Lighting The Road To The Future

Saints Star Cam Jordan Hosts 2019 Youth Football Camp

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Juan LaFonta
Fighting the Good Fight and Making the Case for a Better New Orleans

Juan LaFonta’s face is emblazoned on TV and billboards all over New Orleans. Many know him as an attorney, but some don’t know that he has been on the frontlines for almost two decades giving back to the city that’s given him so much. In addition, his story of overcoming personal obstacles to become the success he is today is one of inspiration.

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Inspiration for the Next Generation
Last year he took a group of kids to see the movie Black Panther and saw how transformative it was for them to see a Black superhero on the screen. He says of the experience, “It was great seeing how excited the kids were seeing a film that celebrated our culture and diversity. I rented out two theaters paying the kids’ admission, giving a red-carpet experience to children. It was amazing to see their eyes light up watching a positive reflection of themselves on the screen.”

LaFonta wanted to build on this idea and this summer.

Juan LaFonta is surrounded by football team members from A.L. Davis Park. When LaFonta learned team members were wearing outdated uniforms, he donated funding to help them get brand new ones.

By Edwin Buggage
Editor-In-Chief

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LaFonta, former Chair-
man of the Louisiana
Legislative Black Cau-
cus, District 96, pictured
with President Barack
Obama. During his
tenure as Chairman he
served as the lead nego-
tiator in the aftermath of
Hurricane Katrina, help-
ing secure $1.2 billion
for rebuilding efforts.

Above: LaFonta with kids striking his signature
“11 fight for you” pose.

LaFonta and his wife Shyla LaFonta.

LaFonta and a group of students attend a movie at the Broad
Theater. He sponsors “movie days” for local youth several times
per year.

is sponsoring field trips to the movies for 100-150 children for eight
weeks from various area summer camps, including some NORD camps. Kids
from YaYa, Tami’s Dance Company, First Friggin’s Baptist Church, Goal
Getters & House of Healing, Pleas-
ant Zion, SUNO’s Healthy Minds/Healthy Bodies, and Boys and Girls
Club will have the opportunity to en-
joy the movie of their choice at
The Broad Theater. “I chose to do
this because there are many people
doing great things in the community. I
also wanted to do my part, by giving
opportunities for growth and to en-
courage them to look beyond their
surroundings and realize they could
be anything they want to be in life.

He is not simply sponsoring the
kids; he is there spending
time with them; speaking with
them and helping them aspire
to reach higher. “I don’t just go
to the movies and leave them
there. I go with them, go in the
cornpop line. I think it is great
for the kids, seeing somebody
who has come out of the com-
unity and struggled who is with
them that can tell them if they
study and stay focused, they too
can become a success.”

Art from the Heart
LaFonta, in addition to being an
attorney, has an extensive back-
ground in the arts. His sister Dana
LaFonta was Director of Artist Ser-
dices for the State of Louisiana. And
as the nephew of acclaimed theater
actor, director and choreographer
Vernal Bagneris, he was exposed to
the arts at an early age and wants to
give the young people of the city that
experience as well. So, he’s part-
nered with Barry Kern and Mardi
Gras World to have an art class for
500 kids from around the New Or-
leans area. “I have a serious back-
ground in art, theatre and music. I
wanted to give children an outlet to
express themselves. I wanted them
to have that one day they can look
back and say this is where I learned
to draw… this is where I had this
great day with Mr. LaFonta and so
many other kids. We will have 22
Art teachers available throughout
the day to teach different types of
art. Several famous, local artists
from the community have agreed
to come teach the children.”

Winning on and
Off the Field
The breadth and depth of his
giving is as immense as his heart
is big and like on the billboards,
sometimes LaFonta is like a su-
perhero coming in to help those in
need. LaFonta expounds upon one
of these instances. “A cook and his
wife were carrying a football team
at A.L. Davis Park on their back…
they testified in front of City Coun-
cil to get mentors not money. They
agreed to continue using jerseys
from another park from the 80s. A
husband and wife saved up money
every year to take care of the cheer-
leaders and football players. I felt
compelled to help and contributed
monies that would help them get
jerseys. This story was featured on
WDSU.”

As someone who is committed to
giving back, he says of his dedica-
tion, “I am trying to sponsor some-
ting every quarter to get more and
more children exposure to positive
things in our culture. I feel it is my
duty to use a portion of my income
to facilitate positive experiences for
kids in the community.”

