



HARLEM COMMUNITY
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. 7

February 15, 2024 – February 21, 2024

FREE



Ballet Icon Misty Copeland Dances Through History

see page 9



Opening Harlem is ... Music, Theater, Dance Exhibit at Harlem Hospital Center

see page 10



White House Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre Highlights President's commitment to Black Community

see page 13



Mayor Adams And Faith Leaders Launch Collective To Prevent Gun Violence

see page 3



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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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IN THIS ISSUE:

Community	3	Consumer	12
Expressions	4	National	13
Community	5	Education	14
Op Editorial	6	Health	15
Real Estate	7	Urbanology	16
Calendar	8	Games	17
Entertainment	9	Literary Corner	18
Cultural pg	10	Classified	19

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PAT STEVENSON

February is Black History Month. We continue to present features on Black History. Last week, in our February 8, 2024 issue, we presented our annual “Blacks on Broadway” feature. This issue is on our website at www.harlemcommunitynews.com. Start planning to see these shows. There are 25, enough for you to see a different show every week into the summer. These shows feature more than 200 Black actors. Could you go out and support them? We are also giving away tickets to some shows, such as “MJ: The Musical,” “The Lion King,” and “Aladdin.” Just go to our website and sign up for our Broadway ticket giveaway. We will announce winners on February 29, 2024.

I began publishing community newspapers 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, view past videos, current events, advertising, subscription information, and more. We are also on Instagram and Facebook.

Welcome To Our Black History Month issue!

**Pat Stevenson
Celebrating
30 years
Publishing**

Mayor Adams And Faith Leaders Launch Collective To Prevent Gun Violence

New York City Mayor Eric Adams and a coalition of multi-faith leaders from across the city launched the Citywide Clergy Collective, a group of 272 faith leaders committed to preventing gun violence in New York City, at the administration's annual interfaith breakfast.

Using a \$1.5 million grant from the New York State Department of Criminal Justice, Citywide Clergy Collective members will deliver resources, direct services, and community-building programs to all New Yorkers in all five boroughs as they respond to the needs and traumas that gun violence creates. The programs and services will be run by local faith leaders across the city, with assistance from the New York City Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD), Office of Neighborhood Safety, Office of Faith-Based and Community Partnerships, and New York City Police Department (NYPD).

"Public safety is the prerequisite to prosperity, and it takes all of us to deliver a safe city," said Mayor Adams. "That's why we are bringing together a multi-



denominational coalition of hundreds of faith leaders with city and state resources so we can prevent gun violence before the shooting starts. Together, we are making systemic investments that will lower crime and help communities heal. We are proud to continue the momentum we've built over the first two years of our administration, driving shootings down and making our city safer and more resilient for all New Yorkers."

"When it comes to public safety, every one of us has a role to play in keeping our communities safe. Time and time again, our faith

community has been there to answer the call," said First Deputy Mayor Sheena Wright. "As co-chair of the 'Gun Violence Prevention Task Force,' we have seen firsthand the power of a prevention-based approach and tackling the root causes of gun violence to keep our city safe. Together, with the help from every sector and community in New York City, we can end the gun violence epidemic."

"Public safety requires the public — all of our fellow New Yorkers — to look out and care for our neighbors. No one understands this better than our allies in the faith-based community," said Deputy Mayor for Strategic Initiatives Ana Almanzar. "Our city has seen real progress in stopping violence before it happens in our streets because of targeted investments in our young people, community support, and fearless crisis management system groups who bring peace every day. I applaud our faith-based

partners for leading by example and showing the endless possibilities when communities come together for a greater cause."

"Gun violence is a serious issue, and we must deal with it seriously. The complex challenges of gun violence are multi-faceted and go way beyond the gun," said Mayor's Office of Faith-Based and Com-

munity Partnerships Executive Director Pastor Gilford T. Monroe. "The partnership that Mayor Adams is leading with the faith community will change the way we deal with the root causes of the violence in this city. Ending gun violence must involve a holistic approach that includes comprehensive collaboration and community planning. This initial investment of \$1.5 million to fund the Citywide Clergy Collective's faith-led approaches to gun violence prevention is an important aspect in galvanizing our resources towards the high-risk youth and survivors of gun violence."

In addition to bringing together hundreds of multi-faith leaders to prevent gun violence in New York City, the Adams administration has systematically driven down homicides and shootings in New York City through an approach that utilizes both prevention

and intervention strategies. This past summer, Mayor Adams' Gun Violence Prevention Task Force released "A Blueprint for Public Safety," outlining a forward-thinking roadmap with upstream solutions to address gun violence throughout the five boroughs.

The report built upon all the work the Adams administration has undertaken to reduce gun violence by double digits and culminated in months of engagement with communities most impacted by gun violence, including young people, whose feedback was critical in shaping the strategies and recommendations that will ensure the city continues to build on the public safety gains made since January 2022.

Since the start of the administration in January 2022, the NYPD has also removed more than 14,000 illegal guns from New York City streets.



PONDER THIS! Black Newspapers Drumming Our Stories



By Hazel Rosetta Smith

African drums are more than musical instruments for entertainment. The drum has carried Africa’s rich history as a sacred source of spreading important and often urgent communication.

African drumming revealed the hope and despair of a people that had to persevere. Information was

its prime purpose to organize and keep spirits high through various beats that meant different things discernable to tribes across the continent.

Drums played a significant role in the history of slavery. It did not take long to discover that the slaves used drums for communication. The British, Dutch, and French slavers, suspicious about any form of communication between slaves, soon forbid drumming to curtail their fear of uprisings.

It is recorded that by 1776, a large number of slaves had learned to read and write. In 1872, Samuel Cornish and John Brown Russwurm printed the first African-American periodical called Freedom’s Journal in New York. As

African Americans migrated around the country, it opened the way for the circulation of newspapers to provide information to the rising Black population.

