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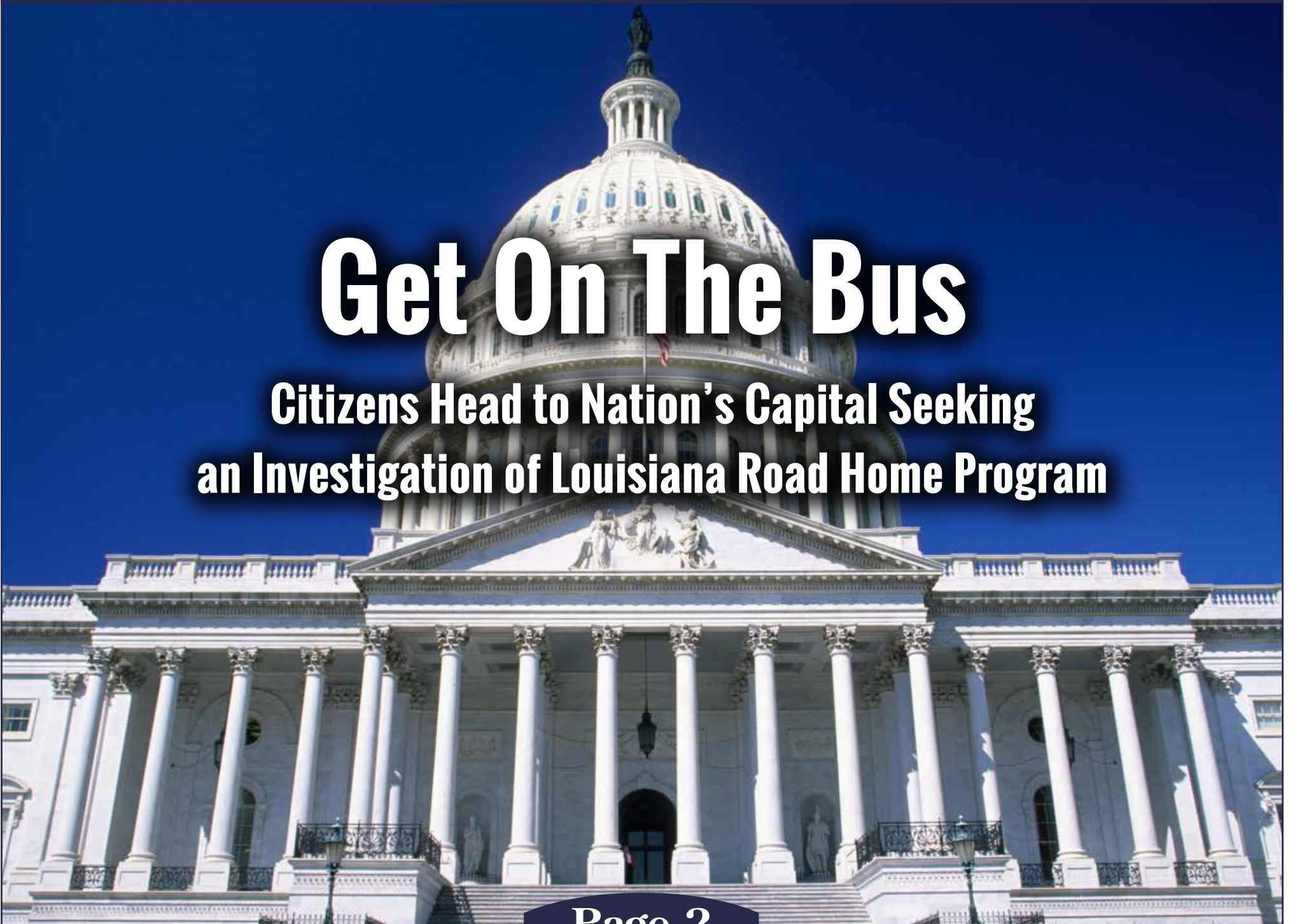


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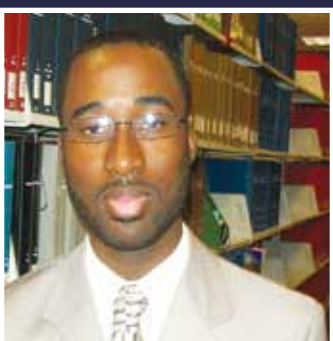
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Get On The Bus

