

the Stand

south side news

www.mysouthsidestand.com

Syracuse, NY

SUMMER 2016

Issue 51

FREE

VOICE OF THE YOUTH

Syracuse teen uses
rap lyrics to advocate
for children's rights

Celebrating freedom

Annual Juneteenth Festival expects record turnout

closing gaps

CSTEP program helps
minority students
achieve science goals

Pull of the streets

Local research identifies it
as a behavioral addiction

LIFE LESSONS IN CHESS

SYRACUSE
JOBS
MATTER

SYRACUSE JOBS PREVIEW



EVENTS | SUMMER

the
Stand

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SPECIAL THANKS THIS MONTH

DEAN LORRAINE BRANHAM,
SHAWNA RABBAS,
DIGITAL DESIGN STUDENTS AT THE
INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY AT
SYRACUSE CENTRAL

CONTACT US

SOUTH SIDE NEWSPAPER PROJECT
(315) 882-1054
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THE STAND IS BASED OUT OF THE
SOUTH SIDE COMMUNICATION CENTER
2331 SOUTH SALINA STREET
SYRACUSE , NY 13205

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BUT RETAINS THE RIGHT TO PUBLISH ONLY
MATERIAL THE STAND DEEMS ACCEPTABLE TO
THE PUBLICATION'S EDITORIAL PURPOSE AND
IN KEEPING WITH COMMUNITY STANDARDS.

What: 44th Annual Teenage Competitive Art
Exhibition

When: Opening Reception: 1 to 3 p.m. Saturday,
May 7; exhibit through May 20

Where: Community Folk Art Center (CFAC), 805
E. Genesee St.

Cost: Free and open to the public

More details: In collaboration with the Syracuse
Chapter of the Links, Inc. CFAC artwork from local
high school students. Gallery hours are 10 a.m.
to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Friday and 11 a.m. to 5
p.m. Saturday

More Info.: Call (315) 442-2230 or visit
communityfolkartcenter.org

What: Rahma Clinic Health and
Wellness Fair

When: 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, May 14

Where: Rahma Health Clinic, 3100 S. Salina St.

Cost: Free to attend

More details: Sponsored in part by a generous
grant from The Gifford Foundation, this health
fair will bring more than 15 health professionals
to the clinic to offer education materials, answer
questions about preventive and integrative medical
care, give away health-related products and provide
free health screenings

More Info.: Call (315) 565-5667 or visit Rahma
Health Clinic page on Facebook

What: Cooking Up Literacy

When: 2 p.m. Friday, May 27
and Wednesday, July 6

Where: Beauchamp Branch Library, 2111 S.
Salina St.

Cost: Free to attend, but space is limited

More details: Learn about nutrition and discover
something new to enjoy at home

To RSVP: Call (315) 435-3395

What: Southwest Showcase Sundays: Sire's Sunday

When: 3 to 7 p.m. Sunday, June 19

Where: Spirit of Jubilee Park, 100 Block of South Ave.

Cost: Free

More details: Live bands and children's activities,
including bounce houses, face painting and free hot
dogs and beverages for children accompanied by
an adult

More Info.: Visit Facebook and search for
Southwest Showcase Sundays

What: Music in McKinley Park

When: 6 to 7 p.m. Wednesday, July 13

Where: McKinley Park, West Newell Street

Cost: Free; parking available near bathhouse

More details: Hosted by The McKinley Park
Supporters, a program of the Southside Interfaith
Community Development Corp., the band concert
will feature the Youth All Star Band. Bring a
lawn chair/blanket; children can play on the
playground.

More Info.: Email aah1102@aol.com

What: How to Draw Cartoons with Paul Merklein

When: 10 a.m. Wednesday, July 20

Where: Southwest Community Center Branch, 401
South Ave.

Cost: Free, but limited to 20 attendees

More details: Cartoonist Paul Merklein will show
young, budding artists how drawing cartoons is
a fun, fast and easy way to express themselves.
Open to ages 12 and older.

More Info.: Call (315) 671-5814

What: Joined Artists, Musicians and Singers, Inc.
(JAMS) Third annual Artists Cookout

When: Noon to 6 p.m. Saturday July 23

Where: Clark Reservation State Park, 6105 E.
Seneca Turnpike, Jamesville

Cost: Free to attend; purchase tickets for food
and beverages

More details: Features live bands such as Mike
and Anjela Lynn and the Talented Ones, Trump
Tight 315 and more to be announced. Sponsored
by CNY Arts, JAMS and The Stand.

More Info.: Call (315) 479-9620

What: 15th annual Mary Nelson Youth Day BBQ

When: 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 20

Where: Corner of South Salina and Wood Avenue

Cost: Free and open to all

More details: Youth parade begins at 11 a.m.
Backpacks filled with school supplies to each
registered youth will be distributed. There will be
live entertainment, informational tables and food.
Volunteers are needed and greatly appreciated.

More Info.: Contact Mary Nelson by emailing
tmarynelsonyou@twcny.rr.com

■ Cover photography by Leonard Adams of Makhai Bailey, a local teen rapper known as
"Truth Speaker, The Voice of the Youth," recording at Freeborn Music Productions

Last year, Syracuse was ranked as top in the nation for concentrated poverty among blacks and Hispanics out of 100 metro areas. Pockets of poverty reside mainly on the South and West sides, along with portions of the city's North Side.

The study, "The Architecture of Segregation," was published last fall by Paul A. Jargowsky, a fellow at The Century Foundation. He identified Syracuse's problem in a study based on nationwide data.

Journalism students from the S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications worked with The Stand this spring and used Jargowsky's report to launch a project examining the state of jobs in Syracuse. Through an online multimedia project at SyracuseJobsMatter.com, students added personal perspectives by talking directly with low-wage workers, job seekers and employed residents who are "just getting by" about the challenges they face finding safe, secure and fulfilling work in the city. Find a preview of the project in this issue of The Stand on Page 10.

The project also covered current policy concerns, such as New York's Fight for \$15 and the protest over the COR Development deal for Syracuse's Inner Harbor. Local community programs that help residents become self-sufficient are also profiled.

When examining where low-income workers and unemployed call home, Jargowsky identified ZIP codes of poverty and emphasized that part of the problem rests with policies in place that lead to segregation, loss of tax dollars, declines in education and increases in violence.

Hope still exists. Examining Jargowsky's study can help educate the city on where to target help and which policies are doing more harm than good. Community leaders are also becoming outspoken on policy choices; they shared their opinions in a roundtable discussion with students in February.

Sharon Owens, CEO of Syracuse Model Neighborhood Facility Inc., believes that to reach a solution, the voices of those in poverty must be heard. "I think some of the strongest voices are people who grew up in poverty and found their way out — and stayed out. What was it in your life that triggered that ... maybe a job ... a two-parent income." Highlights from Owens and other local leaders — as well as from the unemployed and underemployed — can be read and heard online at SyracuseJobsMatter.com.

Ashley Kang



UPCOMING EVENTS

July 16

Annual Photo Walk

When: 10 a.m.
Saturday, July 16

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

Details: Participants will follow a path through the South Side, leaving from the South Side Innovation Center. They will take photos of the neighborhood and neighbors along the way. The event will open with a short lesson by a professional photographer.

After the walk, participants will share their photos with the group and receive feedback.

A limited number of digital cameras are available for loan. To reserve a camera and/or sign up for the Photo Walk, contact Ashley Kang by email before July 6.

More info: Call (315) 882-1054 or email ashley@mysouthsidestand.com



TWO PROJECTS OF THE STAND WIN SYRACUSE PRESS CLUB AWARDS

The Stand's director, Ashley Kang, and photographer Ben Cleeton won second place in the Special Interest category for Human Interest Feature from the Syracuse Press Club on April 30. The award was for the October 2015 feature, "Moving Forward," about former gang members Quante Wright and General Davis.

Also, the in-depth project about fair housing, My Housing Matters, produced in partnership between an Urban Affairs reporting class at the S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications and editors with The Stand, took first place for best multimedia story. Visit MyHousingMatters.com to view the project.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR



Go online to view a letter to the editor by **Bob Dougherty**, a Land Bank

Community Advisory Board member, in response to the April edition's article about the "Land Bank Dispute."

