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

COMMUNITY

# QUEENS NEWS

"Good News You Can Use"

Vol. 30 No. 6

February 8, 2024 – February 14, 2024

FREE



**After Claudine  
Gay's Resignation,  
Who And What Will  
Colleges Defend?**

see page 20



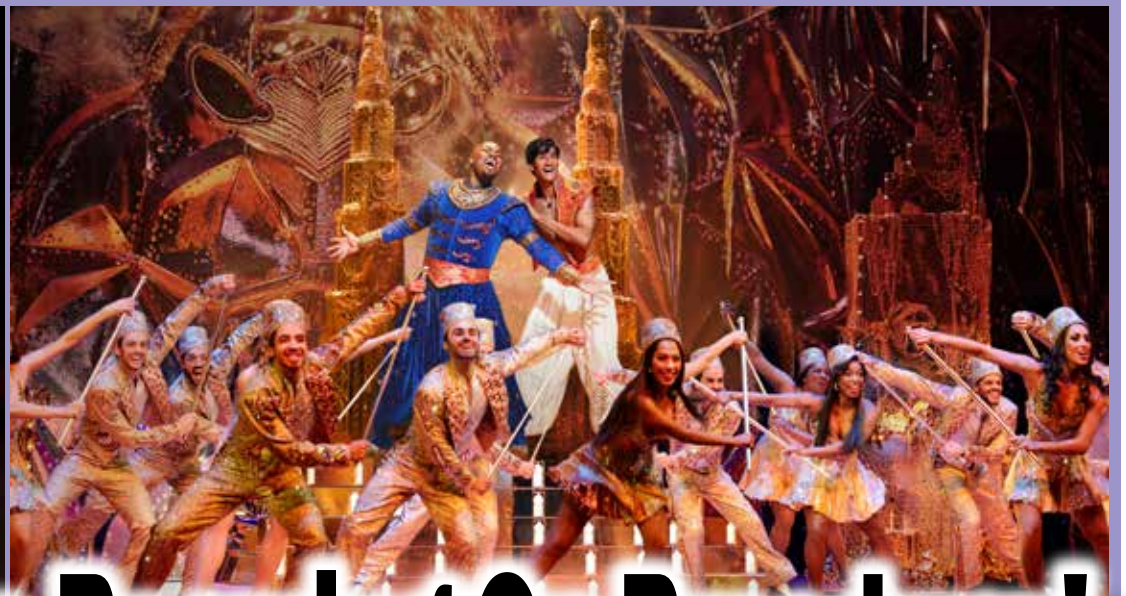
**Great Men In Black  
History**

see page 3



**Mayor Adams To  
Relieve Over \$2  
Billion In Medical  
Debt For New  
Yorkers**

see page 21



# Blacks Are Beaming On Broadway!

see pages 9-19



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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.

HARLEM COMMUNITY NEWS  
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QUEENS COMMUNITY NEWS

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## IN THIS ISSUE:

Expressions	4	Black History	20
Community	5	Community	21
Op Editorial	6	National	22
Real Estate	7	Health	23
Calendar	8	Urbanology	24
Theater	9	Games	25
Blacks on Broadway	Literary Corner	26	
	10-19	Classified	27

Publisher/Editor	Pat Stevenson
Editor	Cynthia Horner
Social Media Mgr	Steven Bennett
Layout Mgr	Steven Bennett
Proofreader	Hazel Rosetta Smith
Publisher Assistant	Steven Bennett
Borough Writer	Howard Giske
Feature Writer	Jennifer Cunningham
A&E Editor	Linda Armstrong
Social Media Mgr.	Charlotte Anderson
Travel	Debi Kops
Intl News & Entertainment	Maria Cavenaghi
Society	Audrey Bernard
Columnist	William A. Rogers
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Columnist	Hazel Rosetta Smith
Feature Writer	Erin Lewenauer
Events Calendar	Howard Giske
Writer/Videographer	Marisol Rodriguez
Book Reviewer	Terri Schlichenmeyer
Brooklyn Writer	Keith Forrest
Bronx/Queens Writer	Howard Giske
Photographer	Nadezda Tavodova Tezgor
Photographer	Michelle James
Photographer	Seitu Oronde
Office Asst/Distributor	Dominic Jones
Distribution	Russell Simmons
Marketing Consultant	William A. Rogers

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Mailing: P.O. Box # 1775, New York, New York 10027  
Phone: 646-988-1015•  
Email: [harlemnewsinc@aol.com](mailto:harlemnewsinc@aol.com)  
Website: [www.harlemcommunitynews.com](http://www.harlemcommunitynews.com)  
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PAT STEVENSON

February is Black History Month. We present our annual “Blacks on Broadway” feature in this issue. Start planning to see these shows. There are 25, enough for you to see a different show every week into the summer. We are also featuring more than 200 Black actors. Journalist Linda Armstrong and I started this feature more than 29 years ago. We could only find Black actors in just a few Broadway shows when we began. We have come a long way, baby. So go out and support these actors by buying tickets to these productions. 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 15, 2024. (see pages 9-19)

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](http://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.

Welcome To Our Black History Month issue!

**Pat Stevenson  
Celebrating  
30 years  
Publishing**

# Great Men In Black History

By Afro Staff



## Thurgood Marshall (1908 – 1993)

Born in Baltimore, Md., to a railroad porter and a teacher, Thurgood Marshall became the nation's first African American Supreme Court Justice. After having his application to the University of Maryland denied because he was Black, Marshall decided to attend the Howard University School of Law, where he would later graduate at the top of his class before starting his own legal practice in his hometown of Baltimore. During his service as a Supreme Court Justice, Marshall was passionate about the advancement of colored people through civil rights and affirmative action laws.



## Vivien Thomas (1910 – 1985)

Vivien Thomas was the assistant to Johns Hopkins surgeon Dr. Alfred Blalock. He was a clinical laboratory supervisor and assisted in developing the life-saving cardiac surgical procedure for "blue baby syndrome" in 1944. Even without a formal medical degree, Thomas was one of medicine's greatest innovators, developing techniques and tools that would set the standard for modernized heart surgery today.

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**PONDER THIS! Wise and Witty Augusta Grubb at One Hundred and One**



By Hazel Rosetta Smith

One hundred birthdays are exceptional. When additional digits are added to the package, it is miraculous. My dear sister friend, Augusta, crossed the century line and celebrated one hundred and one birthdays on Friday, January 26. We are longtime members of the Abyssinian Baptist Church, and

that connection of love and respect has created a closeness like family.

She was born in Pensacola, Florida, the only child of Geneva Edwards and Lawrence Butler. She was destined to become an educator like her mother and musically inclined like her father, the musician.

Augusta took music lessons from her Aunt Alberta and was a high jumper on the track team for Tuskegee Institute, preparing to attend the tournaments in Germany when the war cancelled the trip. The next step was Elizabeth State University in Elizabeth, North Carolina where her mother's brother taught science and math. After a short stint, her mother called her home to attend Alabama A&M University in Huntsville.

In 1941, Augusta migrated to Harlem and married her former high school sweetheart. She graduated from City College with a B.S. in Early Childhood and worked as a Psychiatric Aide at Rockland State Hospital for a decade, before stepping into her true destiny.

In 1970, she changed careers to teach fifth grade at P.S. 128 and then P.S. 153 (Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. Elementary School.) When music and art was taken out of the school system, Augusta would not desert the children. She continued to teach music as a volunteer and led the student Glee Club.

She had a son, the late Melvin, Jr. and two daughters. Her daughter Deidre is a retired music teacher/choir director from Mum-

ford High School, Detroit, Michigan. She directed the children's and women's choirs of Hartford Memorial Church in Detroit and has taught many well-known artists, including siblings of the famed Winans family.

Her daughter Michelle is a pianist, graduate of the Music & Arts High School in New York and an award-winning multi-talented creative artist.

Augusta remembers her mother's adamant request regarding her move to Harlem - find a good Methodist church that has a good choir. St. Mark's Methodist on Edgecombe Avenue was first choice until she moved to Lenox Avenue and joined the Abyssinian Baptist Church.

Augusta says with pride, "I became a good Baptist



at a good church with a number of good choirs and I served as a good usher." She attended the Christian Education Monday Bible Classes at noon and the Wednesday evening Manna Worship Services, in addition to the ministry of Black Teachers Who Care.

When the pandemic closed visiting hours, she and I became phone partners engaging in hours of conversations that continue to date. She is wise and wit-

ty, loves to read and discuss at length the latest book. The sound of Jazz is constant from her radio.

