to committee, essentially upholding the Kapszukiewicz maneuver.

What latent truths does this factious council meeting reveal about the current iteration of Toledo's executive and legislative branches of government?

Who controls City Council?

Carty Finkbeiner, the NAACP, and others had the mayor's attention and lobbied the mayor to ward off a vote on the veto lest it causes a racial divide. However, it is clear from other behind-the-scenes maneuverings that Council President Matt Cherry and the mayor have future aspirations which are tied to each other. It's rumored that Cherry's next move is to become mayor, while Kapszukiewicz has his sights set on replacing Marcy Kaptur in Congress. The two will always act in their best political interests. Using their collaborative political might they ensured that the veto was sustained.

How to handle legal disputes between the executive and legislative branches?

City Law Director Dale Emch represents both the mayor and city council. Isn't that a conflict of interest? If not, it should be. Emch wrote a short, one-page opinion concluding that Adams' proposal violated the City Charter, a contention that other high-level legal experts disputed. City council needs its own legal counsel and should not rely on the mayor's legal counsel in disputes like this.

Where has the Black Voting Bloc gone?

All five Black councilmembers supported Adams' original proposal for the new Department of Parks, Recreation, Youth Services, and Educational Engagement. However, the seasoned former high-level public school administrator was only able to retain three of the five votes, causing her effort to override the mayor's veto to fail.

Councilwoman Vanice Williams' relatively quick motion to send the proposal to committee seemed to smack of back-room dealing and abandonment to Adams, who testily replied: "I really resent the fact that the inexperience and lack of knowledge about process is being pounced upon with the new people of council who are being taken advantage of, in my opinion, and I wish that that were not the case, and if it is it's unfortunate. But I do know one thing is for sure, the very same people who were as adamant about it on March 2nd need to be as adamant about it today!"

Show Me the Money

Toledo is a political tale of two cities. One group of residents is adamant about receiving funding to get their streets paved, snow removed, and downtown bricks and mortar built. The other group, less privileged, needs funds to address their disparate social and economic situation. The latter typically gets only the crumbs that have trickled down, if any, after priorities have been met for the more advantaged group.

The question is Has anything changed?

The truth is that "Everybody and their mother have been positioning themselves to get a chunk of the federal funds allocated for Toledo." Privately, \$40 million was offered to create the new youth department. Then it was reduced to \$30 million. How much, if any, funding will ultimately reach Black and Brown people, children, entrepreneurs, and social service providers?

The administration needs to allocate these funds to maximally impact the community and the people of color who need it most. We will be watching.

Contact Rev. Donald Perryman, DMin, at [drlperryman@centerofhope-baptist.org](mailto:drlperryman@centerofhope-baptist.org)

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## Community Calendar

April 2

Greater St. Mary's Baptist Church with Pastor Robert Lyons, Sr. will be holding a 7 Last Words of Jesus Christ Good Friday Service on Friday, April 2, 2021 at 6pm. We are located at 416 Belmont Avenue Toledo, OH 43604, contact us at (419) 244-2663.

# Thirty Years ago, I watched Rodney King Beaten. We Thought Our Fight Was Finally Over

By Rep. Karen Bass (D-Calif.)

Texas Metro News

Guest Column

March 3, 2021

When I first saw the tape of Rodney King being beaten in the middle of the street on March 3, 1991, I was not horrified or surprised. I was hopeful. I believed that now, finally, the public would believe what Black and Latino activists had been saying: that police brutality is real and continues a long history of treating Black people like their lives do not matter, while simultaneously attempting to hide that reality in plain sight.

Activists had fought for years to get elected leaders to see and act on what was happening in Black communities across America. But officers who killed or brutalized Black people could say that they did it because they had been in fear for their life, whether or not the person was armed. But then, 30 years ago as we watched that video, we were convinced that justice would finally be served, and the truth would be exposed to the world. We were right to an extent.

### VIDEOS AMERICA CAN'T IGNORE

People across the country felt outraged at what they saw on the tape, but that anger did not translate into large-scale change. Los Angeles amended its city charter to rein in the largely unchecked chief of police, who around that time suggested that Black people were dying from chokeholds at the hands of police at disproportionate rates because our neck veins were different from "normal people's" neck veins.

While these local actions were significant at the time, the reforms pretty much stopped there. There had been a moment of understanding and an opportunity for change, but it passed. In what could now be viewed as a rigged trial (due to changed venue and a jury with no Black people on it), the jury didn't convict any of the four police officers involved in the assault. After that verdict, I drove through the intersection of Florence and Normandie in South Los Angeles on my way to a meeting with other activists and saw our community begin to burn in anger and despair.

Black and Brown people in this country have now endured 30 years of police brutality and violence since Rodney King was beaten. On May 25, 2020, the world witnessed yet another video, this time of the slow killing of George Floyd. Tens of thousands took to the streets demanding change, not only in Minneapolis but in nearly every major U.S. city and in cities around the world. Thirty years later, I stand hopeful yet again. There is a systemic problem with policing in the United States. By enacting transformative reform on a national level, we have a chance to address it.

### WHAT REAL POLICE REFORM LOOKS LIKE

Though named in his honor, Congress must not pass the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act to honor one man — but to honor all the unarmed people who have been brutalized or killed by police since his death and the many more who were brutalized or killed prior. Last year I introduced this bill to act on these long overdue reforms. I developed it carefully in consultation with many stakeholders, including some police officials.

The bill would introduce common sense reforms such as: requiring police officer accreditation; promulgating best practices; maintaining a registry of officers dismissed for excessive use of force; providing grants for communities to reinvasion public safety; and banning the chokeholds and no-knock warrants in federal drug cases, which have been at the root of recent high-profile tragedies. The House passed the bill last year, but it never got a vote in the Senate. The 117th Congress will take up the bill again this week with the opportunity to set us on a path towards finally addressing the issue of police brutality in a transformative way.



Rep. Karen Bass

This is a moment of understanding and an opportunity for change yet again and we cannot let it pass. When the police officers were acquitted at their trial for the beating of Rodney King, I felt hopeless and defeated. It felt like his life did not matter. That's the feeling we will continue to have until we act. We cannot afford to wait another 30 years. Next week, Derek Chauvin will stand trial for second-degree murder and second-degree manslaughter in the death of George Floyd. At some point, our nation needs to make a decision about how many more instances of police brutality do we need to witness before.

