

Lighting The Road To The Future

New Orleans

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**Joseph S. Clark High  
School 40th Reunion**

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# Café Reconcile

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# Café Reconcile

## Building Hope and Changing Lives



By Edwin Buggage

### Hope Lives in Central City

When driving down Oretha Castle Haley Boulevard, you see a street that is a mix of buildings, some that are in a state of disrepair while others have become bastions of hope and vision for a City as it rebuilds. This street formerly called Dryades which during the days of segregation was a bustling thoroughfare where Blacks came to shop and were the places where the seeds were sown for the modern Civil Rights Movement.

Today the street that is renamed for the great Civil Rights icon is seeing a revival in many ways. One of

the many new enterprises is giving kids hope and is designed to help young people. Reconcile New Orleans, Inc. founded by Craig Cuccia in 1996 is a program that transforms the lives of young adults in the community through the ministry of reconciliation. They do this by encouraging personal growth, providing workforce development and training, promoting entrepreneurship, and working with businesses, non-profits, and people of faith to support this transformation. "We started as Kids Café in 1998, and in 2000 became Café Reconcile, since then we have graduated 800 young people into the workforce, it is a bridge to teach kids the necessary skills to be viable in the workplace and become a success in whatever they want to do in life," says Executive Director Glen Armantrout, who was the Chief Operating Officer of

Acme Oyster House and have served in various capacities in Café Reconcile before becoming the leader of the organization.

Café Reconcile has come to symbolize one of the success stories that prove that with encouragement and a support system that young people can turn their lives around. According to their website their mission statement reads, they are a community of concerned people committed to addressing the system of generational poverty, violence and neglect in the New Orleans area. Our innovative life skills and job training program assists young people (ages 16-22) from severely at-risk communities who desire to make a positive change in their lives. Reconcile's students arrive facing a vast array of challenges, from extreme poverty and high school attrition to homelessness,

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violence, and participation in the juvenile justice system. Nonetheless, these young people possess a deep desire to break the cycle and become productive, contributing members of society.

**A Recipe for Success**

And true to their stated goals this is something they continue to

him. He is very inspirational. And his organization acronym stands for Perseverance Understanding Success and Healing, and he's gone through all of it and its spirit is living within him, he is truly an incredible young man."

This is a program that is chock-full of success stories of young people defying the odds. Another

Continuing she says giving advice to young people a recipe on how resilience is a key ingredient to a journey where success is the ultimate destination, "I feel like whatever you go through not to give up and remember you are trying to make a better life for yourself and you are building a foundation not only for yourself but future gen-

erations. All I did was to keep on pushing; I did it and I feel you can too."

**Restoring Hope**

When we look at media images we see images of young people in so-called at-risk communities portrayed inaccurately. While it is true that these youth face many chal-

lenges, it is through this distorted lens many of our young people fall through the cracks believing the hype and become part of a self-fulfilling prophecy that leaves many kids never reaching their full potential. And ultimately, it is society

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James Carville and students from Cafe Reconcile.



Cafe Reconcile's Ryan Dalton, one of three young people chosen to attend White House to address issues concerning youth.



Cafe Reconcile Executive Director Glen Armantrout enjoys time with students from the program.



Brandi Addison, one of the many Cafe Reconcile success stories.



Linda Collins, Job Specialist with Cafe Reconcile feels with help support and love all children can be successful.

do, giving young people what they need, lighting the fire to inspire them so they can reach higher. Over the years there have been many success stories of young people overcoming the odds. Armantrout has so many of these stories, but he talks of a young man who stands out as an example the transformation many of the kids experience after coming through the doors of Café Reconcile, "Ryan Dalton is at a summit and is one of three youth chosen across the country in a panel discussion about disconnected youth with Michelle Obama. He is a graduate of the program and is a front of the house trainer and is training to be a front of the house manager. But he also has a program he started called the P.U.S.H Project. Continuing he says, "He is one driven young man, if I lived three months of his life I don't know where I'd be, his brother was the first murder of the year, and he has overcome many hardships. But he is enrolled in college and trying to raise his own young children. He has a lot on his plate more than some of us can ever imagine, but he has a good support team with us and we are glad to help guide

graduate of the program is Brandi Addison, she is a young mother who is full of positive energy and is a story of inspiration. "Brandi is an awesome young lady, when I interviewed her I immediately realized there was something special about her. She was a motivated young lady and always positive. While in the program she was a young mother and became pregnant with twins and worked all the way through the program until the end. She is a great team leader," says Linda Collins, the Job Placement Specialist at Reconcile as she beams with pride sitting across from Brandi inside the dining room of the café.