I am in awe of Augusta's desire to keep abreast of church and community news. Notice the Harlem Community newspaper on her lap. She is a woman of faith and a source of inspiration and encouragement. God has blessed her mightily and I am blessed to be a witness of the light that surrounds her.

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# QBP Richards Now Accepting Applications for Queens General Assembly

## Deadline to apply: Thursday, February 29

Queens Borough President Donovan Richards Jr. announced that he is accepting applications from civic-minded individuals who are interested in serving as a Queens General Assembly (QGA) delegate for 2024.

The QGA, a borough-level intercultural working group, brings together community stakeholders of diverse backgrounds and specialties for monthly dialogues and

community actions that promote leadership enhancement, coalition building, and networking.

“With societal tensions around the globe and even here at home on the rise, now is the time for unity and tolerance to take hold, especially here in The World’s Borough. If you have an interest in bridging divides and serving your community, we want you to join the Queens General Assembly,” said Borough President Richards.

“In years’ prior, the QGA has come together in many different ways to build interborough bonds and meet the needs of some of our most vulnerable communities. That and more is what the QGA stands for, and I look forward to bringing in a new cohort to see what else we can achieve for Queens.”

Recruitment for the 2024 session continues through Thursday, February 29. Applicants will be contacted by Friday, March

15, and approximately two dozen finalists will be appointed as delegates by the Borough President. An installation ceremony for the new cohort of delegates will be held in March.

This year’s delegates will serve for the remainder of 2024. Those who actively participate will have an option to continue as alumni after their term concludes.

Since its inception 21 years ago under the leadership of the late former

Borough President Helen Marshall, the Borough President’s QGA has united leaders from all parts of Queens under the banner of community service and promoting the values of tolerance and respect for all who call The World’s Borough home. Examples of the QGA’s recent work include arranging a \$50,000 in-kind donation to Queens food pantries and organizing holiday toy drives across several family shelters.

Applicants must be Queens residents who are at least 18 years old and demonstrate an interest in community service and bridging societal divides. Those interested in applying can email Queens General Assembly Coordinator Susie Tanenbaum at stanenbaum@queensbp.org.

Follow the Office of the Queens Borough President via @QnsBPRichards on Twitter and @QueensBPRichards on Facebook and Instagram

## QUEENS UPCOMING EVENTS

**THURSDAY NIGHT JAZZ PRESENTS:**  
**Ravi Coltrane**  
 February 8th, 2024  
 153-10 Jamaica Avenue  
 JCAL

Feb 8 JCAL Thursday Night Jazz

**February 8 - 9:30pm**  
**JCAL Thursday Night Jazz**

JCAL’s free Jazz series presents the legendary Ravi Coltrane. A special presentation of Thursday Night Jazz featuring Ravi Coltrane. Coltrane is a critically acclaimed Grammy™ nominated saxophonist, bandleader, and composer. In the course of a twenty plus year career, Mr. Coltrane has worked as a sideman to many, recorded noteworthy albums for himself and others and founded a prominent independent record label, RKM.

Jamaica Performing Arts Center is located at 153-10 Jamaica Avenue Jamaica, NY 11432

**Feb 10 5pm**  
**Kings of Soul at Spectrum Theater**

Kings of Soul showcases the music of legendary artists Teddy Pendergrass, Marvin Gaye, Luther Vandross, and Al Green in an evening of soulful rhythms and melodies. Honoring the true “Kings” of classic soul, featured hits include “Turn Off The Lights,” “Lady Love,” “Let’s Get It On,” “Sexual Healing,”

“Here And Now,” “Let’s Stay Together,” “I’m Still In Love With You,” and more. The songs are sung



Feb 23 JCAL West African Dance

by some of the top up-and-coming male crooners. Spectrum theater, 177th St & Baisley Blvd. This is a Dinner & Show event. \$65

**February 23 8pm and 10pm**  
**JCAL A Weekend of West African Dance: Black History Month Presentation**

A Weekend of West African Dance: A Black History Month Presentation Featuring Kofago Dance Ensemble and FANIKE! African Dance Troupe. A vibrant celebration of West African dance and culture at the Jamaica Performing Arts Center. This exciting event is a part of our Black History Month festivities and promises to be a weekend filled with rhythm, energy, and joy. Friday February 23rd 8:00 PM - 10:00 PM - Kofago

**KINGS OF SOUL Valentine's Tribute**  
 TEDDY PENDERGRASS  
 MARVIN GAYE  
 LUTHER VANDROSS  
 AL GREEN  
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Feb 10 Spectrum Theater

Dance Ensemble performance. Saturday February 24th 8:00 PM - 10:00 PM - FANIKE! African Dance Troupe performance Get your tickets for an explo-

sive performance by Kofago Dance Ensemble and FANIKE! African Dance Troupe!  
 Dance show celebrating West African dance.

# Op-Ed: Keep Raising Your Voices In 2024

By Mary-Pat Hector

From the time I could talk, I was loud and opinionated, especially about the rights of those disenfranchised and pushed to the margins of society. Though not calling it democracy back then, I believed being heard by the powers-that-be would make a difference. My adamant pitch and passion was always met by opponents bent on silencing and shutting me down.

One hurdle after another, this Black girl-child coming of age in the deep South eventually realized going it alone to get results was an impossible feat.

I found my tribe — a chorus of like-minded voices — all screaming synchronously at the top of our lungs. Together, we unharassed the secret to being heard, fighting back, and making an impact.

In the “off-year” election year of 2023, the primal scream of voters reverberated. The message was simple. They’ve had enough of being dismissed, denied, and deceived.



Mary-Pat Hector is the CEO of the student and youth activist organization, RISE. Courtesy Photo

The stunning wins for the abortion rights movement in ruby-red Ohio, deep-purple Virginia, and light-blue Pennsylvania were not about party or candidate victories. It was a full-throttle response to disinformation maneuvers by extremists who are clueless about how democracy works or that it can work.

Last year’s victory can’t be claimed by one state or coalition alone. It is part of a still roaring scream, pushing to the tipping point a changing landscape to exact a people’s victory that proclaims democracy is us. Grassroots organizers, non-profit advocacy groups, and institutions committed to

public interest are the small “d” democrats who are saving the day.

From Vermont to Virginia, Kansas to Kentucky, Montana to Maine, the call is loud and crystallizing. Politicians should read the edict from voters, not the latest polling data.

Just as abortion rights in the post-Dobbs era triggered unstoppable pushback and movements in ballot campaigns, constitutional amendments, and legislatures across the country, groundswells of voices for change are surging and coming to their feet around gun safety and climate change, saying “no” to book banning and assaults on LGBTQ rights; demanding clean water in Jackson and Flint; and justice for workers on picket lines at work sites nationwide.

There is a well-paved path of civic engagement animated by people devoted to action and advocacy. Together, we are the connective tissue of democracy. You don’t need an advanced degree to read the message plainly spelled out last year.

Without abstractions or caveats, the voters are collectively embracing authentic solutions. Across generational, demographic, and geographic divides, we are responding to issues that hit hard where we live, impacting real-life choices and everyday circumstances.

What’s motivating us with each new ballot initiative is our demand to raise our voices for ownership of our civic life. We can secure common sense solutions that speak to an elevated form of basic brilliance.

We know the role of government is to help, not hinder, obstruct or enter the corridors of our personal lives. Rights denied, reversed, or taken away will ultimately spur movements.

My call to action to anyone unsure they hold power in their voice:

1. Join a group that shares your values in 2024.
2. Get involved.
3. Speak, meet, organize, and act.
4. Become the movement to plow the ground and plant the fertile seeds of change.



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# Home Buying in Harlem Be Prepared to Buy Now



Rev. Dr. Charles Butler

An unfortunate truth of home buying for prospective first-time buyers today is facing the harsh reality of not earning enough money to afford to purchase a home at today's prices.

I mentioned to some friends how I could not afford to buy my home at its current market value. You cannot allow any more time to pass by. If you are ever going to successfully complete the home buying process, you must first start the process.

However, too many prospective first-time home buyers appear to be so discouraged over this situation that they are ready to forgo their dream of homeownership altogether, and just be happy with renting. But you must understand the rents will continue to increase significantly and will soon be unaffordable for many Harlem residents.

I want to encourage you not to give up your dream; homeownership is still a reality. Push past your anxieties. Home buying requires you to have faith that you can succeed. The Apostle Paul reminded his son in ministry, "God did not give us a spirit of fear, but power, love, and a sound mind," 2nd Timothy 1:7.

