



Urban League of
Greater Pittsburgh

*Empowering Communities.
Changing Lives.*

AGENCY MEDIA REPORT

DECEMBER, JANUARY, AND FEBRUARY

2013/2014



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12/2/13	Title 1 rewards schools go to the head of the class <i>Mentions: The Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh</i>	Pittsburgh Post-Gazette
12/3/13	In Memoriam to Rex L. Crawley, Ph.D. <i>Mentions: The Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh, BMLDI</i>	New Pittsburgh Courier
Winter Issue	In Memoriam to Rex L. Crawley, Ph.D. <i>Mentions: The Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh, BMLDI</i>	Soul Pitt Magazine
Winter Issue	Guild Volunteers Support Urban League Movement	Soul Pitt Magazine
12/10/13	Community Calendar <i>Mentions: The Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh Ronald H. Brown Leadership Awards Gala</i>	New Pittsburgh Courier
12/11/13	'Tis Better to Give <i>Mentions: Urban League's NULITES Youth Leadership Program</i>	Herald (Sharon, PA)
12/17/13	Urban League hosts 18th Awards Gala honoring leadership	New Pittsburgh Courier
12/17/13	Seen: Ronald H. Brown Leadership Awards Gala <i>Mentions: The Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh Ronald H. Brown Leadership Awards Gala, Esther Bush</i>	Pittsburgh Post-Gazette
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1/5/14	Bold Ideas <i>Mentions: Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh, organizations history</i>	Pittsburgh Post-Gazette
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1/16/14	Stories of Influential African-Americans bring exhibit alive <i>Mentions: Esther Bush, Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh</i>	Pittsburgh Post-Gazette
1/16/14	An Ear to History <i>Photo: Esther L. Bush, Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh</i>	Pittsburgh Post-Gazette
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1/23/14	Cultural Benefits for Seniors Mentions: Urban League of Pittsburgh	Pittsburgh Post-Gazette
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2/4/14	Freeland Dead at 88 <i>Mentions: Urban League</i>	New Pittsburgh Courier
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2/6/14	Keystone Region Organizations Receive \$591, 000 from Comcast Foundation <i>Mentions: Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh</i>	Financialcontent.com
2/6/14	RMU memorial for Rex Crawley <i>Mentions: Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh</i>	Pittsburgh Post-Gazette
2/9/2014	A Civil Rights Hero <i>Mentions: Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh</i>	Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

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2/10/2014	Urban League moves ahead	Tribune-Review (Greensburg)
2/11/2014	Church Circuit <i>Mentions: Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh, Urban League Sunday</i>	New Pittsburgh Courier
2/16/2014	Pittsburgh's Urban League goes to bat to assist community	Sunday Tribune (Philadelphia)
2/17/2014	Peduto puts new focus on city's school system <i>Mentions: Esther Bush, Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh</i>	Pittsburgh Post-Gazette
2/18/2014	PNC celebrates Black History and Diversity in 15 cities <i>Mentions: Esther L. Bush</i>	New Pittsburgh Courier
2/19/2014	Insufficient Funds: Banks offer few options for low-income customers	Pittsburgh City Paper
2/23/2014	Kids in crisis need help from effective teachers <i>Mentions: Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh</i>	Pittsburgh Post-Gazette
2/25/2014	Roger Humphries: Pass It On <i>Mentions: Esther Bush, Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh</i>	Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Title 1 reward schools go right to the head of the class

By Eleanor Chute
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Fifth-grader Armani Bailey of Turtle Creek used to think he wouldn't be able to do long division.

But the teachers at the Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh Charter School in East Liberty had other ideas.

"They make sure you know everything," said Armani, who got extra help after school. "You're always going to be challenged. You're not going to get on the easy path."

Students at the K-5 charter school are doing so well that the school has been designated as one of about 180 Title 1 reward schools across the state — including 20 in Allegheny County.

The schools are being honored for high achievement or high progress even though they have enough low-income students to qualify for federal Title 1 financial help.

More than 1,800 schools in Pennsylvania — about 61 percent — are Title 1.

Those honored for high achievement are in the top 5 percent of Title 1 schools based on math and reading proficiency on state tests.

The ones honored for progress are in the top 5 percent of Title 1 schools for student growth in reading and math as measured by state tests.

Both groups also had to meet standards for test participation and graduation or attendance rates.

The state Department of Education plans to use the experiences of the reward schools to help low-performing Title 1 schools, beginning with presentations on what has and hasn't worked for reward schools at the Standards Aligned System Institute in Hershey on Dec. 11.

Of the reward schools named so far across the state, the Urban League charter school has the largest percentage of students — 85.51 percent — who are eligible for free and reduced-price lunch. Some other schools may be named later.

The percentage of low-income students at the reward schools statewide goes as low as about 4 percent but averages around 30 percent.

The Urban League, which made the list based on high yearly progress, provided more than a year's growth in math and reading for its students. About 86 percent of its students were proficient in math and about 77 percent in reading.

The Urban League school's executive director, Gail Edwards, said, "The staff that's here really cares deeply about our students, and the relationships that they have established make all the difference in how well these children do."

"We absolutely tell them every day there isn't anything they can't accomplish and they have to work hard for those things they want to accomplish. There's a lot of encouragement. There's a lot of working to make them believe in themselves."

Of the 19 other schools in Allegheny County on the reward list, five have percentages of low-income students above 25 percent.

Two, earning for high achievement, were in Shaler Area — Marzolf Elementary, with 41.16 percent low-income students, and Burchfield Elementary, with 26.51 percent low-income. Both serve grades K-3.

The other three with percentages of low-income students above 25 percent earned the reward for high progress: Wilson Elementary in West Allegheny, grades K-5, 29.07 percent; Whitehall Elementary in Baldwin-Whitehall, grades 2-5, 28.99

percent; and East Union Intermediate Center in Deer Lakes, grades 3-5, 25.8 percent.

Other Title 1 schools with smaller percentages of low-income students that made the reward list for high achievement were Central and Poff elementaries and Hampton Middle in Hampton; Dorseyville Middle in Fox Chapel Area; Allard and McCormick in Moon Area; Lincoln in Mt. Lebanon; Hosack and Peebles in North Allegheny; Richland in Pine-Richland; Burkett Elementary in Montour; and Pleasant Hills Middle School in West Jefferson Hills.

Making the list for high progress with percentages of low-income students below 25 percent were Washington Elementary in Mt. Lebanon and Boyce Middle School in Upper St. Clair.

The federal government allots about \$6 billion in Title 1 grants nationwide based on the number of children ages 5 to 17 who are in poverty.

At the school district level, the money typically is allotted based on lunch program eligibility, in which incomes can be nearly twice as much as the poverty level.

Districts and schools can use Title 1 money to help any student academically in a building receiving such funds.

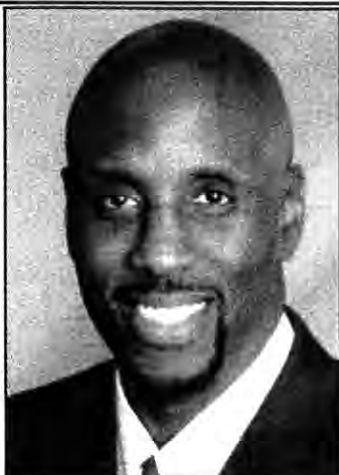
Many districts concentrate their spending in elementary schools, and some allot their own funds to help pay for Title 1 teachers or services.

Many of the reward schools give common reasons for their success: high expectations; caring and skilled teachers who engage students; close tracking of individual student progress, with prompt help when needed; flexible groupings of students to focus on particular needs; wise use of time.

James Schweinberg, principal of East Union Intermediate



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REX CRAWLEY

Rex Crawley loses his bout with cancer

by Ashley Johnson

Courier Staff Writer

A true beacon in every sense of the word, Rex Crawley's, passion for life and his commitment to the betterment of the community and its people always shone through.

Even while fighting for his own life, he still managed to advocate for the lives of others.

Crawley, who had been battling non-hodgkins lymphoma, lost his bout early Nov. 26 with his wife Daria by his side, at Shadyside Hospital. He was 49.

Crawley, who earned his doctorate at Ohio State University, was the assistant dean and a professor at Robert Morris University's School of Communications and Information Systems. He also served as the endowed chair and executive director of the Uzuri Think Tank and as the co-director of the Black Male Leadership Development Institute. Crawley is survived by his wife, Daria, and two sons, Xavier and Vaughn.

In a statement released Monday, Robert Morris University President Gregory Dell'Omo said, "...Rex had a profound and lasting impact on hundreds of young men throughout the Pittsburgh region -- just one example of his exemplary service to the larger community." He added, "Rex will be missed greatly as he was such an integral part of the RMU family, and our thoughts and prayers go out to his wife Daria, who is an associate professor of management at Robert Morris, and their young sons Xavier and Vaughn."

SEE CRAWLEY A4

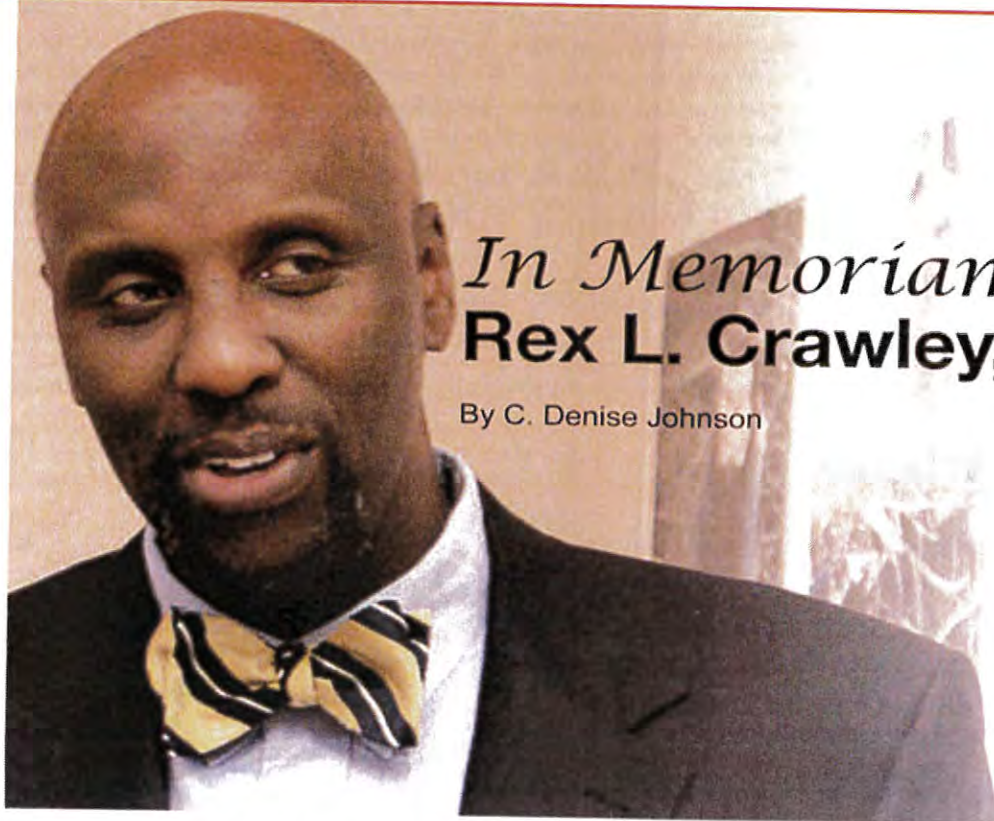
As the co-director of the Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh and Robert Morris sponsored BMLDI, Crawley, who served his position for six years, was responsible for guiding African-American males in grades nine through 12 through a yearlong program designed to increase educational and leadership opportunities.

Sabrina Saunders, co-director of the BMDI and director of the Education and Youth Development Department at the Urban League, said, "Today we lost an amazing man, a true example of God's love. What I will remember the most about Rex is his undeniable faith and dedication to his family and community. As co-director for the Black Male Leadership Institute, Rex has without question, changed the minds, hearts and undoubtedly helped save the lives of hundreds of African-American boys in the Pittsburgh region." She went on to say, "His life taught me what one person's dedication can accomplish through strength, leadership and selfless love. Rex believed that we should expect excellence from our young men, but that we should greet them with compassion and understanding. He is an irreplaceable part of the BMLDI family and his legacy will live on through the many lives that he has touched and helped to change for the better."

Among many other things, one of Crawley's recent tasks was advocating for African-Americans to get tested and become not only bone marrow donors, but organ donors as well. In his last interview with the New Pittsburgh Courier, Crawley spoke of his bout with cancer and his determination to get more African-Americans registered in the article, "Black marrow donors needed for Crawley to win his bout."