Joshua Walton

*Nominated by John Akins,
Fatherhood Community Health Worker*

By | Ashley Kang
The Stand director

Q: What did it feel like when you became a father?

A: Exciting. During the pregnancy I was in Oneonta Job Corps., but her labor was induced. There was no crazy call: ‘She’s having her baby, hurry!’ So I had time to be there. I was supportive through the labor, but I didn’t know what to say. I didn’t know the pain. The second time, I was there for the entire pregnancy and birth. I handled all the food cravings and needs that came up. I mean, I had to, that’s my lady.

Q: What was it like when you saw your firstborn son for the first time?

A: Amazing. It was like I was looking at a little me — someone I never want to be apart from, because I grew up without my father.

Q: What can you share about your children?

A: Joell, 7, my oldest, looks just like his mother. The two boys have different mothers. Joell is not shy at all, and I’m very shy. He likes to dance and tell jokes and be the center of attention. And his mother is just like me, so we don’t know where he gets that from. He doesn’t even get embarrassed. My newborn, Xylan, looks just like me. Even as a baby, he has my eyes and my eyebrows.

Q: What do you try and instill in your sons?

A: Teach them to do right and be better than you. I try and give my kids the things I wasn’t able to get. Not just the material things, but the love. I’m real big on no material things because those are not important. My mom was great bringing me up and making sure I had what I needed, even nice things, but it wasn’t Air Jordans. It’s about school and being there with them ... teaching them and showing.

Q: Why are fathers important?

A: For a son, I believe a father is important to teach how to be a man. Fathers serve as a model on how to be independent, how to go that extra mile to support your family. My mother played both roles. But oftentimes a male influence is important. Nowadays, I think that male influence is even more important to combat that draw of the street. The excess of crime has a lot to do with young males being out there without a father. The high incarceration rate for our population is alarming. Without a father or role model, influence comes from other males in the streets — that’s just what happens.

Q: As a father, is there anything you do that would surprise people?

A: I think what I don’t do surprises some. It’s not bad to go out and have a good time sometimes, and me being so young, that’s what people expect me to do — but I don’t do that. I put anything aside so I can be there for my sons. I see my oldest every day even though I now live on the East Side, and he stays here on the South Side with my mother who



MEET FATHER JOSHUA: Walton, 26, is raising two sons and dreams of being a basketball coach. | Ashley Kang, Staff Photo

shares custody. I come down here every morning — rain, sleet or snow — and make sure he’s off on the school bus safely. Every day I’m out looking for work, focused on doing what I have to do for my sons.

Q: What’s your opinion about commonly held stereotypes about black fathers?

A: I feel a large amount of fathers who aren’t there make all of us look bad. And I believe that the statistic (meaning number of black fathers who are actively engaged in their children’s lives) is higher than America really thinks. I guess it’s just hard to see it. I have friends, many of us are fathers, and they are there. In my experience, the mother really isn’t. My friends take care of their kids by themselves, basically. They work. And it’s so hard to find a job in Syracuse. It makes us look bad. It’s not like we don’t want to work and we don’t want to provide, it’s that no one is giving us a chance. No one, really. That puts us in a depression mode. Seriously. That’s how I be feeling. I’m so eager (to work). I hate that feeling of not being able to provide. This city needs more jobs.

Q: Any advice for other dads?

A: Stay in their lives and be a good example.

“I try and give my kids the things I wasn’t able to get.”

BACK HOME

Eat To Live grocery store reopens with changes

By | Ari Gilberg
Urban Affairs reporter

Food cooperative returns to South Salina Street with a new business plan, produce selection after being closed for two years

A Syracuse food cooperative held its grand reopening Wednesday, April 20, after a two-year hiatus due to financial constraints, in an attempt to provide healthy and cheap produce to the local community.

Jeremy DeChario, interim general manager of the Eat To Live Food Cooperative, located at 2323 S. Salina St., said he believes the key to making the store successful will be in selling products that people want to buy, not necessarily the products that have the most famous brand or the products a select few consider to be the best.

“I think a lot of folks get into the trap where, ‘Oh, this product is the best,’” DeChario said. “But if nobody is buying it, then what difference does it make? You can’t be in business that way.”

Eat To Live is a community-owned food cooperative whose managers say it is dedicated to bringing healthy and cheap food and household products to the South Side. The food cooperative also hopes to benefit the greater South Side economy through its ownership equity where anyone can become a member and a part owner for \$100, according to its mission statement.

The grand reopening featured a local chef giving a food demo and preparing a healthy meal that can be cooked in just 10 minutes. After preparing the meal of brown rice, zucchini, collard greens, squash and kale, the chef gave plates of free samples to customers.

Joseph Bryant, board president of Eat To Live, said the idea of the food cooperative originated in 2006 when members of the Southside Community Coalition offered fresh produce outside on the streets to residents. The 3,000-square-foot food cooperative opened seven years later, in October 2013, but folded within two months due to financial problems, Bryant said.

Eat To Live now has more money, thanks to a \$10,000 anonymous donation and \$5,000 donations each from The Allyn Foundation, Gifford Foundation and Central New York Community Foundation. Eat To Live has a remodeled business plan and produce selection, and it is well-positioned to succeed, Bryant said.

Brandi Woolridge, the assistant general manager of Eat to Live, said the community has been extremely supportive since the food cooperative first announced it would return.

“To see us coming back, it seems to be inspiring and invigorating the community,” Woolridge said. “And so far, everybody — the community members — that I’ve bumped into or talked to are just excited that it’s here and just looking forward to coming in to shop.”

One customer is Jim Bright, who owns Dunk & Bright, which is within walking distance of Eat To Live. He said he was excited when he heard it was reopening.

“It’s good for the community,” Bright said. “I’m very excited for this, because it will also be convenient. Selfishly, it will be convenient for me to grab fresh produce on the way home.”

*Keep up to date by following on Facebook
Search for Eat To Live Food Cooperative*

SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY



Do you have a high school diploma or GED, but no college?

You may qualify for the Arthur O. Eve Higher Education Opportunity Program (HEOP) for part-time students at Syracuse University.

HEOP helps with:

- » Tuition
- » Books
- » Academic guidance
- » Tutoring

Are you eligible?

Call **315-443-3261** for an appointment, or visit **parttime.syr.edu/heop**.

HEOP and its activities are supported, in whole or in part, by the New York State Education Department.

“This wonderful program benefits low-income students. It gave me the tools to complete my dream of a bachelor’s degree.”

Nancy Legra-Garcia
SU Class of 2015

**GO SU
part time!**

CHESS TOURNEMENTS

Throughout the school year, area schools host chess tournaments, and there is still one more planned for this June

Next tournament set for: Saturday and Sunday, June 4 and 5

Where: Location to be determined, and you can volunteer to host the event at your school

To volunteer as host: Have your school principal or president contact Anton Ninno at (315) 350-1157 or antonninno@yahoo.com

HOW TO SPEND \$2,000 GRANT

Here is the proposed budget for the \$2,000 first-prize grant that was awarded to the Syracuse NY Chess Association in February:

- Instructors (40 hours at \$25/hour): \$1,000
- Books and teaching materials: \$500
- Chess sets and equipment: \$500

OPEN GAME

Chess association wins grant to create more clubs, host workshops



> Shaun Bryant, left, plays chess with Emmanuel “Manny” Hampton during a recent chess club meeting at Southside Academy Charter School. | Ari Gilberg, Staff Photo

By |Ari Gilberg
Urban Affairs reporter

Southside Academy teacher says chess helps kids learn cognitive skills, boosts confidence

A Syracuse middle-school teacher plans to use a \$2,000 grant to help more people develop mental discipline, emotional resilience and strategic planning — all by playing a 1,500-year-old board game: Chess.

Anton Ninno, 64, a computer lab teacher at Southside Academy Charter School and the founder and president of the Syracuse NY Chess Association, said he believes that chess can work as a tool to improve students' thought capacity and intellectual development.

“Every time you sit down and play, it's a lesson,” Ninno said. “You might win. You might lose, but either way it's a lesson.”

Ninno has run the Syracuse NY Chess Association, a group of adult chess players who help schools host tournaments and create chess clubs throughout the Central New York area, since its incorporation one year ago. The association already has received praise and recognition for its work.