Here are a few helpful tips to assist you in completing the process: (1) Attend the home buyer education workshop with Harlem Congregations for Community Improvement, Inc. (HCCI).

This program will equip you with knowledge and provide step-by-step instructions. You will gain the confidence needed to complete the home buying process. You will learn how to assemble your home buying team from industry professionals. You will receive the knowledge of the home buying process that will enable you to make better decisions.

(2) Create a monthly household budget and aggressively save as much money as possible.

Avoid all wasteful spending. The home buying process is extremely expensive. You will need lots of money to cover the minimum down

payment, closing costs, and other fees associated with purchasing a home. Most lenders will require at least 3-4 months of mortgage payments in the same account after you close on the property.

(3) Create a personal purchasing plan. If you fail to plan, you plan to fail. Detail exactly what steps you need to take to successfully complete the home-buying process, including your savings, the type of property you can afford, and the projected purchase date in your plan.

(4) Use credit responsibly. Lenders want to see 24 months' clean credit history with at least 3-4 active credit accounts. Pay your debts on time. Pay more each month than the minimum amount. Avoid late fees, penalties, and additional interest payments. By staying on top of your credit debt, you will increase your monthly savings. The biggest reasons mortgage applications are denied are poor credit history and high credit debt.

*If you are interested in attending the HCCI workshop or have questions regarding the home buying process, contact Rev. Dr. Charles Butler at (212) 281 4887 ext. 231 or email [cbutler@hcci.org](mailto: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](http://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 17 Flip Side Cast at Greater Hood**

**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 Wa-

ter 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](http://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 212-283-0294 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

al modern art. Free with Museum admission

**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.



**Jazzmobile Mar 13**



**Jazzmobile Feb 14**



**Feb 29 MET**



**8 Feb 24 Central Baptist Church**



**“MJ IS AN ELECTRIC EXPERIENCE YOU WON’T SOON FORGET.”**

*-Harlem News*

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# Blacks Are Beaming On Broadway!



Michael James Scott as Genie, Michael Maliakel as Aladdin,  
photo by Matthew Murphy



MJ, The Musical

By Linda Armstrong

**B**lack talent consistently demonstrates that they belong on Broadway with every brilliant performance they give.

This year, it's so exciting to know that "The Wiz" is returning to Broadway. Also, "Hell's Kitchen," the musical from Alicia Keys, will debut on Broadway. There will be 25 musicals that are employing Black actors on Broadway in 2024. Some of those productions go to extraordinary levels. For example, "The Lion King" employs 30 Black actors, "MJ: The Musical" employs 26, and "The Wiz" will be joining those impressive numbers by employing 28 Black actors.

There is such a feeling of pride that you experience when you see one of us doing their thing on stage and doing it so well. While the names of the lead/featured actors are mentioned below, photos of all the Black actors in the productions, including ensemble, swing,

and understudies, are included in this issue.

"& Juliet," playing at the Stephen Sondheim Theatre, asks what would happen next if Juliet didn't end it all over Romeo. She gets a second chance at life and love her way in the storyline. It stars Lorna Courtney as Juliet and features Veronica Otim as Lady Capulet/Nell, Rachel Webb as Judith, Virgil Gadson as Augustine, and Michael Ivan Carrier as Thomas.

"The Neil Diamond Musical--A Beautiful Noise," playing at the Broadhurst Theatre, tells the singer's story and highlights many of his most popular songs. It features Shirine Babb as the Doctor.

"Aladdin," playing at the New Amsterdam Theatre, is Disney's movie story that comes to life and shares the story of Aladdin, a poor boy who falls in love with Princess Jasmine. The musical features Michael James Scott as the Genie, JC Montgomery as the Sultan, and Dennis Stowe as Jafar.

"Back to the Future" is a

musical based on the 1985 movie. It centers around Marty McFly, a teenager transported back to 1955. The play is onstage at the Winter Garden Theatre and



LStevenTaylor as Mufasa in The Lion King  
Photo by Joan Marcus

features Jelani Remy as Goldie Wilson/Marvin Berry.

"The Book of Mormon," playing at the Eugene O'Neill Theatre, is a musi-

cal that deals with the Mormon faith. Derrick Williams plays the General, Jacques C. Smith plays Mafala Hatimbi, and Kim Exum plays Nabulungi.

"Cabaret at the Kit Kat Club" will play at the August Wilson Theatre, with previews beginning April 1. It tells the story of the Emcee and toast of Mayfair, "Sally Bowles," who works at the Cabaret. Key cast members include Ato Blankson-Wood as Cliff Bradshaw, Ayla Ciccone-Burton as Helga, Julian Ramos as Bobby, and Paige Smallwood as Rosie.

"Chicago," playing at the Ambassador Theatre, tells the delightful, sexy stories of the women of murderess row. It stars Kimberly Marable as Velma Kelly, Jermaine R. Rembert as Martin Harrison, and Arian Keddell as Mona.

"Days Of Wine And Roses," playing at Studio 54, is a musical that tells a riveting story of a couple falling in love in 1950s New York and struggling with alcohol addiction. It features David Jennings as Jim Hun-

gerford, Others, and Sharon Catherine Brown as Mrs. Nolan, Others.

"HadesTown" can be seen at the Walter Kerr Theatre. It's the mythical story of Orpheus trying to overcome Hades, and get back to his love. Tony Award winner Lillias White leads the cast in the role of Hermes, Phillip Boykins stars as Hades, Jordan Fisher stars as Orpheus, and Brit West is featured as a Fate.

"Hamilton," playing at the Richard Rodgers Theatre, is a beloved musical that focuses on the life of Alexander Hamilton. The cast features Jeannie Harney as Angelica Schuyler, Kyle Scatliffe in the role of Marquis de Lafayette/Thomas Jefferson, Tamar Greene as George Washington, Ebrin R. Stanley as Hercules Mulligan/James Madison, and Jared Dixon as Aaron Burr.

"Harmony," playing at the Ethel Barrymore Theatre, tells the story of the Comedian Harmonists, a group of singers--three Jewish and three Gentiles--that had a very successful career



Harry Potter And The Cursed Child, production shot

in Berlin, Germany, in the late 1920s and early 1930s until the Nazi's took over Germany. It features Allison Semmes as Josephine Baker.

"Harry Potter and the Cursed Child," playing at the Lyric Theatre, tells an engaging story of Harry Potter and other students at Hogwarts. It's a magical time at the theatre, featuring Cara Ricketts as Hermione Granger and Irving Dyson Jr. as Craig Bowker Jr.

"Hell's Kitchen" will begin performances on March 28 at the Shubert Theatre. The musical will feature songs by Alicia Keys and is a loosely autobiographical story about her life growing up in Hell's Kitchen. The cast has not been announced yet.

"How To Dance In Ohio," which plays at the Belasco Theatre only through February 11, tells the touching story of seven autistic high school students, the doctor who treats them, and the dance they organize. It is based on a documentary of the same name. It stars Desmond Luis Edwards as Remy', Imani Russell as Mel and features Darlesia Cearcy as Johanna.

"Kimberly Akimbo," playing at the Booth Theatre, is a musical comedy about a young girl with a medical condition that causes rapid aging. The produc-

tion stars Justin Cooley as Seth, Olivia Elease Hardy as Delia, and Fernell Hogan as Martin.

"Merrily We Roll Along," playing at the Hudson Theatre, shows the relationship between three lifelong friends and how they journey through life, handling success, failure, and betrayal, but still managing to reunite. The production features Krystal Joy Brown as Gussie Carnegie, Christian Strange as RU/Reverend, Maya Bond as Mimi, Natalie Wachen as KT, and Talia Simone Robinson as Meg Kincaid.

"MJ: The Musical," playing at the Neil Simon Theatre, tells the story of Michael Jackson's life and features 25 of his biggest hits. Elijah Rhea Johnson plays Michael Jackson's lead role. Tavon Olds-Sample plays Middle Michael; Apollo Levine plays Rob/Joseph Jackson; Sasha Allen plays Katherine Jackson; Max Chambers plays Little Michael; Jackson Hayes portrays Little Michael; Jace Bently plays Little Marlon; Matthew Frederick Harris is seen as Tito Jackson/Quincy Jones; Antoine L. Smith doubles as Berry Gordy/Nick. You will also see Lloyd A. Boyd (Randy Jackson), John Edwards (Jackie Jackson), Nick T. Daly (Jermaine Jackson), and

Zachery Downer (Marlon Jackson).

