

# the Stand

## south side news

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Syracuse, NY

FEBRUARY 2015 Issue 40 FREE

### GUITAR HERO

Bobby Green recalls experiences growing into music legend

Fighting breast cancer  
She Matters supports women from testing to treatment

fifth year

Join The Stand's anniversary party on March 21

**Positive spin**  
DJ uses hip-hop to help educate at-risk youths

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**REPORTERS, EDITORS AND  
PHOTOGRAPHERS**STUDENTS AT THE  
S.I. NEWHOUSE SCHOOL OF  
PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS**SPECIAL THANKS THIS MONTH**DEAN LORRAINE BRANHAM, ABBY  
LEGGE, NICK LISI**CONTACT US**SOUTH SIDE NEWSPAPER PROJECT  
(315) 882-1054  
ASHLEY@MYSOUTHSIDESTAND.COMTHE STAND IS BASED OUT OF THE  
SOUTH SIDE COMMUNICATION CENTER  
2331 SOUTH SALINA STREET  
SYRACUSE, NY 13205**4** **FEATURES** | Local author Roger Knight reflects on how court rulings, such as those involving the deaths of Michael Brown and Eric Garner, motivated him to write his novel.**6** **HEALTH** | Find out about "She Matters," a health program working with local residents to educate the neighborhood about breast cancer.**10** **THE STAND** | As *The Stand* reaches its five-year anniversary, see a timeline highlighting important moments for the publication and hear from former Stand writers.**14** **YOUTH** | Meet the DJ who is using his passion for hip-hop music to help teens facing poverty. He does this through his work with the Good Life Youth Foundation.**16** **FEATURES** | Read about how resident Timothy Bryant pursued his dream of going to college, has made dean's list every semester and was honored by Syracuse University's chancellor.**18** **ENTERTAINMENT** | A *Friendly Five* column highlights one of Syracuse's local legends — Robert "Bobby" Green, a talented guitarist who has been playing for more than 60 years.

■ Cover photography of Bobby Green by Alexandra Hootnick

## CALENDAR | FEBRUARY

**What:** CNY Real Men Read**When:** Noon to 2:30 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 21**Where:** Community Folk Art Center, 805 E. Genesee St.**Details:** Men, age 18 and older, are invited to bring along their sons, grandsons, nephews, godsons and friends to hear and share stories about men who play, create and read. Children attending must be accompanied by an adult 18 or older. Lunch and free books provided.**More Info.:** Register by Feb. 18 by contacting Connie Gregory at (315) 559-4795 or by email at [litforlifefamilies@gmail.com](mailto:litforlifefamilies@gmail.com)**What:** "Jerry's Story"**When:** 2 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 22**Where:** Onondaga Historical Association Museum, 321 Montgomery St.**Details:** This play follows William "Jerry" Henry's journey as he escapes from slavery in Missouri. His journey brings him through Syracuse, where the most famous event of his travels occurred.**Cost:** OHA members, teachers and students: \$10; general public: \$12**More Info.:** Reservations are suggested. Call (315) 428-1864 ext. 312 from 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Monday through Friday; Saturday and Sunday, call (315) 428-1864 ext. 321**CALL FOR ARTISTS**  
**Reviving Place Project**Onondaga Environmental Institute is seeking to commission local artists to work with community members and create maps that creatively call attention to and celebrate what's unique, special or important about local places. These maps will serve as educational tools and will also help to celebrate and increase community pride in and stewardship of local places. Artist applications are due Tuesday, Feb. 17, at 4 p.m. For more information on how to apply, contact Sarah Wraight at [swraight@oei2.org](mailto:swraight@oei2.org) or (607) 342-2913**DISCLAIMER**

THE VIEWS EXPRESSED IN THE STAND ARE NOT NECESSARILY THOSE OF THE ENTIRE STAFF. THE STAND WELCOMES SUBMISSIONS FROM ALL MEMBERS OF SYRACUSE'S SOUTH SIDE BUT RETAINS THE RIGHT TO PUBLISH ONLY MATERIAL THE STAND DEEMS ACCEPTABLE TO THE PUBLICATION'S EDITORIAL PURPOSE AND IN KEEPING WITH COMMUNITY STANDARDS.

As our five-year anniversary of The Stand approaches, I want to recap what I consider to be our Top Five Moments.

## 5. Behind The Scenes Workshops

During these sessions, Syracuse University reporting students shared how they developed their story ideas. Each workshop's goal was to take a reader 'Behind the Scenes' of our paper's production. Community members were also able to provide feedback and share ideas for future stories. The workshops were successful because student reporters heard firsthand what worked in their articles and also received constructive feedback directly from readers. The workshops were true learning experiences and great conversation starters, which is why I found them so successful.



## 4. Launch Party

Held over Valentine's Weekend in 2010, we invited the community to "Fall in Love" with The Stand. Copies of the inaugural issue were available early to all who attended. Our goal was to create buzz and excitement for the newspaper, to build readership and generate interest.

## 3. Annual Photo Walk

Our photo walks, held each July, have by far been our most popular event offering. Professional photographers, hobbyists, local residents and youth all mingle together for the day. Each year when new people attend, they are skeptical and ask if they will be seen as intrusive when walking through the neighborhood with their cameras. When they complete the walk, they are energized and talk about how many residents they met and how welcoming everyone was. Next, we all share photos and discuss what images stood out to us from the day's walk.

## 2. From Where We Stand

Our goal with our first summer-long storytelling offering — "From Where We Stand" — was to put real families behind the camera to tell their own stories. Each of the eight participants received a new Nikon DSLR camera — theirs to keep. The pairing of participants with professional mentors offered everyone the chance to pick up new skills and to learn the difference between simply taking pictures and telling a story. The eight participants' stories were shared online at FromWhereWeStand.net, in a photo gallery exhibit this past September and in print issues of The Stand.