As I sit in the dining area amidst the hustle and bustle of the kids in the program, Brandi is sitting at a table in the dining room after the shift, and is a wise woman beyond her years. Commenting on her experience and what she passes on to others now coming through the program, "I learned responsibility and I tell them that I know what they're going through, I've been there and give them hope and tell them they can make it," saying what she's learned by being part of the Café Reconcile family.

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# Shoot Ya Best Shot!

## Joseph S. Clark 40th Class Reunion

Photos by Renard

The Graduating Class of 1972 from Joseph S. Clark High School held its 40th Reunion last Friday night. The Class continued its celebration at Bernard Sanders' house with a picnic and attended church on Sunday morning.



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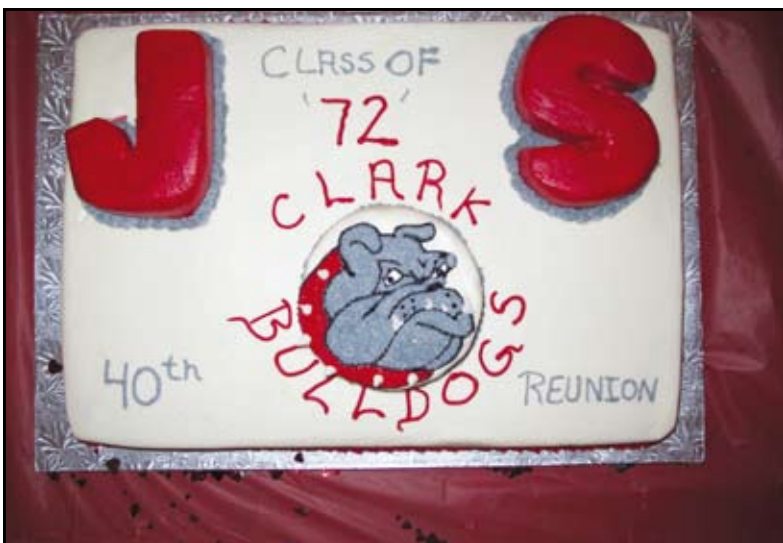
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# Shoot Ya Best Shot!

## Joseph S. Clark 40th Class Reunion

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# Save Black Men Get Your PSA Screening



**Marc Morial**  
President and CEO  
National Urban League

## To Be Equal

"With the prevalence of prostate cancer disproportionately affecting our men, we must be vigilant to ensure aggressive testing continues for this most vulnerable population." — Cedric M. Bright, M.D., president of the National Medical Association

Last week, the United States Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) recommended that healthy men should no longer

take a routine PSA blood test for prostate cancer because the procedure may lead patients to pursue unnecessary and potentially debilitating treatments for a disease that may never fully develop. This week, the National Urban League joins the National Medical Association, the Prostate Health Education Network (PHEN), the American Urological Association and other leading medical experts in rejecting that conclusion, especially for African American men who are 60 percent more likely to develop prostate cancer and twice as likely to die from it.

We agree that unnecessary medical tests should be avoided, but the evidence for eliminating PSA screenings for prostate cancer, especially for African American men, is inconclusive at best. Instead of abandoning PSA screenings for everyone, we encourage more education for both providers and patients that will al-

low men to make more informed decisions about the risks and benefits of the test. There are several reasons for our position.

First, while prostate cancer remains the second-leading cause of cancer death among men, we also know that advances in early detection and treatment have resulted in a 40 percent decline in prostate deaths in the United States over the past two decades. The National Medical Association (NMA), the nation's leading advocate for African American physicians and patients, has stated that PSA screening remains the best method to detect early stage, curable prostate cancers. The group endorses the American Urological Association's guidelines for early detection, which include initial PSA testing at 40 years and a multi-factorial assessment of risk based on age, ethnicity, and family history.

Second, the NMA also points

out that the USPSTF made its recommendation based on large clinical studies performed in Europe, Canada and the United States, which included very few African American men.

And third, while the USPSTF correctly states that a percentage of men will experience harmful side effects from treatments following the PSA test, the test itself is risk-free. It simply alerts both doctor and patient to the possible presence of disease.

Anthony D'Amico, chief of Genitourinary Radiation Oncology at Boston's Brigham and Women's Hospital, suggests that the USPSTF's recommendation may actually be harmful to high-risk groups, which includes African American men. He said, "I think men at high risk...have the most to lose from not getting PSA tests. They are the ones who get the lethal cancers."

