NAACP Visits the City of Des Moines
Story can be found on page 25
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Also Available at churches, our directory can be found on our website at dsmurban.org

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If you would like to become an outlet of The Des Moines Urban Experience, contact Dwana Bradley at dwanabradley77@gmail.com

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This publication was birthed by my father, who has always had a passion for people. The mission of The Des Moines Urban Experience (DMUE) is to empower, educate, and promote leadership in our community. In the future, we will offer programming that will address the issues of jobs, education, and health. These key issues have plagued our community for quite some time. The DMUE will partner with other agencies who are focusing on these issues to make sure the members in our community have the resources they need to be successful.

There are two programs under the DMUE: one being Iowa Juneteenth Observance, and The Des Moines Urban Experience Magazine. As editor-in-chief, a whole new world has unfolded for me. This publication exists to be the voice for the community and a voice for the voiceless, and this is done through the submitted writing of others. I appreciate the stories and opinions of others. I respect their voice and how they view the world. I may not always agree with each submission, but I hope dialogues and responses through submissions of your own will create much-needed conversations we should have amongst each other. It is the dialogues that we have with others that will help us grow. There will be articles and opinions in this publication that you as a reader may not agree with, and I encourage you to write so others can hear you. We can't be afraid to speak out. We must be comfortable with being uncomfortable.

The Des Moines Urban Experience Magazine is on track to be the leading publication for our city and this state. We strive each day to do and become better as a publication, and each year we will get better, learning from mistakes as we move forward. My commitment is to this publication. I thank you for reading, reaching out, and submitting your articles. I prompt you to continue to talk to each other, learn from each other, but most importantly grow with each other. We want to be a publication that makes people proud, but we also don’t want to resist conversations that are needed, conversations that will help us grow and learn more about each other.

My heart’s desire is to make an impact on this community, I’m passionate about people, and I want you to live your best life. I believe in what I’ve been given to do, and I hope you will stand with me and this great publication. I wish you all Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays, and Happy Kwanza. I will continue to reflect over this year and look ahead to a great 2018! The best is yet to come!

Dwana Bradley
Editor-In-Chief
The Des Moines Urban Experience Magazine

Happy Holidays!
As a local custom frame retailer and art gallery, The Great Frame Up in West Des Moines enjoys supporting the visual arts. This month we introduce readers to American visual artist Henry Ossawa Tanner.

“I will preach with my brush.” —Henry Ossawa Tanner

“Tanner was born in 1859 and was the first black student to attend the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts in Pittsburg. The artist moved to Atlanta but, disheartened by American racism, settled permanently in France in 1894. His painting technique is a blend of styles he encountered while working in Europe, including impressionism.” He has a wonderful tie to Iowa, several of his paintings are featured in the permanent collection of the Des Moines Art Center.

Henry Ossawa Tanner was an American painter who frequently depicted biblical scenes and is best known for the paintings “Nicodemus Visiting Jesus,” “The Banjo Lesson” and “The Thankful Poor.” He was the first African-American painter to gain international fame.

Henry Ossawa Tanner was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, on June 21, 1859. As a young man, he studied at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. In 1891, Tanner moved to Paris, and after several exhibits, gained international acclaim—becoming the first African-American painter to receive such attention.

Early Life
A pioneering African-America artist, Henry Ossawa Tanner was born on June 21, 1859, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The oldest of nine children, Tanner was the son of an Episcopalian minister and a schoolteacher.

When he was just a few years old, Tanner moved with his family to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where he would spend most of his childhood. Tanner was the beneficiary of two education-minded parents; his father, Benjamin Tanner, had earned a college degree and become a bishop in the African Methodist Episcopal Church. In Philadelphia, Tanner attended the Robert Vaux School, an all-black institution and of only a few African-American schools to offer a liberal arts curriculum.

Despite his father’s initial objections, Tanner fell in love with the arts. He was 13 when he decided he wanted to become a painter, and throughout his teens, he painted
and drew as much as he could. His attention to the creative side was furthered by his poor health: After falling significantly ill as a result of a taxing apprenticeship at a flourmill, the weak Tanner recuperated by staying home and painting.

Finally, in 1880, a healthy Tanner resumed a regular life and enrolled at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. There, he studied under Thomas Eakins, an influential teacher who had a profound impact on Tanner’s life and work.

Tanner ended up leaving the school early, however, and moved to Atlanta, Georgia, where he would teach art and run his own gallery for the next two years.

In 1891, Tanner’s life took a dramatic turn with a visit to Europe. In Paris, France, in particular, Tanner discovered a culture that seemed to be light years ahead of America in race relations. Free from the prejudicial confines that defined his life in his native country, Tanner made Paris his home, living out the rest of his life there.

Artistic Success
Tanner’s greatest early work depicted tender African-American scenes. Undoubtedly his most famous painting, “The Banjo Lesson,” which features an older gentleman teaching a young boy how to play the banjo, was created while visiting his family in Philadelphia in 1893. The following year, he produced another masterpiece: “The Thankful Poor.”

By the mid-1890s, Tanner was a success, critically admired both in the United States and Europe. In 1899, he created one of his most famous works, “Nicodemus Visiting Jesus,” an oil painting on canvas depicting the biblical figure Nicodemus’s meeting with Jesus Christ. For the work, he won the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts’ Lippincott Prize in 1900.

Also in 1899, Tanner married American singer, Jessie Olssen. The couple’s only child, Jesse, was born in 1903.

Throughout much of the rest of his life, even as he shifted his focus to religious scenes, Tanner continued to receive praise and honors for his work, including being named honorary chevalier of the Order of the Legion Honor—France’s most distinguished award—in 1923. Four years later, Tanner was made a full academician of the National Academy of Design—becoming the first African-American to ever receive the distinction.

Death and Legacy
Henry Ossawa Tanner died at his Paris home on May 25, 1937.

In the ensuing years, his name recognition dipped. However, in the late 1960s, beginning with a solo exhibition of his work at the Smithsonian, Tanner’s stature began to rise. In 1991, the Philadelphia Museum of Art assembled a touring retrospective of his paintings, setting off a new wave of interest in his life and work. (credits – Des Moines Art Center gallery guide; Biography.com)

The Great Frame Up currently features originals, prints, sculptures and framed artwork of numerous African American and Iowa artists in the gallery. To see some of the prior artists featured visit www.westdesmoines.thegreatframeup.com and our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/tgfuwdm. Please follow us on Instagram https://www.instagram.com/thegreatframeup_wdm, Pinterest www.pinterest.com/tgfuwdm and Twitter @tgfuwdm.

About The Great Frame Up
The Great Frame Up is a custom picture framer, offering more than 1,000 custom frames, mat styles, ready to hang framed art and local artwork. The West Des Moines location of The Great Frame Up opened in 2005 and is located at 5515 Mills Civic Parkway in the West Glen Town Center and is open Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday 10- 6pm; Thursday 10- 8pm & Saturday 10- 5pm.
“Hey”, this is one of the most celebrated months of the year. Can you believe that 11 months have come and gone and now its that time of year in the month of December. There will be a lot of festive celebrations, gifts exchanged, food, fun, and fellowship. Don’t forget that Jesus is the reason for the season. I know you have heard this phrase time and time again whether you were in church, listening to the radio or talking on the phone to one of your friends, but I want you to get this word deep down in your sprint man. Jesus is the reason for the season and we must not forget that God loved the world so much that he gave his only begotten son that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have everlasting life. The angel came to virgin Mary to awake her spirited to let her know that she was chosen to be the one to carry the baby Jesus. He is the savior of the world during this time of celebrating lets not forget that Jesus is the reason for the season. It’s time to reflect what God has done for us and how he has made a way for us through out the years. Thank him for all of the blessings you have received in 2017 and we anticipate the coming in of a brand new year as we move from 2017 into 2018 Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all of God’s Children!

The Annual Stella Awards Annual Salute To Gospel Music Returns to the Orleans Arena, Las Vegas NV Saturday March 24, 2018 @ 6:30 pm purchased your tickets now @www.thestellarawards.com Gospel Music Powerhouse Earnest Pugh Drops New Music

Video Survive Pastor Leslie Buchannan Jr. and the Greater Life Baptist Church recently celebrated 5 years of ministry Pastor Gregory Harris and Refreshing Outreach Ministries recently celebrated 9 years of ministry.

Gospel Top 10 Airplay

1. Travis Greene You Waited RCA Inspiration/PLG
2. Tamela Mann Change Me Tillymann
3. Charles Jenkins Feat. Le’ Andria Grace Inspired People RCA Inspiration/PLG
4. William Murphy Everlasting God RCA Inspiration/PLG
5. Anthony Brown & Group Therapy Trust In You Key of a Music/Fair Trade/Tyscot
6. Jekalyn Carr You Will Win Lunjeal
7. Deitrick Haddon & Hill City Worship Camp A Billion People DHVISIONS/EONE
8. Cheryl Fortuen Fighters Ludawn/Tyscot
9. Ruth La’Ontra Kingdom AJJR/Tyscot
10. Marvin Sapp Close RCA Inspiration/PLG

Merry Christmas
God loves all people and all people need help. He sees all people groups in the world as equal. So, when people abuse their influence and power and don't provide freedom for others it grieves the heart of God. So, as people of God, we should be looking out for the oppressed in our society. God is close to the brokenhearted and weak and we should too.

Look around! Who/Where are the oppressed in our society? Really. Who/Where are they?

One who is oppressed is one who is crushed or burdened by abuse of power or authority. They are unable to move freely because of a power structure hindering them and creating obstacles for mobility.

It is important to identify the oppressed in our society because Jesus knows them and identifies them. Jesus is drawn to them and if Jesus is drawn to them so should we because our life should be in Christ. While in the synagogue, Jesus finds a passage concerning himself from the prophet Isaiah saying, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, Because He anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are oppressed.” (Luke 4:18).