## 1. Our Contributors

Over these past five years we have had some wonderful contributors. One of our board members, Reggie Seigler, has developed a music column — A Friendly Five — that I constantly hear from readers is one of their favorites. Other community members have also contributed regularly, and while most of our Newhouse reporting students write for only one semester, there have been a handful who continue writing through their years at SU. To hear directly from some of our past committed contributors, turn to Page 11 and 12.

And now we invite our readers to join us in celebration of our five-year milestone.

Ashley Kang

# SAVE THE DATE

## March 21

### The Stand's Five-Year Anniversary Celebration

Keynote speaker will be Sean Kirst, an award-winning columnist for Syracuse Media Group and a Stand reader.

The celebration will feature a short program about the success of The Stand newspaper over the past five years, tables with information on how to get involved, along with a cake and snacks. The event is free and open to the public.

**When:** 10 a.m. to noon  
Saturday, March 21

**Where:** South Side Innovation  
Center, 2610 S. Salina St.

**More Info.:** (315) 882-1054 or  
ashley@mysouthsidestand.com

## TIME FLIES

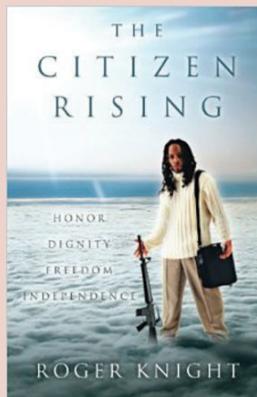
Learn more about The Stand's past five years in our special **timeline** starting on Page 10, and be sure to pick up next month's anniversary edition. It will hit the streets March 7.

## ABOUT HIS BOOK

**Title:** “The Citizen Rising”

**Pages:** 202 pages

**Cost:** \$15 from Knight directly; available also at Barnes & Noble or Amazon.com



## RECOMMENDED READING

### High School / Middle School Students

- “A Tale of Two Cities” by Charles Dickens  
*A great book about politics and the mind.*
- “Catcher in the Rye” by J. D. Salinger  
*A powerful book about growing up.*
- “The Prophet” by Khalil Gibran  
*It causes you to think about the biggest issue: We know what to think, but not how to think.*

### Elementary Students

- “Urban Girl Adventures” by Asadah Sense  
*This series is about the life of a little girl in New York City who captures her experiences in photo.*

**For more:** Visit [UrbanGirlAdventures.com](http://UrbanGirlAdventures.com)

# SEEKING JUSTICE

Local author Roger Knight on his first book and his passions



> Roger Knight talks about his book, “The Citizen Rising,” at the White Branch Library. Knight says he plans to eventually write a sequel to “The Citizen Rising.” | Alexandra Hootnick, Staff Photo

By | Seamus Kirst  
*Staff reporter*

## Author Roger Knight is devoted to social justice, spreading certain values and morals

Roger Knight, a local author, says that the court decisions made around the deaths of Michael Brown in Ferguson and Eric Garner in Staten Island remind him why he was motivated to write his novel, “The Citizen Rising.”

Even before these events made news, Knight found himself engaged in the court system.

When an unarmed Amadou Diallo, an immigrant from Guinea, was shot and killed by four New York City policemen in 1999, Knight wanted to bring his son to watch the trial.

“There are three ways of learning about an event,” Knight said. “The best is to learn by going, the second best is to learn from someone who was there, the third best is to learn by reading.”

But the trial was moved to Albany, where all four officers were eventually acquitted of their charges, including second-degree murder.

“I didn’t like how the trial went,” Knight said. “All of the police got off, and I didn’t like what black leadership had to say. This made me feel like the powers that be don’t think that black people have any power.”

A few years later, Knight told his sons he was going

to write an article in response to the acquittal. But as he began writing, he realized he had more to say. He continued to write for the next eight years.

In 2010, he finished the initial writing of “The Citizen Rising.” Knight says his novel, through themes of morality and ethics, explores the biases of the American justice system and its disempowerment of black communities.

The novel was published last February and can be purchased on Amazon.com. Early in January, Knight held his first book discussion and signing at the White Branch Library in Syracuse. Aran West, a librarian at the branch, has gotten to know Knight through his visits and attended the event.

“Roger is a charismatic personality, a philosophical thinker, a way cool dude and a keen observer of people and political systems,” she said. “He has lived in interesting times and is well-read and versed in the classics.”

West sees Knight’s novel as being connected to current events, as it was inspired by the Amadou Diallo decision.

“In ‘The Citizen Rising,’ the citizen experiences the same event Roger did, but directs his feelings into an action plan to empower and uplift the black community by gathering a group of handpicked individuals, accomplished in their own right,” she said.

“He shows them how they might unite to take and hold the reins of power — political, economic and social, physical, mental and spiritual — and build a new society inclusive of people from all walks of life and all

rungs of the ladder.”

Knight, who worked for the U.S. Postal Service, attributes his writing skills to his undergraduate years at Morgan State University in Baltimore.

Knight said much of his education happened outside the classroom, as pivotal American history took place. He described racial tensions as the Civil Rights Movement grew during the 1960s and recalls seeing Ku Klux Klan members burn crosses on campus. He remembers the Baltimore Riot of 1968 when Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated and martial law was enforced.

As a student, Knight said he was disturbed by media coverage of these events and their portrayal of black people, in general.

“Whenever these events happened it seemed like the news would try to find the most ignorant sounding person they could find to describe what happened,” Knight said. “They were trying to fix this at black colleges like Morgan State in the 1960s. We read a lot, but they really focused on how you spoke.”

Knight said that his education at Morgan State instilled within him a desire to bring different black voices to the forefront of American culture.

“If all Americans see on television are black people committing crimes and being arrested, then that’s a serious problem,” Knight said.

But, for Knight, “The Citizen Rising,” is just the beginning of his cultural commentary and call for action.

“Beyond writing, I would like to teach a class on ethics, civics, values and morals,” he said. “I would like to teach this class to 5-year-olds.”