The Importance
of Supporting
Black Businesses
LaFonta is also a proponent of
supporting Black businesses. He
is also putting his money where
his mouth is by beginning an
initiative to underwrite advertis-
ing for other Black businesses.
Explaining why he launched this
he says, “More Black businesses
would advertise if they could, if
they had the capacity, but a lot of
these family businesses and Black
businesses, they are run by fam-
ily members. And when I was first
doing this, I didn’t really think
I would pay the large amounts I
pay for advertising. For a small
business oftentimes, this is so far
out of their thinking because they
have to pay a staff and take care
of family. I want to give them ac-
cess to something they normally
wouldn’t have access to and let
them have something that can
help move them along to increase
their visibility.”

Continuing he says, “The first
couple of businesses I’m spotlight-
ing really looked out for me when
I didn’t have any money and was
hungry. There were people who
opened up their doors and fed me
for free and took care of me. Fric-
es like Dunbar’s, Neyow’s, those
people are family or like family. If
I didn’t have food they said come
on by, we got food. We know you
ain’t got no money, but you’ll get it
to us when you become a lawyer –
you’re good. It’s about helping
those who help themselves. They
were helping me because I was
pushing to do better and because
of that they took care of me. So, as
I have become successful, I live by
the verse from the bible that says,
‘whom much is given, much is
required.’ Too many people forget
that.”

Helping Rebuild
New Orleans one
Brick at a Time
Today LaFonta as a private citi-
en is doing much of the work
that he began as an elected official, help-
ing bring back the city from the
destruction of Hurricane Katrina
where he served the New Orleans
community as the former Chair-
man of the Louisiana Legislative
Black Caucus, and as the former
State Representative of District 96.
In these troubling times for the city,
he served as the lead negotiator in
the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina,
resulting in 1.2 billion dollars that
were used for redevelopment, re-
pair, and new initiatives for the city
and region. This is all part of the
work he continues to do because
of the love he has for the City of
New Orleans. He is not alone in
doing great works and credits
being influenced by and getting much
needed help from family, friends,
church groups, his fraternity, Phi
Beta Sigma, his wife Shyla, who is
a constant source of love and sup-
port and most importantly God that
guides him in his mission to make
New Orleans a better place for all.

I Am My Brother’s
and Sister’s Keeper
Speaking of why others should
do what he does, LaFonta says
with passion ringing in his voice,
“God created us to love other
people and be your brother’s and
sister’s keeper. I don’t believe we
were put on this earth to make
money and just buy Gucci, Fendi
and Prada. We are put on this
earth to help other people that
are God’s children. I think when you
forget you are put here to help
others and to help your commu-
nity you miss the boat.”

LaFonta is someone who’s ex-
perienced many obstacles and
says he owes a debt of gratitude to
so many people who have helped
him along in his journey. “I have
overcome a lot in my life to be-
come who I am today. I have a lot
of people to thank, family mem-
bers extended family, and friends.
Without them I don’t know what
kind of person I would be. Those
are people who didn’t have a lot
but gave so much, offering me
half the bread they had. And
there’s no way I could have done
what I’ve done without a whole
community rallying behind me to
help me.”

Continuing, he says, “I think
that’s one of the things that’s miss-
ing in this community today, that
we’ve forgotten, is that we all stand
on the backs of those who came
here before us. And we’ve come
so far only because we’ve helped
one another. I am trying to remind
people that we need to get back to
that and this is the only way we can
become a better city.”
By Renetta Burrell Perry

The ancestors taught us that death comes in threes. We’ve seen this prophesy come into fruition over the past several weeks. On the heels of losing Leah Chase and Dr. John, New Orleans has lost yet another iconic legend.

Dave Bartholomew; master trumpeter, singer, songwriter, bandleader, producer and one of the principle architects of what we know today as Rock ‘n’ Roll died this past Sunday at the age of 100. His son Don shared in his social media post that his father was 100 years and six months old. He said his father’s body was simply tired and he tearfully lamented that Dave was a great man.

Best known as songwriter and producer for a string of Fats Domino’s 1950s/1960s epic hits “Ain’t That a Shame,” “Blue Monday,” and “Walking to New Orleans,” Bartholomew’s artistry transcended New Orleans and flowed around the musical universe, introducing a new sound that would eventually influence generations of musicians all over the world (Elton John, Paul McCartney and the Rolling Stones have all fused his work into projects of their own).