*Rep. Karen Bass, D-Calif., represents Culver City and parts of Lost Angeles in the United States House of Representatives and is the former chair of the Congressional Black Caucus. Follow her on Twitter: @RepKarenBass*

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# Rep. Hicks-Hudson Co-sponsors Resolution to Declare Racism a Public Health Crisis

*Resolution provides meaningful actions to address racial health disparities, dismantle systemic racism in Ohio*

*Special to The Truth*

Last week, State Rep. Paula Hicks-Hudson (D-Toledo) signed on as a co-sponsor to House Democratic priority legislation to declare racism a public health crisis. Previously introduced in the 133rd General Assembly as HCR 31, the resolution provides meaningful action steps to address racial health disparities and begin to dismantle systemic racism in Ohio.

"The data showing the devastating effects of COVID-19 on people of color further highlights that race plays a major factor in survival and recovery. In order to solve the problem, we must first acknowledge it. This resolution does that," said Rep. Passer.

The resolution comes as Black Ohioans experience lower vaccination rates than white Ohioans, and COVID-19 has disproportionately impacted Black and brown communities. Black and brown Ohioans also continue to face differences in health outcomes such as higher infant and maternal mortality rates, higher incidences of childhood trauma, higher youth incarceration rates, higher poverty rates, and a life expectancy almost four years below white Ohioans.

The resolution calls for the following actions:

- \* Establishing a glossary of terms and definitions concerning racism and health equity;
- \* Assert that racism is a public health crisis affecting our entire community;
- \* Incorporating educational efforts to address and dismantle racism, and expand understanding of racism and how racism affects individual and population health;
- \* Promoting community engagement, actively engaging citizens on issues of racism, and providing tools to engage actively and authentically with communities of color;
- \* Committing to review all portions of codified ordinances with a racial

equity lens;

- \* Committing to conduct all human resources, vendor selection and grant management activities with a racial equity lens including reviewing all internal policies and practices such as hiring, promotions, leadership appointments and funding;

- \* Promoting racially equitable economic and workforce development practices;

- \* Promoting and encouraging all policies that prioritize the health of people of color, and support local, state, regional, and federal initiatives that advance efforts to dismantle systematic racism and mitigating exposure to adverse childhood experience and trauma training of all elected officials, staff, funders and grantees on workplace biases and how to mitigate them;

- \* Partnering and building alliances with local organizations that have a legacy and track record of confronting racism;

- \* Encouraging community partners and stakeholders in the education, employment, housing, and criminal justice and safety arenas to recognize racism as a public health crisis and to activate the above items;

- \* Securing adequate resources to successfully accomplish the above activities.

The resolution now awaits referral to a House committee.



*Rep. Paula Hicks-Hudson*

## Black Americans Must Now Fight on All Fronts

*By John E. Warren, PhD, Publisher of The San Diego Voice & Viewpoint  
Guest Column*

While some of us are spending our time watching the news or wondering how we are going to survive the pandemic, now is the time to understand the battles we are in and determine what we must do individually and collectively.

Here are the issues: (1) We must be clear that we support a conviction in the George Floyd murder trial. Nothing less is acceptable. We must voice

*...continued on page 6*

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# The School That Dreams Are Made Of

By Asia Nail

Sojourner's Truth Reporter

If you've been looking for a job lately, you know how competitive the job market it is. What if you do not have the specific skills employers are looking for? What if your new job barely makes ends meet?

What if you are ready for a career change?

When a single mom and educator was unhappy with options for her at-risk community, she started her own school. Learn what she did and how you can partner with her.

Stephanie Boutté, president of Ternion Training and Education Center, is currently enrolling students interested in obtaining marketable skills.

TTEC is a faith-based vocational training center that partners with ministries and business leaders across the nation to help make a bigger difference in urban communities.

When Stephanie Boutté found herself pregnant at 17 she realized fast that there weren't many resources in her community that catered to determined mothers in her situation.

"Going to college with a baby was one of the most difficult things I've ever experienced. I grew up in a poverty-stricken town and I knew if I did not get higher education I would never break this cycle of poverty within my own life," says Boutté.

The Toledo vocational training center prides itself on helping students gain skills without taking on college loans. The main goal is to provide excellent training resulting in gainful employment and self-sufficiency -- absolutely debt free. In due course, Boutte expects the school to have about 1,200 to 1,300 students enrolled for programs ranging from computer applications to medical assistant, HVAC and fiber technician.

TTEC is one of only two sites in the area that offers the Pearson testing center and the only center opened on the weekends. Boutté takes particular pride in the fact that such accessibility is available to those in the teaching business.

"Every single person that comes through our doors has a situation that is unique and different. I cater to each student individually to increase their success. Each of our students have a goal and we make it our mission to ensure they reach it without going into debt," explains the president.

Boutté owned her own vocational training school for over 20 years providing career training and community development programs throughout the Houston, Texas market.

"Coming from a generation of poverty, I knew we were poor. No one else knew we were poor," she says. "When I got pregnant, I decided to attend vocational training school. At the time the minimum wage was \$3.25. After graduation I got a job making \$8.25 an hour."

This educational experience helped Boutté to become self-sufficient in her life at a time when many single mothers would have had to depend on supplemental government assistance.

After earning her bachelor's of business administration, she worked in the

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**Black Americans... continued from page 4**

our call for a conviction in all our media outlets. There can be no cover up or acquittal. (2) We must look closely at each state that has a Republican Governor or legislative majority seeking to pass voter suppression laws such as limiting days and times of voting, reducing ballot drop boxes and the number of precincts available in our communities.

We can't wait to litigate. We must follow the example of the state of Georgia and register every voter possible, secure voter identification cards or help voters obtain them in advance of the state laws that are going to pass with Republican majorities in the legislatures and organize voters against Republicans seeking office or re-election in 2022 so that they don't get a majority in the U.S. Congress or the U.S. Senate. Georgia set the example, now let's follow it in every state. (3) We must urge the passage of the John Lewis Voting Rights Act, H.R. 1.

The Bill has passed the U.S. House of Representatives, we must now find the five or 10 votes needed in the Senate to add to the Democratic votes necessary for passage. Every Senate and Congressional District has people seeking to replace the incumbent. We must find those people and support them if they support us. The late Julian Bond once said, "No permanent friends, no permanent enemies, just permanent interest."

We must study the White Nationalists, and the Republicans who no longer care about the American people, only maintaining their "White Privilege" at

**School That Dreams Are Made Of... continued from page 5**

corporate arena. "Working exposed me to different types of people with new ideas and I gained an appreciation for new experience," she recalls.

Determined to make a difference in underserved areas, and to provide opportunities for exposure to others, she returned to the vocational school arena to acquire employment.

