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

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BROOKLYN NEWS

"Good News You Can Use"

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Free



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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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Free copies distributed in your community weekly

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Publisher/Editor	Pat Stevenson
Social Media Mgr	Steven Bennett
Proofreader	Hazel Rosetta Smith
Publisher Assistant	Dominic Jones
Theater Writer/Critic	Linda Armstrong
Intl News & Entertainment Society	Maria Cavenaghi
Columnist	Audrey Bernard
Columnist	Tonya Sims
Columnist	Lil Nickelson
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Brooklyn Writer	Keith Forrest
Bronx/Queens Writer	Howard Giske
Photographer	Nadezda Tavodova Tezgor
Photographer	Michelle James
Photographer	Seitu Oronde
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
Website: www.harlemcommunitynews.com
Twitter: @harlemnewsinc • Facebook: /harlemnewsinc
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PAT STEVENSON

Happy New Year 2026!

As we welcome January 1, 2026, we also honor the seventh day of Kwanzaa, dedicated to the principle of Imani, which means Faith in Swahili. Today invites us to embrace a deep belief in ourselves, our families, and our community. Imani reminds us that progress begins with trust, trust in our purpose, trust in our collective strength, and trust in the possibility of a brighter future. As we step into a new year, this principle encourages us to hold fast to hope even when challenges arise. It calls us to believe not only in what we can see, but in what we can build together through unity, creativity, and determination. May this day inspire renewed confidence, positive change, and a shared commitment to uplifting one another. With Imani guiding us, 2026 becomes a year of promise, resilience, and purposeful growth.

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Happy New Year!!!

Pat Stevenson
Celebrating
33 Years Publishing

Are You Financially Prepared for the New Year?

(Statepoint)

A new year is a chance to embrace a wallet-friendly mindset and make a fresh financial start. But what changes will make the most impact?

CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER® professionals are sharing their favorite resolutions for 2026:

Calculate spending: Before any other money planning in 2026, you need to calculate your spending. Did you end 2025 with more money than you had at the beginning of the year? If so, your budget is likely in good shape and you can thoughtfully leverage excess funds to pay down debt or save for a specif-

ic goal. If you're facing a net deficit, it's time to cut spending where you can or identify ways to increase your income.

Build savings: Make 2026 the year you automate savings, increase your contributions to your retirement accounts and adopt a "pay yourself first" approach to building your nest egg. The sooner you take these steps, the longer you'll have to watch your savings grow. Your financial advisor can help you determine how much you'll need for the future you want — whether that involves becoming a homeowner, paying for your children's college education or taking an early retirement. They

can also provide strategies for reaching these goals.

Adopt tax planning strategies: Learn how new tax rules ushered in by the "One Big Beautiful Bill Act" could impact your taxes. A CFP® professional and your tax advisor can help you understand the changes and strategize accordingly so you can maximize benefits and minimize missteps.

Review your insurance coverage: One unexpected event can have devastating financial consequences without the right insurance. Review your policies to determine whether they meet your current needs and add coverage where



necessary. This is also a good opportunity to comparison shop among providers to ensure you're not spending more than you need to.

Seek expert guidance: Varied factors such as insurance, investments, taxes and credit work together to form your

complete financial picture. Make working with a CFP® professional a New Year's resolution. They are specially trained to holistically evaluate all these components when offering financial advice. Visit [LetsMakeAPlan.org](https://www.LetsMakeAPlan.org) to find a CFP® professional

near you.

This year, don't be afraid to take a deep dive into your finances to determine whether your current financial plan is working. A few small tweaks may be all you need to course correct for a brighter financial future.

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PONDER THIS: Do It a New Way in 2026



(Statepoint)

In this first week of the new year, contemplate on what you can do to step out on the good foot. Looking back over the 365 days of last year might be a jarring experience, if you focus only on what you did not get, compared to what you did get.

Too much time spent on the haves and the have-nots is not healthy. Of course, many of us had unexpected disappointments and had to face losses in family and friends. Yet, somehow, somewhere, there had to have been some surprise accomplishments, joy, and laughter in the mix.

Those who are in the practice of psychology and mind therapies advise clients as they help them to reevaluate and eliminate the negative, to place the focus on the positive.

So here we are, the upstart of another year. This could be your time and your turn to get things right. Focus on your priorities. There is no shame in the claim that you matter, be

mindful of how you feel. If every move makes you feel doubtful or leery, try another way, enhance your enthusiasm for something new.

Then, if you really have done all you can do, and you have applied your whole heart in the effort, just stand, let it rest for a bit.

Popular motivational speaker Iyanla Vanzant was known to state profoundly in her opening narration “you have to do the work.” Doing the work can only begin with a willingness to be open and honest, not hurtful, or plain mean.

Hurt gets engraved on the heart, like a wound that will not heal until the right medicine is consistently applied. Too many wounds on the heart can cripple you

and destroy the lives of others around you. There are questions that should be dealt with and answers that are necessary to comprehend the truth before moving onward.

Those questions that involve personal relationships are commitment concerns and business/work questions provide operational and financial clarity. Family relationships are the hardest to delve into because they are deeply rooted.

It is a new day in a new year. Do not allow yourself to remain in a cul-de-sac of regret and neglect. Do not fill your mind with matters that cannot be resolved alone. Sometimes we must walk away from family and friends to clear our head

and focus on what is most important.

With your head held high and your back straight, walk the walk and talk the talk and believe in yourself. Things are about to get better. Get ready to be blessed. It is 2026, a new opportunity to get it right for you and yours.

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

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BROOKLYN EVENTS

Jan 11–Feb 15, 8:30–11 a.m.
Winer Birding at Brooklyn Botanical Gardens
Brooklyn has many diverse habitats, which makes it a great borough for birding! Visit Brooklyn parks while learning about the birds that inhabit them in the winter. Classes will meet at a different Brooklyn park each week. Beginners welcome
Brooklyn Botanical Gardens entrances 150 Eastern Parkway, 455 Flatbush Avenue & 990 Washington Avenue

Jan 13, 14, 15
“Not For Radio – Winter in the Garden”
Being held at Kings Theatre, Flatbush Avenue. A multi-night concert event at the historic Kings Theatre.

Jan 18 –Jan19, 10:00 am – 5:00 pm
Celebrate Martin Luther King Jr.
Turn dreams into action with two days of service, storytelling, and song! March with Grammy-nominated musician Fyütch, create shadow puppets, join community service projects, and hear Dr. King’s words come to life. Being held at Brooklyn Children’s Museum, 145 Brooklyn Avenue.

January 29 - February 1.
Disney On Ice presents Mickey’s Search Party comes to Brooklyn
Being held at Barclays Center. Celebrate Disney magic at Disney On Ice presents Mickey’s Search Party, a fast-paced, family-friendly production that follows the search for Tinker Bell through stunning worlds. Explore the colorful spirit realm of Coco with Miguel, brave the ocean with Moana, marvel at Belle’s enchanted chandelier, sing with Elsa, and watch Stitch crash the action with mischievous surprises. Featuring spectacular ice skating, daring aerial stunts, and memorable moments from Aladdin, Toy Story, and The Little Mermaid, this all-out celebration delivers nonstop music, mischief, and memories.