Aside from the mega collaborations between he and Domino, he penned “One Night” for Elvis Presley, “My Ding-a-Ling,” originally recorded by Bartholomew himself, then performed by Chuck Berry, “Let the Good Times Roll” for Shirley and Lee, “I Hear You Knocking” for Slim Gaillard and more. But collaborations between he and Domino yielded 65 singles on the Billboard pop chart between 1955 and 1964.

He was the recipient of numerous awards and accolades including the Grammy’s Trustees Award in 2012 and in 1991 he was inducted into the Rock ‘N’ Roll Hall of Fame as a Songwriter.

Born in Edgard, Louisiana, Bartholomew was influenced early-on by the sounds of Louis Armstrong and his father who also was a jazz trumpeter. He started off playing the tuba then the trumpet and eventually played with Joe Robicheaux and Papa Celestin. He would later inspire big named, home-grown players like Allen Toussaint and Dr. John, and many credit his Fats Domino 1949 classic hit, “The Fat Man” with being the first Rock ‘n’ Roll record.

Mayor LaToya Cantrell tweeted: “After giving the world a century of magic and putting in the hard work to create it, Dave Bartholomew has passed. It’s no understatement to say American music would sound very different without his contributions and his talent. Dave Bartholomew helped make the New Orleans sound that echoes around the world to this day. May he rest in God’s perfect peace.”

Famed New Orleanian/actor Wendell Pierce tweeted: “I heard the news this evening in London that Dave Bartholomew had died. After the shock and sadness, I feel a sense of responsibility. He created the template to leave the boundary of New Orleans and share our artistry with the world. He leaves a great legacy.” Speaking of Dave’s sophistication and ineptness as a renaissance man, he continued, “Dave Bartholomew lived in my neighborhood of Pontchartrain Park. He commuted between New Orleans and Los Angeles as easily as you catch a streetcar on St. Charles Ave. For a Black man in the 40s/50s, example he displayed a great sense of self-reliance: impressive to me as a boy.”

At press time, no funeral arrangements had been announced.
Bayou Classic Names Ambassador for 46th Annual

Sheryl Underwood Of “The Talk” Named Ambassador for The 46th Annual Bayou Classic

By Jeffrey Ory

Comedian, actress and television host Sheryl Underwood has been named an Ambassador of the upcoming 46th Annual Bayou Classic which is set to take place in November. Best known as the co-host of the Emmy-Award-Winning, CBS television-show “The Talk,” Underwood is committed to using her visibility and influence in positive ways.

The Bayou Classic, ranked as the #1 HBCU Classic in the nation, is the iconic collegiate gridiron matchup between Southern University and Grambling State University, which will take place the Saturday after Thanksgiving in the Mercedes-Benz Superdome in New Orleans. Tickets are now on sale for the 46th Annual Bayou Classic and the Greek Show & Battle of the Bands.

“It is an honor and privilege to be an Ambassador for the 46th Annual Bayou Classic – the grandaddy of all football classics,” said Sheryl Underwood, Ambassador for the 46th Annual Bayou Classic. “From our earliest beginnings we knew that higher education was the key to jobs and freedom. Our families wanted more for their children which led many to HBCUs.”

Underwood is co-host of “The Talk,” watched by an average of 5+ million viewers per day, and co-hosted the 2017, 2018 and 2019 Daytime Emmy Awards, is a much sought-after entertainer and public speaker who is described as one of the world’s brightest contemporary humorists.

Underwood is Owner and Chief Executive Officer of Pack Rat Productions, Inc. and is the 23rd International President of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc. – the only full-time entertainer to ever hold the sorority’s highest post.

Underwood will help promote the Bayou Classic nationally through channels including, all 388 affiliates of Sheryl Underwood Radio and all national media appearances. As the ambassador, Underwood will be a judge in the Annual Bayou Classic Greek Show and all eyes will be on her as she is honored and recognized during the Bayou Classic Game.

Underwood, born in Little Rock, Arkansas, joined the television show “The Talk” on CBS television for the start of season two. With Underwood at the table, “The Talk,” received its first Daytime Emmy for Best Talk Show and another Daytime Emmy for Outstanding Talk Show/Entertainment and multiple Emmy nominations. In 2017, “The Talk” received a record eight Daytime Emmy Nominations, tying with TV host Ellen DeGeneres, with Underwood and her co-hosts of “The Talk” winning Outstanding Entertainment Talk Show Hosts.

