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NEWSPAPERS, INC.

"GOOD NEWS YOU CAN USE"

The Harlem Community Newspapers, Inc. Connecting Harlem, Queens, Brooklyn and The Bronx

COMMUNITY

HARLEM NEWS

"Good News You Can Use"

Vol. 30 No. 4

January 25, 2024 – January 31, 2024

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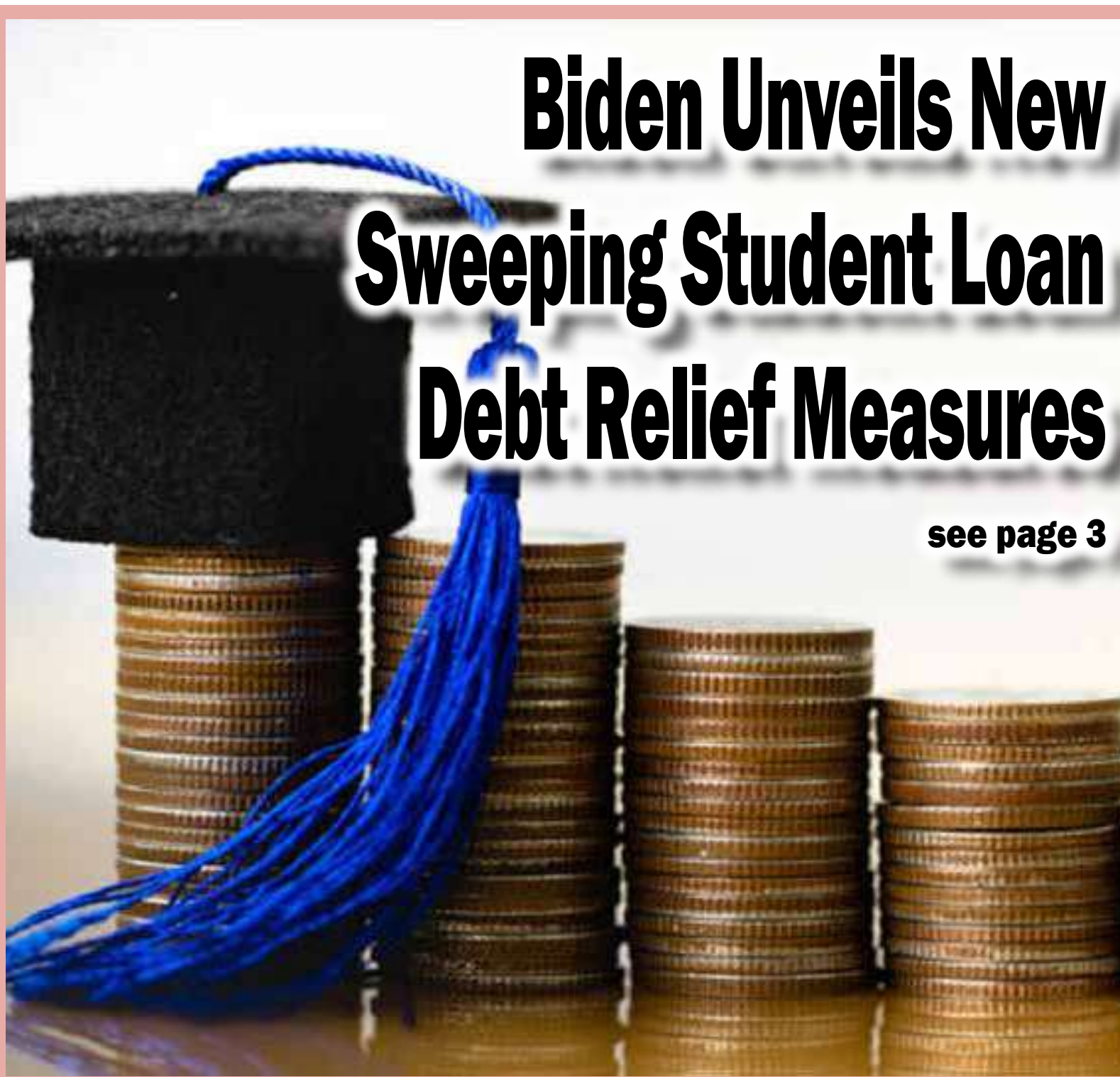
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OUR MISSION STATEMENT

The Harlem Community Newspapers, Inc. will publish positive news and information. Our mission is to deliver “good” and informative news to our readers focusing on health, education, housing, business and employment opportunities. We look for and publish results, not problems. We promote businesses, opportunities and events happening in the communities we serve. We are dedicated to providing our readers with valuable information they can use to improve the quality of life for themselves, their families and our communities.

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Free copies distributed in your community weekly

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A Publication of: Harlem Community Newspapers, Inc.
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PAT STEVENSON

My words for today are “Be Informed,” before you speak and vote. One thing I learned during my years in the advertising business is that often, people believe what they are “sold.” The top products sold are not necessarily the best products. The same goes for information. Many want you to believe and repeat, “Biden is too old.” I say too old for what? I am 71 years old, and I have friends in their 80s and 90s who have better recall and get around better than I do. “Be informed” about what Biden is doing. Take a look at his record of accomplishments even though he has a congress working against him. The next question I would ask you - if you do not think Biden is the best choice - who is? Who has shown a willingness to put themselves out there and subject themselves and their family to threats and humiliation? This is a difficult time for our country, however. Please do your research and make informed decisions. In the subsequent issues of Harlem News, I will continue to point out the accomplishments of the Biden administration and those of our local politicians, such as Mayor Adams and others. I want my readers to be prepared to make an “informed” decision when they go to the polls in November.

I began publishing community newspapers primarily covering the African American communities in New York 30 years ago. At that time, I decided to focus on the rarely reported “Good News” in the community and provide information pertinent to improving the lives of our readers. Celebrating 30 years of publishing, we are pivoting to a more significant online presence while maintaining our print editions. Go to our website and subscribe to our daily newsletter, “Harlem Daily.” It is free. Watch for our 30th Anniversary events and support requests--coming soon!

Did you get the COVID-19 booster and your flu shot? People are still getting sick from and dying from COVID. It has been reported that more than 10,000 people died from COVID in December. It is still here--get vaccinated!

You can visit our website at www.harlemcommunitynews.com to see past issues, subscribe to our daily newsletter, and view past videos, current events, advertising, subscription information, etc. We are also on Instagram and Facebook. Again, Happy New Year 2024.

Pat Stevenson
Celebrating
30 years
Publishing

Biden Unveils New Sweeping Student Loan Debt Relief Measures

By Stacy M. Brown
 NNPA Newswire Senior National Correspondent
 @StacyBrownMedia

President Biden continues to make significant strides in alleviating the student loan debt crisis, announcing the approval of debt cancellation for an additional 74,000 student loan borrowers. The latest action contributes to the record-breaking relief the administration has provided to more than 3.7 million Americans.

Earlier this month, Biden announced the accelerated implementation of a crucial provision under the Student Aid for Voluntary Education (SAVE) plan, which the administration said has helped 3.6 million Americans by canceling their student debt. Biden said the plan aims to create

a more affordable student loan repayment structure while providing life-changing support to students and their families.

“My administration approved debt cancellation for another 74,000 student loan borrowers across the country, bringing the total number of people who have had their debt canceled under my administration to over 3.7 million Americans through various actions,” Biden said in a statement on January 19, 2024. The beneficiaries of the latest round of relief include nearly 44,000 teachers, nurses, firefighters, and other public service professionals who have earned forgiveness after a decade of ded-

icated service. Additionally, close to 30,000 individuals who have been in repayment for at least 20 years without receiving relief through income-driven repayment plans will now see their debts forgiven.

