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A Data News Weekly Exclusive

# Empowering Youth to be Leaders of Tomorrow

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# Isaiah Youth Institute Encourages Youth, Creates Leaders of Tomorrow

**Eric M. Craig**  
Multimedia Editor

One local organization in New Orleans creates the leaders of tomorrow through community development and encouraging faith-based approaches to politics.

The Isaiah Institute is a group of faith-based organizations and local business leaders that come together to take responsibility for their community.

The Isaiah Institute of New Orleans prides itself in assisting local youth in creating a support-base for assessing critical issues affecting local communities and neighborhoods. The local Institute has partnered with the Andrew J. Young Foundation and the National Urban League.

“If people don’t obligate to change it, the government is under no obligation to fix it. We don’t function with a benevolent government,” said John Johnson, the outreach reach coordinator for the Isaiah Youth Institute.

Johnson has worked with the Institute for the last five years. As a retired veteran, and a former volunteer during Hurricane Katrina, Johnson spends his time mentoring economically challenged men and women.

In working at the Institute, Johnson teaches students how the government operates. During mentor sessions, Johnson explains how legislative and judicial branches in city, state, and national governments move people, communities and governments forward.

Every semester, the Institute conscripts a new group of students to become community leaders. In politics, Johnson noted, students are often not at the table of discussion. The Institute plans to change that.

“When we teach young people the truth, that this is your government, that this is your country—and you have to take responsibility of the government.”

The Institute encourages the use of faith to bring forth change in communities. In order to make change, Johnson said, one has to believe in something.

According to Johnson, youth that have participated in the Institute have been more aware of more social issues than their college peers.

“We’re looking for a conscious group of young people

Cover Story, Continued on page 3.



Isaiah Youth Institute of New Orleans Executive Director Joseph Givens addresses leaders at the Institute’s leadership convention.

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Cover Story, Continued from page 2.

that are willing to see and act on issues via voting and other democratic tools,” Johnson said.

The Institute gives youth leaders the access to information and training to learn how to change things and how to do research and listening campaigns. Youth leaders take the knowledge they learn through the Institute, and hold listening campaigns, to understand sentiments in a community. This way, students get a grasp on what the public needs and uses learned resources to suggest fixes to the problem at hand.

“We teach the students the difference between protesting and demonstration. Protests beg for attention. Demonstration is having the power to make people react. Demonstrations need public officials in their corner.

#### Youth Institute Events

In April, the Institute held a youth convention at the University of New Orleans with over 200 student leaders. Students came from



Civil Rights Activist and former Mayor of Atlanta Andrew Young speaks to St. Augustine High School students during Isaiah Youth Institute's leadership convention held last April. Photo Courtesy of Joseph Givens.

the University of New Orleans, Southern University at New Orleans, Dillard, Loyola University, Tulane University, and Xavier University of Louisiana.

At the convention, the students gathered to identify and discuss issues that affect people on the local, state, and national level. Civil Rights Activist and 55th Mayor of Atlanta, Andrew Young, spoke to the student leaders about impacting government.

On May 24th, two dozen Institute leaders met to discuss the outcome of their planned listening sessions. On Labor Day weekend, another leader-wide convention will be held in New Orleans.

This year, the Institute's will spearhead a campaign to young people voting in New Orleans. Student leaders plan to hold voting registration drives in September, aiming for 80 percent of college and universities students to registered to vote.

“If you want your voice heard, you must be a registered voter,” Johnson said.

#### Correction

## Michael Bagneris Announces Bid for Mayor



#### Data News Staff

Two weeks ago, Data News Weekly ran a photo of Michael Bagneris and his wife, Madlyn, in an article headlined “Michael Ba-

gneris Announces Bid for Mayor,” which ran in the May 20, 2017, on page 3. In the caption of the leading photo, Data News Weekly misidentified Madlyn Bagneris. Data News Weekly apologizes for the error.

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# Four African-Americans Chosen for Cosby Jury

Stacy M. Brown  
NNPA Newswire Contributor

PITTSBURGH—After a third day of the jury selection process Bill Cosby criminal trial, all 12 jurors have been chosen. It was a day filled with high-drama and even several outbursts of laughter by the embattled comedian and others.