Jan 29, 7:30pm
Staged Reading: “Twelve Angry Black Women”
Being held at Billie Holiday Theatre, Restoration Plaza. A staged reading exploring the experiences of Black women, presented by the historic Billie Holiday Theatre. Cost:

Tuesdays in January
Tough Love Tuesdays with Alwaysz Fit 4 Lyfe
Being held at Billie Holiday Theatre, Restoration Plaza. Description: A recurring fitness and wellness event hosted at the Billie Holiday Theatre.



¹ Jan 11-Feb 15 Winter Birding in Brooklyn



Jan 18-19 MLK Day at Brooklyn Children Museum



Jan 29-Feb 1 Disney on Ice at Barclay Center

HARLEM COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS

Record Accomplishments, Historic Achievements

OP EDITORIAL



By Mayor Eric Adams

Last week, our administration's senior leadership came together to celebrate our historic achievements and enduring accomplishments over the past four years. Assembling this diverse and experienced team of dedicated public servants from all backgrounds and all boroughs was an accomplishment in itself. This was the first administration to have five women deputy mayors, the first woman police commissioner — and the second woman police commissioner. We had the first Dominican deputy mayor, the first Filipino deputy mayor, the first East Indian deputy mayor, and the first Persian deputy mayor — an administration that looks like the city it serves and that has delivered for our city every single day.

I want to thank everyone who took on the task of building a better city and succeeded by every

possible metric. Four years after we took office during a pandemic and a crime wave, we can say with confidence: New York City has never stood stronger than it does right now. Record jobs, record homes, record small businesses, record early childhood education enrollment, record investments in homelessness, record safety, and so much more.

The last four years have been a testament to what we can achieve when dedicated public servants work together to put sound policy into practice. These wins were the result of smart, focused leadership, common-sense thinking, and reasonable, responsible solutions. This “radically pragmatic” approach is how you get four years of declining crime and four years of record-breaking economic expansion. It's how you clear the way for a new generation of housing and change the conversation on homelessness and mental health. It's how you cut the cost of childcare and increase the average New Yorker's lifespan. It's how you boost student test scores and keep our streets and parks clean, green, and rat-free. It's how we Got Stuff Done and how we will leave New York safer, stronger, and more resilient than ever before.

America's safest big city is now even safer. I am proud we

leave this city with the fewest number of shootings in recorded history under our administration. Public safety was the prerequisite for prosperity, and we broke the record for the most jobs and the most small businesses in our city's history. And then we did that again...and again...and again.

Housing had become a generational issue, holding working people back — so we took action and laid the foundation for a fairer, more affordable future. After 60 years of diversions and delay, we passed the most pro-housing legislation in the city's history. We turned New York City into a “City of Yes,” and in the years to come, thousands of New Yorkers will move into new housing that is safe and affordable thanks to the work we did together.

We centered the needs of working people at every turn, putting \$30 billion back in the pockets of working-class people with smart policies designed to have immediate impact. These included lowering the cost of subsidized childcare by more than 90 percent, wiping out medical debt, cutting taxes for low-income New Yorkers, giving 330,000 NYCHA residents free broadband internet, and more. And we did it all with sound fiscal management, leaving our city with the highest budget

reserves in the history of the city.

I want to thank every public servant who worked so hard to keep New York the greatest city in the world, a city that can live up to our ideals and lift up those in need — people like my mother, Dorothy Mae Adams, a single mom who worked multiple jobs to raise her six kids. She never stopped fighting to provide her family with a better life, and, for the last four years, we have never stopped fighting to do the same for New Yorkers and their families.

Thank you to our senior leadership, the entire City Hall team, and the hundreds of thousands of city employees across all the agencies who helped make all these record achievements a reality for working-class New Yorkers. You rewrote the playbook on public safety and public spaces, education and the economy, health care, homelessness, and housing. Your work has changed our city for the better, and it will stand the test of time.

Above all, thank you to the people of New York City, for electing me to serve as your mayor. It has been the honor of a lifetime, and the work we have done together has laid the foundation for a better, safer, more affordable city going forward. ###



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Home Buying in Harlem Be Prepared to Buy Now



By Rev. Dr. Charles Butler

I would like to wish all of you a healthy and happy New Year! For those who successfully completed the home buying process in 2025, congratulations to you for achieving your goal while being confronted with an extremely difficult and unpredictable economy! However, if your quest is to purchase a home this year, you must know the obstacles will be even greater. But do not be discouraged, you can still with a good plan successfully navigate the home buying landscape and realize your dream of homeownership.

The first thing is to the process now! You cannot afford to procrastinate any longer. This is a new year, so you must come out decisively if you want to be competitive. The market value of Harlem properties will not be significantly declining. This is still a seller's

market, meaning the demand is greater than the supply of affordable homes on the market.

There is still uncertainty concerning the economy. Interest rates by all indication will not be decreasing. Because of these factors, many homeowners are reluctant to place their homes on the market. These factors are making homeownership extremely difficult for the low to moderate-income first-time buyers. Hopefully, your employer will provide a cost-of-living increase, but that money is usually absorbed through increased living expenses.

So here are a few tips you can use to increase your savings as you prepare for homeownership: (1) Create a monthly household budget. This is the primary tool you must use in the home buying process. Your budget will tell you how much you can save each month, how soon you will be ready to buy and how much you can afford to spend on a home. Consider increasing your monthly income by taking on a part-time job.

(2) Pay yourself first. Set a goal to save a specific amount of money each month. Do this as soon as

you get paid. Push yourself to aggressively save as much as possible. Review your budget periodically to make sure you are working towards meeting your goal. Reduce your monthly expenses wherever possible. Turn off the cable, lower the thermostat, bring your lunch to work. Eliminate all wasteful spending.

(3) Pay off all outstanding credit debt as quickly as possible. You want to avoid paying excessive interest rates and late fees. But remember to keep the accounts open and active. But do not open any new accounts. Friends, the only way homeownership will happen is you must make it happen. Control your spending and credit. If your goal is to purchase a home in Harlem, you must be committed to this process. Maintain your focus. Do not allow anything to get in your way of achieving your goal. You can do it!

If you are interested in attending the workshop or have questions regarding the home buying process, contact Rev. Dr. Charles Butler at (212) 281 4887 ext. 231 or email at cbutler@hcci.org.

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HARLEM EVENTS

Jan 6, 11:00 am – 3:00 pm
El Museo del Barrio – 47th Annual Three Kings Day
The Arts Open Paths (El Arte Abriendo Caminos) A major East Harlem cultural parade and celebration featuring performances, puppets, music, and community participation honoring Latinx, Caribbean, and Latin American traditions. Cost: Free

Jan 15-16, 7:00–8:00 pm
Harlem Jazz Series: Craig Harris & Harlem Nightsongs Big Band
Big Band / Jazz Address: Mount Morris Ascension Presbyterian Church, Harlem
Weekly performance by Craig Harris and the Harlem Nightsongs Big Band.

Jan 17
Film Screenings: Pan African Legacies – Malcolm X & Franz Fanon
Being held at Teachers College, Columbia University (Harlem)
Screenings exploring the legacies of Malcolm X and Franz Fanon.

Jan 19, 10:00am-12:00pm
MLK Day Harlem Street Tree Care (Volunteer Event)
NYC Parks volunteer event caring for Harlem street trees in honor of MLK Day.