Biden credited the success of these relief efforts to the corrective measures taken to address broken student loan programs. He asserted that these fixes have removed barriers preventing borrowers from accessing the relief they were entitled to under the law. The president outlined the broader achievements of his administration in supporting students and borrowers, including achieving the most significant increases in Pell Grants in over a decade, aimed at assisting families with incomes below approximately \$60,000



per year. Other accomplishments include fixing the Public Service Loan Forgiveness program and introducing the most generous income-driven repayment plan in history, known as the SAVE plan, he said. Borrowers are encouraged to apply for this plan at stu-

dentaid.gov.

In response to challenges, including the Supreme Court’s decision on the student debt relief plan, Biden affirmed the administration’s commitment to finding alternative paths to deliver relief to as many borrowers as possible, as

quickly as possible. “From Day One of my administration, I vowed to improve the student loan system so that higher education provides Americans with opportunity and prosperity, not the unmanageable burdens of student loan debt,” Biden asserted. “I won’t

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NEW YORK STATE Department of Health

PONDER THIS! An Attitude of Gratitude is a Pertinent Partnership



By Hazel Rosetta Smith

I am writing with the hope that two words will strike reality in the minds and hearts of the readers. I am focusing on attitude and gratitude. They are different in nature, yet they are a necessary partnership.

Attitude matters in all

factions of life. In your home, with your family and friends, on the job, moving in and out among the population of mixed races and cultures throughout the city. It is unreasonable to think you can do whatever you want and not reap the ramifications of your actions. How you manage any situation is based on how you approach the circumstance. Your approach can cause an unwelcome and even a surprise.

You may think you know the response coming, but not be prepared for how it can take an ugly turn and

change position quickly. Actors are trained early on in their careers that acting is reacting. So it is, on and off stage, be aware, you may have to put on the greatest performance of your life to save your life.

A poor attitude is an emotional trip that is found in ego and vanities. If you believe that you are all that and a bag of chips too, there is a definite possibility that you will fall into a pattern of behavior that is disrespectful and destructive. A good attitude will take you further than you ever imagined.

Opportunities will abound when gratitude is in its proper place. Gratitude is a state of thankfulness that runs through the mind and heart like a personal map. Some people had to be taught how to be grateful, even for the simplest things. When gratitude is not a part of a person's modus operandi, it could be their mindset of entitlement that is preventing a spirit of appreciation.

As we ponder the words, attitude, and gratitude, it should spark a conscientious conversation from within. A sour attitude and

a slack in gratitude may be difficult to diagnose unless we can remove the blinders and see our true selves. Are we ready to be true to and about ourselves?

An attitude of caring, sharing, and loving is an individual decision, worth giving a try. Though we want to believe that most people are endowed with such capabilities naturally, that is not the case. A desire to be helpful and kind to another may seem to be an easy task for some; however, it is not as prevalent as it could be. We cannot escape the consequences of our ac-

tions. You will reap what you sow has been a warning given since time began. Why not sow a sweet spirit and a helping hand toward one another and make this world a better place? If practice truly makes perfect, let us practice positivity and see how negativity will lose its footing.

[Hazel Rosetta Smith is a journalist, playwright, and artistic director of Help Somebody Theatrical Ministries. Contacts: misshazel@twc.com and online www.hazelrosettasmith.com]

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ACS is Taking Steps to Provide Parents With Written Notification of Rights

The NYC Administration for Children’s Services (ACS) is expanding its work to help parents better understand their rights at the outset of a child protective investigation.

The announcement comes following the completion of an initial pilot program in parts of Brooklyn and the Bronx, in which child protective specialists distributed over four hundred notifications to parents who were the subject of an allegation of child abuse or neglect. The notifications explain that while ACS has a legal requirement to assess the safety of the child, parents are not required to let ACS into their homes and can seek the assistance of an attorney. If ACS is not allowed to check a child’s safety as required, the no-

tification explains that ACS may seek permission from Family Court to complete the assessment. Commissioner Jess Dannhauser today announced that ACS will begin distributing written notifications to families in two more zones, with full implementation planned by July 2024.

Providing this information builds upon ACS’s ongoing work to address systemic flaws that have existed in child welfare historically and promotes equity and fairness, including a citywide strategy to reduce the number of unnecessary child welfare investigations. ACS has been working closely with city agencies that serve children and families and external stakeholders to ensure families are being connected to the services and supports

they need without the need for a child abuse or maltreatment report or an investigation.

“ACS is committed to keeping children safe, and, at the same time, respecting families because New York City children and families deserve both,” said Jess Dannhauser, Commissioner of the NYC Administration for Children’s Services (ACS). “To this end, we are expanding the pilot to provide families with information about their rights during a child protective investigation citywide by July of this year. In doing so, we are taking an important step towards the mayor’s vision of safety, equity and justice.”

“In order to support children, we need to also act to support parents. With the expansion of this pilot,

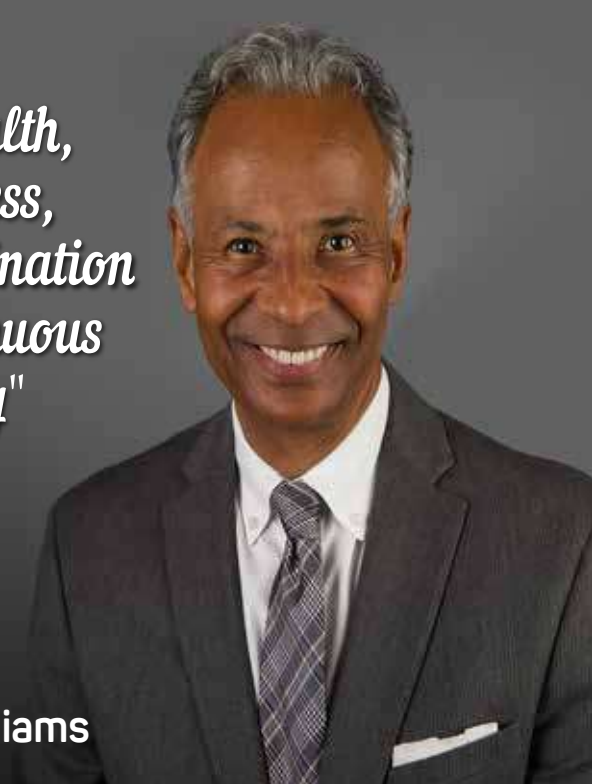
child protective specialists will help inform more parents of their rights during a child protective case. This pilot also shows how ACS is working to make the system more equitable and fair for families,” said Deputy Mayor of Health and Human Services Anne Williams-Isom

The new written materials – which are available in ten languages in addition to English – being provided to families include the following information: “The Administration for Children’s Services (ACS) has received a report from the New York Statewide Central Register (SCR) with concerns about your child(ren). ACS has a legal obligation to assess the safety of your child(ren) to complete an assessment of the concerns. We are re-

questing your permission to enter your home to have a conversation with you about the alleged concerns and to explain the process. We want you to know that you have a right to not let ACS into your home. If you choose not to let ACS into your home, ACS is required by law to determine how best to assess the safety of your child(ren). This may include seeking permission from Family Court to complete the assessment. We also want you to know that you may call an attorney at any point during this investigation. We have an informational packet that includes contact information for your local family defense organization, along with other resources within your community.”

