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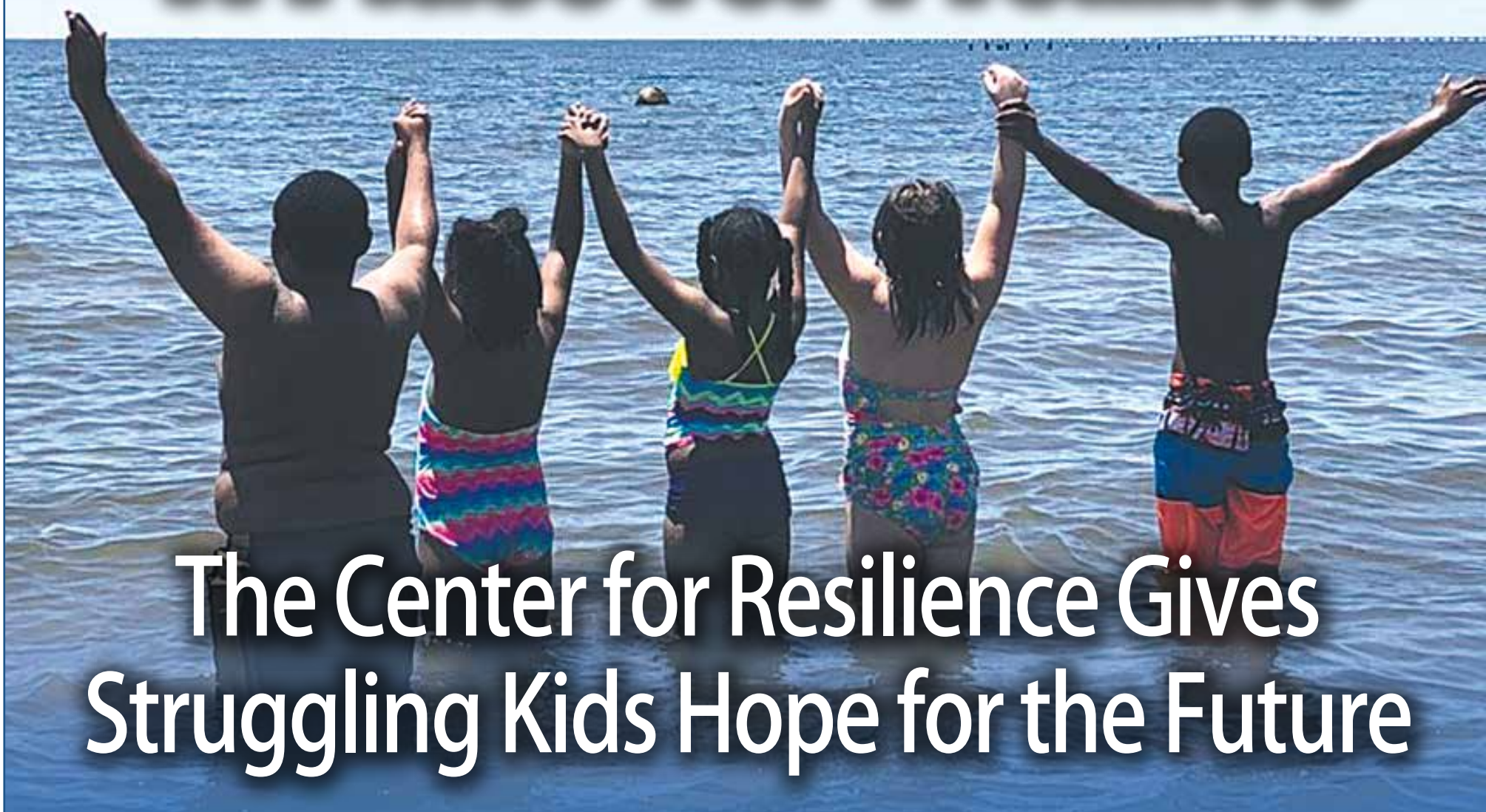
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A Data News Weekly Exclusive