**Citizens Head to Nation's Capital Seeking
an Investigation of Louisiana Road Home Program**



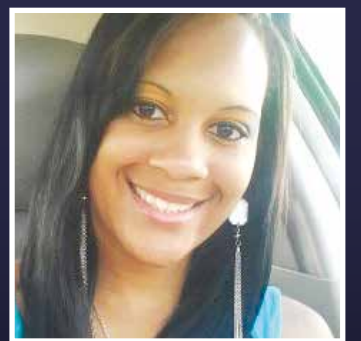
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Road Home Action Network Team (RHANT) Fights for Justice

Citizens Get on Bus to Nation's Capital to Ask for Investigation of Louisiana Road Home Program



Nearly 8 years later after the devastation of Hurricane Katrina, many homeowners and renters that are primarily African-Americans are still not residing in the City. The Road Home Action Network Team (RHANT) has planned to load several buses of concerned citizens and head to the nation's capital to request a meeting with President Barack Obama regarding the subject.

By Benjamin Bates

As the City continues to recover from the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina; a City that has been praised for its rebuilding and its hosting large events are still a City that struggles with the plight of blight. Today nearly 8 years later

many homeowners and renters that are primarily African-Americans are still not residing in the City. Understandably, the monumental task of rebuilding a City that was 80 percent underwater requires a herculean effort, but some of the work that could have been done as

federal dollars poured into the city and state for rebuilding was mismanaged according to the Road Home Action Network (RHANT), who's planned to load several busloads of concerned citizens and head to the nation's capital to request a meeting with President Barack Obama

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and demand an investigation of the Louisiana Road Home Program?

Viola Washington, Chairperson of RHANT says that July 7th - 9th citizens will board buses and head to Washington D.C. to bring awareness of the fraud, abuse and discrimination that took place in the Road Home Program. The following list is just information on the program and some of the things she claims were mismanaged.

HUD has distributed recovery funds in a discriminatory manner, this program is a \$13.5 billion federally funded program established by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the Louisiana Recovery Authority (LRA), now the Office of Community Development, to assist residents affected by Hurricane Katrina and Rita to rebuild and return to their homes. HUD is responsible for overseeing Louisiana's use of federal disaster recovery funding and assuring that the funds are used to promote equal housing opportunity. This disaster created enormous damages, and millions of

dollars through contractual fraud.

Congress appropriated billions of tax dollars to HUD for the Louisiana Road Home Disaster Recovery Program. The plan was implemented under the leadership of Governor Kathleen Blanco, and contracts begin to flow, mainly to out of state contractors. (LRA), Louisiana Recovery Authority was mandated to oversee the program through HUD's rules and regulations and best practices policy. However "under ICF, HUD rules were not followed despite objection from the LRA and the community, said Washington.

According to RHANT officials, the ICF asked for a pay raise which was granted by Governor Kathleen Blanco after the mismanagement of billions of dollars. This created an outcry from state officials. The governor decided to step down and not seek re-election. A new election took place, which Bobby Jindal, became the new Governor for the State of Louisiana, and is now in charge of the contract with IFC. RHANT insists that HUD's rule breaking continues under the new Governor.



Citizens will board buses and head to Washington D.C. to bring awareness of the fraud, abuse and discrimination that took place in the Road Home Program.

As African-Americans continue to struggle to return this issue has political ramifications for people of the City. "When they used zip

codes to determine which properties would be repaired and others were not, they had in mind disenfranchising the African-American population and presence in the City," says Washington.

As a statewide program with many parishes hit, Washington feels that many African-American home owner were treated unfairly. "When monies were given for elevation of low lying, flood-prone areas, Jefferson Parish (who although received only 5 percent of the damage) was awarded 95% of the monies."

This in addition to a variety of issues with the program sent RHANT to reach out to elected officials at the local, state and national level. One person who has come to their assistance is U.S. Congressman Cedric Richmond, for the rally he has helped with providing security for those participating. And in a tough U.S. Congress that is gridlocked on many issues he has called for an investigation of the home elevation program.

With this rally they hope to bring attention to their cause and seek a remedy for all the most

common of reasons, to simply return home. And to make the Louisiana Road Home Program true to its name, and not simply another roadblock.