In February, Syracuse NY Chess won a \$2,000 first-

prize grant at the annual Salt City DISHES dinner, awarded to the organization that produces the best proposal to better the Syracuse community.

Ninno said he plans to use the money in a variety of ways, including hosting a series of family chess nights, offering instructional chess workshops, helping more city schools start their own chess clubs, creating chess clubs at local community and senior centers, purchasing chess sets for clubs that are just starting, funding more tournaments and hiring instructors to teach students and train teachers.

Along with fellow board member Jon Speed, Ninno attended the Salt City DISHES dinner and treated it as a networking event — not expecting Syracuse NY Chess to actually win.

“We were doing it because, well, this is a way for us to get our message out about Syracuse Chess to about 200 people who might be interesting people to connect with, like networking,” Ninno said. “And then we won.”

During his presentation, Ninno explained the basics of Syracuse NY Chess and how he would allocate the money if awarded the first-prize grant. Speed gave first-hand testimony of the benefits Syracuse NY Chess could provide.

Speed said both of his sons — Charlie, 12, and Jona-

than, 9 — have made great improvements since they first began playing chess. The two focus more intently, use logic and show a greater degree of planning, he said. In addition, he believes chess has helped Jonathan to overcome impediments from dyslexia.

“I can’t really prove it scientifically or anything, but I’ve seen a dramatic improvement in his handwriting ability since he has been playing chess,” Speed said. “I can credit that to the patterns and things that are a part of the game.”

Many students at Southside Academy have seen the benefits chess can provide as well. In addition to his work with Syracuse NY Chess, Ninno has run Southside Academy’s chess club since he was first hired at the school more than a decade ago.

The club, which Ninno said has won nearly 70 trophies from tournaments throughout the years, meets after school every Wednesday for 45 minutes. Ninno’s colleague, Bob Nasiff, a local chess coach, begins each meeting with a brief instructional lesson. Students may then play as many matches as they want.

Nasiff, a national chess master who is considered one of the United States’ top players, compares practicing chess to strengthening the mind — something he said

can benefit people of all ages.

“Just like you’ve got to work out physically to stay in shape, you’ve got to work out mentally to stay in shape,” Nasiff said. “And I’ve always felt that chess is a sport of the mind. It keeps you thinking in all different ways when you’re playing a game of chess.”

Participating students agree. Shaquan Thompson, a seventh-grader, has been a member of the chess club for only a few weeks, but said he already has learned valuable lessons from Ninno and Nasiff on improving his game and keeping his composure under pressure.

“They have been really helpful and showed us some of the basics and what to do in certain situations,” Thompson said. “They showed us that in chess we shouldn’t be nervous; we should think about everything before we act.”

Ninno said he believes that one of the reasons chess is so special is that it doesn’t restrict anyone from participating. Anyone can play.

“One of the interesting things about chess is, unlike sports, chess doesn’t care how big you are,” Ninno said. “It doesn’t care what color you are. It doesn’t care what religion you are. It doesn’t care whether you are a boy or a girl. Or how much money you have in your pocket. It’s just a game.”

CHESS CLASS

A South Side center is now offering a chess program that is open for people of all ages to learn and play the game

When: 6:30 p.m.
Tuesdays

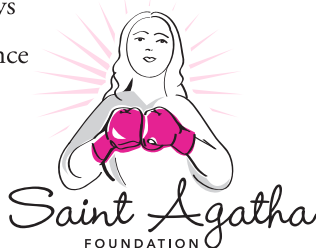
Where: Mary Nelson Youth Center, 2849 S. Salina St.

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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HIGHER EDUCATION

Alumni from OCC's CSTEP program have graduated and transferred to institutions all over the United States, or secured a job in various fields, including:

Binghamton University

Clarkson University

Cornell University

Embry-Riddle
Aeronautical University

General Motors

Massachusetts
Institute of Technology

Morehouse College

Rochester Institute of
Technology

SUNY College of
Environmental Science
and Forestry

SUNY Oswego

SUNY Upstate Medical
University

Syracuse Healthy Start

Syracuse University

University of Buffalo

University of Maryland,
Baltimore County

University of Texas

LIFTOFF TO SUCCESS

Science program at OCC helps underrepresented students



> CSTEP students Romeo Kpolo, Dewayne Garner Jr., Javar Carter, Krystina Lowe-Howard and Krista Pride pose in front of Lake George. Students from across New York state gather at The Sagamore Resort on Lake George for the CSTEP conference each year. | Photo Provided

By | Ashley McBride
Staff reporter

OCC's Collegiate Science and Technology Entry Program sets students on the right path

Strides are being made toward increasing the representation of minority groups in the science, technology, engineering and mathematics fields — through Onondaga Community College's Collegiate Science and Technology Entry Program.

Known as CSTEP, the program was established to provide support for individuals from underrepresented groups. It helps more than 100 students each year with programming and counseling services in the STEM field.

Drake Harrison, who has been the director of the program since 2007, said that when he became director, he wanted to make significant changes to how it operated.

"When I first took over the program, the program existed. In other words, there were students who participated, but it had very little visibility," Harrison said. "I wanted to make the program something that students want to be proud of."

He said he encouraged the counselors to really get to know their students and their students' aspirations, and

enable them to achieve them. Instead of the counselors simply prescribing a generic course map for a specific major, Harrison wanted them to determine which classes would be most beneficial for a student to take if the student wanted to transfer credits to another institution.

Natalia Montilla, a first-year student at OCC, graduated last May from Nottingham High School. She said what benefits her the most about CSTEP is the connections she makes with students who have similar goals.

Last year, Montilla and her peers attended a conference for the Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation, known as LSAMP, where she met minority students from all over the United States with career aspirations in the STEM field.

One of the things that Montilla said stands out about CSTEP is the close-knit community.

"The CSTEP organization is like a big family," Montilla said. "That's the kind of environment that it gives off, from the faculty to the students and the events they provide."

Vince Hopkins, a math and science major, agreed. He stops by the office often, even when he doesn't need help with anything, just to say hi. Two years ago, Hopkins arrived in Syracuse from the Netherlands to study adolescent education. He still wants to be a teacher, but



> Dr. Robert Osgood, an associate professor of biomedical science from Rochester Institute of Technology, teaches a microbiology power lab for OCC CSTEP students. | Photo Provided

he is going a different route. Hopkins eventually wants to transfer to Binghamton University to earn a bachelor's degree in biology and a master's degree in education.

"I want to be well-rounded because I know how bad it is in high schools and colleges," Hopkins said.

Meggy Young, a counselor for the program, said one of the more difficult aspects of working with students is that they often have other responsibilities that can take their focus away from school.

"Sometimes you have to check in with their personal life and they're willing to share with me," Young said. "The beauty of the counselor is that I'm not seeing them for just one semester, I see them until they graduate. So we have a relationship."

The program accepts students year-round, but applicants must have a 2.5 GPA, and they must be part of a historically underrepresented group or be financially disadvantaged. If a student falls into other categories but doesn't have the required GPA, the student can receive services but cannot attend programs, Harrison said.

"It gives the students an opportunity to see what we do," he said.

The program is publicized through social media, posters on campus and by targeting certain students, but the best exposure is from other students, Harrison said.

Success is measured not by retention, he said, but by the students who transfer to a four-year institution or secure employment. The CSTEP office prepares students for their graduation from OCC by providing academic advising, tutoring, professional development and by encouraging students to complete research and internship opportunities.

This year, the program has 20 students conducting research over the summer, which Harrison said is the



> Vincent Hopkins and Josephus Parkinson visited Brookhaven National Laboratory on Long Island. Parkinson completed a short course there during the winter. | Photo Provided

largest group ever. In addition, five CSTEP students will participate in the NASA New York Space Grant program at Cornell University. They'll receive scholarships and mentorship while completing an internship over summer.

Young said the best part of her job is being involved with students from the time they start to when they graduate. One of the first things she does in a meeting with newly accepted students is draw a timeline on a piece of paper with "100" labeled on one end. She asks them where they are now and what they want to accomplish if they were to live to be 100 years old. From the students' answers, she helps them to create short-term, mid-term and long-term goals.

