New Orleans Post-Katrina
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By Samjah Iman
Data News Weekly Contributor

Abandoned houses, tenantless fields, neglected businesses, and the look of timeworn agony etched on some of the native's faces are just a few indications that Hurricane Katrina left more than a small mark on this City. Many of the people here wear the remnants of the hurricane like a badge of honor – it’s their war story; for others, it was a nightmare that forever changed the trajectory of their lives. While some New Orleanians occasionally ponder on the horror caused by the travesty 13 years ago, one young man reflects on The Big Easy’s newfound notoriety, as a result of Katrina, that has caused an influx of non-native creatives to flock this way.

New Orleans bred rapper, producer, and visual artist Nesby Phips is no stranger to the creative community here in New Orleans. Having traveled all over the US performing his music, he holds strong to the old adage, “there is no place like home.” “New Orleans is

Nesby Phips rocks a crowd along with his band, The Grid, at Blue Nile on Frenchmen. (Photo Credit: Samjah Iman)
where creativity is fluid and unrestricted,” boasts Phips. Since Hurricane Katrina, there has been a major inpouring of non-native artists to this City (I'm one of them). Celebrities like Solange Knowles, who fled to the city in 2013, often brag about the je ne sais quoi New Orleans possesses. The Don’t Touch My Hair Singer was quoted in a 2016 Vogue article saying, “I really, really love it there [New Orleans]. It is also one of those things you can't put into words, you can't really put your finger on what is so magical about it.” According to Phips, the magic was in this city before Hurricane Katrina. It’s just that people from other places are just now starting to recognize the beauty in what New Orleanians simply refer to as living. I sat down with Nesby Phips seeking answers on what he believes attracts us non-native creatives to his city, and why he thinks people are choosing New Orleans over any other major city.

Exactly when do you think the post-Katrina creative influx to New Orleans started happening?

I think it started happening in the last four to five years. In the beginning it was a brave thing to come to this city after the hurricane because there wasn’t life here. But recently, the word is getting out about the city. The allure about the city got out. Not that people weren’t visiting here at first, but between that, the internet, the popularity of the city and certain well-known artist tapping into the city…. the word just got out. But it’s been alluring, some people are just now catching on. Like Playwright Tennessee Willams who moved here from Mississippi said, “America has only three cities: New York, San Francisco, Look at a Mardi Gras Indian costume. We are colorful people. We are peacocks. People are drawn and attracted to it and some creatives come down here to emulate that. Some artist come down here and pick up on the New Orleans aesthetics and pick it as their art work. I've seen artists who are not from here but moved here, then go out of town to perform and build friendships by chanting, “where y’at, where y’at, where y’at lil daddy!” That's how they simply spoke to each other…. sounded like they were ralleying troops. There’s a rhythm to everything here. There’s a rhythm, there’s a taste, there’s a roux to everything we do. There’s a core ingredient to everything we do. It's not flavorless here.

Who are some of your favorite New Orleans-born creatives?

Definitely Aaron Neville……he has a cold, sweet voice. Mahalia Jackson for sure. No one sounds like her. I enjoy Frank Ocean as a songwriter. Jay Electronica is one of the greatest emcees and personalities to come out of New Orleans. He’s nothing short of a legend. Artist Ceanux Young…. he has a brilliant style of painting, and he’s a multi-talented individual. Lil Wayne is one of the best rapper/writers of all time. Currency has a crazy pen. Patrick Melon is one of the best photographers out there. Not only does he have a style, he has a specific subject he sticks to which is Black New Orleans. Artist B-Mike of Studio BE has made an imprint on culture, and he did it off of sheer drive.

What in New Orleans sparks your creativity?

I get inspired just by waking up and going outside. Getting out the house and bumping up against the other things that are around like hearing and being at the second line or going to hear a horn. You got other cities where you can’t see live music seven days a week for free. When you leave your door in New Orleans, you see that everything has a rhyme, riddle, sway, and step to it. And that’s just what it is.

