

the Stand south side news

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Syracuse, NY
SUMMER 2019 Issue 75 **FREE**

SAMAIA'S SERVICE

11-year-old Samaia Goodrich is already a recognized philanthropist

MATERNAL MORTALITY
Working to lower mortality rates among black mothers

Code Camp

A new computer bootcamp is now up and running in downtown Syracuse

Talking Parenting
Yusuf Abdul-Qadir on being a father and the sense of direction it has given him

HONORING A LEGEND



the Stand

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SPECIAL THANKS THIS MONTH

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DEDICATED TO DEAN LORRAINE BRANHAM (1953-2019)

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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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- PHOTO WALK** | Mark a special milestone this summer — The Stand's 10th year capturing the neighborhood in photos
- COMMUNITY** | Celebrate Manny Breland's more than 31 years as a mentor to his former students at Central Tech High School
- FATHERHOOD** | Hear from Yusuf Abdul-Qadir, the youngest of eight siblings and father to an infant daughter
- FEATURES** | Meet 11-year-old Samaia Goodrich, the first Syracusean to be honored with a Prudential Spirit of Community Award for her community service
- HEALTH** | Meet the yoga-teaching and baby-delivering community members fighting high mortality rates of black mothers
- COMMUNITY** | Learn about the new program launched by Hack Upstate teaching computer programming to women and minorities
- COMMUNITY** | Read about the city's new Bureau of Administrative Adjudication that promises to be a check on negligent landlords

- Cover photography of Samaia Goodrich receiving the Prudential award provided by her family

School Supply Give Away

Last summer as an overcast sky loomed over Syracuse, Mary Nelson and her team of about 200 volunteers geared up to distribute more than 10,000 backpacks filled with free back-to-school supplies. This summer's 18th annual Mary Nelson School Supply Give Away will be held Saturday, Aug. 17, on the corner of South Salina Street and Wood Avenue. It will open with a youth parade at 10 a.m. and includes educational, health and resource vendors, entertainment, games and food. Backpacks provided to students from Pre-K to college level who have registered.



Sajida Ayyup



Robert Schulz



Annaliese Perry



Sajida Ayyup

This May marks 10 years I've worked with the South Side Newspaper Project. I was hired by The Stand's founder Steve Davis, board members of this project and the late Newhouse Dean Lorraine Branham, who died April 2 at the age of 66 battling cancer.

While she led an \$18 million fundraising campaign for the renovation of Newhouse II, she also continually supported the funding of this paper and efforts to involve students in community journalism. When chatter would surface about possibly cutting print and making The Stand an online only publication, Branham would hear from readers who appreciated and needed the print version. If that disappeared, their options of reading our stories would also vanish.

The first print version was our March 2010 issue, debuting over Valentine's Weekend with a launch party where we invited residents to "Fall in Love with The Stand." That first print issue was produced with four Newhouse students in an advanced reporting course and its cover story by The Stand's Founder Steve Davis featured then newly named police chief Frank Fowler.

For a decade now, we've been able to tell stories unique to the South Side. We've shared residents' perspectives on important issues by aiming to put their voices first.

For 10 summers we've also trekked through the neighborhood, cameras in hand, to put the people and places here in focus. Learn more about the annual Photo Walk on Page 5. Images are shared in each September issue, online and some have even been added to the walls of local community spots such as barber shops, the library and laundromat.

Ashley Kang



GRANT AWARDED

The Stand has received a Community Listening & Engagement Fund (CLEF) grant to further the South Side Newspaper Project's community reach and impact. The CLEF grant provides funds to help community-based news organizations better connect with communities they serve.

This summer, staff will begin to work with The Listening Post Collective to conduct an information needs survey to find ways to further engage a greater number of South Side residents.

The aim is for the Listening Post consultant to visit Syracuse in the coming months to see firsthand how The Stand covers the community.

Funding for the CLEF grant is provided by The News Integrity Initiative, Democracy Fund, Knight Foundation and the Lenfest Institute.



> During The Stand's 2010 launch party, Newhouse Dean Lorraine Branham visited with board member Charles Pierce-El. Branham led the Newhouse School for 11 years and was a strong supporter of this project both financially and in encouraging student participation. She saw the mutual benefit this project provides — in-depth stories on the community and real-world reporting opportunities for Newhouse students as well as local high schoolers and community contributors. | File Photo

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10th Annual Photo Walk

Anniversary event aims to capture a wider scope of the South Side neighborhood



> This was Photo Walk Leader Bob Gates' favorite shot taken at last year's walk. On April 27, it took first place in the Syracuse Press Club online photo contest.



> Annaliese Perry stitched together this shot after taking a number of pictures of a boy showing off his backflip during last summer's Photo Walk. Perry explored the neighborhood, chatting with residents and snapping pictures. This summer, the annual event will expand into multiple walks to capture greater locations, streets and faces of the South Side.

By Ashley Kang
The Stand Director

This summer marks a decade of documenting the South Side in photos. We hope you'll join us!

Despite the emptiness Linda Pritchard feels as she mourns the loss of her son, Darron Lundy, she tries not to let that overshadow the joy she feels when surrounded by the rest of her family. Lundy died in 2017 after a hit and run accident.

Annaliese Perry met Pritchard during last summer's Photo Walk and captured the image to the right of Pritchard with her grandson, Siream, and the faithful family dog, Wooter.

Pritchard spoke of the treasured moments spent with Siream, such as proudly watching him perfect his backflip. It reminds her of days gone by, when her

young sons would delight in the same childhood fun.