Black newspapers in a manner of speaking, began drumming our stories across the nation. Popular papers included: Philip Alexander Bell’s Colored American (1837–41), the North Star (1847–60), the National Era, The Frederick Douglass Paper (1851–63), the Douglass Monthly (1859–63), The Christian Recorder (1861–1902) and Daniel Rudd’s Ohio Tribune (later renamed the American Catholic Tribune, 1885-1897).

Communities depended on Black newspapers to keep them abreast of political meanderings that con-

trolled their lives and livelihood. Racist discrimination and disparities in the North; ongoing lynchings in the South, meager business opportunities and sometimes acknowledgements of the so-called new negroes who refused to be held back, became the highlights of daily editorials and opinion pages.

BLACK NEWSPAPERS MATTER! Black-owned newspapers publish news about our people, to be shared by all people. Various publications place an emphasis on positivity and celebration of our unsung heroes and sheroes; others may focus on daily issues of crime, disparities, and political chaos, while others circulate social, church, and community work.

The mindset of news gathering should be room



for it all. All aspects of our journey are important and worthy of noting in the media. We can choose to read the Black Press, choose to subscribe, but most importantly, realize that when we choose to advertise in a Black-owned newspaper, we are participating in the concept of the African drum continuing the heritage of a proud culture through communication.

Good news you can use has been the purpose of

Harlem Community News throughout its 30 years of publishing. Let pride preside – celebrate and rejoice, it is Black History Month.

[Hazel Rosetta Smith is a journalist, playwright, and artistic director of Help Somebody Theatrical Ministries and HRS Speaks! Retired, former Managing Editor and Woman’s Editor of the New York Beacon. Contact: misshazel@twc.com and online www.hazel-rosettasmith.com]



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Harlem Village Academy Hosts NY Scholarship Month

Harlem Village Academy West Charter School recently hosted an NYC Scholarship Month celebration and workshop for parents and guardians of kindergarten, first, and second-grade students with NYC Scholarship Accounts through the NYC Kids RISE Save for College Program.

Across the five boroughs, schools celebrated NYC Scholarship Month in January, an opportunity for new families to activate and view their children's NYC Scholarship Accounts for the first time!

As part of their college and career readiness efforts, schools host various events, workshops, and activities so that families know their children already have a resource for their educational futures. Each student's account starts with an initial \$100 seed investment, and there are opportunities to earn more over time. This builds on this financial asset



Left to Right: Harlem Village Academy West Charter School school team members Paul LoMedico, Managing Director of External Affairs & Board Liaison; Melissa Ortiz, Principal and Vicki Villamarin, Director of Special Projects; with NYC Kids RISE team members Shawntel Street, Deputy Director, School Networks (Charter Schools); Jackie Matos, Chief of Staff, Mark Lee, Managing Director, Executive Project Management; Sinead Keegan, Director, Community Leadership & Training Institute; and Narehan Mohammed, Community Engagement Associate. Photo by Bridget Ye for NYC Kids RISE

for higher education and encourages students to dream big about the future.

During the presentation about the Save for College Program, the Harlem Village Academy West Charter

School team worked with families to activate and view their students' NYC Scholarship Accounts and learn about how the Save for College Program is supporting their children's college and

career training in the future.

At Harlem Village Academy West Charter School, 297 students have NYC Scholarship Accounts, with more than \$107,000 invested in their college and career futures.

In celebration of NYC Scholarship Month, NYC Kids RISE, NYC Public Schools, the NYC Mayor's Office of Equity & Racial Justice, the Gray Foundation, and City officials recently announced that over 200,000 students across the city, including 75,000 new students, now have NYC Scholarship Accounts with nearly \$30 million invested for their future college and career training. Now, almost every kindergarten, first, and second grader in NYC public schools has a financial asset for their higher education. Their families can activate and view their new NYC Scholarship Accounts at nyckidsrise.org/activate to start receiving additional rewards.

NYC Kids RISE has provided schools with toolkits, guides, posters, outreach tools, and additional resources in multiple languages to encourage families to activate their child's NYC Scholarship Account and take other steps in the program. For support with

activating and viewing their child's account, families can reach out to their school, attend an upcoming virtual workshop at nyckidsrise.org/events, email NYC Kids RISE at info@nyckidsrise.org, or call the NYC Kids RISE hotline at 833-543-7473.



A Harlem Village Academy West family poses with the school's Money Tree Poster during the NYC Scholarship Month celebration and workshop for parents and guardians of kindergarten, first, and second-grade students with NYC Scholarship Accounts through the NYC Kids RISE Save for College Program. Photo by Bridget Ye for NYC Kids RISE

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By Mayor Eric Adams

Community Op-Ed: Getting Every Single Trash Bag Off Our Streets

New Yorkers deserve clean streets, free of smelly trash bags and rats. That's why we are taking the next leap forward in the Trash Revolution — our initiative to reimagine trash collection and remove every single trash bag from New York City's streets.

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.

Our Trash Revolution is a key part of this mission, giving New Yorkers the world-class sanitation services they deserve. New Yorkers shouldn't have to hold their noses or dodge

trash mountains as they walk home.

Our administration is rejecting that status quo and is delivering for everyday New Yorkers. We are making our streets cleaner by picking up trash more efficiently and cracking down on illegal dumping across the city.

But we are just getting started. Last week, we unveiled the prototype of a new kind of garbage truck that uses a mechanical arm to empty trash from new, on-street containers, like those you might see in European or Asian cities. This will allow us to pick up New Yorkers' trash quicker, cleaner, and smarter — and we developed this truck in a fifth of the time experts said it would take.

We also announced the next stage of containerization: a full-scale pilot in Harlem's Community Board 9, expanding from our initial ten-block pilot. This will be the first neighborhood in the city with zero black bags sitting on

the street waiting for pick-up. Rat sightings in those ten blocks fell by more than two-thirds year-over-year. That represents real progress, real fast.

The strategies we are testing in Harlem will make a huge difference in some of our biggest and densest neighborhoods, helping us tackle mountains of black bags at the source.

Since our administration came into office, we have been making history in the fight for cleaner streets. We established later set out times for trash, providing the highest level of street litter basket service ever for 23,000 baskets across our city.