"I'm hoping my story will enlighten the





In Memoriam: **Rex L. Crawley, Ph.D.**

By C. Denise Johnson

There is so much more to Rex Crawley than meets the eye. Despite the fact that this Steubenville, Ohio-native transitioned on November 25 at the age of 49, I refer to him in the present because his legacy remains present and will likely remain so for years to come. Why?

Rex Crawley represents all we don't hear enough of about Black men. He was assistant dean of the School of Communications and Information Systems at Robert Morris University and chair of the university's Council on Institutional Equity. Most recently, Crawley was the endowed chair and executive director of the Uzuri Think Tank, a research center dedicated to identifying the factors shared by successful African American men and developing models of success for others to follow. Beyond his work in academia, he was an active

member of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, serving in a variety of leadership roles, and was on the boards of the Community College of Allegheny County, the August Wilson Arts and Cultural Center, and the National Marrow Donors Program.

The Black Male Leadership Development Institute (BMLDI) is a program which brings 75 African American boys in grades nine through 12 to participate in a year-long program designed to increase educational and leadership opportunities for the selected participants. BMLDI allows young African American men to take the competencies that they already have and expand them into a repertoire of leadership skills that can have a practical impact in their local communities. By creating a supportive learning community and offering a challenging curriculum and rich set of activities that enhance their awareness

of themselves and the world around them, they will acquire leadership skills that can help change the outcomes for African American men and boys in this region. Rex Crawley founded this initiative and the BMLDI is, de facto, his legacy.

His other legacy is best summarized in his own words, from his last blog entry made a week before his passing: *"I have come to realize that this season in my life is a platform to help others successfully manage their cancer incidents. I ask God each day to direct my path and to help me and others understand that this is not totally about me or about saving Rex, instead it is more about increasing the awareness about these issues and particularly now the issue of the increased need for African American bone marrow donorship. I do not have a match for my transplant yet, and I may not need one due to modern technology and medicine. But the issue (donorship) remains critical.*

"I have decided to allow my situation to be used by God to help increase awareness at a large scale. I want people to know that they could save a life simply by registering with the Be The Match registry. There are people dying every day because they have no donor matches and no other transplant options and you could be the one to save their lives. How awesome would that be? How awesome would that feel? This thing is so much bigger than me and I am so glad and blessed to be a part of it."

Rex Crawley is survived by his wife Daria and two young sons, Xavier and Vaughn. Continue his legacy by registering at Be The Match and supporting the Black Male Leadership Development Institute at Ryan Scott - Program Manager (rscott@ulpgh.org) or Sabrina Saunders - Director (ssaunders@ulpgh.org) or calling 412-227-4215.





Allegra Wakefield, Guild President

GUILD VOLUNTEERS SUPPORT URBAN LEAGUE MOVEMENT IN PITTSBURGH



Founded nearly 60 years ago to provide fundraising support to the Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh, today's Guild shows no signs of slowing down.

For two years in succession, the Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh Guild has received national accolades for community service, in large part due to the now annual health fair that this group of energetic and committed volunteers puts together in various neighborhoods. From Duquesne to downtown Pittsburgh, the Guild Health fair has become a staple on the May community calendar, focusing on issues ranging from the prevention and treatment of diabetes to this past spring's theme of "coping with stress" as part of the National Council of Guilds designation of May as National Healthy Awareness month.

Guild members lend support to a variety of Urban League efforts including assisting the Hunger Services Program with a food distribution at Thanksgiving, providing ushers and ambassadors for events such as the State of Black Pittsburgh, the Ronald H Brown Leadership Awards Gala, and Urban League Sunday. Additionally, Guild volunteers are frequently recruited to host Urban League outreach and information tables at events sponsored by other organizations such as African American Heritage Celebration at PNC Park, Umoja African Arts in the Park Festival, and other such occasions.

Each year the Guild takes on a variety of fundraising activities to meet its budget which consists primarily of dues to the National Council of Guilds and money to be donated to the operations of the Urban League affiliate. Bus trips and group outings put the "fun" in fund raising for this group of gregarious men and women.

The mission of the Urban League is to enable African Americans to achieve economic self-reliance, parity and power, and civil rights.

The Guild meets monthly on Saturday mornings at 11 a.m., generally at the home of one of its members. For more information, interested person can email Urban League Guild liaison Regina Johnson at



Community Calendar

Holiday Open House

DEC. 5—The McKeesport Regional History and Heritage Center will host its annual Holiday Open House from 12-5 p.m. at 1832 Arboretum Dr., McKeesport. There will be holiday themed trees, treats, unique gifts and more. There will be activities for children of all ages. The event will run through Dec. 9. For more information, call 412-678-1832.

Ambassador of Hope Gala

DEC. 6—Leon E. Haynes III and the Board of Directors will host the 9th annual Ambassador of Hope Gala at 6 p.m. at the Rivers Casino, One Oxford Centre, 301 Grant St., Downtown. The keynote speaker will be Pastor Chad Johnson, chaplain of the Pittsburgh Steelers. Reservations are required. For more information, call Jeannette Dawson at 412-342-1336.

Urban League Leadership Awards

DEC. 6—The Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh will host the Ronald H. Brown Leadership Awards Gala at 7 p.m. at the West Club Lounge, Heinz Field, 100 Art Rooney Ave., North Shore. Honorees for the evening include Chris Moore for Civic

Leadership; Dr. Jerlean Daniel and Dr. Jack Daniel for Community Leadership; and Tim Nettles of Enterprise Holdings for Corporate Leadership. There will be a silent auction and reception at 5:30 p.m. and a dessert reception and dancing at 8:45 p.m. Black Tie Attire is preferred. Reservations are requested. For more information, call 412-227-4802.

Queens Luncheon

DEC. 7—The Harriet Tubman Guild Inc. will host its 2013 annual Queens Luncheon at 11 a.m. at the Doubletree Hotel, 101 Mall Blvd., Monroeville. The event will include a talent show, a fashion show, a surprise gift and entertainment from the Flo Wilson and the Old School Band. There will also be vendors with great gift ideas for Christmas. This is a fundraiser for the Harriet Tubman Terrace. For more information, call 412-728-1311 or 412-363-8422.

Shopping Extravaganza

DEC. 7—The Ultimate Beauty Spa will host The Ultimate Shopping Extravaganza from 12-5 p.m. at 2015 Murray Ave., Squirrel Hill. There will be shopping, healthy cooking demonstrations, musical entertainment, a Kwanzaa presenta-

tion and more. This is free and open to the public. For more information, call 412-421-7100 or visit www.theultimatebeautyspa.com.

NAACP Meeting

DEC. 10—The Pittsburgh Unit of the NAACP will host its Executive and General Meetings at 7 p.m. at Freedom Unlimited, 2201 Wylie Ave., Hill District. All members are encouraged to attend. For more information, call 412-471-1024.

Bistro Opening

ONGOING—Marva Jo's Bistro will host its Opening at 320 5th Ave., McKeesport. The Bistro will open Fridays from 8-11 p.m. and Saturdays from 9 p.m.-12 a.m., and include unlimited desserts, coffee, tea, bottled water and more. This is a BYOB establishment and breathalyzers will be on hand. Entertainment will include Tony Campbell and his band, Aubrey Bruce, Marva Josie and more. For more information, call 412-583-6741 or visit www.marvajosbistro.com.

(To have items listed on Community Calendar, send information at least two weeks in advance to: 315 E. Carson St., Pittsburgh, PA 15219; Fax: 412-481-1360 or email: newsroom@newpittsburghcourier.com.)



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Main
Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh

'TIS BETTER TO GIVE

State police

Pennsylvania State Police at Mercer are again collecting new, unwrapped toys for distribution in Mercer County.

Toys can be dropped off in the barrel in the lobby of the station in Jackson Township until Dec. 15.

Blanket drive

MIME Ministry of Community Missionary Baptist Church holds a blanket drive and will distribute them to area nursing homes and community shelters.

Items accepted are blankets, snuggles and body throws.

Blankets/items can be dropped off between noon and 3 p.m. Saturdays through Dec. 29 at the church, 1013 Emerson Ave., Farrell.

Info: 330-448-2517.
Gift Collection for Joshua's Haven City Mission in Sharon.

Donations will be gift-wrapped by students in the Urban League's NULITES youth leadership program.

Homeless shelter wish list: boxer underwear (L, XL, XXL), slippers (size 10, 11, 12), pajama pants (L or XL), T-shirts (L, XL, XXL), long sleeve T-shirts (L, XL, XXL), sweatshirts & sweatpants (L, XL), body wash, toilet paper, laundry detergent, cold cereal (any kind), paper plates & paper bowls, napkins, instant oatmeal (individual packets),

plastic silverware, paper towels, liquid dish soap, disposable razors, deodorant, gas cards, bus tokens and gloves.

Donations will be accepted at the Urban League, 601 Indiana Ave., Farrell, until 4 p.m. Dec. 16.

Info: Erin Houston, education director, 724-981-5310.

Quota International

Quota International of Hermitage's Gutchies for Kidz program continues to accept new undergarments for school-age children through high school. The group is also collecting pajamas for the holiday season.

Dropoff tubs are at:

■ Knott's Interiors - 1505 N. Hermitage Road, Hermitage

■ Greenville Savings Bank - 550 N. Hermitage Road, Hermitage

■ Je'riel Fashions - 1550 E. State St., Hermitage

■ Lori Rollinson's Hair Boutique - 22 E. Shenango St., Sharpsville

Info: 724-347-7410 or 724-699-7282.

Penn State Shenango

Penn State Shenango is holding a toy drive to benefit the Marine Corps Reserve's Toys for Tots Foundation. All new toys are welcome.

The program collects new, unwrapped toys during October, November and December each year, and distributes them as Christmas gifts to needy children in the community in which the campaign is conducted.

The collection continues through Dec. 16 in the cam-

pus bookstore located in McDowell Hall, the Student Affairs Office in Sharon Hall room 103, and in the PTA building located across from the Lartz Memorial Library.

Info: Jennifer Jewell, 724-983-2886.

Applications for Toys for Tots can be obtained by calling the Mercer County Family Center at 724-588-2404.

GC Food Pantry

Grove City Community Food Pantry, 114 S. Center St., which serves close to 630 families, is collecting donations via the annual Parade of Trees in which nonprofits set up a decorated tree in downtown Grove City businesses.

The public votes for favorite trees by placing donated non-perishable food items, hygiene products and cleaning goods under them.

Donations will be accepted through Dec. 15.

Hermitage Goodfellows

Hermitage Goodfellows will again be assisting families at Christmas. The Goodfellows will deliver food and toys on Christmas Eve.

Last year, the Goodfellows delivered to more than 120 families and elderly residents of Hermitage.

The Goodfellows have been helping families for more than 50 years.

Anyone wishing to drop off canned goods or toys may do so in Hermitage at the city garage on Virginia Road, Fire Station 1 on Highland Road, or Rice Pool and Spa at 3604 E. State St.

New toys for boys and girls ages 9 to 13 are needed this year.



Urban League hosts 18th awards gala honoring leadership

by Ashley Johnson

Courier Staff Writer

With the Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh's slogan of "Empowering Communities. Changing Lives."—It is a goal that can only be achieved through dedication, hard work and great leadership. Despite the grueling weather, hundreds gathered on Dec. 6, as the Urban League honored four individuals and a corporation for their roles in helping the organization and surrounding communities achieve that goal at the 18th Annual Ronald H. Brown Leadership Awards Gala at the West Club Lounge at Heinz Field.

Esther Bush, president and CEO of the Urban League, said, "We felt really good about the hundreds of people who dealt with the weather and supported us. I really want to thank them." She said the feedback that she's received has been positive.

The Urban League's annual event honors outstanding individuals, organizations or corporations in the Greater Pittsburgh community who exemplify leadership in improving the quality of life for African-Americans, while raising funds to continue the vital services they provide within the community.

This year's honorees were: journalist Chris Moore for his civic leadership, Jerlean E. Daniel, PhD, and Jack L. Daniel, PhD, for their community leadership, and Enterprise Holdings and Tim Nettles, for their corporate leadership.

"I want to congratulate all the honorees. I've had a personal relationship with all four of them and I will tell you, being Black in America is an uphill battle. And getting more people to support you while you're trying to advocate on behalf of equity and equality on behalf of the African-American community is more than a notion," Bush said.

Moore, a producer and host at WQED Pittsburgh, was honored for his civic leadership. He has been a part of the WQED since 1980 and is best known for his work with the television shows "Black Horizons" and "4802," several documentaries such as "Wylie Avenue Days," "Torchbearers" and "Jim Crow Pennsylvania," various military-related programs including "Fly Boys:

Western Pennsylvania's Tuskegee Airmen;" and for creating and hosting "Black Talk" on WCXJ. He has also served for 30 years as the founder and co-director of the Pittsburgh Black Media Federation's Frank Bolden Urban Journalism Workshop.