January
Schomburg Center – Annual Black Comic Book Festival
Being held at Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, 515 Malcolm X Blvd
Annual gathering of Black comic artists, workshops, panels, and film screenings celebrating Black comics and graphic storytelling.

January
Studio Museum in Harlem – Exhibitions (ongoing)
From the Studio; Tom Lloyd; Expanding the Walls; From Now; To Be a Place; Camille Norment; Christopher Myers: Harlem Is a Myth Address: Studio Museum in Harlem (new building) Short description: Multiple long-term exhibitions exploring photography, community, Harlem identity, and contemporary Black art. in search results. Studio Sunday is a free day for the public, 11:00 am – 6:00 pm. Family artmaking and gallery engagement

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Jacob Lawrence, Subway (detail), 1938 © 2025 The Jacob and Gwendolyn Knight Lawrence Foundation, Seattle / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

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Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture
135th St & Malcolm X Blvd, Harlem
THROUGH JUNE 30, 2026



schomburg.org/100

Jan 6 El Museo Three Kings Day Celebration



The Musical Comedy '44' has extended its run off-Broadway

by Audrey J. Bernard

After breaking records in both Chicago and Los Angeles, "44 The Musical" is taking a bite out of The Big Apple! The new musical is dazzling New Yorkers with a satirical look at the rise and presidency of Barack Obama at the off-Broadway Daryl Roth Theatre (101 East 15th Street, NYC). '44' was originally scheduled for an eight-week limited engagement beginning with preview performances on Tuesday, October 14, and officially opening Thursday, November 6, and closing Sunday, December 7, 2025. Now, by popular demand, this glorious musical has been extended to an additional four-week engagement through Sunday, January 4, 2026.

Barack Obama's election changed history, and

the off-Broadway production of "44 The Musical" is setting history straight via a satirical look at the rise and presidency of the iconic Forty-Fourth President of the United States, Barack Obama, as well as the eccentric political characters he met along the way. Obama's election changed history. And as we can clearly see, it also ended racism forever! But "44 The Musical" is the story of Obama you won't read about in history books, because history books are now banned in most states. '44' is the story of Obama as Joe Biden kinda sorta remembers it.

The music in the play is electric and features a melting pot of music that delivers everything you'd come to expect from a Musical about the Obama Era: Sarah Palin scream-sing-

ing "Drill Me Baby" like Ozzy Osbourne, President Obama crooning "How Black Is Too Black?" over a smooth Motown groove, and of course, "Filibusters," a hardcore hip-hop jam where Mitch McConnell and Ted Cruz rap "Green Eggs and Ham" in its entirety. The political world is buzzing about "44!" Barack Obama exclaims, "Of all the musicals about my Presidency, this is one of them." Alex Jones raves, "The Radical Left Deep State White Woke-er Globalist Cabal has done it again!" And Bill Clinton moans, "I came. I saw. I came."

Prodigiously directed by co-creator Eli Bauman with music direction by Anthony "Brew" Brewster and choreography by Miss James Alsop, the charismatic cast is led by T.J.

Wilkins (NBC's The Voice) as Barack Obama and Shanice (Flex & Shanice) as Michelle Obama, and Chad Doreck as Joe Biden with Larry Cedar as Mitch McConnell, Summer Collins as Sarah Palin, Summer Nicole Greer as the Voice of the People, Jenna Pastuszek as Hillary Clinton, Dino Shorté as Herman Cain, Jeff Sumner as Lindsey Graham, and Michael Uribes as Ted Cruz. Understudies Audri Bartholomew, Wilkie Ferguson III, Chelsea Morgan Stock, and Ryan Williams round out the company.

The performers are backed by the electrifying L.A. band House of Vibe as "The Andrew Jackson Five" with Anthony "Brew" Brewster on keyboards, Phillip "Fish" Fisher on drums, Corey Cofield on bass, Conrad Bauer on

guitar, and Greg Raymond on keyboards. The music supervisor is Wilkie Ferguson III.

"44 The Musical" features scenic design by Julio Himede, costume design by Matthew Hemesath, lighting design by Nathan W. Scheuer and Natali Arco, and sound design by Jonathan A. Burke. General management is by DR Theatrical Management. Monica Saunders-Weinberg and Bauman produce in association with Anthony "Brew" Brewster, Steve McKeever (Hidden Beach Recordings), Conrad Bauer, and Shanice and Kerry Gordy.

The buzz around "44 The Musical" is electric and the word of mouth has many celebrities and prominent New Yorkers coming to Union Square to see the heartfelt, soulful musical where audiences are known



to laugh, cry, cheer, applaud loudly, and give several standing ovations which begs the question, "Why is it closing?" Recently, the cast welcomed LL Cool J, Montell Jordan, Wanda Sykes, Charlamagne the God and Ben Vereen who snapped selfies with the cast. (Photos by Jenny Anderson / Broadway/World) (SOURCE: The Obama Musical)



Wanda Sykes (front-r) takes a selfie with '44' cast

Chad Doreck, T.J. Wilkins, Jenna Pastuszek

Montell Jordan (back row, hat) & '44' cast

Belongó honors David Perez and David Amram at Inaugural Gala

by Audrey J. Bernard

Belongó—a non-profit organization dedicated to performing, educating about, and preserving the music of the Americas emanating from African and indigenous roots—hosted its inaugural gala on November 11, 2025 at the trendy City Winery in Manhattan. The first-ever celebration attracted leaders, artists, and supporters to honor David Perez, co-founder & managing partner at Avance Investment Management, and celebrated American composer, conductor, and multi-instrumentalist David Amram. Additionally, a special Community Service Recognition was awarded to Michelle Cruz, Director of Economic Development at Union Settlement.

This was a level one event starting with the Master of Ceremonies, award-winning journalist and television host Errol Louis, revered for his work at NY1 and CNN, who set the pace for a magnificent evening for some 300 festively dressed people. Many guests followed the dress code and wore Bugalu fashion -- cocktail attire with vibrant cultural flair inspired by the Afro Latin jazz heritage and the spirit of East Harlem's Bugalú era. The flava was block party chic reminiscent of summertime in

New York City where folks joyfully danced in the streets. Guests enjoyed a convivial cocktail reception, dinner, dancing, a live auction of curated exclusive items, and a cigar-rolling experience.

The music was muy caliente and featured pulsating performances by O'Farrill & The Afro Latin Jazz Orchestra and Belongó's stellar youth orchestra the Fat Cats, led by Zack O'Farrill. evening is bugalú (boogaloo)—a powerful fusion of Latin, African, and African American rhythms. This electrifying genre reflects the spirit of Belongó and brings their mission to life through live performance, dance, and shared connection. As Belongó honors the musical traditions of the Americas, it celebrates the power of culture to unite, inspire, and transform.

Belongó, originally known as the Afro Latin Jazz Alliance, was founded in 2007 by 6-time GRAMMY winner and 2-time Latin GRAMMY winner Arturo O'Farrill who serves as Belongó's artistic director. O'Farrill, who was born in Mexico and raised in New York City, is a torchbearer for a musical movement rooted in heritage, justice, and evolution and his career spans work with Dizzy Gillespie, Wynton Marsalis, Harry Belafonte, and

Carla Bley, and an unwavering dedication to Afro-Latin music as both an art form and a force for equity.

