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The Holiday Spirit and the Season of Giving



Mattress Direct located at 200 N. Carrollton Avenue presented 39 local kids with new twin size Tempur-Pedic mattresses. Pictured above is General Manager Wayne Johnson (back row left) with some of the children who received the mattresses and supporters. Johnson says he is excited that the national company is doing something to help the City's youth. (photo by Glenn Summers)

By Edwin Buggage

It is again the season of giving and many from around the New Orleans area are reaching out to help those in need. And the help is coming from many across the spectrum of the City including businesses, Social Aid and Pleasure Clubs, individuals and many

others are giving back across the Crescent City.

Mattress Direct located at 200 N. Carrollton Avenue is one of several businesses that are doing something for those in need. General Manager Wayne Johnson says he is excited that the national company is doing something to help the City's youth. "We are presenting 39 local kids with new twin size Tempur-Pedic mat-

tresses." Continuing he says, "I think it is important that we help people in need not just during the holiday season, but year round and I am glad that we are able to be in the forefront of doing something for the children of our City."

Adonis Expose' is Co-Owner of Funkshuns LLC, a full-service consulting firm and is also a member of

On The Cover: is Kyle Franklin at Drexel Prep toy drive with the Jr. class coordinators: Chelsey Robinson on left and Mykai Scott on the right.

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Adonis Expose (above), Zulu Social Aid and Pleasure Club Parliamentarian, he has donated the toys he collects throughout the year (pictured to the right) to the Zulu's for their annual toy giveaway.

the Zulu Social Aid and Pleasure Club and serves as its Parliamentarian. He has been throwing his well-attended holiday parties for a number of years. Then in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina his parties took on a new purpose. He began collecting toys for the City's underserved youth. Initially, he worked with another organization but since becoming a member of Zulu he has donated the toys he collects to them for their annual toy giveaway. "I started giving my annual event 15 years ago, but after Hurricane Katrina I saw a need and started my toy drive because there were a lot of kids who did not have a lot and were displaced. I saw there was a lot of hardship, so I thought it would be great to give back," he says of why he selflessly serves others. Of the events he says, "It is overwhelming to see kids and their families waiting in lines that were around the corner, it is always a great feeling to give back to those who are in need during this time of the year. It is an amazing feeling; words can't describe the look in a kid's eyes. Seeing the kids filled with joy is very emotional for me."

Zulu Social Aid and Pleasure Club have been around for more than a century. They are known around town for many things, but what has come to become another thing that's synonymous with this organization is their annual toy giveaway that draws over 1500 youngsters from around the City to receive Christmas gifts. Kyle Franklin is the Zulu Toys for Tots Chairman

and he speaks proudly of what the organization does for the young people of New Orleans. "Zulu has been doing a toy give away officially for about 8 years, but they have been giving things away for many years." Continuing he speaks on how he feels when he sees the young people waiting in line and receiving their gifts, "It is a great feeling to see the families out there touches your heart."

Leroy Haley is someone who has been directly impacted by the goodwill of others. As he continues to work hard to position himself to do for his family that includes his fiancée and two children he appreciates the help he is receiving during the holiday season. "I am grateful for the help Zulu is giving and other organizations around the City to help people who unfortunately do not have the resources to get gifts for their children. I believe more people should give, but I know for me I am grateful for the help I am getting so my kids can enjoy Christmas."

During the holiday season many get as much joy out of giving as receiving. Wayne Johnson says it was great to see how excited the young people were after they received their mattress "They were very excited about the gifts; in fact one of the young girls laid on one of the mattresses and went to sleep." He also says that being a local business he feels that it is important that if you are going to do business in New Orleans that you should give back. "We are a locally owned store

in mid-city and I was thrilled to be part of something that meant so much to children in our City that are in need."

As stated by Leroy Haley, Christmas is mostly special for young children. And one of the kids to get a mattress on this day was named Robert. With a smile on his face he told Data News, "I feel good about receiving a Tempur-Pedic mattress. Continuing he says, "I attend MLK School and I like to play basketball, and when I get home and go to sleep my mattress is hard. This new mattress is going to help me sleep better and I want to thank Mattress Direct for giving me a new mattress."

The holiday season is a time where people's hearts open in big ways. And those who are helped are eternally grateful. "I don't know where I would be without the goodwill of others right now as I seek employment to care for my family. I feel blessed meeting Kyle through my neighbor who mentioned the great things Zulu does with their toy giveaway because without him I don't know where I would get gifts this season for my children," says Leroy Haley of the generosity of others.