Through a wide range of initiatives, ACS has been working to address the disparities that exist at each of the stages throughout the child welfare system, as

well as the number of families impacted by a child welfare intervention. As a result of this work, substantial progress has been made: the number of Black non-Hispanic families experiencing an indicated investigation declined 38 percent from 2018 to 2022; the number of Black non-Hispanic families in family court filings related to abuse and neglect dropped by nearly half; the number of Black non-Hispanic families experiencing an emergency removal declined by one-third; and the number of Black non-Hispanic families with a child placed into foster care as a result of a child abuse or neglect investigation was down 20 percent. Today, the number of children in New York City’s foster care system is less than 6,500. Comparatively, 25 years ago, there were more than 40,000 children in New York City’s foster care system.



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Dr. George Williams

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Community Op-Ed—Honoring Dr. King’s Legacy by Fighting for Fair Housing



By Mayor Eric Adams

Recently, we celebrated the life of one of our greatest American leaders, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. This is a moment to honor his accomplishments, but it’s also an opportunity to reflect on what he fought for and to carry his legacy forward. We must find new strength to continue his work by breaking down barriers and building true equality — here in New York City and all across this nation.

That means fighting for fair housing and building a city where working people can afford to stay and thrive. This is one of the major issues that Dr. King fought for during his lifetime, and it remains urgent in 2024.

Many forget that Dr.

King called out discriminatory practices by landlords and realtors who were keeping Black Americans out of certain neighborhoods. He also advocated for the Fair Housing Act to make those discriminatory practices illegal. This landmark legislation was finally passed by Congress the week after Dr. King’s assassination.

Here in New York City, we have much to be proud of about our civil rights record. But there is a dark side to our history that has yet to be reckoned with — a deep legacy of discrimination and segregation that we must dismantle in order to finally build more housing and create an equitable city.

New Yorkers are still living under zoning laws written more than 60 years ago. Many who pushed for these laws aimed to promote racial segregation. As a result of these laws, New Yorkers of color have suffered from a housing crisis for decades. Costs are too high, and too many parts of our city are “off limits” to housing opportunities. This is a direct cause of gentrification and soaring rents, and it’s driving New Yorkers away from family, community, and jobs. These outdated and

unfair zoning laws must be changed, and they must be changed now.

That’s why our administration has put forward our “City of Yes for Housing Opportunity” proposal, which will promote new housing in every neighborhood. And it is why we’re calling for action in Albany this session to deliver the housing affordability New Yorkers need.

Our “City of Yes” plan delivers on the promise of the Fair Housing Act. It calls for every neighborhood to carry its fair share of the housing crisis. It will pave the way to converting unused offices into houses; help families add space for parents, children, and caregivers; and give our houses of worship the flexibility to use their property to build homes and generate income.

When we came into office two years ago, we had a mission: protect public safety, revitalize the economy, and make this city more livable for hardworking New Yorkers. Making our city more livable means building more housing for more people, especially people of color.

We delivered on that promise by creating the second-highest number of new

affordable homes in one year, and the highest number of homes for formerly homeless New Yorkers. Using CityFHEPS vouchers, we have connected more New Yorkers than ever before to permanent housing, made record investments in improvements at NYCHA developments, and established the NYCHA Trust to unlock billions more for repairs.

For so many New Yorkers, this is personal. I know what it feels like to live without the security of housing. I grew up on the edge of homelessness. My siblings and I had to take trash bags full of clothes to school because we didn’t know where we would sleep the next night. That’s no way to live. You cannot plan for the future if you are worried about today.

We cannot say “no” to our neighbors and our fellow New Yorkers. We must be a “City of Yes”: “yes” in my backyard, “yes” on my block, “yes” in my city. We must say “yes” to housing opportunity, and we must continue Dr. King’s legacy through action, not just words.

Together, we can build a fairer, more equitable New York City.



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Vol. 30, No 4 January 25, 2024



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Home Buying in Harlem Be Prepared to Buy Now



Rev. Dr. Charles Butler

Persistence is one of the greatest keys to successfully completing the home buying process. For many prospective first-time buyers, the realization of owning their own home can start to appear like a distant and unattainable dream.

Do not despair. Do not get discouraged. Do not quit. Stay focused on completing your goal of homeownership. You owe it to yourself and your family to complete this process. Do not give up on your dream. Remain persistent and determined throughout the entire process.

Another key to successfully completing the process, especially in a highly competitive market, is having a solid home buying plan. Start by developing a monthly household budget. This will let you know how much you can save each month, how much

you can spend on a home, and how soon you will be ready to buy. This is essential information for prospective first-time home buyers. Your budget will help you gauge the down payment, closing costs, and mortgage payment reserves you need.

Create a projected purchase date based on when you expect to be ready to complete your purchase. It would help if you had a specific target date in mind. Work towards hitting that target. For example, "By June 2025, I will be ready to purchase." That's only 18 months from now. In the home buying arena, that's closer than you might think. Decide on the type of home you want to buy. Select two or three ideal neighborhoods that provide the features necessary to you, i.e., transportation, shopping, schools, churches, parks, etc. Have a price range in mind.

The third key is being prepared. An opportunity can come when you least expect it. Continue to research housing and know what is happening in the market. Work closely with your loan officer. Keep your pre-approval letter close at hand and have it updated when necessary. Have your money for the down payment and closing costs readily ac-

cessible. Maintain contact with your real estate agent so that you will be notified when great deals become available.

Continue to save as much money as possible. Last year, I had several first-time buyers who were eligible for the New York City Home First Down Payment Assistance Grant. However, the application process took too long, and most sellers are unwilling to wait the additional time for the approval process to be completed. The buyers had to either purchase without the grant assistance or walk away from the deal.

Maintain communication with your housing counselor and your attorney. They may be a great source of information for you during this process. The Harlem housing market is costly, and the competition for affordable properties is challenging. Any advantage you can use in this process can make a huge difference.

If you are interested in attending a Harlem Congregations for Community Improvement, Inc. ("HCCI") workshop or have questions regarding the home buying process, contact Rev. Dr. Charles Butler at (212) 281 4887 ext. 231 or email at cbutler@hcci.org.

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The MTA encourages vendors who have not done business with us to register for our bidders list using MY MTA Portal for vendors at www.mymta.info. Registered vendors can search for procurement opportunities across all MTA agencies and receive invitations to bid or propose on the types of goods and services they can provide. Certified minority and women-owned businesses (M/WBE), service-disabled veteran-owned businesses (SDVOB), and disadvantaged businesses (DBE), are strongly encouraged to compete for MTA opportunities. Visit our website at <https://new.mta.info/doing-business-with-us> for detailed information and guidelines.

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HARLEM CALENDAR OF COMMUNITY EVENTS



Feb 1 Opening The Ways of Langston Hughes at Schomburg

Jan 26 7:30pm & 10:30pm Uptown Nights presents Ian Isiah and Kimberly Nichole at Harlem Stage

As part of its beloved music series, Uptown Nights, Harlem Stage presents an electric double bill that promises to get you on your feet — Ian Isiah and Kimberly Nichole.

Raised in the heart of Brooklyn with a strong gospel stripe, Ian Isiah has grown into the forefront of both fashion and LGBTQ+ movements, first with Hood By Air and now Telfar. He has toured with and has been featured on numerous Blood Orange projects and appeared on records by Yves Tumor, Theophilus London, and Mykki Blanco. 2018's Shugga Sextape Vol. 1 took the music world by storm and, with his R&B and silky soul-infused AUNTIE, a collaborative EP with Chromeo, Ian has continued to break ground and prove himself to be a true rising star.