In 2007, Arturo founded what is now Belongó, a visionary nonprofit organization that brings Afro-Latin music to life through performance, education, and cultural preservation. Formerly known as the Afro Latin Jazz Alliance. This esteemed organization has: Provided free music education to over 20,000 students across NYC's public school system; Presented 870+ performances worldwide to over a million people; Built an archive of 750+ musical scores across 16+ genres; and Forged pathways for cultural exchange between Cuba and the U.S. as an informal ambassador of cross-border artistry

Belongó's mission is not only musical—it's transformational. With a deep commitment to community and culture, the organization has been named the cultural partner for Timbale Terrace, a 340-unit affordable housing project being developed on Park Avenue in East Harlem. Its future home, Casa Belongó, will be a permanent cultural anchor—offering music instruction, performance space, and creative refuge to a neighborhood long defined by its rich artistic leg-

cy. The groundbreaking is slated for 2026.

O'Farrill recently released his critically acclaimed live album *The Original Influencers: Dizzy, Chano & Chico* (Live at Town Hall). It pays tribute to the groundbreaking collaboration between Dizzy Gillespie, Chano Pozo, and Chico O'Farrill (Arturo's father), whose fusion of Afro-Cuban rhythms and modern jazz birthed an entire genre. With guest appearances by Pedrito Martínez, Daymé Arocena, and more, the project reclaims the roots of Latin jazz while passing the torch to a new generation.

In a message of deep gratitude, The Belongó Team thanked their guests. "Thank you for joining us at the first-ever Belongó gala, honoring David Amram, David Pérez, Michelle Cruz, and the spirit of Afro Latin Jazz that continues to unite and inspire us. We hope you enjoyed the unforgettable night of music, community, and celebration. We are also grateful for New York City Cultural Affairs Commissioner Laurie Cumbo's presence; her stewardship has been outstanding. Because of your support, we are one step closer to building a space where artists and communities can belong, and where the music never stops. We can't wait



(L-R) Arturo O'Farrill, Laurie Cumbo (Commissioner, NYC Dept. of Cultural Affairs), Marietta Ulacia (Belongó Executive Director), Eduardo Castell (Belongó Board Chair)

to see you on the dance floor again soon."

Proceeds from Belongó Bugalú support free music education programs in New York City public schools, city-wide community programs, a New York City performance season, and free concerts and events. Belongó Bugalu is grateful

for the support of Avance Investment Management, LLC, co-founded and led by our honoree David Perez. For additional information contact <https://www.afrolatinjazz.org/bugalu>. (Gala photos by D'Anthony Photography)



(L-R) Joe Bataan, David Amram, Arturo O'Farrill



Gala host, Errol Louis



David Amram being honored by Arturo O'Farrill and Belongó



Michelle Cruz, Director of Economic Development at Union Settlement.



Arturo O'Farrill, Laurie Cumbo (Commissioner, NYC Dept. of Cultural Affairs)



Arturo O'Farrill, Zach O'Farrill



Eduardo Castell (Belongó Board Chair), David Perez (gala honoree), Arturo O'Farrill

Voza Rivers Legacy Series Kicks off with Playwright David Wright's Yoruba Dance Drama - Sango

by Keith forrest

New Heritage Theatre Group (NHTG), New York State's oldest Black nonprofit theater company (est. 1964), in partnership with The City College of New York (CCNY), has officially launched the inaugural season of the Voza Rivers Legacy Series. The program kicked off, Monday, December 15, 2025, with a successful staged reading of *Sango* (A Yoruba Dance Drama) by open mic winner David Wright.

Held at CCNY and helmed by celebrated director Michael Anthony Green, the presentation showcased the first of five winners selected from a competitive citywide Open-Mic Competition. The reading marks a significant milestone for the program, which is designed to champion rising multidisciplinary artists and provide a platform for culturally rich, innovative

storytelling.

David Wright, an accomplished Brooklyn-based playwright and performer, brings an enigmatic exploration of myth, spirituality, and community to the stage with *Sango*. Deeply rooted in the West African Yoruba cultural tradition, this dance drama utilizes rhythm and movement to bridge the gap between ancient heritage and contemporary artistic expression. The reading serves as a vital development opportunity for Wright, offering a professional environment to refine his work before a live audience.

Following this powerful opening, the series will continue its commitment to nurturing new voices with four additional presentations scheduled throughout the 2026 season. On January 26, 2026, the series will present Sydnie Helsop's *Little Girl Blue*,

followed by Eric Richardson-Hagans' *If Only Yesterday* on February 23, 2026. The spring lineup concludes with Allison Shillingford's *At the Table* on March 23, 2026, and Daisy Dumas-Featherstone's *Mast/Mask* on April 27, 2026. Each session provides these emerging playwrights and screenwriters a professional platform to develop their work through community feedback and industry visibility.

The Voza Rivers Legacy Series honors its namesake's six-decade career in the arts. Known for bringing *Sarafina!* to Broadway and championing the global African diaspora, Voza Rivers has dedicated his life to creating inclusive spaces for BIPOC, LGBTQ+, and disabled artists. The program is backed in part by the West Harlem Development Corporation, with additional support from the



Voza Rivers Legacy Series Producers Amy Sprecher (left) Aaliytha Stevens (2nd Left) and Irene Gandy (2nd right) are joined by Voza Rivers (right) and Dr. Vincent Boudreau in presenting Playwright David Wright.

New York State Council on the Arts, the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, and the Nederlander and Shubert organizations.

New Heritage Theatre Group, led by Executive Producer Voza Rivers and Executive Artistic Director

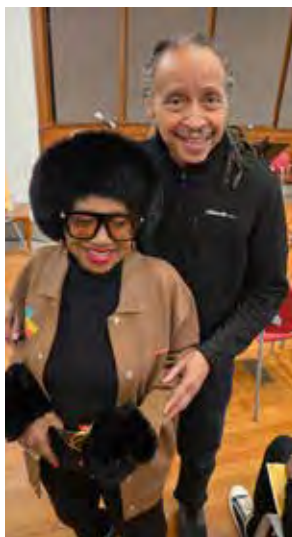
Jamal Joseph, remains a pillar of Harlem's cultural landscape. As the theater-company-in-residence at The City College of New York, NHTG continues to provide vital training and exposure to artists of color, ensuring that the historical

and social experiences of African and Latino descendants are celebrated locally and globally.

Photos by
New Heritage
Theatre Group



Voza Rivers Legacy Series inaugural playwright David Wright marks the debut reading of his play *Sango* (A Yoruba Dance Drama).



Tony Award Winning Producer & Voza Rivers Legacy Series Founder Irene Gandy strike an pose with New Heritage Theatre Group Executive Artistic Director Jamal Joseph



The City College of New York President Vincent Boudreau & Living legend Voza Rivers



Sango reading cast members

Small Business Owners Remain Confident Despite Trade Challenges

(Statepoint)

Optimism for the future of the U.S. economy and business prospects is at an all-time high, according to a new survey of small and mid-size business owners.

Just one year ago in PNC's Economic Outlook survey, a record 56% of respondents – which include business owners or financial decision makers at more than 500 small to mid-size businesses nationwide – reported optimism for the future of the U.S. economy. That number jumped to 58% in the latest survey, with optimism for business prospects climbing to 84%.

In contrast, is a declining number of respondents who say they expect demand or profits to increase in the next six months. Additional-

ly, 46% of business owners say they are “extremely concerned” about inflation in the coming months, with one-third also reporting they are “extremely concerned” about the risk from higher tariffs and supplier prices.