"I'm honored that the Urban League thought of me as a leader," Moore said of his honor. "I've never thought of myself as a leader, but (more) as someone who shines the light on others who are leaders."

For the first time, the Urban League honored two individuals for their community leadership, and they just happen to be husband and wife. Jerlean Daniel is the recently retired executive director of the National Association for the Education of Young Children, along with a former chair of the Psychology in Education department and assistant professor in both, the School of Education and the School of Social Work, at the University of Pittsburgh. She has also served on several advisory committees and authored a series of articles.

When asked how she felt about the award, she said, "I am honored and humbled to be a recipient of the Ronald H. Brown Award. He was a remarkable and accomplished man. I consider this award to be an affirmation of a journey I have been on in full collaboration with so many others in Pittsburgh, Allegheny County and beyond to make the world what it ought to be." She continued, saying, "The journey will continue until we get it right."

Her husband, Jack

Daniel, is a professor of Communications at the University of Pittsburgh. He is known as a pioneer in communication research and for his role in bringing the Black Studies Department to Pitt. He founded the National Communication Association's Black Caucus and has chaired and served on several steering committees. Jack Daniel has also co-authored the book "We Fish: The Journey to Fatherhood," which he did so with his son. In his acceptance speech, Jack Daniel credited his upbringing for his knowledge of and dedication to service.

"There are some things that happened at the University of Pittsburgh that Jack is responsible for and that you will never know. I will tell you, he helped Blacken the University of Pittsburgh," Bush said of him during his speech.

Nettles, the vice president and general manager of Enterprise Holdings, received the corporate leadership honor on behalf of his company, which operates the Enterprise Rent-A-Car, National Car Rental and Alamo Rent-A-Car brands. The global network operates in more than 8,100 airports and neighborhood locations, with approximately 75 of them located here in the Greater Pittsburgh area. In both 2012 and 2013, the three brands took the top three J.D. Power and Associates spots for car rental satisfaction.

Nettles, a member of the Urban League board, said the Urban League and Enterprise have had a long-standing partnership that has lasted for more than a decade. Along with Enter-



Hope Has a Home



Cherrie and Reginald Brown



Bob and Carol Carter



Roy Engelbrecht photos

Valerie and Gateway CEO Paul Bacharach, Dr. Abraham Twerski and Paul Sweeney

Across Town



Judy Holahan and Vivian McDowell



Judge Dwayne Woodruff and honorees Jerlean Daniel, Jack Daniel, Chris Moore and Tim Nettles, Urban League CEO Esther Bush and dinner chairs Alan Trivino and Evan Frazier



Chris Weiss, Jessica DiVito and Scott Schubert



Bill Leshjian, Chaz Kellum and Marsha Blanton



Dennis Yablonsky, W&J president Tori Haring-Smith and David Ross

Holiday Dinner Dance Thursday at Chartiers Country Club. The non-dating social group is open to university graduated who are 50 or older and offers a number of educational and cultural activities.

2. The Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh, which is celebrating its 95th anniversary year, held its **Ronald H. Brown 2013 Leadership Awards Gala** Dec. 6 at the West Club Lounge of Heinz Field. Honored were Chris Moore of WQED, Jerlean and Jack Daniel, and Enterprise Holdings (Pittsburgh) represented by regional VP Tim Nettles. Co-chairing the gala were Alan Trivilino from PNC and Evan Frazier from Highmark.

3. For some people, jumping into frigid water once to benefit **Special Olympics** isn't enough. Fourteen Super Plungers who had each raised more than \$3,500 splashed into an above-ground pool behind the Hard Rock Cafe in Station Square to the cheers of 250 people at the **Pittsburgh Polar Plunge Friday Night Splash**. On Saturday, hundreds more joined them for a freezing dip in the Ohio River. The Plunge raised more than \$400,000.

4. The ACHIEVA 2013 Awards of Excellence took place Dec. 2 at Sheraton Station Square. Honored were Pirates manager Clint Hurdle (accepted by Chaz Kellum), United Way's Bob Nelson, Trufood Manufacturing, state Sen. Matt Smith, Kris Mamula, attorneys

Rebecca Heaton Hall, Stephen Feldman and Jeffrey Ruder, Mary Limbacher, Debbie Efke-man, Courtney Chiurazzi and Helenka Foley. ACHIEVA is one of the nation's largest non-profit organizations serving people with disabilities and their families.

5. Washington & Jefferson College honored David Ross, class of '78, president and co-founder of Atlantic Realty Companies, and Dennis Yablonsky, CEO of the Allegheny Conference, as Entrepreneurs of the Year at its **27th annual Entrepreneurial Leadership Dinner** Nov. 21 at The Duquesne Club in Pittsburgh.

SEE **SEEN**, PAGE C-3



STAMPED ON

Cuts in federal food benefits
mean **tightened belts**
for residents and
charities alike

(BY REBECCA NUTTALL AND ALEX ZIMMERMAN)

(PHOTOS BY HEATHER MULL)



JUST WEEKS before Thanksgiving, a time when belts loosen all across the country, nearly 1.8 million low-income Pennsylvanians began tightening their own.

On Nov. 1, cuts in the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program — often referred to as SNAP or food stamps — went into effect. As a result of reduced federal spending, Pennsylvania's program has lost some \$183 million. And a family of four with no income is allotted \$1.75 to spend per person per meal.

"I've seen families who were getting a couple hundred dollars down to a hundred," says Brandi Rukovena, food-pantry coordinator for North Hills Community Outreach, adding that families will have to make choices between paying for medications, making mortgage payments and having enough to eat.

Among those impacted: an estimated 766,000 children and 494,000 elderly who receive benefits in Pennsylvania.

"We already have record numbers of children" in poverty, says David Greeve, SNAP coordinator for the Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh. "With parents getting less benefits from the SNAP program, it really impairs their ability to provide for their children."

"I always come back to one man who was brought to tears. He was in a divorce situation and was finding himself unable to provide for his family. It hurts a person's pride and feelings of independence. It creates a sense of desperation and hopelessness."

Meanwhile, Greve says, "A lot of our seniors are forced to make a choice between getting their medicine and putting food on the table."

Families or individuals who qualify for SNAP receive an ACCESS Card, which acts like a debit card at a grocery store. The card can be used to buy bread, cereal, fruits, vegetables, meat, fish, poultry and dairy products. It can't be used purchase products like alcohol or tobacco, or items like soap, diapers, household supplies or vitamins.

SNAP benefits vary in amount and are dependent on a family or individual's income. For a family of four, a household's gross monthly income cannot exceed \$3,141. For individuals,

the threshold is \$1,533.

Food-stamp benefits were decreased because the federal stimulus plan expired. According to the Pennsylvania Department of Welfare, which administers SNAP benefits, federal funding for food stamps was decreased by 5.4 percent. For a family of four, that amounts to a decrease of \$36 monthly.

The reduction reflects the last gasp of President Barack Obama's 2009 stimulus plan. That year, food benefits were increased by 13 percent, based on the assumption that the cost of living would rise by that percentage over the ensuing four years. But federal cost-of-living numbers — whose accuracy is hotly contested by economists — reflected a smaller rise, and benefits were reduced accordingly.

"While Republicans will say this is a rollback of an increase, if a person [started receiving food stamps] in July, they're getting less now than they were before," says Ken Regal, executive director of Just Harvest, a nonprofit that helps people apply for benefits. "That's a cut, no matter how you slice it."

The 5.4 percent cut is "a small decrease," said Kait Gillis, a spokesperson for the state's Department of Public Welfare. "But unfortunately, it's going to affect people, and we hope our local organizations can pull together to fill the gap for citizens in need."

That won't be easy, say area food pantries and food banks.

"IT'S NOT THE
DOWNTRODDEN
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... [T]HESE ARE
PEOPLE WHO ARE
EMPLOYED."



ESTHER BUSH

HIV/AIDS

These monthly pages focus on health disparities in the Pittsburgh region. They educate readers about key health issues and inform them of research opportunities and community resources. All articles can be viewed online at the New Pittsburgh Courier Web site. The monthly series is a partnership of the New Pittsburgh Courier, Community PARTners (a core service of the University of Pittsburgh Clinical and Translational Science Institute—CTSI), the Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh and the UPMC Center for Inclusion.

This month the "Take Charge of Your Health" page focuses on HIV/AIDS. Jessica Griffin Burke,

PhD, associate professor of behavioral and community health sciences at the University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Public Health, and Esther L. Bush, president and CEO of the Urban League, sat down to talk about HIV/AIDS.

JGB: Thank you for talking with me. I'm saddened every time I see the statistic that close to half of all new HIV cases in the U.S. are among African Americans. What are your thoughts about this month's health topic?

EB: The numbers of HIV-infected African Americans is staggering. It indicates to me that we need to continue working hard to raise awareness about the disease, encourage HIV testing and promote prevention. It's critical for people to get tested for HIV and receive good medical care if they are HIV-positive. Being diagnosed with HIV today isn't the same as it was 30 years ago. The medications work so well that HIV can be managed and people infected with the virus can lead long lives. However, preventing infection in the first place is essential. We want to make sure that everyone is safe.

JGB: Prevention is a critical issue. What types of prevention programs work for African American populations?

EB: The Girlfriend Project covered in this month's segment is amazing. A program designed by African American women for African American women is definitely the right approach. Using social gatherings as a place to share HIV education and to provide HIV

testing makes a lot of sense. It's clear from the results of Dr. Hawk's research that it works.

JGB: I absolutely agree. The approach of Dr. Friedman's work highlighted on this page, Project Silk, also addresses people's whole lives and tries to find ways to improve their situations while providing HIV prevention. Much of my own research focuses on figuring out the puzzle that is HIV/AIDS among African American women. I've found that violence within relationships is strongly related to a woman's ability to use condoms to prevent HIV and to her ability to get tested for HIV and receive treatment. Ultimately, the interventions that are going to work best are those that really address the needs of the population, right?

EB: I couldn't agree more. That's what we try to do at the Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh. By building links between services—including HIV testing and counseling—and working with and in communities, we should hopefully be able to reduce the number of African Americans who are HIV-infected. I strongly believe that we can lower that statistic here in Allegheny County.

JGB: Thank you again for your time, Esther. Enjoy the holiday season, and we'll talk to you next month when we focus on eye and vision health. If anyone has questions about the "Take Charge of Your Health Today" pages, contact Community PARTners at partners@hs.pitt.edu.



Highmark workforce development paying off

by Christian Morrow
 Courier Staff Writer

Two years ago, Highmark launched a \$2.4-million workforce development program. During a Dec. 19 press event at New Century Careers on Pittsburgh's South Side, spokesman Evan Frazier said the company was pleased with the results and is committed to ongoing support.

"We served over 5,900 individuals through grants of up to \$50,000 to 31 non-profits," he said. "But what was really satisfying is how they leveraged those dollars and forged partnerships to increase the value. We didn't just give them money and walk away. I went to a lot of meetings."

Locally, the initiative awarded more than \$992 million to 14 agencies.

"Part of the goal was to address parts of the community that are often left out like the POISE Foundation and the Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh," said Frazier. "In Allegheny County we focused

tury, POISE and the Urban League, local recipients included the Three Rivers Workforce Investment Board, Life's Work, the NorthShore Community Alliance, Keystone Research Center, Blind & Vision Rehabilitative Services of Pittsburgh, Family Services of Western Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania Women Work, Lutheran Service Society/Springboard Kitchens and the Veterans Leadership Program.

By leveraging their grant awards, Frazier said two-thirds of the recipients had forged new cooperative workforce initiative. So rather than competing, they are partnering with each other.

As a result of the two-year initiative, 785 participants secured jobs. Of those, 180 have already received promotions or raises. Another 504 jobs were retained.

Frazier said he anticipates continued investment in rebuilding the workforce, but said he doesn't know if it will come in another single \$2.4-million chunk.

"We are committed," he said. "We know we are stewards and that follow-up is essential."

(Send comments to cmorrow@newpittsburghcourier.com)



EVAN FRAZIER



SEE HIGHMARK A3
 on adult training and retraining, and rapid reemployment."
 In addition to New Cen-

SNAP Program helps older adults bridge gap between affording food and healthcare

By David Greve
 SNAP Coordinator, Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh
 For Pittsburgh Senior News

With the economic downturn and the rising cost of food and healthcare, keeping food on the table has become a difficult struggle for many seniors. While food pantries and food banks provide needed relief, they often simply can't give enough to fully cover the gaps for people living on fixed incomes. Thankfully, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP, is there to help seniors and others to afford good nutrition throughout the month.