Knight, who used to work for Peace, Inc. and Head Start, explained that young children are exposed to all other academic areas.

“We should teach children morals, instead of just teaching them to make money,” he said. “If you take away the spirituality and human aspect of learning and working, then it quickly becomes empty.”



## Numbers don't always tell the whole story.

Your grades are just part of the picture of who you are. If high school was a struggle—but you have the drive and determination to succeed—college can be more than a distant dream.

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Earn a Syracuse University degree. Ask about the Arthur O. Eve Higher Education Opportunity Program (HEOP) for part-time students. Academic advising, tutoring, and scholarship assistance for tuition and books are available to those who are accepted.

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“I never thought that going to college was within my reach.”

Krystal Jones,  
University College  
part-time student

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University College's HEOP project and its activities are supported, in whole or in part, by a grant from the New York State Education Department.

## MEDICAL COST HELP

Need help with bills? If you have been diagnosed with breast cancer, contact the Saint Agatha Foundation at (888) 878-7900.

Also check with one of these healthcare providers, which partner with Saint Agatha's to help patients cover the cost of treatment:

- Auburn Community Hospital
- Cortland Regional Medical Center
- Crouse Hospital
- Faxton St. Luke's Healthcare
- Oneida Healthcare
- Oswego Hospital
- St. Joseph's Hospital Health Center
- Upstate Medical University

# SHE MATTERS

*Finding ways to help women detect breast cancer, then get through it*



> Valerie Taylor helped found Shades of Inspiration, a breast cancer support group. | Brittany Wait, Staff Photo

By | Lateshia Beachum  
*Urban Affairs reporter*

### Valerie Taylor helped create a support system for women with shared cancer journeys

Valerie Taylor was lying down relaxing in her home when she felt an itch in her right breast. When she touched it, she discovered a lump that felt like the shape of an egg. She called her doctor right away.

"I was more scared than anything because I was like 'What the heck is this? What is going on?'" she said.

The doctor ordered a mammogram and a sonogram. "It was an all-day process," she said of that day in April 2003 — a day that did not end well. It was Stage II breast cancer.

"It was devastating," Taylor said. "I just cried and cried and cried. And then they hurried up and escorted me out the side door."

Taylor had gone to her appointment alone. Her sister was supposed to meet her at the hospital, but by the time Taylor had been escorted out the side door, her sister was at the front, oblivious to what Taylor was going through. Taylor left the hospital alone, heading to her mother's house.

"My mother and I got in the car and we drove around," she said, describing how she processed her initial diagnosis. "I just drove and she sat there."

Although Taylor, 56, had the company of her mother later that day, her solitary trip to her doctor's office and her experience that day is the kind of thing that inspired SUNY Upstate Medical University to write a grant that is funded by Susan G. Komen Central New York called "She Matters."

Bill Simmons, director of the Syracuse Housing Authority, a partner in the grant, applauds the preventative efforts of the program.

"Many will go to emergency rooms before their doctor's appointments or health troubles," Simmons said. "That model, from a business standpoint, is unsustainable. Upstate thought that it would be a good business model if they had a relationship with the residents of Pioneer Homes, encouraging them to be proactive with their health concerns and health issues as opposed to going to the emergency room."

In collaboration with the Syracuse Housing Authority, "She Matters" has trained four residents of the Pioneer Homes development to be resident health advocates. Advocates go door to door in their neighborhood to register women over the age of 40 for mammograms and to educate them about breast cancer.

The initiative's goal is to reach the 149 black women over the age of 40 in the development. Since the program launched this past summer, about 50 women in the Pioneer Homes development have received mammograms. Nearly 200 women in Onondaga County have

been reached through awareness and education, which includes women outside of Pioneer Homes and women under 40, according to Linda Veit, project director of the Upstate Cancer Center.

### IMPORTANCE OF MAMMOGRAMS

Martha Chavis-Bonner, one of the resident health advocates who is paid a modest stipend from the grant for her work, said, "Most people that I have gone to have never had [a mammogram] done before, and they didn't know how important it was for their body."

Veit, writer of the "She Matters" grant, cited inequalities in breast cancer between white and black women. "[Breast cancer has a] higher incidence in white women than black women. But when black women get breast cancer, it's more deadly," she said.

White women have higher breast cancer rates than any other race. However, black women under the age of 40 have higher incident rates and have an increased chance of dying from the disease at any age, according to the American Cancer Society's Cancer Facts and Figures for African-Americans 2013-2014 report.

Cancer is also the second-leading cause of death for black women, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Additionally, black women have a 79 percent five-year survival rate compared with white women, who have a 92 percent five-year survival rate, according to the American Cancer Society. Furthermore,

black women are 40 percent more likely to die from breast cancer than white women.

Kate Flannery, the director of Komen CNY who approved the grant, said such statistics are unacceptable. She hopes "She Matters" reveals why these differences are so vast.

"Pioneer Homes is half a mile from two hospitals," she said. "It shouldn't be location [that's preventing women from seeing the doctor]. That's not the case necessarily. That's part of what we're doing in this program. What are the genuine barriers that are keeping people from getting screened?"

Andrea Rush, administrator for the St. Agatha Foundation, a local organization that helps breast cancer patients pay for treatment, said cost is a barrier even before a single bill goes out. "Sometimes the barrier in going to get tested is because of the financial burden that they know will come," she said. "It's not uncommon for people to know ... something is not quite right long before they've been diagnosed."

Taylor was one of those women. "I kind of suspected [I had breast cancer] when they told me that I had to go back and see the doctor," she said.

But, like many women, Taylor didn't have it on her radar.

"I was never concerned about it because nobody in my family ever had it," she said. She didn't do regularly scheduled mammograms as advised, but she did perform

## CANCER CONNECTS

Cancer Connects, a partner organization with Saint Agatha Foundation, can help you pay for medical bills, childcare and utilities.