Jesus just gave us his mission statement. It is to preach the gospel and “set free those who are oppressed”. Those in power may read the mission statement of Jesus and rationalize what He said about the oppressed saying, Jesus was only talking about spiritual oppression from the devil in the spirit realm. Although this may be included in the mission statement, but it doesn’t exclude the physical oppression that is forced on man in our society. Those who create power structures that burden others will be held accountable. Oppressive behaviors are in direct opposition to God Himself, “He who oppresses the poor taunts his Maker, but he who is gracious to the needy honors Him.” (Prov 14:31).

God’s word is very clear about the treatment of the oppressed. “He who oppresses the poor to make more for himself or who gives to the rich, will only come to poverty.” (Prov 22:16).

Jesus came to fight against systems that unfairly disenfranchise the poor both physically and spiritually. Jesus has compassion for those who are abused by physical authority and so should his followers.

“You shall not wrong a stranger or oppress him, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.” (Ex 22:21).
This is the standard that God set with the people of God in Israel, and reflects the Heart of God.

Again, I ask the question, who/where are the oppressed around us in our society? Who is burdened by the tax code? What gender cannot get promoted unless they perform sexual favors? What race of people cannot obtain certain kinds of housing? What people group are unfairly treated in the immigration system? What communities are burdened by mass incarcerations? Which people group are burdened by the disparities in the education system? Who are being affected by Human Trafficking? As people called by God we need to ask the question, how can we “set free those who are oppressed”? Jesus knows the answer! He would be right there with them. People of God, let’s RISE UP to The Heartbeat of God and be close to those that Jesus was close to.

God Bless You!
You know how we ladies like to switch things up every now and again. So I bought myself a new hair piece…you know a wig about a month ago. It’s a change; and let’s not forget, fun. However, I noticed that each time I put the hair piece on my head, I did not have peace in my Spirit. Sounds like a personal issue, right? I mean what really seemed to be the problem…it’s trendy…lots of other women do it for all sorts of reasons. Bad hair day reasons, medical reasons, trying something different reasons, it’s my money reasons…all sorts of reasons. Yet all these did not make it okay when I wore the hair piece.

My momma always said you can talk to God about anything. So I began to seek God for understanding. “Father, why is it that I feel so uncomfortable when I wear this hair piece?”

That’s when I realized that my natural hair and my natural beauty far exceeded and outweighed that of any real yet artificial addition. For me the hair piece lowered my self esteem rather than boosted it up. When I removed it, I felt much more confident almost immediately.

Needles to say, God has increased my level of confidence in a mighty way. Now don’t get me wrong, I am not knocking hair pieces…quite frankly, “it’s your thing so do what you want to do.”

All I am saying is you are beautiful just the way you are…big, small, tall, short, long hair, short hair, no hair, short nails, or long. I am reminded of a passage that says, “For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made your works are wonderful, I know that full well. Psalm 139: 13-14 KJV

Self-esteem is defined as confidence in one's own worth or abilities. Low self-esteem is a monster that many women struggle to overcome. Often to compensate for low self-esteem we invest in things to try to enhance our outward appearance. Yet those things are just a temporary fix to the real issue. I encourage women everywhere do not be afraid to love yourself and LIVE!! Be happy being you. Embrace your uniqueness, inner and outer beauty. Trust that God had you on His mind when He formed you. If there are areas of your life that you want to change then change them but only for yourself. Building self esteem begins with loving yourself first. Before you pick up the next hair piece for whatever reason, take a moment to tell the woman in the mirror how beautiful you are before and after the trip to the beauty salon. God made you perfect…just the way you are! Do you Boo!

Opportunity for High School Youth:

SIMPSON YOUTH ACADEMY
Nominate youth for summer program about faith and service in a college-preparatory setting!

SIMPSON COLLEGE
simpson.edu/religious-life/simpson-youth-academy
New America Media hosted a forum titled: Spotting and Avoiding Scams Targeting Diverse Communities. This took place at the Central Library on October 27th, 2017. The panel was moderated by Sandy Close, Executive Director of New America Media. The panel included: Todd M. Kossow, Director, Midwest Region Trade Commission, Patti Poss Attorney General, Division of Marketing Practices Federal Trade Commission, Jessica Whitney, Director Consumer Protection, Iowa Attorney General's Office, Chris Coleman, President and CEO of the Better Business Bureau serving Greater Iowa, Quad Cities, and Sioux Land Region. Betty Andrews, President Iowa-Nebraska NAACP State Conference of Branches, Daniel Bright, Hispanic Outreach Specialist of the Better Business Bureau serving Greater Iowa, Quad Cities and Siouxland Region, and Aliz Kornva, Assistant Litigation Director, Iowa Legal Aid.

Each member of the panel provided their knowledge and expertise about the impact scams are having on our community. African Americans are two times more likely to be scam victims of consumer fraud than whites, and are less likely to report fraud. There is an embarrassment some feel when they have been scammed, but many of the panelists encouraged anyone who has been or even thinks they are being scammed to report it. It’s important to know that the IRS will not call you to send them money, they send letters if you owe them, and never send money Western Union unless you know to whom you are sending the money. Many who have been scammed have reported sending money through Western Union, and when this happens, it is more than likely that you will not get your money back.

Here are the Iowa Insurance Division’s top 10 Fraud Prevention Tips:

1. Don't be a courtesy victim. It’s OK to just say no and hang up.
2. Check out anyone you don’t recognize. Always contact the Iowa Insurance Division 1-877-955-1212 to double check that the sales person and the investment offer is legitimate.
3. Monitor your money. Insist on receiving regular reports on your investments and financial accounts and check your credit score reports every year.
4. Never judge a person’s integrity by the sound of his or her voice. Scammers know now to sound professional and friendly to gain your trust.
5. Watch out for salespeople who prey on your fears and other emotions. Scammers know you worry about your savings, but don't let fear cloud your judgement when you invest.
6. Take your time. Take your time to research, get advice and learn more about investing.
7. Be wary of unsolicited offers. Be careful if you can’t find current information about their company. If it sounds too good to be true, it is probably neither good nor true.
9. Watch out for “reload” scams. If you lost money once, don’t let scammers trick you into trying to recoup it.
10. Don’t be embarrassed to report fraud. Reporting fraud is a responsible step in handling your finances, so don’t be afraid or embarrassed to report it if you are victimized. You can save another person from becoming a victim.

The Federal Trade Commission will be making an announcement concerning Fraud in the month of December. Check out their website for more information on how you the American consumer can be protected. Their website is www.ftc.gov
Happy 25th Anniversary to Forest Avenue Library
Three questions are relevant to the history of African-American women in Iowa: How have black women survived? How did they settle in Iowa? What did they do? African-American women have lived in rural and urban Iowa since the 1830s. They have been involved in almost every aspect of Iowa’s social and economic history contributing to its arts, business, education, journalism, legal profession, literature, medicine, military and religion. This chapter features stories of women who were/are “pioneers,” women who paved the way in a profession or broke ground in a particular set of circumstances. “Builders of community” refers to women as club organizers and volunteers who played significant roles in establishing and sustaining community ties. Some fit both categories. Some of these women arrived in the territory as free people. Others were brought in as enslaved people. Still others fled to Iowa as fugitives from slavery.

It is difficult to determine who was the first African-American woman in Iowa, but what she and other early female settlers did occupationally once they arrived is much more clear. Charlotte Morgan can certainly be called a pioneer. She and her husband Nat moved to Dubuque in 1833. A year later, she was one of the seven charter members of the first church (Methodist) in Iowa. Despite the fact that her husband was accused of theft and lynched by an angry mob in 1840, Charlotte Morgan continued to reside in Dubuque. Charlotte Pyles was a noteworthy pioneer in Iowa’s Underground Railroad. She and her twelve children were enslaved in Kentucky, but when her owner died, she and her children were inherited by a daughter who freed them. She and her husband headed for Minnesota, but settled in Keokuk during a harsh winter. “Many a slave, coming from KY, TN and MO found at the gateway into Iowa an enthusiastic member of their own race in “Grandma’ Pyles” [who died in Keokuk in 1880].

In nearby Muscatine, in 1867, Susan V. Clark sued the city “by her next best friend (and father) Alexander Clark, Sr., when she was denied admission to Public School #2 because of her race. A year later, the Iowa Supreme Court ruled that such exclusion was unconstitutional and Susan attended Public School #2. Sue M. Willson Brown (1877-1941) who was born in VA but raised in Oskaloosa, broke many barriers with her involvement in social and civil rights organizations. She was a member of the Iowa Federation of Colored Women’s Club and served as its president. She was also deeply involved in the Des Moines NAACP and became its 1st female president in 1925. She was also a leader of the Order of the Eastern Star and authored its history. In 1917, she led the effort that acquired 942 Iowa Ave. in Iowa City to house African-American female students at the U. of Iowa which barred black women from its dormitories until 1945. Gertrude E. Rush (1880-1962) was also born outside Iowa but moved to Des Moines in 1907. After earning her B. A. at Des Moines U. in 1914, she married attorney James B. Rush and began studying law at Drake U. In 1918 she passed the Iowa Bar exam and became the 1st African-American woman to practice law in our state. In 1925, she and four men founded the National Bar Association because the American Bar Association excluded blacks. Georgine C. Morris was another pioneer who moved to Des Moines with her husband, James B. Morris, Sr. The 1920s would mark the beginning of her long, strong service to the NAACP. In 1939 she organized the Iowa State Conference of NAACP Branches & was elected president of the Des Moines branch the following year. In the 1950s she was a co-founder of the Des Moines chapter of The Links, Inc., a national organization of black women dedicated to creating civic, cultural & educational opportunities for African-Americans. Edna Griffin was a WAC, who did not train at the WW2 Women’s Army Corps Camp at Ft. Des Moines but came to Des Moines with her husband who earned his D. O. at Des Moines Univ. after WW2. In 1947 she led a picket outside Katz Drug Store for its refusal to serve her & others at its lunch counter. A year later the Iowa Supreme Court ruled such discrimination unconstitutional and awarded Griffin and her fellow picketers $1 in damages. Willie Stevenson Glanton also followed her husband to Des Moines after graduating from the Terrell Law School in Wash., D. C. where she began a pioneering career of firsts: 1st black female Asst. Polk Co. Attorney, 1st black female Representative in the Iowa General Assembly, the 1st black female attorney in the U. S. Small Business Administration and the 1st black female City Council member. Evelyn Davis, an Iowa native, pioneered early childhood education, by founding “Tiny Tots” in Des Moines. Elaine Graham Estes, a MO native, integrated the women’s dormitory at Drake U. and became the 1st African-American Director of the DM Public Library. Terry Caldwell Johnson, another migrant, was the 1st African-American woman to serve as Polk Co. Mgr. and currently serves as Executive Director of Homes of Oakridge, and on the Des Moines School Board. If the claim that “No race climbs faster than its women,” is true, then surely African-Americans in Iowa are on the rise as these and many other “Unsung Heroines “Lift as they climb.”
The end of the year is here, and I often ask myself, “where has the time gone?” There has been so much that has happened in my life over 2017, and I spend a great dealing of time reflecting. I’m my toughest critic. Every decision I make, every move I make, I reflect over it. I’ve made some great decisions this year, and I’ve made some decisions that I’ve leaned from and would probably make different choices given the opportunity again. I wanted to share some of the Leadership lessons that I’ve learned for myself. I would love to hear from you. We all have something to learn from each other.