"I'm trying to make them dream vivid dreams," Young said. "My goal is to invite them in."

URBAN BIRDS

Celebrate urban birds at an upcoming event.

When: 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Saturday, May 21

Where: Southside Academy Charter School, 2200 Onondaga Creek Blvd.

Details: Speakers from Rosamond Gifford Zoo and Montezuma Audubon Center will teach about urban wildlife. Attendees can build a birdhouse and learn how to observe city birds to help the Cornell Lab of Ornithology.

More Info.: Call the school at (315) 476-3019 or email Anton Ninno at 44.ninno@nhaschools.com

POVERTY DEFINED

Concentrated poverty is defined as census tracts where more than 40 percent of households live below the federal poverty threshold; in late 2013, that figure was \$23,000 per year for a family of four.

KEY STUDY FINDINGS

- The number of people living in high-poverty ghettos, barrios, and slums has nearly doubled since 2000, rising from 7.2 million to 13.8 million.
- Poverty became more concentrated — more than one in four of the black poor and nearly one in six of the Hispanic poor lives in a neighborhood of extreme poverty, compared to one in 13 white poor.
- To make matters worse, poor children are more likely to reside in high-poverty neighborhoods than poor adults.
- The fastest growth in black concentration of poverty since 2000 was not in the largest cities, but in metropolitan areas with 500,000 to 1 million persons.

— Source: “The Architecture of Segregation: Civil Unrest, the Concentration of Poverty, and Public Policy,” a report by Paul Jargowsky of The Century Foundation

LOCAL JOBS MATTER

Syracuse community works to rid itself of No. 1 poverty ranking



> This member of the Syracuse community participates in a protest at the Syracuse Inner Harbor on Feb. 18. The Urban Jobs Task Force initiated the monthly protests in February to keep jobs local. | Danielle Gehman, Staff Photo

By | Ashley Kang
The Stand director

Syracuse Jobs Matter website gives voice to employment issues of concentrated poverty

Syracuse found national attention last year after a report from The Century Foundation tracking national data identified our city as No. 1 in the nation for concentrated poverty among blacks and Hispanics.

Paul Jargowsky, a professor of public policy at Rutgers University and author of the report — “The Architecture of Segregation” — found that of the 100 largest metropolitan areas in the country, 65.2 percent of the black poor in Syracuse lived in high-poverty neighborhoods; not far behind is the population of Hispanic poor at 62.2 percent.

In Syracuse, the jarring statistics laid out in Jargowsky’s report have led to coalitions of organizations and community members actively seeking to rid Syracuse of this ranking.

A new anti-poverty group — Greater Syracuse HOPE (Healing, Opportunity, Prosperity and Empowerment) — was created in January to address the issue. The group recently received a \$70,000 Community Foundation grant to support a two-year salary for a director of program development to further its initiative based on promised

funding from New York state.

Greater Syracuse HOPE will pursue policy changes and take steps to combat the city’s poverty, according to Sharon Owens, CEO of Syracuse Model Neighborhood Facility, Inc. and the co-chair of Greater Syracuse HOPE’s data/policy and marketing committee. The group’s belief is that those directly affected by the problem are best suited to lend their insight to find a solution. So to represent those residents, Greater Syracuse HOPE is reaching out to hear their perspectives.

In a similar vein, our focus as journalists is to put a face to an issue. This allows complex and oftentimes overwhelming issues to become real and relatable. To hear about the challenges residents face in finding employment, we asked job seekers directly.

Their experiences in seeking jobs, working low-wage positions and even working their way up to sustainable employment are shared in a special in-depth project at SyracuseJobsMatter.com.

The project began in spring with seven students in an advanced editing class at the S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications. The students sought to tell personal stories and to cover current issues, such as the Fight for \$15 campaign and concerns over the Syracuse Inner Harbor development tax deal. The Urban Jobs Task Force, a community group that promotes job creation in the inner city, is protesting the deal because it says that

Hear these community voices ... and more



ISHANNA MCDONNELL, newly hired, shares the difficulty of finding a living-wage job while maintaining her responsibilities as a mother of four. | Shelly Seidemann, Staff Photo



LUIS PEREZ, an immigrant from Cuba, is learning English but describes how language is a barrier for him to secure a job in Syracuse — even though he has an accounting degree. | Maya Parthasarathy, Staff Photo



NADONTE JONES, the only African-American master plumber in Syracuse, explains why his criminal record has never kept him from finding work. | Danielle Gehman, Staff Photo



FRANCINE WHITMAN, a YWCA administrative assistant, tells her story of how she has overcome homelessness, addiction and domestic violence to gain employment and reunite with her son. | Maya Parthasarathy, Staff Photo

even while including \$44 million in tax exemptions, the deal gives no confirmation that jobs and contracts will go to city residents. The group argues that with such a lucrative tax deal, a percentage of jobs should be reserved for city contractors and residents.

The Jargowsky report also states: “If we are serious about breaking down spatial inequality, we have to overcome our political gridlock and chart a new course toward a more geographically inclusive society.”

What will lead to change in Syracuse?

Community action leaders say the answer is more jobs for those now living in concentrated poverty.

Our effort with Syracuse Jobs Matter was to add to the discussion by sharing personal stories of the unemployed and underemployed, putting their experiences into context of the city’s No. 1 ranking for concentrated poverty.

Syracuse Jobs Matter also shares a comprehensive list of resources available in the city for job seekers.

SOCIAL MEDIA



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Syracuse Jobs Matter



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resource list: Email
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ON THE SIDE

PLANNING WORKSHOPS

Each workshop serves a different purpose:

Workshop 1 — May 30

What is “working” and what is “not working” on the South Side

Workshop 2 — June 27

Goals and objectives for the South Side’s future

Workshop 3 — July 25

How to achieve the desired future for the South Side

Time: Each workshop runs from 6 to 8 p.m.

Location: South Side Innovation Center, 2610 S. Salina St.

MONTHLY TNT MEETINGS

Southside TNT general meetings are held at 6 p.m. the first Monday of every month at the South Side Innovation Center, 2610 S. Salina St.

For more on TNT and the **Five-Year Neighborhood Plan Process**, visit syrgov.net/Home_Southside.aspx

To take the **Neighborhood Survey**, visit syrgov.net/TNT/NeighborhoodSurvey/

CREATE A VISION

South Side neighborhood group invites you to be involved in our future

By | Camille Coakley
Guest columnist

Crafting a five-year plan will revitalize the South Side for businesses and residents

Back in 1999, the city of Syracuse established Tomorrow’s Neighborhoods Today, known as TNT, to allow more public input to the elected representatives of city government. Eight Neighborhood Planning Councils were formed that corresponded to the city’s eight planning areas and were named Downtown, Westside, Southside, Valley, Eastside, Eastwood, Northside and Lakefront.

The mission of TNT is to create a comprehensive process for involving all neighborhood residents, businesses and organizations in planning for their neighborhoods that identifies and builds upon community assets and helps direct the city’s resources into priority areas in the most cost-effective way.

One of the main functions of each TNT Neighborhood Planning Council is to create an asset-driven, continuous five-year plan that would include a comprehensive vision for the diverse neighborhoods within the area, five-year goals and objectives, prioritized action plans, resource requests, budgets, recommendations to operating city departments and timelines for completion. Each of the city’s operating departments takes these plans into consideration in the creation of annual and capital work plans and budgets.

Although some believe these plans just collect dust, many neighborhoods are now updating their plans and crossing things off that were accomplished as a result of their long-term planning. Unfortunately, that’s not the case for the South Side. Ours is the only neighborhood-based planning council that does not have a five-year neighborhood plan on record.

Each community with a plan has experienced a noticeable improvement. Now it’s time for the South Side to catch up.

The Southside TNT is calling on all of its residents, property owners, business owners, area employees, neighborhood organizations, social service agencies, faith-based organizations, schools and governmental operating units to participate in the process of creating a five-year neighborhood plan.

The purpose of this document is to act as a citizen-driven neighborhood action plan. This plan will serve as an advisory document for city of Syracuse staff and elected officials in their efforts to help the citizens of the



> South Side residents attend a TNT meeting held last year with a guest from CENTRO at the South Side Innovation Center. | File Photo

South Side achieve their community goals and to mobilize the community to take action through grassroots initiatives.