"I wanted to give back to the type of community I, myself came from. Unfortunately, I found most schools no longer catered to women like myself. It had become all about the money. That truly broke my heart," shares Boutté

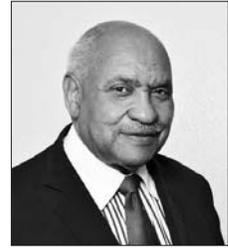
Still determined, she found a position at a local vocational school. With her get-it-done attitude and her love for her students, she evolved her position to program coordinator.

With a special emphasis on valuing diversity, she kept students engaged as they learned new methods tailored specifically to each classroom.

"I'll never forget, my first classroom had 35 Black and Hispanic female students excited to learn. Unfortunately, I was given no books, supplies, or curriculum for the class amongst many other hurdles. Still, I rose to the occasion. After a couple of years, I felt led to start my own school," shares Boutté.

A local real estate developer in Texas heard about all the great things she

the expense of the rest of America. In the midst of this, we must reassess our spending habits and our loyalties. We must know who financially supports those who are against voter participation, those who support police unfair treatment of Blacks, in particular, and people of color in general and those who oppose America helping the most needed and most vulnerable among us. It sounds like a big task, but we start where we live and build from there. Let's get busy.



Dr. John Warren

was doing in educational training and made a donation. Smiling she recalls: "He built an entire school and gave it to me, no strings attached. It was a beautiful blessing."

Not only did this developer pay for the school, he also furnished it, paid for the Internet, telephone, cable, electricity — everything.

As the school progressed and she began working on new programs, she was introduced to Len Hopkins, Founder of Ternion International. Ternion Group International is a Christian Faith based company.

They found common ground on the firm belief that good training mixed with "paying it forward" is the foundation of achieving personal success.

"Paying it forward" is when someone does something for you, but instead of paying that person back directly, you pass it on to another person instead.

"We had a business meeting. Len showed me his vision, and I showed him mine. They were almost identical," she says.

Ternion reached out to Boutté shortly thereafter, excited to duplicate her program with aspirations to open up 440 locations across the U.S.

"I became the president of TTEC because they were able to help me expand what I'd been doing successfully for the past 22 years on a national level. My dream school expansion has come true," she adds.

TTEC's innovative ways of teaching aim to put students into a good mood, so that they are more likely to retain information. She fondly states, "We always make a point of creating personal relationships with our students and their families. What sets our school apart is the love we freely give and our open-door policy."

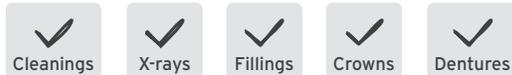
After doing research, she found that Ohio had one of the highest unemployment rates for African Americans and disadvantaged communities in the U.S. Excitedly, Boutté explains, "I'd like to incentivize more companies to come to Toledo. We train the workforce. I believe if the State of Ohio petitions more out of state companies considering relocation, job growth could consistently increase. I've seen many instances where Texas has petitioned California for their businesses. Tesla considering a headquarters move to Austin is an example."

TTEC recently received a letter from the LeBron James foundation. "I anticipate us sharing a tenacity for new learning methods," she shares. "My

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# Suzanne Rorick: Bringing Diversity to the Toledo Opera

By Fletcher Word  
Sojourner's Truth Editor

"The arts are not just entertainment," says Suzanne Rorick, executive director of the Toledo Opera and this year's YWCA Milestones honoree for the Arts. "We are employers; we want to help advance some of the issues of the day; we want to help the cause of social change; we want to address racism; we have an important role to play and we have to be more than just entertainment."



Suzanne Rorick

Rorick has worked in the non-profit arts/culture sector for 30 years and joined the Toledo Opera management staff 20 years ago as Director of Development. Ten years ago, she was named executive director and, during that decade, Rorick and the Toledo Opera have made a concerted effort "to expand our civic footprint – to use our art to expand our audience," she says.

Specifically, that effort has resulted in a greatly increased number of Black artists in the Opera's productions as well as several recent productions of Black-themed operas, including the recent premier of I Dream – an opera about the last 36 hours in the life of Martin Luther King, Jr.

As a YWCA 2021 Milestones: A Tribute to Woman honoree for the Arts, Rorick embraces the YWCA's mission of "eliminating racism and empowering women."

"That's why it's more crucial now than it's ever been to make the arts truly relevant and inclusive for everyone," she says in her acceptance speech for this week's awards ceremony to be held virtually on Friday, March 26.

That effort to make the arts "truly relevant and inclusive for everyone" took a dramatic turn in 2014 when the Toledo Opera Board added Thomas Winston, then the chief financial officer of the Toledo Lucas County Port Authority, as the board's co-treasurer.

Winston, recalls Rorick, urged the Opera to focus on increasing the number of Black artists and Black-themed works. So, the recent uptick in such performances, she adds "has been intentional – a call to action."

When Winston joined the board, he was the only Black member at that time. The ensuing years have seen an expansion in those numbers as well. Currently other Black members include John Jones of HOPE Toledo; Willie McKether, PhD, vice president for diversity at the University of Toledo; Ashley Futrell, an attorney with Shumaker Loop & Kendrick, LLP; Adrienne Green, operations leader in Building Solutions at Owens Corning (and a 2016 Milestones honoree for Volunteerism) and Zahra Collins of the Toledo Urban Federal Credit Union.



Thomas Winston

"My joining the board certainly was part of a strategic emphasis for all the right reasons," says Thomas, who is now CEO of the Port Authority. "It was unequivocally and unabashedly good for the Opera to review its strategic focus. A requirement for sustainability is expanding our bandwidth to promote diverse operas and artists in order to expand subscribership."

The recent surge in Black artistic presence began in 2015. "Porgy and Bess really started it," says Rorick of that Gershwin classic. But the 2019

... continued on page 8

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Toledo Opera... continued from page 7

rhythm and blues I Dream opera, music and libretto by Douglas Tappin, kicked the Opera's efforts at cultural expansion into high gear. Tappin is a black composer and former barrister from the United Kingdom who relocated with his family to Atlanta 18 years ago to attend Mercer University and immerse himself in the spiritual aspect of composing.

"I Dream forever changed our idea of what we can do and what we should do," says Rorick. The aftermath of the I Dream production saw the creation of a Community Engagement Committee, a diverse group of community members to provide input into the inclusion effort.

The organization's Toledo Opera on Wheels, which takes the arts to youth in the area, is also part of the effort to broaden the overall appeal of opera to the community at large.

As Rorick explains, opera has such universal appeal if the community can be made aware. "Opera take us on a journey outside of ourselves," she adds in her acceptance speech. "By bringing us together and inviting us to immerse ourselves in its powerful storytelling together, opera can expand our collective imagination in ways that endure long after we leave the theatre."