Be You
I can remember a time when I thought I had to be who others wanted me to be. I tried for years to fit the mold that others had put me in, and honestly, that was so exhausting considering I wear many hats. I’ve learned as I’m preparing to turn forty this month that it’s ok to be me, and I found out that I loved who I was, oh yes! I’m in love with myself, and it feels good! There is a freedom that comes in knowing who you are. The key to being impactful with others is knowing who you are and loving yourself, and guess what… It feels good to be me!

Your Team Matters
Being comfortable is something I’ve always been used to. I would intentionally surround myself with people who didn’t really challenge my thinking, because isn’t life easier when everyone just is like you? NOT AT ALL! I had to learn to be comfortable with being uncomfortable. I have a team around me who challenges my thinking and doesn’t always agree with what I do, but we have a respect for one another, and that’s what makes us great together. Every person on the team has something special to offer so make sure to mix things up. The differences of the group will become the strength of your team and your organization.

Adversity Strengthens You
My father has been a Pastor for many years. He has been the Senior Pastor of his church for the last 20 years. While leading the church he has sometimes been falsely accused, misunderstood, and misrepresented. (He has had more good days than bad in the pulpit). On those bad days, my father had a few choices. He could have argued and fussed with each person who attacked him, or he could have stepped down as Pastor. All through the years, I watched him never give up. He never once left the pulpit by the actions of others (although he came close) the reason why he never left is because his passion for what he does supersedes the noise of others. Watching him has helped me in my leadership journey. I know people won’t always agree with my choices, some may call me out, talk about me, and even question me, but when you’ve been called or have a passion for what you’re doing, NOTHING ELSE MATTERS! I’ve learned to drown out the negative and focus on what matters, making a difference in the lives of others.

I haven't completely arrived in my leadership journey and I’m excited by all that I will learn as I watch the leaders around me. Each mistake I’ve made has helped me grow. Each conversation I have provides a new outlook on life, and each story I hear allows me to see the world through someone else’s eyes. There are two things I’m excited for, one is turning forty this month. I’m looking forward to my fierce forties. I’m also looking forward to 2018. I want to be a leader who listens, speaks up, stands up, and makes an impact. If you’re in leadership, keep pressing, keep moving, and NEVER give up! You are what this community, city, and state need. The BEST IS YET TO COME!

Share your leadership story, I would love for you to give leadership lessons to our readers. Send me your article at dwanabradley77@gmail.com
“FEROCIOUSLY FUN, FEEL-GOOD MUSICAL!”
- Entertainment Weekly

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In the media, there have been many stories that have portrayed police in a negative light. There have been many police shootings of African Americans that has received the attention of people in this country, and they have become tired of the way African Americans are treated. Most say they don’t trust the police, or have had issues with the police rather it has been major or minor.

Law enforcement from the Polk County Sheriff’s Office, 5th Judicial District, Transportation Safety Administration (TSA), Des Moines Police Department, and Clive Police Department has started the first Iowa chapter of NOBLE (National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives). The mission of NOBLE is to ensure equity in the administration of justice in the provision of public service to all communities, and to serve as the conscience of law enforcement by being committed to justice by action for all. NOBLE has nearly 60 chapters and represents 3,000 members worldwide.

The Iowa chapter has a great representation of law enforcement committed to working with members and other organizations in the community to tackle tough issues so that everyone is served in an equitable manner. During Thanksgiving members of NOBLE partnered with organizations in the city to provide meals to families. It’s this type of service you will see from members of NOBLE in the future along with making sure that individuals in the community are being treated fairly.

NOBLE will make an impact on this community as we are growing continuously. We will continue to highlight the members of NOBLE in the publication to keep you informed of the impact they are making not just today, but for years to come.
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Mon, Tues, Wed, Fri 10-6
Thurs 10-8, Sat 10-5, Sun Closed
Racial Disparity in Health, Healthcare & Health Coverage

With the open enrollment with healthcare coverage now upon us there are some things as a black community we must keep in mind, or at the very least be aware of when thinking about healthcare needs.

The Health of Black Polk County and Iowa

It is not difficult to make the case that people who are well and relatively healthy have greater opportunities to hold a job and achieve financial security. Understanding the data and dynamics between health status and other elements of health care services and coverage will tell a more complete story.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention provide information that compares indicators among similar counties and provides a comparative quick picture of how a county stacks up with other counties with similar make-up across the nation.

The October 2016 Polk County Health Report issued by the Polk County Health Department provides insights into the current status of health for Polk County and for Blacks in the county.

Compared to their counterparts, the challenges for African Americans to access healthcare coverage is disproportionately exacerbated by poverty. In fact, within the borders of Polk County, households living below 100 percent of the poverty level are concentrated in zip code areas where African Americans are most likely to live. Children make up a large portion of those with low incomes; 20.5 percent of Polk County children were living below the poverty line in 2014.

In 2014, Black adults in the U.S. had the highest percent of people dealing with 2-3 or 4 plus chronic conditions, 22.2 percent and 5.6 percent respectively. Black adults in Iowa have higher rates of chronic illness than any other race or ethnicity, setting the stage for ongoing, higher costs related to chronic illness.

Medical expenses can and do add to the financial insecurity that Black families face. These pressures increase the stress level for a family who is already having trouble paying their month-to-month bills.

This can make mental healthcare seem to be less necessary to those who cannot afford an office visit or co-pay. This only leads to increased disparity in health issues and access to health assistance.

Utilization of Healthcare Services

Individuals without healthcare coverage are less likely to have a consistent primary care provider that provides routine preventive care and screenings. The data found in Polk County ties to the financial situation and difficulties in accessing services that are experienced disproportionately by Black people.

In fact, 65 percent of pregnant African American women were more likely to delay entry into prenatal care.
African American women in Polk County give birth to a higher percentage of low-weight babies than do Asian/Pacific Islander, White, or Hispanic women. Nationally, low birth weight is one of the leading causes of infant mortality and low birth weight babies have a higher risk of health complications throughout their life. Moreover, Black children have the lowest rate (67 percent) of having a “medical home” or a regular doctor or nurse that coordinates care.

Though the ACA and public healthcare coverage now cover the full cost of physicals and well-baby check-ups, healthcare insurance will not necessarily cover the full costs of visits for illnesses, lab work, tests, prescription drugs, medical equipment, emergency room care, hospitalization, and more. These realities and fears can cause a family to wait until a health issue is severe enough that the person needs medical assistance immediately and often at a higher cost.

Taking this information on the current health status and circumstances of Polk County residents, and add to it the data on what brings folks to the emergency room or the hospital, it is easy to see how even one episode of asthma, one complicated pregnancy, or a stroke could plunge a struggling Black family into a dire financial situation.

Access to Healthcare Coverage
The ability to access healthcare that is covered by private or public insurance is clearly connected to financial capacity. The cost of healthcare is part of an Iowa Policy Project report entitled The Cost of Living in Iowa, 2014 Edition: Basic Family Budgets. According to the Basic Family Budgets report, in a grouping of eight central Iowa counties including Polk County, 16.2 percent of families are estimated to live below the budget break-even level. The following data illustrate the high degree of reliance of Black children and adults on public health insurance coverage.

Access to publicly funded healthcare coverage provides families with a safety net that complements their asset ownership and protects against the financial burdens of a major medical emergency or treatment of a chronic illness.

Also at play in Iowa beginning in 2017, is a reduction in the number of choices of insurance companies and plans for individuals who purchase their private health insurance on Iowa’s health insurance exchange. In addition to fewer choices, the premiums for individuals purchasing insurance on the exchange have risen significantly, sometimes in excess of 20 percent over the previous year.

Even with the wide variation in how health coverage is handled, it is less likely that employers of people in low-wage and salary near or below the federal poverty level offer paid or unpaid healthcare coverage options to those workers.

When a disproportionate number of Polk County’s Black population is working in lower-paying positions, the availability of employer-paid health care is diminished, leaving African American or African families to find a way to access healthcare through public coverage or to go without coverage – and sometimes care – altogether.
Everyone processes and deals with stressors in different ways. As I continue growing in my mental health practice, one of the biggest issues that I see with individual clients is their inability to cope with the issues and stressors that are going on with their daily lives. The result can be something known as an adjustment disorder. Adjustment disorders can happen with anyone at any age and may be caused by the simple reason that the individual experiences substantial stress due to an unexpected or significant problem.

I have witnessed when adjustment diagnosis usually happens, it’s one of two reasons. One, a stressful and/or unexpected event has occurred. This could include negative events like going through divorce or marital problems, losing a job, loss of a loved one, issues at school or work, or having a medical illness. It could even be positive events like getting married or having a baby. The second reason is, the individual was never taught how to appropriately cope with the everyday life issues and continues to struggle with moving forward due to that stressor.