Fears around prices

The top challenge business owners are facing is uncertainty around pricing. Fifty-one percent said they anticipate price increases from suppliers. That's up from the 45% in the spring, but down significantly from a year ago (59%). Consequently, 58% of respondents said they expected to increase prices.

Among those who expect to raise prices, 54% are attributing increases to non-labor costs – a sharp increase from the 37% who answered that way in 2024. Fewer business owners reported the cost

of labor (30%), or favorable market conditions (15%) as reason to raise prices.

Tariffs are playing a key role in pricing, according to respondents. Forty-eight percent reported that they believe tariffs are leading to increased prices that suppliers are charging them. Similarly, 46% reported that tariffs contributed to their decision to raise prices they charge customers.

“It's a bit of a roller coaster effect when it comes to opinions on pricing over the last few survey cycles,” Faucher said. “As they weigh how tariffs may impact their business going forward, it seems many business owners accept that price increases are likely, but perhaps not as definitive as a year ago.”

A pause on hiring

As prices rise, business owners who reported plan-

ning to hire over the next six months dipped to just 13% (from 18% a year ago.) Respondents' top hiring challenges were:

- Lack of skills or experience needed (30%)
- Lack of applicants (29%)
- Candidates' inability to meet legal/security requirements (16%)

Fall Economic Outlook by the numbers:

- 44% of respondent believe a recession is likely in the next 12 months.
- 17% say higher tariffs have increased the level of inventory of their business. It mirrors the percentage of business owners who say tariffs have decreased their level of inventory;
- 52% say tariffs have had no impact at all on their level of inventory;
- 23% believe their cash



reserves will be lower at this time next year, marking the first time in survey history that number has exceeded the percentage of respondents who feel cash reserves will be higher in a year (22%); and

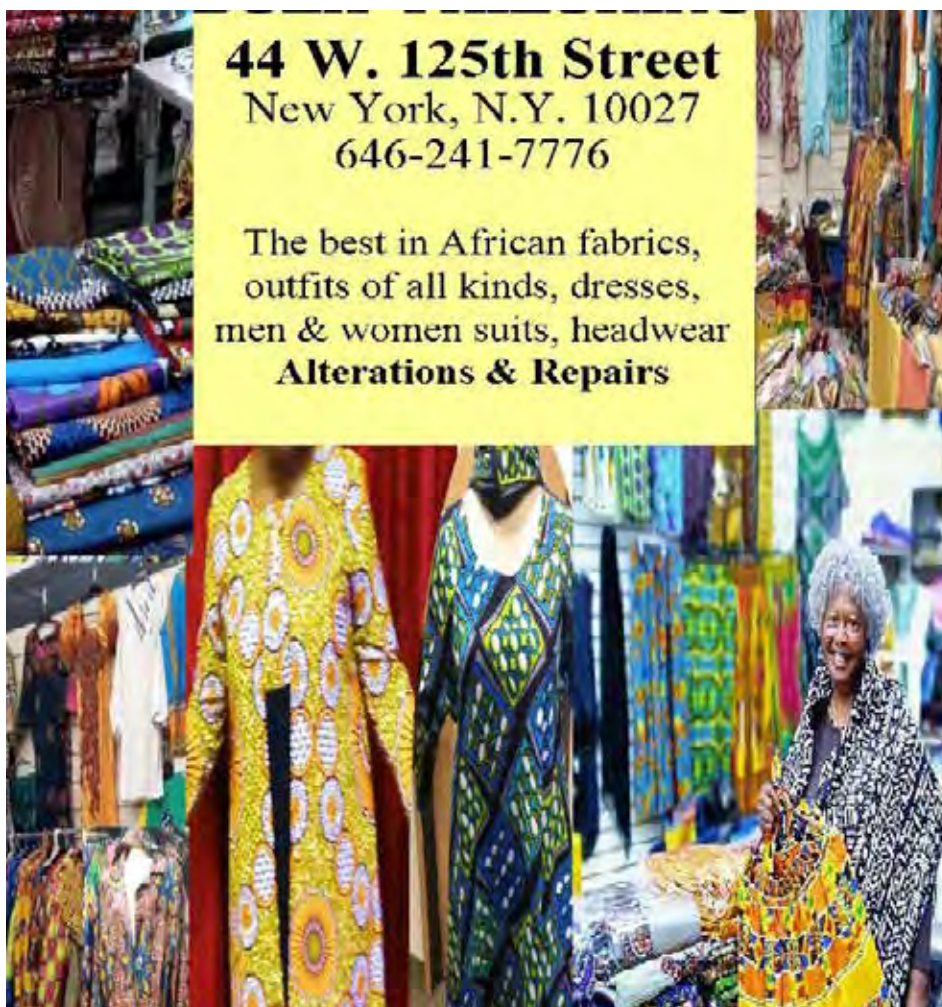
- 24% believe Artificial Intelligence is the technology that will most impact their business over the next two years.

To see the full 2025 PNC Fall Economic Outlook Survey results visit pnc.mediaroom.com.

While it may seem counterintuitive that business owners remain optimistic despite reporting fears around tariffs, inflation and profits, those concerns are still statistically lower than in other survey cycles,” said PNC chief economist, Gus Faucher. “After powering through a global pandemic, it's unsurprising that leaders feel confident in their ability to prosper despite today's challenges.”

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5 Sugar Intake Tips to Prevent Cavities in 2026

(Statepoint)

Holiday celebrations often feature lots of great food and drinks, including sweet treats to indulge in. But too much sugar in your diet can weaken your teeth, leaving your smile vulnerable to cavities. After a sweet holiday season, follow these five sugar intake tips so you can prevent cavities and improve your oral and overall health in 2026.

Restore the balance. If your holiday season was filled with candy canes, hot cocoa and cookies, now is the time to revive a balanced diet with a variety of healthy foods from each of the five

major food groups. Fill your plate with whole grains, fruits, vegetables, lean proteins and low-fat dairy foods.

Sugary beverages like soda and juice should be served sparingly, as healthier options like water and plain milk have far more nutritional value. "Water is the best beverage for your teeth," said American Dental Association (ADA) dentist, Mirissa Price, D.M.D. "Not only does water help wash away cavity-causing bacteria and weaken the acids in your mouth, but water with optimal levels of fluoride strengthens your teeth against cavities.

Be picky if it's sticky and watch out for starch.

You might think dried fruit is a healthy choice, but raisins and dried cranberries often stick to your teeth, giving the bacteria in your mouth more time to feast on the natural sugars. Meanwhile, starchy foods like chips and cakes often get trapped between your teeth where cavities also form. "If you choose these foods, pair them with water, and make sure to brush and floss thoroughly," said Dr. Price.

Resolve to maintain your dental routine. Speaking of brushing and flossing, it's important to keep up with your dental care routine no matter what your diet looks like. That means

brushing your teeth twice daily with fluoride toothpaste and cleaning between your teeth once a day. Choose dental products with the ADA Seal of Acceptance and see your dentist regularly for valuable checkups. Appointments can fill up fast after the holidays, so schedule them far in advance to avoid delays.