Also, six alternate jurors were chosen for the trial that's scheduled to begin on June 5 in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, about 300 miles from where the selection process took place.

Two members of the primary panel are African-American, a man and a woman both in their 30s or 40s. A male Black in his 20s and a female African-American in her 20s were also selected as alternates.

While the primary panel consists of 10 Whites—seven men and three



All 12 jurors have been chosen for Bill Cosby's criminal trial for an incident that was alleged to have taken place more than a decade ago at his home near Philadelphia. (Pool Photo/Pittsburgh Post-Gazette)

women—the alternate jury pool includes four Whites.

In a telephone interview Wednesday, civil rights activist, Rev. Jesse

Jackson said juror suppression has been a tool of the United States justice system for centuries.

"The jury may determine the outcome even before coming to court," Jackson said. "Our history includes the killers of Emmett Till and Medgar Evers; a jury set those killers free. There's a court bias and African-Americans don't have access to the jury pool [like Whites]."

Cosby has been charged with three counts of sexual assault, which stem from an alleged incident more than a decade ago at his home near Philadelphia.

The star faces 10 years in prison if he's convicted.

After Cosby's legal team objected on Tuesday to prosecutors striking an African-American woman, an otherwise quiet proceeding grew contentious.

"We believe this is systematic exclusion of African-Americans," defense lawyer Brian McMonagle complained in lodging the chal-

lenge to the striking of the juror and citing a legal term known as a "Batson challenge."

According to the Legal Information Institute (LII) at the Cornell Law School, a Batson challenge is, "An objection to the validity of a peremptory challenge, on grounds that the other party used it to exclude a potential juror based on race, ethnicity, or sex. The result of a Batson challenge may be a new trial."

The LII continued: "The name comes from *Batson v. Kentucky*, 476 U.S. 79 (1986) - which held this type of peremptory challenge to be unconstitutional when used by criminal prosecutors. Another case, *Edmonson v. Leesville Concrete*, 500 U.S. 614 (1991), permitted private litigants in a civil case to successfully make the same kind of objection."

On Wednesday, drama filled the courtroom when a potential juror admitted to posting a note on Facebook and communicating with someone, who identified themselves as a seated juror. Judge Steven O'Neill, visibly angry, repeatedly asked the man whether the person in question was really a seated juror and whether he or she was in the jury room.

O'Neill then retreated to his chambers with attorneys from both sides and, after 40 minutes, reemerged to say that juror no. 2 had been dismissed, because of a personal issue.

It's not known whether the already seated juror was the individual who traded Facebook posts. The judge had previously made it clear that jurors were not to post anything about the case or whether they were selected on social media or anywhere else.

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# Big Chief Darryl Montana

**Jordan Lorrius**  
Data News Weekly  
Contributor

Born in New Orleans, Darryl Montana is Big Chief of the Yellow Pocahontas "Hunters" Black Indigenous Masking Indian Tribe. Montana's Indigenous Masking Lineage dates back to the 1800s. Montana has been masking from 1964-2017.

## Tribe Timeline:

- From 1945-2005 / Allison "Tootie" Montana / Chief of Yellow Pocahontas Hunters and Monogram Hunters.
- From 1935-1947 / Alfred Montana / Chief of 8th Ward Hunters.
- From 1860-1919 / Becate Batiste / Chief of Krewe of Wild West.

By the age of six, Montana began studying, beading, and learning about the Black Masking Tradition that has been passed down in his family for generations. Not limited to feathers, stones, beads, sequins, and pearls, Montana's one of a kind creative suit design always tells a story that unites the community with the traditional elements of this long-lasting masking culture. Montana has received high honors and has exhibited his works of art to audiences worldwide yet he finds the greatest joy in teaching the New Orleans youth since it is a sure way to preserve the Indigenous Masking Culture.

Montana, a local university professor has been teaching elements of Masking Culture for many years. From the students in the classroom to the community on the streets Montana believes that a unified New Orleans is a key component to solving some of the most pressing local issues. When asked to share about his priceless contribution to Masking Culture over the course of almost five decades Montana said, "No one can do it alone; your com-



munity keeps you accountable. You're struggling paying bills and you gotta live but you build your life around this culture. My dad was one who wouldn't take excuses. It takes sacrifice and pride. It is our duty as a community to uphold and teach our traditions to future generations."