Signs Symptoms And Risk Factors

Signs and symptoms of an adjustment disorder can vary person to person and the type of adjustment disorder. Some examples may include:

- Having problems with sleep
- Lack of appetite
- Difficulty concentrating
- Trouble completing daily activities
- Feeling overwhelmed or stressed out
- Feeling worried, anxious, or jittery
- Frequent crying
- Feelings of sadness or hopelessness
- Not enjoying the things that you used to enjoy
- Isolating oneself from friends and family

Some of you may be thinking – well anyone can feel that way – and that is a true statement. It is also true that these symptoms sound very similar to depression or anxiety. However, adjustment disorders are usually temporary and do not last as long as depression and anxiety. It literally is defined by its name – that people have a hard time “adjusting”, but eventually they find their way. It is also about how a person deals with the stressors that are going on in their lives that makes those with an adjustment disorder different from another person. Learning to cope is not something that you are born with. It is something that is learned from those around you – especially your parents and your family. This is identified by: how you grew up, race, culture, socioeconomic status, ability, gender, raised by a single parent, a parent with addiction problems, etc. These identifications can all have a major effect on how you deal with problems that come up in your life. As children we watch how adults and our peers deal with problems and will learn from their behaviors and mistakes. So, for example, if you had a parent who would deal with stressors by drinking alcohol, you may learn from that pattern of behavior and think, “Well since it helps mom or dad deal with issues, it will probably work for me”. But, in fact, it did not work for them and instead masked symptoms that will remain even afterwards. You may eventually find that even those around you do not know how to properly cope as well.

How Do We Deal With It Then?

Something you may want to ask yourself first is: how you are dealing with the stressful situations in your life now? There are many ways that you can cope or deal with stressors. Some people go for a run, listen to music, knit, or dance. Others may pray, meditate, or journal. If it works, to help clear your head and reorganize your thoughts, then you are heading in the right direction.

The next question is: are you coping or dealing with the stressors in your life in a healthy way?

For example, when you get stressed out do you – go towards alcohol, marijuana, or gambling? These are choices that a lot of people make. Many end up becoming dependent on drugs and alcohol to get past certain situations in their lives. This can lead to addiction and many other interpersonal issues. Maybe you cope by yelling and screaming at others; throwing things around. Again, this does not work and leads to feelings of anger and resentment by those affected by your behavior. So, it is important that whatever way you deal with the stressors in your life it is in a safe and healthy way for all of those involved.

The last question I would have you ask yourself then is:
have you tried these things and are you still having problems with moving forward?

If that is the case, then it may be an indicator that something else is wrong. Mental health problems can be the cause. As someone who has depression or anxiety may have the symptoms that were discussed with more intensity, or those with addiction problems may have symptoms that are aggravated by their addiction issues. It is at this point where talking to your doctor or therapist could be useful. These providers will help you to better cope and feel better about life through therapy and medication management – depending what your needs are.

Sharaine Conner LMSW IADC is a licensed social worker and certified international drug and alcohol counselor in the state of Iowa. Sharaine has a background researching and developing several evidenced-based curriculums, as well as provided trainings in a variety of topics (including microaggressions and diversity, Working with the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, human sexuality, addiction, LGBTQIA+, and clinical basics such as assessment, evaluation, documentation, group facilitation, and treatment planning) to others in her profession. She is also a member of the Iowa Board of Certification’s Training and Ethics Committees, the Iowa Mental Health Counselors Association, the Iowa Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers and the Iowa Club of Des Moines. She is currently taking on clients for addiction and therapy services in Des Moines, Johnston and Indianola. She can be contacted at therapistlyfe@gmail.com.

Hy-Vee Honors Veterans

Hy-vee provided the red carpet treatment to Veterans on November 11th, 2017. Hoval, a non-profit organization that helps Veterans was also in attendance to make sure Veterans knew they were appreciated on this day.
Winter time can be a challenge for some people. Seasonal depression can hit around winter time and affect individuals that are sensitive to changes in the weather. During winter individuals affected by seasonal depression can experience oversleeping, overeating, weight gain, relationship problems and loss of interest in activities. There are multiply ways you can overcome seasonal depression. Mental health therapy, nutrition and exercise are some options that you may consider when overcoming symptoms that are triggered from seasonal depression.

Nutrition plays a huge role in how we feel about ourselves and the way we think. Research has shown us that vitamin D can improve symptoms of depression. The lack of vitamin D in the winter time can play a role in seasonal depression. Vitamins and minerals enhance our body's function and plays a significant role in how we feel. The reason why nutrition plays such an important role in how we feel is because of a chemical called serotonin. According to some research, serotonin is a chemical that is released in our body. Serotonin can affect mood and behavior. Therefore, what we choose to eat affects the way we will feel. Nutrition is one of many tools that we can use to enhance our bodies innate ability to heal. When we deal with depression we must look at what we are eating, our external environment, and our internal environment.

Mental health is just as important as physical health. Overcoming depression was one of my biggest challenges in life, however, I am now in the position to assist other individuals in doing the same. Knowledge and education are very powerful tools that we can use to overcome any challenge whether that be physical or mental health issues.

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www.dmgov.org/departments/humanrights
Kwanzaa is a seven day festival that celebrates African and African American culture and history. Kwanzaa takes place from 26th December to 1st January.

The name Kwanzaa comes from the phrase ‘matunda ya kwanza’ which means ‘first fruits’ in the Swahili language (an Eastern African language spoken in countries including Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Mozambique and Zimbabwe). Kwanzaa is mostly celebrated in the USA.

During Kwanzaa a special candle holder called a kinara is used. A kinara hold seven candles, three red ones on the left, three green ones on the right with a black candle in the center. Each night during Kwanzaa a candle is lit. The black, center, candle is lit first and then it alternates between the red and green candles stating with the ones on the outside and moving inwards. This is quite similar to the lighting of the menorah in the Jewish Festival of Lights, Hanukkah.

The seven days and candles in Kwanzaa represent the seven principles of Kwanzaa (Nguzo Saba):

- **Umoja**: Unity - Unity of the family, community, nation and race
- **Kujichagulia**: Self-Determination - Being responsible for your own conduct and behaviour
- **Ujima**: Collective work and responsibility - Working to Help each other and in the community
- **Ujamaa**: Cooperative economics - Working to build shops and businesses
- **Nia**: Purpose - Remembering and restoring African and African American cultures, customs and history
- **Kuumba**: Creativity - Using creating and your imagination to make communities better
- **Imani**: Faith - Believing in people, families, leaders, teachers and the righteousness of the African American struggle

There are also seven symbols used in Kwanzaa. The seven items of often set on a Kwanzaa table, with the kinara, in the house:

- **Mkeka**: The Mat - A woven mat made of fabric, raffia, or paper. The other symbols are placed on the Mkeka. It symbolises experiences and foundations.
- **Kikombe cha Umoja**: The Unity Cup - Represents family and community. It is filled with water, fruit juice or wine. A little is poured out to remember the ancestors. The cup is shared between people and each person takes a sip.
- **Mazao**: The Crops - Fruit and vegetables from the harvest. These normally include bananas, mangoes, peaches, plantains, oranges, or other favorites! They are shared out.
- **Kinara**: The Candleholder - It represents the days, and principles of Kwanzaa.
- **Mishumaa Saba**: The Seven Candles - are placed in the kinara. Black, red and green are the colors of the Bendera (African Flag).
- **Muhindi**: The Corn - There is one ear of corn of each child in the family. If there are no children in the family, then one ear is used to represent the children in the community. It represents the future and the Native Americans.
- **Zawadi**: Gifts - Gifts given to children during Kwanzaa. They are normally educational, such as a book, dvd or game. There’s also a gift reminding them of their African heritage.

There are also two extra symbols:

- **Bendera**: A flag with three horizontal stripes of black, red and green
- **Nguzo Saba Poster**: A poster of the seven principles of Kwanzaa

There’s also a special greeting used during Kwanzaa in Swahili. It’s ‘Habari gani’ and the reply is the principle for that day. (Umoja on the first day, Kujichagulia on the second and so on.)

The Kwanzaa festival was created by Dr. Maulana Karenga in 1966. Dr. Karenga wanted a way bring African Americans together and remember their black culture. Harvest or ‘first fruit’ festivals are celebrated all over Africa. These were celebrations when people would come together and celebrate and give thanks for the good things in their lives and communities.

From these festivals he created Kwanzaa.
The Color Purple: Review
By Dwana Bradley

The Des Moines Performing Arts brought The Color Purple to the city of Des Moines October 31st - November 5th. This play told the story of Celie who lived a rough life. Her circumstances caused her to question who she was and what her purpose was in life. As I watched Celie and all the things she went through, it reminded me of pieces of my life. I think as women we’ve all have a piece of Celie, not that we’ve all been beaten or raped, but we’ve had a piece of us that has made us feel like we didn’t deserve to be loved. Some of us have been taken advantage of, treated wrong, or kicked when we were down. But, then we found love and it changed everything, or rather, you found love in someone or something and it starts to create a change in you. You become truly passionate and it changes your whole outlook on life. In finding love, Celie was able to find her voice and if anything, I found from the Color Purple is once you find your voice, don’t let it go. Your voice is a powerful thing. Celie turned around her gloomy situation and became free from her past. Some of us have a challenging time letting our past go, but once you do, freedom is ahead of you. I also found significance in the color purple, as a Christian I know the color purple represents royalty, and once Celie clothed herself with the color purple she walked with purpose and displayed royalty. If you haven’t seen The Color Purple, I suggest you check it out. The tour will continue into the summer of 2018. You will be inspired to live your best life.

The NAACP Visits Des Moines

The Mission of the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) is to ensure the political, education, social, and economic equality of rights of all persons and to eliminate race-based discrimination. The State convention for the Iowa-Nebraska NAACP took place on November 11th, 2017. Many delegates from across the state came to Des Moines. On November 10th, 2017, there was a welcome reception for Chairman Leon Russell and other members of the National NAACP at the Riverwalk Hub, and they were welcomed by community members in various positions in the city. The NAACP is considering having their National Convention in Des Moines in 2019. A decision hasn’t been made, but it seems they were impressed with our city. Betty Andrews, the President of the Iowa-Nebraska chapter of the NAACP was fired up with her speech and would be excited to have the National Convention in this city. Many people had the opportunity to talk to representatives of the National association. We are looking forward to hearing the announcement in the hopes that Des Moines will be the site of the 2019 NAACP National Convention.
I fell asleep on the plane ride home. I am crazy for pursuing someone who continuously runs away, but here I am. Maybe it’s because every time she exposes her face her walk her talk her eyes her waist her mind her heart, to point on one thing would be what she calls “putting her in a box”. “So you tellin’ me you’re really bout to go get the crazy chic from the bar.”