Participants on our Photo Walk also met couple William and Sharon Mitchell, who were all smiles for portraits. William was found enjoying the porch while Sharon was relaxing inside. William encouraged us to knock on the door and greet Sharon so he wasn't the only one getting his picture taken.

Grandfather Clifford Meniffee also invited photographers in, where he posed in his living room for a portrait below a slew of family photos, including of his 14 grandchildren.

This July, we'll gather in the heart of the South Side's Sankofa District at the South Side Innovation Center, 2610 S. Salina St., for this project's 10th annual Photo Walk.

Join us to snap photos (we have cameras to loan!), pose for pictures or pick up a copy of September's print issue to discover who we met along the walk this year.

REGISTER FOR A WALK



Sign up by contacting The Stand's

Director Ashley Kang at (315) 882-1054 or emailing ashley@mysouthsidestand.com

Register online by visiting The Stand's homepage at MySouthSideStand.com

Save the Date
July 27th



To stay up-to-date, follow on



BRELAND EVENT

What: Central Tech High School honoring Manny Breland Celebration

When: 2 p.m. Saturday, June 15

Where: Bethany Baptist Church, 149 Beattie St.

Details: Central Technical High School alumni are paying tribute to Manny Breland, basketball coach and educator. Billy McBride, assistant athletic director at Amherst College, will give the keynote address. Alumni cheerleaders and basketball players will also be recognized. Light refreshments available.

Cost: \$10. Event open to the public, and tickets may also be purchased the day of the event.

To purchase tickets: Call (315) 474-3746 or visit Collin's Barber & Beauty Shop, Westcott Lodge, various churches and the Dunbar Center

HONORING BRELAND

Alumni gather for a special tribute to a dedicated educator

By Nabiha Asim
The Stand Intern

To Central Tech's alumni, Emmanuel Breland is more than player, coach and educator

Emmanuel "Manny" Breland, educator for over 31 years, still influences the students he taught back in 1969 at Central Tech High School.

Breland is seen at every community event, says alumnus Barbara Chestnut-Rohadfox. From funerals to jazz concerts to school meetings, he is there.

But too often, it was funerals that brought alumni and Breland together, Central Tech alum Johnny Elliot said. So now, members of the Central Tech class of 1971 to 1973 have organized a celebration honoring Breland's friendship and kindness.

Alumni have wanted to put together a celebration for a long time. Elliot proposed the idea after a funeral for alum William Stroman's father. Elliot contacted another alum, Chestnut-Rohadfox, and he put together a mini class reunion.

"The small people, they don't get recognized," Chestnut-Rohadfox said. "Not that Mr. Breland needs to be put in the front. With his personality, he doesn't need a pat on his back. But I ran into so many people who were so appreciative of Mr. Breland. So that is one of the reasons I thought it was imperative that we do this."

On June 15, the Bethany Baptist Church is expected to host Breland's family and members of local organizations such as the Dunbar Center, 100 Black Men of Syracuse, the Boys and Girls Club, church congregants, former co-workers and other alumni. Billy McBride, assistant athletic director at Amherst College, is giving the keynote address. Other speakers will also touch on the impact Breland has made in their lives and the community.

"I'm continually thinking about how fantastic it is," Breland said about the special event. "It is just overwhelming and humbling ... for something like this to be contemplated is just beyond anyone's wildest dreams."

Breland says he is looking forward to seeing his former students and reminiscing with them.

"I call them kids, but some of them are 50 and 60 years old," he joked. "They come up to me and they remind me of something that went on."

Breland says he is also looking forward to tease his "kids" about having to deal with their children now, calling it "karma."

"(Many former students) gave me so much hell and



> Emmanuel "Manny" Breland holds a framed photo of a basketball team he coached in 1967-'68. | File Photo

that's why now they're getting that from their kids," he said, adding they all laugh about that now.

"We want him to know he is one of the iconic lights that shines through Syracuse, that we appreciate him even though it took us so many years to do this," Chestnut-Rohadfox said. "We want him to know we love him."

It's the small gestures and care Breland shows that makes him an "unsung hero" to Central Tech's alumni, Chestnut-Rohadfox said. Breland's accomplishments are historic. He is the first African American to receive a basketball scholarship to Syracuse University, and he was also inducted to the Syracuse Sports Hall of Fame in 1992. To Central Tech students, he is more than a principal, vice principal or a basketball coach.

"A lot of times we talk so much about Martin Luther King Jr. What happened to the unsung heroes? And to me Mr. Breland is a hero in our community," Chestnut-Rohadfox said. "In his 80s, if he was in this room right now, you would never even know he's a hall of famer."

Chestnut-Rohadfox knew she could always reach out to Breland when she needed to. In 1971, she was suspended for smoking in the girl's bathroom, something she claims she didn't do. Breland got her back into school.



BASKETBALL TEAM: A basket a day . . .

“He had a listening ear, you know, and it didn’t matter whether you went to class or not; it didn’t matter,” she said. “Whatever the scenario was, he wasn’t just a principal. I think he was a person who was touchable, and you really don’t find that today.”

Breland’s mere presence is empowering, Chestnut-Rohadfox said. For alum Earl Scruggs, seeing an African American teacher and vice principal was eye-opening. It’s not common in the South, where he is from.

“He was quiet,” Scruggs said. “Very quiet. But, in our time, a powerful individual that we needed.”

Breland was always there for students who were going through rough times, missing classes and not doing their work.