Check out Nesby Phips’ projects on all music streaming apps and stay tuned for his upcoming live album Therapy. @nesbyphips
A Celebration of True Beauty

Greater St. Stephen Ministries & Cumulus Radio
“Greater Glam 2018” Community Event

By Edwin Buggage
Photos by Glenn Summers

Greater Glam and the True Definition of Beauty

For several decades Greater St. Stephen Ministries has been a place where spirits are fed on a consistent basis. The focus of this groundbreaking church has always been how to do God’s work both inside the church and also making an impact in the entire community.

Dr. Debra B. Morton, who today leads the church as its First Woman Pastor is a visionary leader, author and entrepreneur who serves with her husband, Bishop Paul S. Morton, Sr. continues a tradition of a thriving community of outreach through ministry of more than 7000 members. In addition to its combined community of outreach through television, radio and social media their audience is more than 15,000 people weekly who are fed messages of faith, hope and inspiration.

This was on full display on Saturday August 25, 2018 when Pastor Debra B. Morton, partnered with Cumulus Radio and Tracee Dundas, who is best known as being the Creative Director and Founder of New Orleans Fashion Week producing an event called, “Greater Glam: A Day of Empowerment, Beauty and Fashion Honoring Amazing Women.”

The Greater Glam Experience is more than an event that focuses on beauty. It is a community project with a focus to provide a creative cultural vehicle that raise funds that are donated to education scholarships and women business development grants.

“It has always been Important that we reach outside of the walls of the church. To impact people and connect, giving them the tools to tap into their greatness and embrace their true beauty,” remarks Dr. Debra Morton, Pastor of Greater St. Stephen Ministries.

Working Outside of the Church Walls

Being a community advocate is something Greater St. Stephen is known for. They are among one of several churches in the City that are beacons of light and shining example of what the life of Christ represented. Speaking of the partnership with Cumulus and Dundas, Morton says it was a great fit that worked with what the church already does; working to uplift and empower women in the community.

“It is Women’s month at our church and when Terry Davis from CUMULUS Radio approached me about putting on this event and mentioned Tracee, who I love what she does with beauty and fashion,” states Pastor Morton with passion ringing in her voice. “This aligns perfectly with celebrating women of excellence and this is something I have been doing for 20 years; hosting events that empower women. I am proud to say this event as well as others we have had over the years that a lot of church women come from all over to be with us.”

The turnout at “Greater Glam” consisted of women from all age groups. A fact not lost on Pastor Morton, who highlights that by all measures the event was a success, “I wanted to highlight great women and those who aspire to greatness that came out to be celebrated and empowered and that was a beautiful thing to see so many Black women of all ages together celebrating and encouraging each other.”

Building Community

Terry Davis says the event aligned with the mission of CUMULUS Radio and is part of their commitment to reach out to the community. “The collaborative between the partnership of Greater St. Stephen and Cumulus Radio open the door to this concept. After participating with Greater St. Stephen on other initiatives, I shared an idea, with our Regional VP Patrick Galloway, on the importance of women’s events and how they fight their way through racism and segregation to raise their daughters and granddaughters to become educated even though they didn’t have those opportunities themselves. They were strong forever. And these are women to be honored as well for their courage and dedication making the sacrifices and inspiring the next generation of women for greatness.”

Other Amazing Women honored included; Dr. Kya Robottom, Founder of The Robottom Foundation, whose mission is to mentor pre-teen and teenage young women in New Orleans. Leona Tate, Founder of the Leona Tate Foundation for Change, where the mission is to educate young people on the lessons of Civil Rights to help build social equality in today’s society.

Lauren Perry, Executive Director of the Beautiful Foundation, where their mission is to provide a safe environment for leadership development for underserved young women in the community. Ariel Wilson, Founder of The Orchid Society. A professional women’s organization focused on mentoring, community service and social awareness. Patricia Watson, Executive Pastor of Watson Teaching Ministries and Executive Director of the Family Center of Hope Educational and Social Services.
Gov. Edwards Orders Flags at Half-Staff for Sen. John McCain

BATON ROUGE – Today, Gov. John Bel Edwards ordered flags of the United States and the State of Louisiana to be flown at half-staff over the State Capitol and all state buildings until sunset on Sunday, September 2, 2018 in honor of American patriot and hero U.S. Senator John McCain.