"Moulin Rouge" is playing at the Al Hirschfeld Theatre. As Bohemians and Aristocrats mingle, this musical celebrates truth, beauty, freedom, and love. It features E.J. Hamilton as Universal Lady M Cover and Tasia Jungbauer as Arabia/Ensemble.

"Six" is playing at the Brooks Atkinson Theatre. A British pop musical, it follows the lives of the six ex-wives of King Henry VIII. Khalia Wilcoxon plays Catherine of Aragon, Olivia Donalson plays Anna of Cleves, and Storm Lever plays Anne Boleyn.

"Spamalot," playing at the St. James Theatre, is a hilarious musical about King Arthur and the Knights of the Roundtable, who are searching for the Holy Grail. It stars James Monroe Iglehart as King Arthur and Nik Walker as Sir Galahad.

"Sweeney Todd The Demon Barber of Fleet Street," playing at the Lunt-Fontanne Theatre, is a musical thriller about a murdering barber—Sweeney Todd, and Mrs. Lovett, a restaurant owner who is killing, cooking, and serving up their enemies. It features Daniel Yearwood as Anthony Hope.

"The Lion King," playing at the Minskoff Theatre, is the beloved Disney musical that brings the movie version of the same name to glorious life with lifestyle puppets, a captivating storyline, and powerful, meaningful songs, and it will help one to appreciate the circle of life. L. Steven Taylor plays Mufasa, Sidney Nicole Wilson plays Sarabi, Vincent Jamal Hooper plays Simba, Nia Thompson plays Young Nala, Donovan Louis Bazemore plays Young

Simba, and Bonita Hamilton plays Shenzi.

"The Notebook" will play at the Schoenfeld Theatre with previews starting February 10. Based on the book and movie of the same name, the musical tells the story of Allie and Noah, people from different worlds who share a lifetime of love, although outside forces try to pull them apart. This musical is about the enduring power of love. It will feature Charles E. Wallace as Father/Son, Others; Dorian Harewood as Older Noah, Hillary Fisher as Sarah, Jerome Harmann as Hardeman, Jordan Tyson as Younger Allie, and Joy Woods as Middle Allie.

"Wicked," playing at the Gershwin Theatre, is a musical that will make you look at the story of "The Wizard of Oz" entirely differently. It gives you the background of the wicked witch and Glinda, the Good. It features Kimber Elayne Sprawl as Nessarose.

"The Wiz" will begin previews at the Marquis Theatre on March 29, and it marks the return of a classic Black story version of Dorothy and her journey. The musical will star Nichelle Lewis as Dorothy (Mia Neal will also play the role); Deborah Cox will shine as Glinda, The Good Witch; Melody A. Betts will take over as the bad Evillene; Wayne Brady will delight as The Wiz (Alan Mingo Jr. will also play this role at times); Avery Wilson will be Lion; Kyle Freeman portrays Scarecrow; and Phillip Johnson Richardson will be Tinman.

Our people are phenomenally talented; they bring their gifts to the stage and share them with us regularly. They have a way of making us feel inspired,



Production shot from How To Dance In Ohio



THE WIZ, Production shot



Spamalot, Production shot



A Beautiful Noise, production shot

included, and important. I love seeing us perform on Broadway stages because we bring a passion, a certain flair, warmth, depth, and understanding that can't be ignored.

Black actors are out there every day bringing their A+ game. Don't let me feel alone; support our people in any of these 25 shows. See you at the theatre!

# Blacks on Broadway 2024

**& Juliet**



Brittney Nicholas



Charity Angel Dawson



Lorna Courtney



Michael Ivan Carrier



Rachel Webb



Veronica Otim



Virgil Gadson

**A Beautiful Noise**



Anthony J. Garcia



Aveena Sawyer



Deandre Sevon



Gabrielle Djenne



Jordan Dobson



Kalonjee Gallimore



Shirine Babb



Tatiana Lofton



Travis Ward-Osborne

**Aladin**



April Holloway



Caleb Barnett



David Wright



Dennis Stowe



Jaz Sealey



JC Montgomery



Jeremy Gaston



Jonathan McClinton Smith



Keely Beirne



Keisha Gilles



Michael James Scott



Nicole Athill Headshot

**Back to the Future**



Jelani Remy



Joshua Kenneth Allen Johnson



Kevin Curtis



Nick Drake

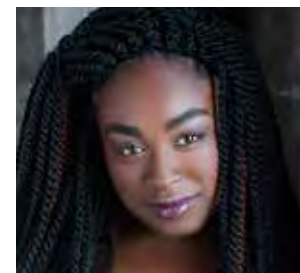


Victoria Byrd

**Book of Mormon**



Arbender Robinson



Arica Jackson



Darius Nichols

# Blacks on Broadway 2024



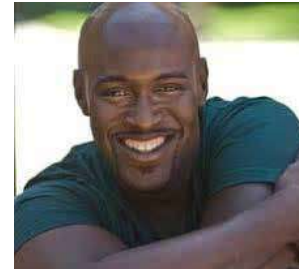
Derrick Williams



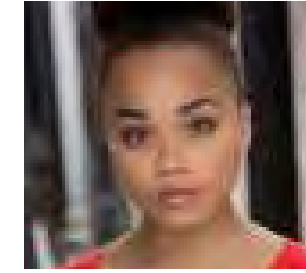
Jasmin Richardson



Jevares Myrick



John Eric Parker



Kim Exum



Keziah John-Paul



Randy Aaron

**Cabaret at  
the Kit Kat**



Ato Blankson-Wood



Ayla Ciccone-Burton



Christian Kidd



Julian Ramos



Paige Smallwood

**Chicago**



Arian Keddell



Jermaine R. Rembert



Sharon Moore

**Days of  
Wine & Roses**



David Jennings



Kelcey Watson

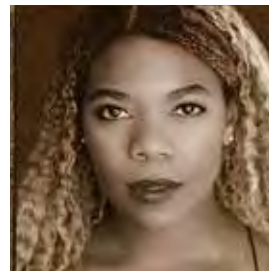


Sharon Catherine Brown

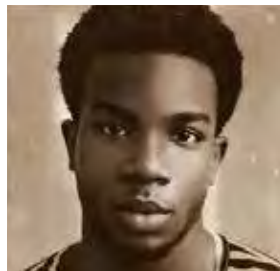
**Hadestown**



Brandon Cameron



Brit West



Chibueze Ihuoma



Jordan Fisher



Lillias White



Malcolm Armwood



Max Kumangai



Phillip Boykin



Sojourner Brown



Tara Jackson

**Hamilton**



Ebrin R Stanley



Jared Dixon



Jeannie Harney



Johanna Moise



Jonathan Butler-Duplessis



Kamille Upshaw



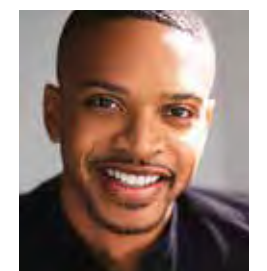
Kyle Scatliffe



Shonica Gooden



Tamar Greene



Willie Smith III

# Blacks on Broadway 2024

**Harmony**



Allison Semmes



Benjamin H. Moore



Kyla Stone



RhonniRose Mantilla

**Harry Potter**



Alexandria Peter



Cara Ricketts



Chadd Alexander



Eleasha Gamble



Gabrielle Reid



Gary-Kayi Fletcher



Irving Dyson Jr.



Jamyl Dobson



William Rhem Jr.