Underwood, who has received numerous awards and accolades, was named one of the 10 most influential talk show hosts on Twitter in 2012 and currently has more than one million social media followers. As part of “The Talk” hosting team, Underwood received a 2016 People’s Choice Award for “ Favorite Daytime TV Hosting Team,” a 2016 NAACP Image Award for “Outstanding Talk Series” and a 2017 Nomination in the same category and is a KJLH (Los Angeles) Proven Achiever 2018 Honoree.

“For 46 years friendships, marriages and bragging rights could be witnessed at the Bayou Classic! The Battle of the Bands...The Greek Show...The food, the fun and the game!!! The Bayou Classic welcomed everyone,” added Underwood. “The Bayou Classic Tradition lives on and with this long-term relationship we can coalesce our resources to continue to open doors for anyone who wants to realize their dreams at an HBCU!”

The 46th Annual Bayou Classic is scheduled for Saturday, November 30, 2019. The game is prefaced by other great events to celebrate HBCUs role in our education system – the BizTech Challenge (Friday), the Greek Show & Battle of the Bands (Friday), Doc Griggs 2x Around the Dome (Saturday), the Bayou Classic Parade (Saturday) and the Bayou Classic Fan Festival (Saturday).

“Sheryl is a savvy businesswoman, philanthropist and a multi-faceted, multi-media entrepreneur who is recognized as one of the most articulate, well-informed women of our time. As a fan, I am tremendously excited to have Sheryl to welcome the world to the Bayou Classic,” said Dottie Belletto, President and CEO of NOCCI. “We have a unique opportunity to continue to demonstrate Bayou Classic as the #1 HBCU Classic in the country through the channels that Sheryl provides. Her excitement is contagious and only matched by her love and admiration for HBCUs and the education it provides our young professionals.

You can “Experience the Power” of Bayou Classic now – tickets are now on sale for the 46th Annual Bayou Classic. Bayou Classic fans may also purchase tickets for the ever-popular Battle of the Bands & Greek Show to be held on Friday, November 29, 2019 in the Mercedes-Benz Superdome. Tickets, which are available on every seat.
Saints Cam Jordan Hosts 2019 Youth Football Camp

By Renetta Burrell Perry

Superstar Saints Defensive End Cam Jordan hosted the Second Annual Youth Football Camp last week at Tulane University's Yulman Stadium. The camp is designed to help local youth to develop confidence, character building and courage. Youth from the Blue Lion Karate Academy, along with other organizations, had the opportunity to get up-close-and-personal with the highly celebrated, much loved Saint.

Visit www.ladatanews.com for more photos from these events
The Uptown Swingers’ Annual Second-Line Parade

Story and photos by De’John Vanison

The Uptown Swingers hosted their Annual Second-Line Parade on Sunday, June 23rd. Their theme was “Stop The Killing, We Are One.” The Royalty Queen was Terrinika Smith “Double Trouble,” and the Grand Marshall was Wellington Ratcliff, Jr. “Skully.” Miss Big Shot was Trina and Miss Swinger was Melory. Maid Terry Smith is the Queen’s mother. The Queen’s son T’Darryl Smith also paraded.
City of New Orleans

The City of New Orleans today became one of 10 American cities that will participate in a new national initiative to identify, pilot, and measure the success of interventions to accelerate economic mobility for their residents. The work comes through a $150,000 Grant from BloombergPhilanthropies, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and Ballmer Group.

Over the next 18 months, New Orleans will engage disadvantaged youth in services that increase their employability.

“The Administration is committed to supporting the young people of New Orleans, so that they are prepared for the jobs of the future and able to achieve a higher quality of life than the generations that came before them,” said Chief Administrative Officer Gilbert Montaño. “We know that will require data- and evidence-based decision-making and we are grateful to BloombergPhilanthropies, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and the Ballmer Group for their support as we work to give young people a foot up on the career ladder.”

The defining characteristic of the American Dream is upward mobility, but new data from Opportunity Insights shows that the current generation’s chances of earning more than their parents are declining. In many communities, young people and families face significant barriers to climbing the economic ladder based on the neighborhoods in which they live.