Elliot remembers Breland asked him if he was OK, sitting by a window in the hallway during class time. Elliot’s mother was in the hospital at the time. Breland didn’t question Elliot for not being in class. Instead, he looked after a student.

“To me that was like, wow,” Elliot recalled. “He’s looking at me as a father figure, you know a father wondering what’s wrong with his son.”

Elliot isn’t the only alum who thought of him this way. Max Jones, now a pastor in Syracuse, gets a surprise visit from Breland at the Apostolic Church of Jesus Christ every once in a while.

“He will just show up without any invitation to show his support for one of his former students,” Jones said. “That has meant so much to me every time that he would come saying ‘I’m so proud of you.’ That’s something an uncle would do.”

Breland kept Jones’ father involved in his academic and athletic career. They’d work together, deciding what kind of discipline Jones would get as a kid. Jones says he was admitted to Cornell University thanks to the guidance.

“A large degree of my success as a man, as a person, as an adult, is due to Mr. Breland,” he said.

Much of Breland’s work remains behind-the-scenes but doesn’t go unnoticed by his former students.

“I would have to say he probably saved a lot of lives,” Scruggs said. “Yes, trust me on that one.”

> After earning a basketball scholarship to Syracuse University, Breland helped lead Syracuse to its first NCAA tournament bid in 1957 and led the Orangemen in scoring each of the first two games of the tournament. After SU, he returned to his alma mater to coach basketball.

| Provided Photo

SURVIVOR JOURNEY

What: Syracuse Juneteenth Ancestral Celebration

When: 6 to 10 p.m.
Friday, June 14

Where: Atrium Building,
100 S. Salina St.

Cost: \$25

Details: The event will include a 50/50 raffle, complimentary glass of wine and hors d’oeuvres. Additional beverage tickets will be available for purchase.

ON THE SIDE

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Yusuf Abdul-Qadir

Nominated by Twiggy Billue

By Lianza Reyes
Staff Reporter

Q: Tell me about your daughter?

A: Her name is Maya Aneesa. She is 7 months old. She was born three days premature. Actually, she was born a few days before (my grad school) orientation. We moved houses a few days before. She is a fireball; she's got a lot of personality and is very driven. I have a video I took of her from a month ago, and put a few of her toys in front of her to see what she would reach for first. You can see her trying to reach for her toy cellphone. Every time she missed it, she would reach again and again. She kept trying. It's surreal that a young child could have so much determination.

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

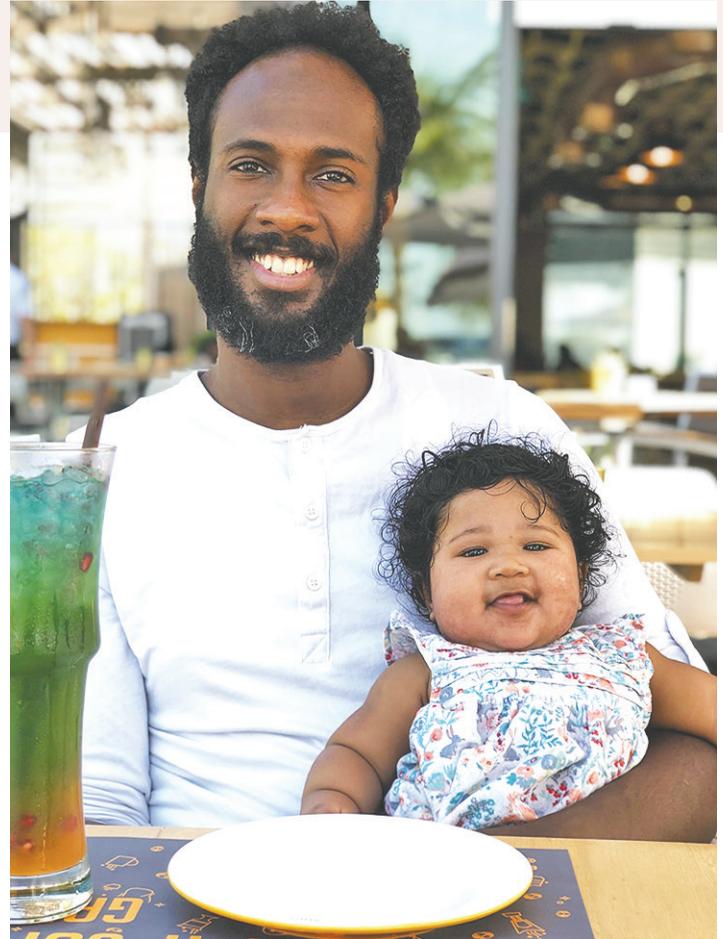
A: This has been the most amazing experience of my life. You change as a person. You don't become perfect, but you definitely begin to see what priorities take place. For instance, I'm a full-time graduate student taking a heavy course load, while also being director of the American Civil Liberties Union Central New York chapter. I have a consulting firm where I do some work around sustainability and real estate development. And at the same time, as if that's not enough, I do a lot of community and civic engagement work. You find a new sense of purpose and direction (as a father). It's been my biggest motivator that I can do it, and that the things I value become more important to me as a parent.

Q: What was your relationship like with your dad?