By this fall, every single New Yorker in all five boroughs will have access to free, pain-free weekly curbside compost collection.

We are cracking down on illegal dumping and stepping up enforcement efforts. In fact, we issued 24 percent more violations over the past fiscal year than the prior year.

We have containerized

trash for restaurants, delis, bodegas, bars, and grocery stores. And, as of March 1, 2024, all businesses in New York City will have to put out their trash in containers. By this fall, all buildings with one to nine residential units will need to containerize their trash as well.

Here in America, New York City is leading the way as we use proven solutions that have been adopted in cities all over the world. Add it all up, and we will already have 70 percent of New York City's black bags off our streets by this fall. This is the most significant progress toward clean streets that New Yorkers have seen in generations.

No one thought this would be possible, but we are getting it done. As a result, New York City, which used to be known for its mean streets, will now be known for our clean streets.

Rats are moving on and moving out. And our city is becoming more livable than ever for everyday New Yorkers.



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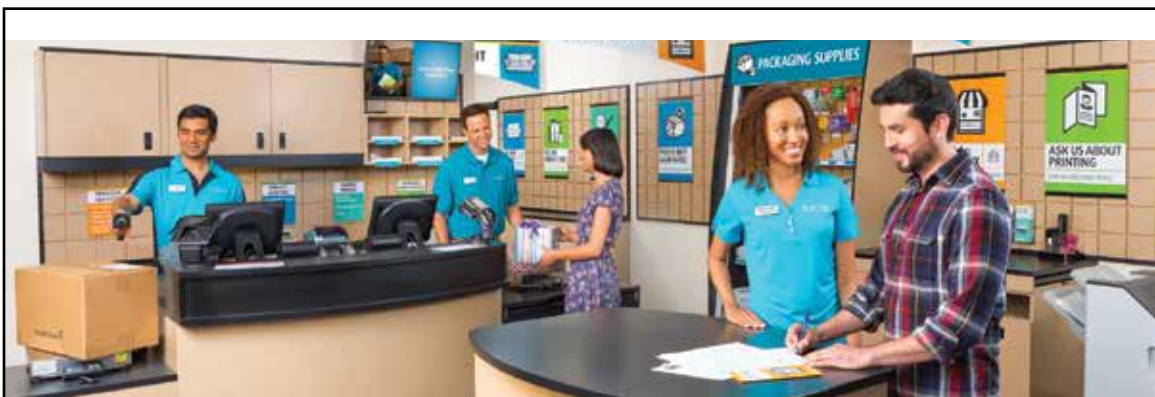
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Home Buying in Harlem Be Prepared to Buy Now



Rev. Dr. Charles Butler

Can anyone buy a home in Harlem? The secret is out. Everyone knows the answer, and it is a resounding no!

Home values in Harlem are getting so high that low-to-moderate-income families are being priced out of the market. No matter how much money you have saved, most lenders will use your debt-to-income (DTI) ratio to determine the amount of money they will lend you to purchase your home.

Many first-time home buyers are being slapped in the face with the cold reality that buying a home in Harlem is no joke and should not be taken lightly. These prospective buyers are discovering they are in a financial fight beyond their wildest imagination. They realized home values in Harlem were high but did not completely

understand the amount of money required to get to the closing table.

Most people will tell me that their monthly rent payments are already equivalent to a mortgage, which is why they want to buy a home. What many first-time buyers need to take into consideration is the down payment and the closing costs. A conservative estimate of these costs can be between 10 and 20% of the purchase price.

For these prospective buyers, my advice is to not get discouraged. Stay focused on your goal. You must understand that the housing market is very competitive. You must become 'mortgage ready' as fast as possible, or else you will be left behind.

Brownstone's market prices now will typically range in the millions of dollars. If you are considering purchasing this type of home, understand that you will be competing with the 'big boys' so you better bring your "A" game and have plenty of money just to join the conversation. Some grant programs may assist you, but the bulk of the money must come from you.

Your first step towards homeownership must be to

create a **personal purchasing plan**. What exactly do you need to do to become a homeowner? You might need to increase your savings or improve your credit score. You must have a plan because if you fail to plan, ultimately, you will not succeed. You must write out your plan, including every detail in the homebuying process.

Create a monthly household budget and review all your monthly expenses. Identify all wasteful spending. Determine which expenses can be either eliminated or reduced. This will help increase your monthly savings. You must now start to save as much money as possible aggressively. You must have a realistic savings plan in place. If you are to make your dream of homeownership a reality, hold on to that dream, stay determined, and believe it can happen.

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.

MTA Procurement

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 15 6:30pm
16th Annual Black
History Month
Celebration at
Schomburg Center
for Research
in Black Culture**

The Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, located at 515 Malcolm X Blvd will present the Harlem Chamber Players' 16th Annual Black History Month Celebration. The concert will feature three phenomenal Black Women. Harpist Ashley Jackson will open with Take Me to the Water for solo harp from her recent album, Ennanga, followed by Mar Calmo from Recife for solo harp, strings, and percussion with members of The Harlem Chamber Players.. The featured guest artist is Nathalie Joachim, who will perform her latest work, Ki moun ou ye. The multi-disciplinary performing artist Helga Davis will host this event. This concert is free and open to the public. RSVP is required. Go to harlemchamberplayers.org for more information.

**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-



Feb 17 Flip Side Cast at Greater Hood

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

**Feb 23 7:00pm
Harlem opera Theater
at Schomburg Center**

Harlem Opera Theater will Salute Black History with a Tribute to Harry Belafonte, Singer, Actor, Activist, and Producer at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture. The program will feature from the Georges Bizet opera, Carmen Jones, callypso, and spirituals. Harlem Opera Theater artists: Denisha Ballew, Soprano; Daveda Browne, Mezzo-Soprano; Charles Williamson, Tenor; Virdell Williams, Baritone. Professor Gregory Hopkins, Artistic Director, will accompany the classical singers on piano. The program is free and open to the public. Registration required.