Recent years have brought to the Toledo Opera not only Black-themed productions but also a bevy of Black singers. Derrick Davis, Victor Ryan



Alicia Russell

Robertson and Ken Overton sang the parts of Martin, Hosea and Ralph, respectively, in I Dream. Overton also sang the part of Jake in Porgy and Bess. Brian Major has been on stage for Magic Flute, Carmen and La Boheme.

Alicia Russell was the resident soprano during the 2018-19 season and appeared in Magic Flute, The Ballad of Baby Doe and had a major role in Carmen, Frusetta. She returned for La Boheme, the Opera's last production before the pandemic hit, in the role of Musetta.

Darren Stokes, a prominent bass-baritone appeared in the 2016-17 season production of The Marriage of Figaro in the title role.

Laquita Mitchell has been a virtual regular in lead roles on the Valentine stage. This soprano sang Bess in Porgy and Bess, Countess Rosina in The Marriage of Figaro and Coretta in I Dream.

Now comes Blue.

Next February, during the 2021-22 season, the Toledo Opera, says Rorick,



Brian Major

...continued on page 8



>80% of Toledo's children enter kindergarten without the skills needed to learn...

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Toledo Opera... continued from page 8

will bring this very acclaimed opera to town. The two-act work, with music by Jeanine Tesori and libretto by Tazewell Thompson was first performed at the Glimmerglass Festival in 2019 and received the Music Critics Association of North America 2020 Award for Best New Opera.

Blue is about a Black family in Harlem who lose their teenage son as the result of a police shooting. The cast members will include Krysty Swann and Allen Michael Jones; Chelsea Tipton II, the former resident director with the Toledo



Douglas Tappin



Krysty Swann



Allen Michael Jones



Laquita Mitchell and Darren Stokes

Symphony, will return to Toledo to conduct and Tazewell Thompson, the librettist who is first and foremost a renowned stage director, will be the director.

The Toledo Opera has taken such action "not just by chance" says Rorick. It's part of the plan these days.

"The mission of the YWCA is to eliminate racism," says Rorick. "That has to be all our mission."



Tazewell Thompson



Chelsea Tipton-II

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# TARTA Announces New Vaccine Ride Program

The Toledo Area Regional Transit Authority (TARTA) is announcing a new free Vaccine Ride Program with services available in Maumee, Ottawa Hills, Rossford, Sylvania, Sylvania Township, Toledo and Waterville.

The Vaccine Ride Program offers several options to residents needing transportation to a vaccination site:

- **Vaccine Xpress** – A direct TARTA route from the downtown Toledo Transit Hub to the Lucas County Recreation Center (Rec Center) beginning Tuesday, March 23, 2021. This route will operate on days when the state recognized mass vaccination site, Rec Center, is hosting events. It will offer hourly service. For specific details, visit [www.tarta.com](http://www.tarta.com). The Vaccine Xpress was developed in partnership with the Toledo-Lucas County Health Department.

“We are proud to be partnering with TARTA to give residents a green light to their best health. This will assist in removing a significant barrier to ensuring every Lucas County adult can be vaccinated,” said Health Commissioner Eric Zgodzinski.

- **Call-A-Ride for Vaccines** – TARTA’s door-to-door service is now available to take residents to vaccination sites within their community Monday through Saturday. Reservations are required and can be made up to three days in advance by calling 419-243-7433. The service is available in Maumee, Ottawa Hills, Rossford, Sylvania, Sylvania Township and Waterville.

- **Toledo Area Regional Paratransit Service** - TARTA’s ADA service that is available in TARTA’s service area. Reservations can be made up to seven days in advance by calling 419-382-9901. Pre-qualification of the service is required. Service is available seven days per week.

Funding for these free services is made possible by a recent grant award of \$266,713 from the Ohio Department of Transportation through Governor Mike DeWine’s Rides for Community Immunity program. A total of \$7 million will be distributed to all 88 counties to help get Ohio’s most vulnerable populations transportation to vaccine locations.

Service costs will also be covered by federal funds through the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021.

“This is just one more opportunity to showcase that public transit plays a

critical role as a pillar in the community,” said TARTA CEO Kimberly Dunham. “TARTA reacted quickly to the Health Department’s call for transportation assistance and will be able to use this new grant funding to help move people to vaccination sites.”

TARTA will continue to follow its COVID-19 Rider Safety Guidelines which include requiring passengers to wear a facial covering, limiting the number of passengers per vehicle and no fare collection. For a complete list of the Rider Safety Guidelines, visit [tarta.com/coronavirus](http://tarta.com/coronavirus).

## Unmet Demand for Afterschool Programs Reaches All-Time High

(StatePoint) Parents of children enrolled in afterschool programs are happier with their participation than ever before, according to a new study. At the same time, there aren’t nearly enough programs available, and students from low-income families are the most likely to lack access. For every child in an afterschool program today, three more are waiting to get in.

Commissioned by the nonprofit Afterschool Alliance, and conducted by Edge Research, “America After 3PM 2020” builds on household surveys conducted in 2004, 2009 and 2014 and offers a pre-pandemic snapshot of how youth spend their afternoons that has significant implications for the post-pandemic world.

The study finds that the families of 24.6 million children -- more than ever before -- are unable to access afterschool programming, with many reporting cost as a barrier. It also exposes significant inequities, with Black and Latinx children and low-income households disproportionately affected.

“Quality afterschool programs are essential to student success in school and life. If we want to emerge from this pandemic strong, we need to provide all youth access to the important enrichment opportunities and resources afterschool programs provide. We’re far from doing that now,” says Jodi Grant, executive director of the Afterschool Alliance.

To further understand the state of U.S. afterschool programs today, consider these core findings from the report:

- **Unmet demand is soaring.** Demand has grown 60% since 2004, from 15.3 million children waiting to get into a program in 2004 to 24.6 million children in 2020.

- **Barriers to participation grow.** Sixty-one percent of low-income parents report that cost is a barrier to enrolling their child in an afterschool program, up from 50% in 2014. Access, such as a lack of a safe way for their child to get to and from a program, is a barrier for 58% of respondents.

- **Inequities persist.** These barriers especially affect low-income families. The number of children from low-income households in afterschool fell from 4.6 million in 2014 to 2.7 million in 2020, while the number of higher-income children in afterschool fell by just under 450,000.