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A Place For Hope

The Center For Resilience



By Renetta Burrell Perry

According to a 2015 survey of children in the City of New Orleans between the ages of 10-16, it was found that close to 40 percent had witnessed first-hand some form of violence, whether community or domestic, and many (around 18 percent) had witnessed a murder. Sadly, over half of the children surveyed had endured

the pain of having someone close to them murdered. Though extremely disturbing, these statistics represent a hotbed of psycho-societal issues that run rampant throughout our schools and plague our children. In an ideal world, these issues would be recognized early-on, assessed and treated, leaving children with the skills and fortitude to move on and focus solely on their futures. However, in a city the size of New

Orleans where resources are grossly underweight in comparison to these societal ills, the pendulum swings in a much different direction. Enter the Center for Resilience, an innovative, pioneering school designed in response to the lack of out-of-school intensive support for children with tremendous emotional and behavioral challenges.

Starting out over four years ago as the New Orleans

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DATA NEWS WEEKLY

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Therapeutic Day Program, the Center for Resilience partners with Tulane University Medical School Department of Child and Adolescent Psychology and is a non-profit organization operating with funding from the Orleans Parish Schools (who are their main contract for students) and philanthropic donations. The school is the only one of its kind in the State of Louisiana, providing services to children who are referred by their home schools. Students receive all of the services on site and as a result, receive academic services with teachers, counseling services, sessions with individual therapists and daily group therapy. In addition, if families opt into it, children can also receive all of their medication management through the medical director who is an on-site psychiatrist. Children spend their entire day at the school and the goal is to build the skills



necessary for them to transition back to their home school.

“Love, But not Tough Love”

The feeling that children attending the Center for Resilience are in capable and caring hands, is overwhelming as Liz Marcell Williams, Ed.D and CEO brings her extensive wealth of knowledge and experiences as a former special education teacher to the Center where she says “we are about love, but not tough love.” Describing a typical day in the Center as opposed to a regular school setting, she says, “we focus on healing and wellness. We think that healthy relationships are the cornerstone to that, so we’ve intentionally created an environment that is built on unconditional, positive regard for our children. This is a place where it is ok to have mistakes and to fail and to have a fresh start the next day. So, we’re a non-punitive organization. We implement exclusively restorative practices as the quote/unquote consequences for behavior. And we believe that children do well if they can, so we’re about thinking of what their learning skills are and how we can address those so we can build

up the skills necessary so that they can go back to their home schools and be successful in that setting.”

Williams describes the typical protocol for students and parents who have been referred to the school and how many of them who have become numb to the violence that surrounds them, need deep probing into the layers of issues that ultimately lead to behavioral problems. She uses the “iceberg metaphor” when describing this, saying, “not a lot of our kids here have true mental illness, but they have psycho-social stressors. We use the iceberg metaphor all the time around here. Oftentimes in the school’s conceptualization of behavior you’re looking at the stuff that you can see above the water, if you’re thinking of an iceberg: cursing, running around the school building, not completing work, getting into fights with other kids or with adults, difficulty building friendships; these are the reasons that kids get referred here.” Explaining her school’s approach, she adds, “in a therapeutic setting where we have a clinical and a medical staff who are able to do psycho-social assessments, do family histo-



Liz Marcell Williams, Ed.D, CEO, Center for Resilience.

ries, we start to understand what’s behind those behaviors. So, going back to that metaphor - what’s all the stuff underneath the iceberg.”

“And we find certainly that we’re able to do accurate diagnoses whether there is anxiety present or depression...and we’re able to understand those things and we’re also able to get into this child’s experiences. So, we say all the time here, unsurprisingly, not a lot of our kids here have true mental illness, but they have psycho-social stressors, exposure to community or domestic violence, or victims of those things themselves, multiple incidents over time so they have really chronic stress. There are kids who have lost loved ones, whether

it’s due to violence or long-term incarceration, there’s a caregiver that means a lot to them who is no longer with them so there’s a lot of grief that they’re dealing with. And we’re able to really start thinking about how to address those behaviors. And we’re also able as a small setting to ignore some of the stuff that’s really hard to ignore in a school setting.”