Timing matters. Instead of eating sweets on their own, pair them with meals or eat them shortly after mealtimes. During a meal, your mouth releases more saliva, which is another tool in the fight against tooth decay, canceling out acids and washing away food from teeth and gums. Saliva also contains minerals to

repair weakened teeth. For snacks between meals, choose a healthy option like fruit, vegetables or cheese. "If you find yourself enjoying a sweet treat apart from a meal, chewing sugar-free gum with the ADA Seal of Acceptance after can increase saliva and may help counter acidity," said Dr. Price.

Set a good example. It's no surprise that most kids also want to enjoy a sweet treat now and then, but remember that cavities are the most common chronic childhood disease. Provide children with foods and drinks that are healthy and low in sugar, remind them about regular at-home dental care, and set a

good example by modeling all the tips above.

To learn more about how nutrition affects your teeth, visit MouthHealthy.org/nutrition-simpact. For help keeping your child's dental routine on track, visit MouthHealthy.org/calendar to download a free 12-month brushing and flossing calendar.

"Making choices to keep your mouth healthy doesn't stop you from enjoying good food," said Dr. Price. "Finding a balance is key, and the start of a new year is a great time to focus on healthy behaviors to benefit your dental and overall health."

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10 Doctor-Recommended Health Resolutions for 2026

(Statepoint)

With a new year ahead, the American Medical Association (AMA) is offering Americans 10 evidence-based tips for staying healthy in 2026 and beyond:

- **Get health screenings:** Schedule preventive visits, tests and screenings so your physician can catch conditions before they become more serious.

- **Manage stress:** Mental health is part of overall health. Techniques such as meditation, deep breathing and yoga can help reduce stress. Ask for help from a mental health professional when you need it.

- **Be physically active:** Start the year off by prioritizing physical activity. Strive for at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity

activity or 75 minutes of vigorous intensity activity each week. If you have a sedentary lifestyle or primarily sit for long stretches at work, build in frequent breaks to stretch and move throughout your day.

- **Follow a healthy diet:** Drink water instead of sugar-sweetened beverages and eat nutritious, whole foods, including fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts and seeds, low-fat dairy products and lean proteins. Avoid unhealthy ultra-processed foods, especially those with high levels of added sodium, saturated fats and sugar. Drinking sugary beverages, even 100% fruit juice, is associated with a higher mortality risk, according to a study published in JAMA Network Open.

- **Stay hydrated:** Drink

plenty of water or other beverages composed mostly of water, such as milk or herbal tea, to avoid dehydration and to keep your body functioning properly. Even mild dehydration can drain your energy and make you tired. Adult men should get about 15.5 cups of fluids a day and women should get 11.5 cups, according to the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine.

- **Get plenty of good sleep:** To maintain your health and emotional well-being, most adults need 7 to 9 hours of quality sleep. Rest helps boost immunity and improve mental clarity.

- **Update vaccinations:** Vaccinations remain the best defense against flu and other serious respiratory viruses. Since significant

flu activity can stretch into May, it's not too late to get a flu shot. The AMA recommends vaccination as long as the threat of flu remains. Talk with your physician or other health care professional to determine which vaccines are right for you. To cut through vaccine confusion and have open, honest conversations with your physician, first go to the AMA website for evidence-based information. For help finding a flu vaccine in your area, visit GetMyFluShot.org.

- **Drink in moderation:** If consuming alcohol, do so in moderation as defined by the U.S. Dietary Guidelines: up to one drink per day for women and two drinks for men, and only for adults of legal drinking age.

- **Quit tobacco, nicotine and e-cigarettes:** Ask your



doctor or health care professional for resources and guidance to help quit smoking, vaping or using other nicotine products. Make your home and car smoke-free to eliminate second-hand smoke exposure.

- **Follow medication directions:** When taking prescriptions, store them safely to prevent diversion or misuse, and properly dispose of any leftover medication. If you're prescribed antibiotics, complete the full course

to prevent antibiotic resistance.

For more health tips and resources visit ama-assn.org.

"With the holiday cookies eaten and those missed workouts officially last year's worry, the new year is a great chance to refocus on the healthy choices you want to make in 2026," said AMA president Dr. Bobby Mukkamala. "Even tiny changes now can snowball into major gains for your

It's Not Too Late to Get Vaccinated This Respiratory Season

(Statepoint)

In a time of confusion and inconsistent information, healthcare professionals want you to know that it's not too late to get vaccinated this respiratory season. Getting vaccinated helps protect against potentially serious diseases like influenza (flu), COVID-19, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) and pneumococcal disease.

A recent survey from the National Foundation for Infectious Diseases (NFID) finds that many Americans harbor concerns about vaccine safety and effectiveness, or find the guidance on respiratory vaccinations unclear. To address misconceptions around vaccines and promote a healthy winter for you, your family, and communities nationwide, NFID is sharing these insights:

Vaccination helps prevent

severe disease. Vaccination is not just about preventing infection. Most importantly, it's the most effective way to protect yourself and others against severe disease-related outcomes, including hospitalization, long-term complications, and death due to flu, COVID-19, RSV and pneumococcal disease. This means that even when vaccination does not prevent infection completely, it can make an illness milder.

Vaccines are safe and effective. All recommended vaccines undergo extensive safety testing before approval and continue to be monitored for safety and effectiveness long after they are recommended for use. In the United States and globally, vaccines are held to the highest safety standards – more stringent than those for almost all other medications. Contrary to a widespread misconception, vaccines cannot

cause the diseases they are designed to prevent. While there are potential side effects, they are rare, and much less severe than the diseases vaccines prevent. The most common side effects – sore arm at the injection site, achiness and fever – are normal signs that the body's immune system is building protection.

Getting vaccinated helps protect everyone. By preventing severe respiratory illnesses, getting vaccinated reduces your likelihood of missing work or your child missing school. It reduces strain on the healthcare system and helps protect everyone, especially infants and young children, pregnant women, older adults, and people with heart disease, lung disease, or other chronic health conditions.

Recommendations are science-based. It's important to follow science-based immuni-

zation recommendations. They are based on rigorous review and ongoing research. National medical organizations composed of practicing healthcare professionals recommend these respiratory vaccines based on long-standing evidence and clinical experience:

- **Annual flu vaccination** is recommended for everyone age 6 months and older.

- **An updated COVID-19 vaccine** is recommended for those at high risk (including young children, pregnant women, older adults, and people with chronic health conditions), and anyone age 6 months and older who wants to reduce their risk for severe COVID-19 or long COVID.

- **A one-time RSV vaccination** is recommended for pregnant women; infants whose mothers did not get vaccinated for RSV during pregnancy should receive a monoclonal

antibody to protect against RSV. RSV vaccination is also recommended for certain adults ages 50-74 and all adults 75 and older.

- **Pneumococcal vaccination** is recommended for children younger than 5, all adults 50 and older, and people with certain chronic health conditions or other risk factors.

Access may vary. Evolving federal recommendations directly impact the availability and coverage of vaccines. Some states and insurance companies are developing their own coverage rules for vaccines previously recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. If you run into barriers, talk with a trusted healthcare professional who can help you navigate local restrictions.

Healthcare professionals are here to help. Talk with a trusted healthcare professional

to learn about the benefits and risks of vaccination against flu, COVID-19, RSV and pneumococcal disease. These conversations can help you make informed decisions about your health and the health of your family and community.

More information about the 2025-2026 respiratory season can be found at <https://www.nfid.org>.