**Feb 24 4pm
Black History Month at
Central Baptist Church**

Thelma Hill Performing Arts Center in association with Central Baptist Church of New York City will present its 2nd annual Black History Month Program. The event is located at 166 West 92nd Street. The event is Free to the public. The program will include three

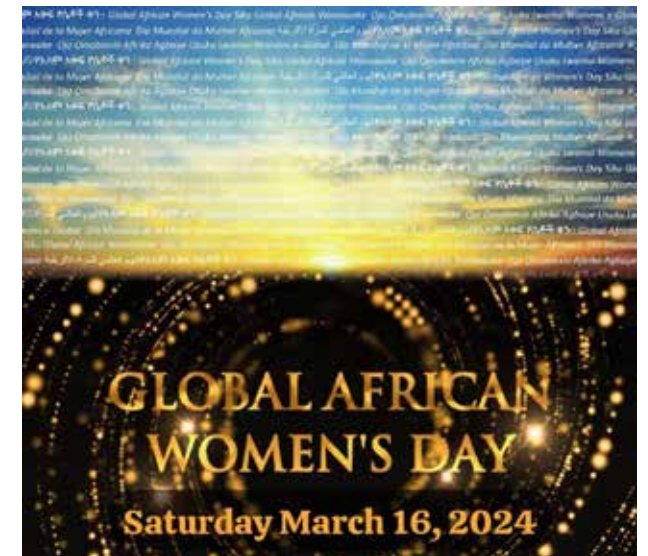
bible-themed works by choreographer Walter Rutledge, featuring dancers Amina Konate and Tevin Johnson. The works will revive Johnson's solo set to 2 Chronicles and extend the work with another selection from Hebrew 11, narrated by theater legend James Earl Jones. Two additional sections, a solo for Konate and a new duet for the pair, will also be offered.

**Mar 16 1:00pm
GLOBAL AFRICAN
WOMEN'S DAY
at Alhambra Ballroom**

A historic gala of African women in Harlem, spanning linguistic and cultural landscapes during the annual UN women's conference. Alhambra Ballroom is located at 2116 Adam Clayton Powell Junior Boulevard, Harlem. Celebrate the incredible achievements and contributions of African women from around the world. This will be an afternoon filled with inspiration, empowerment, and connections! Hear from renowned speakers, activists, and network with like-minded individuals who are passionate about uplifting African women everywhere. Mark your calendars, SAVE THE DATE, gather your friends, and join us for an unforgettable afternoon of empowerment at GLOBAL AFRICAN WOMEN'S DAY! Registration is \$90. For sponsorship and ticket information, contact Deborah C. Nelson at Globalawd@gmail.com Message line only 646-535-0755. A portion of the proceeds will support travel grants for women living in rural areas and distressed communities to participate in forums where their issues can be represented.



Feb 29 MET



Mar 16 Global African Women's Day at Alhambra Ballroom

Feb 23 Salute to Harry Belafonte at Schomburg

Feb 14 Live Jazz at ALKE



Feb 24 Central Baptist Church

Ballet Icon Misty Copeland Dances Through History

By Erin Lewenauer

Misty Copeland made history in 2015 when she became the first African-American principal ballerina at the American Ballet Theatre, the first in the company's 75-year history. Her celebrated career is now documented in an intimate memoir of rocky paths and friendship, *The Wind at My Back: Resilience, Grace, and Other Gifts from My Mentor, Raven Wilkinson*.

The story follows her mentor and fellow ballerina, Raven Wilkinson. Copeland honors Wilkinson, who had a similarly rough road through the all-white ballet world in the 1950s and 60s. Wilkinson faced racism, hostility, and even death threats for entering this exclusive and competitive world. Copeland shares her own struggles with racism and exclusion in her pursuit of this dream career and honors and recognizes the women who paved the way for her. She and Wilkinson have a deep connection that helped her rise up, achieve her dream, and inspire others.

Copeland was born in Kansas City, Missouri, and raised in San Pedro, California, where she began her study of ballet at the late age of 13. Copeland and her siblings grew up with a single mother who divorced several times, which resulted in financial instability. Her first encounter with dance was on the drill team during middle school. The coach was struck by her wild talent and recommended that she attend ballet classes



MasterClass

taught by Cynthia Bradley at the local Boys & Girls Club. Though age 13 was a late start, her intense natural ability led her to take classes with Bradley at the San Pedro Ballet School.

At 15, she won first place in the Music Center Spotlight Awards and moved on to study at the San Francisco Ballet School and American Ballet Theatre's Summer Intensive on full scholarship. From there, she joined American Ballet Theatre's Studio Company in 2000, was promoted to the corps de ballet in 2001, and in 2007 became the company's third African-American female Soloist. Through all this, she overcame judgment of her skin color and athletic body type. Copeland is very versatile, performing a variety of classical and contemporary roles. One of her

most significant roles was performing the title role in *Firebird* in 2012 with brand new choreography by revered choreographer Alexei Ratmansky. In 2014, she again made history as the first Black woman to perform the lead role of "Odette/Odile" in *Swan Lake*.

Copeland's passion is giving back. She has worked with many charities and dedicated her time to mentoring young dancers. She is the author of the bestselling memoir "Life in Motion" and other books. In 2014, she received an honorary doctorate from the University of Hartford for her contributions to classical ballet and diversifying the art form. Copeland is now an icon, and her passion, drive, and exceptional skill inspire and motivate dancers worldwide.

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Opening harlem is . . .Music, Theater, Dance Exhibit at Harlem Hospital Center

Community Works/New Heritage Theatre Group and Harlem Hospital Center are celebrating the historic launch of a permanent exhibition of harlem is . . .

Theater, Music, and Dance at Harlem Hospital Center. This dynamic, landmark multimedia installation is a unique salute to people who have built and are sustaining

Harlem's cultural legacy. For over two decades, the harlem is... exhibition series has chronicled a century of the Harlem community's evolution and honored more than 100 legendary people, places, and institutions that anchor that history. For music, theater, and dance, each component illuminates a different aspect of Harlem's character and culture, weaving together research, interviews, and creative writing by young people with archival and contemporary elements.