Sitting on my porch with one of my childhood friends, not a norm for me. I guess I just need to see what people will say when I make this move I’ve already decided on. I answer him, but we’ve been silent too long, so I probably only said yea in my head.

He finished his beer, and I lean back while he gets up to leave. “Well man, good luck.”

This is crazy, but I’ve never met anyone who has had this effect on me. To think about no one has ever talked to me like she did that first night, and it results in me still being around.

“The fuq you want,” she says as I follow behind her, at least that guy stopped following her as I got closer to her and grabbed her arm to keep her from falling. She is disrespectful, but her eyes don’t agree with her countenance. She has drunk a lot, but I can tell she hasn’t reached her limit yet. “Let my arm go, I got this,” she pulls away and digs in her purse until she finds her blunt. “I always got this,” looking up at me she says, “remember that shiii. Fuq...where is my fuq’n lighter.”

I flick mine, as she rummages through her purse. Her eyes get wide with childlike wonder then they go back to the façade she was putting on. She is so expressive with her facial expressions. I notice she only wears lipstick everything else real, like her hair. Look down sheepishly she leans in to puff her stick. “Mmmmm, balance me out weed,” she says laughing. Her smile just washed away all her attitude, and my opinion. I stand there wondering should I walk her to her car, but she said, ‘she got this’ so I turn to walk away.

“Hey lighter guy, can I have a ride?” I look back at her. And though she has the body that will intimidate those that are unsouthern. I saw past that and realized she didn’t need to be driving. “Come on,” I answer. “My car is parked in the back meet me there,” my look must show my exasperation, but then she does something I wasn’t expecting. She puts her hands behind her back attempts to look docile as her thick red lips say, “Please.” “I got chu,” I say.

Riding into the back-parking lot, she is bent over her back seat. This girl needs a fuq’n leash. It’s like she is aware of her sexiness yet uncaring or maybe unbelieving of it. “Thanks,” she says before asking do I want some of her liquor. I like her, I don’t know if it’s because she isn’t trying to make me, or the fact that I had to adjust my pants before she got in my ride. Either way I’m glad I met her already. “Can we ride for a bit, I’m not ready to go home.” It’s not like I have plans anyway, so I tell her coo. Music plays as she drinks more. “You should be careful,” I say. “Why?” And she says this in a way like she doesn’t understand that she is worth keeping safe. “Never mind,” I respond. “You know what you need to do,” she says before taking a swig. My mind tells me she is going to continue regardless if I answer or not. “You need to open up, you’re a stuffed clam waiting to break out and walk on land.” She must think she is hilarious cause she holds her head back and seriously laughs. After a while of silence she says, “Your cute,” I say. “Your drunk,” she says, “Then take advantage of all this sexiness.” I look over at her like did she just really say that ish. This girl is crazy. “Ooo, this is my song, pull over somewhere.” She exclaims. This girl is extreme and unpredictable. I pull over in front of my place. She hops out of my car after another shot. She has the blunt re lit and she holds it between her lips as she walks around to my front seat. “Come on,” she says. She reminds me of a mechanic while she talks with the blunt between her lips, “why?” I say while hiding my smirk, “cause you need to get out and have some fun, you ain’t dead yet,” she responds. What the fuq did I get myself into, is my thought as I get out the car. I stand outside leaned against my ride as she swings her hips and arms in a way similar to her club performance. Her eyes are closed, and I think she forgot I was here. So, I watch her like I did earlier from my bar stool, with my hat pulled low. Man, her performance in the club was stripper perfect.

I was just in a local bar having a beer, because honestly, she is kinda right. I haven’t just chilled in a while. That was my mission this evening. I didn’t expect so many people though. Turning in my bar stool to face the dance floor must have been divine intervention. I heard a guy next to me say, “I’ll ride the fuq outta that thoroughbred.” Old heads and their lingo. I won’t lie though, I looked to see who he was speaking about. First thing I saw was her lips. Thick and red, then she smiled....there is something about a pretty mouth with a gap. Her eyes were very low, but I knew they weren’t closed the way she effortlessly swayed through the crowd. She made her way to the dance floor as a sexy smooth beat started on the air waves. She moved through the dance floor. Dancing in between couples. It seemed every time she passed them she left the women smiling and the men staring after her. Yet
she continued moving as if she had left no impact. A space cleared right in front of me, and here is where she decided to place her feet. I pulled my cap low enough to where I could see, but I wasn't looking like a creep just staring. It didn't matter anyway her eyes closed when she got in this space on the dance floor. Her hips swayed back and forth, like she was letting the music take control of her. What was she wearing, shiiii, she had the perfect caramel/cinnamon complected legs to pull off her skirt and heels choice. I don't know anything about woman’s clothes, but I could tell she loved shoes, by how they looked, unique is what I’ll call them. The way her open toes and legs began to work together to do that thing strippers do, I honestly thought she was a stripper, but fuq the way she looks I’ll tip her all night. She was just that hypnotizing. This girl is sexy as fuq, no exaggerating. I imagine her with no clothes and I have to adjust for the first of many times tonite. Her hands went over her head, and her head tilt back. She touched her body like she was realizing how sexy she is. She got to be a stripper, or used to be. She looks about 21-22. Pretty toes, kinda short maybe 5’3 without shoes. Her legs looked soft and strong and thick. Every time she moved her muscles showed their imprints. She must be a trying to be lady like because she turns from the crowd as she twirls her hips into a dip.

This fuq’n Woman is the exact kind I would go for in my past. I decide to watch until the song is over, then I’m out. With her back facing me she bends over enough to tease, but not enough to touch her knees. She must know what she is doing, because she smiles when she turns around and shows her beautiful face. Thick red lips surround a gap, then shows off her cheek bones with a dimple when she smiles. I like her naturalness. I like it more than I can help. I finish my beer, set it on the bar behind me. When I look back her eyes open and she is staring right at me. Holding my gaze shamelessly, as her hips still sway to the beat. She turns, and I leave, but not before I hear the guy next to me say, “I don't care if she wants it, dancing like that she needs it and I’m going to give it to her.......”

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**PROTECT YOURSELF!**

Get your flu shot!

Everyone 6 months of age and older should get vaccinated against the flu each year.

Getting your flu vaccine is important for anyone you come into close contact with including the very young, the very one, people who have weakened immune systems and those who cannot be vaccinated.

*Protect yourself and your loved one this flu season.*

Visit the Polk County Health Department to receive your flu vaccine!

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Amber (left) has lived with HIV since 1997.

I am a mentor, an advocate, and an uncle.
And I am living with HIV.

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I am a mentor, an advocate, and an uncle.
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The Des Moines Urban Experience
Magazine would like to
Congratulate
Renee Hardman and
Joseph Jones
for being elected to City Council.
Renee will represent West Des Moines and Joseph will represent Windsor Heights.

Renee Hardman
Photo Credit: The Des Moines Register

The Des Moines Urban Experience
Magazine
Congratulates
Jonetta (Sue) Douglas
on her retirement with the State of Iowa! Thank you for 45 years of service. Make sure to read her story in the January edition.
The Des Moines Urban Experience Welcomes David Houston

David Houston is the Executive Director of Homes 4 My Peeps. The mission of his organization is to provide green housing solutions and sustainable means to blight-ed communities. David was reared in Des Moines, Iowa. A graduate of Roosevelt High, he was blessed to continue his education in Baton Rouge, Lousiana attending Southern University A&M as a student athlete. In 2002, he graduated with a bachelor's degree in architecture and moved to Texas for eight years to pursue a career in architecture.

After returning to Des Moines in 2011 he saw immense amounts of growth and new vibrant developments across the metro, but somehow not much had changed in other areas of the city. David states, “I returned to the see the very same empty lots and boarded up homes that I grew up with 15 years later.” Inspired by this observation, he found a home in the Riverbend area and purchased the home with a big vision to restore, showcase, and utilize the home as a hub. This model home would promote and encourage sustainable living and efficient housing methods.

If you would like to learn more about Homes 4 My Peeps visit their website at homes4mypeeps.org

David has shared a recipe. Try it!

Recipe type: Entrée
Cuisine: Vegan, Gluten-Free
Serves: 2-3

Ingredients

**VEGETABLES**
2 Tbsp olive, melted coconut, or grape seed oil
1/2 red onion, sliced in wedges
2 large sweet potatoes, halved
1 bundle (227 g) broccolini, large stems removed, chopped
2 big handfuls kale, larger stems removed
1/4 tsp each salt + pepper

**CHICKPEAS**
1 15-ounce (425 g) chickpeas, drained, rinsed + patted dry
1 tsp cumin
3/4 tsp chili powder
3/4 tsp garlic powder
1/4 tsp each salt + pepper
optional: 1/2 tsp oregano
optional: 1/4 tsp turmeric

**TAHINI SAUCE (OPTIONAL)**
1/4 cup (56 g) tahini
1 Tbsp maple syrup
1/2 lemon, juiced
2-4 Tbsp hot water to thin

Instructions

Preheat oven to 400 degrees F (204 C) and arrange sweet potatoes and onions on a bare baking sheet. Drizzle both with a bit of oil, making sure the flesh of the sweet potatoes are well coated and placed skin side down on the sheet.

Bake for 10 minutes, then remove from oven flip sweet potatoes and add broccolini. Drizzle broccolini with a bit of oil and season with a pinch each salt and pepper.

Bake for another 8-10 minutes, then remove from oven and add kale. Drizzle kale with a touch more oil and season with a pinch each salt and pepper. Bake for another 4-5 minutes then set aside.

While vegetables are roasting, heat a large skillet over medium heat and add chickpeas to a mixing bowl and toss with seasonings.