The holidays bring out the best in people, and it is great to see people extend themselves to help their fellow man and woman. Beyond just the giving of gifts, this is what the season is all about serving others. And for all our readers we wish you'll Happy Holidays from Data News Weekly.



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Shoot Ya Best Shot!

Christmas Party at the New Orleans Passport Office

Photos by Brisket

The Holidays' best party hands-down had to be the Christmas party at the New Orleans Passport Office. Oh what fun they had ringing in the season!



Visit www.ladatanews.com for more photos from these events

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Shoot Ya Best Shot!

Monday Night Football at New Zulu Event Hall

Photos by Brisket

Big Shot Roy Fox hosted a Monday Night Football at the newly opened Zulu Event Hall. The Saints rocked the Bears and everyone had a great time.



DJ Shine's Party at Spice

Photos by Brisket

DJ Shine hosted a party at Spice Nightclub. Guests appearance by hip-hop star Choppa kept the crowd on their feet with his driving beats and lyrics, and DJ Shine on the ones and twos. A great way to start the holidays!



Data News Weekly is Hiring

Data News Weekly Newspaper, The People's Paper, is hiring for two positions in our New Orleans Office.

Editor/Reporters

About the Job

Journalists — tired of reading of layoffs, closings, the dire straights of the profession? Recent college graduates — think your job prospects are bleak? Not with us!

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Sales Manager/Retail Ad Manager

About the Job

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Breathing Life into a Movement



Julianne Malveaux
NNPA Columnist

"I can't breathe," gasped Eric Garner, again and again. "I can't breathe," he said, as several police officers were on top of him, choking him, pushing his head onto the concrete sidewalk. The man was not resisting arrest; he simply had the temerity to ask a police officer not to touch him. And because he was allegedly selling loose cigarettes, the life was choked out of him.

No one tried to help him or stop the vicious assault, which was ruled a homicide by the coroner. Emergency medical respondents offered no assistance. Eric Garner's last words, "I can't breathe, I can't

breathe, I can't breathe" ought to motivate all Americans, not just African Americans, but Americans of conscience to breathe life and energy into a movement for justice.

Breathing ought to be a simple thing. Air in, air out. It's not so simple when one's neck is being choked. Not so simple when one's spirit is being choked. The image of Eric Garner's neck in a chokehold, the image of at least four White police officers on top of him, is galling. All the more galling is the invisible choking of spirit that comes when people cannot breathe, cannot speak, and cannot respond to injustice.

To put this in a historical context, how many were as free to speak as Ida B. Wells was when she fought against lynching. Even in her freedom, Wells was threatened and run out of Tennessee. But others feared to speak about lynching for fear of being lynched themselves. Can't breathe. Think of the many African Americans who have served in our armed forces, treated unfairly, serving nonetheless, often silent.

How can any of us breathe in an atmosphere of compounded injustice? How can we breathe in an atmosphere of hypocrisy, when justice has never been blind? We live in a nation where a 12-year-old boy, Tamir Rice, is shot because he has a toy pellet gun that wasn't even pointed at police. Hard to breathe when video makes it absolutely clear that it was not necessary for Daniel Panaleo to place Eric Garner in a chokehold. Hard to breathe when a grand jury comes to an incomprehensible decision, one that defies common sense – and what we saw with our eyes.

Difficult to breathe when an elected official, Congressman Peter King (R-NY), chooses to blame Eric Garner's health for his death. "If he had not had asthma, and a heart condition, and was so obese, almost definitely he would not have died from this," King told CNN's Wolf Blitzer. King failed to note that use of the chokehold was banned by New York Police Department in 1993. Instead, there is no shame, no condolence in his insensitivity

and ignorance. Can't breathe.

Whether he is svelte or obese, carrying a briefcase or a bag of skittles, wearing a Hermes suit or a hoodie, behaving respectfully or rudely, a Black man's safety cannot be guaranteed, especially when a White police officer is involved. The mothers, daughters, sisters, aunts and wives of these men hold their breath, cannot breathe, except to pray for the safety of their loved ones. Would the system be fairer if a White man walking down Park Avenue had the same fears? Would the protests look different if those who were massacred looked different?

Can't breathe has become a metaphor for the African American condition, juggling the space between hopes and despair, between progress and regress. Who would have thought police violence against African American men would so visibly escalate at a time when our nation's leader is an African American man. Can President Obama breathe, or is he in a figurative chokehold when he parses words about the murders

of Eric Garner, Michael Brown, and little Tamir Rice? Our president faced protest when he criticized James Crowley, the White police officer who arrested Harvard Professor Henry Louis Gates, Jr. in his own house in 2009. Now, Obama offers measured words in response to the outrageousness of grand jury failure to indict.