The new national initiative, supported by BloombergPhilanthropies, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and Ballmer Group, seeks to respond to the strong demand among local leaders for new, more effective interventions to address rising income inequality and declining economic mobility. In BloombergPhilanthropies’ 2018 American Mayors Survey – the largest comprehensive public-opinion survey of mayors and city managers – one of their top concerns was the challenge of providing more and better economic opportunities for all residents.

New Orleans was selected through a competitive process that looked at local commitment to addressing economic mobility, willingness to use data and evidence to accelerate progress, and ability to dedicate a team to accomplish the initiative’s goals. The initiative is supported by a $12 million investment from BloombergPhilanthropies, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and Ballmer Group that was announced last fall. Over the next 18 months, New Orleans will develop, pilot, and measure an initiative focused on preparing young people for high opportunity career paths designed to help improve residents’ long-term economic mobility.

New Orleans will also work closely with other cities participating in the initiative to share lessons and experiences to further advance the work and build a model for future collaboration among cities on the topic.

New Orleans staff have already begun working with a team of advisors from Results for America and the Behavioral Insights Team, both partners in What Works Cities, a BloombergPhilanthropies Initiative that helps cities confront urgent challenges through data-and evidence-based decision-making. New Orleans city staff will deepen their data skills and strengthen their ability to deliver results to residents with the help of experts from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Ballmer Group and the Behavioral Insights Team, along with the Sunlight Foundation.

Additionally, Opportunity Insights at Harvard University is helping New Orleans staff draw insights regarding economic mobility in the community using data from the Opportunity Atlas, an interactive resource developed in collaboration with the U.S. Census Bureau.

The other nine cities participating in the economic mobility initiative are: Albuquerque, N.M.; Cincinnati, Ohio; Dayton, Ohio; Detroit, Mich.; Lansing, Mich.; Newark, N.J.; Racine, Wis; Rochester, N.Y.; and Tulsa, Okla.

Healthy Blue Back to School Supply Giveaway

Edited by Data Staff Writers

Celebrate the upcoming school year with a fun day of music, games, refreshments, health screenings, community resources, and school supplies (while supplies last) to help students in grades K – 5 and families get “day one” ready for the new school year. The Back to School Giveaway is possible with support from Healthy Blue in partnership with Providence Community Housing, Enterprise Community Partners, Immanuel Community Church, and the residents of Faubourg Lafitte.

Students must be accompanied by a guardian to receive school supplies.

The event will take place on Saturday, July 20th from 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. at the Sojourner Truth Neighborhood Center, 2200 Lafitte Street, New Orleans, LA 70119. School supplies will be distributed while supplies last.

To learn more about the Back to School giveaway at Sojourner Truth Neighborhood Center, visit Healthy Blue on Facebook @ HealthyBlueLA.
Research Finds Pre-Pregnancy Weight Affects Infant Growth Response to Breast Milk

LSU Health Sciences Center
Image courtesy verywellfamily.com

In the first study of its kind, LSU Health New Orleans Researchers report that women’s pre-pregnancy overweight or obesity produces changes in breast milk, which can affect infant growth. The research findings are published in PLOS ONE, available online here.

“The importance of this study is that it demonstrates that breast milk contents can vary depending on mother’s weight status at the time of conception and further impact the growth and development of breastfeeding infants,” says Henry Nuss, PhD, Assistant Research Professor of Behavioral & Community Health Sciences at LSU Health New Orleans School of Public Health and Lead Author.

“Childhood obesity rates in the US have increased significantly in recent decades,” notes Melinda Sothern, PhD, Professor of Behavioral & Community Health Sciences at LSU Health New Orleans School of Public Health. “Although many studies have shown that breastfeeding may be protective against excessive weight gain during early life, we do not fully understand why.”

Breast milk contains pro-inflammatory proteins such as tumor necrosis factor alpha (TNF-) and interleukin-six (IL-6), as well as hormones like insulin and leptin, and anti-inflammatory polyunsaturated fatty acids, such as omega-3 (DHA) and omega-6 (EPA). If and how their interaction may influence infant growth has been unknown. The research team set out to discover the interrelationships between these compounds in blood and breast milk in early postpartum women with normal BMIs and with overweight/obesity before pregnancy to determine if these components correlated to infant growth measures at age 4–8 weeks.