Harlem Stage alum and punkSoul/Rock artist Kimberly Nichole (Kim Nicky) has a sound shaped by the groundbreaking grunge music of her hometown, Seattle, and the southern blues and gospel roots of her parents. Kimberly made a name for herself in New York City on the underground music scene and in nightlife by way of the late night club

The Box. She has shared stages with Rock & Roll Hall of Famers Nancy Wilson (Heart), Slash (Guns N' Roses), and Joe Walsh (The Eagles), as well as the likes of Nona Hendryx, Ledisi, Kehlani, Janelle Monae, and Christina Aguilera (who served as her coach when she was a finalist on The Voice). Now based in London, Kimberly returns to the Gatehouse for a special set showcasing her distinctive style, soaring voice, and edgy showmanship. Harlem Stage is located at 150 Convent Avenue New York

Jan 26 7:00pm, Jan 27 7:00pm & 9:30pm Jazz at Lincoln center presents The Blues with Bobby Rush and Shemekia Copeland

The Blues with Bobby Rush and Shemekia Copeland takes place at Frederick P. Rose Hall, the home of Jazz at Lincoln Center, located on Broadway at 60th Street in New York, NY. For information and tickets, visit jazz.org/theblues

Feb 1st 7:30pm Reckoning With Our Past at Jazz at Lincoln Center

Jazz At Lincoln Center, for Reckoning With Our Past: Conversations For Our Shared Future, moderated by Sole-dad O'Brien with Lonnie Bunch (Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution), and special guests! You can REGISTER FOR FREE



Jan 26 Kimberly Nichole at Harlem Stage

using my customized link: <https://bit.ly/3tEZtLV>

515 Malcolm X Boulevard New York, NY 10037

Feb 1 Exhibition Opening: The Ways of Langston Hughes At Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture

Harlem Renaissance poet Langston Hughes (1901 - 1967) held friendships with artists across generations and disciplines. He forged connections between creative professionals, encouraged the work of others, and helped build a larger network of Black creatives and intellectuals responding to, and shaping, the current events of the time. One friendship began in the classroom at Atlanta University when photojournalist Griffith Davis (1923 - 1993) was a student and Hughes a visiting professor. The photographs in The Ways of Langston Hughes: Griff Davis and Black Artists in the Making offer an intimate look at Langston Hughes with students, writers, visual artists, and performers in different periods of their maturation. Davis's photography is complemented by archival material from the Schomburg Center's collections and letters reflecting decades of personal correspondence. Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture is located at

Feb 2-3 8:00pm Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra with Wynton Marsalis performs Music of Duke Ellington

Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra with Wynton Marsalis performing masterfully structured pieces from musical architects Duke Ellington, Jelly Roll Morton and Charles Mingus. The concert even also features the world premiere of "Usonian Structures," a new suite by award-winning jazz composer, arranger and saxophonist Andy Farber, inspired by architectural structures of the immortal architect Frank Lloyd Wright. Ticket prices \$30 up.

Feb-4th, 8:00PM Afrique en Cirque at Lehman Performing Arts Center

Afrique en Cirque is a show by Yamoussa Bangoura, inspired by daily life in Guinea. This performance shares the beauty, youth and artistry of African culture. A colorful show beyond its scenery, costumes and staging, it makes any theatre vibrate with energy and represents the strength, agility and life's joys of young Africans. The audience will see acrobats execute gravity-defying moves and human pyr-



Jan 26 Ian Isiah at Harlem Stage

amids, accompanied by the contemporary sounds of live Afro-Jazz, percussion, and kora. Welcome to the universe of Kalabanté Productions, and prepare for an unforgettable journey. Tickets can be purchased at Lehman Performing Arts Center.

Feb 17 2:00pm "The Flip Side of the Coin" at Greater Hood Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church

A Gospel Musical Play "The Flip Side of the Coin: The Brothers Speak" will be held at Greater Hood Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church, 160 West 146th Street. This play is written and directed by Hazel Rosetta Smith. Tickets are \$25. For tickets call Virginia Montague 212-283-0294 or Hazel Smtih at 636-320-1760.

February 25-July 28, 2024 The Harlem Renaissance and Transatlantic Modernism at the Met
The Metropolitan Museum of Art will present

the groundbreaking exhibition The Harlem Renaissance and Transatlantic Modernism. Through some 160 Works of painting, sculpture, photography, film, and ephemera, it will explore the comprehensive and far-reaching ways in which Black artists portrayed everyday modern life in the new Black cities that took shape in the 1920s-40s in New York City's Harlem and nationwide in the early decades of the Great Migration when millions of African Americans began to move away from the segregated rural South. The first art museum survey of the subject in New York City since 1987, the exhibition will establish the Harlem Renaissance and its radically new development of the modern Black subject as central to the development of international modern art. Free with Museum admission



Jazzmobile Feb 14



Feb 25 MET



Jazzmobile Mar 13

Disney Imagineer First Since Walt to Receive National Inventors Hall of Fame Award

Disney Imagineer Lanny Smoot is being inducted into the National Inventors Hall of Fame! As one of Disney's most prolific inventors, he has the most patents at the Walt Disney Company with 74 for Disney and 106 career patents overall.

Some of his most notable work includes:

- Special effects behind the Madame Leota float inside the Disneyland Resort Haunted Mansion attraction
- State-of-the art Star Wars lightsabers

Lanny is only the second person from the Walt Disney Company to receive this high honor! The only other recipient was Walt Disney, a post-humous award.









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LincolnCenter.org/Blanchard

10 Herbal Teas To Help You Become “New”



By *ArtfulTea.com*

It's a new year and a lot of people are trying out new things. Many people are attempting to embody the phrase “new year, new me” by focusing on their health and wellness.

In addition to being a time for new beginnings, January is also National Hot Tea month. Whether you try it in a bag, loose leaf or if you decide to make your own concoction, consider adding more hot tea to your diet this new year. Here's a list of 10 herbal teas and the health and wellness benefits they offer:

1. Matcha Tea

Within the last few years, matcha has grown very popular and can often be found in coffee drinks, baked goods and everything else in between. Matcha's ever-growing popularity is due to its high level of caffeine. In addition to the boost of energy it has been known to provide, the plant also has a high level of I-theanine, a compound which has been known to

reduce stress and provide a calm and focused state. If you're looking to be more productive in this new year, you and matcha just might be a match!

2. Peppermint Tea

Peppermint has a plethora of benefits, but much like matcha, it's great for productivity. Its strong aroma and taste have been known to improve alertness and memory.

3. Dandelion Root Tea

With its long history of medicinal use, dandelion root is known for improving digestion, fighting colds, and improving overall health.

4. Ashwagandha Tea

Ashwagandha is a powerful supplement with many benefits, however its effects can become very severe if not properly monitored. The root plant can be used for controlling both blood sugar and blood pressure levels.

5. Jasmine Tea

Jasmine tea has a history of preventing and helping with gastrointestinal disorders.

6. Hibiscus Tea

Hibiscus tea has a great source of iron and can be very beneficial to those who menstruate and suffer from anemia. In addition to this, hibiscus has a great amount of Vitamin C which is great for iron absorption.

7. Ginger Tea

Ginger tea has been used throughout history to help reduce inflammation and provide relief from many other forms of pain and discomfort.

8. Rooibos Tea

With its high antioxidants count, rooibos tea has been found to be useful when warding off illness and diseases.

9. Turmeric Tea

Turmeric is the star of many international dishes when used as a seasoning, but it also has a multitude of amazing health benefits when brewed as a tea.