Date, Time: Sunday, July 7, 2013, 2:00 pm

Return: Wednesday, July 10, 2013

Cost: \$200.00 per person (includes transportation, hotel, and snacks on bus)

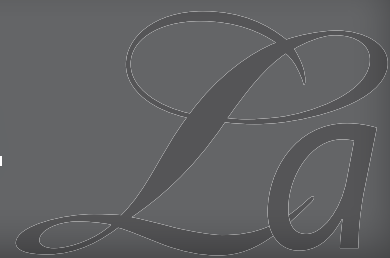
Please make all payments and donations payable to: RHANT, Bring or mail to 2600 Banks St., New Orleans, LA 70119

For walk-in, location is at the corner of Banks and S. Dorgenois.

Buses are leaving from St. Bernard Ave. and N. Claiborne Ave. (under the overpass across from the CIRCLE Food Store) for more information and meetings contact RHANT, Viola Washington, Chairperson, 504- 827-0001.

If you want to be a sponsor or supporter of this special event, please call so that we can add your organization to our sponsor list. This solidarity list will also be presented to our President (all donations are tax deductible).

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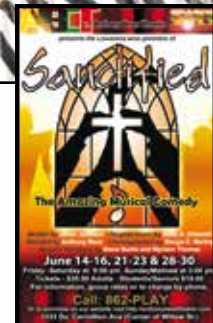
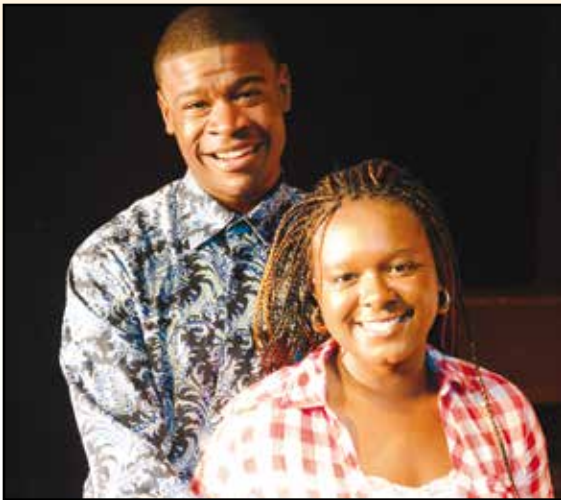
BRIGHTSTARTSM



Shoot Ya Best Shot!

Get "Sanctified"

at Anthony Bean Community Theater



The Anthony Bean Community Theater presents the Louisiana-area premiere of the warm-hearted and humorous musical, "Sanctified". Written by Javon Johnson, with original music by Rollo A. Dilworth, directed by Anthony Bean, musical directions by Steve Burke and Wynton Thomas. . Featuring Roscoe C. Reddix, Donna King and Mychael Thompson. Performances are June 21-23 & 28-30. Friday and Saturday at 8:00 pm, & Sunday at 3:00 pm. Tickets are \$20.00 for adults, \$18.00 for students and seniors, and are available by calling the Box Office at (504) 862-7529. (Box Office hours are Thursday - Saturday,

6pm - 8pm and two hours before performances.) You can also charge by phone on line at www.anthonybeantheater.com

Sanctified tells the story of The East Piney Grove Baptist Church which has fallen on hard times and their last chance maybe their upcoming gospel revival. Desperate, the young and ambitious new Pastor calls in his cousin the diva of all divas for backup, but the elders aren't having it! This hilarious gospel comedy opens a window to the African American church, gospel music, and the congregations that sustain it. This is a warm, joyous, hymn-filled show that bears wit-

ness to the trials and triumphs of the African American church.

Playwright Javon Johnson explains: "This is a warm, joyous, hymn-filled show that bears witness to the trials and triumphs of the African-American church. The project set out to explore the traditional world of gospel music and how it has been twisted, turned, and constantly revolutionized by the hip-hop and the R&B sound."

The cast also includes Joshua Kagler, Yolanda Cephus, Prinsey Walker, Asia Nelson and Shelita Burke Manual, Steve Burke, Wynton Thomas and Sean Jones.

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trailblazer

Cameron Mims

Wise Beyond His Years

by: Edwin Buggage

Cameron Mims is a young man on a mission. In his short 18 years of life he has amassed the wisdom displaying the traits of a young Solomon. Wise beyond his years, he is a leader giving counsel and guidance to those both young and old.