Contact them at (315) 634-5004 or at [cancerconnects@gmail.com](mailto:cancerconnects@gmail.com). You also can make a tax-deductible donation via [cancerconnects.org](http://cancerconnects.org) or by mail.

5008 Brittonfield Parkway  
P.O. Box 2010  
East Syracuse, NY 13057

ON THE SIDE

## Do you need help with your breast cancer bills?

The Saint Agatha Foundation has established funds at area hospitals and medical providers to provide financial support for breast cancer patients in Onondaga, Cortland, Cayuga, Madison, Oneida, and Oswego Counties, New York.

### The following costs can be covered:

- ▶ Treatment, procedures, testing, office visits
- ▶ Transportation to and from treatment, child care
- ▶ Prescription and procedural co-pays
- ▶ Medication not covered by insurance
- ▶ Wound care systems
- ▶ Breast reconstruction
- ▶ Lymphedema sleeves



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ON THE SIDE

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self-breast exams from time to time.

Shawni Davis, 32, said she was as uninformed about breast cancer as her mother. “It was shocking,” Davis said of the news.

Neither knew of any family history with breast cancer. According to the American Cancer Society, more than 85 percent of women diagnosed with breast cancer do not have a family history of it.

“I felt sad and hopeful all at the same time,” Davis said. “When you hear that someone has breast cancer, you immediately think the worst. Talking to (my mom), she said that the doctor said that they found it pretty early, so the chances of survival were pretty good. That made me feel hopeful.”

That hope was tested back in 2003.

By mid-June 2003, Taylor had surgery for the placement of her portacath, a small device placed under the skin that feeds a vein for the delivery of drugs. By late June, she had her first chemotherapy treatment at the Brittonfield location of Hematology-Oncology Associates of CNY, with her sister by her side.

Taylor ended up in the hospital for almost a week after her first treatment because of a bacterial infection, a common complication, according to the Centers for Disease Control.

Davis, a then-19-year-old Syracuse University student who found herself acting as her mother’s power of attorney, said she was scared out of her mind when she saw her mother placed on ice because of her high temperature.

“It was tough to see her that way. I didn’t know that they actually put people on ice to take their temperature down. These were all experiences that were very new,” she said.

Davis eventually dropped out of school. “It was a lot to try to handle everything. It was just way too much,” she said of her demanding roles of student and caregiver. She began looking into her family history and discovered that breast cancer was, indeed, a part of it. “There were way more people in my family who had breast cancer than I thought,” said Davis, who eventually went to trade school and now works as an electrician.

### FINDING SUPPORT

Taylor, who had undergone a lumpectomy and eventually a double mastectomy, started learning more about how to care for herself as a breast cancer patient and how to find resources to get her through treatment via breast cancer support groups.

Taylor had started attending the groups because she wanted to talk to people who shared her experience. “Somebody who was going through what I was going through, that’s what I was seeking,” she said.

Gussie Sorensen, a clinical social worker at Brittonfield, helps run support groups for patients. She said that after being in her line of work for 33 years, she knows how support groups can help patients during their treatment.

“I think being in a support group, once you’re diagnosed, in terms of the treatment phase, helps patients understand their disease process,” Sorensen said. “They can learn to advocate for themselves with the medical team. They’re just overall informed in general.”

Taylor said she got practical advice, too. An older woman told her she’d suffered a blood clot in her port because she didn’t get it flushed with saline.

Assistance from support groups and her family helped Taylor finish her cancer treatment in December 2003. By that time, she had undergone the lumpectomy and double mastectomy, a decision she made after enduring the grueling physical pain of chemotherapy. “When I went through what I went through with that chemo, I said, ‘I can’t do this anymore. I want all of it off.’”

Davis said it was tough seeing her mother suffer; seeing her mom lose her hair was particularly difficult. Taylor said looking for a surgeon to perform her reconstructive surgery was the hardest time for her.

Taylor underwent her reconstructive surgery in 2007. She went back in 2011 for more work, and another round late last year.

### THE GREATEST CHALLENGE

Beautifying herself as a black woman with breast cancer was more of a challenge for Taylor than she expected. She participated in the “Look Good, Feel Better” program that’s run through the American Cancer Society of East Syracuse. The program provides women with make-up kits and teaches them how to apply it. Taylor said the kit she got initially was too light. “I’m dark skin, real dark,” she said. “I was like, ‘If I put that on, I’ll look like a clown.’”

Taylor would later find her enjoyment in the program when there was a headscarf wrapping session.

Three years ago, she and others she had met founded their own breast cancer support group called Shades of Inspiration.

The group, which consists of 18 women of color, meets once a month. They donate care packages to women with breast cancer at area schools.

“I think it’s awesome,” Davis said of her mother’s group. “I think it helps bring awareness to African-American women, especially in this community, to pay more attention to their breast health.”

Taylor said that through her work, she sees a need to talk about breast cancer in the black community.

“What I’ve noticed, black women don’t talk about breast cancer,” she said, mentioning an aunt-like figure who had been diagnosed with breast cancer but didn’t ever talk about it. “Black women don’t talk about it if they ever had it. We don’t think that we get it, and we do.”

Her daughter says her mother is up to this kind of challenge.

“She’s a resilient woman,” Davis said. “She’s built for this.”

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# Five Years of The Stand

> The Stand staff and South Side residents join together in celebration of the launch of the print newspaper over Valentine's Weekend on Feb. 13, 2010, at the South Side Innovation Center. | Mitchell Franz, File Photo

## 2010

### FEBRUARY

The South Side Newspaper Project debuts its first print issue of The Stand over Valentine's Weekend with a launch party held Feb. 13, 2010.



### MARCH

The inaugural print issue of The Stand newspaper is the March 2010 edition.



### MARCH

The first full-day journalism workshop is offered to South Side residents March 6, 2010.