Attorney General Eric Holder has been less measured in his comments. The day after the Staten Island grand jury exonerated Daniel Panaleo for his murder of Eric Garner, Holder announced Department of Justice's findings of excessive force by the Cleveland Police Department. Perhaps the Cleveland consent decree will be a first step toward cleaning up excessive police action around the country.

Eric Garner did not have to die. He did not have to stop breathing. Did his last breath bring life to a movement, or did he gasp that last breath in vain?

Julianne Malveaux is an author and economist based in Washington, D.C.

An Open Letter to Black Elected Officials



Kevin Chavous

Each year, various social service organizations issue reports relating to the state of Black America. While issues such as affordable housing, jobs, crime and challenging family dynamics are generally discussed, the poor quality of the education received by far too many African-American children continues to be a focal point found in these reports.

The facts don't lie. According to John Hopkins University, 32 per-

cent of African-American students drop out of high school nationally - 15 percentage points higher than their White counterparts. In urban school districts with a high concentration of low-income and minority students, the gap is widened and graduation rates are even lower. According to the Schott Report on Black Males in Public Education, African-American males have the lowest graduation rates out of any other race in 38 of our nation's 50 states, a 76 percent majority. For over a decade, African-American students have been the least likely to obtain a high school diploma out of every racial or ethnic group in the United States. Additionally the achievement gap between African-American and White students has consistently grown or stayed stagnant nationally with White stu-

dents outperforming their African-American peers up to 30 points on standardized tests. Not only are African-American students struggling in high school, but are ill prepared to succeed in higher education. Nearly 63 percent of African-American students enrolled in a full-time four-year college institution fail to graduate.

For years, we have known that these deficits exist in many of the schools in our community. And for years, we have put a band aid on the problem and talked in platitudes about future solutions. Yes, many of you offer well intentioned remedies consistent with the memories of your own schooling - even though those days represent a far-away time that has long passed us by. Additionally, many of you have relied on assurances from friends

and acquaintances who are part of the education system and continue to work hard in that system each day. Assurances of coming change that never comes for so many of our kids trapped in failing schools.

On the other hand, it is hard to join forces with some of your fellow conservative legislators who may be identified with education reform. I do understand that you have fought with many of those legislators for years over proposed cuts to social service programs that provide a needed lifeline for many of your constituents. As one of your peer colleagues from Mississippi said to me, "You need to realize that if I support charter schools or school choice, I am instantly identified with the enemy and viewed as a traitor to many of my people".

The truth is I know that it is not

easy to pick up the baton and challenge the education establishment on behalf of the kids not served well by that system.

But, those challenges aside, enough is enough.

Those of us who are vested with some measure of authority or influence need to take an all hands on deck approach to addressing the educational shortfalls within our community. As best we can, we need to lay aside the adult issues, the system preservation issues, and the tendency to go along to get along and start to truly put our kids first.

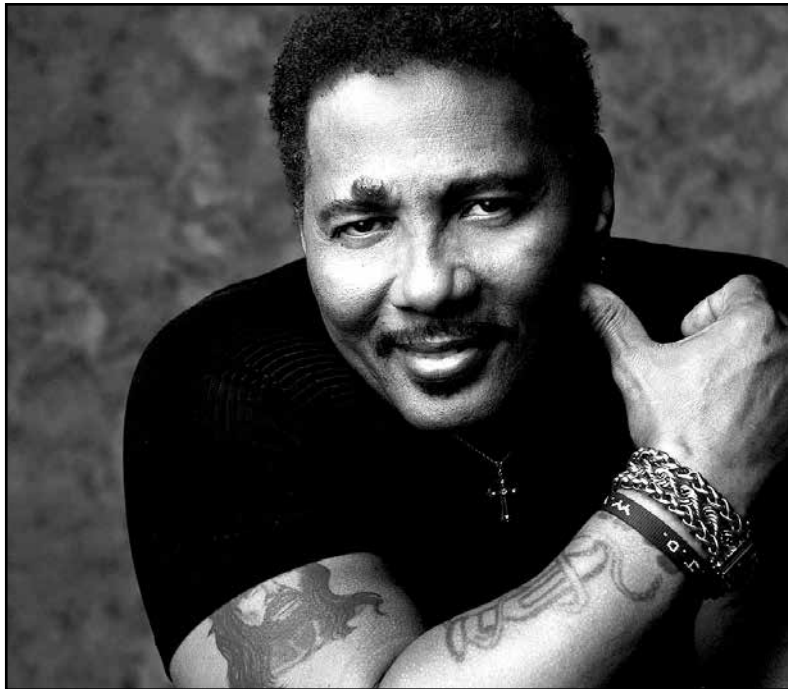
Our new standard should be: will this proposal - irrespective of who proposed it - help our children learn? If the answer is yes, we should support it.