Since its inception in 1964, SNAP, formerly known as Food Stamps, has changed dramatically. The complicated paper stamp system has been replaced by a monthly deposit onto a simple debit card, which is then swiped at the grocery store checkout. Many more businesses, like drug stores and gas stations, now accept these debit cards, also referred to as EBT, making shopping for essentials more convenient. Unused benefits even roll over from one month to the next, eliminating concerns about losing the balance you have for as long as you use the card.

However, the most important changes have been the loosening of income eligibility guidelines, meaning that thousands more seniors now qualify for the program. Seniors and individuals with disabilities can now take advantage of categorical eligibility, which enables them to qualify for the program at higher incomes. A senior living alone can have a monthly income up to \$1,916, or \$2,586 a month for a two-person household, and still qualify for the program.

Applying for SNAP has never been easier. Paper applications are no longer necessary since the introduction of the online COMPASS tool. While the tool enables interested applicants to file on their own over the Internet, community organizations like the Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh have taken advantage of the feature to help seniors and others complete an application over the telephone from the comfort and privacy of their homes. The Urban League can be reached at (866) 395-8930 or through the United Way's 2-1-1 service by dialing 2-1-1 and asking for help applying for SNAP.

Completing an application over the phone with the assistance of the Urban League can be much quicker and simpler, with representatives that can explain the process and answer questions about it. The Urban League also makes visits to senior centers and living facilities, enabling seniors to get signed

up in person right where they live. In fact, individuals who complete their applications this way may never have to visit a County Assistance Office, completing the entire process by phone and by mail.

Eligibility for the program and the amount of benefits received are calculated through a balance of income and expenses. Seniors are able to deduct household expenses, like rent or mortgage payments and utility bills, as well as their medical expenses, from doctor and prescription co-pays to hospital bills and insurance premiums, from their income when being considered for benefits. For seniors with high medical costs, this can make a significant difference in their eligibility.

A few new requirements have recently been added. In May, the governor re-instituted asset testing, which sets limits on the value of financial resources, such as checking and savings accounts or vehicles, a household may have and still remain eligible for the program. Fortunately, there are several features and exceptions to the process that directly benefit seniors. For instance, retirement accounts and the first owned vehicle are not considered in the calculation. Best of all, while younger applicants must have less than \$5,500 in resources to qualify, seniors can have up to \$9,000 before they hit the limit.

Across southwestern Pennsylvania, seniors are taking charge of their good nutrition with SNAP. If you're having trouble affording good food throughout the month, SNAP may be able to fill those gaps. *PSN*

For more information or to apply over the phone, call the Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh at (866) 395-8930. To request an in-person visit from an Urban League SNAP representative, call David at (412) 325-0752.





Impoverished children, circa 1918.

University of Pittsburgh Archives/Kingway Association Records

BOLD IDEAS

Edward W. Sites and Christine H. O'Toole
profile the heroines of Pittsburgh's first child-welfare system.

When Alice Ballard Montgomery stepped off the Philadelphia train at the Downtown Pittsburgh platform in 1902, she wasn't the new sheriff in town: she was the new chief probation officer.

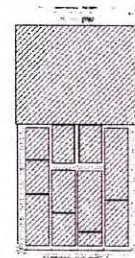
Montgomery was a squarely-built, 50-year-old social activist on a mission — to prove to Pittsburgh that poor, abandoned children could be nurtured into responsible adults. She was among Pittsburgh's Progressive Era bluestockings, a unique crop of feminists and social mavericks who paved the way for juvenile courts, child labor laws, mothers' pensions, Social Security, public child welfare, public health and day care.

Pittsburgh's late-19th-century history, marked by rapid industrialization, created great fortunes and great

misery. While the rise of Gilded Age millionaires such as Frick, Mellon, Carnegie and Heinz has been well-documented, the contributions of women such as Montgomery, who fought for the city's poor and abandoned, until recently have been ignored.

We recently marked two important milestones for human services in Allegheny County — the 50th anniversary of the county child-welfare agency, now known as the Office of Children, Youth and Families, and the 75th anniversary of the University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work's specialization in child welfare. As we looked at the entwined history of these efforts, we found a quartet of earnest and brilliant women who led the fight to find permanent, loving homes for abandoned children and widowed mothers.

Even before women gained the right to vote in 1919, they had been at the



frontier of social work, as volunteers or matrons in private institutions. The Progressive Era, spanning the end of the 1800s and the first two decades of the 20th century, unleashed their talents.

Allegheny County Civic Club, founded in 1895 as an offshoot of the Twentieth Century Club, led the way. The group founded the city's Municipal Hospital, drafted tenement housing standards and organized the Child Labor Association and the Juvenile, or Children's, Court of Allegheny County. A new generation of family-service agencies emerged from those reforms: The institutions now known as Hill House, the Ward Home, Bradley Children's Home and the Davis Home for Colored Children (now Three Rivers Youth) were all launched in the first decade of the new century. The new agencies offered women their first professional careers in the field.

Montgomery had arrived in town to work with the county's newly established Children's Court and promptly hired 10 probation officers — all women — to investigate cases. Allegheny County's Children's Court was one of the first in the nation to remove children from the adult jail population, and Montgomery was determined to prove that the court could provide children

with help, not punishment. A fearless, experienced hand, she had studied Philadelphia's welfare issues and even lived for a time in a settlement house there, documenting conditions in city slums.

Her team located foster parents and long-lost relatives to provide permanent homes. One 1905 report described a typical case: *When [the children] heard the judge say, "take them to the detention room," they were pretty well scared. . . . Then came a long talk with the probation officer. Dick said he had a half-brother in Johnstown and would like to live with him. His brother was written to, and as he consented to take the boy and give him a good home, the court committed Dick to his care.*

Fellow Progressive Florence Lattimore called the court "the most thought-provoking step on behalf of children ever taken in the District." But Montgomery grew to believe that the city's working class needed far more help. She lobbied city leaders to take a more comprehensive step — to invite the famous Progressive reformer Paul Kellogg to conduct the Pittsburgh

Survey of 1907.

Kellogg immediately accepted. He was eager to study what he called Pittsburgh's "destruction of family life, not in any imaginary or mystical sense, but by the demands of the day's work, and by the very demonstrable and material method of typhoid fever and industrial accidents; both preventable, but costing in single years considerably more than a thousand lives, and irretrievably shattering nearly as many homes."

The survey was a massive two-year undertaking that brought eager young Progressives to document the city's social ills. Its 50 researchers included lawyer Crystal Eastman (later a co-founder of the American Civil Liberties Union), artist Joseph Stella and photographer Lewis Hine. Funded by the Russell Sage Foundation and published as a series of articles in 1909, the

survey led to the city's first water-purification plant, which reduced typhoid outbreaks, and to new workers' compensation laws.

Among the shrewdest observers of family life in the region was the 29-year-old Lattimore, who contributed the chapter "Pittsburgh as a Foster Mother" to the Pittsburgh Survey. A passionate reformer and writer, she visited mill towns and squalid homes in Skunk Hollow (now Ewing Street in Bloomfield), reported on conditions at almshouses and exposed the lack of enforced standards for charitable institutions. She began to document the case histories not only of children, but their parents. She argued that institutions became default housing for children who could have remained with their families if other supports for the adults were provided. She came to advocate for a system of care that addressed complex family needs.

"The first step is to determine whether the possibility of life in his own home still exists for a child," she wrote. "It is not sufficient to learn that the father is out of work or that the mother is in the hospital. Modern philanthropy has demonstrated that the unemployment of a father and the illness of a mother are mere starting points for the determination of the real cause of trouble. Is the unemployment necessary, and why? Can work be found for the father and health be found for the mother? These questions must be settled before a child can be justly pronounced to be in need of new guardianship or of institutional care."

The situation, she argued, "involved

fundamental questions of municipal responsibility for the hidden as well as exposed causes of poverty and distress."

Government gradually and grudgingly began to assume authority over child-welfare institutions. Pennsylvania established its Department of Welfare

in 1921 and appointed Ellen Potter, who had previously managed the state's Children's Bureau, as its first head.

As Pitt faculty fellow Jessie B. Ramey reported in "Child Care in Black and White," her history of orphanages, Potter became the first female member of a governor's cabinet in the United States. With deep experience in New York settlement houses, she published articles and advocated research and best practices for children's health and welfare.

Potter had earned her medical degree at Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania and served in uniform in World War I. But she fought a different battle in her negotiations with county orphanage inspectors: the unfunded mandate.

Pennsylvania could prescribe optimal living conditions and rules, but it could not compel compliance. Potter's agency provided no grants to private institutions for improvements. Instead, the department relied on Potter's strategy of patient prodding and good example.

She effectively deployed and promoted an army of female field agents, who visited orphanages and reported their findings. (Among them were recent graduates of Pitt's School of Social Work, which offered its first courses in 1918.) Basic hygiene — modern toilets, drinking fountains and individual combs and toothbrushes — slowly became the norm.

One of Potter's successors in Harrisburg was Helen Glenn Tyson, a Schenley Farms resident who served as deputy welfare secretary for Pennsylvania in 1930. Tyson was an insightful advocate for child welfare in Allegheny County. She earned a Ph.D. at the University of Pittsburgh after graduating Phi Beta Kappa from Vassar. She was also a founder of the Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh. Created as part of a national movement in 1918 to enable

African-Americans to secure economic self-reliance and civil rights, the local Urban League chapter continues to be an active partner of Allegheny County's Department of Human Services.

Advances lay far ahead. Shaped first by the Great Depression and later the federal programs of the Great Society, comprehensive public human-service programs in Allegheny County and elsewhere would dwarf the early-20th-century efforts. But in many ways, the bluestocking vanguard built the foundation to help the generations that built Pittsburgh.

Edward W. Sites (esites@pitt.edu) is professor emeritus at the Pitt School of Social Work. **Christine H. O'Toole** (chris@christinehotoole.com) is a Mt. Lebanon-based writer. This story is based on Mr. Sites' Sept. 23 address about the history of the School of Social Work and Ms. O'Toole's monograph, "From Almshouses to Excellence: A History of Child Welfare in Allegheny County," which was commissioned by the county and may be accessed at alleghenycounty.us/dhs/research-cyf.aspx.



Kathy Leahy

Alice Ballard Montgomery, circa 1910

JAN. 3-9, 2014

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AFTER HOURS



Lexus of North Hills' Diamond Gala

Michael Spacciopoli, left, Kevin Mullen and Michael Young at Lexus of North Hills' sixth annual Diamond Gala, benefiting Cribs for Kids' Infant Safe Sleep Initiative.

COURTESY OF BRIDGETT KAY PHOTOGRAPHY LLC/WHIRL MAGAZINE



Ronald H. Brown Leadership Awards

Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh President and CEO Esther Bush, left, with honorees Drs. Jack and Jerlean Daniel at the awards gala.

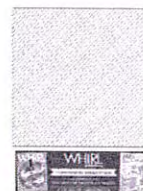
COURTESY OF KASSIE JACKSON/WHIRL MAGAZINE



Schenley Place groundbreaking

Elmhurst Group broke ground on Schenley Place, a 105,000-square-foot, seven-story, Class A office building with three levels of below ground parking. The building is located on the corner of Bigelow Boulevard and Rusk Avenue in Oakland. Pictured, from left, are: Tyler Noland, The ER&CT Fund; Senator Jay Costa; Dan Gilman, City Council; Senator Jim Ferlo; Bill Hunt, Elmhurst Group; Rev. D.J. Quirin, First Baptist Church; Brooks Robinson, on behalf of Gov. Tom Corbett; and Nello Giorgetti, Cohen & Grigsby.

COURTESY OF ELMHURST GROUP



Stories of influential African-Americans bring exhibit alive

By Lauren Lindstrom
 Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Pittsburgh residents can now hear from some of the city's most influential citizens in their own words, thanks to a new exhibit.

"Celebrating Black History Month" honors 12 influential African-Americans who have contributed to civic leadership, civil rights and the arts in Pittsburgh. The exhibit opened Wednesday at the PNC Legacy building, 600 Liberty Ave., Downtown as part of the PNC Legacy Project.

The exhibit will open to the public Monday to commemorate Martin Luther King Jr. Day, but PNC debuted the project a few days early.

Among the honorees are **Esther Bush**, CEO and president of the Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh; Sean Jones, artistic director of the Pittsburgh Jazz Orchestra; Demeatria Boccella, founder of Utopia Model Agency and Fashion AFRICANA; and civil and women's rights advocate Alma Speed Fox.

Visitors can hear stories from each of the 12 people featured by picking up phone-like listening devices hanging around the exhibit. Additional historical information is featured on interactive storyboards and in photo slideshows.