Few Resources - Huge Need

In a city where close to 40 percent of its young children have witnessed violent crimes, including murder, it is curious that the Center is the only one of its kind. When asked about her opinion on this,

Williams says, “I think there are a number of answers to that question. Certainly there was a move to privatize healthcare in our state which meant that a lot of the programs that had been state run were shut down and a lot of the state run programs were addressing needs that had been identified like behavioral health, that certainly was the issue with NOAH (New Orleans Adolescent Hospital) and some of the programs at Southeast Hospital and things like that. So, I think that’s one reason. Another reason is we struggle to attract mental health providers because as a state we have one of the lowest Medicaid reimbursement rates and that’s a challenge that we see.” She adds, “when you look at agencies that are doing very comparable work in other states and other cities, they are able to come close to a sustainable operating budget through Medicaid revenue and through charging their local school district and we have the challenge of figuring out what a funding model looks like in a decentralized system of schools on top of the lower Medicaid reimbursement rates.” Williams continues her assessment, adding that the lower Medicaid reimbursement rates and eligibility requirements are a deterrent for many professionals in the industry, therefore stifling the variety of mental healthcare options in the city. She explains, “it is true that we have a lot of professionals who do mental health work, but we don’t have a real variety of the types of services that are offered. So there’s a proliferation of mental health agencies that do the community based services like seeing a child in their home or at their school twice a week, but when you have a child that exceeds that level of care and for whom those things aren’t making a difference then we really don’t have options except for a medical placement in a psychiatric residential treatment facility and we don’t have any of those in Orleans Parish. So sometimes parents won’t even consider that as an option. And for some kids that’s too restrictive of a placement. We have this huge gap between the community services and then the hospital placement.”

Results Driven

When asked about the success of her school, it is clear to see the abundance of pride for the tremendous accomplishments she, her staff and the children have been rewarded with. “We track a whole lot of data around here and we’ve served over 60 students since we first launched. We have children leave the program for a

Cover Story, Continued on page 9.

Business Meets Chess & Kids Tournament

Photos by Maureen and David Grimaud

Data Staff Writers The first quarterly Business Meets Chess and Kids Tournament took place at last week's meeting an arousing expression of appreciation from both the business professionals as well as the kids who participated. The event brought together volunteers from the business world, along with kids from area schools, in a quest to have them mentor and groom the youth in the game of chess and life. The mission of Chess NOLA is to build the community through chess, one move at a time. The date of the next meeting will be released at a later date. For more information on how to become a part of the initiative, call: Ken Mask (504) 908-0337.



Above: Left to right: winners of the tournament are flanked by Michael Shultz, left and David Grimaud, President, South Carolina Chess Association. Upper Right: David Grimaud and chess tournament winner.



Pipeline To the People Reboot

How Do You Feel About the New Orleans Pelicans Winning the NBA Draft Lottery?

Edwin Buggage Editor

Welcome to Pipeline to the People. We are excited to re-introduce the popular column where we gauge the pulse of the community regarding pertinent issues and matters of importance, influence and interest.

People are celebrating and buzzing around the Crescent City, where recently the New Orleans Pelicans won the NBA Draft Lottery and will get the number one pick in the upcoming NBA Draft. Data News Weekly went out to engage the community's reaction on this potentially game-changing news.