### JULY

The Stand offers its first Photo Walk on July 24, 2010, which is a social photography event where photographers get together to explore a neighborhood, shoot photos and practice their skills. Each July, The Stand continues to hold our annual Photo Walk, which has become our most popular event.

## 2011

### JANUARY

The Stand moves to The South Side Communication Center, located at 2331 S. Salina St., which is jointly run by the Southside Community Coalition and the South Side Initiative. The center serves as a public computer lab, meeting space and the home base for The South Side Newspaper Project and other local nonprofits, such as the Black History Preservation Project.



## A look back in time...

Compiled By | Ashley Kang  
The Stand Director

Our timeline takes a look at highlights from the past five years of The South Side Newspaper Project. While we recount our successes here, we are also hard at work to plan a celebration to launch us into our next half-decade.

### 2011



#### JANUARY

A group of reporting students from The Stand spent 11 days in South Africa over winter break, telling stories about the interesting culture and people who live there. Visit [worldjournalism.syr.edu](http://worldjournalism.syr.edu) to read a collection of stories from overseas and the South Side.

#### MARCH

The Stand holds its first Poetry Workshop in partnership with The Syracuse Poster Project on March 26, 2011. The partnership continued by offering poetry workshops each year.

### 2012



#### FEBRUARY

Earn our status as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit on Feb. 24, 2012.

#### APRIL

Director of The Stand presents on the newspaper's experiences in providing consistent and specialized local coverage as part of the Newhouse School's "The News Re-Imagined" conference held April 4, 2012.

# WHY I JOINED

And why you should work with *The Stand*, too

By | Ame Donkor  
Community Correspondent 2010 to 2011

From the very first workshop I attended for The Stand, I knew that I was on the cusp of a life-changing experience. I was introduced to The Stand through its director, Ashley Kang, who sent out a slew of emails to drum up interest in the newspaper project.

I've enjoyed writing since I was a kid. I saw contributing to The Stand as an opportunity to exercise my talent and to travel around the local area. I was excited about meeting the residents, business owners and politicians. I really wanted a better idea of this new city that I had come to.

By attending the free workshops and learning the writing styles, interviewing techniques and photography lessons, it all came together.

Although I'm leaving Syracuse, I'd definitely like to see more people from the South Side community contribute their views and positivity on what is happening in this part of the city.



#### APRIL

Founder of The Stand, professor Steve Davis, receives the Chancellor's Citation for Excellence Award on April 9, 2012. His work with The Stand was just one consideration for the honor.



#### JULY

The Stand makes its TV debut in July 2012 to promote our Photo Walk. Each month, staff members continued to appear on WCNY's "The Reith Show," which aired live for seven months, May through November 2012.

#### NOVEMBER

Director Ashley Kang presents during the "Meet Your Local Media Panel" held Nov. 13, 2012. She spoke as part of a discussion sponsored by the Central New York Community Foundation for local news directors and nonprofits.



12/10/12  
Dear Ashley-Kang,  
Thank you for allowing me to attend your two writing workshops. These 2 workshop sessions have helped me to realize that one of my aspirations is to be a journalist!  
Sincerely,  
Leasia

#### DECEMBER

We receive a special thank you card from eighth-grader Leasia Thompson, who hopes to one day become a journalist.



The idea is that the newspaper will eventually be handed over to the community to be run as a locally owned and operated publication. I'd like to check out the news at The Stand's website, [mysouthsidestand.com](http://mysouthsidestand.com), in the coming years and read stories written by South Side youth reporting about friends, neighbors and relatives ... and about the good things that are happening in their part of the city.

# GRATEFUL TO SOUTH SIDE

*Newhouse student recounts her experience writing for The Stand for three years*

By | Durrie Bouscaren  
*Staff reporter from 2011 to 2013*

I really think The Stand is something special.

In a world where larger news outlets are laying off reporters to save money and stay in business, it's become increasingly difficult for a newsroom to cover its market.

Syracuse is especially hard to cover because of the broad range of issues residents face in each section of the city.

However, that's also what makes it so fascinating.

This creates an opportunity for The Stand to be the strongest voice from the South Side. We can find the stories. We can open conversations. No one can better explain a community than its own residents.

The thing that makes me the proudest is that The Stand symbolizes collaboration between Syracuse University and the South Side community. Students often enter Professor Steve Davis' classroom knowing nothing about the South Side. It can be intimidating to enter an unfamiliar neighborhood and try to relate to people. I know that it was difficult for me at first.

I come from suburban Colorado; I had no idea how to interview someone about difficult urban issues I had never experienced. How could I possibly relate? But I did find out that I knew how to listen. I started to



see how the residents there have a knack for organizing and addressing an issue.

Through them, I learned how to tell a story. And for that, I'm extremely grateful.

I've met inspiring leaders, hard-working entrepreneurs, and dedicated students here on the South Side. It's been a life experience. I can't wait to see what The Stand will come up with next.

## 2013



### JANUARY

The Stand offers a special mentoring session for eighth-graders from Eagle Wings Academy on Jan. 26, 2013.



### MAY

The project takes first place in the category of special interest print magazine from the Syracuse Press Club on May 3, 2013 for a sister project completed over the summer. This project produced a glossy print magazine and digital tablet called "Vox/Voz," which covered Syracuse's West Side neighborhood.

## 2014



### FEBRUARY

John A. Young, a board member since 2010, passes away Feb. 27, 2014. He was enthusiastic about our community newspaper and brought ideas and outreach to the project.

### MAY

Project receives a \$4,000 Gifford Foundation Grant to fund our first summer-long storytelling series. Additional funds to support the project were contributed by the Near Westside Initiative and the Allyn Foundation.

### JUNE

The project launches its first summer-long series: "From Where We Stand," where eight participants were given a camera and paired with a mentor. Our goal: to put real families behind the camera to tell their stories.





## AUGUST

“From Where We Stand” project is featured on WCNY’s “Insight” public affairs show airing Aug. 1, 2014.