The exhibit will be open to individuals and small groups three days a week starting February 13, 2024. Hours are Tuesdays 10 am to 2 pm., and Thursdays and Saturdays, 12 to 4 pm. Visitors should check in with the hospital desk at 506 Lenox Ave/ Malcolm X Boulevard through the 136th Street entrance before going to the second floor.

Barbara Horowitz, Community Works president, commented, "We are confident that

this installation will endure as a lasting draw for visitors, students, and community groups." New Heritage Executive Producer Voza Rivers added that the hospital is a center that highlights arts, and the exhibit is an opportunity for community partnerships to build on a common history.

Harlem Hospital Center is a center for major art installations. The Hospital's Mural Pavilion is home to WPA-era murals renowned for being among the first to reflect people of color at work. It also remains home to a 30-foot timeline honoring Harlem's history



over the century, which is part of the lasting exhibit. "We are so proud that generations to come will be able to view this landmark exhibit along with the historic murals," said Horowitz.

Supporting information for the exhibit is available at <https://www.harlem-is.org> and with posts on www.instagram.com/harlemislegacy and at www.facebook.com/communityworksnyc. The website has downloadable curriculum materials for teachers, students,

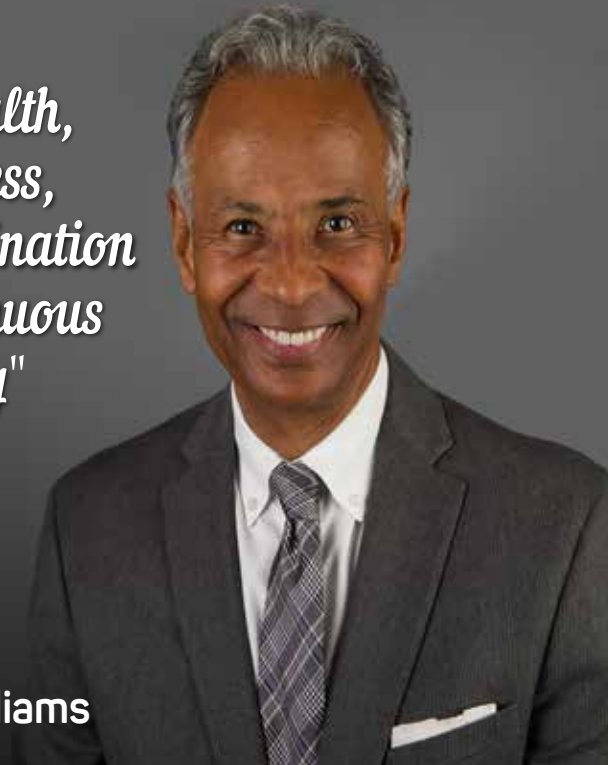
and community groups.

Arrangements for group visits during listed hours should be made by emailing bh@communityworksnyc.org, 917-757-2242, or emailing HarlemPublicAffairs@nychhc.org, 212-939 1372.

Whirlwind Creations Inc. designed the exhibit with contemporary photographs by Ruth Morgan. The Harlem is . . . program is dedicated to the memory of Community Works' Board Chairman Michael Davidson.



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Dr. George Williams



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Romance Scams on the Rise and Elderly are Particularly Vulnerable

(StatePoint)

They say, “you can’t buy love,” but scammers have figured out a way to exploit it for profit.

Romance scams are at an all-time high and, while victims cross all demographics, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) reports that elders are increasingly targeted. Why? Because they often have retirement savings at their disposal and may be more isolated and less tech savvy.

“Romance scammers often manipulate emotions to gain trust,” says Mark Kwapiszeski, head of enterprise fraud for PNC. “Those who fall victim end up putting feelings above logic. This can create embarrassment and, as a result, these crimes are less likely to be reported.”

Scammers will create convincing profiles on dat-

ing and social media apps, reaching out to their target feigning familiarity or attraction. Things move quickly, but there is always a reason they can’t meet on video or in person. They may claim to have a reason that requires them to be overseas or out of reach. They tell their target everything they want to hear, and the hook is set.

Suddenly, a crisis arises that they insist they need financial help to mitigate. Or maybe they need finances to set up a new life together. They ask for the money, but would prefer it be sent in a form like cryptocurrency or gift card, where there is little chance of the victim ever recovering it.

Such scams are highly effective. In 2022 alone, romance scams resulted in \$1.3 billion lost, more than double the money lost in the

previous year, according to the FTC.

To add insult to injury, scammers may convince their target to send them revealing photos they will later use to extort them. They may even play the long game and build trust over time, then convince their target to invest with them, without the victim ever getting any return.

“A romance scammer can invest a long time in cultivating trust, which makes these scams particularly nefarious,” Kwapiszeski says.

To protect against potential romance scams, follow these tips:

- Before sending money or sharing financial information, consult a friend or family member. Simply talking to someone not involved in the situation is often enough to identify red flags.
- Trust your gut. If some-

thing seems too good to be true, it probably is.

• Beware of “love bombing,” when a person lavishes you with excessive flattery, affection and praise early in the relationship to manipulate your emotions.

• Be wary of strangers reaching out on social media.

• If you like someone, ask for a quick video chat. If they refuse or make up outlandish excuses, that’s a red flag.

• Stay alert to photos or biographical details that don’t match up with what someone’s told you.

• Use image and name-reverse searches to validate the identity of people you meet online.

• Never send intimate photos to strangers or invest without doing your due diligence.

• Confide in family and friends if you grow suspi-



icious.

Elders have lost homes, emptied out retirement accounts and risked lifetime savings for a love interest that never truly existed. Once the shock abates and the money is gone, the shame sets in and some have even resorted to self-harm instead of admitting to being defrauded in this way. If a loved one falls victim to a romance scam, it’s important to respond with empathy.

If you believe you or someone you love has been a victim of fraud, PNC

Bank’s web resources, as part of its Security and Privacy Center (pnc.com), can help. After taking immediate measures to protect yourself, block the scammer on all accounts, change your passwords, and report the incident to the FTC and FBI.