In a letter accompanying the

USPSTF recommendation in the May 21 issue of the *Annals of Internal Medicine*, D'Amico and other leading prostate cancer experts concluded, "The USPSTF has underestimated the benefits and overestimated the harms of prostate cancer screening. Therefore, we disagree with the USPSTF's recommendation."

So do we. Since 1922, the National Urban League has been a leading provider of health-related services in the African American community. We urge African American men to continue discussing the pros and cons of prostate cancer screening with their doctors. And we support more community-based education and early intervention efforts for low-income and minority patients who face barriers to consistent, quality health care.

Marc H. Morial, former mayor of New Orleans, is president and CEO of the National Urban League

# Jobs Numbers Could Affect Obama's Ability to Keep His Job



**Julianne Malveaux**  
NNPA Columnist

The unemployment rate was 8.1 percent in April. In May, it rose, just a tiny bit, to 8.2 percent. A tenth of a percentage point does not seem like a big deal. Indeed, the Department of Labor describes the unemployment rate as "essentially unchanged." And compared to this time last year, when the rate was 9 percent, people are mostly better off. But the magic number for many observers is a

number below 8 percent.

According to many, should the unemployment rate drop to 7.5 or even 7.8 percent, President Obama will have something to point to in terms of labor market progress. Should it rise above 8.5 percent, Republican candidate Romney can continue to pound on him about economic failure (that is, when his team is not misspelling "Amercia"). What happens if the unemployment rate lingers between 7.8 percent and 8.5 percent is anybody's guess.

No help is likely to come from Congress. The Republican majority in the House of Representatives is hardly interested in economic stimulus that could help a Democratic president that they have consistently opposed. So President Obama and the business sector that supports him are pretty much left to their own devices when it comes to job cre-

ation. And it isn't that the unemployed will flock to Romney—they may simply stay home.

As always, the unemployment number the Bureau of Labor Statistics report is not the best number to review. When those marginally attached to the labor market and those who work part-time but want full time work are included, the unemployment rate soars to 14.8 percent. The Black unemployment rate rises to a depression-era level of 24.5 percent. Moreover the number of folk who haven't had a job for six months has risen. Now, 5.4 million people, 42.8 percent of the unemployed, haven't had a job for more than 27 weeks.

Candidate Romney, in hanging around Donald Trump and the "birther" crowd is counting on hysteria and trivia to drive him to victory. Romney says President Obama doesn't know how to cre-

ate jobs, but this is the same man who says he "enjoys" firing people and who slashed employment when he was a corporate raider at Bain.

President Obama, too, must be cautioned against straying into trivial issues when economic issues are central. At the same time, the president is to be congratulated for taking a strong position on marriage equality. Some may say that it was a long time coming, and that it might be a calculated move to influence some votes in the election. But those who are watching carefully understand that whether it helps the election or hurts it (and some African American pastors are railing against this one), this was a matter of conscience for President Obama. Unfortunately, Romney has no such conscience. He knows the birther rap is nonsense. Yet he stands by a birther and says nothing. Hi own

father was the subject of birther vitriol more than 40 years ago when he ran for president and it was revealed that he was born in Mexico.

The diversions will be dust in the wind come election day. People are mostly going to vote their pocketbooks. The news that unemployment rates are stagnant and possibly rising, is bad news for President Obama, no matter how his team spins it.

And beneath the numbers, there is lots of pain that is being masked. For example, some economists say we need to generate 300,000 jobs a month just to stay even with population growth. In the first quarter of this year, an average of 226,000 jobs were created each month. But in April, just 77,000 jobs were created, and in May, only 69,000 jobs. Declines

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# New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Foundation Community Partnership Grants Now Open

The New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Foundation is now accepting applications in four categories of Community Partnership Grants: two for education programs (in-school and after-school); one for documenting Louisiana's indigenous culture or creating new works; and one for cultural events presented by nonprofit organizations.

Since 1979, the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Foundation has invested the proceeds from Jazz Fest directly into the community with grants to fund projects that support the Foundation's mission.

The Foundation is now accepting applications in four categories



of the Community Partnership Grants program.

The deadline to apply is July 16, 2012. Activities funded by these grants must occur between Sept. 1, 2012, and Aug. 31, 2013.

The four categories now open are:

Jazz & Heritage After-School and Summer Education Programs in Music, Arts and Cultural Traditions. This category supports

after-school and summer arts education programs offered by nonprofits and educational institutions. Organizations may apply for funding to pay the fees of the artists or educators who do the instruction.