## AUGUST

The Stand’s 5th annual Photo Walk is spotlighted in a segment on the nationally syndicated program “Artifex” airing Aug. 8, 2014.



## OCTOBER

The Stand leads a journalism lesson for girls in the Literacy Empowers All People program Oct. 7, 2014, which happened to fall on National News Engagement Day. During the lesson, the girls, ranging in age from 8 to 14, learned how to conduct an interview and write a lead paragraph.



## OCTOBER

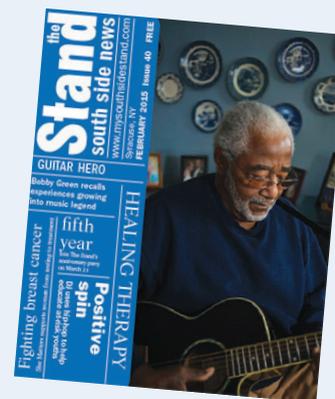
The Stand Director Ashley Kang presents with board member Reggie Seigler during the North-east Region of the Alliance for Community Media’s annual conference held in Nashua, New Hampshire, Oct. 10, 2014. The pair spoke about the South Side Newspaper Project’s community and university partnership in running the paper.



## SEPTEMBER

The South Side Newspaper Project holds its first gallery exhibit to showcase photos in the “From Where We Stand” series on Sept. 11, 2014.

## 2015



## FEBRUARY

The South Side Newspaper Project prints its 40th issue.



## MARCH

The Stand to hold its Five-Year Anniversary Party from 10 a.m. to noon Saturday, March 21, at the South Side Innovation Center, 2610 S. Salina St. All are welcome!

## JOIN THE GOOD LIFE

Good Life Youth Foundation focuses on four key areas:

- life coaching
- education
- financial
- entrepreneurship

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## FIND THE GOOD LIFE

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2610 South Salina St. #4  
Syracuse, NY 13205

Call: (315) 443-8792

Email: [info@agoodlifefound.org](mailto:info@agoodlifefound.org)

Click: [facebook.com/GoodLifeFoundationInc](https://www.facebook.com/GoodLifeFoundationInc)

Tweet: [@AGoodLifeFound](https://twitter.com/AGoodLifeFound)

# MUSIC TO THEIR EARS

*DJ Maestro spins records and turns around the lives of at-risk youth*



> Hasan Stephens, or DJ Maestro, plays songs at a basketball game in the Carrier Dome. | Alexandra Hootnick, Staff Photo

By | Jamie Weiss  
*Staff reporter*

Hasan Stephens believes hip-hop can lead youth away from the streets and toward success

**A** 15-year-old steals from an elderly man. The goal: Get just enough money to buy some food. The yield: Just seven cents.

Still, the culprit draws prison from a judge bent on teaching him a lesson.

This could be one of the songs “DJ Maestro” plays at Syracuse University football and basketball games at the Carrier Dome, another tale in rhyme. But it’s no make-believe story. The man behind the music that fans hear at the Dome, whose real name is Hasan Stephens, works with local youths whose stories — like this one — are real.

Stephens runs Good Life Youth Foundation, a program for at-risk youth in Syracuse. The journey of this 15-year-old is just one of many Stephens says he’s witnessed.

“That really hurt me because I knew him, knew who

he was, and I knew that it was a mistake,” Stephens said recently. “I wish he had been allowed to come back from that mistake. Punished yes, but not punished like that. Not as severe for what he did.”

Stephens says he’s worked with about two dozen youths since 2012, when he acquired space in the South Side Innovation Center and launched Good Life, an organization where he combines his passion for hip-hop music with his mission to show youths how to beat poverty. People likely would recognize Stephens this winter by his stage name, “DJ Maestro,” spinning the latest beats and pumping up the crowd before any SU basketball game. But Stephens spends much of his time serving as the executive director of Good Life or teaching the evolution of hip-hop at SUNY Cortland.

Stephens was DJ-ing at the Carrier Dome last spring when an SU junior approached him, and got involved by accident. Now a senior, Zachary Veca smiled when he recalled meeting Stephens.

“We were just having a normal conversation about his music choices when I decided to ask him for his card,” Veca said. “He gave me his Good Life Youth Foundation

card and he told me about his community service and his foundation, and I was actually looking for community service at the time, so it was perfect. I gave him a call and started doing community service, which led to an internship, then a job.”

Veca said the main thing he’s learned from working with Stephens is how to relate to the kids.

Music is the key.

“Everything I do has a hint of hip-hop,” Stephens said. “I use hip-hop here in the foundation to educate youth on life skills, financial literacy skills and also entrepreneurial skills.”

While hip-hop doesn’t always have the best reputation, Stephens searches for songs that have a positive message for youth, such as Jay-Z and Kanye West’s song “Murder to Excellence.” Stephens takes lyrics to show that doing the right thing, from managing your money to staying out of trouble, is the only way to be successful. An example: “I’ll be a real man, take care of your son. Every problem you had before this day is now done.”

Stephens said he’s seen kids getting locked up, but also success stories like that of his first mentee, Ron Funderburg. Stephens brought a teenage Funderburg to work with him in hopes of keeping him off the streets.

“He was just hanging with me and he started learning a lot of things,” Stephens said. “He eventually branched off and became an entrepreneur and owns a clothing label now, Unico Re’, and he’s doing really well.”

Funderburg is fond of his former mentor, crediting his many successes to Stephens. When they were working together, Funderburg said he wanted to be a fashion designer, and Stephens immediately offered one piece of advice — learn to market yourself.

“Honestly, he was there at every moment. When I needed somebody to talk to, he was there,” Funderburg said. “He’s like a big brother to me.”

Funderburg is now a mentor alongside Stephens at Good Life. He takes the kids with him to his fashion shows while Stephens will take his mentees to work in the Carrier Dome.

“It’s anything to get them off the streets,” Stephens said. “Rather than lose them, we need to educate them.”