“Sen. McCain lived an exemplary life in service to his family, state and nation,” said Gov. Edwards. “After volunteering for duty in Vietnam, McCain’s plane was shot down and he was held captive for more than five years at Hoa Loa prison in North Vietnam. Determined to continue a life of public service, once he returned home, he went on to represent Arizona in Congress for 35 years. Sen. McCain established himself as a great statesman, one who pushed to reform the tobacco industry, campaign finance and he cast the decisive vote to prevent the repeal of Medicaid Expansion, which has provided health care coverage for more than 470,000 Louisianans. He leaves behind a lasting legacy of staying true to one’s principles and putting country over politics. Donna and I ask Louisianans to join us in prayer for his devoted wife, Cindy and their family.”

New Orleans Sailor Serves in Black Sea Aboard USS Carney

BLACK SEA (Aug. 13, 2018) Gunner’s Mate 3rd Class Karen Handy, from New Orleans, stands watch on the starboard bridge wing of the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Carney (DDG 64) Aug. 13, 2018. Carney, forward-deployed to Rota, Spain, is on its fifth patrol in the U.S. 6th Fleet area of operations in support of regional allies and partners as well as U.S. national security interests in Europe and Africa. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Ryan U. Kiedzik/Released)
Greater Glam 2018

Photos by Glenn Summers
Data News Weekly Contributor

The Greater St. Stephen Ministries community project Greater Glam 2018 took place on Saturday August 25, 2018 and featured an Empowerment Day Session and Fashion Show Experience. Greater Glam 2018 is the inspiration of Dr. Debra B. Morton in collaboration with fashion leader Tracee Dundas Creative Director of New Orleans Fashion Week and Cumulus Radio New Orleans. Didn’t the ladies look amazing? Of course they did and of course, Data was there!
Chelsey Napoleon Fundraiser

George Bordenave gave a get together fundraiser for Candidate Chelsey Napoleon running for Clerk of Civil District Court at his home. The fundraiser was held on Saturday, August 25, 2018. It was well attended. Data News Weekly was there!!!

Visit www.ladatanews.com for more photos from these events
Secretary Devos’ Plan to Arm Teachers

There are apparently unions that are standing by the…”

Bill Fletcher, Jr. is a talk show host, writer and activist. Follow him on Twitter @BillFletcherJr, Facebook and at www.billfletcherjr.com.

Is Trump Looking Out for American Workers?

Congresswoman Frederica S. Wilson is a fourth-term Congresswoman from Florida representing parts of Northern Miami-Dade and Southeast Broward counties. A former state legislator and school principal, she is the founder of the 5000 Role Models for Excellence Project, a mentoring program for young males at risk of dropping out of school. Congresswoman Wilson also founded and chairs the Florida Ports Caucus, a bipartisan taskforce that coordinates federal action in support of Florida’s harbors and waterways. The Florida lawmaker sits on the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee and the Education and Workforce Committee.

This may seem strange, but there are apparently unions that feel that President Donald Trump’s policies on trade are in the interests of workers in the United States. I am a bit perplexed.

If you leave aside for a moment the horrendous assaults that Trump and his Republican allies have been conducting against American workers and their unions, it is still difficult to see how Trump’s views on trade are helping American workers.

Let’s look at the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) for a moment. Trump has repeatedly suggested that the U.S.—as a nation—has been the principal victim of NAFTA, that it has turned out to be less than true. Workers in the U.S., Canada and Mexico have all been victimized by NAFTA. For instance, NAFTA destroyed Mexican agriculture, and forced a massive migration of Mexican farmers into the cities of Mexico and later to the U.S. Many U.S. manufacturing plants have closed and gone to border areas of northern Mexico where the workers are underpaid. Canadian companies have left Ontario and moved to the U.S. in search of cheaper labor.

What does Trump say about this? Nothing, as a matter of fact. Instead he acts as if the people of these other countries are out to carve up the U.S. the way that you carve a turkey at Thanksgiving.

This leads to another question. If Trump is squeezing U.S. workers through his judicial appointments, destruction of worker and environmental regulations, and siding with the corporate “Right” against workers, why would anyone assume that in dealing with NAFTA negotiations or negotiations with China that he would be particularly concerned about the interests of U.S. workers? I suppose that I look at this way. If the neighborhood bully regularly assaults me and then one day comes to me and says that “we” should join together against some people on another block, why would I believe them? In fact, why would I believe that my interests and those of the bully are all at aligned?