They compared polyunsaturated fatty acids, inflammatory markers and hormones to infant weight, length, head circumference and percent fat mass at 4-8 weeks postpartum in the same group of 33 women. The researchers found that pro-inflammatory qualities of breast milk were associated with infant growth measures regardless of maternal pre-pregnancy BMI. However, infants born to women with overweight or obesity demonstrated less responsive growth to breast milk. “Infants who are born to mothers of unhealthy weight status may be metabolically programmed to have a less favorable growth response to breast milk,” Dr. Nuss adds. “These findings suggest that women of childbearing age who anticipate having a child should consider their weight status as a potential risk factor for adverse growth outcomes.”

The research team, which also included Jovanny Zabaleta, PhD, Associate Research Professor of Pediatrics at LSU Health New Orleans School of Medicine, as well as researchers from Pennington Biomedical Research Center, concludes that more studies are needed to assess longitudinal effects of this impact.

Bayou Classic, Continued from page 5.

Ticket prices for the 2019 Bayou Classic Football Game range from $16-$59. Tickets for the Greek Show & Battle of the Bands starts at $20 with options for VIP experiences.

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Humana Foundation to Invest $1 Million in New Orleans
Strategic Community Investment Program will Invest in One or More Organizations Addressing Social Determinants of Health in the Greater New Orleans Community

By Sarah Von der Linde

The Humana Foundation, philanthropic arm of Humana Inc. (NYSE: HUM) for the past 38 years, recently announced it is extending its Strategic Community Investment Program to New Orleans and will invest $1 million or more in the community. Organizations are invited to apply for investments to fund initiatives addressing social determinants of health, the conditions under which people are born, grow, live, work and age that impact overall health and well-being.

“We’re excited to extend our Strategic Community Investment Program to New Orleans this year,” said Walter D. Woods, CEO of The Humana Foundation. “We’ve listened to input from New Orleans nonprofits to guide our application process, and we’ve incorporated that into learnings from our initial 2018 investments in seven communities across the U.S. We believe our investment in New Orleans will have a tangible impact on the health and well-being of many residents and will enable us to build more healthy days together with community partners.”

Selection Criteria
The Strategic Community Investment Program in New Orleans will invest in initiatives that create greater health equity for all and address one or more of the following social determinants of health: Post-secondary attainment and sustaining employment, social participation and inclusion, financial asset security and food security.

In an effort to encourage collaboration across sectors, The Humana Foundation will give special consideration to joint applications from two or more organizations working in partnership towards results greater than what a single organization could achieve. Organizations in the greater New Orleans community, including those in Jefferson, Orleans, Lafourche, Assumption, Plaquemines, St. Charles, St. James, St. John the Baptist, Terrebonne, St. Tammany, Washington, and Tangipahoa parishes, can apply for an investment from The Humana Foundation.

Strategic Community Investment in ‘Bold Goal’ communities
The Humana Foundation’s Strategic Community Investment Program began in 2018, investing more than $7 million in nonprofits in seven communities: Knoxville, Tn.; Louisville, Ky.; San Antonio, Tx; Baton Rouge, La.; Tampa Bay, Fl.; Jacksonville, Fl.; and Broward County, Fl. In each of these communities, Humana is pursuing its ‘Bold Goal’ to improve the health of the communities Humana serves 20 percent by 2020 and beyond. The Humana Foundation contributes to this work by investing in nonprofit and other organizations that address social determinants of health that impact people’s overall health and well-being.

Each organization that received a 2018 Strategic Community Investment has the opportunity to apply for continued investment for one or two additional years based on the specific results they achieve over a 12-month period. This strategy allows The Humana Foundation’s community investments to continue to grow, while also committing to creating greater health equity in the communities it serves.

Application Process
Any organization – or consortium of organizations – interested in applying for a Humana Foundation Strategic Community Investment must fill out an application and submit it to The Humana Foundation no later than July 26, 2019. After reviewing all applications, it receives, The Humana Foundation will then ask a group of finalist organizations to go through a more detailed due diligence process. (A link to the online application will be available on The Humana Foundation website beginning June 20, 2019.)

Marc Morial, Essence Festival’s Founding Mayor, Celebrates 25th Anniversary of the Iconic “Party with a Purpose” He Brought to New Orleans

By Angela L. Young, ALY Media Relations, LLC

National Urban League President and CEO Marc H. Morial will join influential voices including Michelle Obama and Congresswoman Maxine Waters in a celebration of the 25th Anniversary of the iconic event he brought to New Orleans.