The best line of defense against romance scams is awareness. Understanding common tactics can help you stay protected.

PHOTO SOURCE: (c) Oleg Elkov / iStock via Getty Images Plus

BLACKS ON BROADWAY

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White House Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre Highlights President's commitment to Black Community

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

In an exclusive telephone interview, White House Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre underscored President Biden's unwavering commitment to addressing the Black community's critical issues. Reflecting on promises made during the 2020 campaign, Jean-Pierre outlined key achievements and ongoing initiatives directly impacting African Americans and other historically underserved communities.

"At the onset of President Biden's term, the country faced economic turmoil and the devastating effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. The president, true to his campaign commitment, prioritized equity, ensuring the Black community received fair access to COVID-19 vaccines," said Jean-Pierre.

"He made sure that small businesses got back on their feet, our schools reopened, and the child tax credit put money into people's pockets. All those

things were important to our community."

The more than 10-minute discussion also delved into the significance of the American Rescue Plan, which was pivotal in supporting various facets of the Black community. The first Black woman to serve as White House press secretary, Jean-Pierre highlighted the impact of the Biden-Harris administration's policies on economic recovery, small business revival, and other measures that directly provided essential financial relief to individuals.

"Economic indicators demonstrate significant progress since President Biden took office. Black unemployment, which stood at 9.2 percent, has notably declined to 5.9 percent as of October," said Jean-Pierre, emphasizing the administration's commitment to economic revitalization.

Jean-Pierre also noted the importance of net worth, noting a remarkable 60 percent



increase for African Americans. She highlighted the historic investment of \$7 billion in historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) and the doubling of Black business ownership since the onset of the pandemic.

"The president has consistently prioritized equity across various policy areas, including healthcare, education, and police reform," said Jean-Pierre, also the first openly gay person to helm the White House briefing room.

"Executive orders were issued to ban chokeholds and implement strong use-of-force policies when congressional action stalled," Jean-Pierre added.

She noted that Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris have regularly worked to uplift Black and Brown communities, including their fight for voting rights, police reform, and cutting prices at the cash register.

"Lowering prices is what the president works on every day,"

the press secretary asserted. The prices of eggs, milk, and used cars and trucks are lower, and we will do everything we can to continue to lower prices. The work continues."

The conversation extended to Biden's recognition of the Black Press's significance, with Jean-Pierre assuring ongoing access to the president for regular engagement and discussions.

"The president understands the credibility and importance of the Black Press in conveying

messages directly to the community. We are committed to ensuring continuous access and engagement," affirmed Jean-Pierre. "We're going to ensure the Black Press has access to the president. That's what he wants—he wants to speak directly to you. This president understands the importance of speaking to the Black Press, and he wants to have regular engagement with all of you, and we're going to make sure that happens."

Official White House Photo by Carlos Fyfe

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Trade Secrets to Success: Unveiling the Power of Vocational Programs



By Tonya Sims

The rising cost of college, paired with crippling student debt, begs the question: is a traditional four-year degree the only path to success? While college undoubtedly offers benefits, vocational and technical programs have emerged as viable alternatives, providing individuals with high-wage careers without the hefty price tag.

Beyond the Textbook: Hands-On Skills for Real-World Jobs

Unlike traditional academic programs, vocational-technical programs focus on practical, hands-on training in specific trades. From welding and carpentry to IT and healthcare, these programs offer students the pathway to gain the proficiency necessary to hit the ground running in their chosen careers. This emphasis on practical application translates to immediate job readiness, allowing

graduates to enter the workforce with confidence and marketable skills.

Debt-Free and Gainfully Employed: A Brighter Financial Future

The cost difference between vocational programs and traditional universities is stark. Vocational programs typically last shorter durations and cost significantly less. This translates to less debt and quicker entry into the workforce, allowing graduates to start earning and building financial self-sufficiency sooner. In many cases, apprenticeships within these programs even offer paid learning opportunities, eliminating financial burdens.

Filling the Skills Gap: Addressing Market Demands

Vocational programs address a crucial need in the labor market – a deficit of skilled workers in various trades. From plumbers and electricians to HVAC and automotive technicians, these fields experience consistent job growth and high demand. Graduates of vocational programs are well-positioned to capitalize on this opportunity, securing stable, well-paying jobs with excellent career prospects.



Diverse Opportunities and Personal Fulfillment

The notion that vocational programs are limited is outdated. Today, these programs offer diverse options in many different sectors, ranging from robotics and cybersecurity to culinary arts and graphic design; the spectrum of possibilities is expansive. This allows individuals to pursue careers that align with their passions and skills, fostering personal fulfillment alongside financial stability.

Education Tailored

to Individual Needs: Not a One-Size-Fits-All Approach

While college offers invaluable academic knowledge and personal growth, it may not be the optimal path for everyone. Individuals with hands-on learning preferences, a specific career focus, or financial constraints may find their calling in vocational programs. Recognizing this diversity in learning styles and career goals is crucial to ensuring everyone has access to fulfilling and financially se-

cure futures.

Conclusion: Breaking the Barrier, Embracing New Horizons

In conclusion, vocational and technical programs are not backups; they're MVPs and offer an invaluable alternative to traditional college education. By providing practical skills, financial benefits, and diverse career opportunities, these programs empower individuals to achieve financial independence and personal fulfillment. As we move forward, disman-

ling the misconception of a one-size-fits-all education system and promoting diverse pathways to success is essential. Every individual deserves the opportunity to find their niche, and vocational programs offer a bright light. So, whether you dream of styling hair, wiring a high-rise, or navigating the intricacies of insurance, explore the exciting world of vocational programs and discover your unique path to success! Remember, a "signing day" might just be in your future!

Empowering Survivors: The WISP Scholarship Program

By Lamez Kinsey, Resource Editor



The WISP Scholarship Program offers hope and empowerment to female survivors of domestic violence in our community. With awards of \$6,000 and deadlines on March 1 and November 1, 2024,

this program provides vital financial support for survivors pursuing higher education.