The process for the Southside TNT Five-Year Neighborhood Plan begins with the TNT Southside Neighborhood Survey, followed by three planning workshops. The Neighborhood Survey is available through TNT’s website and will provide a sense of the neighborhood’s feelings and attitudes.

The planning workshops will analyze the conditions of the neighborhood, identify our assets and challenges and then provide goals and recommendations — followed by an action plan. These workshops are designed to bring together members of the community to assess physical, economic, social and perceptual conditions, and to create a shared vision for the entire South Side.

We invite you to join the planning process. A new TNT coordinator and a recently formed citywide planning and zoning committee has been established to support and ensure TNT sectors have the capacity and ability to uphold their duties to keep city officials informed as to the needs of the neighborhoods that make up the city.

Together we can create the neighborhood we desire and become proactive instead of reactive to what happens on the South Side.

I hope we can count on you. Things get solved if you get involved.

Camille Coakley is an active participant in TNT Area 3 Planning Council — South Side — and is director of Real Estate and Development at APD Solutions



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Street Addiction Diagnosed

> Timothy “Noble” Jennings-Bey, director of the Trauma Response Team, first approached addiction experts with his theory on street addiction in 2008. He marches down Hudson Street on April 21 with Lepa Jones, president of Mothers Against Gun Violence, in protest of violence in the community. | Ashley McBride, Staff Photo

By | Ashley Kang
The Stand director

Local ‘groundbreaking’ study reveals that allure of the street mirrors other behavioral addictions

“The hardest part of my job is hearing the mother’s scream after a homicide.”

Those are the words of Timothy “Noble” Jennings-Bey, director of the Trauma Response Team, whose job is to respond to neighborhood killings and provide help to victim’s families.

“I’m in the business of trying to help people heal and deal with the ghosts,” he explains.

CONFRONTING GHOSTS

In Jennings-Bey’s more than decade working on violence prevention, he’s seen many young men die. He’s seen even more become intoxicated by the street — becoming hard-wired for deviance and showing signs of withdrawal when out of the action. For several years, he’s analyzed the underlying factors that sway these young men to engage in destructive, criminal and violent behav-

ior. He first connected street life to addiction during a class focused on signs of alcohol abuse. He saw the exact behaviors described in his textbook as he saw in the men he encountered with the Trauma Response Team.

“I didn’t create anything new,” he said of his theory on street addiction. “I just diagnosed it.”

After a presentation on his model last year, a parent thanked him, telling him she would never have looked at her child as having a disease related to the streets.

“She thought something was wrong with her and the way she was parenting,” he said. “So there was joy in that for me because I gave a family comfort, at least psychologically. Now the steps they take after that are up to her and her family but at least she knows there is nothing wrong with her son. He’s not a bad person. He’s not a criminal. He just has an addiction that he has to work through.”

In 2008, Jennings-Bey shared his theory with experts at Syracuse University’s David B. Falk College of Sport and Human Dynamics, partnered with a team there and then co-authored a paper on his hypothesis. Within the past year, he has launched a nonprofit — The Street

Addiction Institute, Inc. (SAII) — to start to implement his model for recovery. His strategy with SAII is to address the underlying trauma and show SAII members a different way of thinking. He not only wants to prevent the “ghosts” but also the recidivism rate and traumatic stress accumulating in the neighborhood.

A research team known as the Syracuse Neighborhood Violence Research Network, which includes the collaborative team that published the street addiction paper, is also investigating the psychological trauma caused by neighborhood violence, noting for every individual who is physically injured, 200 others are affected. While these others may have no external injuries, developing research reports they may have mental trauma similar to veterans or current civil war refugees suffering from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, or PTSD.

“Post means that it’s stopped,” Jennings-Bey interjects, noting the one major difference. “With us, it never stops. It’s ongoing. The secondary victims ... the ones outside the yellow tape, continue to carry the psychological trauma with them.”

WHAT THE PAPER SAYS

His 2014 study, “Street Addiction: A Proposed Theoretical Model for Understanding the Draw of Street Life and Gang Activity,” defines street addiction as both a physical and psychological need for action with a heightened response to threats or triggers, which could be hearing a gunshot to a perceived verbal threat.

One study participant described it as: “The sight, the smell, the feel, well the memory of how a gun feels in my hands ... I mean I’m done with it, but damn there’s a longing there. Bullets, beautiful ... tarnished casings .. damn I need a piece. But I resist. I will resist. I have resisted.”

The collaborative paper was published in the 2014 “Journal of Addiction Research and Theory,” after two failed attempts with other journals. Although it is not uncommon for research articles to be declined for one reason or another, acceptance of this theory was especially challenging. “Within the behavioral addictions field, our theory pushed the envelope,” said Dessa Bergen-Cico, lead author on the paper and a professor at SU’s Falk College with expertise on addiction, PTSD and other traumas. “Even when we first started this work, the concept of behavioral addictions was not yet accepted.”

The first submission went out in 2010. “We noted the reviewers’ feedback and expanded the study before resubmitting to the ‘Journal of Behavioral Addictions,’” Bergen-Cico said, noting that the journal itself did not

even exist until 2012.

While behavioral addictions, such as substance abuse and gambling, are well-documented now, studies on the behavior of gang activity through the framework of

**“When I hear gunshots I run —
run toward the sound of where
they’re coming from. I want in ...
I want to see what’s going on.
It’s like someone tripped a
switch in my brain.”**

— Study Participant

addiction is scarce. The authors report that this paper is the first published work on the theory.

For the paper, Jennings-Bey and community violence and outreach worker Arnett Haygood-El used their established trust in the community to interview a dozen men with histories of gang affiliation and street crime, who anonymously shared their perspectives.

“The study would absolutely not have been possible without them,” said Bergen-Cico, about the pair’s role. “A study like this takes a tremendous amount of trust between the interviewer and the subject, so having those interviews conducted by Noble and Arnett, allowed for (greater insight). Something I would not have been able to achieve.”

Haygood-El and Jennings-Bey both grew up on the South Side and shared similar life experiences as those they interviewed. Haygood-El related because years ago he led that same lifestyle. He dropped out of school at age 15 and says he ran his own crew by 19. By 25, he had three children, had been shot five times and served time for gun possession. Now at 47, he is the public relations specialist for the Trauma Response Team and president of the SAII.

He said for almost a decade he and Jennings-Bey have been tossing around this idea of street addiction and are now working for grants to expand on what they learned through their research. “College was my rehab,” he said about starting at Fredonia State University at age 28. “I started having visions of my death, and it affected my health. I had to do something to make a change. We hope the SAII can help guide these young men sooner.”

Their study determined that with most addictions there is a history of trauma and suffering, resulting in people acting out as a way to handle the buildup of stress. The study showed that the experiences described by inter-

ADDICTION DEFINED

Street Addiction is a term to describe the psychological and physical drive for action, coupled with hyper-vigilance for one’s own safety that anyone who lives the day-to-day life of street-level violence faces.

Is reinforced by:

- Adrenaline rush of street-level excitement
- Bonding with others involved in street activity



Shared Characteristics:

Local research showed street addiction shared gambling behavior

- Tolerance or progression
- Loss of control
- Urge, craving or drive to stay in action
- Withdrawal
- Used to escape problems
- Lying to conceal behavior
- Experiencing negative consequences, yet continuing despite losses

Some **Recognized Behavioral Addictions:** Gambling, sex addiction, shopping, eating and Internet addictions

— Source: The 2014 “Street Addiction” study

TRAUMA RESPONSE

Trauma Response Team

- Established in 2010 with the understanding that for each neighborhood murder, an estimated 200 people are affected
- Run by Timothy “Noble” Jennings-Bey, with additional volunteers serving as team members
- Two full-time and three part-time employees, with nearly 40 volunteers
- In an agreement with the United Way, the team is funded by the city of Syracuse
- Team members arrive at crime scenes and hospitals to provide psychological first-aid to victims’ families and to help calm the situation

— Source: 2015 Trauma Response Paper by the research team

viewees actually mirrored the characteristics of gambling as defined in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM-V).