"We're here to honor the transformation of our wonderful city and the men and women who contributed to it," said Donna Peterman, executive vice president and chief communications officer for PNC. "To hear in their own words how being from Pittsburgh has shaped them

and what they have been able to bring to the city."

Ms. Bush said she was honored to be featured in the project.

"I am on a list with all these other people that I respect and look up to, who have laid the groundwork for all of us," she said after the presentations. "I think it's excellent."

Although he is an Ohio native, Mr. Jones said he has grown to appreciate Pittsburgh's history after living in the city for a decade.

"Pittsburgh is truly my home now," he said. "At the end of the day, I decided to make this my city. While I have been here I've tried to do everything I can to hold up that rich legacy."

He said he is excited for the opportunity to learn from the stories of the other inductees.

"I am delighted to see the space," he said. "I will have to come back a few more times to see everything and really dig into the stories of these individuals."

The exhibit is open to the public weekdays from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. starting Monday and runs through October.

For more events to celebrate Martin Luther King Jr. Day, go to www.post-gazette.com.

Lauren Lindstrom: llindstrom@post-gazette.com or 412-263-1964.



AN EAR TO HISTORY



Robin Rombach/Post-Gazette

Esther L. Bush, CEO and president of the Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh, listens Wednesday to an audio recording in the African-American oral histories exhibit at the PNC Legacy Building, 600 Liberty Ave., Downtown. Ms. Bush is one of the 12 prominent African-Americans in Western Pennsylvania to be featured in the exhibit. The exhibit will open to the public Monday, which is Martin Luther King Jr. Day. **Story In Local, Page B-2**



NEWSMAKER Dean Williams

Noteworthy: Williams will receive a distinguished individual leadership award Friday from the Coro Center for Civic Leadership's



Pittsburgh office. The award goes to a person who practices values-based leadership.

Age: 56

Residence: Penn Hills; native of West Mifflin.

Education: Bachelor's degree in physical education, Norfolk State University.

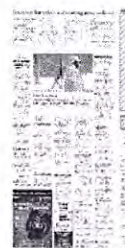
Background: Williams is executive director of the Formerly Convicted Citizens Project, a nonprofit aimed at removing barriers for people with convictions. The organization started in 2011 with a grant from the Falk Foundation. Williams holds monthly workshops on expungements and pardons at the Urban League. More than 3,000 people have attended the sessions. He is a former kinesiologist in the VA system in New York, having worked in Manhattan, Brooklyn and the Bronx. Williams also is the lead singer for Protege, a group from Studio-E Entertainment in Greensburg that performs private corporate events and weddings. He is the former lead singer of the Pittsburgh R&B group Artistry.

Quote: "I have no funding at this point. I've pretty much been volunteering for the last eight months. This award is a great opportunity. I'm extremely humble to have been chosen. The goal is to help as many people as possible."

— Jason Cato

To nominate

If you have a suggestion for a Newsmaker, contact Metro Editor Jim Borden at 412-320-7981 or jborden@tribweb.com, or fax the name to 412-320-7965.



MCCANDLESS

Cultural buffet for seniors

By Jill Cueni-Cohen

Vincintian Home resident Marie Kane, 79, has lived in Pittsburgh all her life and has never traveled out of the state. However, on the Martin Luther King Day of Service on Monday, the world came to her during the McCandless nursing home's first-ever multicultural fair.

"Now I want to learn more about different countries," Mrs. Kane said after spending an hour playing "Jeopardy" with flags — and people — from different nations. "The girls I met today brought their country to me, which makes me want to learn more. It's so nice when people come here, because we don't get out much."

Joyce Lewis-Andrews, director of volunteer services, came up with the idea of a multicultural fair after last year's successful Book of Life program, in which volunteers paired up with residents to document their lives' events and accomplishments.

This year's fair surpassed her expectations. More than 100 volunteers from different cultures shared their arts, heritage, food and entertainment with the residents.

"I put out a plea to schools and organizations for volunteers, and the outpouring of interest was amazing," said Ms. Lewis-Andrews. "Culture isn't just about different countries. We've also included the youth culture; they brought their music and styles to showcase, and the residents loved it."

Chinese students Vivian Liang, 16, Brandy Yang, 15, and Sophia Li, 19, have been living at the Holy Family Interna-

tional Institute and attending Vincintian Academy. They entertained the residents with music from China. Vivian and Brandy treated the audience to a duet performance of a Chinese love song and Sophia played a folk song on the piano.

"We are so happy to visit these people, and it was so rewarding to see them so happy," said Vivian. "They make us think about our grandparents in China and how much we miss them. But seeing how optimistic they are gives me hope that I can live as happy as they are when I'm old."

Among the fair participants were volunteers from AmeriCorp, Pittsburgh Cares, the University of Pittsburgh, the Urban League of Pittsburgh and Holy Family Institute. Pittsburgh Cares provided seven activities from around the world, one of which was aboriginal painting with Q-tips.

Bringing people from the outside world into the cloistered community of Vincintian Home is Ms. Lewis-Andrews' goal, but she noted that it's a beneficial experience for all.

"This is a great way to let our residents see the changes going on in the world," she said. "But the benefits of volunteering are also just as important as the benefits the residents receive. Volunteering keeps you active, healthy and has a mental benefit, because it gives you a meaningful purpose. Volunteers get as much out of the experience as the residents do."

The event took place in three shifts, starting at 10:30 a.m. and ending at 8 p.m. with a display of African tribal dancing.

Ms. Lewis-Andrews said she was pleased with the way residents responded and by the attendance. She said she plans to make this an annual event.

She said Vincintian's next event — Rocking for Residents — will involve rocking chairs and take place in June. Those interested in volunteering can visit: www.vcs.org.

"Talking with these girls today opened the world up for

me, and now I'm going to start studying about other countries," said Mrs. Kane.

She said her late husband was in the Navy. "He spent a lot of time on the boat, so when I suggested we take a cruise, he always said no. He'd had enough of boats. But I always wanted to go somewhere like Hawaii, and today was inspiring. Maybe there's still time."

Jill Cueni-Cohen, freelance writer: suburbanliving@post-gazette.com.



WENDELL FREELAND

Tuskegee airman, lawyer, pioneering civil rights leader

By Torsten Ove
 Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Wendell Freeland, a respected lawyer, pioneering civil rights leader and proud member of the Tuskegee airmen of World War II fame, died early Thursday morning after a battle with pancreatic cancer. He was 88 and lived in Shady-side.

Mr. Freeland, former chairman of the board of directors of the Urban League of Pittsburgh from 1962 to 1967 and a former senior vice president of the national board, was at the forefront of the civil rights movement here in the 1960s.

"I don't think there's any part of African-American history in this city that he wasn't a part of," said Lynne Hayes-Freeland, his former daughter-in-law. "He didn't just talk the talk, he walked the walk."

A product of segregated schools in his native Baltimore, he took on such legal cases as integrating the Highland Park pool while challenging local companies to hire blacks and urging African-Americans to develop the skills to land good jobs.

In a 1963 speech at a meeting of the Allegheny County Council on Civil Rights, he called for "action, not slogans, to compensate for the deprivations of the past."

Before becoming board chairman at the Urban League, he chaired the board's education committee and helped establish a dialogue between the black community and the Pittsburgh Public Schools board that laid the foundation for desegregation and the hiring of black teachers, the Urban League said.

Last year, the league honored him by creating the Wendell G. Freeland Living Legacy Award for future honorees who uphold the league's mission.

Mr. Freeland continued to champion the rights of African-Americans into old age. In 2010, he persuaded the state Supreme Court to posthumously admit George Vashon, a 19th-century black lawyer from Pittsburgh, to the Pennsylvania bar.

Mr. Vashon's application had been twice turned down by the Allegheny County Bar, so Mr. Freeland and Nolan Atkinson, a Philadelphia lawyer and Vashon's great-grandson, petitioned the court on behalf of George Vashon's descendants.

"That was something that he often said he was most proud of," said Ms. Hayes-Freeland, who had been married to Mr. Freeland's son, Michael.

Mr. Freeland's dedication to equal rights began long before his arrival in Pittsburgh.

Among the Tuskegee airmen, he was held in high esteem for taking part in the 1945 Freeman Field mutiny, often considered the first step toward integrating the military in 1949.

He was among a group of black officers with the 477th Bombardment Group stationed at Freeman Field in Indiana who tried to enter an all-white officers' club and were arrested.

Most were released, but when about 100 black officers later refused to sign a statement indicating they understood that they weren't allowed in the club, they were arrested for disobeying orders during wartime.

"That's why Wendell is so special to us," said Regis

Bobonis Sr., chairman of the Tuskegee Airmen Memorial of



Wendell Freeland

the Greater Pittsburgh Region. "He was an icon inside the civil rights movement."

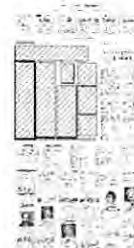
In September, Mr. Freeland was one of three remaining local Tuskegee airmen who attended the dedication of an exhibit in their honor at Pittsburgh International Airport. The event was special for him.

"History and the contributions of African-Americans were a big part of who he was," Ms. Hayes-Freeland said.

The Tuskegee memorial group will honor him with a eulogy next Saturday at its annual meeting in the Sewickley Public Library.

Born in Baltimore in 1925, Mr. Freeland enlisted in 1943 during World War II and served as a bombardier in Europe. He often joked that he was chosen as a bombardier because he was short and could fit into the cramped aircraft compartment.

Back home following the war, he married his wife, Jane, in 1946. He graduated from Howard University and was one of the first black graduates of the University of Maryland School of Law.



He and Jane arrived in Pittsburgh in 1950 when he took a job with the Smith Jones law firm. He later worked as an assistant district attorney and then returned to private practice.

Hemet Elsie Hillman, philanthropist and Republican power broker, in 1960 and became involved in Republican politics at a time when the GOP was trying to attract more blacks.

"He was my political lawyer and did all my political work until just last month," Ms. Hillman said. "He became a total part of my family. We'll miss him terribly."

As an attorney, Mr. Freeland accepted all kinds of clients, his family said, and often didn't charge for his services.

"He took cases for people who could not pay," said Ms. Hayes-Freeland. "If they were a plumber, then they would do some plumbing work [rather than pay]."

He continued to practice law into his 80s and was a regular at The Carlton restaurant, Downtown, which named several drinks for him, including the "Wendellini."

"He was just a real wonderful person, bright and smart, one of the more prominent

intellectual lawyers you would find over the generations in Pittsburgh," said owner Kevin Joyce. "He was a very dynamic man. He always had time for everybody. He really had a common touch."

In addition to his wife and his son, Mr. Freeland is survived by his daughter, Lisa Freeland, federal public defender for the Western District of Pennsylvania.

Funeral arrangements were not complete Friday.

Torsten Ove: tove@post-gazette.com or 412-231-0132.



WENDELL FREELAND

Freeland dead at 88

Civil rights attorney,
Tuskegee Airman

by Christian Morrow
 Courier Staff Writer

Whether as a recruit in a segregated World War II Army base, as a lawyer in a courtroom or as a citizen marching on the streets of Downtown Pittsburgh, Wendell Freeland was a relentless fighter for racial justice.

Freeland who remained sharp and active until very recently, still doing the New York Times crossword every day before going to his law office, died at his home in Shadyside of pancreatic cancer Jan. 24, just weeks shy of his 89th birthday.

Tim Stevens, who heard the news that morning from attorney Vic Walczak of the American

Civil Liberties Union, said it was a great loss.

"He is one of my Civil Rights heroes," said Stevens. "He was one of the earliest stalwarts in the Civil Rights movement. He always carried himself with dignity and grace, always a gentleman. I'm proud to have known him."

Freeland started his first protest when he led more than 100 other Black officers into the "Whites Only" officers club at Freeman Field in Indiana. He recalled that incident during a gathering of Tuskegee Airmen in Sewickley in 2005. His friend Mitchell Higginbotham was one of those 104 officers, and one of the reasons Freeland moved to Pittsburgh from his native Baltimore a few years after the war, after earning his law degree from the University of Maryland in 1950.

"It was the first time I was arrested. I was arrested again for refusing to sign a paper acknowledging administrative rules promoting segregation. It was scary. It was potentially a court martial offense for which we could be shot," he said.

The U.S. Army brass in Washington, however, did not want to be seen imprisoning or executing men for trying to desegregate their facilities. So the charges were dropped and the men released. Three years later, President Harry Truman issued an executive order to desegregate the

SEE FREELAND A3

U.S. military.

As an attorney, though, one of his proudest moments came more than 60 years later when he helped get Black attorney George Vashon posthumously admitted to the Allegheny County bar. Though he practiced before the U.S. Supreme Court in 1867 he was rejected by the county bar twice. Freeland and Philadelphia attorney Nolan Atchison won Vashon's admission from the state Supreme Court in November 2010.