10. Lavender Tea

Usually enjoyed for its soothing and floral taste, lavender tea is especially beneficial when you want to participate in a little rest and relaxation.

Atlanta's Spelman College Just Got the Largest-Ever Single Donation to an HBCU

BY JEFF AMY

A billionaire couple is giving \$100 million to Atlanta's Spelman College, which the women's school says is the largest-ever single donation to a historically Black college or university.

The donation was announced by Ronda Stryker and her husband William Johnston. She is the billionaire granddaughter of the founder of medical device maker Stryker Corp., and he is the chairman of money management firm Greenleaf Trust. They live in Michigan.

Spelman said that it would use \$75 million to endow scholarships. The rest of the money will be used for other purposes, including developing an



John Spink/Atlanta Journal-Constitution via AP, File

academic focus on public policy and democracy and improving student housing, a sore point in recent years among Spelman students.

"It's a transformational gift to any institution, period," trustee Lovette Russell said.

HBCUs have small en-

dowments compared with other colleges, but have seen an increase in donations since the racial justice protests spurred by the killing of George Floyd in Minnesota. Spelman, which has about 2,400 students, has been relatively well-funded, though, reporting an

endowment of \$571 million in 2021. It's one of only two historically Black women's colleges and part of the Atlanta University Center, a consortium of four historically Black schools.

"I think it says that it's worth investing in HBCUs more broadly, schools

that have been far too underinvested in," Spelman College President Helene Gayle told CBS News. The college announced the donation in its chapel on a CBS broadcast.

Stryker has been a Spelman trustee since 1997. She and Johnston gave Spelman \$30 million in 2018. They also gave \$100 million in 2011 to create the Homer Stryker Medical School at Western Michigan University.

The Spelman donation comes a week after the United Negro College Fund announced a donation of \$100 million from the Lilly Endowment Inc. That gift will go toward a pooled endowment for the 37 historically Black colleges and universities that form UNCF's membership, includ-

ing Spelman, to boost the schools' long-term financial stability. The fund is trying to raise \$370 million for a shared endowment.

In recent years, other big donations to HBCUs include the \$560 million MacKenzie Scott, the ex-wife of Amazon founder Jeff Bezos, gave in 2020 to 22 Black colleges, the UNCF, and the Thurgood Marshall College Fund, another fundraising arm. Netflix founder Reed Hastings and his wife, Patty Quillin, split \$120 million among the United Negro College Fund, Spelman and Morehouse College. Former New York mayor and entrepreneur Michael Bloomberg pledged \$100 million for student aid at the four historically Black medical schools.

Closing the STEM Skills Gap to Create New Possibilities for Kids

(StatePoint)

Over the next decade, it's projected that nearly 3.5 million manufacturing and STEM-related jobs will be available, yet 2 million are expected to go unfilled due to a skills gap, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor and Statistics. Advocates are addressing systemic educational barriers that impact student success in order to fill this skills gap and expand opportunities for young people.

That's the idea behind Driving Possibilities, a \$110 million STEM career readiness and community engagement initiative of the Toyota USA Foundation. Its unique approach brings industry and academia together, while coordinating



A teacher at West Dallas STEM School conducts a lesson with students. (c) Jason Kindig

nonprofit services that address barriers and societal disparities—all to prepare youth for successful futures.

“From machine learning and connected technologies

to autonomous vehicles and electrification, the career opportunities of tomorrow will be boundless for those with STEM skills. During this time of rapid industry advancement, it's more im-

portant than ever to give all young people an equal opportunity to access rewarding careers in high-growth industries tomorrow,” says Colleen Casey, executive director, Driving Possibilities.

With the goal of increasing student awareness, excitement and interest in STEM learning, the multi-pronged approach of Driving Possibilities includes innovative, hands-on STEM programming from pre-K to 12th grade levels, professional and leadership development for teachers, and industry exposure and mentorship opportunities for students. The program also addresses students' essential needs to ensure they have the food, transportation, mental health services, after-school programming and early intervention literacy support they need to succeed.

This long-term initiative is already making a huge impact for thousands of families in such high-need locations near Toyota's

operations in Michigan, Kentucky, Indiana and Alabama. And while the program looks a little different in each location because it is based on the unique needs of each community, the mission remains the same: to level the playing field for students facing educational barriers. To learn more, visit toyotaeffect.com.

“Young people are tomorrow's problem-solvers, makers and innovators. But they can face many roadblocks on their journey. Listening to what students need and then working within their communities to come up with solutions, will contribute to thriving communities, stronger local economies and limitless possibilities for all,” says Casey.

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How to Support Early Readers at Home

(StatePoint)

Recent data indicate that over 60% of fourth graders in the United States are reading below grade level, with performance particularly low due to the lingering effects of the pandemic. The good news? Learning experts say that the trend is reversible. One key factor is to make sure that young children have a strong foundation in early language skills when they begin kindergarten. Here are a few tools and ideas for supporting the literacy journey at home and on-the-go:

Make Reading Playful

Interactive learning tools can go beyond drills and practice and make learning fun while building confidence and independence. The LeapStart Learning Success Bundle system, for example, features touch-and-talk pages that work on key skills like phonics, vocabulary, counting and problem solving. The attached smart stylus is designed for young kids' hands and a carrying handle makes on-the-go reading adventures possible. The system comes with an interactive storybook based on the popular animated series, Go! Go! Cory Carson, and an activity book that introduces early skills like letters, numbers and more. Sold separately is an expansive library of compatible books covering preschool through first grade subjects.

"Tapping to hear words sounded out helps children gain independent reading skills and an understanding of how print works," says Dr. Clement Chau, vice president of learning at LeapFrog. "Getting kids ex-



cited about reading through play helps set the stage for reading success before kids even learn how to spell words."

When teaching children to read, one technique that teachers like to use is to slide a finger below each word in a sentence as it is read aloud. This helps young children connect spoken words with words on a page. Slide-to-Read ABC Flash Cards are double-sided cards that fit into a screen-free tablet with special sensors so kids can explore letters, words and colorful pictures with the touch of a finger. Kids can even slide their fingers below the printed sentences to hear each word read aloud, just like how a teacher might do it in a classroom.

A strong foundation for reading starts with knowing the letters and letter sounds. One toy that introduces these essential skills is Mr. Pencil's Scribble, Write & Read. Using the included stylus, kids can trace dotted lines to write numbers, lowercase letters and uppercase letters. In addition to finding letters to build words, kids can slide Mr. Pencil across the screen to sound out new words, or free-draw anything they can imagine to inspire their

creativity.

"By practicing stroke order and hearing letter sounds aloud, children will begin to map letters to the sounds they represent," says Chau.

Story Time

One other simple way to build reading fundamentals is by making your child a card-carrying member of the library. Most public library systems have dedicated children's librarians who run programming and events designed to entertain and educate kids of all ages, while developing a lifelong love of reading. In addition to programs such as seasonal reading challenges and story time, some branches also provide free homework help and host events for kids covering everything from STEM topics to music and art. Be sure to check out books with every visit!

Dr. Chau also recommends checking in with your child's teacher periodically to assess their progress in school and to learn how you can support your child at home.

"A lot of what it takes to prepare your child for future reading success can be supplemented outside the classroom, particularly with recommendations from the teacher," says Chau.



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Lasik Eye Surgery: Is it Really Worth it?

By Jaleesa Robinson

Imagine having to deal with the struggle of wearing glasses and contacts all your life and there's a procedure out there to fix all of that called Lasik. Who wouldn't want that right? But just like most surgeries, there are always expectations that come with it, so we must ask: Is Lasik eye surgery truly worth it?