"It's not too late to get vaccinated this respiratory season. If you have questions about which vaccines are right for you, reach out to your doctor, pharmacist, nurse or other healthcare professional," says Robert H. Hopkins, MD, NFID medical director. "I am confident enough in these vaccines that I have been vaccinated, as have all my family members. I encourage others to be immunized so they have the same protection I give to my family and to my patients."

What Moms Want in 2026: Child Care Investments and Safety for Kids

(Statepoint)

For years, young families have struggled to find quality affordable child care—a problem created by long-term lack of government investments and exacerbated by the pandemic and inflation. Former U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen called the nation's child care system “a textbook example of a broken market.” Thousands of programs have closed in recent years and for those still operating, prices are high and waitlists long.

Now, intensified immigration enforcement is creating new pressure on this already-fragile system. Immigrants are essential to the care workforce, making up 20% of child care workers, including 26% of cen-

ter-based child care providers and early educators, and 23% of preschool teachers, according to the Center for Law and Social Policy. Young families in particular depend on these care workers, but advocates say they can't stay in their jobs when they are living in fear, detained or deported. The Better Life Lab reports the sharp increase in ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) activity starting in January 2025 has already resulted in roughly 39,000 fewer foreign-born child care workers nationwide and 77,000 fewer mothers of preschool-aged children in the workforce.

“When child care programs are forced to reduce capacity or close, the harm is extensive. Parents are forced to leave much-needed

ed jobs, businesses can't recruit employees they need, kids go without early education opportunities that help them thrive, and more children go hungry and without health care,” said MomsRising Executive Director and CEO Kristin Rowe-Finkbeiner. “Families, communities, small businesses, and our economy suffer. Unfortunately, the Trump administration's immigration policies are destabilizing the care infrastructure that families depend on to work, provide, and thrive—and are undermining our economy.”

Growing evidence shows the Trump administration's immigration policies are also traumatizing the children and families these educators serve. News stories have documented

immigration raids outside child care and afterschool programs and even inside schools. In Chicago, a child care worker was arrested outside Rayito de Sol Early Learning Center in front of families. In Charlotte, the ourBRIDGE for KIDS afterschool program closed for days when ICE agents amassed outside of it. And school systems across the country are reporting steep, alarming drops in student attendance.

Seeing these actions, or losing a loved and trusted teacher or friend, traumatizes all the children affected, not just the people authorities are targeting, advocates and concerned parents say. That's why a growing number of mothers, educators, medical professionals, and others are asking the Trump



administration to reinstate the longstanding policy that protected churches, schools and hospitals from immigration enforcement. Congress is also considering the Protecting Sensitive Locations Act, which would prohibit immigration enforcement at child care centers, schools, hospitals, churches and other sensitive spaces.

To learn more, visit www.momsrising.org.

“Child care is essential to the country's success, and immigrant caregivers help keep child care programs open, educating our children, and supporting communities,” Rowe-Finkbeiner added. “Our nation needs a safe and orderly immigration process that balances compassion and security, not cruelty. Children should never be made to feel unsafe.”



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URBANOLOGY: Water the Season of Winter



By William A. Rogers

The Season of winter will be with us until Friday March 20th 2026. Taoist wellness strategies consider winter to be the season of the element of water. There are five elements Fire, Water, Wood, Metal and Earth. Ancient Taoist sages created wellness strategies for each of the five elements: using

their uncanny understanding of the relationship between the human body and the cosmos. During the winter season, the two vital organs that attention should be given to are the Kidneys (yin organ) and the bladder (yang organ). The positive emotion of winter is Gentleness; the negative emotion of winter is Fear. People will tend to urinate more during the water season and Mercury is the planet that influences the solar energy of earth during winter. Winter is a good time for men to have their Prostate checked. The Kidneys are the Yin water organs; they filter all the fluids, removing excess water and toxins. Kidneys can only move about six cups of liquid per day, in-

cluding what is already in the body as well as what you drink. If the kidneys get overloaded with toxins due to drinking too much, it can cause an energy imbalance in the body that can weaken the Immune System. The Bladder is the yang water organ that receives and eliminates urine (which is not waste it is filtered blood). The bladder channel has a relationship with most body functions. It runs close to the spine and can influence the Sympathetic Nervous System (ANS). The ANS influences many body functions including heart rate, digestion, perspiration, respiratory rate and sexual arousal. Ki Energy treatments as well as many other forms of Taoist energy balancing

techniques such as Tai Chi, Acupuncture, and Chi Nei Tsang have been used for centuries to bring balance to every vital organ including the Bladder and Kidneys. Scientific research in Quantum Physics has identified energy fields that surround all material forms in the universe. These fields are called "Subtle Organizing Energy Fields" (SOEFs). When the mind, body and spirit energy of the human body is in balance, the SOEFs that surround each vital organ are energized providing all the necessary energy that the vital organ needs to be healthy, the scientific definition of this state of being is negative entropy. Stress caused by negative emotions can cause an imbalance in the body separat-

ing the mind and spirit from the body. The scientific definition for this state of being is positive entropy. Fear and anxiety are the negative emotions of winter, and the negative energies of fear and anxiety will weaken the SOEFs that surround the Kidneys. The above-mentioned treatments and techniques are very effective in naturally bringing balance to the body by reviving negative entropy energy. I provide information on wellness strategies for each season in my book "The Art of W.A.R Strategies for Self-Empowerment" send an email to onuwon@gmail.com or call 917 821-7099for details. Happy New Year, 2026 the year of the HORSE

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By Zakiyyah

HERBS ARE NATURE'S MEDICINE Healing Foods in the Kitchen - Part 4

Here are some herbs that can be prepared in various ways to help relieve tensions and stress: Catnip (relieves "congestion" of emotional tensions); Hops (used in pillows to treat insomnia); Vervain (good for nervous conditions and headaches); Eleuthero (a Ginseng relative that is exceptional for treating insomnia); Rosemary (soothes/relieves nervous insomnia, mental fatigue and simple or congestive headaches); Mugwort (excellent nervine for uncontrollable shaking, insomnia); Marjoram (relieves headache/insomnia); Anise (½tsp in cup of warm

milk, stand for 5min then strain) at bedtime prevents insomnia and nightmares; Skullcap (excellent for all nerve disorders); Valerian (calming and sedating for emotional disturbances and pain); (Red) Fu Ling (best for nervous/restless conditions and treating hyperactivity in children). The medicinal properties of herbs like Uva Ursi, parsley root, gentian root, red raspberry leaves, buchu leaves, saw palmetto berries, kelp and bladder wrack, all contain chemical ingredients that promote the body's ability to reduce high levels of sugar in the blood. A number of organs are

affected by diabetes: kidney, pancreas, spleen, liver and gall bladder. Herbs like Uva Ursi, parsley root, gentian root, red raspberry leaves, buchu leaves, saw palmetto berries, kelp and bladderwrack all contain chemical ingredients that promote the body's ability to reduce high blood sugar. MAKE NATURE'S MEDICINE YOUR OWN This information is to help balance your body's natural healing energies, and is not intended as diagnosis, treatment or cure. Email: theherbalist1750@gmail.com; phone: 347-407-4312; blog: www.herbsarenaturesmedicine.blogspot.com.

Answers to Crossword on page 17

S	L	A	T	E		S	O	T			T	H	O	U		
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GAMES

See answers on pages 16



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See answers to Suduko on page 18



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Fill in the blank squares in the grid, making sure that every row, column and 3-by-3 box includes all digits 1 through 9.