In 2018, New Orleans will celebrate its Tri-centennial, a 300-year-old anniversary and yet another major milestone. Big Chief Darryl Montana is retiring after 48 years of masking and following in the honorable footsteps of his father Big Chief Allison "Tootie" Montana who masked for 50 years. We honor your lifetime of community service to New Orleans and your sincere preservation of Indigenous Black Masking Culture.

1. What is one of your most memorable suits and why?

A. I made a suit where I traced my Mama's hands inside of a dream catcher. Everybody knows my Dad well but for years my Mama was the driving force that kept this culture thing going in our area.

2. Describe a difficult time in your life that Masking Culture helped

you get through?

A. I was incarcerated for three years. While I was gone, I prayed and sang Indian songs in the field every day. I must've had a tribe of about 300. If it hadn't been for this Masking Culture I don't know where my mind frame would've been because the system was mentally messing with me.

3. How significant is Indigenous Black Masking Culture to New Orleans?

A. Whenever the tourists come to this City, they're gonna promote the jazz bands and the Indians. Indian is key and everything else comes after it. To not have us is like Gumbo without the seasoning.

4. How does New Orleans Tourism Commission support Indigenous Black Masking Culture?

A. We don't get no support. I was fortunate enough to have been working for Xavier for 24 years but not everybody else has such opportunities. This is my 48th year masking. I've done one thing with the Tourism Commission and it was post-Katrina. They took a street car on an 18-wheeler truck and drove to Chicago. Sev-

en of us went on the trip. They were using us to let the world know that New Orleans is not still under water.

5. What was your creative response to Hurricane Katrina?

A. My dad died two months before Katrina so I did a suit in honor of him. There's a replica of my dad in his last suit coming out of the suit I made that year, so when I walked the streets he was right there with me.

6. What's a valuable lesson you've learned in 48 years of masking?

A. The lesson I learned is that it's not about me it's about we, about Us.

Big Chief Darryl Montana is a shining example of determination and focus. Montana's cultural expressions of art identify with his life experience and long standing Black Masking Family Lineage in New Orleans. Montana's great pride in serving New Orleans for over four decades is reflected in the celebration and preservation of Black Masking Culture. The countless hours of sewing and prayer are the common thread that weaves together a robust vibrant culture rich in history and family.

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# Treme' 7th Ward Arts and Culture Festival

**Kichea S. Burt**  
Photographer

During Memorial Day Weekend, the Treme' 7th Ward Cultural District held its 2nd Annual Arts and Cultural Music Festival under the Claiborne underpass. Blocks between St. Bernard and Orleans Avenues, under the Claiborne Avenue underpass, were filled with several local art, community, and food vendors. Artists performed on one of two music stages, which were each located on the St. Bernard and Orleans Avenues ends, respectively. Musical performances included Zion Trinity, Kid Merv Campbell, Neisha Ruffins, and the Treme' Brass Band.



Visit [www.ladatanews.com](http://www.ladatanews.com) for more photos from these events



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# Howard Hewett

## *Soul Survivor*

Edwin Buggage  
Editor

### A Soul Music Legend

Howard Hewett first came to know success as a member of the group Shalamar with hits such as "Second Time Around" "A Night to Remember" and many others. In 1986, he embarked on a solo career where he scored hits such as the romantic classics "I'm For Real" "Show Me" and his show stopping foray into spirituality "Say Amen." Data News Weekly recently had the chance to speak with him during a stop in New Orleans where he performed his grown and sexy show to a packed house.

### A Soulful Journey

With a career spanning decades, many know the songs but they do not know much about the man with the golden voice that continues to captivate audiences with his unique brand of soul. "I started out in Akron, Ohio we had a gospel group called the Hewett Singers with myself and three of my sisters; where I was the lead singer; my mom was a professional gospel promoter in the Akron/Canton/Cleveland area. We opened for all the major gospel singers," recalling the beginning of his singing career at age 10.