Diane Lyden Murphy, dean of Falk College, described the paper as groundbreaking research during a roundtable discussion held April 11 by the Syracuse Neighborhood Violence Research Network. “To get this into the DMS-V as a classified behavioral addiction, what would that do? We would take the lead in reconceptualizing this.”

Discussion continued that morning with guests including Chief of Police Frank Fowler of the Syracuse Police Department and Onondaga County Health Commissioner Dr. Indu Gupta. The consensus was that if street addiction received recognition, it would change the way professionals approach treatment and help those working with youth be trained to identify and better handle the effects of traumatic stress.

“Once you put addiction on the table with recovery from the streets, blend it and present the package, it’s that ah-ha moment,” Jennings-Bey said of each interviewee’s reaction. “It’s that through line of everybody’s experience. They would say, ‘yeah, I feel the same; I just didn’t know what it was.’ They didn’t know what to call it.”

NEXT STEPS

“Our aim with the study was to really change the response to people stuck in these cycles,” Bergen-Cico

said. “Rather than saying, here’s bad people doing bad things and we need to get them to stop. Simply saying lock them up, does nothing to address that behavior.”

Current solutions, such as school suspensions, extending time on sentences and/or probation, are punishment-oriented only. Responding in this way without addressing the underlying behavior issues, she believes, is not productive.

According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, nationally 55 percent of inmates will be re-incarcerated, with three-quarters rearrested within five years of their release. “So what we’re currently doing is not working,” she said.

Her ideal audience for the study is social workers, probation officers and people who work with adolescents in juvenile centers — even teachers. The goal isn’t necessarily to provide a new diagnosis to be treated medically,

but to inform new ways to work with such individuals through an addiction-informed process rather than focusing solely on punishment.

Recently a \$15,500 grant from the CNY Community Foundation went toward two training sessions to help train the trainers on how professionals can better counsel inner-city residents.

“Remedies for violence currently are focused on the perpetrators,” said Sandra Lane, another co-author of the paper and professor of public health at SU. “Noble and Arnett’s approach is different in this way.”

RECOVERY MODEL

Next steps are for SAIL to recruit individuals and families with whom to start working. Jennings-Bey and Arnett will begin recruitment based on their already established relationships in the community. Jennings-Bey reports SAIL is in stage two of launching, recently completing the business nitty gritty. In mid-April, an office

was opened in Peck Hall, a family counseling facility run by SU, which serves as a neutral location for all parties. The center resides in an academic building set off campus and on the edge of downtown.

Jennings-Bey also hopes to partner with the courts to take in offenders himself rather than have them immediately incarcerated.

“I hope that they have enough faith

in my track record and my relationship with SU to give us those young people first and let us take them through a curriculum,” Jennings-Bey said. “I’m very confident that we can cut back on the recidivism rate, the number of gunshots and the exposure to the whole street/gang culture.”

In 2015, the Syracuse Police Department reported 142 shooting victims, according to data gathered by the Gun Involved Violence Elimination (GIVE) Initiative, which tracks crime, arrest and firearm activity for 20 New York state police departments. GIVE also notes 16 individuals were killed by gun violence last year, compared with 14 the previous year.

A long-term goal is to create a respite house for those injured in community violence. Current research by the team discovered a pattern in neighborhood violence where the names of reported gunshot victims would

“It’s a cyclone of jealousy, envy, drugs and pursuit of women. There’s no top and no bottom, no end and no beginning, it just keeps spinning faster and faster in a frenzy and after a while nothing shocks you, nothing is too much.”

— Study Participant



Keep up to date by following **Street Addiction Institute, Inc.** on Facebook



> Arnett Haygood-El, 47, president of Street Addiction Institute, Inc., stands with Timothy "Noble" Jennings-Bey, 42, the institute's founder, outside Peck Hall, which houses the SAIL's new office space. | Ashley Kang, Staff Photo

reappear months later, this time as a shooter. The team determined this by studying neighborhood violence based on public reports dating back to 1995.

Analysis tracking the offenses noted two key findings. First, the neighborhood violence was separate from any reported drug dealings. Second, the names of gunshot victims returned to the police blotter as perpetrators of gun violence. The team identified this as a repetitive pattern and suggested addressing it as a public health crisis. Simply patching up physical wounds or filing criminal charges does not prevent the spread of retaliation shootings.

"We approach this like any communicable disease," explained professor Lane. "We know that a communicable disease spreads from one individual to another and the strategy is to prevent the spread. Think of it like Ebola."

A communicable disease affects the poor and marginalized most, and strategies to control these diseases are greatly affected by environmental conditions. Many can be prevented with simple interventions if public health workers act efficiently and effectively. But trying to consider someone to be at risk to be shot or act as a shooter is a very unorthodox view. Yet this is the strategy the Syracuse Neighborhood Violence Research Network is pursuing.

Jennings-Bey believes if this pattern of neighborhood feuding can be interrupted, retaliation of violence by shooting victims will drop. His strategy, after bandaging the gunshot wound, would be to send the victim to his respite center, to prevent the likely future shooting.

He says such a center will create a safe place by removing the individuals from their environment and immersing them in the SAIL program.

"We as a city and county spend a lot of money on gunshot injuries," Jennings-Bey said. "So I look at this as a public health issue, affecting the entire community."

Haygood-El, who was shot five times in the chest and abdomen at the age of 24 because of a dispute in the streets, says he required emergency surgery and an 18-month hospital stay. By age 18, he says he was addicted to the streets and in trouble with the law a number of times because of guns.

His final hospital bill was \$65,000, but he says he paid nothing. "Medicaid took care of that. At that time, I was uninsured. I was running the streets, living with girlfriends. I had no money."

His bill fell on the taxpayers, as do many others since the majority of gunshot victims are uninsured.

During the April 11 presentation, the team shared the estimated cost they determined based on figures reported by the Syracuse Police Department. Their analysis, unlike data compiled in the GIVE report, excludes domestic disputes, focusing instead on what they deem community violence. This is an effort to find patterns to fit their public health analysis. In a paper currently under review, they reported that, based on data from 2006 to 2008, the emergency medical care for each gunshot victim totaled \$28,510. Multiplying the estimated cost of each emergency care with the number of victims, which they identified as an instance of community violence, suggests that the total annual price tag for Syracuse is more than \$2.5 million.

Instead of using those tax dollars to treat medical traumas, the research team wonders what could happen if those millions were funneled to combat the path that led individuals to neighborhood violence. Jennings-Bey's nonprofit hopes to disrupt this cycle, with the end goal of cutting Syracuse's gun violence in half within 10 years.

"The addictive pull of the streets began when I would see dudes fresh and fly in the neighborhood and it drew me in. I wonder how many years I wasted scheming and planning. You know it didn't even stop when I was locked up. I spent the first half of my sentence planning scams for when I'd get out."

— Study Participant

FREE SUPPORT

Therapy services are offered at no cost to individuals, couples and families by Syracuse University's Couple and Family Therapy Center.

Hours: 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.
Monday through Thursday
and 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Fridays; closed for lunch
from noon to 1 p.m. daily

Where: Peck Hall, 601 E. Genesee St.

Details: Graduate students in the Marriage and Family Therapy Department under the guidance of licensed clinical supervisors provide therapy

For an intake appointment:
Call (315) 443-3023

BY THE NUMBERS

Last year the center:

- Saw 600 people
- Oversaw 370 cases
- Held 7,000 appointments

— Source: Tracey Reichert Schimpff, director of Clinical Services at SU's Department of Marriage and Family Therapy

HEALTHY PARTNERS

Healthy Neighbors has initiated partnerships in the community.

Community Garden: The first program implemented by Healthy Neighbors was a community garden in Pioneer Homes. Because of a lack of access to quality produce at nearby grocery stores, facilitators decided that a garden would be the best way to help residents learn about nutrition and health.

She Matters: Funded by a grant from Susan G. Komen for the Cure foundation, resident health advocates receive training to educate their neighbors on the importance of breast health and facilitate mammogram screenings for women older than 40 in Pioneer Homes.

WALK FOR HEALTH

Healthy Neighbors partnership encourages active lifestyles for seniors



> From left, Maxine Bando walks with Frances Ogilvie and Shelia Kithcart during a lap around the plaza level of the Toomey Abbott Towers on April 8. | Ashley McBride, Staff Photo

By | Ashley McBride
Staff reporter

The partnership encourages proper exercise, diet and a sense of community among seniors

Residents of Toomey Abbott Towers are taking steps toward a healthier lifestyle.