"It is significant, in my opinion, because it is an indication that some of the wrongs of the past—though certainly not all—can be rectified if there is an entity capable and willing to do it," Freeland said at the time. "It's encouraging in that respect."



KDKA-TV reporter Lynn Hays-Freeland, formerly married to his son Michael, said organizing the memorial for Wendell was nearly impossible.

"There is no way to capture 88 amazing years in a one-hour tribute to a man who touched so many people in so many ways," she said. "He had a wonderful, dry sense of humor and was always insightful. You always left a conversation with a better understanding of what you were supposed to do and why."

Part of that was due to his love of history, which he would play up for his birthday parties.

"They were costume affairs," said Hays-Freeland. "He would send you clues to who your character was and you would dress as that character. Then at the party people would guess who you were supposed to be."

In addition to his legal work, Freeland was a co-founder of the Hill House Association, and also served as the Urban League of Pittsburgh board chairman and as National Urban League board vice president.

Former NAACP Pittsburgh branch President Alma Speed Fox recalled Freeland as a dear friend, and a thoughtful attorney who mostly stayed out of the limelight during the Civil Rights struggles, but nonetheless made significant contributions.

"He was a partner with Henry Smith—who was way out there. He later became a judge," she said. "But Wendell was low-key and worked on the sideline, getting people out of jail, forging alliances. He worked closely with K. Leroy Irvis. He was a very sincere man."

But he did like to talk, she said.

"Whenever we did TV shows, I would always have to tap him and say, 'It's my turn. They only have a few minutes left,'" she said.

His gregarious nature was recently confirmed when he was interviewed for the PNC Legacy Oral Histories project. It was scheduled for an hour, Freeland, charming as ever, spoke for three.

Freeland is survived by his wife Jane, son Michael and daughter Lisa, and two grandchildren. Visitation with the family will take place Saturday, Feb. 1, 12-4 p.m. at the House of Law Funeral Home, 9406 Frankstown Rd., in Penn Hills.

The public memorial will be held Feb. 2, at 1 p.m. at the Carnegie Music Hall in Oakland.

(Send comments to cmorrow@newpittsburghcourier.com.)



ESTHER BUSH

Eye Health

These monthly pages focus on health disparities in the Pittsburgh region. They educate the reader about key health issues and inform them about research opportunities and community resources. All articles can be accessed online at the New Pittsburgh Courier Web site. The monthly series is a partnership of the New Pittsburgh Courier, Community PARTners (a core service of the University of Pittsburgh's Clinical and Translational Science Institute—CTSI), the Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh and the UPMC Center for Engagement and Inclusion.

This month, the "Take Charge of Your Health Today" page focuses on our eyes—understanding eye health and the range of resources available here in Allegheny County. Jennifer Jones, MPH, community engagement coordinator of Community PARTners, and Esther L. Bush, president and CEO of the

Urban League, sat down to talk about why having healthy eyes is important for all of us.

JJ: Happy New Year, Ms. Bush! It's been a few weeks since our last health page, and it's nice to talk with you again. In the fall we had meetings to pick what health topics we'd focus on each month. You voted for eye health as a topic to which we needed to bring attention. Why is this important to both you and the African American community?

EB: Happy New Year to you, too! Yes, I definitely thought that we should spend some time discussing our eyes. After all, we each have a set of them—and, unfortunately, some work better than others! As I've gotten older, I've noticed that more of my family members and friends begin having problems with their eyes—problems like dry or watery eyes, blurry vision or needing a stronger glasses prescription. Some have had to get cataracts removed. Sadly some have developed glaucoma. As Dr. Schuman discusses in the overview, African Americans are at higher risk for many of these eye conditions and diseases.

JJ: Dr. Schuman provides some great information for all of us to think about. We may not realize that having our eyes checked regularly is as necessary as annual physicals. But it is, especially if poor eye health, glaucoma or diabetes run in our families. It's good to know that there are free resources, such as the Guerilla Eye Service. Dr. Waxman and his colleagues are out in the community, providing eye screenings for those who need it most.

EB: Yes, and it's also important to know that there's research being done on eye health. Dr. Schuman mentions that researchers don't exactly know why eye diseases affect African Americans disproportionately. To me, that means that we need more African Americans to be involved in research studies. That way, the information we provide can help future generations.

JJ: I always learn something new about health from these pages. Medicine and technology never cease to amaze me! I'm glad that you suggested we talk about eye health, especially since it is National Glaucoma Awareness Month. Next month we're focusing on oral health, another important part of our health. I'm sure we'll learn how the condition of our teeth



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By Comcast Cable Via PR Newswire

February 05, 2014 at 10:00 AM EST

Keystone Region Organizations Receive \$591,000 From Comcast Foundation

Grants to Support Programs Focused on Community Service, Digital Literacy and Empowering Tomorrow's Leaders

EXTON, Pa., Feb. 6, 2014 /PRNewswire/ -- Thirty nonprofit organizations in Comcast's Keystone Region have been awarded a total of \$591,000 in grants from the Comcast Foundation to support programs focused on community service, digital literacy and empowering tomorrow's leaders. Comcast's Keystone Region includes portions of northeastern, central and western Pennsylvania, the Maryland panhandle, eastern Ohio and northern West Virginia.

"The Joshua Group teaches students to believe they have the power to achieve their academic goals," said Kirk Hallett, Founder and Director of the Joshua Group in Harrisburg. "We tell the over 200 students in our After-School Program that education is the great equalizer and support from the Comenot Foundation is critical to help us provide them with the resources they need to maximize their potential."

Michael Toledo, Executive Director of Centro Hispano added, "Thanks to the generosity and commitment of the Comcast Foundation we were able to sustain and expand our College Enrichment Camp Initiative targeting Latino students who are high school freshman in our Greater Reading community. At our camp which is a collaborative initiative with Albright College, we are able to introduce these students to the college experience and the importance of digital literacy in higher education. For many of our students this program is a lifeline for them to pursue higher education. The support of the Comcast Foundation is having a direct impact on the lives of the students we serve."

Sheila Rawlings, Senior Development Officer for The Neighborhood Academy in Pittsburgh said, "We are in the business of offering new educational opportunities to families that lack options, and Comcast's support has been invaluable in our effort to offer a comprehensive, college-preparatory education to our students. Our school is specifically designed to meet the needs of low-income youth, so not only does our partnership with Comcast reinforce our educational efforts, it supports our overall effort to nurture and care for our students."

The organizations receiving Comcast Foundation grants include:

- * Best of the Batch Foundation, Mumball (\$10,000)

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- Big Brothers Big Sisters of Jefferson County, OH (\$10,000)
- Big Brothers Big Sisters of Lackawanna County (\$10,000)
- Big Brothers Big Sisters of Lawrence County (\$10,000)
- Big Brothers Big Sisters of York and Adams Counties (\$10,000)
- Boys & Girls Club of Harrisburg (\$15,000)
- Boys & Girls Club of Western Pennsylvania, Carnegie (\$15,000)
- Boys & Girls Club of Western Pennsylvania, McKeesport (\$15,000)
- Centro Hispano, Reading (\$20,000)
- Easter Seals of Western and Central Pennsylvania (\$25,000)
- The Foundation for Enhancing Communities, Harrisburg (\$10,000)
- Gettysburg YWCA (\$10,000)
- Girl Scouts of Western Pennsylvania (\$50,000)
- I-Lead Charter School, Reading (\$20,000)
- Imani Christian Academy, Pittsburgh (\$10,000)
- Japan American Society of Pennsylvania, Pittsburgh (\$25,000)
- The Joshua Group, Harrisburg (\$28,000)
- Lancaster Country Day School (\$10,000)
- Lancaster YWCA (\$15,000)
- Mountaineer Boys & Girls Club, Morgantown (\$10,000)
- The Neighborhood Academy, Pittsburgh (\$10,000)
- Olivet Boys & Girls Club, Reading (\$15,000)
- Poise Foundation, Pittsburgh (\$10,000)
- Sarah Heinz Boys & Girls Club, Pittsburgh (\$20,000)
- Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh (\$138,000)
- York Country Day School (\$10,000)

"The Comcast Foundation is proud to award these grants to our partner organizations to improve the lives of our local neighbors," said Charisse R. Lillie, Vice President of Community Investment for Comcast Corporation and President of the Comcast Foundation. "Through this support, we remain committed to closing the digital divide, empowering young people to become leaders and engaging our employees and local citizens in volunteerism."

Since 1999, the Comcast Foundation has donated nearly \$140 million. In addition to grants from the Comcast Foundation, Comcast responds to community needs through local sponsorships and in-kind support, donating more than \$1.6 million worth of airtime for public service announcements from Keystone region organizations. The company also gives back through employee volunteerism and providing technology equipment and services to organizations across the country.

For these and other community efforts, Comcast in 2013 was named one of the most community-minded companies in America by Bloomberg, the Points of Light Foundation and the National Conference on Citizenship. The Civic 50 is a comprehensive survey of S&P 500 companies that best use their time, talent, and resources to improve the quality of life in the communities where they do business.

To learn more about Comcast's community support, visit the [Comcast Corporation website](#), explore and "like" us on [Facebook](#) or follow us on [Twitter](#).

About the Comcast Foundation

The Comcast Foundation was founded by Comcast Corporation in June 1999 to provide charitable support to qualified nonprofit organizations. The Foundation primarily invests in programs intended to have a positive, sustainable impact on their communities. The Foundation has three community investment priorities—promoting community service, expanding digital literacy, and building tomorrow's leaders. Since its inception, the Comcast Foundation has donated nearly \$140 million to organizations in the communities nationwide that Comcast serves. More information about the Foundation and its programs is available at www.comcast.com/community.

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STAY CONNECTED



RMU memorial for Rex Crawley

Moon— The life, scholarship and community contributions of Rex Crawley, professor of communication at Robert Morris University, will be celebrated in a public program at 4 p.m. Friday in the Sewall Center Arena on the RMU campus, University Boulevard.

Crawley, 49, died Nov. 25 from complications from non-Hodgkin's lymphoma.

Because he was known for wearing bow ties, attendees are encouraged to wear bow ties to the Rex Crawley Memorial Celebration. Speakers and a performance by the RMU choir will be followed by a 5:15 p.m. reception with refreshments and music.

Crawley joined RMU in 1999. He was assistant dean of the School of Communications and Information Systems, head of the Department of Communication and chair of the university's Council on Institutional Equity. He was also co-director of the Black Male Leadership Development Institute, a program he ran with the Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh.



A civil rights hero

As a lifelong dog lover, I applaud your coverage of police canine officer Rocco's heroic death. I wonder, however, why so much less attention was given to the death of Wendell Freeland, who was a dogged hero of the civil rights movement.

Although fair enough to easily pass for white, Wendell maintained his Negro (later black and African-American) identity during his youth, when schools, lunch counters and even the military were segregated. Active at both the local and national levels of the Urban League, he was a leader in the public school desegregation and in the establishment of Neighborhood Legal Services. He often provided pro bono legal services to destitute prisoners.

The Post-Gazette's news obituary ("Tuskegee Airman, Lawyer, Pioneering Civil Rights Leader," Jan. 25) and editorial ("Passion for Activism: Wendell Freeland Was True to Every Mission," Jan. 30) were excellent but insufficient to reflect the man whose memorial service filled Carnegie Music Hall, an event that should have merited a story in itself.

MARGARET C. ALBERT

North Point Breeze

The writer was an employee or consultant to the Urban League of Pittsburgh for more than 40 years.





PHOTOS: PHILIP G. PAVELY | TRIBUNE-REVIEW

The Mt. Ararat Baptist Church Men's Choir performs on Sunday during the 29th annual Urban League Sunday service in Ebenezer Baptist Church in the Hill District

URBAN LEAGUE AIMS TO ADVANCE

Group goes to bat
to assist region's
black community

BY MATTHEW SANTONI

For 96 years, the Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh has fought to advance and assist the region's black community, and in a thunderous sermon at the annual Urban League

**BLACK
HISTORY
MONTH**

Sunday service in the Hill District, the Rev. William Curtis said the group should not shy away from more fighting.

Jumping off from the passage in the Gospel of Matthew in which Jesus says, "I do not come to bring peace, but a sword," Curtis preached about the value of using people's tensions, disagreements and strongly held convictions to tackle tough is-



sues and find resolutions. The alternative, he said, lets good ideas and necessary changes get buried by attempts to establish a consensus or suppress dissenting voices.

"The Urban League is designed to carry our dreams and goals to where it's not welcome, to where it's not accommodated," Curtis, pastor at Mt. Ararat Baptist Church in Larimer for the past 17 years, told several hundred gathered in Ebenezer Baptist Church on Wylie Avenue. "It can't always be pleasant, polished and sanitized.