A native of New Orleans he is the son of Antoinette and Albert "Brother" Mims. When he was born they made a commitment to the Lord that their son would be raised such that the Lord and the church would be a significant part of his life experience. That is something that has continued to guide his life to this day. The gift of God's grace and guidance is a fact not lost on Cameron who understands that his wisdom is possible because of God the village of elders that's surrounded and guided him, "I put God first and also my parents taught me well and the people they had around me contributed in positive ways to my life, my god father, my barber Wilbert "Mr. Chill" Wilson, and just so many different people who taught me by example. And as I journey through life I try to keep company with

people who are on the same path I am on trying to do the right things and bettering themselves."

Cameron is a 2013 honors graduate of Eleanor McMain High School. He was inducted into the National Honor Society, and was a member of the track team. He is a young man armed with a plan and a focus that will insure a bright future. "My plan is to attend college, this year where I will be an incoming freshman at Xavier University. I will be studying Business and Computer Science and one day hope to become a Computer Information Systems Manager," says Cameron.

Planning is important if you are to become successful in life, and this has been first and foremost in Cameron's quest to achieve greatness. Speaking with the confidence of someone who is on the path to achieving his goals, advising other youth who do not have a plan he remarks, "For those who don't have a plan find something you enjoy or something you have a talent at because everyone has a talent, for some it may be in numbers, for others it may be in computers or some in



writing or speaking or a knack for business, but I say explore your talents and try different things."

He is the son of Albert Mims, who is known for his community work trying to save the lives of young men who are victims of violence. Growing up witnessing his father practicing the gift of giving to others led young Cameron down a similar path. "My father is a major influence on me, I watched him when I was younger as he would bring me along to see some of the work that he does in the community. I watched in admiration as he would

bring me to schools when he spoke, and seeing his impact I was inspired and took on as my life mission to help people."

Having a spiritual foundation is essential for anyone seeking a fruitful life. Cameron is a young man who is actively involved in his church and says accepting Christ is the source of his strength, and gives him the capac-

ity to want to give back. Speaking of his church activities he says, "I am a Junior Deacon at my church Israelite Baptist Church pastored by Emmanuel Smith Jr. I am a Sunday School Teacher to the youth and I have also given several sermons to the congregation. I am there to help anyone and I enjoy working with the young kids mentoring them and guiding them in the right direction."

His powerful example has even led to him entering the pulpit to preach several sermons, speaking of one of the titles of his sermons that he feels people can gain insight, "Obedience a Life or Death Situation, I tell them that life is about choices. You can make the easy choice or the fast choice and often times this is the wrong choice and I tell people whatever choice we make in life comes with a consequence. And my first sermon was called

Never Too Young to Teach and Never Too Old to Learn, I preached this because I wanted to impart on the people that throughout our lives these are two roles we will always play that of student and teacher."

In this he calls for a new spirit of understanding between young and old to bridge the generation gaps that sometimes cause rifts in our community. "Sometimes I believe the older generation should stop and listen to what young people have to say and don't always be so judgmental. Because we are not all out here doing bad things and some of the problems that affect us we may have suggestions that can add to solutions. And also I think it is important for us as young people that we put our best foot forward showing our elders that we have talents and something to bring to the table to better our community and empower our people."

JMJ
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New Orleans Native Brings Elite Camps And Clinics Back To Hometown

By: Akilah Laster

Global Sports Agency, Dibia Athletic Development, will bring its elite camps and clinics to Louisiana this July as a part of the company's yearly expansion with special meaning to Company CEO, Brandon Okpalobi, St. Augustine High School Alumni and New Orleans native.

"We have expanded to other cities, but could not forget where we came from," said Okpalobi, who is based in Miami, Florida where he played basketball for the University of Miami. "New Orleans athletes are hungry for knowledge and skills and we felt our programs were needed there."

Okpalobi touts other New Orleans players that have established a legacy of success in the athletic arena that not only moti-

vated him throughout his athletic career, but helped create a sports culture in a City more known for multicultural arts, cuisine, and people.

He commended other native New Orleans players like Avery Johnson, Kerry Kittles, and D.J. Augustin-all guards like Okpalobi, for setting the foundation.

"The culture, diversity, values, and discipline I learned from growing up in New Orleans translated to success in other arenas," Okpalobi said. "Athletes from here have an uncanny desire to be the best and the competition here is serious."