A: My father died when I was 5. This is why this period of my life is so important, because I spent most of my life having imaginary conversations with my father. He never got to go to any of my graduations. He's never going to see Maya. Before my father died, he graduated law school and passed the bar exam. He had been dying for some time, but he was determined to earn his law degree at the age of 40. Even if he hadn't had the easiest life and was formerly incarcerated, he was determined to graduate against all odds. It's through that that I get who I am as a person from those imaginary conversations. I'm very fortunate that my older brother had a very large influence in my life. I lived with him for six years, and he's 22 years older than me. When my father died, my brother made a promise to take care of us. And he fulfilled that promise. It's the same sacrifices that I want to make for my children.

Q: Do you have other siblings?

A: I'm the youngest of eight. I'm the very youngest. The second



MEET FATHER YUSUF ABDUL-QADIR: This new father juggles school, work and a new baby. He has been married to Bushra Kabir for the past three years. | Provided Photo

youngest brother teaches at Whitman and runs the South Side Innovation Center. He's 10 years older than me. That gap of 10 years should really show the type of family I had. My mother had seven boys and one daughter.

Q: Any advice your father shared that stuck with you?

A: It's difficult to remember things my father said. It's honestly also difficult to remember him. But I do have distinct memories of growing up with a Muslim family. During Ramadan, we would have food together at sunrise, then breaking fast at sunset. I remember things like that. Another one of the things my brother said that stood out to me was the value of credibility. How hard it is to build and how easy it is to destroy. That it is a lot to be a person of integrity. My integrity and credibility I try to build is something I maintain. Of the many lessons I've got with my oldest brother, this is the one that stuck with me through my adulthood.

Q: Is there anything you do as a father that surprises people?

A: Society has problematic views of manhood, masculinity

and fatherhood. I'm a black man, and I'm very particular about making sure I'm present in my daughter's life. Not because black men aren't, but because of society's notion that black men aren't present in their children's life. So I spend a lot of time with her. When she turned six months old, I made her food. I love to cook lots of extravagant and fancy things. I began to introduce her to different flavors, like avocados and mangoes. My wife has been breastfeeding, and as you get towards six months, the composition of the breastmilk changes. So iron is one of the things you really need. I need to balance the type of foods that she needs, and I spend a lot of time on it.

Q: Anything else?

A: Another thing is I spend a lot of time with her to make sure my wife is not the only person who provides for Maya's wellbeing. My wife is a full-time professional woman, so I make sure I balance my academic, professional and extracurricular work to being present in her life. Reading my textbooks, playing with her, to make sure I have time with her. She also travels a lot. At seven months old, she's been to six countries. Part of why is because my wife and I love traveling, but also I wanted to make sure she knew that the world was open to her.

Q: Why do you love being a dad?

A: Because it's changed me profoundly. Again, I'm not perfect, but I try. We tried to make sure I built wealth for her, and we wanted to prepare her to inherit wealth and not have the same types of struggles we did. We moved everything in the house before my wife went into delivery. It was that type of determination to move heaven and earth to make this happen. I could talk about me taking intense courses throughout the year to make sure I graduated with two master's degrees and

two certificates, but I don't know if I would be as determined as I am without my daughter. I don't know if I would have enough energy to read or do an assignment. I remember that I am doing this for myself, but really it's so Maya has the opportunities and advantages in her life. Most importantly, the ability for someone to love you in the way she does. I look to my left and she's smiling at me. That feeling of unconditional love is irreplaceable.

Q: Any advice for first-time dads?

A: Each experience is going to be different. I recognize the

privilege I have working for a prestigious institution that gives me paternity leave and time off. But if there are fathers who don't have that ability or are questioning the decision to take time off, I would urge them to do it. In fact, one of my colleagues who didn't want to take and who changed his mind, is going to take a month off with his wife and his son in Paris. I would urge people to take time to build that relationship. Because those moments, you won't get that back. As long as you keep your child's best interest in mind, then you will be in a position to be the best parent you can be.

Q: Final thoughts?

A: I have so much hope for Maya. My wife is Bangladeshi and I'm an African-American who grew up in a Puerto Rican family. My siblings are black and Puerto Rican. I grew up in a family that was multi-cultural, and I myself speak three languages. We're determined to make sure all the languages we know, she knows. Children's brains are like sponges. From time to time, I'll speak to her in Spanish. It's amazing to see how she comprehends. And to see how she lights up when she sees me or her mother, she yearns for us to hold her. When I come through the door and she reaches for me, because her 'abu' is here. Abu is what I called my father, and it's what she will call me. To have that wrapped into this beautiful baby girl is something else. She makes me want to be a better person, and I'm constantly doing what I can to become that.

“I'm very particular about making sure I'm present in my daughter's life.”



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May 21, 2019

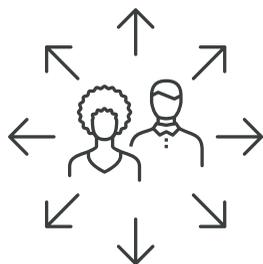
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Samaia Goodrich

Giving, compassionate and with a will to change the community

By Muhammad A. Nomani
Staff Reporter

Meet the local middle schooler who's a philanthropist and humanitarian tied into one

This diligent sixth grader spent a recent Saturday packing groceries with other volunteers to distribute door to door as part of Reach Saturday, a project of Abundant Life Christian Center. After an hour, 403 grocery bags were packed and ready.

For Samaia, such activities are a part of her usual Saturday.

Samaia got the gene for community service from her parents. At a young age, she would accompany her parents, Anthony and Akua, to their after-school program at Syracuse, where children were taught the essentials of participating in community-led efforts such as clean ups, providing for the homeless and taking on responsibility for community growth and leadership. Both have been actively involved in the Syracuse community for more than two decades after having started the after-school program in 1998.