Education and music is something Stephens has valued since he starred in childhood plays. The self-described “momma’s boy” says he owes a lot to his mother, Jane Stephens.

Jane, a single mother, raised Stephens in the Bronx during the late 1970s and early ’80s, noting how the music of the era influenced his appreciation for the arts. They did everything together, from visiting the Bronx Zoo to seeing Broadway shows.

“One of the shows I remember that touched him a lot was ‘Serafina!’” Jane said. “He was in tears in the audience. Then the experiences he had in school brought out his love for music and dance even more.”

The proud mom couldn’t contain her excitement when reviewing the awards and achievements her son earned growing up. She said he has always been on the right track in terms of his education, and his entrepreneurial instinct comes naturally to him.

“He says he gets his work ethic from me,” Jane said with laugh. “But I didn’t realize I had Christian impacts on him, too. This is what God wants him to do. Everyone has a reason to be here. And he feels like this is what God wants him to do.”



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ON THE SIDE

# HEALING TOUCH

*Longtime massage therapist pursues public health degree at SU*

By | Mary Beth Horsington  
*Contributing writer*

**Timothy Bryant's tumultuous childhood motivates him to help others affected by trauma**

**T**imothy Bryant was a single father working as a massage therapist and director at a Syracuse spa when he met a client who was a Syracuse University professor. As the professor learned more about Tim, she suggested to him that a degree in public health might feed his passion for caring for people.

"I had obtained my GED having only completed 10th grade, so college was something I thought was beyond my capability," Tim said. "I wasn't confident I'd succeed, but I entered with an open mind, determined to see what would unfold."

What unfolded in Tim's college career would surpass his wildest dreams. Now in his senior year as a part-time SU student majoring in public health, Tim, 47, has made the dean's list every semester. He has traveled abroad — to Europe, Africa, six countries, and a host of cities, towns and rural settlements.

"The opportunity to travel abroad has been a highlight of my academic career," Tim said. "I have been immersed in cultures that I would have no other way of fully understanding or appreciating."

Tim was inducted into Alpha Sigma Lambda, an honor society for non-traditional undergraduate students, in 2011. His crowning achievement came last year, when Tim and three classmates were presented with the Chancellor's Award for Public and Community Service for a smoking cessation program they designed and implemented at the Syracuse Community Health Center.

Tim's college experience was made possible through the Arthur O. Eve Higher Education Opportunity Program, which provides academic and financial support for students whose educational and economic circumstances would prevent them from attending SU. University College has the only HEOP program for part-time students in New York state.

"HEOP not only provides the financial means to be able to return to school, it gives students the necessary tools to acclimate into the academic environment and is a tremendous support system for the entire undergraduate process," Tim said.

Tim's early years did not set the stage for a bright future. Growing up in a tough urban neighborhood in Jersey City, New Jersey, he was twice the victim of violent crime — once at age 9 and again at age 14. This led to recurrent post-traumatic stress disorder, which cut short



> Timothy Bryant is currently studying public health at SU, and he plans to earn a Ph.D. in sociology. | Provided photo

his educational pursuits.

"PTSD wasn't widely understood at the time," Tim said. "I found myself unable to function socially for several years, and as a result I was unable to complete high school."

Tim worked to understand and treat his disorder. This led him to massage therapy, in which he's been certified for more than a decade.

"Part of the work I do is helping individuals heal from grief and trauma through touch therapy," Tim said. "I also do sports-related massage work, injury prevention and healing, and everyday stress relief."

This spring, Tim will do his internship in a study that examines trauma associated with gun violence and gang culture in Syracuse.

He plans to eventually earn a Ph.D. in sociology and hopes for a career in policymaking — "something that will directly impact people and the community," he said.

For now, he's focused on his undergraduate degree.

"My advice to anyone who has the desire to attend SU is take that leap of faith, keep an open mind, and embrace every moment," Tim said.

## CULTURAL CREATIONS

"The opportunity to travel abroad has been a highlight of my academic career. I have been immersed in cultures that I would have no other way of fully understanding or appreciating."

— Timothy Bryant

*Horsington is an employee of the University College of Syracuse University*

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## LINER NOTES

Bobby Green has played on stage with famous musicians such as Frankie Valli and Blues great Lonnie Shields. He has also warmed up the stage for Wilson Pickett.

Green put out three records with the Eldaros:

- “Please Surrender”
- “Baby Child”
- “Rock-A-Bock”

Green was recorded on another song with a group called “Larry Ellis and the Black Hammer.” That song was called “Black Feeling.” Larry is the grandson of national legend Elizabeth “Libba” Cotten (both now deceased), who wrote “Freight Train” — covered by the Grateful Dead.

# GUITAR HERO

*Syracuse native Bobby Green continues to build musical legacy*



> Bobby Green, 78, plays guitar in his house in Cicero. Green often plays gigs in the Syracuse area with his band, Bobby Green & A Cut Above. | Alexandra Hootnick, Staff Photo

By | Reggie Seigler  
*A Friendly Five columnist*

**Even without formal training, Green was determined to learn how to make music**

I was hanging out with my two grandsons, ages 10 and 12, a couple of weeks ago when I ran into DeBorah Little. She was at the South Side Innovation Center preparing to participate in a planning meeting for her family reunion.

Wanting to show my grandsons that I knew someone who was close to someone famous, I introduced them to her and told them about her husband. I was trying to lean on her influence to gain some cool points with my sports-engrossed grandsons. You see, her husband happens to be Floyd Little. You know, one of Syracuse University sports’ famous No. 44s, like Jim Brown, Ernie Davis, Derrick Coleman and Barack Obama. Well, maybe the last guy wasn’t quite an SU sports No. 44, but he does like basketball, and he is the 44th president of the United States. So I just threw him in.