Tyra Barabino:
Actress and Writer

"Getting the number one pick, and potentially Zion Williamson is exactly what the City and the Pelicans need-



Tyra Barabino

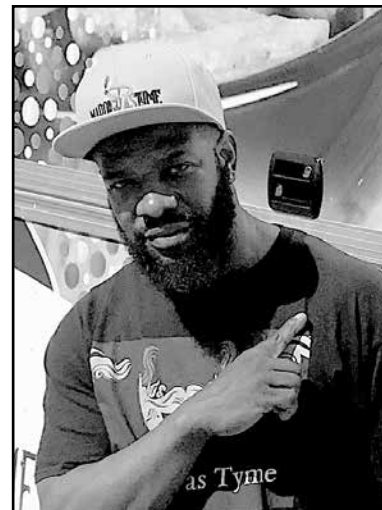
ed. Especially with the Pelicans being on the brink of losing the former number one player Anthony Davis, this will put the team back on track to compete with the best of the best teams in the NBA, as well as give the



Charlie Tenner

team a much-needed spark for next year's season."

Charlie Tenner: Culture Bearer, Comanche Hunter's Spyboy -



Craig Jones

Mardi Gras Indian

"I believe the Pelicans are gonna be a good team with or without Anthony Davis. In the second half of this season the Pelicans played hard with the pieces they had. With them

gaining the 1st pick of the 2019 NBA draft, that's gonna make the Pelicans more dangerous and more competitive in the next few years."

Craig Jones: Owner of Mardi Gras Tyme Food Truck and Catering

"New Orleans has been known as a football town with the Saints, but with the Pelicans having the number one pick in the upcoming NBA draft we can invest in making the Pelicans a winning team. The ownership in Gayle Benson is bringing in top management to help the franchise on this mission and with them most likely drafting Zion Williamson will create fan excitement. It is something not only great for the Pelicans Organization, but for the citizens of the City and those who continue to love and support New Orleans and our rich culture and heritage."

The Port of New Orleans Receives Equity Ally Award

Edited by Data Staff Writers

The Port of New Orleans (Port NOLA) received the Equity Ally Award recognizing the Port's efforts to provide access to new opportunities for women and minority entrepreneurs. Tiffany Carter, Director of Procurement, accepted the award on behalf of Port NOLA at the Good Work Network's Annual Meeting Friday, May 17th at Audubon Zoo.

"The Port of New Orleans strives to be inclusive working with and promoting local and small businesses while growing the global economy through our gateway," said Brandy D. Christian, President and CEO of Port NOLA and CEO of New Orleans Public Belt Railroad (NOPB). "This award validates the success of our procurement department's initiatives such as the Small Business Contracting Program, and it allows us to continue to move forward in the right direction."

The Port's Small Business Contracting Program is designed to develop mutually valuable professional relationships with local and small businesses to increase the number of small businesses, including minority-owned, women-owned, disadvantaged firms and service-disabled veteran-owned businesses applying and competing for Port contracts.

During fiscal years 2016 through 2018, more than \$6 million was spent with minority and women-owned businesses. During the current fiscal year, Port NOLA has already spent more than \$5.6 million in small business contracts.




The Port of New Orleans (Port NOLA) received the Equity Ally Award recognizing the Port's efforts to provide access to new opportunities for women and minority entrepreneurs. Tiffany Carter, Director of Procurement, accepted the award on behalf of Port NOLA at the Good Work Network's annual meeting Friday, May 17 at Audubon Zoo.

As a part of the Port's procurement objectives, the team continues to increase the proportion of funds spent with qualified local and small business firms in construction, professional services, goods and services.

"The inclusion, growth and promotion of minority and women-owned businesses is one of my personal commitments and priorities that is shared by the entire Board of Commissioners," said Arnold Baker, Chairman of the Board of Commissioners of the Port of New Orleans. "The generation of small business wealth creates a greater number of personal options; which makes individuals

more apt to make better personal decisions; which in turn leads to larger and more frequent personal successes diminishing socioeconomic initiated challenges reflected by acts of crime, abuse and hopelessness. Local and small businesses are a critical part of creating economic vitality in the region and of our success to keep Port NOLA competitive and strong."

"We know that strong economies are inclusive economies," said Good Work Executive Director Hermione Malone in a letter to Port NOLA. "Organizations like the Port have made an evidenced commitment of that belief through proactive engagement with women and minority-owned firms. The fruits of that work can be seen in contract opportunities awarded and growth in business revenues."