After establishing Dibia Athletic Development in 2011, Okpalobi quickly expanded camps and clinics overseas to Bermuda; with "Team Dibia" athletes/represen-

tatives in seven countries and at four colleges and universities his elite training and philosophy is proliferating throughout the sports industry.

"Dibia Athletic Development coming to New Orleans to host camps and clinics is a great thing for the City," said Clifford Barthe, Director of Basketball Operations at Tulane University. "This camp will expose our young people to new training techniques and concepts which should aid in their growth."

In the near future, the company will expand into South America and parts of Africa, which is also special for Okpalobi whose father is Nigerian. But for now he says he is most excited and focused on promulgation in his hometown.

"There's no place like home,"



Pictured above is Global Sports Agency, Dibia Athletic Development CEO, Brandon Okpalobi, a St. Augustine High School Alumni and New Orleans native.

Okpalobi said. "It's always rewarding to leave and return when you can make a difference."

Barthe and Okpalobi alike, feel that Dibia Athletic Developments will have a two-fold impact.

"After Hurricane Katrina some people thought that youth sports would die in the City," said Barthe who felt like relocation of strong athletic programs and institutions contributed to that notion. "Seven years later we are still here and as more events like this one are organized there will be more good players in New Orleans."

Essence of Sports Clinic

Isidore Newman School
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July 1st-2nd

Boys and Girls Ages 8-18
dibiaathletic.com/events/

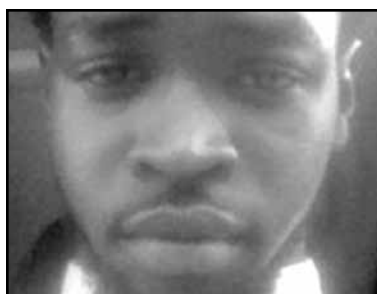
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Pipeline to the People Essence and the City

The Impact of The Essence Festival on New Orleans

By Corey Anderson
Data News Weekly Columnist

Whether it's winter, spring, summer, or autumn, New Orleans has a certain feel to it that can't be mistaken with any other city. The Fruit man down the street, The Second-line on Sundays, The undeniable spirit of Bourbon Street; these things are special and specific to the City. They give it its own unique mystique, its own essence of sorts. The Essence Festival, held in the City of New Orleans since 1995 to commemorate the 25th Anniversary of Essence Magazine, is another unique trait that New Orleans has adopted and made its own. People flock from all parts of the country, and even the globe, to share this experience of food, entertainment, and the soul of the City. With the date fast approaching for the 2013 Essence Festival, Data News Weekly wanted to know your thoughts about this year's upcoming festival in our two-part pipeline.



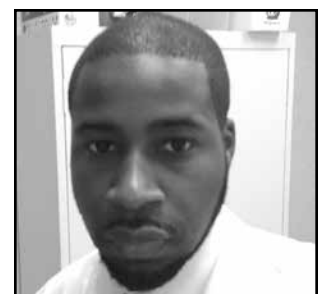
Ryan Thompson

"No I have never been to the Essence Festival, but it is definitely important to the City and to music. The Essence Festival to me is about re-discovering musical roots. And it's not only for the City, but for a large range of people, whether you're new to music or not."



Chantal Jackson

"It's been a while since I went to Essence. But while I was there, my favorite part was seeing Beyonce. It has an impact on New Orleans because people from out of town come to New Orleans just to go to Essence, therefore New Orleans is making money during Essence from restaurants, hotels, and other businesses which help boost the economy."



Dirck Gillam

"Honestly I've never been before considering I've lived in New Orleans all my life. But the impact is enormous...It livens the City and brings a positive vibe back to the City like no other."ation in America."

You can "Sag" But It Will Cost You

By Jineea Butler
NNPA Columnist

Do you ever wonder what message our young men are really sending when their pants are sagging to the point of showing their underwear? Has it crossed your mind that they might be mooning us? Before we can figure it out, they pull up their pants, only for them to gradually fall right back down. Focusing solely on body language, it's not a stretch to think they are saying, "Kiss my butt." Or, words to that effect.

Whatever they are trying to say, an increasing number of public officials are making it clear that they don't want to hear it. Wildwood, N.J. is the latest city to place a ban on sagging pants, classifying it as indecent exposure. The ban, which goes into effect July 2, applies only to the boardwalk in the Jersey Shore Resort. Mayor Ernest Troiano, Jr. told the Associated Press: "It's amazing — and this is a pun — how far decency has fallen through the cracks."