Once hot, add 1 Tbsp oil and chickpeas and sauté, stirring frequently. If they’re browning too quickly, turn down heat. If there isn’t much browning going on, increase heat. I found 10 minutes total at slightly over medium heat was perfect.

Once the chickpeas are browned and fragrant, remove from heat and set aside.

Prepare sauce by adding tahini, maple syrup and lemon juice to a mixing bowl and whisking to combine. Add hot water until a pourable sauce is formed. Set aside.

To serve: Slice sweet potatoes into bite size pieces. Divide vegetables between 3 serving bowls and top with chickpeas + tahini sauce.

Best when fresh, though leftovers will keep for a few days in the fridge.

Notes
*Nutrition information is a rough estimate for 1 of 3 servings with sauce.

Nutrition Information
Serving size: 1/3 of recipe with sauce Calories: 474 Fat: 21g
Saturated fat: 2.8g Carbohydrates: 62g Sugar: 7.2g Sodium: 563mg Fiber: 11.4g Protein: 13.2g
A dream doesn’t become reality through magic; it takes sweat, determination and hard work”. This quote is the epitome of Diane and Joe Koger, owners of The Amazing Panda Learning Center (515) 802-0106 located at 2550 73rd Street in Urbandale, IA whose grand opening was in August of this year. The facility is a dynamic state of the art childcare center enriching the lives of infants and toddlers up to after school care for elementary aged students.

Ms. Diane Koger and her husband Joe Koger are both natives of Chicago. Ms. Diane notes that she has always had a passion for teaching children and helping inspire them. Watching her mother, a gifted beautician turned her dream into a reality as she became a business owner truly inspired Koger to follow her own dreams. These dreams did not come easy. Ms. Diane worked hard and obtained her degree in Early Childhood education and a certificate in this field as well. She did this all while being a mother and working full-time position at high managerial level.

Ms. Diane’s goals for the next 5 years are to use education as a teaching tool to help parents grow and empower parents and children; while embracing the community. Koger’s desire is to see the children that attend Amazing Panda Learning Center become future leaders. She and involves the children in STEM programs which she feels is very important. They currently have openings in the two-year-old and preschool classrooms. Koger’s advice for those seeking to pursue their dreams and those who have an entrepreneurial spirit while wanting to become business owners is the following. “If you have a dream start planning now, how you want to implement that dream, the people that you want to incorporate in that dream to help bring it to life, take the jump.”

During the interview Ms. Diane expounds more regarding the phrase “take the jump” or “taking that leap”. Koger mentions hearing Steve Harvey in a video discussing jumping and taking a leap of faith if a person wants to achieve their dreams. Action is necessary for a dream to become a reality. Koger wants to encourage others that if there is passion and you have that yearning inside of you and you can do it well, if you take your time, trust, believe, and put in the work all things are possible.

Ms. Diane attributes her faith in God as the source of her success, and the loving support of her husband Joe Koger. She is extremely grateful for his support as co-owner of Amazing Panda Learning Center and is a driving force in her life. Ms. Diane is a dynamic woman and accounts her over 15 years working at West Des Moines Community Schools, reminding readers that if you think you can’t do it you Can do it.

Ms. Diane shares her testimony and is candid about her start with the district as a lunchroom worker serving meals to students. Koger’s position didn’t deter her, she kept on believing and six months later she obtained the role
of a teacher's aide in special education. Later another opportunity presented itself to work for the districts after school program. Years later due to her dedication and divine interventions she became a building administrator and supervisor for the West Des Moines after school programs.

Koger is very thankful for the people in her life that kept her grounded and focused. Ms. Diane stresses to “Keep going, keep believing, keep doing, and prayer is sufficient. You can do nothing without God.” Ms. Diane Koger and her husband Joe Koger exemplify that hard work definitely pays off, they display this hard work ethic and kindness to the parents and children they serve.
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~DAISY, student

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With nearly 30 educational programs and training opportunities, DMACC–Urban Campus offers a rich learning environment that is designed to inspire and empower all types of learners. DMACC–Urban Campus offers programs to support English language learners, individuals seeking to obtain their high school equivalency, working adults interested in increasing their skill set, and students looking to start their educational journey with a goal of transferring to a baccalaureate-granting institution.

DMACC–Urban Campus is committed to providing a quality education at an affordable price. In addition, supporting students with tutoring, advising, financial aid and necessary educational accommodations lies at the heart of the campus’s mission.

*For more information on DMACC–Urban Campus and to start your educational journey, visit dmacc.edu/urban or call 515-244-4226.*
Ila Plasencia honored with AARP’s Andrus Award for Community Service

By: Rachel Wermager and Jeremy Barewin

Every year, AARP honors outstanding volunteers in communities across the country with the Andrus Award for Community Service, and this year is no exception. There is no shortage of incredible and inspiring acts of volunteerism and kindness that this year’s local award recipient, Ila Plasencia, has performed in the central Iowa community. Even at the age of 90 she still volunteers her time, energy and guidance to her community, the youth and the families of Iowa Latinos. Plasencia has been described as someone who simply does what needs to be done, and all with a humble attitude. She was honored with Andrus Award in November by AARP Iowa at their annual volunteer appreciation luncheon in Des Moines.

Her list of accomplishments and work is extensive. She has worked to establish a multitude of things such as: an early childhood learning center that would eventually become Head Start under the direction of Drake University, a health clinic for the Latino community, the Brown and Black Coalition, classes on citizenship and English, the Valley Junction Cinco De Mayo celebration and the Hispanic Heritage Parade in Des Moines.

Plasencia has played a pivotal role in various community groups throughout her life. In 1957 she first began her career with the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), which is an organization devoted to the political and social advancement of Latino/as in the United States. She helped establish the first women’s LULAC council in Iowa and in 1986 she became the first women to hold the office of LULAC State Director. In 1987 she became the first woman from Iowa to hold the office of LULAC National Vice President for the Midwest.

Plasencia is a strong female presence in the Iowa community. Such will-power to help others likely came from her upbringing. Plasencia was born in 1927 in Earlham, Iowa. Her mother died when she was a mere five years old from tuberculosis, so her dad was her primary caregiver and mentor. He has been described as raising Plasencia with a positive attitude. She graduated high school in 1945 and held various jobs over the years, and in 1949 she married her husband Ralph Plasencia.

Plasencia is a leading advocate for the Latino community in Iowa. She founded the Latino Student Awards Recognition Ceremony, was fundamental in starting the United Mexican American Community Center (UMACC) and was the impetus for the creation of the Hispanic Heritage Parade. This year, she was inducted into the Iowa Latino Hall of Fame for being someone that celebrates Latino heritage and has made outstanding and significant cultural, political, social and economic contributions to Iowa.

“When I decided to nominate Ila for this award, I was flabbergasted at the wealth of experience that she has. Ila has generously volunteered time, energy, guidance, and sometimes money, for her community, the youth, and families of Iowa Latino,” wrote Brena Corona, who nominated Plasencia for the Andrus Award. “She has helped motivate the youth to have pride in their heritage, to excel in school and to expect to attend college. Ila's volunteerism has been broad and benefited many ages and served many needs.”
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
CONTACT: Kent Sovvern, ksovern@aarp.org
515.697.1002

MEET JEREMY BAREWIN -
AARP IOWA’S NEW COMMUNICATIONS AND MEDIA TALENT

Des Moines, Ia – Jeremy Barewin joined AARP Iowa as associate state director of communications and outreach in late September. A Drake University graduate, Barewin brings more than 15 years of experience in communications and marketing to AARP Iowa, having spent the last decade working for healthcare organizations in the Chicago area.

“Jeremy is a welcome addition to the AARP Iowa professional staff” said Kent Sovvern, AARP Iowa State Director. “He is a much respected and highly skilled communications professional with unique expertise in healthcare, public policy and non-profit communications. His understanding and implementation of New-Media strategies including use of video is most impressive”, added Sovvern.

Most recently, Barewin served as national marketing director for the National Multiple Sclerosis Society. During that time, he focused on strategic communications and outreach including MS advocacy, services, and awareness campaigns.

The Association Forum of Chicagoland recognized Barewin as one of the top "Forty Under 40" association professionals in 2014. In addition to his B.A. in journalism from Drake, Barewin holds a master’s degree in public administration from Saint Louis University.

He succeeds Ann Black who in retirement is exploring her ‘What’s Next’ Real Possibilities for the future after serving AARP members for over 16 years.

AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization, with a membership of nearly 38 million, that helps people turn their goals and dreams into real possibilities, strengthens communities and fights for the issues that matter most to families such as healthcare, employment and income security, retirement planning, affordable utilities and protection from financial abuse. We advocate for individuals in the marketplace by selecting products and services of high quality and value to carry the AARP name as well as help our members obtain discounts on a wide range of products, travel, and services. A trusted source for lifestyle tips, news and educational information, AARP produces AARP The Magazine, the world’s largest circulation magazine; AARP Bulletin; www.aarp.org; AARP TV & Radio; AARP Books; and AARP en Español, a Spanish-language website addressing the interests and needs of Hispanics. AARP does not endorse candidates for public office or make contributions to political campaigns or candidates. The AARP Foundation is an affiliated charity that provides security, protection, and empowerment to older persons in need with support from thousands of volunteers, donors, and sponsors. AARP has staffed offices in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Learn more at www.aarp.org.
Plasencia's list of volunteer work and achievements is a never ending one. Through this work she has personally touched the lives of so many people and has had an incredibly positive impact on her community. Plasencia continues to give her time and energy to help others, even after all these years. This sense of selflessness is one of the main reasons she was chosen to be honored with the Andrus Award.

Health Minute from CareMore Clinic
December 2017

CareMore knows everyone’s lives can get hectic at times, but the important thing is to not let stress get the best of you. There are lot of different natural ways to de-stress and we’re here to share them with you. Take a quick mental break, and walk away, it can really help take your mind of things and you will feel refreshed.

Get out and get some fresh air and sunlight. Being outdoors can really lighten your stress load but allowing you to relax.

Consider taking up writing some of your frustration out in a personal journal, it can be productive to vent.