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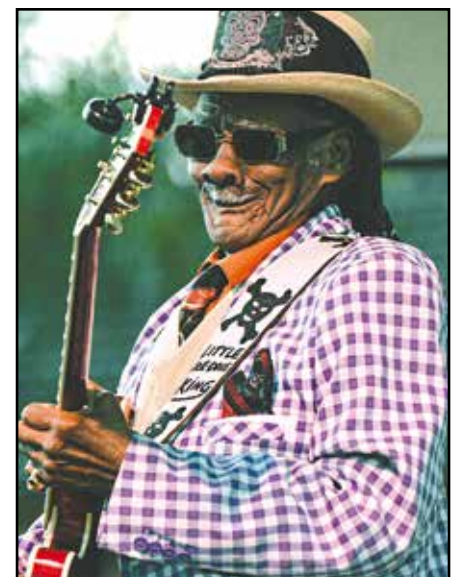
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Fun on the Bayou!

Photos by Kichea Burt
Data News Contributor

Bayou Boogaloo 2019 opened last Friday, May 17th and culminated on Sunday after being forced to delay for 2 hours due to persistent, heavy thunderstorms. But gray skies turned blue, giving festival goers carte blanche to party and have fun on the Bayou, and Data was there to take in all of the culture!



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

Nicole's Hawaiian Celebration 2019

By June Hazeur
Data News Contributor
Photos by Terry Jones

Nicole Carter held her traditional Hawaiian Birthday Celebration on Saturday, May 18, 2019 at The Prime Example. As usual there was lots of food, fun and alcohol flowing, and the Zulu Social and Pleasure Club members were a part of the celebration. Everyone had a great time and Data News Weekly was there!!!



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

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Rebuilding Mazant Royal is the Only way to Put Housing First



Andreanecia Morris
Executive Director,
HousingNOLA

In 2007, the New Orleans City Council voted to begin a massive overhaul of New Orleans Public Housing Developments by approving the demolition of four public housing sites. That contentious vote was unanimous, and it was done in the hope that the Housing Authority of New Orleans (HANO) could do better by the families it serves. As a city, we resolved to do better by our citizens—this obligates us to

a path where we must seize every opportunity to create safe and decent public housing.

That obligation is why HousingNOLA and our sister organization, the Greater New Orleans Housing Alliance (GNOHA) support HANO's efforts to redevelop the former Mazant Royal site. This long-awaited effort represents 136 new apartments, creating Affordable Housing opportunities for people making as little as \$13,800. The average household income levels in Bywater have doubled since the year 2000 (\$38,240 to \$62,418), completely out of pace with the average income for the rest of Orleans Parish. This neighborhood is also still missing almost 1,500 people who called it home before Hurricane Katrina. The development team is proposing

to build 82 homes and apartments for families at or below the average median income for New Orleans. This will give families and individuals who have been pushed out of the Bywater the chance to once again live in a neighborhood ripe with job opportunities, reliable transit options and commerce.

Since that fateful vote in 2007, HANO has created 3,347 new housing units at eight sites, a mix of subsidized units (traditional public housing, project-based vouchers, low-income housing tax credit units) at market rate units and first-time homeownership opportunities. Over the past 14 years, approximately \$1 billion has been spent across New Orleans rebuilding public housing sites. Much has been accomplished with a mix of financing

tools, but now New Orleans is facing an unprecedented affordability crisis. HANO must be able to honor its commitment to our continued recovery despite a decline in redevelopment resources and the ending of disaster funding. This financial reality makes the HANO Scattered Sites an integral component in the strategy to meet the Affordable Housing needs of New Orleans.