Jazz & Heritage In-School Education Programs in Music, Arts and Cultural Traditions. This category supports in-school music and arts education at Louisiana public K-12 schools. Schools may apply for funding to purchase or repair instruments and other supplies, or to cover part of an arts teacher's salary.

Jazz Journey Presenting: Festivals and Concerts in Music and Performing Arts. This category

supports new employment for Louisiana performing artists by providing funding to nonprofit organizations that hire them for cultural events.

Jazz & Heritage Archive: Documentation and Preservation. This category supports the creation or exhibition of art works that document or interpret the indigenous culture of Louisiana.

The deadline to apply for each of these grants is Monday, July 16, 2012.

For the guidelines and application forms, please see the Downloads section of the Community Partnership Grants web site here.

## Malveaux, Continued from page 6.

in job creation speak to shrinking opportunities for those who are not working.

While the Obama Administration has few tools to combat the current employment situation, his team now needs to go on the offensive to talk about ways more jobs can be created, and by pointing out the ways that legislative gridlock hurts those who are looking for work. Without aggressive attention to the plight of the unemployed, the Romney crew can use stagnant numbers to take the offensive. This can't happen – if the employment situation is stagnant now, imagine it under “cut government spending” Romney. President Obama and his team need to contrast the Romney record with his own, and make it clear that failure to stimulate the economy will lead to disaster.

Julianne Malveaux is a Washington, D.C.-based economist and writer. She is President Emerita of Bennett College for Women in Greensboro, N.C.

## City Pools Open

### *City Pools Open In Conjunction With NORDC Summer Camps*



Mayor Landrieu and friends officially launch the 2012 Summer Pool Season with a Splash!

All 12 City-operated swimming pools are now open. The New Orleans Recreation Development Commission will facilitate summer aquatics programs throughout the city that will focus on water skills and education.

In December of 2010, Mayor Landrieu announced that the City entered into an agreement with the American Red Cross Southeast Louisiana Chapter to fund a year-round swimming lesson and lifeguard training program, under the direction of NORDC.

The City will operate 12 state-of-the-art pools this summer and approximately 7700 youth will be served by swimming lessons and

programming, which marks an increase from last year's programs which served 6700 youth.

This year NORDC will offer 34 kiddie (ages 4-12) camps which will serve at least 4655 children across the city through partnerships with schools, non-profits and faith-based organizations. This is 5 more camps than were in operation in 2011. There will be 7 teen camps (ages 13-17) which will serve 1000 teens across the city. In partnership with JOB1, teen camps will offer local teenagers career exploration seminars to allow for exposure to a variety of job fields. Kiddie Camp registration is still open for many camps.

## Cover Story, Continued from page 3.

that loses out on people who could contribute so much to society if they were given the tools and the chance to succeed. “It is absolutely rewarding to do something that helps people, because with some of the kids who come through the program they come into it with little or no support. And I feel that with just a little bit of support and love all our kids can be successful,” says Collins of the rewards she reaps in her job and the noble mission of Café Reconcile.

Addison is a young woman whose dreams are big, she aspires to one day become an entrepreneur owning her own catering business, and feels it is within her reach. She says there are things her and many of the other kids have to offer but are sometimes overlooked, “I think sometimes people think of the young people of the City of New Orleans and they lump them all together and don't give them a chance. They think everybody is a criminal, but at Café Reconcile, they give people a chance. I have seen so many different people with different attitudes and some may write them off, but I can see something special in them. I can see what others may not see because I was that person at one time in my life. And sometimes all people need is someone to believe in them and give them a chance and Café Rec-

oncile has done that for me and so many others, they have taught me to never give up and stay focused and if you can believe it you can achieve it.”

In a City that has seen so much devastation, reconciliation is a powerful word that has an even greater meaning and purpose as a City rebuilds. And with the work that is going on in this small café dedicated to young people and giving them the foundation to have a better life should serve as an inspiration for the City moving forward. “Reconciliation of every one of all races, religions and backgrounds is important in the world and in our City, and our goal is to train our youth and give them hope. What we do is bring everybody to the table literally to feel and touch one another to broaden their horizons and transform the way we see each other” says Armantrout of Café Reconcile and its mission. Continuing he encourages people to get involved in the fight to save the youth of New Orleans, “People need to get out of their offices and get on the street; you have to get in front of a problem to truly do something about it.” And that is what this great organization is doing on a street named for a woman who dedicated her life to serve; Café Reconcile is building hope and changing lives.



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