Learn it’s okay to say, ”No” politely to others, especially if you don’t have the time or resources to take on additional tasks.

CareMore wants you to have a stress free Holiday season!
The decision to love for most people will be the bravest thing they will ever do. When we decide to love we are required to submit the blueprint for our destruction. Love in its healthiest form compels us to reveal the most vulnerable aspects of our identity. While the meaning and purpose of any life can be understood by what and who we decide to love, one must be clear that love “ain’t no punk.” Love is often the source of passion, the reason for sacrifice and the strength to endure. However, love is a complicated emotion that serves as a motive for both good and evil. As a result, when we love we have to make peace with the unknown.

When love is healthy it obligates us to identify priorities that are more important to us than our own needs and wants. As a consequence we necessarily open ourselves to the possibility to be exploited and wounded. When we do so, we are presented with the opportunity to meet our best selves. When we love we develop aspects of our identity that otherwise could go unripe. Love presents every one of us with the reason and circumstance to grow and evolve in ways that are unimaginable in its absence. The act of Love forces us to reach deep into ourselves in dark places to find the light. Love is the bravery necessary to do things that to our less evolved selves may not only seem to be unwise and terrifying, on occasion our worst night mares actually come true. In those moments we have no choice but to find the strength to heal, learn, get better and find the next opportunity to do it all over again. Every time we do we reach past the darkness to find the light.

Love is the source for everything in our lives that gives us joy, purpose, and clarity. It is simultaneously the basis for our deepest pains, our most frustrating confusions, and our utmost irrational behavior. Love is our connection to the things and people that help to give our life fulfillment. As we learn, grow, and live those connections undergo shifts, changes, and challenges that require us to constantly evaluate who we are and why we think it so. Love presents us with the opportunity to become what is necessary to nurture goodness in our lives, but only if we are willing to heal from the inevitable abrasions that come from being exposed. There are none among us who can enjoy the contentment offered by love’s protection without being scarred from its uneven and jagged embrace. Love allows us to live beyond our own flaws and to accept the flaws of those we claim to care about, giving us all permission to be our authentic selves.

Love is a gift that gives us the wherewithal to appreciate heart ache in the pursuit of happiness. It is a real understanding that it is always darkest before the dawn. Meaning that love is not the absence of the agony, it is the power to see it through. When we love we find in ourselves all that is worthy of the life we live and the reason to continue the journey. A soldier is not brave because they win the battle, they are brave because they fight the battle no matter the odds. Love is in part the hope that the value of our potential outweighs cost of our failings and imperfections. In the act of love is the discovery of a joy that is unmatched in any other aspect of our temporary existence. The extent to which we commit to love in this life is the extent to which we earn our own promise.

In love is the power to bring hopefulness to despair and possible to the impossible. Love requires each of us to face some of our worst fears and often we have to find beauty in the horrid. When we love we develop the power to protect those we love while at the same time putting ourselves at emotional, physical and psychological risk. When we love we have to find peace with the unknown and accept the possibility that injury is not only feasible but likely. Love is both a strength and weakness, it contains both the dark and the light, loving requires our strength and endurance because love “Ain’t No Punk!”
Preventing Amputation in the Diabetic Patient

By Mica Murdoch, DPM

Diabetes has become one of the most prevalent diseases in the world. It is the seventh leading cause of death in the United States and in 2012 over $245 billion in medical costs were attributed to treatment of diabetes. One of the major complications of diabetes is lower extremity wounds or ulcerations that result in amputation of all or part of the lower extremity.

Neuropathy, a symptom that develops with diabetes, puts people with this disease at risk for ulcerations of the skin in the foot. These wounds are at high risk for developing severe and chronic infections that can result in the need for amputation. 60% of all non-traumatic amputations occur in diabetic patients. Recent studies, done by both Duke University and Thompson and Reuters, show that the expeditious treatment and closure of diabetic ulcers prevents the risk of amputation. This significantly improves the quality of life as well as decreases the associated medical costs.

There are multiple levels that are required to properly care for and treat a diabetic patient with an ulceration. Because diabetes affects multiple body systems, ulcerations often require an in-depth evaluation of several systems in order to provide appropriate care. Blood supply to the lower extremity becomes one of the most essential and basic needs for preventing amputation. Without adequate blood supply, a wound will never heal. Another important consideration is bacterial load or infection. A wound with heavy bacteria or an infection will not heal or stay healed. Because diabetes compromises the immune system, diabetic patients are also at risk for severe infections that can be introduced through a wound or ulcer in the foot.

Being able to offload or reduce weight on an ulceration is also an important factor in healing a diabetic wound and preventing the return of wounds in the future. Offloading techniques can vary greatly from modification, to shoe gear, to surgical reconstruction, depending on the patient and the wound. When these areas are addressed, there are several advanced techniques that will help wounds close quicker and stay closed. Under the care of a trained professional, these techniques will significantly decrease the risk of amputation and will increase the quality of life for the diabetic patient.

The WATCH Wound Center (Wound Alliance for Treating Caring and Healing), and the Amputation Prevention Center at Broadlawns Medical Center are equipped to address all cases of diabetic foot ulcerations. The WATCH Wound Center and the Amputation Prevention Center at Broadlawns is uniquely qualified to treat ulcerative wounds and lower extremity conditions by administering wound healing techniques ranging from non-invasive vascular testing to complete surgical reconstruction. For additional information or to schedule an appointment with one of our providers, please visit www.broadlawns.org or call (515) 282-HEAL(4325).

Mica Murdoch, DPM
Section Chief
Broadlawns Foot and Ankle Clinic

Looking for a way to help during the holidays? WIN Ministries is currently accepting donations for our 1st Annual Hygiene Drive! All you have to do is pick up a few toiletries then call us at 1-888-293-3221 or email us to schedule a pick up! It’s that simple!

Hygiene Kits will be shared with families in shelters and the homeless in Iowa. We are also sending Hygiene Kits to Puerto Rico to help families still rebuilding from Hurricane Maria.

Help us empower others…and spread the holiday cheer!
Please...Engage the Outrage!

by Gary Lawson

There yet remains a compelling need in the Iowa African-American/Black community to ‘step up to the plate’ and give a ‘stronger voice’ to the ‘outrageous’ disparities the African-American/Black community experiences when it comes to jobs/income, education, and health.

This month marks the “one-year anniversary” since the Connect Foundation and the Des Moines Urban Experience Magazine forged a collaborative effort to determine what is ‘actually being done’ to address the disparate impact experienced by the African-American/Black community in Des Moines regarding jobs/income. Our collaborative efforts sought to determine the “quantity and quality” of programs used to serve the African-American/Black community in terms of ‘measuring progress’ on ‘reducing’ the harsh realities that African-Americans/Blacks continue to experience with respect to attaining good jobs/income, a good education, and good health.

In July of 2016, the Connection Foundation contacted the Des Moines Register to schedule a meeting for discussing an update on the state of human development efforts (jobs/income, education, and health) within the African-American community. On August 2, 2016, we met with the Engagement/Opinion Editor of the Des Moines Register and during that meeting we shared our finding that existing data identified ‘jobs/income’ as the ‘primary’ human development concern within the African-American community and that very little attention seems to be given to that issue as a priority. On August 3, 2016, in order to provide some evidence of our experience concerning the issue, we sent some data on a Certified Nurse Assistant (Aid) demonstration project, to include measured results, that the Connect Foundation had previously conducted.

Following our meeting, and later in August of 2016, the Connect Foundation met with the Des Moines Urban Experience Magazine to discuss collaborating on conducting a community meeting for addressing the state of well-being (jobs/income, education, and health) within the African-American/Black community. We reached out to the Des Moines Register once again to collaborate on this issue, but they decided not to participate at that time...but would reflect on future participation.

The ‘first step’ of the collaborative efforts by the Connect Foundation and the Des Moines Urban Experience Magazine was simple, to meet with the leadership of each of two organizations that we were able to identify as being ‘managed’ by African-Americans/Blacks and providing programs to address the disparities. The rationale being that organizations ‘managed’ by African-Americans/Blacks are generally considered as being in a position to have more ‘awareness’ (or cultural competence) with respect to addressing the existing disparities and providing education/training that results in ‘reducing’ the disparate impact experienced by African-Americans/Blacks. The two organizations we met with are the Directors Council and the Iowa Black Business Coalition.

Our ‘second step’ was to hold a ‘roundtable’ with representatives of each of the two organizations and make every effort to identify the ‘level of success’ resulting from the education/training programs each of the two organizations provided during the most recent fiscal year (during that time) to reduce the disparate impact on the African-American/Black community with respect to jobs/income, education, and health.

Our ‘third step’ was to hold a public meeting, the Des Moines African-American/Black Colloquy, consisting of the Directors Council, the Iowa Black Business Coalition, various other invited African-American/Black non-profit organizations connected to the issues (jobs/
income, education, and health), and an ‘open invitation’ to the general public.

As a result of a ‘survey’ we conducted during the colloquy, results revealed ‘education’ was considered the ‘first priority’ among organizations offering programs to reduce disparities within the African-American/Black community, while ‘income’ was the ‘first priority’ among the general African-American/Black public. According to data by the United Way of Central Iowa, ‘income’ is the number one issue. This finding suggests that African-American managed organizations may not be in step with the well-being priorities. If correct, this poses a real problem, but doesn’t seem to generate any significant media interest and may suggest that the general public in Des Moines/Polk County may be less aware of the problem as well.

A second important finding was that only 17% of the ‘organizations’ were ‘very familiar’ (58% were ‘somewhat familiar’) with the services of the Directors Council, to include their success rates with the well-being issues (jobs/income, and health), while ‘none’ of the respondents from the general public were familiar with the services/success rates of the Directors Council. This finding suggests that very little is known about the ‘success rates’ in dealing with disparities and if the finding is correct...then this poses a major problem as well. On the other hand, 50% of the respondent ‘organizations’ were ‘somewhat familiar’ with the services/success rates of the Iowa Black Business Coalition, while 75% of the ‘general public’ responded that they were somewhat familiar.