WISP, or Women's Independence Scholarship Program, breaks barriers to education and fosters self-sufficiency for sur-

vivors. Whether studying part-time or full-time, survivors can apply for assistance continuously.

Applicants must be domestic abuse survivors, separated from their abusers for a year. They must be U.S. citizens or residents, show financial need, and be accepted to

a U.S. educational program. They must also plan to enter the job market and have received help from a domestic violence agency for six months.

Many recipients are mothers, showing the program's impact on families and future generations.

Apply at the WISP Scholarship Program and take the first step toward independence.

For assistance, contact lady@blackgate-motoring.com. Let's support survivors on their education, empowerment, and self-sufficiency journey.

Resource Columnist

Beyond Bias: Building a Compassionate Future in Health Care

By Lynn St. Hilaire, Vice President of Clinical Services for MetroPlusHealth

At the age of 10, my world was shaken when my father, behind the wheel on the way home, clutched his chest in agony. Unable to drive, I wrestled the steering wheel from his hands and guided the car into the emergency driveway at New York Presbyterian Queens. Panic set in as a swarm of medical professionals rushed to my father's aid.

In that frigid emergency room, a compassionate nurse emerged. She sat with me, offering reassurance throughout the ordeal. However, this isn't always everyone's experience. This was a pivotal moment for me that set the stage for a broader discussion on the disparities in healthcare. While circumstances such as mine are universally distressing, the anxiety is heightened when the care received fails to address or, worse yet, exacerbates the pain. To be overlooked in the system and feel misunderstood by your care provider is a reality that people experience every day.

This is the reality for countless Black people navigating our healthcare system. From inconsistent care standards to the haunting figures of Black maternal mortality, these disparities are not faceless statistics. They are an urgent call to action we need to answer as care professionals. Here are three steps that providers can take to build an equitable future in healthcare:

Pre-Empt Distrust

A visit to the doctor can evoke a sense of apprehension. For Black individuals, however, there is an additional layer of concern—being mindful of one's appearance to avoid unfair treatment. According to a recent KFF survey,

a staggering 55% of Black adults express the need to manage their appearance to ensure fair treatment from providers meticulously. This heightened awareness reflects a broader societal issue, wherein individuals may feel compelled to manage not only their health concerns but also the potential biases they might encounter based on their racial identity. Other patients of color may opt to have someone on the phone during medical visits, which reveals a deeper issue—systemic distrust.

Healthcare professionals should be aware of their patients' skepticism, actively seeking to understand their experiences and what they bring to the bedside. To alleviate this skepticism, practitioners should prioritize building familiarity and make it the cornerstone of how they provide care.

Listen to Understand

Few in healthcare have the intention of mistreating others. But, the environment sometimes ingrains certain beliefs. In interactions with patients, these unconscious biases can lead to neglect or downplaying of concerns. It is essential to prioritize listening and acknowledging individual experiences, especially within the broader context of cultural nuances. Patients, particularly from marginalized communities, crave treatment for symptoms as well as an understanding of their unique concerns. The key lies in recognizing the depth of these experiences and ensuring that healthcare also considers the impact on an individual's life experiences to establish a care model that conveys the sentiment of acknowledging, listening, and understanding each individual's perspective.



Dismantle Barriers

The key to dismantling systemic barriers lies in everyday actions. We must ensure that information reaches the communities that need it most through their own messengers. At MetroPlusHealth, taking a local approach is how we connect with residents from diverse neighborhoods throughout New York City via community events, non-traditional advertising methods, and embedding it into how we serve our members.

Many years ago, when that nurse extended compassionate care to me, it not only served as the catalyst for my journey into healthcare, but also ignited a commitment to dismantle health inequities. Closing the gap in health insurance coverage, rectifying uneven access to services, and addressing poorer health outcomes among marginalized populations requires a boots-on-the-ground management model, along with a reprogramming of the implicit biases that permeate our healthcare system. As I reflect on those experiences, I invite us all to write a new narrative in healthcare - one that listens intently and seeks to understand diverse perspectives. The future of healthcare should echo with equality, understanding, and a shared commitment to transformative change.



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Urbanology: Yasuke, The African Samurai



By W.A. Rogers

African History Month became necessary because the history of African contributions to the world had to be hidden to justify the physical and mental enslavement of Africans throughout the world. The

African Diaspora is truly a sleeping giant. If ever awakened, it would become a very powerful force.

We focus on the many accomplishments Africans have made in the U.S. because if you consider yourself to be an African American, your history {or his-tory} is only 500 years old. If you consider yourself an African born in America or the Caribbean, your history goes back to the beginning of humanity.

Knowledge is power. The more we know about the hidden facts about the African influence worldwide, the more we can understand who we are and

our ability to adjust to any environment or culture. Yasuke is a good example; he was the first foreign-born Samurai in Feudal Japan.

Yasuke was born in Mozambique in 1555. He was sold into slavery following the fall of the Abyssinian Bengal African Kingdom, ruled by Ethiopians. An Italian Jesuit missionary, Alessandro Valignano, was able to secure Yasuke as a bodyguard and servant during a trip to Japan.

When they arrived in Kyoto, Japan, in 1579, the sight and strength of the 6 foot 2 African caught the attention of Oda Nobunaga, a powerful Japanese warlord.

Nobunaga trained Yasuke in the way of the Samurai, which was very difficult even for many Japanese, who had to undergo difficult and sometimes brutal training to become skilled members of the elite Samurai class.

It was twice as difficult for the African foreigner. Yasuke prevailed and became a significant factor in helping Lord Nobunaga unify Japan during the Sengoku period. Nobunaga was known for his innovative military tactics and willingness to adopt new technologies and strategies, with an African as one of his most trusted warriors.

With Yasuke at his side, Nobunaga's military campaigns and political maneuvering allowed him to expand his influence and conquer a significant portion of Japan. In 1582, Nobunaga was betrayed by one of his own generals, Akechi Mitsuhide, and forced to commit seppuku {ritual suicide} at the Honno-ji temple in Kyoto. (I was able to visit the temple when I was in Kyoto.)