This so-called fashion statement originated in prison. Yes, the joint. Prison clothing is often ill-fitting. But belts are prohibited in most institutions because they might be used for suicide or hanging.

Still, that's no reason to extend that style beyond the prison walls. They are wearing pants so low that they are obstructing the

way that they walk and exposing where the sun doesn't shine. And their staunchest defenders aren't doing a good job of arguing their case.

Consider Hip Hop rapper The Game's recent comments about Wildwood's new law. TMZ reported that he said, "N***** should sag down to their socks out there. They trying to get people to not sag, please. Can't tell people how to wear their f***ing clothes. What times are we in? This ain't the f***ing slave days. F*** that." He goes on to say, "I am with the sagging movement. First five people to get fines, I will pay their tickets ... I will go there and sag cause I am a sagging Sagittarius."

Whether the law is valid, racist or unjust, we should not encourage our young people to break the law. After The Game pays the tickets for the first five people who defy this order, what happens to the next 10,000 who follow suit? Because the first offense is \$25 – \$100, he's only committing to a maximum of \$500. The fine can go as high as \$200 and 40 hours of community service. Is The Game going to do their community service, too?

Other jurisdictions – including Lynwood, Ill.; Terrebonne Parish in Louisiana; Albany, Ga.; Opa-Locka, Fla.; Collinsville, Ill. and Hahira, Ga. – have adopted similar bans. In addition, school districts, transit agencies and airlines ban

wearing pants that expose skin below the waist or underwear.

Interestingly, before the crack-down on those showing their crack, there were unofficial street standards for sagging. They called for wearing pants one or two sizes larger to sag below the elastic designer label on the boxers that matched and clearly defined your outfit. It was a requirement that boxers and the outfit had to showcase a brand from head to toe. The unspoken street rules went so far as to stipulate that if you didn't wear a coordinating belt you were deemed improperly attired.

Sadly, many young people can't give you a good reason for why they are showing their butts – literally.

When asked, most will tell you that they feel more comfortable with their pants exposing their backside. People of my generation used to say that we sag our jeans because we felt uncomfortable with the sizes and styles that were available. Consequently, Urban Fashion was born. Designers for Karl Kani, FUBU and Cross Colours began to make clothes that addressed our vision for a more comfortable feel.

As bad as the sagging looks, it's difficult to sit by as people belittle our entire Hip Hop community on the basis of only a slice of our community. Mr. Mayor have you taken the time to speak with the

young men in question? Fortunately, there's more to them than meets the eye. And as one ACLU official said, having bad taste shouldn't be a crime.

Just as public officials have a duty to look beyond our clothes; rappers need to clean up their acts, too. I think many of them don't understand the saying made famous by French writer Francois-Marie Arouet aka Voltaire, "With great power, comes great responsibility."

My questions to The Game are: When these people follow you, are you going to give them a job when they are "sagging down to their socks"? Are you going to stop the paper trail that might hurt their careers? How will these five people even get in touch with you to pay the fines? No matter how relevant or powerful a rapper aspires to be we can't allow them to plant messages that poison the mentality of our youth. If The Game is serious about making change; why not pursue the proper protocol to overturn this law.

Critics say if young men wearing pants below their waist want to know how they are perceived by others, all they have to do is look at what "saggin'" spells when the letters are reversed.

Jineea Butler, Founder of the Social Services of Hip Hop and the Hip Hop Union, can be reached at jineea@gmail.com or Tweet her at @flygirladyjay

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Statement by the President on the Supreme Court Ruling on Shelby County v. Holder

WASHINGTON, DC - I am deeply disappointed with the Supreme Court's decision today. For nearly 50 years, the Voting Rights Act - enacted and repeatedly renewed by wide bipartisan majorities in Congress - has helped secure the right to vote for millions of Americans. Today's decision invalidating one of its core provisions upsets decades of well-established practices that help make sure voting is fair, especially in places where voting discrimination has been historically prevalent.

As a nation, we've made a great deal of progress towards guaranteeing every American the right to vote. But, as the Supreme Court recognized, voting discrimination still exists. And while today's decision is a setback, it doesn't represent the end of our efforts to end voting discrimination. I am calling on Congress to pass legislation to ensure every American has equal access to the polls. My Administration will continue to do everything in its power to ensure a fair and equal voting process.