Bill Fletcher, Jr. is a talk show host, writer and activist. Follow him on Twitter @BillFletcherJr, Facebook and at www.billfletcherjr.com.
Out with the Old, In with a New Understanding to Improve SCD Care

Ask Dr. Kevin

Dr. Kevin Williams
Chief Medical Officer, Pfizer Rare Disease Unit

With National Sickle Cell Awareness Month just next month, I’ve been thinking a lot about the challenges that people with sickle cell disease (SCD) face and what can be done to make a meaningful change in their care.

Evolution of the science behind SCD has advanced in recent years, resulting in a new understanding of the disease. However, this knowledge is not commonplace among individuals living with SCD and their healthcare professionals. As with any disease, better understanding and awareness of the condition is the foundation for improvement in appropriate and timely care. Recently, the Sickle Cell Disease Council For CHANGE (CFC) has set their sights on raising awareness of the expanded science behind the disease among patients, their families, and healthcare professionals. The CFC, a group convened by Pfizer and inclusive of more than 20 experts, advocates, and patients working to improve care for SCD patients, is looking at this issue as part of a recently released report called “Improving Vaso-occlusive Crisis (VOC) Management.” In the report, the CFC explains how the understanding of SCD has evolved through the years, and outlines recommendations for how to get this information into the hands of those who can use it—healthcare professionals, emergency department staff, and people living with SCD—to make a positive change and improve patient care.

Here is an overview of what the CFC found, which is outlined in the report:

The Expanded Science Behind the Disease

Let’s start at the beginning. A common (and somewhat outdated) view of SCD is that complications from the disease are caused by a simple “plumbing malfunction.” In other words, it is only the sickled red blood cells that clump together and cause blockages in blood vessels that lead to pain and organ damage.

Now it has been understood that the underlying science is more complex than this.

Recent breakthroughs in the understanding of SCD have shown in fact that the vaso-occlusion (or blocking of minute blood vessels involving multiple pathways and different types of blood cells), is a key factor underlying all of the different manifestations of the disease.

In SCD, these rigid, crescent-shaped cells have difficulty passing through small blood vessels and irritate the internal lining of these vessels. This causes the lining of blood vessels to become “sticky,” and as a result, not only the red blood cells, but also white blood cells and platelets clump together. This can further contribute to obstructions in blood flow and inflammation. These events can occur even when there are no outward signs or symptoms, ultimately causing several of the complications seen with SCD.

Other factors that contribute to vaso-occlusion may include stress, the thickness of a person’s blood, as well as infection or conditions that commonly trigger a painful crisis.

The most common symptom of vaso-occlusion is the pain crises (or vaso-occlusive crisis – VOC). VOC is the cardinal manifestation of SCD and is often thought of synonomously with SCD.

In addition, there is an increasing awareness of another SCD complication—one that is often overlooked: chronic pain. VOCs are sudden, intense episodes of pain, while chronic pain, especially for older adolescents and adults, is defined as ongoing pain that has been regularly present over a period of the past six months.

What makes it more complicated? People with SCD can experience VOCs while also suffering from chronic pain. And while VOCs are routinely treated with opioid medications, chronic pain should be managed separately and with a different approach. Ongoing, long-term use of opioids can lead to drug tolerance, which causes people with SCD to require higher doses. However, according to the report, considering alternative pain relief options when appropriate, along with regular reassessment of medication use and dose, may be helpful in minimizing this issue.

Getting the Word Out

It is great news that the understanding of the science of SCD has evolved, but it is important to make sure that the right people, especially patients and their doctors, are aware that SCD is far more complex than being just a disease of red blood cells in order to make a meaningful difference.

Armed with this information, individuals living with SCD and their healthcare professionals better understand and explain the varied symptoms an individual can have. They can make more informed treatment decisions for their SCD patients, and people with SCD can be empowered to advocate for better care. Additionally, this new understanding of SCD among both healthcare professionals and patients can lead to better communication and more positive interactions in the future.