Yasuke was not Japanese, so he was spared from committing seppuku, but he was forced to relinquish his rank and title. Yasuke was deported back to Africa, where he lived as a Jesuit

missionary until his death. When we talk about African history, it is important to know an African played a role in laying the foundation for the unification of Japan. There were talks of a film starring Chadwick Boseman as Yasuke, unfortunately, Boseman died in 2020 before the film could go into production. However, there is an animated fantasy series about Yasuke on Netflix. Craig Shreve wrote a book about Yasuke entitled "The African Samurai," which is an interesting read.

Answers to Puzzle on page 17



HERBS ARE NATURE'S MEDICINE

DIY Healing with Crystals, Herbs, and Essential Oils

By Zakiyyah

It is crucial to explore natural solutions to our everyday health challenges in these times when the quality of our health is constantly bombarded. Join us to actively participate in blending herbs and essential oils to eliminate disease and restore vitality for your whole family/community. Use crystals (and their elixirs) to easily cleanse and balance overactive or depleted energy in our organs/systems.

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will learn simple methods to restore energy and manage your stress naturally.

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GAMES

See answers on page 16 and 18

CROSSWORD

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THEME: LOVE

ACROSS

- Zagreb native
- Not St. or Blvd.
- Tucked in
- Whatchamacallit
- Robert Redford's Sundance _____
- In a cold manner
- Tiny island
- Mad King George's number
- Hearing, e.g.
- *Love's late Nirvana husband
- *Star-_____
- *Air Supply's "Making Love Out of Nothing at _____"
- Elementary particle
- Tire meas.
- Land of Israel
- *Joe Cocker and Jennifer Warnes: "Love lifts us up where we _____"
- Ladder crosspiece
- Frenzied
- London's Thames, e.g.

- _____-European language
- Call it quits
- Very bright star
- What procedural and epidural have in common
- Crosby's and Still's partner
- Mountain valley
- Final words
- Future J.D.'s hurdle
- Food scrap
- Tax
- Pen point
- *"All You Need Is Love" band, with The
- *Letters to Juliet destination
- Habituate
- NHL surface
- Ancient marketplace
- Like many bathroom floors?
- Blunderbuss, e.g.
- Entrenched (2 words)
- Whirlpool
- Volleyball court center
- English homework assignment

DOWN

- Computer-related imaging acronym
- CISC alternative
- Capital of Norway
- Single-cell protozoan
- Bottom lines
- Similar
- One of the Tudors
- Authoritative proclamation
- Single pip cards
- The Container Store purchase, pl.
- "What _____ can I say?"
- T-shirt, after tied
- Chemical cousin
- Homer's epic
- Actor Lowe
- Deviation from the norm
- *U2's "In the Name of Love" song
- First light of day
- Lemur from Madagascar
- Damien's prediction
- Ding-a-_____
- Convex molding
- *"Love means _____ having to say you're sorry"
- *"Love Actually" star
- Hockey score
- *True Love's _____
- Feudal lord
- Loafed
- "Holy moly!"
- Rant
- "Peace" with fingers (2 words)
- Phony
- Teeth mark
- Children's writer Blyton
- Old, in Scottish
- Three pointer
- Heater outlet
- Wooden pegs
- Rigoletto's "La donna mobile," e.g.
- Pool tool
- One or some

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Black History Month Books for Kids

REVIEW by Terri Schlichenmeyer, Harlem News contributor

You know your history. You know about slavery, Jim Crow, Harriet Tubman, and Malcolm X- all those things and more. So now make sure your child knows by bringing home these great Black History Month books for kids.

Since forever, African Americans have been first-rate gardeners and farmers and in “The Last Stand” by Antwan Eady, illustrated by Jarrett and Jerome Pumphrey (Knopf, \$18.99), Mr. Earl’s grandson worries about his Papa, who runs a farmer’s market.

Two summers ago, there were five people with country roadside stands. Now, it’s just Mr. Earl. What will the people in their community do if there’s no fresh pro-

duce or fresh eggs? Who will have peppers for Mr. Johnny or pumpkins for Ms. Rosa? What will happen on the day when Papa’s “too tired” to go to his market stall? This book, and the stories it can lead to, will help your 3-to-5-year-old learn more about everyday Black history.

If your ancestors came north in the Great Migration, you’ll want to bring “Everywhere Beauty is Harlem” by Gary Golio and art by E.B. Lewis (Calkins Creek, \$18.99).

When photographer Roy DeCarava came to Harlem in the early 1940s, he wound up in Harlem. And so, after work every evening, he slipped film into his camera, and he went hunting for treasures – not gold or jewels, but people. A

man snoozing on the subway, a little boy drawing with sidewalk chalk, an artist standing streetside with his wares, not one of them escaped his notice. Looking into the eyes of those people he captured on film, “Roy sees Harlem.”

Your 3-to-7-year-old will want to see, too. Be sure to read the biography at the end of this tale, so you can give your child the full, authentic story.

And finally, if your 6-to-9-year-old needs to know about a legend, read “Fighting With Love: The Legacy of John Lewis” by Lesa Cline-Ransome, illustrated by James E. Ransome (Simon & Schuster, \$18.99).

Here, your child will learn that John Lewis was the son of a sharecropper, and he dreamed of a better life. He wanted an education, and he sneaked out and got one. He was a teenager before he heard the words “justice” and “segregation,” and he knew instantly that they were important. When he left on a bus to go to Seminary school, his mother warned him not to get in trouble, but how could he not?

“Fighting with Love” is wonderfully illustrated, but the story’s longer and more in-depth. You may find in the picture book section for little kids, but older children are the right audience for it. For them, this is an excellent introduction to Lewis’s life and historical biographies.

If you need more Black History Month reading for your child, or if you’ve got older kids itching to learn more, then ask your favorite librarian or bookseller for help.

Black History Month Books for Kids
c.2024, various publishers \$18.99 each various page counts



SUDOKU ANSWERS

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

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