"After she was born, I went back to the afterschool program," Akua said. "She grew up in the program. ... Even when in Pre-K, she always had a heart for the betterment of people."

After Hurricane Maria hit and devastated families in Puerto Rico, Samaia felt it was her calling to help. At 9, she spearheaded a project by gathering 60 volunteers and raising funds for those affected by the hurricane. The volunteers collected more than \$5,000 for affected families in hopes of brightening their Christmas. This included setting up donation boxes, distributing fliers and sending letters to businesses about the effort.

For her efforts, Samaia was recently awarded the 2019 Prudential Spirit of Community Award.

Akua says Samaia has always been inclined towards solution-oriented approaches. For her, identifying the problem is only the first step, her mother said. It has always fascinated both Samaia's parents to see her leadership acumen and the need to do good for the people she's around.

"She's a servant leader," said Akua, explaining that Samaia leads with her heart. "She is not selfish."

Even at such a young age, Samaia has developed a name for herself. Her selflessness in all her community efforts speaks through her work.

"I have always loved to help and give to others," said Samaia, who was the first student from Syracuse to have won the Prudential award.

As a 2019 Honoree, Samaia has been invited to Washington, D.C., along with 101 additional State Honorees for a four-day trip in early



> Isaiah Goodrich poses with younger sister Samaia. | Provided Photo

May. There she will receive \$1,000 and be considered for one of 10 national awards.

Samaia also founded the Let Our Voices Echo Project — also known as the LOVE Project. The aim of this project in Samaia's words is to "learn to love ourselves, each other and the community through service."

Both Samaia's parents, appreciate their daughter's love for community work. Being the youngest out of three siblings and their only daughter, they said they wanted to ensure she's able to do what she wants to in life.

"She was always the giver, always wanted to see if other kids were OK, sharing her toys with them," Anthony said.

He also wants Samaia to know that while she is a rising star in the community, there is a bigger aspect to all of this for which she is made.

"We're going to make sure that she enjoys her childhood, but she has to understand that she has a call on her life," he said. "So, she has a responsibility to answer to that call."

Samaia also received the Youth Community Service Award this year from Zeta Phi Beta Sorority Inc., a sorority found in 1981 by seven Syracuse women to encourage and start community service efforts, scholarships and help locals in need.

Samaia is always looking for the next thing she could get involved in to make the community better, her family says. Anthony noted, while it sounded cliché, the best advice he gives his daughter is to always be humble and know that her purpose is bigger than her.

"You treat others how you want to be treated," Anthony tells his daughter. "Lead by example."

NATIONAL SCALE

Across the country, other groups have begun to add to the maternal mortality conversation.

In September, Charles Johnson, the son of celebrity judge Glenda Hatchett, appeared before Congress to advocate for a bill that would encourage the improvement of prenatal and maternity care for black women. Johnson lost his wife, Kira, to pregnancy-related complications in April of 2016 after she delivered the couple's second son.

Since, he and his mother have begun speaking out for the rights of black pregnant women, even founding a nonprofit 4Kira4Moms to support the cause.

On Dec. 11, Congress passed the proposed H.R.1318 bill. Over the next five years, according to the bill, the U.S. will spend \$60 million to lower the maternal mortality rate.

For more, visit 4kira4moms.com

BIRTH OF A MOVEMENT

Local advocates combat death rates among black mothers



> Marcelle Haddix teaches pregnancy-friendly yoga at a Doula 4 A Queen event. | Michaela Greer, Staff Photographer

By Michaela Greer
Staff Reporter

A Syracuse doula and yoga-enthusiast are helping to lower the maternal mortality rate

Indaria Jones says that the full weight of her pregnancy hadn't even begun to set in when she and her baby almost lost their lives.

When the Syracuse native went into labor just 6-1/2 months into her pregnancy, she had only given her employer notice two days earlier. And while the old adage claims that ignorance is bliss, Jones says that she wishes she'd known a lot more before her pregnancy experience.

"I had a very traumatic experience and I never really told anyone my story because I don't want to scare other moms or pregnant people," Jones said of the birth of her daughter, now four years ago. "But I guess it's good to inform them of what to do and what can happen."

At the time, Jones didn't realize that her odds of having pregnancy-related complications was 243 percent more than her white counterparts, according to the Centers for Disease Control. The 2018 CDC report noted

that in comparison with white women, minority women are three to four times more likely to die in the United States from child birth.

New York state is ranked 30th out of 50 for the lowest pregnancy mortality rates. On average, 20.6 women die per 100,000 births in New York, which is slightly better than the national average of 20.7. California is the safest state to deliver at 4.5 deaths per 100,000 births, with Georgia the worst at 46.2.

Last April, Gov. Andrew Cuomo announced that to combat these high maternal death rates, he would create an initiative to lower the mortality rates, particularly across racial divides. Women like Jones now depend on advocates like Sequoia Kemp, founder of Doula 4 A Queen, who seek to educate expecting mothers. To do so, Kemp regularly hosts events and informational sessions geared toward the mental and physical wellness of black pregnant women.

Jones said that the months leading up to her delivery were increasingly painful. She recalls having difficulty walking around her workplace for more than four minutes, and when she tried to go shopping at Destiny Mall, she wasn't able to walk from the car to the guest services kiosk without doubling over.

"Your first time, you don't really know. You're just

trusting the doctors,” Jones said. “I went to my usual checkups, and I would tell my OB that I could barely walk. She said ‘You know, you’re getting further and further along and your baby is coming down and that’s just all that is.’”