Lasik eye surgery is a laser surgery most commonly used to correct a person's vision. It's the best-known eye correction surgery out there.

During the surgery, a specific type of laser is used to cut and change the shape of your cornea (tissue found at the front of your eye). It's typically performed so a person has an alternative

to the typical glasses and or contacts solution for bad vision.

Lasik laser surgery typically helps correct three vision problems: astigmatism, nearsightedness, and farsightedness. People with normal vision have a cornea that changes how light is seen and directs it to the back of the eye. People with nearsightedness, astigmatism, and farsightedness have a cornea that directs light incorrectly, thus blurring their vision.

Though it seems like the perfect eye surgery, that should be available to everyone with vision problems, sadly that is not the case. Unfortunately if you:

- Are under 18 years old
- Suffer from eye disease or have a family history of eye disease

- Have an autoimmune disease
- Take certain prescription drugs (ie: steroids)
- Suffer from thin corneas
- Are pregnant

You are NOT eligible for Lasik eye surgery. Many other things may disqualify you as a candidate for Lasik surgery. When considering Lasik eye surgery, it's best to consult your eye doctor on whether or not you are a good candidate.

As stated previously, many people may not be qualified for laser eye surgery, but let's dive into the possibilities for candidates. Like any other surgery, many risks come with Lasik.

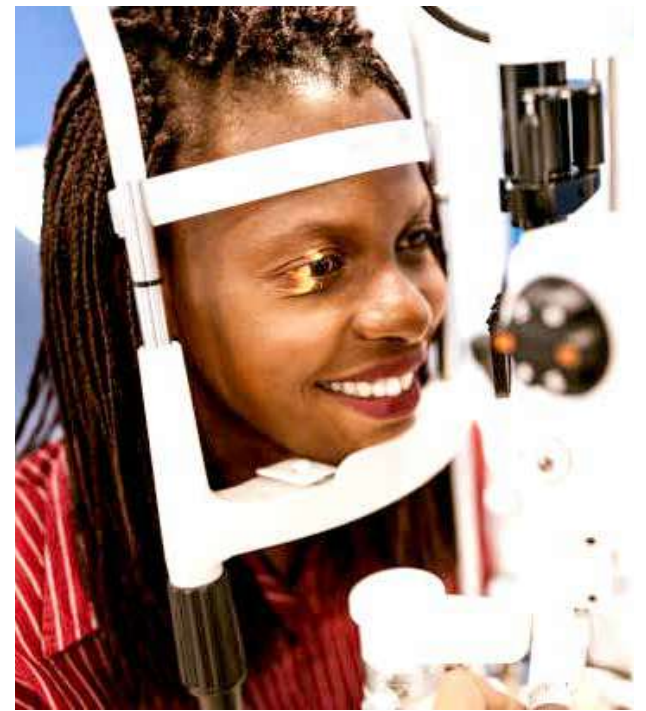
Some of the risks of laser eye surgery are glare, double vision, dry eyes, a

temporary blur of vision after surgery, astigmatism (yes, it can cause exactly what you're trying to correct), and more.

Some of the more drastic risks that come with Lasik are regression, which is the possibility of your vision slowly going back to how it was before the surgery, and vision loss. Though these are very rare occurrences, always be mindful of the possibilities.

Taking the leap to get Lasik can also come with rewards. This surgery can correct one's vision for 20/20 or better. More than seven out of 10 people who successfully undergo Lasik surgery no longer feel the need to use contacts or glasses to help their vision.

A doctor's recommendation of this eye surgery



would truly depend on the patient. Since people and their lifestyles are different there's no guarantee your doctor will give you the okay for Lasik. With so many factors to consider to

see if someone is qualified, this decision must be made based on a doctor's deep evaluation of the specific person interested in the surgery.

Photo courtesy NNPA

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Dr. Jamie Ware Advocates For More Cervical Cancer Education

By Mylika Scatliffe
AFRO Women's Health Writer

January is Cervical Cancer Awareness Month, and if nothing else, Dr. Ware, a board-certified obstetrician-gynecologist at the Meharry Clinic in Nashville, Tenn., and associate professor in the Meharry School of Medicine.

She wants women to remember that, unlike many other cancers, cervical cancer can be prevented.

"There is a screening test to detect cervical cancer, and with regular screening at the proper intervals, we can take measures to diagnose and treat the dysplastic cells before they become cancerous," said Ware.

The pre-cancer stage of cervical cancer makes it somewhat unique. By the



time other cancers are diagnosed, the cancerous cells have developed into full-blown cancer. With cervical cancer, there is dysplasia, or abnormal cells which have not yet progressed to cancer, and they can be treated.

Most adult women at some time in their lives have had conversations about the dreaded annual pelvic exam, commonly known as the PAP smear. Dreaded, though it may be,

it is one of the easiest and quickest methods of preventive screening for women to endure. Dysplasia can be detected with a PAP smear.

Although all women are at risk, but data shows it occurs most often in women over the age of 30. Human papillomavirus (HPV) is an extremely common family of sexually transmitted viruses that causes almost all cervical cancers.



Most individuals under the age of 30 can clear the virus on their own, but some infections last longer, and in addition to cervical cancer, it can cause cancer of the vagina, vulva, penis, anus, or the back of the throat, called oropharyngeal cancer. Oropharyngeal cancer includes the base of the tongue and tonsils.

In addition to proper screenings, cervical cancer can be prevented with the

HPV vaccine. Vaccination can begin at nine years of age, but the CDC recommends two doses of HPV vaccine between the ages of 11 and 12. The vaccine is most effective when it is given prior to exposure to the virus and before becoming sexually active but is still recommended if a person has already been exposed. The HPV vaccine is approved by the Food and Drug Administration to be given up to the age of 45, and the CDC recommendation is that everyone through age 26 gets the HPV vaccine if not already fully vaccinated.

Ware cannot emphasize enough the importance of preventive care when it comes to cervical cancer.

"The current recommendations for cervical cancer

screenings, or PAP smears, are every three years beginning at age 21 for a woman of average risk.

What are the signs/symptoms of cervical cancer?

- Bleeding during or after sexual intercourse.
- Abnormal bleeding.
- Changes in menstrual cycle, including prolonged bleeding, heavy bleeding, and more than one menstrual cycle per month.

If a woman experiences any of these symptoms, she should immediately see her doctor.

Ware encourages women to have honest and forthright conversations with their providers about cervical cancer and their general reproductive health.

Photo courtesy of Meharry Medical Group

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Urbanology: Therapeutic Use of Mushrooms



By W.A. Rogers

Mushrooms have been used as a healing option for thousands of years worldwide. Records show that in ancient Kemet {the name of Egypt before European rule}, plants and herbs were widely used for healing.

To this day, many African cultures make use of mushrooms for therapeutic and ceremonial options. In China, mushrooms such as reishi and shiitake have been used for over 2,000 years.

These two mushrooms are valued for their ability to improve the immune system and promote overall well-being. The Aztecs and other indigenous groups used mushrooms like Psilocybe for healing, spiritual ceremonies and for their visionary properties. Psilocybin mushrooms, also known as magic mushrooms or 'shrooms, can be used for stress management and recreational drugs.

Various mushrooms such as Birch Polypore have been used as a medicinal fungus and has been document-

ed in traditional European and Russian folk medicine. Modern scientific research has been exploring the potential health benefits of various types of mushrooms.