"In our not getting along, we can at least value human life and hear each other's dissenting ideas," Curtis said. "As long as we go around trying to get along, progress stagnates."

Since its founding in 1918, the Pittsburgh area's chapter of the Urban League has offered programs in employment, education, family support, health education and housing counseling, and has become one of the largest and most active of the national organization's more than 100 local affiliates, said chapter President and CEO Esther Bush.

The annual gathering kicked off the league's membership drive, and copies of their annual report outside

the church sanctuary highlighted some of the group's achievements from 2013: 2,265 people got help with job training; 220 children participated in science and technology programs; and 2,389 families got housing counseling in areas such as financial literacy or eviction and foreclosure prevention.

"There is so much happening in our town, so many things changing behind closed doors," Bush said. "We have to come together as a community, on behalf of our children, to at least have a voice."

Bush said the league was backing educational changes in city schools, including new teacher evaluations, curriculum changes and more volunteering from the black community.

"They go to bat for the underserved community," said Crystaline Barger, 35, of Braddock Hills, who attended the service. "All the time, when they're going into these meetings (with local officials), they're going in with opposing ideas, not just to get along and have tea and crumpets."

Matthew Santoni is a staff writer for Trib Total Media. He can be reached at 412-380-5625 or msantoni@tribweb.com.

*"In our not getting along,
we can at least value human
life and hear each other's
dissenting ideas."*



The Rev. William Curtis, pastor at Mt. Ararat Baptist Church in Larimer, delivers the keynote address.



PHILIP G. PAVELY | TRIBUNE-REVIEW

"There is so much happening in our town, so many things changing behind closed doors," said chapter President and CEO Esther Bush.

Urban League moves ahead

Group goes to bat to assist region's black community

BY MATTHEW SANTONI

For 96 years, the Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh has fought to advance and assist the region's black community, and in a thunderous sermon at the annual Urban League Sunday service in Pittsburgh's Hill District, the Rev. William Curtis said the group should not shy away from more fighting.

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Matthew Santoni is a staff writer for Trib Total Media.



Church Circuit

Prayer Shut In

FEB. 7—My Sister's Keeper will host its Women's Ministry Prayer Shut-In from 11 p.m.-3 a.m. at Word Missionary Baptist Church, 134 8th St., McKeesport. Attendees are asked to wear comfy clothes, and to bring a pillow, blanket and bible. Women are invited to lie at the altar and share with their sisters in Christ. A light continental breakfast will be served. For more information, email Rhonda Moorer at rhonda.moorer@bnymellon.com.

Concert Series

FEB. 8—Beulah Presbyterian Church, 2500 McCrady Rd., Churchill, will host its Music On the Hill Concert Series at 4 p.m. This is the first installment in the series and will include a performance of the Opus II String Orchestra playing favorite themes from Disney Classics. Refreshments will be served; a free will offering will be accepted. For more information, call 412-242-4570 or visit www.BeulahPresby.org.

Love & Literacy

FEB. 8—Faith and Hope Community Outreach Ministries presents its 3rd Annual Love & Literacy Black Tie Affair from 6-10 p.m. at the Comfort Inn Conference Center in Penn Hills. The theme for the evening is, "Inspire a Love for Literacy in Adults and Children." Brother Marlon, host of Pittsburgh's WAMO 100, will serve as Master of Ceremony and DJ, and Diane I. Daniels, New Pittsburgh Courier business writer, will be the keynote speaker. A silent auction, dinner and dancing is a part of the evening activities. For tickets and more information, call Trina Hawes-Lewis at 412-241-1951 or email: fhcom15208@verizon.net

Urban League Sunday

FEB. 9—The Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh will host its 29th Annual Urban League Sunday from 4-6 p.m. at Ebenezer Missionary Baptist Church, 2001 Wylie Ave., Hill District. The

guest speaker will be Rev. Dr. Mark Tyler of Mother Bethel AME Church in Philadelphia, Pa., along with the Mt. Ararat Baptist Church Youth Choir. This is free and open to the public. For more information, visit www.ulpg.org.

Marriage/Family Enrichment Classes

FEB. 15—Pastor Andrew V. Jackson and Rev. Helen Jackson will host the 2014 Marriage & Family Enrichment Classes from 10 a.m.-12 p.m. at Webster Avenue Christian & Missionary Alliance Church, 2325 Webster Ave., Hill District. The theme is "Make a good marriage even better." This 10-week session, which runs through April 19, will touch on topics such as Communication, Conflict Resolution and Relationship Stability. Lunch and childcare will be provided. Registration is required. For more information, call 412-391-2100.

Financial Peace Orientation

FEB. 15—The Dollars and Sense Ministry of Rodman Street Missionary Baptist Church, 6111 Rodman St., East Liberty, will host its Financial Peace University Attendees will learn how to make a budget, how to get out of debt, how to communicate with one's spouse about the finances, how to invest with confidence and more. There is an investment of \$130 requested; assistance is available for qualifying individuals. For more information, call Paul Jacobs at 412-480-2480 or email pauljacobs424@gmail.com.

(To have items listed on the Church Circuit, send information at least two weeks in advance to: 315 E. Carson St., Pittsburgh, PA 15219; Fax: 412-481-1360 or e-mail: newsroom@newpittsburghcourier.com.)



[NEWS]

NEWS+FEATURES » NEWS

February 19, 2014

Insufficient Funds: Banks offer few options for low-income customers

"The less money you have, the more you need a bank account."

by [Alex Zimmerman](#) [@AGZimmerman](#)

On a recent frigid Friday afternoon outside the ACE Cash Express off Market Square, there is a steady stream of customers.

There's a 34-year-old mother of two who pays nearly \$20 to cash her paycheck of \$591.57. She's not happy to be here, she says, but doesn't have a choice. After she lost her last job, the bills started piling up, and her PNC checking account got hit with overdraft fees she still isn't able to pay off.

Malick, who declines to give his last name, stops by to load money on his prepaid debit card, an increasingly popular financial option that he says costs him \$3 to load, plus a \$5 monthly maintenance fee. He's unable to open a checking account because "I owe so many banks money from gambling."

And there's William McGann, a 40-year-old Mount Washington concrete worker who's just cashed his paycheck at a cost of about 3 percent. "I hate banks," he says.

They're not alone: 10.1 percent of Pittsburghers don't have bank accounts (about 2.4 percentage points higher than the national average) and 19.9

percent are "under-banked"— meaning they have accounts, but also rely on financial services like check-cashers, payday lenders, pawn shops or rent-to-own agreements.

That's according to the Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh, which is launching a new program in an effort to bring those numbers down.

As this issue was going to press on Feb. 18, banks, local officials and community groups were scheduled to announce an initiative called "Bank On Greater Pittsburgh" — an attempt to connect low- and moderate-income people with low-cost banking and financial education. The United Way provided the Urban League with \$150,000 in annual grant support for three years for the program, according to Debra Squires, director of family growth and child development at the Urban League.

"People who are poor have the least money to put into other services," Squires says. "The less money you have, the more you need a bank account."

That's the logic of the Bank On initiative, which is based on a National League of Cities model: People who rely on services like check-cashers would be better off if banks could offer them "second chance" accounts with low transaction costs, low- or no-minimum balance requirements and overdraft-fee controls.

"That's why these [initiatives are] a good idea," says Mark Price, a labor economist at the left-leaning Keystone Research Center. "They mix in education — they try to change the fee structure in a way that's less harmful to low-income individuals. Because of their income, they are going to bounce checks. Getting banks to partner and recognize that [...] is a good thing."

The program has the support of Mayor Bill Peduto, who included the Bank On program among the 100 policies he proposed leading up to his election.

"It's critical that the Urban League is really leading this because they are a trusted voice," says Betty Cruz, Peduto's non-profit and faith-based manager. "They will have the interest of the community in mind."

But even if financial institutions are willing to do some banking education in low-income communities, it's not yet clear whether they plan to change the financial products they already offer — a reality the Urban League's Squires acknowledges, but hopes to work on as the program develops.

PNC Bank, which participates in Bank On initiatives in 17 cities, typically "[offers] the type of products we would offer off the shelf, and in most cases those services require a fee," says spokesman Fred Solomon.

The bank declined to discuss, prior to the official announcement how it plans to participate in the Pittsburgh version of the program.

A Fifth Third Bank spokesman echoed that sentiment, saying it would participate, but essentially offer the same services it offers to all its customers.

"Serving people of meager means is very costly," says Richard Witherspoon, CEO of the Hill District Federal Credit Union. He says he offers a \$500 emergency-loan program at a slight loss and plans to participate in the Bank On program with financial outreach and counseling.

But some point out that poor people rely on alternative financial outlets because they offer a service they can't get at traditional banks.

"Banks haven't changed their model enough to really do what needs to be done to serve the needs of lower-income people," says Lisa Servon, a professor of management and urban policy at The New School in New York.

Servon, who worked for several months last year as a check-casher and teller in the South Bronx to understand why people use non-mainstream financial services, says many poor people "actually are not ignorant — they're making pretty conscious choices about what they're doing" when they choose check-cashing or payday loans over traditional bank accounts.

The people she saw often lived paycheck to paycheck and couldn't wait several days for a check to clear. They would rather pay for a check-casher or payday loan in order to make ends meet than pay overdraft fees, which can actually be more costly, she said. Plus, check-cashers are often open later and are more visible in poorer communities.

"If we look at the business model of banks, their role is to make as much profit as they can — and they don't make a ton of profit by doing lots of transactions," she says. "They'd rather have one customer with a million dollars than have a million customers with one dollar."

Servon says that programs like Bank On can be useful if they offer products that poor people actually need, but it's important not to lose sight of poverty as the underlying reason people choose alternatives.

"Anybody who's working full time at a job should be able to make ends meet — and that's just not the case," she says. "The emphasis is always on the customers changing — and I think the services need to change."

MORE BY ALEX ZIMMERMAN

UPMC employee seeks meeting with CEO, escorted from USX building by police

by Alex Zimmerman

Fact-checking tonight's land bank hearing

by Alex Zimmerman

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Pittsburgh's Urban League goes to bat to assist community

Matthew Santoni

For 96 years, the Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh has fought to advance and assist the region's Black community, and in a thunderous sermon at the annual Urban League Sunday service in the Hill District, the Rev. William Curtis said the group should not shy away from more fighting.

Jumping off from the passage in the Gospel of Matthew in which Jesus says, "I do not come to bring peace, but a sword," Curtis preached about the value of using people's tensions, disagreements and strongly held convictions to tackle tough issues and find resolutions. The alternative, he said, lets good ideas and necessary changes get buried by attempts to establish a consensus or suppress dissenting voices.

"The Urban League is designed to carry our dreams and goals to where it's not welcome, to where it's not accommodated," Curtis, pastor at Mt. Ararat Baptist Church in Larimer for the past 17 years, told several hundred gathered in Ebenezer Baptist Church on Wylie Avenue. "It can't always be pleasant, polished and sanitized.

"In our not getting along, we can at least value human life and hear each other's dissenting ideas," Curtis said. "As long as we go around trying to get along, progress stagnates."

Since its founding in 1918, the Pittsburgh area's chapter of the Urban League has offered programs in employment, education, family support, health education and housing counseling, and has become one of the larg-

est and most active of the national organization's more than 100 local affiliates, said chapter President and CEO Esther Bush.

The annual gathering kicked off the league's membership drive, and copies of their annual report outside the church sanctuary highlighted some of the group's achievements from 2013: 2,265 people got help with job training; 220 children participated in science and technology programs; and 2,389 families got housing counseling in areas such as financial literacy or eviction and foreclosure prevention.

"There is so much happening in our town, so many things changing behind closed doors," Bush said. "We have to come together as a community, on behalf of our children, to at least have a voice."

Bush said the league was backing educational changes in city schools, including new teacher evaluations, curriculum changes and more volunteering from the Black community. — (AP)



The Mt. Ararat Baptist Church Men's Choir sings a musical selection at the 29th annual Urban League Sunday at Ebenezer Baptist Church in Pittsburgh's Hill District on Sunday. AP PHOTO/PHILIP PATLEY TRIBUNE REVIEW STAFF



Critical report from 2003 revisited

Peduto puts new focus on city's school system

By Eleanor Chute
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

More than a decade ago, the Mayor's Commission on Public Education called for the Pittsburgh Public Schools board to be appointed by the mayor rather than elected by residents.

That hasn't happened nor have some of the other recommendations in the 144-page report critical of the district and written during the administration of Tom Murphy in 2003.