**How To Dance in Ohio**



Ayanna Nicole Thomas



Darlesia Cearcy



Desmond Edwards



Hunter Hollingsworth



Imani Russell



Jean Christian Barry

**Kimberly Akimbo**



Fernell Hogan



Justin Cooley



Olivia Elease Hardy

**The Lion King**



Amanda Kunene



Andrew Arrington



Angelica Edwards



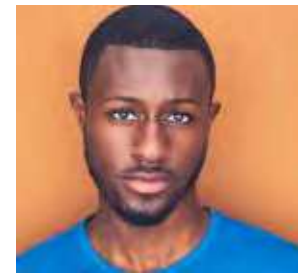
Antonia Raye



Bongji Duma



Bonita J. Hamilton



Cameron Amandus



Daniel Harder



Daphne Marcelle Lee



Donna Vaughn



Donovan Louis Bazemore



Gilbert Domally



India Bold's Browne



Isio-Maya Nuwere



Jacqueline Rene'

# Blacks on Broadway 2024



Jaysin McCollum



Kevin Tate



L Steven Taylor



Lindiwe Dlamini



Lindsey Jolyn Jackson



Marquise Hitchcock



Nia Thompson



Nteliseng Nkhela



Paige Fraser



Ray Mercer



Shawn Alynda Fisher



Sidney Nicole Wilson



T. Shyvonne Stewart



Zinhle Dube

Merrily We Roll Along



Christian Strange



Krystal Joy Brown



Maya Boyd



Natalie Wachen



Talia Simone Robinson

MJ The Musical



Antoine L. Smith



Apollo Levine



Blu Allen



Brandon Whitmore



Bre Jackson



Carina-Kay Louchiey



Carole Denise Jones



D. Jerome



Dasia Amos



David Hughey



Elijah Rhea Johnson



Ilario Grant



Jace Bently



Jackson Hayes



John Edwards



Lloyd A. Boyd III

# Blacks on Broadway 2024



Matthew Frederick Harris



Max Chambers



Michael Harmon



Michelle Mercedes



Nick T. Daly



Sarah Sigman



Sasha Allen



Tavon Olds-Sample



Tre Frazier



Zachary Downer

Moulin Rouge!  
The Musical



Bria Jene Williams



E. J. Hamilton



Jordan Wynn



Tasia Jungbauer

SIX



Khaila Wilcoxon



Olivia Donalson



Storm Lever

Spamalot



Anju Cloud



Darrell T. Joe



James Monroe Iglehart



Kaylee Olson



Nik Walker



Olivia Ashley Reed



Shina Morris-Fisher



Claire Saunders



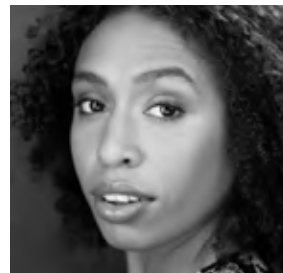
Daniel Yearwood



Dwayne Cooper



Jonathan Christopher



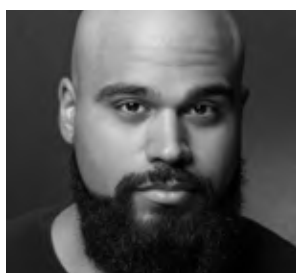
Kyrie Courter



Michael Kuhn



Patricia Phillips



Paul-Jordan Jansen



Taeler Cyrus

The Notebook



Charles E. Wallace



Dorian Harewood



Hillary Fisher

Sweeney Todd The  
Demon Barber of  
Fleet Street



# Blacks on Broadway 2024



Jerome Harmann-Hardeman



Jordan Tyson



Joy Woods



Kim Onah

Wicked



Cajai Kennedy



Dashi Mitchell



Kimber Elayne Sprawl



Michael Williams



The WIZ

Alan Mingo, Jr.



Allyson Kaye Daniel



Amber Jackson



Anthony Murphy



Avery Wilson



Avilon Trust Tate



Christina Jones



Collin Heyward



Cristina Rae



Deborah Cox



Jay Copeland



Judith Franklin



Kareem Marsh



Keenan Washington



Kolby Kindle



Kyle Freeman



Mariah Lyttle



Matthew Sims



Maya Bowles



Melody A. Betts



Mia Neal



Michael George



Nichelle Lewis



Olivia Jackson



Phillip Johnson Richardson



Planco Jones



Shayla Alayre Caldwell



Wayne Brady

# Blacks on Broadway Aug. 2023 Theatre Listing

**“& Juliet”**  
Stephen Sondheim Theatre  
124 W 43rd St.

**“A Beautiful Noise”**  
Broadhurst Theatre  
222 W 51st St.

**“Aladdin”**  
New Amsterdam Theatre  
B’way & 42nd St.

**“Back To The Future”**  
Winter Garden Theatre  
1634 Broadway

**“The Book of Mormon”**  
Eugene O’Neill Theatre  
230 W 49th St.

**“Cabaret At The Kit Kat Club”**  
*(previews April 1)*  
August Wilson Theatre  
245 W 52nd St.

**“Chicago”**  
Ambassador Theatre

219 W 49th St.

**“Days Of Wine And Roses”**  
Studio 54  
254 W 54th St.

**“Hadestown”**  
Walter Kerr Theatre  
219 W 48th St.

**“Hamilton”**  
Richard Rodgers Theatre  
226 W 46th St.

**“Harmony”**  
Ethel Barrymore Theatre  
243 W 47th St.

**“Harry Potter and the Cursed Child”**  
Lyric Theatre  
214 W 43rd St.

**“Hell’s Kitchen”**  
*(previews begin March 28)*  
Shubert Theatre  
225 W 44th St.

**“How To Dance In Ohio”**  
*(Closing Feb. 11)*  
Belasco Theatre  
111 W 44th St.

**“Kimberly Akimbo”**  
Booth Theatre  
222 W 45th St.

**“Merrily We Roll Along”**  
Hudson Theatre  
141 W 44th St.

**“MJ The Musical”**  
Neil Simon Theatre  
250 W 52nd St.

**“Moulin Rouge”**  
Al Hirschfeld Theatre  
302 W 45th St.

**“Six”**  
Brooks Atkinson Theatre  
256 W 47th St.

**“Spamalot”**  
St. James Theatre  
246 W 44th St.

**“Sweeney Todd The Demon Barber of Fleet Street”**  
Lunt-Fontanne Theatre  
205 W 46th St.

**“The Lion King”**  
Minskoff Theatre  
Broadway and 45th St.

**“The Notebook”**  
*(previews begin Feb. 10)*  
Schoenfeld Theatre  
236 W 45th St.

**“Wicked”**  
Gershwin Theatre  
222 W 51st St.

**“The Wiz”**  
*(previews begin March 29)*  
Marquis Theatre  
210 W 46th St.

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# Madame Lillian Evanti Makes An Impact on Broadway's History

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

There's little question that African Americans have been a significant part of Washington, DC's civic life and identity since the city was first declared the new national capital in 1791.

According to Cultural Tourism DC, African Americans were 25 percent of the population in 1800, and most of them were enslaved.

While most were free by 1830, slavery was still in practice.

On April 16, 1862, nine months before President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation in January 1863, the U.S. Congress passed the District of Columbia Emancipation Act, making the District of Columbia's slaves the first

freed in the nation.

African Americans flocked to the District, where the nightlife became famous, and U Street was the thriving center for Black culture and social exchange.

Reportedly, iconic figures like Zora Neale Hurston and Mary McLeod Bethune found refuge in what became known as Black Broadway. Performers like Louis Armstrong and Billie Holliday were regulars.

And so was Madame Lillian Evanti.

Born Lillian Evans in D.C. in 1890, Evanti was the first African American to perform with a major European opera company.

A Howard University graduate, she made her professional debut in Nice,



**Madame Lillian Evanti in France in 1926**  
 Photo: Agence de presse Meurisse – Bibliothèque nationale de France / Wikimedia Commons

France, in 1924 and adopted the stage name Evanti.

According to whitehousehistory.org, Evanti returned periodically to the District and performed on Lafayette Square several times in the 1920s and 1930s.

At the Belasco Theater, a six-story building that had a soaring facade, Evanti performed before a desegregated audience.

During one 1926 ap-

pearance, Marian Anderson joined Evanti for a performance before a football game between Howard and Lincoln universities.

Later, Evanti performed for President Franklin D. Roosevelt and First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt.

"She made me feel right at home," Evanti reportedly said after chatting with the First Lady.

"That was a time when

colored people – as we were known – could feel good, could have some hope that the world wasn't all bad," Cleveland McFadden, a Northern Virginia-based art collector and "sometimes historian," noted.

"We hadn't 'made it' by any means, but you could feel D.C. was more home than just about any place in the United States," McFadden offered. "Singers and performers like Madame Evanti helped to take us different places in our minds and spirits. And, because she was from the area, her impact was probably felt deeper than the superstars who visited and performed on Black Broadway."

Whitehousehistory.org historians wrote that, on August 28, 1943, Evanti made her most acclaimed performance in the capital, portraying Violetta in the National

Negro Opera Company's La Traviata, which was staged on a barge floating in the Potomac River.

"Throughout the 1940s and 1950s, she traveled to Latin America as a goodwill ambassador on cultural outreach journeys organized by the State Department and received decorations from the governments of the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Liberia, and Nigeria," the historians wrote.

"Beginning in the mid-1930s, Evanti advocated for establishing a national cultural center in Washington for classical and contemporary music, drama and dance – legislation establishing such a center was approved in 1958."

Evanti, a composer and collector of works by African American artists, died in 1967 in Washington, DC.

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# After Claudine Gay's Resignation, Who And What Will Colleges Defend?