Later moving on to R&B, eventually landing in Los Angeles singing at the legendary Maverick's Flat in the Crenshaw District, playing in several bands touring Europe and Asia before joining Shalamar. "I met Jeffrey and Jody there, because a lot of the Soul Train dancers would be there. On any given night, you might see Richard Pryor there, Lionel Richie or Chaka Khan or members of Earth Wind and Fire. I was singing in a group called Beverly Hills. Jeffrey heard me sing before Shalamar was formed. By the time, I returned from touring Jeffrey approached me about joining



Howard Hewett

the group because Gary Mumford went back to singing gospel. Later, I was working with producers at Motown but I wasn't signed to them. Shalamar had the hit "Take That to the Bank" which Gerald Brown sang lead on. Then Gerald left the group out on the road without a lead singer. My first wife worked for Don Cornelius and knew Jeffrey and he called me at Motown and said we want to offer you an equal position and being the lead singer in Shalamar and the rest is history."

### My Love for New Orleans, New Music and Shalamar Reunion

Hewett is a regular in New Orleans, bringing his show to the Cres-

cent City where he has legions of loyal fans. "I have a love affair with New Orleans. It is just the whole vibe of New Orleans; it really stands out to me and is an amazing and special place." Continuing to speak of his show he says with a hint of slyness in his voice, "I enjoy interacting with my audience. I especially enjoy interacting with my female fans."

He says he is recording new material both as a solo artist and with Shalamar reuniting with original member Jeffrey Daniel and adding the Singer Carol Griffey into the mix. "I am working on a new album, but now it is back to a singles market, so I don't know when I will put the complete album

out, but I will be putting out singles soon." Continuing he says, "I've always enjoyed collaborating, so I am working with Joyce Irby from the group Klymaxx, we finally got back together and we have something coming out soon and I've worked with Leon Sylvers who did all the early Shalamar stuff and I also worked on this new Shalamar stuff featuring myself, Jeffrey Daniel and Carol Griffey. It is a very cool song like Shalamar for 2017."

### Inside the Soul and the Meaning of Life

After years of commercial success and touring, music is only a part of what gives this man who started his love affair with music in the church. He says it is his spirituality and his children that continues to guide him and gives his life purpose and meaning. "I remember when my first child was born I saw life come into her and it changed my life forever and it gave me direction and purpose. Today, my three daughters and a son are all grown up and we have a very special and close relationship. I have been married three times, but I fought to keep them all together; staying in contact with one another. Life itself gives me meaning and purpose every time I wake up giving me one more day to get it right. I have been blessed; singing since I was 10 years old, and helping people get through something and enhancing their lives. When people come up to me and say how the song "Say Amen" has changed their lives, I know that God blessed me to create this song and many others throughout my career. Throughout my life, I have stayed true to myself, my family and my music and this is why I have survived not only the music industry but life and its many challenges."

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# Flint Residents Still Suffering, Forgotten, Abandoned

**D. Kevin McNeir**  
The Washington Informer/  
NNPA Member

Residents of Flint, Michigan have very little to celebrate, three years after the water crisis in the city made national headlines.

On April 25, as citizens of the blue-collar city, located about one hour from Detroit, marked the third anniversary of the announcement that over 100,000 men, women and children had potentially been exposed to high levels of lead in the drinking water, the suffering continues.

The health crisis arose shortly after officials decided to switch drinking water sources to the Flint River. Before long, thousands began to suffer from illnesses linked to the contaminated water, including an estimated 12,000 children who have been exposed to dangerously-high levels of lead. And while an estimated 15,000 children in the city will soon receive extra money for nutritional foods that can limit the effects of the lead exposure, that assistance will not be extended to families who left the city—even though their children may suffer from health problems related to the lead-contaminated water.

That decision, made by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, has not been well received. For now, qualifying families will receive a one-time payment of \$420 for each eligible child—funds that come from \$7 million in additional food assistance from the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families block grant.

But for those like one former Flint resident and mother who moved barely a stone's throw away for the sake of her young child's health, the dollars won't be made available.

"If I had moved to another state, I could understand being treated differently. But moving just 15 minutes away, I feel like it's unfair," said Ariana Hawk in an interview with the Detroit Free Press.

Meanwhile, a fundraising campaign has been launched by California-based Green for All—a climate and economic justice organization that focuses on poverty and pollution to create an inclusive green economy strong enough to lift people out of poverty.