The time for change is now, and the CFC is working to get the word out about the urgency around improved care for SCD. Learn more about the Council here and read their first report here.

The next Ask Dr. Kevin article will be available this fall. Until then, join the conversation and find out more information about SCD at oneSCDvoice.com, a collaborative platform that provides access to resources designed to increase knowledge, provide emotional support, and help empower people living with SCD. Sign up for free today.

Dr. Kevin Williams is the Chief Medical Officer for Rare Disease at Pfizer. He pursued medicine after being inspired by his father’s work as a general practitioner in his hometown of Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Dr. Kevin is passionate about raising awareness and increasing understanding of rare diseases, such as sickle cell disease, in the African American community. You can follow Pfizer on Facebook and Twitter.
Jay Z, Beyoncé Awarding $1M in Scholarships to ‘Exceptional’ High School Students

By Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Newswire Contributor

Popular music’s most powerful couple continue to make power moves. Hip-hop superstar Jay Z and his wife, Beyoncé, have announced a new scholarship program that will award 10 scholarships worth $100,000 each to “exceptional” high school seniors who demonstrate financial needs.

The award will serve as a dedicated university-based fund for each selected student throughout the duration of the student’s enrollment, according to a news release.

“This back to school season, students in the On The Run II Tour markets, who are preparing for college, will be chosen by Boys and Girls Club of America,” according to a joint press release from Beyoncé’s “BeyGOOD Initiative” and Jay Z’s “The Shawn Carter Foundation.”

“Qualified students must demonstrate academic excellence and show financial needs that would make it hard for them to enter college, will be chosen by Boys and Girls Club of America, according to a joint press release from Beyoncé’s “BeyGOOD Initiative” and Jay Z’s “The Shawn Carter Foundation.”

“Qualified students must demonstrate academic excellence and show financial needs that would make it hard for them to enter college or university for the academic year 2018-2019,” the release noted.

The markets will include Atlanta, Orlando, Miami, Arlington, Texas; New Orleans, Houston, Phoenix, Los Angeles, San Diego, Santa Clara, and Seattle.

The power couple have had a long history of helping students, with the Shawn Carter Foundation spearheading college tours to historically black colleges and universities and providing scholarships to college-bound students throughout the country.

Through her BeyGOOD initiative, Beyoncé created the Formation Scholars Award, a merit program to help female students start or further their college education, and this year they announced the Homecoming Scholars Award, a second merit program, opened to qualified students, regardless of gender, to enter or continue their studies at one of eight HBCUs.

In May, Jordan Davis decided to apply for the BeyGOOD scholarship but said doubted he would receive the award. About a month later, he got the news. The Plano native was one of the eight finalists who had won the inaugural scholarship sponsored by Beyoncé and Google.

“I was so ecstatic,” Davis told the Houston Chronicle. “It was a dream come true. It almost felt like Beyoncé had chosen me.”

Homecoming Scholars was inspired by Beyoncé’s performance at the 2018 Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival. Beyoncé, the first black woman to be its headline performer, referenced HBCUs throughout her performance that incorporated a 100-piece all-black marching band and song selection.

“The show, with its homage to excellence in education, was a celebration of the homecoming weekend experience, the highest display of college pride,” according to a news release.

“The energy-filled production put the spotlight on art and culture, mixing the ancient and the modern, which resonated masterfully through the marching band, performance art, choir, and dance. It was the impetus to mark her second scholarship program.”

As a part of the scholarship application, students were required to submit a 1,000-word essay about “one African or African-American thought leader in their field who has inspired them to achieve their goals.”

In addition to maintaining a GPA of 3.5 or higher, he volunteers for Habitat for Humanity and is a member of TSU Honors College Enrichment, the Urban Gardening program, Intervarsity Christian Fellowship, and is also a counselor for Young Life Christian Fellowship.

Davis said he is grateful because of the financial benefit for him to pursue a degree in organizational leadership and development.

“This scholarship took off the pressure to get loans or additional funds,” Davis said.

“A master’s degree is not cheap and this makes the gap smaller.”

Jay Z and Beyoncé’s OTRII Tour reportedly has grossed more than $150 million.