By José Luis Vilson

Claudine Gay was the first Black president in Harvard University's history and, as such, stewarded the work of the world's most prestigious university over a six-month tenure. A few months later, the day after Haitian Independence Day, Gay resigned.

As a Dominican-Haitian American, I saw what she did there. People who empathized with Gay understood that her mental health and personal well-being mattered way more than this esteemed position. Yet, Black women and other women of color saw how the nonsense solidified the glass ceiling on their prospects again. Legions of conservatives and their devotees celebrated the move, but as I scanned through those who celebrated, I didn't see anyone who would directly benefit from her stepping down.

Well, besides a few cheerleaders whose plan had come to successful fruition. Then it hit me: too many people look for any reason to tell Black people — and so many “others” — that they're inferior as opposed to figuring out why they don't love themselves enough.

For instance, people have charged Gay with plagiarism, but her doctoral advisor shot the accusation down, as have most scholars who followed 1990s editions of APA citation styling. With the advent of ChatGPT and the plethora of college essay writers and black-market test-prep companies, charging plagiarism at a moment's notice only makes college entry harder for everyone. .

If admissions become even more opaque for prospective students, that serves no one. But dissenters don't care that their own people do it; they just know that Claudine Gay can be charged with it, and

enough people believe it. Billionaires worry not about the hypocrisy games, just about whether they can restrict the referees. Mainstream media shares the blame here, too.

They'll say Black people have the lowest GPAs when matriculating in colleges and universities, but rarely account for how prospective Black and Latinx students generally have higher GPAs than the average GPA just to get in. They proclaim that DEI and other identity-based initiatives have deteriorated academic expectations, but students of various backgrounds provide evidence that we're not even close to achieving equality— much less equity— on campuses large and small. They shout about how inclusivity programs, including affirmative action, have subverted notions of merit, but merit has always been a subjective measure, and affirmative action programs were an effective

corrective measure.

They'll say professors fear “cancel culture,” but the only “canceling” we're seeing is the work of people that a select few have deemed as “the other.” Because the same folks who took advantage of diversifying neighborhoods have retrofitted this narrative to college campuses they deem too inclusive.

After Gay's resignation, Gay still sought to uphold Harvard's values. Time and again in American history, the people least likely to get the largesse of what America has to offer continue to hold this country accountable to its purported values. Ivy League schools shouldn't have so much power over how we discuss college, but they do.

I also know exclusivity and prestige are part of the game, but hear me out. Rather than placate white supremacists who wish to narrow curricula, college and univer-



**Claudine Gay**  
AP Photo by Mark Schiefelbein

sity presidents should look for more ways to advance a truly shared humanity where we can better redefine and characterize education.

Placating fascists only makes that movement grow.

Oh, and higher education institutions should prepare to defend themselves and each other. Because dictatorships usually come for the intellects of their most marginalized, then everyone else.

We're seeing it now.

*José Luis Vilson is a veteran educator, writer, speaker, and activist in New York City. He is the author of “This Is Not A Test: A New Narrative on Race, Class, and Education.” He’s a National Board Certified teacher, a Math for America master teacher, and the executive director of EduColor, an organization dedicated to race and social justice issues in education.*



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# Everyday Habits to Help Protect Against Illness This Season

**(StatePoint)**

With only 8% of children and 21% of adults reporting receipt of the 2023-24 COVID-19 vaccine, less than half the population reporting receipt of a flu vaccine and just 20% of adults 60 and over reporting receipt of the respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) vaccine, it's no surprise that rates of respiratory illnesses are at elevated levels this season.

"Respiratory illness is all too common, particularly during colder months when people spend more time indoors and germs can spread more easily," says Dr. Albert Rizzo, chief medical officer, American Lung Association. "Fortunately, there are many strategies for staying healthy."

The American Lung Association is sharing everyday habits you can adopt to help avoid infection, along with information about available tools to help prevent severe illness:

- **Wash your hands.** Regularly wash your hands with soap and water. If soap and water isn't available, use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.

- **Cover your cough and sneeze.** Stop the spread of infection by using a tissue to cover your mouth and nose when you cough and sneeze. You can use your elbow if a tissue is not available.

- **Keep your distance.** Close contact with a person who is sick increases exposure to respiratory droplets containing a virus. Maintain your distance whenever possible.

- **Stay home.** In addition to staying home when you are sick, try your best to keep your distance from household members to help prevent them from getting sick.

- **Clean and disinfect.** When someone is sick at home, cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched surfaces is especially im-

portant to help prevent the spread of illness.

- **Consider wearing a mask.** Wearing a mask helps provide protection against circulating viruses, and can help protect people at higher risk of serious illness. Effectiveness does vary depending on the virus and mask quality.

- **Get up to date.** Talk to your doctor to see if you and your family members are up to date on vaccinations. Flu vaccination is recommended for everyone 6 months of age and older. RSV vaccination is recommended for adults 60 years of age and older after having a discussion with their healthcare provider. Maternal RSV vaccination is recommended as an option to help prevent babies from developing severe RSV illness and is given during weeks 32-36 of pregnancy during September through January. COVID-19 vaccination is recommended for everyone 6 months of age

and older.

- **Learn more about monoclonal antibodies.** If you have an infant or are an expectant parent, ask your healthcare provider about a monoclonal antibody injection to help provide protection against severe RSV illness. This preventative antibody is recommended for infants under 8 months of age and babies between 8-19 months at increased risk of severe RSV.

- **Get tested, if needed.** If you do get sick, testing can help your healthcare provider determine which virus you have, and inform next steps such as treatment. Talk to your healthcare provider about testing right away if you get sick, especially if you are at increased risk for severe illness.

- **Seek treatment.** Antiviral medications available for flu and COVID-19 may lower your risk of severe illness, hospitalization and death if started early and



within the recommended treatment window.

For more resources, visit [lung.org/viruses](http://lung.org/viruses).

To feel your best this season, adopt healthy hab-

its. And if you do fall ill, take steps to get the right treatment.

*PHOTO SOURCE: (c) monkeybusinessimages / iStock via Getty Images Plus*

# Youth Suicide Prevention: Recognize the Signs

**(StatePoint)**

Children and teens can be moody, but when signs of mental health troubles last for weeks, don't assume it's just a passing mood.

Suicide is a leading cause of death among U.S. children, teens and young adults ages 10-24, and rates have been on the rise. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that all teens be screened for suicide risk starting at age 12.

While no single cause has been identified, suicide is often preceded by depression that is undiagnosed or untreated. Most youth show some warning signs or behavior changes in advance. Families and their doctors can work together to identify if a child or teen is struggling with depression, anxiety or substance use, all of which increase the risk of suicide.

"Suicide is complex, but often preventable,"



said Janet Lee, MD, FAAP. "When a person talks about killing themselves or feeling hopeless or trapped, it should always be taken seriously."

Don't be afraid to ask your child or teen to talk about their mental health or if they're contemplating suicide. Asking directly is the best way to know what your child is thinking. Stud-

ies show that it is safe to ask about suicide risk and that asking the question will not put the idea into their head. Note that your child may initially turn away or be silent, but actions may speak louder than words. Watch for major changes in your child's sleep patterns, appetite and social activities. Self-isolation, especially for kids who usually enjoy

hanging out with friends or participating in activities, can signal serious difficulties.

"Your goal should be to create a safe space where your child can trust you to listen and express concern without judgment or blame," Dr. Lee said.

If your child says something like "I want to die" or "I don't care anymore," some suggested responses are:

- "I'm sorry you are feeling this way—can you share a bit more?"

- "It sounds like you're in tremendous pain and you can't see a way out."

- "Maybe you're wondering how life got this complicated and difficult."

- "Right now, you're not sure of the answers to the problems you're facing."

- "You must really, really be hurting inside to consider ending your life."

Common causes of stress that increase the risk of suicide include major

life-changing events, including the loss of a loved one to death, divorce, deployment or incarceration. Bullying, discrimination, racism and stigma surrounding mental health or suicide can also increase risks. Children who have witnessed or are suffering violence or domestic abuse, engage in self-harming behavior or experienced a suicide in their school or friend group are also at higher risk of suicide.

Research has shown there are protective factors that help reduce the risk of suicide, including ready access to health care. Maintaining close connections to family, friends and one's community is also important.

Parents and guardians should limit access to lethal means, such as removing firearms and locking up medications or other potential poisons or weapons in the home. Half of youth suicides occur with firearms—

and suicide attempts with firearms are almost always fatal. Teens and adolescents who attempt suicide with a firearm almost always use a gun found in their house, studies find.