Commentary,
Continued on page 7.

Aaron Neville Honored

By Calla Victoria

New Orleans crooner, and member of the legendary Neville family, Aaron Neville received the supreme honor of having his signature hit song "Tell it Like it Is" inducted into the Grammy Hall of Fame, The Recording Academy announced on Tuesday December 16, 2014. To be inducted into the Grammy Hall of Fame, a recording must be at least 25 years old and "exhibit qualitative or historical significance." "Tell it Like It Is" was written by George Davis and Lee Diamond, recorded at Cosimo Matassa's Studio in New Orleans, and released in 1966. It peaked at number one on the R&B charts and number two on the pop charts in 1967 and on the Billboard Hot 100. Musicians performing on the single included "Deacon John" Moore, Alvin "Red" Tyler,



Willie Tee, June Gardner, Emory Thomas and George Davis, who

also arranged the single. Neville's song "Tell it Like It Is"

joins 26 other songs deemed timeless, influential and historically significant. Among the other 2014 Grammy Hall of Fame inductees are Lou Reed's Cosimo Matassa's hit "Walk On The Wild Side," The 4 Seasons' "Big Girls Don't Cry," ABBA's "Dancing Queen," the Sex Pistols album "Never Mind The Bollocks, Here's The Sex Pistols," and Alice Cooper's "School's Out." Other inductees include recordings by Harry Belafonte, Leonard Cohen, Bob Dylan, Willie Nelson, Bonnie Raitt, Otis Redding, and Hank Williams. Other New Orleans artists to have been honored over the years are Fats Domino's "Ain't That a Shame," "Blueberry Hill" and "Walking to New Orleans," Professor Longhair's "Tipitina," and several songs by Louis Armstrong including "West End Blues," "St. Louis Blues," and "What a Wonderful World."

Commentary, Continued
from page 6.

Of course, this new approach requires something equally hard: taking the politics out of education. Now is time for us to do all we can to take partisanship and party caucus prioritizing out of the education policy and funding discussion. Such partisanship continues to curtail the reform effort in many school districts hurt our kids.

Rather, the example set by many of your peers in the Louisiana Black Legislative Caucus is one to follow. In recent years, several of those members have embraced bold education reform initiatives ranging from charter schools, virtual learning, common core and the statewide opportunity scholarship program. Moreover, some of those same members have been supportive of the aggressive system reform ef-

forts promoted by State Superintendent John White. Often, these Louisiana Black Caucus members find themselves voting with conservative colleagues with whom they oppose on most other issues. But, as former New Orleans State Senator Ann Duplessis says, "At some point, we have to come together to help our kids, or accept the fact that we will continue to lose more of them".

With all of the challenges facing Black America, none is more important to our future than the education of our young. As you enter your respective legislative sessions in the New Year, I truly hope that that you find the way to extend yourselves beyond yourselves and build the needed alliances to get our kids in good schools now - by any means necessary.

Oh Come Let Us Adore Him

*Public Invited as Central City's
Israelite Baptist Church Hosts Live
Nativity Scene December 22 and 23*

New Orleans City Council President Stacy Head is proud to support the Israelite Baptist Church's 2014 Christmas production of a live nativity scene, in partnership with the NOPD's 6th Police District, the Central City Partnership, Inc., and the Young Men Olympians Benevolent Association. Community members, especially those from the Central City neighborhood, are invited to attend this unique neighborhood event and share in the spirit of the holiday season. Outdoor seating will be provided.

This special event is supported

by the Israelite Baptist Church, Reverend Emanuel Smith, Jr., Pastor, City Council President Stacy Head, NOPD, 6th Police District, Central City Partnership, Inc., Young Men Olympians Benevolent Association and features Gospel Musician Jo "Cool" Davis and other community choirs

The live outdoor nativity scene with costumed actors, children, and live music will take place at the Israelite Baptist Church, 2100 Martin Luther King Junior Boulevard, New Orleans, on Monday, December 22 and Tuesday, December 23 from 5:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

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