A few popular mushrooms used by many wellness practitioners are Chaga, a robust antioxidant that addresses daily free radical damage, Turkey Tail supports immune modulation, Lions Mane promotes mental clarity focus and memory also known for its Nerve Growth Factor {NGF}, Cordyceps supports energy stamina, cognition, and immunity, Reishi supports energy, stamina, and stress management.

It is important to note that the ceremonial and therapeutic use of psychedelic mushrooms by indigenous

cultures is very different than recreational or non-sacred use. These practices are part of indigenous traditions and are deeply tied to cultural and spiritual beliefs. You don't want to play around with magic mushrooms unless you know what you are doing.

There has been a growing interest in ethnomyology, which studies the traditional use of fungi by different cultures. This field of study aims to document and understand the traditional use of mushrooms in different cultural contexts, including their potential therapeutic applications.

The therapeutic use of mushrooms by African slaves in the southern United States is not extensively documented, but African slaves

brought with them a rich tradition of herbal medicine and healing practices from their diverse cultural backgrounds.

Ethnobotanical research, especially at many HBCUs, has focused on the historical contributions of traditional African medicine to the broader landscape of healing practices in the Americas, including using natural resources such as plants and fungi.

While many mushrooms can be used for cooking and healing, you have to be careful when eating wild mushrooms. Many can make you sick and even cause death. The Amanita phalloides mushroom, also known as the Death Cap, is one of the most poisonous mushrooms in the world and is responsi-

ble for most fatal mushroom poisonings.

This mushroom is dangerous because it resembles some edible species. While there are many benefits in using mushrooms for therapeutic and spiritual healing, you need to know what you are doing. It is best to use a holistic practitioner or a reputable nutritional company.

I use Auri Nutrition (www.tryauri.com). This company makes vegan, gluten-free mushroom gummies, a great natural way to build your immune system, plus help to improve focus and energy. There are many therapeutic benefits that mushrooms bring. If you have not tried using mushrooms for health and wellness, I suggest exploring the options.

Answers to Puzzle on page 17

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G	O	L	E	M		I	O	U		E	A	S	E	L
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C	A	B	B	A	G	E		P	L	A	Y	D	O	H
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P	I	N	T			S	A	P		E	C	A	S	H



HERBS ARE NATURE'S MEDICINE

The Endocrine System: Herbs to Treat the Entire Body

By Zakiyyah

The endocrine system consists of seven glands that secrete hormones into the bloodstream, carried to every organ and tissue. It helps control mood, growth, and development, and the way our organs work, including metabolism and reproduction.

In my herb course, the endocrine system falls under the earth element and encompasses three Zodiac earth signs: Taurus (which rules the endocrine system), Virgo (which rules the digestive system), and Capricorn (which rules the skeletal system). The seven glands are the adrenals, gonads, pancreas, thymus, thyroid, pituitary, and pineal glands, and not by coincidence, they are inte-

grally tied to the 7 Chakras.

Adaptogen herbs are best used for the endocrine system, as they provide deep nourishment for your total well-being and more resiliency to stress. They can build, tonify, and nourish your system for increased overall health.

The herbs in my glandular formula provide natural hormone-like herbs useful for the change of life, adolescence, maturity, sterility, frigidity, forgetfulness, anemia, general weakness, and tiredness. These, in part, include - dong quai, ginseng, licorice, black cohosh, sarsaparilla, kelp, ginger, golden seal, and lobelia.

To learn more, send me an email. You can inquire about my upcoming herb

courses that will take place via Zoom (and in person), launching in March 2024.

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GAMES

See answers on page 16 and 18

CROSSWORD

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						8		6
			1	4		5		
		9	2					3

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THEME: CLASSIC TOYS

ACROSS

1. Sri Lankan language
6. Something to chew on, especially for cows
9. Mascara holder
13. Muscat resident
14. “___ Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest”
15. Father, colloquially
16. Jewish folklore creature
17. Debtor’s letters
18. Art class prop
19. *Barbie’s little sister
21. *___ 4 game
23. One less than jack
24. *___ Frog educational toy
25. Nutcracker’s distinguishing feature
28. Taboo, alt. sp.
30. Cooking fat
35. Deserter’s acronym

37. President’s David
39. Shower accessory
40. Pro ___
41. Conical dwellings
43. Prep flour
44. *Thomas or Henry, e.g.
46. Law school test acronym
47. Genealogist’s creation
48. Maurice of “Where the Wild Things Are”
50. Flying saucers
52. Make mistakes
53. Chemically-induced curls
55. Harry Potter’s Hedwig
57. *Certain Patch
61. *Not real dough
65. Normal
66. Clingy seed container
68. ___ - ___ -la
69. Theater curtain fabric
70. Put into service
71. Female deer, pl.
72. Pub offering
73. Goo on a trunk

74. What’s in your e-wallet?

DOWN



1. Duds or threads
2. Wildly
3. French Sudan after 1960
4. All thumbs
5. Marine gastropod
6. Coconut fiber
7. *Shedding-type card game
8. Tie in tennis
9. Shark’s provision
10. Part of cathedral
11. Work detail
12. “Stop!” to marchers
15. Correspondence friend (2 words)
20. Make, as in a law
22. Edible type of grass
24. Complete payment (2 words)
25. *Banned lawn darts
26. Fully informed
27. Supreme Teutonic god



29. Get-out-of-jail money
31. Like Neverland boys
32. France’s longest river
33. Bid on a house, e.g.
34. *Certain gun ammo
36. “Best ___ schemes o’ Mice an’ Men”
38. “La Vie en rose” singer
42. Counter seat
45. Flamethrower fuel
49. Party barrel
51. Swaddle
54. Type of puzzle
56. Words in song, sing.
57. Intersection of two arcs
58. Ascus, pl.
59. “___ after reading”
60. Switch’s partner
61. Get ready, for short
62. Comedian Carvey
63. Ford contemporary
64. Jumble
67. North American country

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“Who Got Game? Basketball” by Derrick Barnes, illustrated by Jez Tuya

REVIEW by Terri Schlichenmeyer, Harlem News contributor

Practice, dribble a little, shoot more three-pointers, and you might jump right into a book like “Who Got Game? Basketball” by Derrick Barnes, illustrated by Jez Tuya.

Here we are, football season’s almost over, and your mind has turned to other things – namely, hoops set high over your head and a round bouncy basketball. Kids like you who “got game” have had it for over a century. Yes, the basketball game was created by Dr. James Naismith in 1891 in Massachusetts.

In the years since, basketball has changed a lot, thanks to what Derrick

Barnes calls “pioneers.” Julius “Dr. J” Erving improved the dunk. Before that, in 1950, the NBA first allowed Black basketball players on the teams. There have been super-tall players (Manute Bol and Gheorghe Muregan who were seven feet, seven tall) and smaller b-ballers – five-three Muggsy Bogues had a vertical jump of nearly four feet! Just two years after the game was invented, America had its first women’s team.

A lot of off-court people poured themselves into the game, too. Barnes writes, for example, about Pat Summitt, hoopster, leader, and “one of the greatest coaches in all of sports his-



Who Got Game Basketball author
CREDIT EyeSun Photography (Charlotte, NC)

tory.” Her record of 1,098 wins ranks her in first place in coaching women’s basketball and as the coach with the second-most wins overall.

You can probably guess that there are bucketfuls of stats in a book about buckets. Barnes lists NBA players who jumped to a team right out of high school. He writes about the greatest basketball park ever. He explains why winners cut down the net, how Title IX changed the game, why backboards rarely break into a zillion pieces anymore, high scores, bad injuries, “hoops movies,” and where you can pick up a game today.