Vien Truong, the director of Green for All said that the #Fix-



President Barack Obama sips filtered water from Flint following a roundtable on the Flint water crisis at Northwestern High School in Flint, Mich., May 4, 2016. (Pete Souza/White House)

ThePipes campaign has raised \$10,000 to fix Flint homes. With several celebrities signing on and asking their followers to give their support, including Van Jones, Common, Russell Simmons and most recently hip-hop artist Big Sean, she expects to see the level of donations increase.

"Every dollar we collect brings Flint families one step closer to clean bathing and drinking water," said Truong, who estimates that the bill for removing lead-contaminated pipes is \$10,000 per home. "Many don't know that over 8,000 city residents now have tax liens [on their homes] for refusing to pay for poisonous water," Truong said. "It's outrageous that three years later, families living in Flint still don't have clean drinking water. Lead has poisoned over 300,000 people. Meanwhile, companies have left, restaurants have closed, property values have declined and investors have gone elsewhere. We have to make people remember and help."

Truong continued: "With President Trump promising to cut the EPA budget by one-third, Americans need to understand that what's happened here in Flint will one day become the norm. One can intellectualize this all they want but studies show the disproportionate number of landfills, toxic facilities and dumps are more often located near the dwellings of low-income families or near

to the city's Board of Review, I've called on my city councilmember—I've gotten nowhere," said Mary Huddleston, a 76 year-old widow who lives alone and says she barely uses any water at all.

Huddleston continued: "I keep making payments each month—just enough to keep the water on so I can flush my toilet, but I don't wash much and only shower once a week. My hair began coming out from using the shower so I have to do it with bottled water that the city gave us. One day my water bill was \$151. Then, after new meters were installed, it jumped to over \$1,000."

Huddleston has been diagnosed with several respiratory illnesses and said that she believes the illnesses are a result of drinking and using the contaminated water.

"I feel like I'm being forced to pay other folks' bills—and for wa-

ter that's still contaminated," said Huddleston.

Since a federal state of emergency was declared in January 2016, Flint residents have been instructed to use only bottled or filtered water for drinking, cooking, cleaning and bathing. Earlier this year, officials said the water quality had returned to acceptable levels.

However, residents continued to be told that they should use bottled or filtered water until all the lead pipes have been replaced—something that won't be completed any sooner than 2020—in another three years.

"Flint will soon become a ghost town," Huddleston said. "But I can't go anywhere. I have nowhere to go. They talk about all this money being donated to help us. I don't know where it's going, but I sure haven't gotten a call."

places where people of color reside. No one speaks for them. Race remains a prevalent factor."

One young activist who has served as the face of the Flint water crisis, nine-year-old Amariyanna Copeny, also known as "Little Miss Flint," joined other protesters during the "Stand Up to Trump" rally outside the White House last month, criticizing President Trump for breaking his promise to address the problem.

"On the campaign trail, he promised he would fix Flint. Unfortunately, this was one promise that he failed to keep—just like his promise to 'Make America Great Again,'" Truong said.

"Little Miss Flint" first made headlines last year after she sent a letter to President Obama inviting him to come see the damage caused by the lead poisoning. Obama replied and visited the city, even meeting with the youthful activist.

In many cases, the stories of suffering from Flint residents seem to be unbelievable in a country like America, given its level of resources. One senior citizen who has lived in Flint since 1963 says she feels abandoned and confused particularly after receiving a water bill for \$1099.09 which officials from the water department alleged was issued to her because she had been "undercharged."

"I've written letters, I've gone

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# Top 5 Ways to Let Your Black Girl Magic Shine All Summer Long



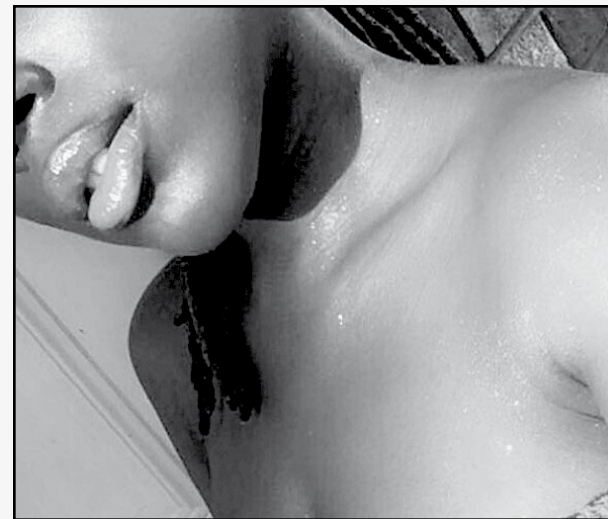
**Delaney George**  
Fashion Columnist

Summer is here. The sun is beaming, and African-American women are glowing all over the metro area. The New Orleans streets are filled with Black girl magic and melanin galore this summer. And, with these five tips, you could make that Black radiance shine even brighter.