Four days after her doctor visit, while lying in bed, her water broke. “It just ruptured completely,” Jones said.

Panicked, she made her way to Crouse Hospital to deliver her baby girl. There she encountered a slew of problems. She needed a C-section, an operation that she dreaded. Jones said that she specifically went to Crouse because of rumors that other facilities perform high numbers of C-sections. During the six-hour surgery, her baby’s right arm was broken, while Jones says she lay on the table writhing in pain, asking all the while about her newborn and receiving no answers.

“The whole time no one answered my questions. I kept hearing them say code blue. They were calling for help, and I heard a whole team of doctors come in,” Jones said. “I kept thinking that I was going crazy and wondered where the heck my baby was.”

Her fear only increased.

“It just got to the point when I felt like I was gonna pass out, but I was scared ... if I pass out, I don’t know if I’m gonna wake up,” Jones said. “I just kept asking my mom to take care of my daughter; I just can’t hold on to this pain anymore. If I don’t wake up, just take care of her.”

Public officials like Cuomo have since acknowledged a problem lies with healthcare that directly affects black women like Jones. But proposed changes have been slow to take effect. Jeffrey Hammond, spokesman at the New York State Health Department, said that one reason for the delay is the lengthy training time required to prepare more midwives.

Kemp, a certified doula who has a bachelor’s in public health, was pleased to hear of the proposed changes, but said she could not sit passively by and wait for them to be implemented.

Her focus is on seeing a mother have a positive pregnancy — not only throughout the medical experience but also how a mother’s social aspects are affecting their pregnancy. After supporting a mother to delivery, she moves her focus on the wellbeing of the infant.

Kemp teaches women about their rights, and says that she encourages them to ask questions of their healthcare professionals. When her clients are overwhelmed by the pregnancy, she acts as a sounding board, stressing the difference between a midwife and doula.

She noted that while she does not perform medical exams like vaginal checks, she makes it a point to offer emotional and informational support. She also explained that doulas are especially helpful during labor with techniques that aid in pain management.

In addition to working one-on-one with pregnant



> Jones’ daughter, I’lea, sustained injuries to her arm during delivery. | Provided Photo

mothers in preparation for delivery, Kemp, through Doula 4 A Queen, organizes events throughout the year which are open to the community. Often, Kemp partners with other local organizations for workshops.

At one such event, Syracuse University professor and yoga enthusiast Marcelle Haddix of The Zen G yoga group taught expectant mothers how to practice yoga without causing harm to their babies.

“A lot of people tell pregnant women to pick up yoga, but you have to be careful not to hurt the baby,” Haddix said. “That’s why we help you learn poses or modify your favorite ones.”

Kemp said that it was important for her to enlist Haddix’s help because she recognizes that mental health is a topic that isn’t usually openly discussed in the black community. She believes that by having events that encourage discussion and feature instructor-led activities like yoga, women will have a safe space where they can be honest about the problems they face.

“I try to have events that cover a spectrum of issues so that even if you’re not pregnant or thinking about having kids tomorrow, you still will have that information for when you do decide to have children,” Kemp said.

Given her past experience, Jones is unsure whether she’d try to have another child but is grateful for people like Kemp.

“I know if I was to have another child, there’s a lot of things that I would do different,” she said. “And I’d definitely get a doula and learn how to advocate for myself.”

GET INVOLVED

Join Kemp with **Doula 4 A Queen** for monthly Community Childbirth Education Classes. The sessions meet at 1 p.m. May 11, June 8 and July 13 at Cafe Sankofa Cooperative, 2323 S. Salina St. and are \$10 each. Partners are welcome to attend. Free childcare will be provided.

These sessions are provided in partnership with Village Birth International, Inc.

To RSVP or contact Doula 4 A Queen for services, call (315) 696-1795 or email doula4aqueen@gmail.com

For more information about **The Zen G’s** events and workshops, follow the group on Facebook or visit zengyoga.com

Indaria Jones and her daughter, I’lea Williams, co-authored **“Beautiful Butterfly,”** a book filled with poetry and photography that celebrates periods of transition.

Copies of the book are available on Amazon

ABOUT THIS EFFORT

Hack Upstate's mission is to help advance Upstate New York's tech community.

Careers in Code, leading the pilot coding bootcamp, was launched in March 2019 to teach computer programming to women and minorities from Central New York's distressed communities and provide them with the technical skills they need to obtain internships and full-time software development jobs with local employers.

Instruction is provided five nights a week, for 24 weeks. Classes run from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. at The Tech Garden.

Funding for this effort is provided through the Alliance for Economic Inclusion, which oversaw \$30 million of New York state money earmarked for anti-poverty measures.

To learn more, visit careersincode.org

LOOKING TO HIRE?

Employers interested in hiring a Careers in Code intern should contact co-founder Jesse Peplinski at jesse@hackupstate.com.

Hack Upstate also hosts "hackathons" for teams of coders, designers and community members to solve problems, create new ideas and win prizes.

To learn more, visit hackupstate.com

UP TO CODE

A coding bootcamp hopes to advance Central New York's tech community

By Jeff Kramer
The Stand Columnist

Careers in Code bootcamp helps women and minorities gain new skills toward employment

Even the most tech-challenged can appreciate the simple logic behind Careers in Code, a computer bootcamp booting up in downtown Syracuse:

Identify women and minorities who need a career boost and show aptitude with computers. Give them 24 weeks of intensive, no-cost instruction. Throw in a free laptop for each student. Click! A homegrown supply of Web page designers, app builders and software developers enters a local economy starved for computing talent.