“And, they’re giving back in a large way,” superfan Nolan Crenshaw said.
NNPA Official Statement on the Passing of Senator John McCain

"John McCain's integrity and courage were his greatest virtues. His national leadership example is still needed today not only in the U.S. Senate, but also in every state, city and town across America."

Washington, DC, August 27, 2018 — The National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA) extends sincerest condolences to the family of Senator John McCain. Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis Jr, President and CEO of the NNPA emphasized, “John McCain's integrity and courage were his greatest virtues. His national leadership example is still needed today not only in the U.S. Senate, but also in every state, city and town across America.”

Dorothy Leavell, Chairman of the NNPA and publisher of the Crusader Newspapers, stated, “The death of Senator John McCain reminds us that none of us are immortal, but his life was one of service and love for his country. Giving of one’s service until the end speaks volumes of his integrity and he fulfilled the call from our maker to be of service to others.”

Clyves Campbell III, former Chairman of the NNPA and publisher of the Arizona Informant observed, “Senator John McCain will be remembered in the African American community of Arizona as a national statesman who grew and evolved particularly in his later years as an elected official who transcended partisan politics and who eventually did what he thought was the right thing to do rather than to be confined to political party loyalty. That is why he voted pivotally to save the Affordable Care Act (Obamacare) at a time when most Republicans were voting to end the ACA.”

“His acts of service in war, where he was held captive, and then at home, was one of dignity, respect and care in the United States Senate far surpassing many others in similar circumstances,” concluded Leavell. “Above all, he put partisanship aside to make decisions that were in the best interest of all of the citizens of the United States and usually without much fanfare. We shall remember him and miss his brand of high character in the Senate. We add our condolences to his family and our country as a whole. Rest in peace (RIP) dear Senator.”

On Monday morning in Arizona, Senator John McCain’s former campaign manager Rick Davis, acting as a spokesperson for the Mc Cain family, read aloud the text of the late senator's final letter to the public. “These are John’s words,” he said. What follows is a transcription of what Davis read:

My fellow Americans, whom I have gratefully served for 60 years, and especially my fellow Arizonians, thank you for the privilege of serving you, and for the rewarding life that service in uniform and in public office has allowed me to lead. I've tried to serve our country honorably. I've made mistakes, but I hope my love for America will be weighed favorably against them. I've often observed that I am the luckiest person on Earth. I feel that way even now, as I prepare for the end of my life. I've loved my life, all of it. I've had experiences, adventures, friendships, enough for 10 satisfying lives, and I am so thankful. Like most people, I have regrets. But I would not trade a day of my life in good or bad times for the best day of anybody else’s.

I owe this satisfaction to the love of my family. One man has never had a more loving wife or children he was prouder of than I am of mine. And I owe it to America to be connected to America’s causes: Liberty, equal justice, and respect for the dignity of all people brings happiness more sublime than life's fleeting pleasures. Our identities and sense of worth were not circumscribed, but are enlarged by serving good causes bigger than ourselves.

Fellow Americans, that association has meant more to me than any other. I lived and died a proud American. We are citizens of the world’s greatest republic, a nation of ideals, not blood and soil. We are blessed and are a blessing to humanity when we uphold and advance those ideals at home and in the world. We have helped liberate more people from tyranny and poverty than ever before in history, and we have acquired great wealth and power in the progress.

We weaken our greatness when we confuse our patriotism with tribal rivalries that have sown resentment and hatred and violence in all the corners of the globe. We weaken it when we hide behind walls, rather than tear them down; when we doubt the power of our ideals, rather than trust them to be the great force for change they have always been.

We are 325 million opinionated, vociferous individuals. We argue and compete and sometimes even vilify each other in our raucous public debates. But we have always had so much more in common with each other than in disagreement. If only we remember that and give each other the benefit of the presumption that we all love our country, we will get through these challenging times. We will come through them stronger than before, we always do. Ten years ago I had the privilege to concede defeat in the election for president, I want to end my farewell to you with heartfelt faith in Americans that I felt so powerfully that evening, I feel it powerfully still.

Do not despair of our present difficulties. We believe always in the promise and greatness of America because nothing is inevitable here. Americans never quit, we never surrender, we never hide from history. We make history. Farewell fellow Americans, God bless you, and God bless America.