The value of New Orleans' rich history is within its people, not its buildings. We need developers to rebuild on scattered sites exactly like Mazant Royal so our artists, culture bearers and work force can once again return to the places they called home. It is imperative that ITEX and HANO be allowed to proceed so that the New Orleanians, who were first displaced by Hurricane Katrina and then by a real es-

tate boom that is wholly unsupported, can return to it. Neighborhoods like the Bywater need stabilization that can only occur when the "missing middle" is given the chance to return and once again have the opportunity to live and thrive. If the New Orleans City Council yields to NIMBY rhetoric and denies this proposal, it will make future scattered site developments on HANO owned property vulnerable to that kind of resistance as well. This has the unintended consequences of further jeopardizing our ability to produce affordable units required to meet the rapidly growing need in our city. In short, the City Council will be reneging on the promise it made when it pledged to redevelop public housing for the people of New Orleans. We must Put Housing First and approve the redevelopment of Mazant Royal.

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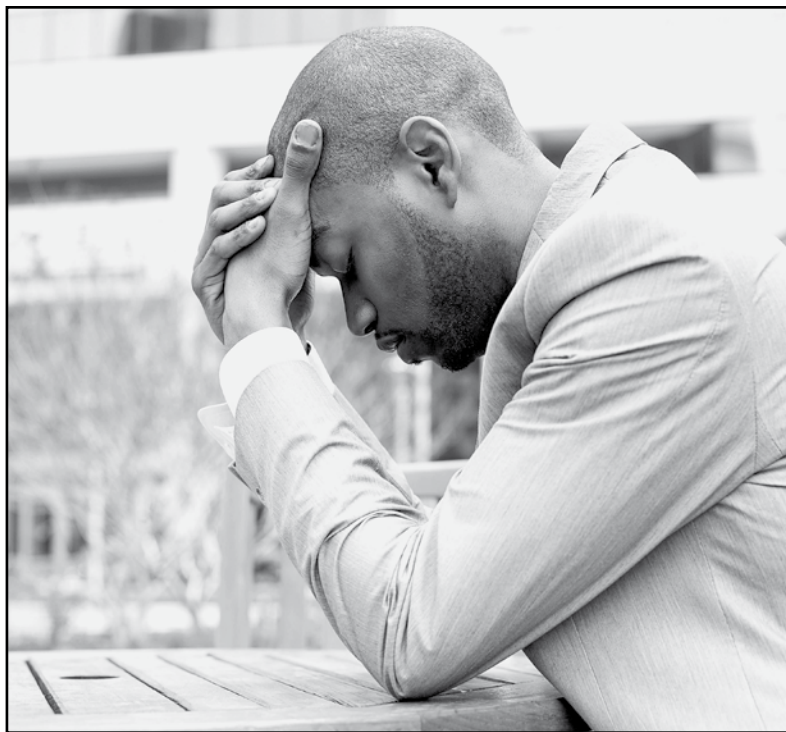
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May is Mental Health Month

Cory Watkins
Divisional Director,
The Jason Foundation, Inc.

May is Mental Health Awareness Month, an annual observance designed to increase awareness about mental health and mental illness. According to Mental Health America (MHA), adolescent depression is increasing at an alarming rate and recent studies show that as many as one in five teen suffers from clinical depression. The latest CDC Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance Survey (YRBS), shows that in Louisiana 31.7% of high school students answered they have experienced the feeling of hopelessness and sadness for a constant period of two weeks or greater during the past 12 months (possible beginning of clinical depression).



Good mental health is essential to overall health and personal well-being. It also contributes to the ability to lead a healthy, balanced and productive life. Emotional problems can impair a person's thinking, feelings, and behavior and, overtime, can become increasingly serious and disabling. Unfortunately, many people do not seek treatment for mental health issues for a number of reasons. They may not be completely aware of the extent of their problem, they may be hesitant to make contact with a mental health professional because they fear they will be stigmatized, or they may not know how to access services. Yet, overall the quality of life is greatly improved when a person with a mental health concern or problem seeks help and

receives appropriate treatment from a qualified professional.