"Suicide is often impulsive and a moment of crisis can escalate quickly," Dr. Lee said. "If your child is considering suicide, call or text 988 or chat on [988lifeline.org](http://988lifeline.org) right away. The Lifeline provides 24/7, free and confidential support for people in distress, as well as prevention and crisis resources."

For more information, visit [HealthyChildren.org](http://HealthyChildren.org).

As children grow and become more independent, it can be more challenging to know what they are thinking and feeling. However, if you see signs that your child's mental health is under threat, it's important to tune in and take action.

*PHOTO SOURCE: (c) SeventyFour / iStock via Getty Images Plus*

## Mayor Adams To Relieve Over \$2 Billion In Medical Debt For New Yorkers

New York City Mayor Eric Adams and New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) Commissioner Dr. Ashwin Vasani announced a pioneering medical debt relief program that will invest \$18 million over three years to relieve over \$2 billion in medical debt for hundreds of thousands of working-class New Yorkers.

Medical debt — the number one cause of bankruptcy in the United States — disproportionately affects uninsured, underinsured, and low-income households, and the city's program would wipe out debt for up to 500,000 New Yorkers on a one-time basis. The city will partner with RIP Medical Debt, a national, New York City-based nonprofit specializing in buying and ultimately wiping out medical debt to acquire debt portfolios and retiree debt from healthcare providers and hospitals across New York City. Affected New Yorkers will then be notified that their medical debt has been relieved; this program has no application process. The one-time debt relief program, the largest municipal initiative of its kind in the country, will launch in early 2024 and run for three years.

"Getting health care shouldn't be a burden that weighs on New Yorkers and their families," said Mayor Adams. "Since day one, our administration has been driven by the clear mission of supporting working-class New Yorkers and today's investment that will provide \$2 billion in medical debt relief is another major step in delivering on that vision. Up to half a million New Yorkers will see their medical debt wiped thanks to this life changing program — the largest municipal initiative of its kind in the country. No one chooses to go into medical debt — if you're sick or injured, you need to seek care. But no New Yorker should have to choose between paying rent or for other essentials and paying off their medical debt, which is why we are proud to bring this relief to families across the five boroughs, as we continue to fight on behalf of working-class New Yorkers."

"For hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers and for millions of Americans, medical debt creates anxiety, uncer-



tainty, and stress," said Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services Anne Williams-Isom. "It weighs not only on individual and familial balance sheets, but may cause some to put off additional care and limits upward financial mobility. New York City's investment through this partnership will help working people and families advance their health and financial well-being so they can thrive, instead of just survive. Furthermore, we realize this issue is part of a larger complex health care system and we look forward to continuing to advocate for systemic changes to help New Yorkers avoid medical debt in the future."

"Throughout my career as a doctor, I have seen first-hand how high health care costs and medical debt can force patients to make impossible choices," said DOHMH Commissioner Dr. Ashwin Vasani. "No one in New York City, or in America, in 2024, should have to choose between getting the health care they need and paying their rent or buying food to feed their families. But as a provider, I have seen all-too-often patients who delay or forgo lifesaving care because of fear of high costs leading to debt. Medical debt caused by the exorbitant and ever-rising costs of health care is the number one cause of personal bankruptcy in the United States, and also has our economy on an unsustainable path. As a physician and advocate, I know medical debt is killing New Yorkers and killing our economy, and today, this city is stepping up to say that the people deserve better."

To supplement the city's investment, RIP Medical Debt and the Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City will also

partner to raise additional funding over three years. New Yorkers interested in helping relieve medical debt can donate online.

More than 100 million Americans hold some medical debt, with the total amount nationwide exceeding \$195 billion. Carrying medical debt can undermine financial stability and mobility, as it can affect credit scores and put individuals and families in difficult positions to choose between care and other needed expenses. Black and Latino communities are 50 percent and 35 percent, respectively, more likely to hold medical debt than their white counterparts, and while medical debt may be held by those without insurance, even those with insurance are at risk of carrying medical debt.

"In a world where homelessness can touch anyone, from those born into poverty to those with privilege, we face the stark reality that a medical emergency can threaten someone's financial stability," said Shams DaBaron, homelessness and housing advocate. "The prevailing notion that homelessness stems solely from mental illness and substance abuse overlooks the struggles of hardworking New Yorkers burdened by the exorbitant costs of healthcare."

Mayor Eric Adams and Commissioner Dr. Ashwin Vasani's groundbreaking medical debt relief program offers hope to those shackled by medical debt. I commend Mayor Adams and his administration for addressing the root causes of poverty, fostering independence, and employing innovative solutions. Their commitment reinforces New York City's position as the greatest city in the world."



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# Urbanology: The Year of The Wood Dragon



By W.A. Rogers

Eastern Chinese astrology celebrates the Chinese Lunar New Year starting on February 10, 2024, and ending on January 29, 2025.

This period, also known as the Spring Festival, usually starts around January 21 and ends around Feb-

ruary 20 in the Gregorian calendar.

In the Chinese Zodiac, each year is associated with one of the five elements {Wood, Fire, Earth, Metal, and Water} and one of twelve animals, {Rat, Ox, Tiger, Rabbit, Dragon, Snake, Horse, Goat, Monkey, Rooster, Dog, and Pig}. 2024 is the year of the Wood Dragon.

People born in the year of the Wood Dragon in the Chinese zodiac have their birthdays on the following range of dates: February 13, 1964, to February 1, 1965, or February 9, 2024, to January 28, 2025. If you check the Chinese Zodiac, you can find which animal

reflects your birthdate and what you might expect during the year of the Wood Dragon.

The Wood Dragon is believed to inherit the Dragon's charismatic and dynamic nature, combined with the characteristics of the Wood element such as growth, kindness, and flexibility. People born in the year of the Wood Dragon are often described as innovative, compassionate, and adaptable, with a strong sense of justice.

Some of the themes for the Year of the Dragon are as follows:

Power and Strength- The Dragon is a symbol of power, strength, and good

luck in Chinese culture.

**Leadership-** Dragons are seen as natural leaders. Due to the Dragon's ambition and leadership, this year should bring success in various endeavors.

**Innovation and Creativity-** The Dragon is a legendary creature in Chinese mythology. The year of the Wood Dragon is often associated with creativity, innovation, new ideas, and ventures.

**Good Fortune-** In Chinese culture, the Dragon is believed to bring luck and prosperity.

**Transformation and Change-** The Year of the Dragon is often seen as a time for personal growth,

transformation, and positive change.

**The Year of the Dragon** can also positively influence other Chinese zodiac signs, such as the Pig, Rat, Rooster, and Monkey. Those signs can also experience positive opportunities for growth and creativity. You can find your Chinese sign by googling your date of birth on one of the many Chinese zodiac websites.

Some predictions that all signs may experience during the year of the Wood Dragon are growth and flexibility, creativity and innovation, harmony and compassion, environmental and nature awareness. The Dragon is the only mysti-

cal animal in the Chinese zodiac. Many believe 2024 can be magical for positive growth.

Let's hope that the Spirit of the Dragon will have a positive influence on as many in the world community as possible. There is an old saying that "life is what you make it." I find astrology and numerology can be helpful guides.

If you visit the Harlem Tourism Board's Facebook page @htbharlem, you can watch my annual interview with the internationally known numerologist Lloyd Strayhorn. He has some interesting predictions for 2024, the Year of the Wood Dragon.

## Answers to Puzzle on page 25



## HERBS ARE NATURE'S MEDICINE

### PART II – More Herbs and Essential Oil Remedies for Intestinal Disorders

By Zakiyyah

Whether you struggle with an occasional bout of acid reflux, the pains of IBS, or gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD) – all can cause extreme discomfort.

Irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) is another common disorder that affects the stomach and intestines. Symptoms include cramping, abdominal pain, bloating, gas, and diarrhea or constipation, or both. IBS is a chronic condition that you will need to manage long-term.

Below is a very effective topical massage oil you can use to massage the stomach every afternoon (ideally between 3-5 pm).

Intestinal Massage Oil: Made in a carrier oil blend

of Moringa and Tamanu, it is blended with essential oils that repair the damaged intestinal lining, eliminate bacterial infections that often accompany IBS, and improve intestinal mucosa. This formula (blended in a 3% Dilution) includes the essential oils of cardamom, birch bark, Nargamotha, Cypress, Helichrysum, Frankincense, and some anti-inflammatory essential oils which include dill, grapefruit, tarragon, cucumber, ylang ylang and ginger; plus a few essential oils to strengthen the immune system, eliminate infection and stimulate better digestion - Oregano, Bay Laurel, and Rosemary Verbenone.