The Healthy Neighbors partnership between Syracuse Housing Authority and SUNY Upstate Medical University has launched a new walking program at the senior living facility.

The partnership began in 2011 as a way for Upstate to leverage its resources in the underserved surrounding areas to address health disparities between those communities and others. The program started with a community garden in the Pioneer Homes community and has since expanded to Toomey Abbott and Almus Olver towers. Through the partnership, residents become resident health advocates and develop programs for their community that address health issues.

Because Toomey Abbott is a senior living facility, the

resident health advocates there faced a special challenge when designing their program.

“One barrier that we face with a lot of residents is that they have different health complications,” said Aldrine Ashong-Katai, project support specialist at Upstate. “So when it comes to encouraging them to exercise, it’s something that they definitely want to be a part of, but sometimes there are limitations.

Shelia Kithcart, one of three resident health advocates there, said they distributed a survey to the residents to determine what kind of program would be most beneficial, and they received positive response for a walking program.

On Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, residents complete laps around the second floor of Toomey Abbott and record their distances. People using walkers and wheelchairs participate as well.

“We don’t push them too hard because it’s not about pushing you to see how far you can go,” Kithcart said. “You do it at your own pace.”

When the weather warms up, Kithcart said they’ll

go outside and try to walk a mile.

As resident health advocates, Kithcart, Janet Bacon and Ron Jackson completed a 10-week training process to learn about various health topics. Among them: nutrition, diabetes and obesity. After the training, resident health advocates enter the internship portion, where they are responsible for developing programs that fit their residential community.

Ashong-Katai said that one of the reasons for implementing resident health advocates instead of using Upstate employees is to ensure a level of trust between residents. The resident health advocates also receive a stipend from the Gifford Foundation for the program.

The program, which began in February, is in its early stages. The resident health advocates at Toomey Abbott are still working out details with facilitators from the Syracuse Housing Authority and Upstate. Ashong-Katai said they are working to incorporate medical residents into the program to take vital signs for Toomey Abbott residents, giving an indication of their fitness.

Kithcart added that they eventually want to take the residents to a gym and do simple workouts. For now, they focus on walking and making gradual changes to their diets. Kithcart said that she encourages the residents to give up one unhealthy aspect of their diets for 30 days, like soda or junk food.

Richard Collins, a resident at Toomey Abbott, said

he's seen results from walking and changing his eating habits.

"I've been drinking lots of water, eating healthy and that's been working," he said. "People come up to me and say, 'you're looking really good.'"

Collins sticks to seven laps each day, which is close to half a mile. On the second floor of Toomey Abbott hangs a poster-sized sheet of paper with all the participants' names listed, along with the laps they completed on each date. Maxine Bando, another resident of Toomey Abbott, walks each of the three days of the program.

"I like the walking program, at my age it helps you lose weight," she said. "I wish more people would participate."

Kithcart said about a dozen people participate each day, but the number dips on Fridays. Some residents have weight-loss goals, but Kithcart said she wants them to focus on maintaining an active lifestyle.

"If we can encourage people to exercise, eat right and lose some weight, it wasn't in vain," she said.

Ashong-Katai said the program works two-fold: In addition to residents receiving health education, they're also bonding with their neighbors.

"It builds a sense of community and camaraderie amongst residents," he said. "They're all part of an initiative. They're all walking, they're engaged and get to know one another."

DISABILITY AWARENESS

What: The 26th Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act

When: 9 a.m. to noon Tuesday, July 26

Where: Atrium at City Hall Commons, 201 E. Washington St.

Details: Event will promote awareness about cross-disability rights and issues. This year's theme is voting and empowering people with disabilities to participate in democracy.

More Info.: Contact Beata at (315) 671-2929 or Sally at (315) 410-3370

GET MOVIN' ACTIVITIES AT THE LIBRARY

- **Yoga** with Vyana Yoga — 2 p.m. Tuesday, June 28. Learn some basic yoga poses and moves in this beginner's class
- **Gymnastics** with West Side Gymnastics School — 2 p.m. Tuesday, July 5. Basic tumbling skills just for kids — space is limited so call the library to register
- **Nia** with Patricia Phillips — 2 p.m. Tuesday, July 12. No-impact and adaptable, Nia is a cardio-dance for all ages
- **Tai Chi** demonstration with Syracuse Taoist Tai Chi Society — 2 p.m. Friday, July 15. Discover the health benefits of the mind and body in this meditative martial art
- **Hula-Hoop** with Go Figure Gym — 2 p.m. Tuesday, July 19. Can you keep the hoop going? Swing your hips and find out!
- **Hip-Hop Dance Class** with Syracuse School of Dance — 2 p.m. Tuesday, July 26. An easy intro to poppin', lockin' and breakin' as well as freestyle Hip-Hop dance
- **Boxing** with West Area Athletic Center — 2 p.m. Tuesday, Aug. 2. Learn beginning boxing and get some discipline
- **Fencing** with Syracuse Musketeers Fencing Center — 2 p.m. Tuesday, Aug. 9. En Guard! The gentleman's sport of sword fighting at its most basic

For more information: Call the library at (315) 435-3395 Beauchamp Branch Library, located at 2111 S. Salina St.

Join The Stand
in July for our annual

South Side Photo Walk



Starts 10 a.m. July 16, at South Side Innovation Center, 2610 S. Salina St.

Free and open to all.

Join your neighbors to document a day on the South Side. The best shots will be printed in The Stand's September issue.

A limited number of digital cameras available to borrow. To reserve, email ashley@mysouthsidestand.com



'LONG LIVE THE KING'

Makhai Bailey has spent time writing a song in support of 2-year-old **King Nazir Leon**, also known affectionately on Syracuse's South Side as "**Baby King**."

The toddler suffers from **CD40 Ligand deficiency, a hereditary immune disease** that can be fatal without a bone marrow transplant. Baby King's mother lost both of her brothers to the disease.

As soon as Bailey met Baby King and his mother, he wanted to write a song about their situation and draw attention to helping their cause. **He titled his song "Long Live the King."**

"I felt that he could have been me. When I first met him, I don't want to say distraught, but I was shocked," Bailey said. "I began to write his song, and I knocked on (my dad's) door at 1 in the morning and said '**Pops, we got to do something. My spirit is feeling as we have to do something.**'"

TRUTH SPEAKER

Syracuse teen raps to raise awareness of children's rights issues



> Makhai Bailey's family, in front: Jazmine Sharif (sister, 7), Lilliana Sharif (sister, 4, on lap), Makhai Bailey (16), Ajanna Williams (stepsister, 8). Back, from left: Amar Sharif (brother, 9), Qu'rana Sharif (sister, 11). | Leonard Adams, Staff Photo

By | Ryan Raigrodski
Urban Affairs reporter

Makhai Bailey finds an outlet through rap during tough times for underprivileged youth

His whole life, Makhai Bailey had dreamed of one day recording music in the studio with his father, who has worked with popular hip-hop artists such as Rick Ross and Juvenile.

But for a while, such a goal was unattainable. His father, Freedom-Allah:Bey, had grown up on the South and East sides of Syracuse, but for most of Bailey's childhood lived in New Orleans near his record label.

Eventually, thanks to some persuasion from Bailey's godfather, Bailey's dad left New Orleans and moved back to Syracuse in 2012, opening the Freeborn Music Productions label.

The move allowed Bailey, 16, to go from only speaking daily with his father on the phone to seeing him daily and living in the same house. And the teen made music even more of a priority in his free time from school and extra-curricular activities, allowing him to finally record with his father.

"I mean, I was nervous because it was my first time being in the studio," Bailey said. "But the fact that my

father was there to coach me, was an awesome feeling."

Bailey's father, 42, views his son also as a friend and his right hand. He says he would often show his son emails he received from his mentor about human rights and other serious issues in the community.

Bailey's godfather and Freedom-Allah:Bey's mentor is Noble I'm Manu-El:Bey, 69. He has lived in Syracuse for the past 33 years, and he met Bailey's father in 2000 during a human rights meeting. The two have grown extremely close since, even opening the record label together.