That's the premise behind Hack Upstate's code-writing bootcamp, which launched with 12 students in March at the Syracuse Tech Garden.

"We're super-excited to see where they will go in their software development careers," says Jesse Peplinski, a software engineer who along with Doug Crescenzi, who co-founded Hack Upstate, a nonprofit established to advance the region's tech community.

Applicants were carefully-screened. More than 40 people initially applied, but the classroom was kept small and selective to assure a likelihood of success and make it easier to secure funding for another bootcamp next year. The stakes are potentially high.

By partnering with municipalities, the private sector and various non-profits, Hack Upstate aspires to place bootcamps throughout Upstate New York to address two long-festering economic poxes — poverty and a shortage of trained tech workers. Syracuse — centrally located, afflicted by chronic "brain drain" and ranking among the top 10 most impoverished cities in the nation — was a natural starting point.

All students must complete "capstone" projects as part of the course requirements. The plan is to get the inaugural class employed when bootcamp ends, or even working as interns mid-session. Getting area companies and agencies involved early has the potential to shape the camps for years to come.

"We think this might work, but we're open to feedback," Peplinski told a group of community and technology leaders at a recent informational meeting.

The bootcamp runs Monday through Thursday for three hours per day. Students are assigned a "success representative" to help them negotiate any tricky passages. They're also given a stipend for expenses. In exchange, they agree to remain in Central New York for at least two

"If you don't have that degree, it locks you out of a lot of opportunities."

— Dana McMullen

years. Classes are also live-streamed at Hack Upstate's YouTube page.

A reporter dropping in on the bootcamp on a recent Tuesday found enrollees sharing their capstone ideas, which ranged from an online art gallery to a "Sensory Syracuse" app proposed by Kelly Corey. Her app would make it easier for people with light, sound and scent sensitivities to learn about the sensory environments of local establishments before visiting them in person.

"If it helps people get out in the community more, that can only be a good thing," she said.

Another student, South Sider Dana McMullen, has an impressive background in assistive technology for the disabled, having worked in the field at Syracuse University and Onondaga Community College. But when she tried to return to work after eight years of caring for her father with Alzheimer's, she discovered her old jobs no longer existed, required degrees she didn't have or that the salaries had dropped significantly. Completing the Careers in Code bootcamp, she said, will be a stepping-stone towards credentials that will cause employers to "take me more seriously. If you don't have that degree, it locks you out of a lot of opportunities." At bootcamp, she's researching the feasibility of an app to make the Alexa voice-activated virtual assistant interact more fully with other apps to make them easier to use for people with disabilities.

Dakir Thompson of Manlius has two capstones going. His cousin, Rashad Mustafa, who works at a pizza shop, showed so much talent as a painter that people started buying the pieces off his Facebook and Instagram pages. Now Thompson is building him a centralized Web store where his cousin's artwork can be catalogued and sold. His other project involves building a more sophisticated Facebook page for Voices of Women CNY, formed in response to the election of Donald Trump. The group



> Dakir Thompson is helping his cousin build a website to sell his art through the skills he learned at the bootcamp. | Jeff Kramer, Staff Photographer

has 800-plus members and its founder, a close friend and mentor, needs a way to collect and organize member data online.

Meanwhile, Anna Aombe plans to build an online business and resources directory for the North Side where she resides. Aombe immigrated nine years ago from Central Africa. She attended Le Moyne College but dropped out when she found herself struggling to balance academics and family. Before she left, however, she took a computer science class. After some initial misgivings with the subject, she caught the bug. “It’s fun, like a puzzle, putting pieces together,” she said, taking a break from a JavaScript lecture. In addition to the directory, Aombe hopes to build an anti-procrastination app that would lock you out of your devices until you complete a pre-set task — say, working out.

The possibilities of that app are intriguing, but for these 12 bootcamp pioneers, procrastination isn’t a problem. They’re too busy and too excited to crack the code on a new life. Thompson took computing classes for a year-and-a-half, but they were more theoretical than hands-on, he recalls.

“I didn’t build anything,” he said. “Here I’ve already built two things in the first three weeks.”

Kramer has written newspaper columns for many, many years in Syracuse and elsewhere. To contact him with story ideas, call (315) 420-2619 or email jeffkramer@gmail.com



Department of
Transportation

I-81 Viaduct Project

NYS DOT has published a preliminary I-81 Viaduct Project Draft Design Report/Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DDR/DEIS). This document examines the potential environmental effects of the project’s alternatives.

NYS DOT plans to hold a public information meeting to further update the public on the status of the project, including the latest developments in the alternatives. An announcement of the date, time, and place of that meeting is forthcoming.

The document can be downloaded on the project website, dot.ny.gov/i81opportunities, and copies will be distributed to project repositories throughout the Syracuse metropolitan region. The project website lists the repository locations.

Individuals may offer comments on the DDR/DEIS:

Written comments

Mail to:

Mark Frechette, PE, Project Director
New York State Department of Transportation, Region 3
333 East Washington Street
Syracuse, New York 13202

Email comments

Through the Project’s website:
dot.ny.gov/i81opportunities

For more information, contact:

NYS DOT
315-428-4351

Project toll-free hotline
1-855-I81-TALK (855-481-8255)

FIX IT or ticket



> Bureau of Administrative Adjudication Director Leah Witmer says her newly formed department is working to make handling property code violations more efficient, holding owners accountable and improving the quality of housing for Syracuse residents. | Emani Glee, Staff Photographer

By Emani Glee
The Stand Reporter

New city office aims to fight property code violations to improve living conditions for Syracuse tenants

Syracuse has launched the Bureau of Administrative Adjudication (BAA), which aims to fight blight by improving compliance with property codes.