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RHANT

Road Home Action Network Team

"JUST GET ON THE BUS" to Washington, DC.

Our goal is to Meet with President Barack Obama

Date, Time: Sunday, July 7, 2013, 2:00 pm—Return Wednesday, July 10, 2013

Cost: \$200.00 per person (includes transportation, hotel, snack on bus) Please make all payment and donations payable to: RHANT Bring or mail to 2600 Banks St., New Orleans, LA 70119

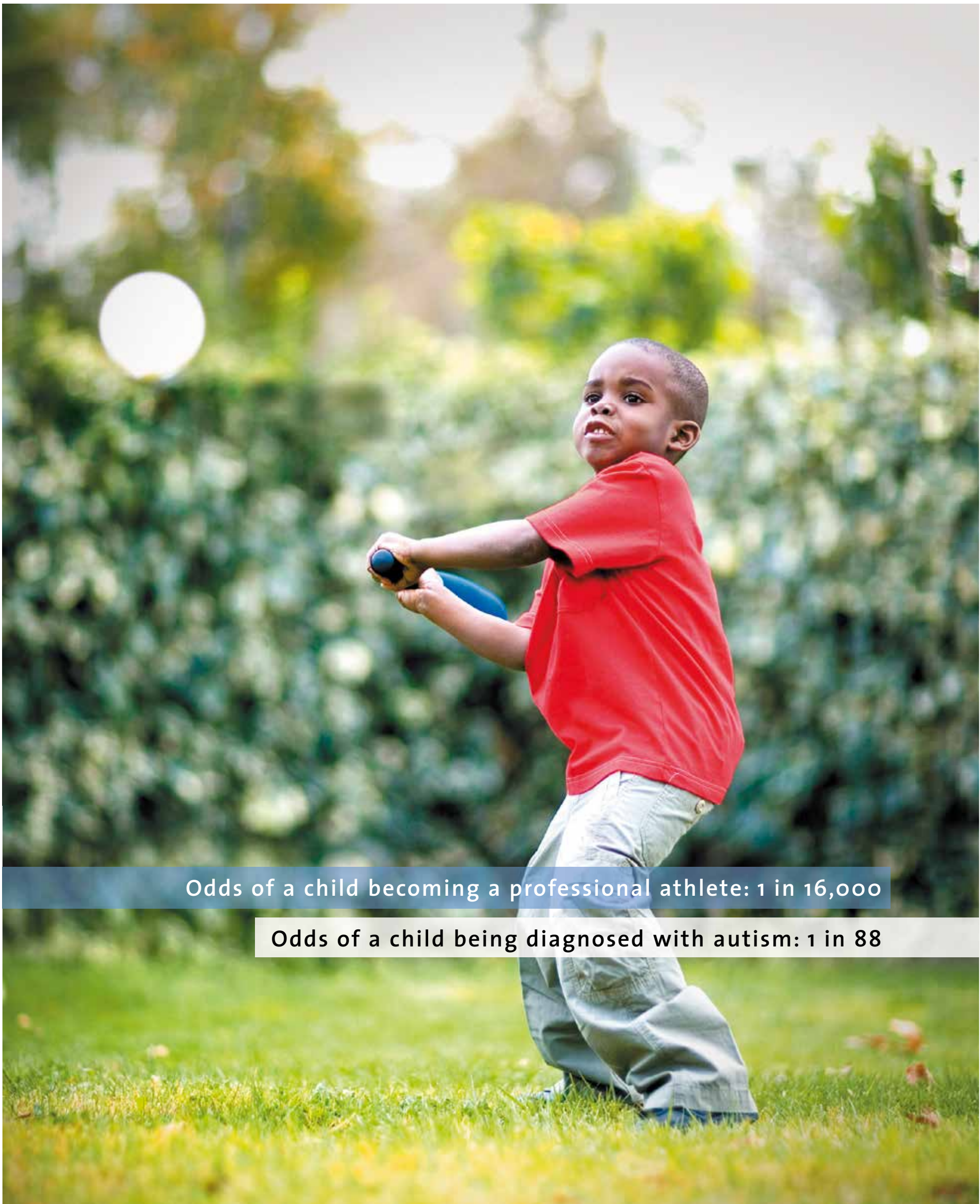
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