**Skin:** You can give yourself that goddess style glow while still protecting your skin by using bronzers, highlighters, and



Model shows off her PoisoOddites body jewelry. Shot by: Dominic Scott



24k skin gives the skin a golden, shimmering glow. Photo courtesy of: @NewCreationn on Instagram



Model Dee, where's 2 natural puff balls to show off her natural girl summer style. Shot by: Delaney George



These jeans paired with a pin-striped crop top accentuate this model's diamond belly ring. Shot by: @theoptomistdreamer on Instagram

Model poses in a chic sexy bathing suit showing off her radiant brown skin. Photo courtesy of: @Six13swim on Instagram



  
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**Hair:** Whether you're a natural, relaxed, or a hair-installment kind of girl, let that Black girl style and personality shine through your hair this summer.

Naturals can let their curls down, wear them in puffs, or go wild with a more frizzy style. If you have hair installed or get perms, go crazy with vibrant colors and exotic textures to express the summer essence.

**Piercings:** Piercings come in all shapes, colors, and sizes just like us. Whether you're more of an ear person, or a belly person, piercing add flare, style, and a sense of mystery to any ensemble. Earrings and nose rings are a must for some women, and recently belly button rings are becoming a necessity as well. Belly rings are

perfect for that crop top you've been dying to wear or that two-piece bikini suit you bought for the beach.

**Swimwear:** Nothing says melanin more than a Black woman soaking up some sun on a hot summer day in her stylish skin complementing swimsuit. This is the summer to let your skin glow, your curves shine, and your style do all the talking with the perfect swimsuit. Whether you're a two-piece kind of girl, a monokini maniac, or wonderful one-piece wearer, there is no excuse not to wear a swimsuit this summer.

**Body Jewelry:** If you're not the daring type to get a piercing, there are many other stylish ways to accentuate the body for this summer. Body chains, thigh chains, and chokers are all ways to make your skin and curves pop all at once. These accessories can make an outfit or swimsuit by giving that extra sexy touch a look needs. Local retailer, @Poisonodities on Instagram has the latest in body jewelry fashion.

For more on where to buy visit @Delannii on Instagram or email Delinke@yahoo.com for more info.



## The Curly Corner

# How Exercise Can Help Promote Healthy Hair Growth



**Destiny Johnson**  
Natural Hair Columnist

Hair growth is essential to maintaining healthy, luxurious hair. When my hair grows effortlessly, I know I must have been doing something right in my hair growth regimen to improve the overall health of my hair. Drinking water, eating the right foods, as well as protective styles are essential to taking care of your natural hair. However, exercise can also tremendously benefit your hair growth. Exercising is a necessary way to improve the overall health of your body and mind but here are four facts on how a nice, morning jog can increase the length and strength of your naturally curly tresses.



Exercise can benefit your overall health including healthy hair growth. Image via [www.curlyhair.com](http://www.curlyhair.com).

1. Exercising can increase the blood flow to the scalp. While exercis-

ing, such as jogging, will establish overall blood flow throughout the body, the scalp benefits as well. Blood circulation allows for more nutrients to reach the follicles. Healthy follicles can improve the overall appearance and length of the hair over time.

2. Exercising often can increase the amount of times you wash your hair during the week. Consistently washing your hair will help to maintain a scalp that is clean and free of agents that may clog your scalp such as dirt and oil.
3. Exercising requires you to wear protective styles. Protective styling helps to retain length by keeping your hair off your shoulders and allowing it to grow effortlessly. Protective styling during exercise is particularly important for ladies who may have fine strands that can easily break.
4. Exercise requires you to drink more water. Drinking more water will help carry the nutrients your hair needs to the hair follicles in your scalp. Water is immensely important to add to your regimen when maintaining the health of your body and natural hair.

Happy Growing!

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