Send an email to inquire about upcoming herb courses

launching in March 2024. In these courses, you will learn how to identify and then heal the source of disease in your body.

#### ... MAKE NATURE'S MEDICINE YOUR OWN

This information is to help balance your body's natural healing energies and is not intended as a diagnosis, treatment, or cure. Check with your doctor before changing your health regimen. Email: [theherbalist1750@gmail.com](mailto:theherbalist1750@gmail.com), call 347-407-4312. **ENERGETIC (NO-PAIN) PRANIC FACE LIFT:** <https://tinyurl.com/y3aldpzy>; blog: [www.herbsarenaturesmedicine.blogspot.com](http://www.herbsarenaturesmedicine.blogspot.com). View my upcoming book: [booklaunch.io/Zakiyyah/theenergeticsofherbs](http://booklaunch.io/Zakiyyah/theenergeticsofherbs).



See answers on page 24 and 26

**CROSSWORD**

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**THEME: COLORS**

**ACROSS**

- Partner of pains
- "Raiders of the Lost \_\_\_\_\_"
- Opposite of flows
- Flesh of fish
- Grazing area
- Soft palate hanger
- Boatload
- Wood-shaping tool
- Old episode
- \*Alice of "Color Purple" fame
- \*Fruit and color
- Long reef dweller
- Sound of pain
- Math class total
- Excessively abundant
- \*"Royal" color
- \*Arrival times, acr.
- \*Color quality
- Shininess
- White House "sub"
- Spritelike
- Cupid's counterpart
- Serengeti grazer

- \*Feeling blue
- Hokkaido native
- \*Color wheel inventor
- Walk with a hitch
- "Malcolm X" (1992) movie director
- Stare open-mouthed
- Napoleon of "Animal Farm," e.g.
- \*Between blue and violet
- \*\_\_\_\_\_phobia, intense fear of colors
- Opposite of cathode
- North American country
- Run \_\_\_\_\_ of the law
- Geography class book
- Local area network
- It's firma
- Has divine power
- Banned insecticide, acr.
- German surrealist Max

**DOWN**

- "General Hospital" network

- Crop of a bird
- Zeus' sister and wife
- Two under par on a golf hole
- Meat-cooking contraption
- Winglike
- \*Predominant color of Mars
- Type of membranophone
- Like never-losing Steven
- Town
- \*Primary color
- \_\_\_\_ Juan, Puerto Rico
- 7th planet from the sun
- Chosen few
- Nicki Minaj's genre
- Not womenfolk
- \*Number of colors in a rainbow
- Of service
- Colorful parrot
- \*The Lumière brothers' colorful creation
- "Cheers" actress Perlman
- Jeopardy
- Sergio of Spaghetti

- Westerns fame
- Follow as a consequence
- Email folder
- Cone-shaped quarters
- Naiad or maenad
- Motherless calves
- Old horse
- Long John Silver, e.g.
- Modified "will"
- Bottom-ranking employee
- Opposite of "out of"
- Hall of Fame Steelers' coach
- June 6, 1944
- "\_\_\_\_ Buy Me Love"
- Between dawn and noon
- Yours and mine
- Expression of pleasure
- Melancholy
- Latissimus dorsi, for short

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**GO TO PAGE 27**

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# “Be A Revolution: How Everyday People Are Fighting Oppression and Changing the World – and How You Can, Too” by Ijeoma Oluo

REVIEW by Terri Schlichenmeyer, Harlem News contributor

Your mind’s made up: it’s time to make a difference.

You’ve decided now to stand up with the people in your community to make change for the better. You can’t live with the status quo anymore, but where do you start? Do you pick up where others left off or, with the new book “Be A Revolution” by Ijeoma Oluo, do you act where few have served before?

In her writing and speaking life, many people tell Ijeoma Oluo that they wish they could help fight racism, but they feel helpless. Their sincerity is willing, but their direction is weak, which is understandable.

Oluo acknowledges that racism is really a very complicated matter, but though there doesn’t seem to be a single solution, there is a place for every individual to help. She suggests starting with your own imagination.

Ignore the naysayers. What do you want to change?

Oluo begins with a chapter on the prison system and the work that can be done to change it from the outside in. Volunteers can also help change laws, and there’s always a need to support those who are imprisoned.

Watch your privilege and approach each injustice with respect. Reject any shame associated with

a subject and don’t separate racial justice and gender justice; working for one is working for both. While you’re at it, support disability justice, too. Be serious about accessibility, both for the disabled and the able-bodied.

Support unions and pay attention to their calls for help. Shop at businesses owned by people of color or disabled shop owners. Work to restore the environment around Black communities and demand that toxic sites in the vicinity are cleared. Attend meetings of your local school board and know your neighborhood school’s policies. Support the library and ask for more diverse reading material. Put your support behind BIPOC-led arts foundations.

And finally, be a mentor. Remember that the world is larger than you think.

You may wonder what makes “Be A Revolution” different from the hundreds of other books on activism released in the last four years. That’s a valid question, and the answer is the size.

Author Ijeoma Oluo says you don’t have to go big. Grand plans are not necessary, which is refreshing news for time-crunched readers.

And yet, tiny steps may still seem insignificant, so Oluo offers interviews with activists who invite readers to look around, see what needs doing, and cast aside feelings of hopelessness. There are simple things you can do for justice. Don’t be afraid to do them.

“Be A Revolution” is a way to get started and a dif-

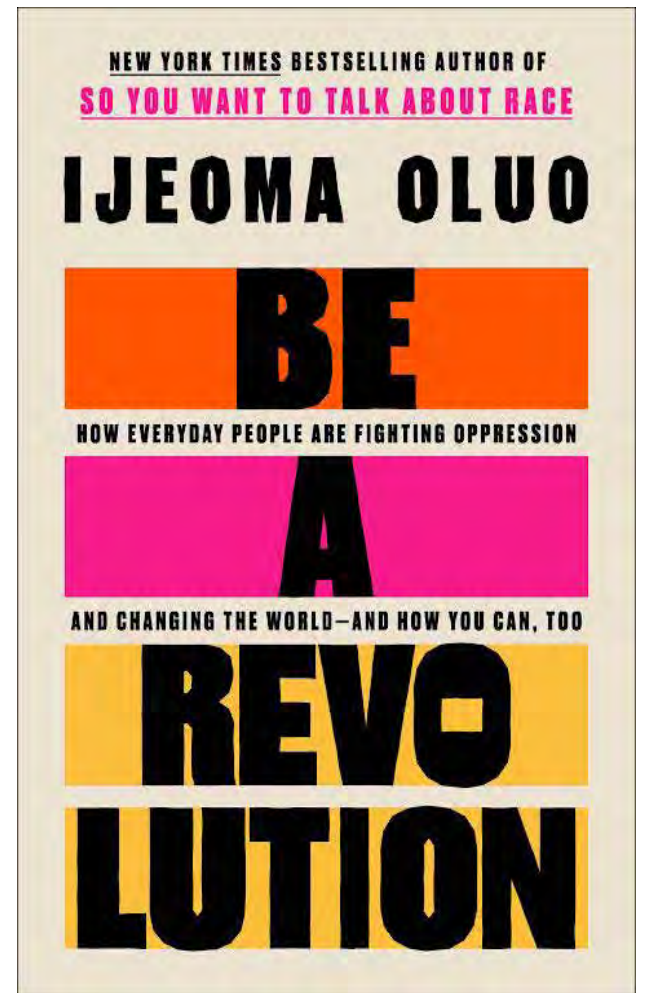


Author photo by Jovelle Tomayo

ferent kind of motivational book.

“Be A Revolution: How Everyday People Are Fighting Oppression and Changing the World – and How You Can, Too” by Ijeoma Oluo

c.2024, HarperOne \$26.99 416 pages



## SUDOKU ANSWERS

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A nonprofit organization in Bronx County, NY is seeking sealed bids for the sale and installation of security related enhancements. This project includes the installation of hardened doors, CCTV and fencing. Selection criteria will be based on price, reputation/experience, and quality of materials proposed. Specifications and bid requirements can be obtained by contacting us at edifystuz@gmail.com. All interested firms will be required to sign for the proposal documents and provide primary contact, telephone, fax and email address. Bids will be accepted until 12 pm on March 15, 2024. Work is to commence by May 15, 2024 and completed by August 15, 2024. Minority and Women Owned Businesses are Encouraged to Apply. For further information, contact R. Stark at 914-523-2243.

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