- **Public support is strong.** Eighty-seven percent of parents support public funding for afterschool programs in communities that have few opportunities for children and youth, support that crosses demographic and political divides. This may in part be due to the growing recognition of the benefits programs provide. Eighty-three percent of respondents agree programs give working parents peace of mind, 81% agree programs help parents keep their jobs, and 76% agree programs help children gain interest and skills in STEM.

For low-income families, the survey reveals that programs address additional needs, such as providing children snacks and meals and offering them skill-building workshops, as well as connecting families to valuable community resources.

To view the full report, visit [afterschoolalliance.org/AA3PM](http://afterschoolalliance.org/AA3PM).

“It’s unacceptable that the parents of nearly 25 million students are struggling to find or afford an afterschool program,” Grant said. “Every parent should have access to an affordable, quality afterschool program that will keep their child safe, supervised and learning. We need more federal, state, local, business and philanthropic support to meet the needs of students and their families after school.”

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# Fedor Encourages Nominations for Ohio Teacher of the Year Award

Last week, state Senator Teresa Fedor (D-Toledo) announced that nominations are open for the 2022 Ohio Teacher of the Year Award.

"All teachers in Ohio have gone above and beyond during this challenging year, but if you know a teacher who you think is especially deserving of recognition, please nominate them for this important award," said Fedor. "It is crucial that the wonderful teachers we have in Lucas County are represented in the pool of nominees."

The Ohio Teacher of the Year Award celebrates teachers and highlights their inspirational work both inside and outside of the classroom. Nominees must hold a professional Ohio educator license and work full-time with a minimum of five years of teaching experience in a state-approved public

school, community school or career center to be eligible.

Nominees must also work directly with students at least 50 percent of the time as the teacher of record, have no previous Ohio Teacher of the Year recognition and plan to continue in active teaching status.

Anyone may nominate a teacher. School administrators, colleagues, community members, parents or students may submit a nomination for one or multiple teachers from a district or school building. Self-nominations are not accepted.

Nominations are due by April 9, 2021. For more information or to submit a nomination, click here.

# How the 'Dream Vacation' Has Changed for Americans

*Special to The Truth*

The pandemic has changed the way we work, learn and socialize, so it's no surprise that it's also changed the way we think about travel. One thing is certain, as the vaccine rollout continues, globetrotters worldwide are eager to return to their regularly scheduled travel.

A new survey from global accommodations search platform trivago reveals not only a widespread desire to travel, but changes in the kind of trips we wish to take. Whereas 62% of Americans would travel for pleasure and fun pre-pandemic, future trips will likely have an increased emphasis on wellness and seeing family and friends -- they'll also be closer to home.

Indeed, the very concept of the "dream vacation" has changed, with the typical idea of a big trip or vacation planned ahead and saved for on hiatus. With certain travel restrictions making it difficult to plan in advance and the separation caused by lockdowns, today, the number one choice for a "dream vacation" among survey respondents was a chance to spend "time with the family and friends I've missed."

The survey also revealed that travel as a form of self-care and wellness is a concept that is continuing to grow. Americans largely view travel as part of a well-rounded life.

But is travel a good idea right now? Experts say that while you're dreaming of that special trip, you don't have to stay put. With proper planning and precautions, local getaways and weekend road trips can be enjoyed safely. Travelers agree -- 55% of Americans plan to travel domestically, compared to under one-third who have international travel plans. Here are a few ideas to get you excited about travel right now:

- See every state: Check all 48 contiguous U.S. states off your road trip bucket list.

- Explore National Parks: From the spectacular red rock formations of the Southwest to the breathtaking sunrises of the Shenandoah, America is beautiful. Explore the country's wild side via its National Park system. A U.S. Park Pass makes it easy and affordable to visit over 2,000 federal recreation sites nationwide.

- Go "glamping": Outdoor adventures are popular right now for a reason, giving you a way to get away while still socially distancing. But if you're not much of a camper, "glamping" can be a terrific alternative. A portmanteau of glamour and camping, glamping is exactly what it implies. Accommodations vary from yurts to treehouses to safari tents and tend to offer all the amenities of a hotel.

- Combine your passions: A majority of respondents picked up a new hobby since the start of the pandemic. From cooking to photography to cycling and running, of those who've enriched their lives with new activities this past year, the vast majority think it's at least somewhat likely they'll pick a vacation connected to the new pastime once the pandemic ends. Take a safe, local trip inspired by your new hobby.

- Know before you go: Do your research before heading out. Check out trivago, which offers tools for booking local trips, as well as travel tips and inspiration. Visit trivago.com.

So much has changed in the last year, including the way we think about

travel and plan our getaways. One thing is certain, for many Americans, travel remains a priority.

*Courtesy StatePoint*



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# U.S. Efforts to Combat Systemic Racism

*Special to The Truth*

“The prevalence, and pervasiveness, of racial discrimination might make the situation look hopeless, but we remain hopeful. Let us expose the racism and racial discrimination endemic to every society, around the globe. Let us press forward, to root out that discrimination and remove the rot from our foundations. And on this day dedicated to ending racial discrimination, let us leave our children a less hateful, more hopeful world.”

— U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, Linda Thomas-Greenfield

Combating systemic racism requires aggressive action to address structures, policies, and practices that contribute to the wealth gap, to health disparities, and to inequalities in educational access, outcomes, and beyond. Today, on the occasion of the United Nations' (UN) International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the United States reiterates its determination to address these challenges at home and abroad, and to make clear to the world that nations with genuine devotion to human rights and equality do not conceal their own failings – they confront them honestly, transparently, and with a determination to make things right.

Here is what the administration is doing to address systemic racism:

**Advancing Racial Equity in the Federal Government:** On Day 1 of this administration, the President issued Executive Order (EO) 13985 which established that the Federal Government should pursue a comprehensive approach to advancing equity for all and creating opportunities for the improvement of communities that have been historically underserved.

**Condemning and Combating Racism, Xenophobia, and Intolerance Against the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) Community:** On January 26, President Biden issued a Memorandum Condemning and Combating Racism, Xenophobia, and Intolerance against Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in the United States. The memorandum orders executive departments and agencies to take all appropriate steps to ensure that official actions, documents, and statements, including those that pertain to the COVID-19 pandemic, do not exhibit or contribute to racism, xenophobia, and intolerance against Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.

**Assessing Domestic Violent Extremism:** President Biden directed the U.S. government interagency to study the threat of domestic violent extremism in the United States. Earlier this week, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence released the unclassified executive summary of the comprehensive assessment acknowledging that domestic violent extremist motivations include biases against minority populations.