Due to ‘not receiving’ the ‘necessary information’ we requested from the Directors Council and the Iowa Black Business Coalition during the process leading up the colloquy, we were not able to follow-up on our survey findings. Our ‘fourth step’ was to meet with the editorial and engagement staff of the Des Moines Register as a follow-up to our After-Action Report that we had sent to them earlier.

Our primary request to the Des Moines Register, based on the After-Action report that we provided in advance of the meeting, was that the Des Moines Register engage the issue of disparate impact within the African-American/Black community in Des Moines with specific focus on identifying what programs were in place for reducing the disparities...to include a ‘measure’ of their success. In addition, the Connect Foundation and the Des Moines Urban Experience Magazine offered our assistance with implementing that effort. In other words, we maintained that there was a need to focus on ‘performance’ when it comes to addressing the state of disparate impact on the African-American/Black community.

Our ‘fifth step’ was to meet with staff of Iowa Public Television as a follow-up to the After-Action Report we sent to them for the ‘same reasons’ that we met with the Des Moines Register, to ‘shed a greater public light’ on ‘performance’ of programs to reduce disparate impact. During our ‘sixth and seventh steps’, the Connect Foundation and the Des Moines Urban Experience Magazine followed up again with both the Des Moines Register and Iowa Public Television to once again attempt to gain their cooperation (and collaboration, if possible) in pursuing information on the status of the programs...and their success...relative to addressing the disparate impact on the African-American/Black community regarding jobs/income, education, and health.

On May 18, 2017, the Des Moines Register published the following... "Report: Structural racism evident in Polk County.” The report focused on racial disparities, but did not give attention to ‘accountability/performance’ of existing programs in addressing the disparate impact on the African-American/Black community.

The Register ran an editorial on August 11, 2017, “The facts on race that Des Moines doesn't want to face.” The article addressed racial disparities, but was not specific on ‘performance/accountability’ of existing programs to ‘address’ disparities...and did not include any findings (or other input) from the Connect Foundation and the Des Moines Urban Experience Magazine, whose collaborative efforts brought the issue of disparities (jobs/income, education, health) to the attention of the Des Moines Register as far back as 2013.

On September 30, 2017, the Des Moines Register informed us that they “have discussed, and continue to examine, how the Register can engage with the African-American community, bring awareness to issues and seek solutions.” They also informed us “as planning progresses, we will be in touch.”

After several meetings and email communications, Iowa Public Television sent us an email on October 19, 2017, and informed us that... “The research that resulted in the colloquy and the After-Action Report were of particular interest to us...” and asked us to answer four questions in total concerning the possibility of developing a program that addressed the findings in the colloquy After-Action Report we provided. The first three questions were deemed “crucial to the development of the program.” A fourth question was added by Iowa Public Television... "What is the essential question we’re trying to answer in this program?"

On October 30, 2017, we sent our last communication to
Iowa Public Television, answering all four of their questions. It is important for us to share our response to the fourth question (“What is the essential question we’re trying to answer in this program?”), our response, in part, was as follows:

Can the best services/best practices that work to ‘aggressively reduce’ the disparate impact on African-Americans/Blacks concerning the primary issues (income, education, health) be identified; and how can the availability of those services/best practices be increased/maintained to the highest level of efficiency and effectiveness?

On November 3, 2017, Iowa Public Television responded... “We’ll review the information below as we develop our plans for new programming.”

As we continue to wait for responses from the Des Moines Register and Iowa Public Television... as they continue to examine the information we provided... to include the offer of our ‘donated services’...Iowa has reached a new and significant milestone in the state economy by approaching 3% unemployment. In addition, the Greater Des Moines Partnership has informed the public...through their EDGE (Education Drives our Greater Economy) platform...that they are working towards increasing the skill levels in employment-age individuals. This ‘intensifies’ the need to address the disparate impact experienced by the African-American/Black community ‘even more’ as the economy will require additional skilled workers as we progress to 2025.

We have known about the inequities that the African-American/Black community has experienced for some time. Back during the early 1990’s (almost a quarter-century ago) the Iowa Commission on the Status of African-Americans was addressing the need for career development initiatives and such. Here it is at the end of 2017, and we have yet to ‘access information’ on the success of programs provided to up-skill the African-American/Black community.

The following words are on the cover of our After-Action Report: “There are no perfect people, policies, or programs, just the pursuit of continuous improvement.” Please...to all concerned Iowans...read our After-Action Report...and engage the outrage!

Note: Follow this link to a copy of our After-Action Report........ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=427x-2FVxYIM&t=284s

‘New Voices’ Needed For Overdue Changes

by Gary Lawson

The Des Moines Urban Experience Magazine is a growing and much needed ‘voice’ in Iowa. The magazine currently relies on ‘submission-based’ articles and is in need of people ‘across Iowa’ to submit articles...especially articles that focus on activities and issues concerning the African-American/Black community.

If you have interest in a subject that really inspires and motivates you...drives your passion for expressing yourself... then ‘write an article’ about it and submit it to the Des Moines Urban Experience Magazine for publication...have your voice heard across Iowa. Your ‘voice’ may be about automobiles, civil rights, education, employment, government, health, music, technology, or any other subject.

This magazine especially needs to hear from aspiring journalists (internships are available to journalism students), retirees who have worked in business and/or government, politicians, parents, activists, etc. One of the most convincing ‘voices’ is someone who has ‘lived experiences’ connected to the subject in an article they submit for publication.

Will anyone really ‘hear’ your voice? Yes. I have regularly submitted articles to this magazine covering national, state, and local figures/subjects since the fall of 2015. A recent example involves an interview that I had conducted with the Chair of the National Association of Black Law Enforcement Officers (NABLEO) that was published in two parts. The article attracted interest from the organizer of the Iowa Summit on Justice & Disparities (Summit), who in turn contacted the Chair of NABLEO and contracted with him to speak at the Summit held this past October. How do I know this? Because I followed up with the Chair of NABLEO, and he so informed me. Your ‘voice’ will be heard...you just might not always ‘know’ who hears it...but If it helps the community, let your voice be heard!
Another example demonstrates how your ‘voice’ may work in a more ‘passive’ way. During the latter part of this past summer, I planned on writing two articles for the Des Moines Urban Experience Magazine dealing with African-American military history.

First, I searched the internet to find out what I could about the Fort Des Moines Museum and Education Center, but I wasn’t able to find a contact ‘telephone number’ on their website. I also wanted to do an article on a friend, who is an African-American female and the Director of the Iowa Gold Star Military Museum (Gold Star Museum). I called the Director and requested assistance in finding a contact ‘telephone number’ for the Fort Des Moines Museum and Education Center.

The Director returned my call and informed me that an ‘email address’ was provided, but not a ‘telephone number’, for contacting the Fort Des Moines Museum and Education Center. While I thought the absence of a telephone number was odd, I didn’t plan on submitting the articles until February of 2018 (African-American History Month)...so I did not follow through with the email contact at that time...deciding instead to wait until January of 2018. Last month, the Des Moines Register published an article on the Fort Des Moines Museum and Education Center (Museum dedicated to US Army’s first black officers class may close).

My time for submitting articles to the Des Moines Urban Experience Magazine on a regular basis is coming to a close. I have been ‘donating’ my ‘time’ and ‘voice’ to community issues for more than 25 years. During the past quarter-century, I have been blessed to have ‘my voice’ resonated via resources such as the former KUCB radio, the Communicator Newspaper, the Iowa Bystander Newspaper, KJMC radio, and the Des Moines Urban Experience Magazine. I humbly and publicly declare my appreciation for the opportunities that each of those organizations has given me to exercise ‘my voice’.

As I begin close this chapter of my life...and ‘my voice’ begins to fade from the Des Moines Urban Experience Magazine...I sincerely hope that ‘your voices’...new voices of the readers...resonate via the Des Moines Urban Experience Magazine. Act on your motivation and inspiration...live your passion...because ‘your community’ needs you...‘your voices’ can and will be heard and bring about ‘overdue changes’ in the African-American/Black community!

God Bless.
Iowa’s African American Festival

2018 EDUCATION DAY

Friday, January 26, 2018 10 AM–2 PM
Community Choice Credit Center • 833 5th Avenue • Des Moines

YOU’RE INVITED TO CELEBRATE A WORLD OF CULTURE

FOR MIDDLE & HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Attention: Secondary School Educators, Counselors, Diversity Coordinators, Administrators and Community Youth organizations. Don’t miss this opportunity to engage your students around African American arts, culture and higher education options. Education Day is for ALL students regardless of heritage, grade point average, or special needs.

IMMAWII

20 YEARS
1998-2018

BIZ PITCH COMPETITION
Calling all student entrepreneurs! Enter this contest and pitch your idea to business leaders for a chance to win up to $200 to help start your business. Check the box on the registration form for details.

AN EXCITING DAY FILLED WITH
EDUCATION, HISTORY, CULTURE &
FUN ACTIVITIES

★ Black History Game Show Competition
★ Teen Diversity Summit
★ STEM Programming
★ Iowa College Fair
★ Biz Pitch Contest
★ Arts, Culture & Education Workshops
★ Historical & Educational Exhibits
★ Engagement Activities

FEATURE: BLACK HISTORY GAME SHOW
Sign your team up to compete in this quiz show competition with teams from across the state of Iowa. It’s a unique opportunity for students to compete for cash prizes and awards based on knowledge of African-American history and for their schoolmates to root for them in a positive academic experience. Teams must have 6-10 members. Study guides provided upon registration so register early!

Hundreds of high & middle school students come together from across Iowa to learn about African American Culture! Parents, check with your school to ensure your

Register Your Students by 1/16/2018!

www.worldiniowa.org ★ 515-288-7171

African American History is Every American’s History
OPEN LONGER, SHORTER WAIT

MAIN CAMPUS
1801 Hickman Road
Mon - Fri: 8am - 8pm
Sat: 9am - 3pm

EAST UNIVERSITY CLINIC
2508 East University
Mon - Fri: 7am - 7pm
Sat - Sun: 8am - 2pm

Check the current wait time at www.broadlawns.org

All forms of insurance accepted.