"They would discuss different situations going on," Bailey said. "The economy, as far as poverty, human rights, the rights of the child."

Eventually, one of those emails from Bailey's godfather inspired Bailey to write one of his first singles, "ROC (Rights of the Child)," Bailey said.

"When Makhai found out that Somalia and the United States were the only two countries that had not ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child," Bailey's godfather said, "he as a child lost it. So I told him, all is not lost brother. We can change it."

Bailey soon wrote another song about strife between police and African-Americans. He titled it, "Michael Brown," named for the young black man shot by a police

officer in Ferguson, Missouri, in 2014.

"My son is not against police officers," Bailey's father said, discussing the song. "He frowns upon the ones that are corrupt and are doing things the wrong way. Because you have people being slaughtered by corrupt cops. I'm not saying that everybody that gets gunned down by a police officer was innocent. But there are some innocent ones. And that is scary to a teenager."

Bailey, who goes by the rap name "Truth Speaker, The Voice of the Youth," has recorded with Freeborn Music Productions at SubCat Music Studios, located at 219 S. West St. He has released several hip-hop singles about issues involving children's rights and the police. He also has helped with outreach for a local toddler in need of a bone marrow transplant.

Bailey's first mixtape, "SoulFoodDaMixtape," is scheduled for release sometime in May.

Bailey's godfather wanted to make music with a serious message, focused on human rights and issues important in the African-American community, which is the type of music he persuaded Bailey's father to focus on, eventually.

"That's one of the things that myself and my mentor have been adamant about: changing the way that we deliver this music," Bailey's father said. "Because the youth are paying attention, and people aren't actually conscious of what they're putting out. So it's kind of affecting our communities in the worst way. Somebody has to stand up."

Nevertheless, Bailey's song about Brown caught the attention of a wider audience beyond youth. Two years ago, when Diana Merritt, a radio host and chief executive of Exclusive Connections LLC heard his track, she immediately fell in love with the concept behind it.

Merritt says she continues to follow his music today.

"He's somebody that can give a message that everyone can relate to, every genre can relate to his actual music," Merritt said. "And I think he is going to go far and have longevity because of the concepts that he uses. He keeps a positive mind frame, he explains things that are going on around him and not just things that he thinks are going on, he's actually in the know and smart."

Bailey's music caught the attention of others. About a year into Bailey's writing and recording music, he per-



> Makhai Bailey wrote a song about "Baby King," a toddler from the South Side who needs a bone marrow transplant. Bailey wears an image of Baby King proudly on the back of his sweatshirt. | Leonard Adams, Staff Photo

formed at The Great New York State Fair last September. The venue, Chevy Court, holds more than 20,000 people.

When Bailey's father found out about this opportunity, he was excited and a little nervous because just a few months before that, Bailey had experienced his first on-stage performance at Henninger High School, where he is a student.

At the state fair, Bailey held his nerve in opening for rapper Nas.

"Everybody's nervous," Bailey said. "You treat it like you would before you take a big exam at school. It's all about mind over matter. Either you are going to bend or you are going to stand up. I chose to stand up."

LISTEN TO HIS MUSIC

The music of Makhai Bailey, who goes by the rap name Truth Speaker, can be heard at freebornmusicproductions.com

His mixtape, "**SoulFood-DaMixtape**," will be released on that website sometime in May

ON THE SIDE

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ON THE SIDE

EVENT
DETAILS

Juneteenth Festival, an annual celebration, promises to draw another record number of people this year.

When: Noon to 10 p.m.
Saturday, June 18

Where: Clinton Square,
downtown Syracuse

Cost: Free to attend

More info.: Visit
syracusejuneteenth.org

JUNE 18 FESTIVAL

Organizers work to bring headliner act Chanté Moore — R&B, jazz singer



> The Juneteenth executive board meets in the Dunbar Center on April 14 to discuss the festival. | Drew Osumi, Staff Photo

By | Ellen Meyers
Urban Affairs reporter

Annual Juneteenth Celebration is a family affair for Syracuse’s African-American residents

Syracuse community members are wrapping up fundraising and finalizing details for the Syracuse Juneteenth Festival, as they expect another record number of people to attend the June 18 event at Clinton Square.

Juneteenth is a holiday that honors the announcement of the abolition of slavery in the United States. On June 19, 1865, Union soldiers arrived in Galveston, Texas, to read the Emancipation Proclamation — signed by President Abraham Lincoln two and half years before — letting slaves know they were free. Today, many communities with large African-American populations celebrate Juneteenth as a way to honor their history and culture through festivals and other community events.

At this year’s Juneteenth Festival, award-winning R&B and jazz singer Chanté Moore will perform. The festival also will feature a children’s game zone, retail and food vendors, and a health pavilion with representatives from different local agencies.

The Juneteenth Committee Board of Directors hopes

to repeat last year’s success, said Kevin Henry, the board’s president and the director of building maintenance and operations in the city of Syracuse. Last year, more than 20,000 people attended the festival, nearly twice the usual number of people.

“We just had a tremendous response from the community from last year,” Henry said. “Pretty much everybody couldn’t wait to get on board for this year’s festival.”

Another key component to the festival’s success is getting all the resources needed to put on the event. Cost of the festival is about \$70,000, Henry said. Some of the money comes from community members, local businesses and Onondaga County. The board also will raise some money from an ancestral dinner to be held at Traditions at The Links at 5 p.m., Friday, May 27.

In order to put on the festival, the board members need financial support from not just businesses, but also from Syracusans, said Kitty Rice, who has volunteered with the festival for 25 years.

“(The businesses and government agencies) have been very supportive. However, we still need the support of the community. If every individual that comes out even drops \$5 in a hat, it would make the festival much easier to produce,” Rice said. Even if people cannot donate money to the festival, community members can help out

GET INVOLVED

- To donate:** Visit syracusejuneteenth.org or mail a check to Juneteenth Incorporated, P.O. Box 973, Syracuse, NY 13201
- To volunteer:** Call Kitty Rice at (315) 475-9693
- To be a vendor:** Call Kevin Henry at (315) 863-0808



Kevin Henry used his knowledge of festivals to help grow Juneteenth from being held in a small parking lot to Clinton Square



Barbara Mattison has helped the Juneteenth festival benefit the community since 2009



Kitty Rice has been a member of the committee for 23 years

MEET THE JUNETEENTH COMMITTEE



Gale Bowens has been with the committee for five years and hopes that through her work, the festival can benefit Syracuse residents



Lee Glover, with the committee for more than a decade, helps run the festival's security as well as organize the parade route



Bridget McCarthy, with the committee since 2009, joined to be active in her community as well as foster a community of black nurses

UPCOMING EVENT

Ancestral Celebration is an event held each year as a fundraiser for the Juneteenth celebration.

When: 5 p.m.
Friday, May 27

Where: Traditions at The Links, 5900 N. Burdick St., East Syracuse

Cost: \$50 per ticket

More info.: Tickets can be purchased at the door or can be reserved by calling (315) 475-9693

in other ways, such as making and printing posters, she added.

Despite the challenges that come from organizing such a large event, the people on the Juneteenth Committee Board say they do enjoy being a part of the event. For Rice, it is an event that includes virtually everyone in the Syracuse community.

"This is one of the very few festivals that happens in Syracuse that includes, or attempts to include, the young people," she said. "There's just not a lot for teenagers, and this is the one festival we try to groom ... so that there's something there for everyone. We try to get the entire family to come out."

The festival also underscores the historical significance of the holiday and Syracuse's connection to the African-American discourse, said Bridget McCarthy, a board member who organizes the health pavilion. Although it might not be part of Syracuse students' American history

lessons, it is still important to remember.

"This is our way of making sure that the future generations are always aware of the history that Syracuse has with the abolition movement and black history in general," McCarthy said.

Henry echoed similar sentiments, saying that he and the other organizers do not want people to forget why they are coming together in the first place. African-Americans in Syracuse have a lot to be grateful for, including other people who fought for their freedom, he said. Henry says he understands that there were many people before him who made it possible for him to pursue a multitude of opportunities, including his current position as a city official.

"We want to make sure that kids and everyone in our community understand the significance of this day," he said, "and how we wouldn't be where we are right now if it weren't for them."

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