**Creating a Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer (CDIO) at the State Department:** Secretary of State Blinken created the position of a Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer (CDIO) at the State Department, in recognition of the crucial role diversity, equity, and inclusion can and should play in U.S. foreign policy. Reporting directly to the Secretary, the CDIO will align and ad-

vance Diversity and Inclusion policies across the department, bring transparency to these initiatives, and hold senior leadership accountable on progress.

Incorporating Racial Justice into U.S. Foreign Policy Goals: Addressing systemic racism and strengthening democracy in the United States is a critical part of President Biden's foreign policy vision. The Secretary of State shall submit a report to the appropriate congressional committees describing initiatives that address racial and ethnic discrimination abroad, to include a list of Department efforts that explicitly focus on addressing racial and ethnic prejudice and discriminations, funding for civil society grants and Embassy programs and initiatives, exchange and leadership programs, and related efforts. This includes State Department programming through the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL) and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

**Supporting Historically Marginalized Populations Around the World:** Globally, the United States supports organizations to empower racial and ethnic minority communities, and uphold the dignity of people who are systematically denied their human rights and fundamental freedoms. Programs support locally-led efforts to combat all types of racial and ethnic hatred and violence and facilitate access to justice for victims of racism. Initiatives are intersectional and support individuals who face discrimination on account of gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, disability, race or ethnicity, religion, and national origin.

**Calling for Action at the UN Human Rights Council:** At the UN Human Rights Council, more than 140 nations joined the United States in a statement outlining the continuing scourge of racism and racial discrimination, xenophobia, and other forms of intolerance. This historic cross-regional statement is a call to action for all nations to:

- \* acknowledge and address the legacy and persistence of systemic racism
- \* review and revise long-standing practices and policies to ensure all individuals are treated equally
- \* embed fairness and inclusivity in decision-making processes
- \* redress inequities in policies that serve as barriers to equal opportunity
- \* eliminate barriers to political participation

**Nominating a U.S. Representative to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination:** The United States nominated Professor Gay McDougal to serve on the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, a body of 18 independent experts that monitors implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination by its State parties. Her nomination underscores the value that the Biden administration places on the Committee's work and her election would end our nearly three-year long losing streak for full-term seats in UN human rights treaty bodies.

## *School That Dreams Are Made Of... continued from page 6*

dream is to also offer programs that teach students to be entrepreneurs capable of creating companies here in Toledo.”

The community is fully embracing TTEC in Toledo. Several churches in the area donate tools and supplies to the school regularly. Ternion continues to develop strategic partnerships with community-based organizations to better prepare students. Bishop Duane Tisdale from Friendship Baptist Church facilitates the school's innovative life classes.

“When our students obtain employment we strive for them to make substantially more money than they have in the past. With this in mind we also teach life skills. We don't want to see our graduates prioritizing designer clothing or \$200 sneakers over core money management. Instead we want them to be able to understand how stock prices change based on world events like the pandemic. We teach life skills through our curriculum, including money/credit management. We also teach the value of owning property. We do a little bit of everything.” President Boutté proudly explains.

TTEC encourages the hospitals, doctors' offices, and companies they work with to help make their students great employees by gaining hands on experience through externships and mentoring. She says: “Upon graduation, our experience has consistently been that our partners eagerly want to hire and refer our students.”

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## *Covid Action Plan... continued from page 16*

### **DIVIDE AND CONQUER**

Keep people who have COVID-19 or symptoms in one area of the home and those who are well in another. We know families who live in their RVs. When one person got infected, that person stayed in a room at the back of the RV, leaving only to use the restroom (masked up, of course). The rest of the family stayed out of the person's space, masked up, and used antiviral cleaners to wipe down the doorknobs, toilet handle, and faucets. No one else in the family got sick. Do your best in your environment. Keep at least six feet of distance between sick and well individuals

... continued on page 13

# The Jigsaw Man: A Novel by Nadine Matheson

By Terri Schlichenmeyer  
The Truth Contributor

Finders Keepers.

It's all yours now, that cool, unique, surprise thing that suddenly turned up and you laid claim to it. What once was lost is yours now. Finders keepers, except, as in the new novel *The Jigsaw Man* by Nadine Matheson, what's found is a dead body.

Looking as though it was about to pay attention, the male torso sat nicely upright against the rocks near the Greenwich Pier. Nicely, if that can be said about a headless, limbless body found along the murky water by a young student. Not so nicely, if you were Detective Inspector Anjelica Henley, who'd been given this case on her first day back to work after being on leave for a PTSD-inducing trauma of her own and was immediately assigned a rookie, Trainee Detective Salim Ramouter, as partner.

But one disarticulated, mutilated body became two in short order, both victims found by the river and both, as it turned out, were romantically tied in life.

In death, there was another tie: Henley and Ramouter instantly realized that these new crimes had a lot in common with another set of cases. Peter Olivier, who'd called himself "The Jigsaw Man," had killed and dismembered a number of people years before, and there were similarities between his crimes and the new cases. Problem was, Olivier had been in prison for two years, and murderous habits he practiced (but that were not made public) seemed to have been copied.

When Henley mentioned the victims' names to Olivier, there was recognition in his eyes and she spotted yet another tie: the new victims distantly knew the imprisoned Olivier.

From his prison cell, Olivier fumed. Someone copied his crimes and

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496 pages

was stealing the limelight, there were leaks to the press and they were all wrong, and DI Henley was ridiculously off-course in her thinking. There was only one Jigsaw Man – everybody else was a copycat – and Olivier was going to escape from prison and prove it...

Reading *The Jigsaw Man* is a lesson in contradictions.

It's good. It's everything you want in a thriller: an evil maniac, another evil maniac, an on-the-edge detective, a love triangle or two, and blood. Plenty of blood, spilled in the most gruesome way possible. For fans of thrillers, the things that author Nadine Matheson offers are like sprinkles on ice cream: absolutely necessary and the more, the better.

And yet, there's two big, nearly-insurmountable problems.

"*The Jigsaw Man*" is set in Great Britain and, as such, is formatted differently in many ways that can cause confusion, particularly in acronyms and, most especially, in dialogue; reading a conversation takes an exhausting amount of attention, lest you mis-attribute a sentence or an important character thought. It's a hot mess, exacerbated by an overabundance of characters that are thrown at readers, unsorted, and all within the first few dozen pages.

Overall, you'll be thrilled by this thriller, but also perhaps annoyed, so keep that in mind. If you can handle the latter, you'll love *The Jigsaw Man*. If not, then keep away.