HARLEM COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS

STATEPOINT THEME: ON THE FARM

ACROSS

1. Laura Ingalls' notebook
6. Boozer
9. Biblical pronoun
13. Sacred text, to some
14. "Fat chance!"
15. Afrikaners' ancestors
16. Cake spread
17. Chowd down
18. Clear the blackboard
19. *Barn chore
21. *John Deere, e.g.
23. Nirvana's "Come asYou ____"
24. Spasm of pain
25. Broadband access overseer, acr.
28. Mark for omission
30. Recessed space
35. "____ and the Real Girl," movie
37. "Shoot!"
39. E in baseball box score

40. Oil org.
41. Intelligent
43. A mixture or medley
44. Children's respiratory disease
46. Foggy view?
47. Politicians, for short
48. In a sympathetic manner
50. Ski hill ride
52. Maiden name indicator
53. Bald eagle's nest
55. Repeated Latin dance step
57. *a.k.a. harvester
61. *Opposite of pasture
65. *Common varieties are yellow, red and white
66. Tall tale
68. Smooth, in manner
69. Audience's approval
70. "____ at ease"
71. Stomach sore
72. Caribou or moose
73. Soldier's bed

74. Harsh

DOWN

1. *Separate cream from milk
2. Locus, pl.
3. Seed coat
4. Form of Japanese poetry
5. Encircle
6. Deep pile carpet
7. *Cereal grass
8. Sorority letter
9. Cleopatra's necklace
10. Thermostat option
11. Guesstimate phrase (2 words)
12. Olympic cast-out, e.g.
15. Charles Darwin's vessel
20. Must-haves
22. Ribonucleic acid, acr.
24. Fine
25. *Group of chickens
26. Birthplace of Caprese
27. Oedipus' successor
29. *Baby sheep
31. *____ rotation
32. Acrylic fiber
33. Bridal veil fabric
34. With a jagged margin
36. Gulf War missile
38. *Pasture-raised chicken's morsel
42. Vanish without this?
45. Lamentation
49. Japanese capital
51. Rh in Rh disease
54. Indiana Jones' find, e.g.
56. Not a minor
57. For boys and girls
58. Popular fairy-tale beginning
59. Stephen King's "TheGreen ____"
60. *Male pig
61. Abe Lincoln's hat material
62. Tatted cloth
63. Done
64. Seaside bird
67. UN labor grp.in 2025



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"Voices from the Kitchen: Personal Narratives from New York's Immigrant Restaurant Workers" by Marc Meyer

Review by Terri Schlichenmeyer, Harlem News contributor

Four stars and three weeks.

That's the rating you've seen for the hottest restaurant in town, and how long before you can snag reservations for a table there. The service is said to be stellar, their signature dish exquisite, the presentation awe-inspiring, and the desserts sublime. It'll be worth it, so while you're waiting (and drooling), read "Voices from the Kitchen, edited by Marc Meyer, then you can compliment the chef – and others.

How many times a month do you visit your favorite restaurant? Marc Meyer says that without the work of immigrant labor, the answer would be

zero because that restaurant probably "would not exist." From construction, to growing and harvesting the food, from oven to table, people "from other nations" have been instrumental in America's restaurants.

In this book, Meyer presents stories of people who work in the restaurants he and his business partners own. The workers live in New York City but they represent immigrant food workers everywhere in America.

Vico came from Mexico because, as the eldest, he was responsible for his family after his father died. He'd wanted to go to college but there was no money for it then.

Fany did go to college and had hoped to find a

good job, but violence in her native Honduras sent her to the U.S., where she met her wife and found happiness.

Armando says he and his siblings were "looking for opportunities." He found a job in a kitchen, where "Malaysians taught me" to speak English and to cook.

Alonso left El Salvador to avoid joining a gang. Lucia came to America illegally ("I'm not going to lie.") as a child. Mamadou came from Burkina Faso with a student visa and stayed, though kitchen duties are "women's work" in his homeland. Carlha's father taught her to cook. Mohammad owned many cows in Gambia before immigrating. And Anna Marie got a job in a kitchen thanks to her Irish accent.

Pick up "Voices from the Kitchen," and you'll know immediately that this is not a book about food. If you're expecting recipes, nope. No sizzling drama, either. What you'll find here, instead, is food for thought.

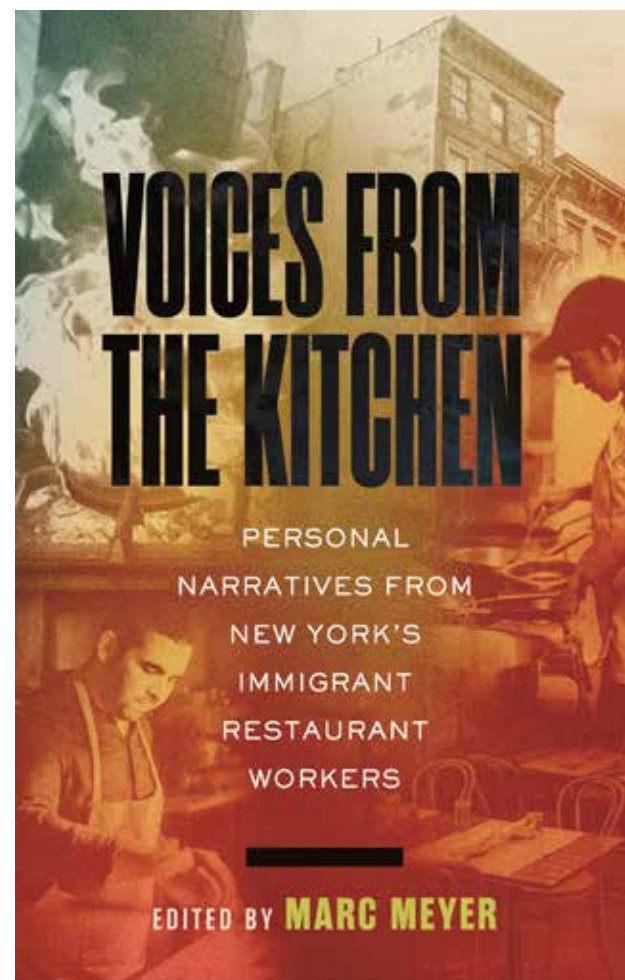
This collection, though sometimes identically-told, is also unique and individual in the many tales of immigration that editor Marc Meyer presents. Over and over, you'll read about dreams and hopes, escape from violence, and wishes for betterment. You may notice that everyone here talked about doing anything to get started in America, cleaning houses, babysitting, collecting garbage, doing whatever it took to survive. Theirs is a collection of tales of taking pride in a job well-done but not being too proud to temporarily work one's self up from the

very bottom. It's inspiring, jaw-dropping, and really quite reflective.

If you've ever craved international dishes, ordered Chinese or Mexican or Thai or otherwise patronized a restaurant that serves them, this is a must-read. Likewise, if you've been thinking about immigration issues and you want to bite into them further, "Voices from the Kitchen" is a good entree.

"Voices from the Kitchen: Personal Narratives from New York's Immigrant Restaurant Workers," edited by Marc Meyer

c.2025, Beacon Press
\$29.95
240 pages



SUDOKU ANSWERS

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

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