So your 9-to-13-year-old loves basketball so much that they dribble a ball in their sleep? Do they think their favorite jersey is church-wear? Then you’ll be the hero of the day when you bring home “Who Got Game? Basketball.”

But first, there’s one big thing you need to know: this is not a how-to book. There are instructions outside here, no rules or plays to follow. Instead, author Derrick Barnes makes young b-ballers happy by sharing

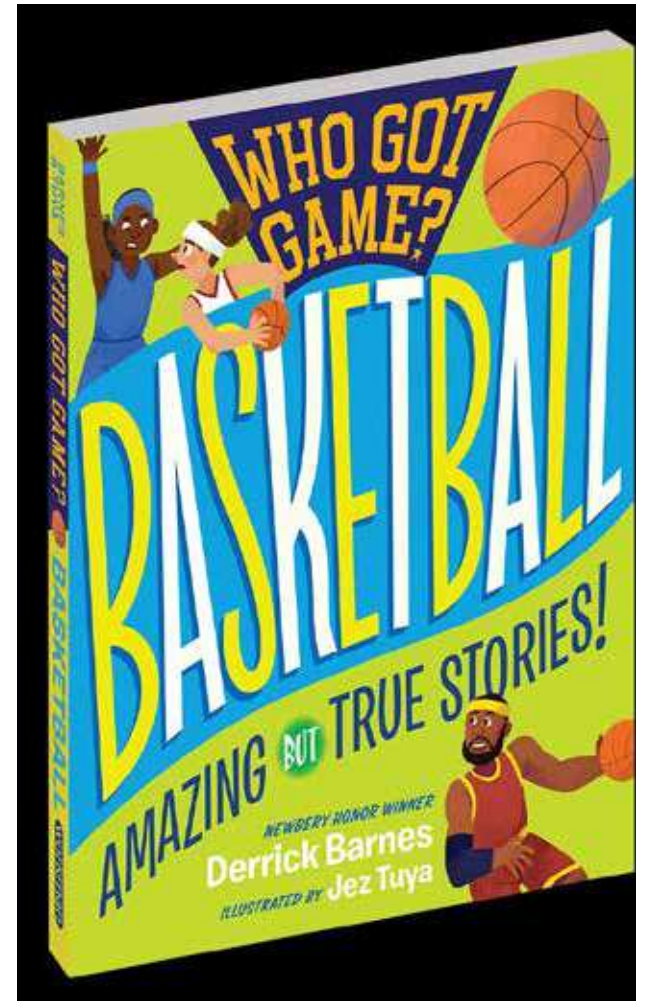
little-known info about the game they love, short lists, great stories about great players, wins and losses, and phrases they should know to talk the talk. All this knowledge is supported by colorful illustrations by Jez Tuya that kids will enjoy alongside the facts.

This book is for die-hard young b-ballers, but don’t be surprised if an adult finds a thing or two to learn here. “Who Got Game? Basketball” is a book any fan will want to jump on.

book cover courtesy of Workman Publishing - author photo by EyeSun Photography (Charlotte, NC)

“Who Got Game? Basketball” by Derrick Barnes, illustrated by Jez Tuya

c.2023, Workman Publishing \$16.99 172 pages



SUDOKU ANSWERS

8	4	2	7	3	5	9	6	1
1	9	3	4	2	6	7	8	5
5	7	6	8	9	1	2	3	4
9	1	4	6	5	2	3	7	8
6	2	5	3	8	7	1	4	9
3	8	7	9	1	4	6	5	2
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2	6	8	1	4	3	5	9	7
7	5	9	2	6	8	4	1	3

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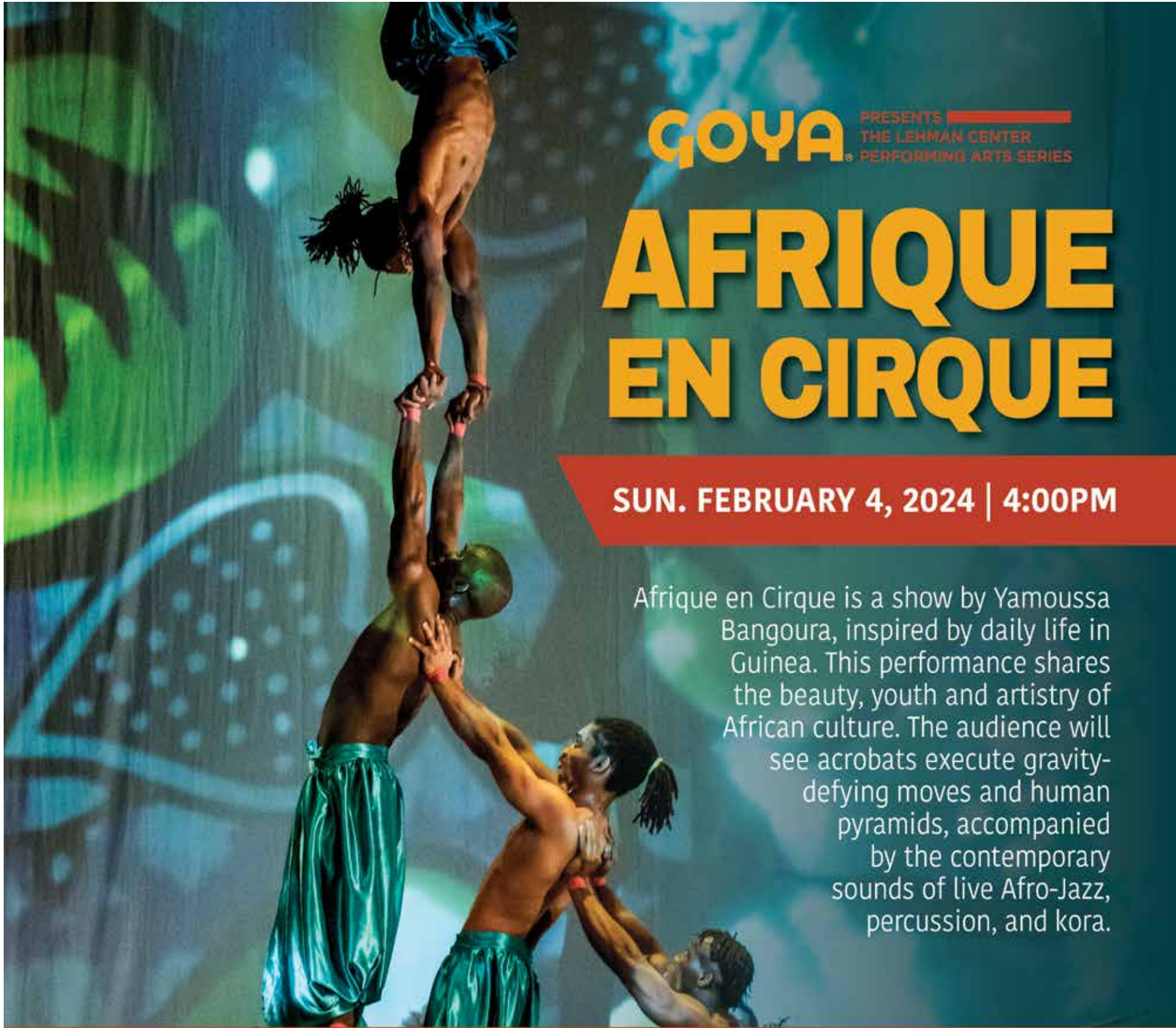
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