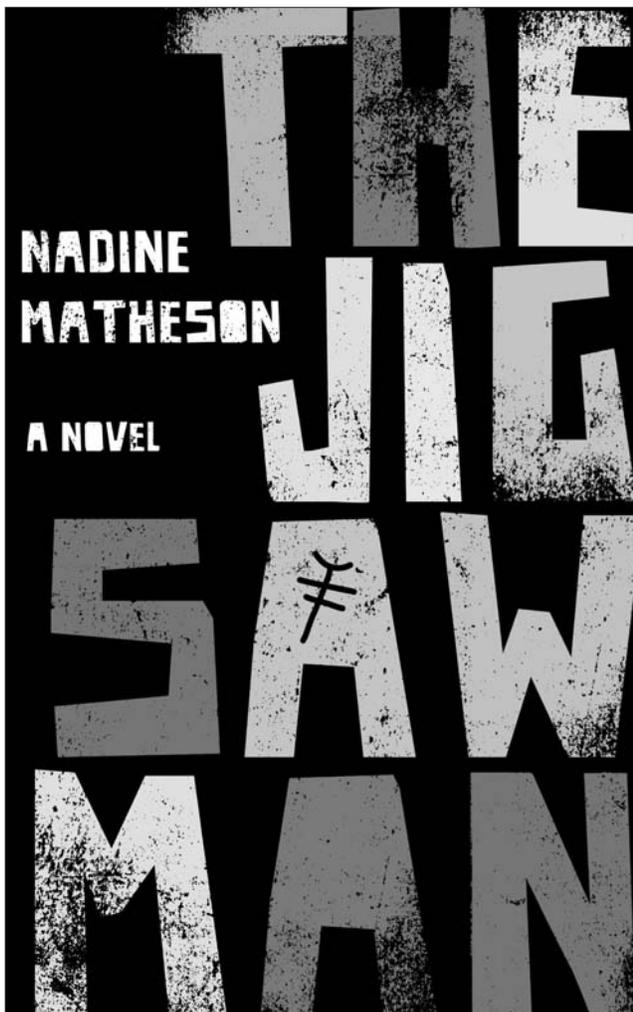
Nadine Matheson

*Covid Action Plan... continued from page 12*

for at least 14 days after a positive COVID-19 test and after they've been fever-free for 24 hours. Keeping them isolated behind a door is safest, but physical distance may suffice. Weather permitting; spend time outdoors at home as much as possible. The virus is more likely to spread in closed in spaces without much ventilation. Related reading: Tired of social distancing? Try NPIs on for size

### WEAR PPE AT HOME WHEN SOMEONE IS SICK

Most of us don't love wearing masks, but they make a difference. At work, I wear an N95 mask, face shield, gloves, gown, you name it. But at home, we wore simple surgical masks, and the virus did not spread to anyone else in our home. Some of the recently recorded COVID-19 variants appear to spread faster than the original SARS-CoV-2 virus, but they do not appear to cause more severe infections. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recently reiterated the importance of wearing a snug-fitting mask and even suggested wearing two masks, depending on the type, to further reduce the risk of exhaling or inhaling respiratory droplets.



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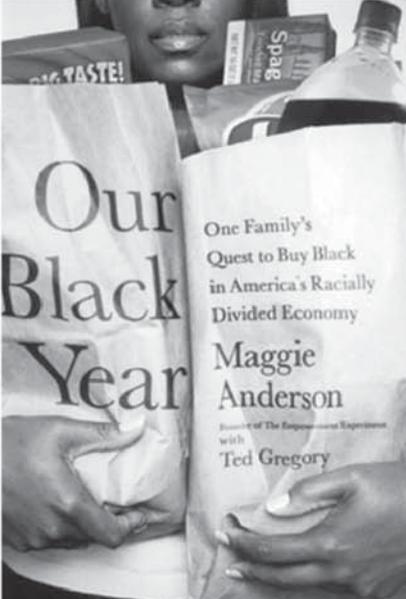
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Annual Membership available and receive priority bookings, church and organizational bookings welcomed  
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**CRUSADERS FOR CHRIST CHURCH** Presents **Youth & Young Adult 4th Sunday**

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  
 310 Woodbine Rd.  
 Toledo, Ohio

*Emmanuel Tiffany Reynolds*  
*Bishop Joseph Mitchell Jr., Pastor*  
*Emmanuel Carter Mitchell, First Lady*

Crusaders for Christ Church • [www.crusadersforchristchurch.org](http://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

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March 24, 2021

## INVITATION FOR BIDS IFB21-B008 WATER HEATERS

Lucas Metropolitan Housing (LMH) will receive sealed bids for Water Heaters. Received in accordance with law until April 14, 2021, 3:00 PM ET. see documents: [www.lucasmha.org](http://www.lucasmha.org); 201 Belmont Ave., Toledo, OH 43604; or 419-259-9446 (TRS: Dial 711). Affirmative Action and Equal Employment Opportunity requirements (Executive Order #11246). This contract opportunity is a Section 3 Covered Contract and any Section 3 Business Concerns are encouraged to apply.



## MULTIMEDIA PRODUCER/ PRODUCTION MANAGER

WGTE Public Media seeks a full-time, Multimedia Producer/Production Manager to manage video production services, develop and edit short and long-form videos and produce live studio and field productions.

Previous experience with directing and video switching along with videography and digital editing required. Candidate must have strong writing skills and be able to handle multiple, time-sensitive projects.

Supervisory experience and experience with Adobe Premiere, After Effects, and Final Cut Pro, preferred. Candidate must be willing to work a flexible work schedule, including occasional evenings and weekends. Bachelor's degree from a four-year college or university in a field such as liberal arts, radio & television broadcasting or journalism preferred; or a minimum of an Associate's degree in liberal arts, radio & television broadcasting or journalism, with two years related experience and/or training required. A valid driver's license is required. Send your cover letter and résumé to: Human Resources, P.O. Box 30, Toledo, OH 43614, or [employment@wgte.org](mailto:employment@wgte.org). EOE/ADA



## THE TOLEDO-LUCAS COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT IS HIRING!

### Current openings:

Supervisor of Clinical & Outreach Services  
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/>

## MANAGER, SENIOR SERVICES

Administers, coordinates, and oversees the various components of the senior services programs provided by Neighborhood Health Association and ensures the effective operation and management of two senior centers. Also responsible for supervising and managing program staff and volunteers.

Responsibilities also include developing partnerships that assist in serving Seniors; assisting in the design and supervision of activities; developing budget and program billing and managing community outreach and education to ensure that all area Seniors know about and have access to services.