Numerous suicides and suicide attempts have been attributed to undiagnosed and/or under treated mental illness. For this reason, The Jason Foundation supports the efforts of Mental Health America and Mental Health Awareness Month. The Jason Foundation, Inc. (JFI) is a nationally recognized leader in youth suicide prevention and awareness and provides programs to all 50 states at no cost through their National Network of Affiliate Offices. The programs are designed to help the public recognize when a young person is struggling with thoughts of suicide and where they can go for help. To find your local JFI affiliate office, go to: <http://jasonfoundation.com/about-us/locations/>.

Cover Story, Continued from page 3.

whole host of different reasons so until this year we were only a K-8 Program. We had some children age-out, we have some children whose parents decide they want to pull them from the program and put them back in a generalized school, but of the children who complete our program and whose schools implement a transition plan, over 80 percent of them have successfully transitioned back and that was our target number. We recognized that existing in a city and a state that doesn't have that real continuum of Mental Health Services and Placements that for some kids this might be the right place for them to be for a longer period of time and that other students might need something even more intensive, so we didn't want to say that we expected a 100 percent success rate but we feel good about where we've landed and we track our parent and our partner school satisfaction rates as well, twice a year on surveys and we have about an 88% satisfaction rate with most of those partners and that has been consistent for about four years."

It is obvious that because of the tremendous impact this school has had and will have on the community the Center for Resilience is destined for a bright future. As they track their students' post-transitioning success, Williams is looking for



students to also transition into society, graduating from high school and being able to thrive in their respective adult lives. In the short term, the goal is to create successful transitioning back to their home schools. She says, "a lot of our kids come here because they don't know how to have healthy relationships. Many of them don't have really positive friendships, they don't have good social skills, peer interactions... They're not necessarily happy in a school setting. We would like to send kids back to school with the belief in themselves that they are not bad kids and an understanding of what their needs are and how

to advocate for them and then the ability to build relationships that are healthy and are supportive for them."

The Center for Resilience will move to a new home on the site of Children's Hospital in Uptown New Orleans and in the 2019-20 school year they will serve children in grades K-9. They will continue in their task to make sure all children with behavioral health needs have access to the appropriate services and placements. Adds Williams, "we can serve children from anywhere. That was another byproduct of transitioning to a non-profit, that we didn't have any restric-

tions on where a child might be coming from, however, obviously based on our funding model we need to have a contract to ensure that the services are in place. So yes, we are open to children from anywhere contingent upon that school or district's agreement to contracting for services and currently that means we contract with Orleans Parish School Board and any of the local education agencies in Orleans Parish.

For more information, visit the Center's website at: www.cfria.org

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Councilmember Cyndi Nguyen Announces Upcoming Summer Playdates Series for Local Youth

Data Staff Writers

District “E” Councilmember Cyndi Nguyen is launching a series of free playdates in her district throughout the summer months. “Summer Playdates with Councilwoman Cyndi Nguyen” was created to give children an opportunity to stay busy during their time off from school while learning key social, physical and motor skills.

Children will have the opportunity to participate in a variety of activities including arts and crafts, yoga, painting, storytelling and building, to name a few. The series will be hosted on Saturdays at the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library (1611 Caffin Ave) from 10



a.m. to noon starting June 1st and ending July 20th, and also at the Read Library (5641 R ead Blvd) on Sundays from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. starting June 2nd and ending July 21st. These events are free and open to all children in District “E” and the surrounding areas.

Summer Playdates is also an excellent way for local students to gain volunteer hours. Any student looking to obtain volunteer hours while supporting this community initiative may contact the District “E” office at (504) 658-1050 or via email at Cyndi.Nguyen@NOLA.gov.

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Black Girl Magic

Black Women Lawyers Freed 17 Inmates Serving Life Sentences, Receive Financing Assistance from Kim Kardashian

By Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Newswire

"Let's pause here to give a little credit where credit is due. Freeing 17 prisoners – all of whom were serving life sentences without parole – is impressive and commendable and the result of a campaign – 90 Days of Freedom – launched by Kardashian's attorney, Brittany K. Barnett, a black woman," Anne Branigin wrote for The Grapevine.