“The Essence Festival helped solidify New Orleans as the quintessential destination for multicultural and African American gatherings,” Morial said. “Bringing Essence to New Orleans remains among my proudest achievements as mayor, and I have been overwhelmed by the cultural significance it has attained.”

Just a few months into his first term as New Orleans Mayor, Morial was looking for ways to leverage his city’s rich cultural identity for economic development and job creation. At the same time, Essence Co-Founder Ed Lewis and Festival Productions Founder George Wein were looking for the perfect location for a 25th Birthday Party for the magazine.

“As the leading African American Publication, they were looking for a city with a strong African American cultural heritage and an African American mayor,” Morial said. “No other city had – or has – such a strong musical tradition and the unique and versatile construction of the Superdome made it the perfect venue.”

What was meant to be a one-time event evolved into the largest Annual Multicultural Event in the nation, the “party with a purpose,” attracting international recording artists, political and intellectual luminaries and bestselling authors. “The daytime events – the cultural, social and political presentations and discussions – were so popular that first year that they had to be moved from the Superdome into the Convention Center where there was more space,” Morial said.

Morial’s keynote that year focused on affirmative action, he recalled, as it was the year President Clinton launched his “mend it, don’t end it” initiative. “I was excited about it from the beginning,” Morial said. “It was big that first year, now it’s tremendous. It’s unique in that it combines thought leadership with music – no other event connects the performing arts with the social movements that influence and shape them.”

The first Essence Festival spawned the Louis Armstrong Jazz Camp, the nation’s Pre-Eminent Jazz Education Program devoted to developing the next generation of Jazz artists and preserving the great American art form.
Tech Boss Lady
How to Start-Up, Disrupt & Thrive as a Female Founder
by Adriana Gascoigne

One foot in front of the other. That's how you get anywhere: whether it's a toe-sliding shuffle or a one-two-three-waltz, the only way forward is step by step. Slow-walk it if you must, but you have to keep going and in “Tech Boss Lady” by Adriana Gascoigne, you'll find helpful business shoeprints to follow.

From the time she was a child, Adriana Gascoigne knew that she didn't want a 9-to-5 job as an adult. Both her parents were entrepreneurs who did whatever it took to keep the family afloat, and Gascoigne spent after-schools and weekends pitching in. For her, self-employment was natural; even so, Gascoigne found herself working in a boys-network Silicon Valley office after college. Before #MeToo was a thing, she was harassed for being a woman. Undaunted, Gascoigne persevered until she spotted a problem and created a solution, finally becoming the entrepreneur she always knew she was. In this book, she offers advice for “founders” of the tech sort – which, as she says, is everyone now, because almost all “business today relies on technology to scale.”

The first point she stresses is that every entrepreneur, “and I mean every single one,” has “absolutely no fear,” which is “quickly followed by acute urgency to propel forward.” If that doesn’t describe you, says Gascoigne, then “hit the bench and sit this one out.” Stay focused on your goals because hard work “will only get you so far...” Be willing to give other women a hand-up; in fact, start doing so as early as possible by giving your daughters or nieces STEM toys. Know how to hire, be a leader, and foster a sense of intrapreneurship in your business. Find a great mentor and be willing to ask for help if you need it but exercise caution when you think you might need a partner. Don’t let failure freak you out. And finally, watch yourself for signs of stress or burnout. You might need an extra jolt of confidence to get back on track.

You’ve got this.

As business books go, “Tech Boss Lady” isn’t bad. It’s not great, either – mostly because, if you’re an entrepreneur, you already know what’s inside it. Indeed, there’s a lot of same in this book. Like many current authors, Gascoigne focuses more on tech start-ups and relies a lot on personal examples, despite an avowal to avoid doing so. Neither can you avoid rah-rah words about goals and hiring, both of which are seen in just about every entrepreneurial book from the last three decades.

And yet, Adriana Gascoigne's style is surely appealing. She's smart and bold, and ideas are presented just freshly enough to capture the attention of young businesswomen who maybe haven't seen this information a dozen times. They might benefit from it, and from Gascoigne's no-nonsense, straightforward, steel-fisted warmth, the most.

This book can surely be read by anyone with entrepreneurial spirit but it’s really not for men, or for women over 40. For younger women with business-sense, though, “Tech Boss Lady” can be a great first step.

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