The right candidate will have a degree or certification in recreational, geriatric or activities therapy; a minimum 2 years in management/supervisory role; minimum 2 years working in culturally diverse and low-income environment; ability to pass a background check and drug screening; be physically fit; have an ability to adapt with strong organization and time management skills; possess excellent resource management, computer, record keeping, interpersonal, decision making and verbal and written communication skills.

The deadline to apply is March 26 at 5 pm. Contact Roy Hodge. 419-514-1600 or [rhodge@rehsystems.com](mailto:rhodge@rehsystems.com)



## ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

The Village of Ottawa Hills is accepting applications for the full-time position of Administrative Assistant for the Police Department.

### Required Qualifications and Experience:

Minimum high school diploma or equivalent: three years of experience of administrative support and/or customer service experience. Must be able to type at least 40 words per minute with corrections and proficient with spreadsheet, presentation, and data base software. Must be able to obtain and maintain clearance to access secure databases. For more detailed information please visit: [www.ottawahills.org/employment](http://www.ottawahills.org/employment) or email [police@ottawahills.org](mailto:police@ottawahills.org).

**Pay Range:** \$48,960-\$59,660

## ARTIST SERVICES MANAGER

THE ARTS COMMISSION IS NOW HIRING for a part-time Artist Services Manager. Deadline to apply is March 29, 2021. The Arts Commission is committed to diversity and inclusion in the selection process and is an equal opportunity employer. For position details and how to apply, please visit [TheArtsCommission.org/Employment](http://TheArtsCommission.org/Employment).



## JOB POSTING

The Rudolph Libbe Group is a one-stop provider of construction and consulting services that range from site selection and financing to ongoing facility management. RLG, comprised of Rudolph Libbe Inc., GEM Inc., GEM Energy, Lehman Daman and Rudolph Libbe Properties, operates as one team. RLG is headquartered in Toledo with offices in Cleveland, Columbus and Lima, Ohio; and Plymouth, Michigan. For additional information, visit [RLGbuilds.com](http://RLGbuilds.com).

Rudolph Libbe Inc. is seeking a Survey Specialist for its Walbridge, OH location. The Survey Specialist stakes out a variety of surveying assignments to facilitate the completion of buildings, building sites, roads, property/boundary limits and site control. This is project level work that requires the knowledge of surveying principles, processes, equipment and software.

A bachelor's degree in Construction Management, Engineering or similar, or completion of an apprenticeship in a construction related trade, at least 5+ years' field survey experience, and a valid drivers' license required.

**INTERESTED PARTIES SHOULD APPLY ON OUR WEBSITE AT [WWW.RLGBUILDS.COM/CAREERS](http://WWW.RLGBUILDS.COM/CAREERS).**

**Rudolph Libbe Inc. is an Equal Employment Opportunity Employer.**

## POLICE OFFICER

The Village of Ottawa Hills is accepting applications for the position of full-time Police Officer.

### Required Training and Experience:

Minimum two year college degree or equivalent, from an accredited college. Must be a commissioned Peace Officer according to the rules of the Ohio Peace Officer Training Council at time of appointment.

Testing must be conducted through the National Testing Network ([www.nationaltestingnetwork.com](http://www.nationaltestingnetwork.com)). Lateral entry applicants may bypass testing and complete an employment application for consideration. For more information, please visit [www.ottawahills.org/employment](http://www.ottawahills.org/employment) or email [police@ottawahills.org](mailto:police@ottawahills.org).

**Pay Range:** \$61,580-\$73,200

**The Village of Ottawa Hills is an equal opportunity employer.**

**Call to place your ad:**

**419-243-0007**

**[www.TheTruthToledo.com](http://www.TheTruthToledo.com)**

# My COVID-19 Action Plan: How to Cope When the Virus Hits Home

By Sonja Bartolome, M.D. Internal Medicine –  
Pulmonary Disease UT Southwestern Medical Center  
Special to The Truth

In a pandemic, even when you do everything right, viruses can still find a way into your home. As a respiratory specialist, I have lived in PPE for the better part of a year and made sure that my family has taken every precaution. I was also among the first health care workers to be vaccinated. So when my husband, Ivan, got COVID-19 this winter, it was a stark reminder of just how insidious and unpredictable the SARS-CoV-2 virus can be. Ivan didn't have a mild case, either. He was sick with a fever and cough for two weeks straight. When I posted an update about Ivan's condition to my social media, I was surprised how many people came out of the woodwork and said, "I had it, too!" or "My whole family caught it at the same time!" It was as if they felt ashamed of being infected by a novel coronavirus that has spread to nearly 29 million people in the U.S. They also seemed worried about being judged by others: What were you out doing?

Didn't you wear a mask or wash your hands? Leading up to Ivan's illness, we hadn't really gone anywhere or done anything. We never went out in public without masks on and hand sanitizer in tow. But that's what viruses do. They are always searching for an available host, even when we do our best to be careful. As we approach the one-year mark of living with COVID-19, we need to eliminate the stigma and shift our focus to controlling the controllables, particularly as new variants to the SARS-CoV-2 virus arise. The vaccines, while vital, don't mean we can let our guard down. If someone in your immediate family becomes infected, there are steps you can take to reduce the risk and limit the spread at home. We developed an action plan when Ivan tested positive for COV-

ID-19, and I wanted to share our experience in hopes it might help others.

## 1. GET TESTED EARLY

When Ivan first started feeling sick, we thought it might be a cold or flu and not COVID-19. But just to be sure, we all got tested right away. My tests came back negative, and we were surprised when his were positive. More severe symptoms began shortly thereafter. My children and I got tested a second time just to be sure, and we were still negative. Testing helped us isolate him early, potentially sparing the rest of the family from infection. Explore UT Southwestern testing options.

## 2. ISOLATE AT THE FIRST SIGN OF SYMPTOMS

Even before his test results came back, Ivan self-isolated at the first sign of symptoms. We're fortunate to have a bathroom off the master bedroom, which he was able to use through his two-week isolation. I took the spare room, main bathroom, and kitchen so I could bring him food throughout our time apart. I also worked from home, attending meetings and seeing patients via video conferences. Ivan and I set up a protocol. I'd mask up, and then knock. He'd put on his mask and move at least six feet from the door. I'd place his food on a side table, chat a bit, then leave so he could unmask and eat. When he was through, we'd repeat the process to clear away the dishes. Our master bedroom has an external door, so we could see him through the glass if we stood in the yard. We could Face Time, but it was difficult being apart for that long. I empathize with people who have had to deal with this situation throughout the pandemic with relatives in nursing homes and hospitals.

... continued on page 12



*Open for healing*

Alex, colorectal cancer survivor and patient at UTMC's Eleanor N. Dana Cancer Center

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