The Decarceration Collective's MiAngel Cody, another black female lawyer, also collaborated on the project.

"If we wanted to go back even further, it's worth knowing the viral Mic video on Alice Marie Johnson that moved Kardashian to act was facilitated by – you guessed it – a black woman, Topeka Sam," Branigin said.

Kim Kardashian, who has deservedly made headlines for helping to win the freedom of as many as 17 mostly African American prisoners who were life without parole sentences, reportedly has signed a deal with Oxygen for a documentary tentatively titled, "Kim Kardashian: The Justice Project."

The project focuses on the socialite's recent foray into criminal justice reform.

Hopefully, it will also shine a light on the African American women lawyers, like Anne Barnett, Topika Sam and MiAngel Cody, who many argue deserve the lion's share of the credit that's gone almost exclusively to Kardashian.

The Decarceration Collective is led by African American female attorneys Cody and Bella Bahhs.

It counts as a premier collective of lawyers, community organizers, and criminal justice policy consultants working to dismantle a system that privileges prisons over people.

The organization provides federal criminal defense, strategic communications and public rela-



"People set to die in prison are now free. Our clients weren't even on this selective list the Sentencing Commission sent out or on federal defenders' radars. In fact, we have copies of letters federal defenders sent some of our clients telling them they weren't even eligible for relief under the First Step Act – but we got them free. Our work in 90 days is historic. We picked some up from prison. We gave re-entry stipends. We continue to support them upon release." Said Anne Branigin. (Photo: The Decarceration Collective)

tions counsel and they serve individual, public and nonprofit clients throughout the United States.

"MiAngel Cody and I have been doing this work for free," Barnett said in a statement.

"Ask any of our dozens of clients who are now free living their best lives. Both of us left six-figure salary jobs and wiped out our own savings accounts to fund our work," she said.

"We attempted to get grants from these large foundations shelling out millions of dollars to other organizations but would not look our way because they so-called don't fund 'direct services.'"

"Our hands were full picking locks to human cages, we didn't have time to participate in glorified begging from the nonprofit industrial complex only to be turned down," she said.

Barnett explained that Kardashian "linked arms with us to support us when foundations turned us down."

"We and our clients and their families have a lot of love for [Kardashian] and are deeply grateful for her," she said.

Barnett also isn't blaming Kardashian for the media attention.

"Kim has always been very clear in her role. It's the media that spins it around – not Kim. We do not care how the media is portraying it, that's what the media does," She said.

"Who cares? We need Kim's support and the support of anyone else who wants to join this fight. We love that she is using her platform to raise awareness. We are not trying to be famous. We are trying to get our people free. Period," Barnett said.

In 90 days, the African American attorneys freed 17 people from life without parole sentences – the second-most severe penalty permitted by law in America.

"Only two of us ... Prosecutors opposed nearly every single case

we had," Barnett said.

"We litigated our asses off in federal courts across the country. We won downward departures in most of our cases due to good lawyering," she said.

Barnett continued:

"People set to die in prison are now free. Our clients weren't even on this selective list the Sentencing Commission sent out or on federal defenders' radars.

"In fact, we have copies of letters federal defenders sent some of our clients telling them they weren't even eligible for relief under the First Step Act – but we got them free.

"Our work in 90 days is historic. We picked some up from prison. We gave re-entry stipends. We continue to support them upon release."

To support the work done by the Decarceration Collective, visit their website at: www.thedecarcerationcollective.org

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Job Opportunity

Freelance Writers Wanted

Data News Weekly, "The People's Paper," is looking for freelance writers to join our team print and digital team. We want to hear from you if you are a working journalist, or an aspiring journalist who has 2 years or more of newspaper or PR writing experience. We need writers who can cover New Orleans news stories, ranging from local high school sports, community events, City Hall and entertainment. Experience in print is necessary, experience in digital and social media are encouraged.

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