In the intervening years, no other mayor or mayor's commission has tried to take control away from an elected school board or made such sweeping recommendations.

While he hasn't suggested appointing the school board, Mayor Bill Peduto, sworn in last month, is taking a keen interest in the fate of the school district.

He is talking not only about the importance of a healthy school district to the well-being of the city, but he also is offering to mediate in school-related disputes and has named Curtiss Porter as his chief education and neighborhood investment officer.

"It's a mayor who's truly concerned about the future of the city, and the future of the city is inherent in the future of his youth, the way I see it," said Mr. Porter, former chancellor of Penn State University Greater Allegheny.

Negotiations are underway with the foundation community to pay a portion of Mr. Porter's \$102,500 annual salary.

The mayor's interest in education is following a different path than in 2003.

This effort promises to be more directly engaged long-

SEE **SCHOOLS**, PAGE A-7

term and focuses on birth through higher education, not just the city school district.

School district officials say they are open to his efforts.

Schools superintendent Linda Lane said she welcomes "support from the mayor or anyone else around how we make ... a district the city deserves and one that will serve the city well in the long term."

School board President Thomas Sumpter said he is looking forward to a "collaborative relationship" with the city.

Nina Esposito-Visgitis, president of the Pittsburgh Federation of Teachers, said: "We need to help each other and work together. If one of us goes down, the other one is going down, too."

Mr. Peduto's deputy chief of staff, John Fournier, previously was director of communications for the teachers union.

Unlike mayors in some other cities, the Pittsburgh mayor has no legal authority over the school district; that belongs solely to the school board, which has been elected since 1964. Before then, the board was court-appointed.

"Whether he has the legal authority to implement or not, he still can be a great influence," said Esther Bush, president and CEO of the Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh and a member of the 2003 Mayor's Commission on Public Education.

"I have been very pleased to see that Mayor Peduto has put

his foot forward to say, 'I am interested in education' and indeed has Dr. Curtiss Porter serving in a capacity to make sure he is committed and informed about what goes on."

Mr. Peduto already has spoken out on several school issues.

After the school board last month raised property taxes by about 2 percent, Mr. Peduto said, "I would hope in the future there would be more of a cooperative effort to work on these sorts of issues."

He made that remark answering a question at a news conference at which he stood alongside state Auditor General Eugene DePasquale as he announced a wide-ranging audit of the school district.

Mr. Peduto also has met with representatives of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to discuss a dispute between the district and teachers over scores to be used in teacher evaluations. The foundation has awarded the district a grant to improve teacher quality.

When Mr. Peduto met with President Barack Obama in December, he asked the president to consider making Pittsburgh a laboratory for early childhood education initiatives, including universal pre-kindergarten.

After a coalition called Great Public Schools-Pittsburgh released its plan for improving the district Friday, mayoral spokeswoman Sonya Toler said "some preliminary discussions" have been held about the mayor co-convening a task force on the report.

Carey Harris, executive director of A+ Schools, an edu-



cation advocacy group, said Mr. Peduto's concern about education is "really essential and important."

Ms. Harris, who also served on the 2003 commission, said, "I think he can use his bully pulpit to sort of advance the importance of our public school system, the importance of making some tough decisions that are going to be made, the importance of the Promise [scholarship program]."

The Pittsburgh Promise scholarship program, which helps city high school graduates pay for postsecondary education, was announced for the Class of 2008 by then-superintendent Mark Roosevelt and then-Mayor Luke Ravenstahl.

Earlier mayoral involvement also included Mayor Bob O'Connor working with Mr. Roosevelt on school safety zones.

The 2003 mayor's commission was formed after local foundations temporarily withdrew their support from the school district because of ongoing battles between school board members and district administration.

Ms. Bush said, "That was a statement that rippled around the country, and it had great influence and great impact."

The resulting report painted a negative picture of the district, saying it is "beset by poor student performance, high costs, high taxes and a very public record of failed leadership and governance and community indifference."

It said, "These problems demand immediate attention."

Yet the 2003 report has faded from public discussions.

Mr. Sumpter, who joined the board in 2005, said, "There was no talk of it when I came on."

Of the report's five principal recommendations, three were not carried out: having the mayor appoint board members, cutting taxes and establishing an independent school consolidation commission.

Although a consolidation commission was not assembled, schools were consolidated and closed.

The report counted 91 schools, including three special schools, and 34,411 enrolled students in 2002-03.

This school year, the district has 54 schools, counting three special schools and about 24,525 students in K-12.

A+ Schools was formed from a recommendation for an independent alliance for school improvement.

One other recommendation called for improving student performance and setting high expectations.

District officials long have spoken of trying to improve academic performance.

While improvements have been seen in some areas, more than a decade later, improving achievement remains a difficult goal to achieve. State test results have been disappointing overall in the past two years. Racial and socioeconomic achievement gaps are large at many schools.

On the financial side, the 2003 report called the district's budget surplus "unnecessarily large" and said the district should cut taxes and start a student performance fund. At the time of the report, the district's surplus was \$82 million or 17 percent of the budget.

While the final audit isn't in, the district expected to finish 2013 with an even larger fund balance — \$85.7 million, or 16 percent of the budget — but it forecasts that it will run out of money in 2016 unless it changes course.

Since 2007, the district has lost millions of dollars in taxes because the state shifted some payments from the school dis-

trict to the city to help relieve the city's financial problems. Now there is talk as to whether Mr. Peduto will channel dollars back to the district. Ms. Toler said this is "part of ongoing negotiations."

As Mr. Peduto prepared to take the reins of the city, a transition committee made of hundreds of volunteers offered suggestions, including some on education. Mr. Porter said the initial report is being reviewed to determine priorities.

Mr. Porter expects attention to be given, among other things, to early childhood education and support of the Pittsburgh Promise.

He said, "I would love to work with the board and, obviously, with the superintendent to be a partner with efforts to re-engage parents and to really be a liaison to discover where the Pittsburgh Public Schools and the municipal authority of Pittsburgh can find common ways to support the achievement of our students across the board."

Mr. Sumpter sees possibilities of city help for early childhood education, operation of closed school buildings as community centers, after-school programs and public safety.

Noting that "partnerships take work," Ms. Lane said, "I'm sure that we'll figure out what's the best way to kind of coordinate effort and work together."

Education writer Eleanor Chute: echute@post-gazette.com or 412-263-1955.



Mayor Bill Peduto



Curtiss Porter

PNC celebrates Black History and diversity in 15 cities

PITTSBURGH—The PNC Financial Services Group, Inc. (NYSE: PNC) on Feb. 3 announced community-wide events as part of its Black History Month celebration. Throughout February, PNC will sponsor 21 events in multiple cities, ranging from art exhibits to local performances and employee-focused activities.

Highlights include a town hall meeting in Charlotte with award-winning broadcast journalist Soledad O'Brien and a weekly screening and discussion of influential African-American films with Chicago-based WVON-FM radio.

PNC-sponsored programs, public events, and employee activities will be held across many of the communities it serves, including Baltimore, Charlotte, N.C.; Chicago; Cleveland; Detroit; Durham, N.C.; Harrisburg, Pa.; Louisville, Ky.; Kalamazoo, Mich.; Newark, N.J.; Philadelphia; Pittsburgh; Raleigh, NC and Washington, D.C.

"Whether it's a town hall meeting that brings a community together, or an art exhibit highlighting the tremendous contributions of American artists, these celebrations reflect PNC's commitment to promoting diversity and inclusion in our workforce and the communities we serve," said Marsha Jones, chief diversity officer, PNC.

Highlights of upcoming PNC events include:

A series of programs recognizing the African Diaspora, and dedicated to the memory of the late Nelson Mandela at the Newark Public Library through March 6. The PNC sponsored celebrations include African music and dance, panel discussions, films and a children's program.

Contemporary artist Hank Willis Thomas leads a series of lectures, exhibits, presentations and a Blueprint roundtable discussion about leadership, mentorship, and critical social issues in the black community at the Cleveland Museum of Art Feb. 1- Feb. 3, and the PNC Fairfax Connection Center, Feb. 5.

Award-winning author Anna Lisa Cox discusses A Stronger Kinship and her new book project, Founding Freedom: African Americans on the Antebellum Frontier at the PNC Kalamazoo Operations Center, Feb. 17. Spoken Word poet Tasleem Jamila also performs poetry from her new book,

BLACK BAPTIST MUS-LIM MYSTIC: From the Cosmos.

Soledad O'Brien's "Black in America Town Hall" event focuses on uncovering and sharing empowering stories of race, class, wealth, poverty and opportunity at the Knight Theater at The Levine Center for the Arts in Charlotte, 7 p.m. on Feb. 18.

African American Historian and VP of D.C. Government Relations at The George Washington University Dr. Bernard Demczuk joins Shellee M. Hanesworth, producer, Black Broadway on U, at "America's Black Broadway: Before there was Harlem, There was D.C.," 8 a.m. at Howard Theater on Feb. 19.

PNC will host Carnegie Mellon University professor Dr. Edda Fields-Black's discussion of her first book, "Deep Roots," Feb. 17 at the PNC Consumer Loan Center in Pittsburgh. PNC also sponsors A Pittsburgh Post-Gazette Town Hall on the African American Experience in Sports at the Fairmont Hotel at 8:30 a.m. on Feb. 20.

"Civil Rights in America," a Black History Month program with "Jump Street" creator and syndicated columnist Robb Armstrong will be held at Forum Auditorium, 500 Walnut St., Harrisburg, Pa., 11:30 a.m. on Feb. 27.

WVON-FM radio personalities in partnership with PNC will host a weekly film screening and discussion of "12 Years A Slave" (Feb. 5), "In Search of A Black Knight" (Feb. 12), "The Trials of Muhammad Ali" (Feb. 19), and "Winnie Mandela" (Feb. 26). The films begin at 7 p.m. at 1011 South Delano Court East, Chicago.

PNC also sponsored events in several other cities surrounding Martin Luther King Jr. Day, including a new exhibition at the PNC Legacy Project in Pittsburgh. The exhibit features the oral histories of 12 African Americans in the region, including musicians Sean Jones and Patricia Prattis Jennings, community leaders Alma Speed Fox and Esther L. Bush, and Tony Award-winning actor Billy Porter. Other honorees include Tuskegee Airman Wendell Free-land, educator Helen Faison, New Pittsburgh Courier editor and publisher Rod Doss, artist Thaddeus Mosley, former chief



Kids in crisis need help from effective teachers

I read with interest the Feb. 18 column by Tony Norman ("Biggest Gap in Black Kids' Learning: Parents"). He states, appropriately, that "the education of African-American public school students in Pittsburgh has finally moved to the front burner of public policy and discussion." I disagree, however, that the position of the NAACP Pittsburgh Unit, the Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh, the Black Political Empowerment Project, A+ Schools and other interested groups and parents is "misplaced."

Our statements are not anti-union, but our African-American kids are in crisis and we must engage all available strategies to impact the achievement gap between white and black kids. Teachers are paid to teach. They should be the experts. Effective teachers help instill a lifetime commitment to learning in the minds and hearts of their students. Not one of the participating groups or individuals in the Feb. 17 press conference would disagree with the goal of parents being intimately involved in strongly encouraging their children to succeed in school. The two goals of having "effective teachers" and "involved parents" are not mutually exclusive.

In the Black Political Empowerment Project's Coalition Against Violence "Strategies for Change," we put at the top of this document the "Community Manifesto" and "The Role of the Family," to promote the need for both the community and families to instill positive values in our children, including the value of education. Unfortunately, too many of our African-American children come from broken homes and broken environments where education may not be valued. Their only hope may be "effective teachers"!

TIM STEVENS
Highland Park

The writer is chairman of The Black Political Empowerment Project and co-convenor of the Coalition Against Violence.



Roger Humphries: Pass It On

Saturday's world premiere of the documentary film "**Roger Humphries: Pass It On**" at the Manchester Craftsmen's Guild attracted more than 300 guests including Mayor Bill Peduto, guild CEO Bill Strickland, Esther Bush of the Urban League of Pittsburgh, James and Pamela Johnson of the Afro American Music Institute, Yvonne Young of the Jazz Workshop of Pittsburgh, and Harry Clark, former principal of CAPA. Moviegoers enjoyed cocktails while being serenaded by two bands including Dwayne Dolphin, Greg Humphries, Max Leake, Tom Wendt and Roby Edwards. But the evening was not just about glitz and glamour. The net proceeds benefited four nonprofits, including Roger L. Humphries Music Scholarship

Fund, Afro American Music Institute, Jazz Workshop of

Homewood and the Lighthouse Arts.



Bill Wade/Post-Gazette photos

Billy Jackson and Carmelle Nickens



Bill Strickland, Roger Humphries and Mayor Bill Peduto