Her cheerful response: “Don’t tell them about my husband. Tell them about my dad.” She didn’t know I was already planning to tell everyone about her dad in my column. The plan was already in place to tell his

story for Black History Month. I didn’t want to let it out then, but I hope she reads this.

DeBorah’s dad is Robert “Bobby” Green. Bobby is a phenomenal talent and a local guitar legend. He was born in Syracuse in 1936. This was before the second Great Migration of African Americans coming from the south and moving north for opportunities. It was also a time before the Civil Rights Movement and Thurgood Marshall’s victory in the United States Supreme Court case of “Brown vs. Board of Education,” which laid the foundation for blacks and whites to receive equal education.

It has been documented, according to the accounts of some older local residents who can remember back that far, that the number of black families in Syracuse then was only a handful, and Bobby’s family — the Kearses-Green family — was one of the largest of them. Bobby remembers going to school at Washington Irving.

“There were two classes at the school for the ‘slow kids,’” he recalled. “I was considered one of the slow kids because I didn’t always catch on to what the teacher was saying as quickly as the other kids. I remember sometimes having to sit in a chair facing the corner wearing a big hat or being sent downstairs to the boiler room to do my work. I would have to do things like write the word ‘who’ 500 times on a piece of paper

before I could come back upstairs.”

He also remembered not being able to go home from school when the other kids went home.

“I’d have to wait until everybody was long gone before I could leave,” he said.

Needless to say, school did not work out very well for Bobby. But around 1949 he found something that did. He was actually known as Robbie Green then. Robbie admired the sounds of the singing groups he would hear back then and began to form his own group.

Some of his first singing groups were the 5 Points, the 4½ Notes and the Harmonettes, which he dissolved because people said it sounded like a girl’s group.

By 1954-1955, things had started to get a little more serious. He had formed a new group called the Eldaros (pronounced el - DARE - ohs).

The group included his uncle, Furman “Duke” Kears. Duke played the guitar and would sometimes leave his guitar hanging around. Robbie began to pick it up, and oftentimes learned a note or two from Duke.

Eventually, though, Robbie and Duke had some differences, and Robbie ended up letting Duke go from the group. That didn’t settle well with Duke, so he raged that Robbie would “never amount to anything on the guitar.”

The statement only added fuel to his fire and passion for music, so Robbie kept on playing.

Robbie never had formal lessons, so he learned to play his guitar by ear through trial, error and instincts. And as time went on, he gained attention in Syracuse’s music scene. The scene was much more alive then in places like the Dinkler, the 800 Club, the Satellite Club, the Embassy and the 320 Club. Robbie’s groups were in high demand and played most of those venues.

Robbie has always had a determined and tenacious spirit. He learned to channel some of that into martial arts. He studied Taekwondo from the same instructor as did another local martial arts legend, Greg Tearney. Greg was married to Robbie’s cousin, Judy, and he and Robbie took instructions together. Robbie managed to raise his skills to the level of a brown belt.

Though that training was many, many years ago, he still believes and uses some of the principles of it. He demonstrated for me a deep breathing exercise that helps with focus. He also showed me a technique used to unleash someone’s hold on you if they were to grab you. The move ended with a backhand blow to the face.

In about the mid-1980s or so, Robbie had a job with Bill Scott Oldsmobile. Bill Scott took a personal interest in Robbie. He recognized Robbie’s intelligence in spite of the fact that Robbie could barely read. He encouraged him to go back to school. Robbie tried it for a while but said that he did not get the diploma.

He does know how to read now. Well kind of. From the way he explained it to me, he doesn’t read in the conventional way.

“The way I learned to read was from memory,” he

said. “Like if you were to take me to Red Lobster and then I saw the sign there that said Red Lobster, I would remember the way that it looks so that no matter where else I saw it, I would know that it said red lobster. I don’t really know how to spell it, but if you wrote it down wrong I’d know that it wasn’t right.”

“I’ve learned a lot of things that way,” he added.

It sounds a little strange, but if you knew him you definitely wouldn’t believe that he has limited reading skills. You certainly wouldn’t think that as a kid he was forced to sit in the corner wearing a dunce hat. In fact, I believe you would think that he’s exceptional.

*“I think music keeps me young.”*  
— Bobby Green

He has supplemented his living by playing the guitar for more than 65 years and has a Syracuse Area Music Award, or SAMMY. He built his home in Cicero and has enjoyed many perks enjoyed by top musicians.

Over the years his name morphed from Robbie to Bobby. It changed when he started playing for “white folks,” he said. “They started asking, ‘Can Bobby come out to play?’” To which his answer would always be “yes.”

Bobby is a widower, now, but was blessed with two loving marriages and more than a dozen children.

Now at 78, he walks with a cane and is slightly bent over, but his wit is very sharp and his virtuosity on guitar hasn’t diminished. He still manages and plays with his band, Bobby Green & A Cut Above.

And he plays every Sunday at Antioch Missionary Baptist Church. He drives himself to all of his gigs and has a girlfriend named Georgiann.

In this age of computers, apps, smartphones, clouds and gigabytes, one might think — given his educational background — that Bobby would be totally lost. But hold on: Bobby hasn’t let the digital age go by without him. He has a Facebook page in which he blogs and uploads his catalog of historical pictures of his life as a musician. He uses the computer and his smartphone, and he can send and receive text messages with the aid of a talk app.

It has been Bobby’s determined spirit that has kept him relevant throughout his life. He was determined not to go through life illiterate, so he figured out a way to read. He was determined to master the guitar, so he used his instincts, and now well into his seventh decade, he’s determined to forge ahead. So he keeps on playing.

“I still love playing, and I don’t want to lose it,” he said. “I think music keeps me young.”

## MAKING CONTACT

**Bobby Green on Facebook:**  
facebook.com/robert.green.3348?fref=ts

Or call: (315) 491-1024

## HAVE A FRIENDLY FIVE SUGGESTION?

Contact Reggie at  
reggie@softspokenband.com  
or (315) 479-9620

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