Starting this March, the BAA now uses quicker and more efficient methods for imposing civic fines and penalties against property owners who have unresolved property code violations.

Before the new changes, cases could only be referred to the city's Department of Law. As a new department, the BAA will serve as another option to handle code violation referrals. Property owners have between 15 to 21

HOW TO CONTACT
Bureau of Administrative Adjudication
201 E. Washington St., Room 701
9 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays
(315) 448-8320

days to comply when violations are issued.

BAA's director and chief administrative law judge, Leah Witmer, said if there's no compliance, BAA issues a notice of violation ticket with a corresponding fine. The property owner will then have 30 days to enter a plea.

Respondents can either plead guilty and pay the fine, request a hearing by pleading not guilty or guilty with an explanation.

If they do nothing, the fine doubles, Witmer said.

The sheer number of violations in recent years have been more than the city's Division of Code resources can handle. There are approximately 9,000 one and two-family units in Syracuse overseen by that division, noted Ken Towsley, the office's director.

He estimated more than 5,000 complaints were filed in 2017, including 10,000 to 12,000 separate violations within those complaints.

In 2007, Syracuse passed a rental registry ordinance to help code enforcement maintain communications with landlords and keep track of rental properties.

Towsley said that up until now, the rental registry hasn't really been enforced, and as a result, many cases end in landlord/tenant eviction court.

Mercedes Chairs, 29, attended eviction court on Dec. 5, 2018 after receiving a notice of eviction. She lived at 1101 Teall Ave. for over a year.

Chairs said she began to start withholding rent because issues in her apartment weren't being addressed, even after code enforcement wrote a list of needed repairs.

"There's mold, and I have a 4-year-old daughter. I can't stay any longer," Chairs told The Stand.

As the threat of eviction loomed, Chairs had already accepted her fate. She already secured a new place to live, so her only request to the judge was to grant her at least two weeks to move.

On the same day, Samantha Laux, 33, also pled her case in court because she was facing eviction. Laux and her six children lived in their apartment on the North Side of Syracuse since October of 2017, but she's been frustrated with the living conditions.

She withheld rent for two months because she told the landlord her apartment had mice, roaches and a toilet that did not work. In court, she said nothing had been done to address the issues.

"When you have roaches that are coming out of the top of your refrigerator and you can't keep food in your fridge because there are too many roaches, that's sad," Laux told The Stand.

According to the Onondaga County Tenant Rights Handbook, insect infestation is an example of a violation of the warranty of habitability. Under the warranty, it is illegal to not provide a tenant with "a livable, safe and sanitary apartment."

Beginning in March, the codes division sent 1,000 violation letters to property owners who did not apply to the rental registry, said Witmer. Owners were given a 30-day registration period. Those who don't can expect to receive a BAA violation, complete with a fine.

BAA cases will be heard by Witmer, who also works with four part-time administrative law judges (ALJs). One



> BAA hearing decisions will be publicly available online on the city's website. | Emani Glee, Staff Photographer

will offer support in the hearings, while the other three work on the appeals panel that will meet quarterly.

"The underlying goal is to improve the quality of housing by holding property owners accountable for unresolved violations through the imposition of civil fines," Witmer said.

Four violation categories have been identified by the BAA — general property maintenance, blighting influences, periodic inspections and zoning. Each category has its own ticket fines and schedule.

Issuing civil fines is going to be a faster way to address unresolved violations, but it's important to understand that the BAA can't force compliance. A property owner may decide to just pay the fine or fines without correcting the violation.

Judges in city and state supreme courts have broader authority, but ALJs only have the ability to deal fines, Witmer explained.

The BAA will also utilize software to improve how the city deals with violations. Witmer said the BAA has built out the Division of Codes software to include a workflow and data collection, while her office is exploring more efficient software options.

The BAA begins with a trial period that will last around six weeks, according to Witmer. Throughout the trial, every part of the process from scheduling hearings and payment collection will be evaluated to determine if any changes will need to be made.

"We're trying to do a slow roll out," Witmer said. "To make sure we that we have everything right."

BAA RECAP

Syracuse's scores of property violations and lack of resources to address them created a backlog of cases. The Bureau of Administrative Adjudication was created in an effort to solve this problem.

The BAA is another weapon in the fight against urban blight by hearing and deciding on unresolved code violations. It offers a more efficient way to address the issues in the hopes of increasing property owner compliance and improving housing quality. With the BAA, Syracuse can spend more time and effort dealing with serious violations.

Syracuse's Division of Code Enforcement will continue issuing citations, and if an owner refuses to comply, a BAA violation ticket and fine will be applied. Owners can either plead guilty or pay the fine.

Hearings will be held at City Hall Commons, and the final decisions will be publicly available on the city's website.

Depending on the property code violation, fines range from \$50 up to \$300.

ON THE SIDE

GROWING SUPPORT

MISSION: A Tiny Home for Good Inc. supports those facing homelessness by providing affordable, safe and dignified homes and fostering strong community partnerships to ensure resident stability.

To learn more, visit atinyhomeforgood.org

GRANT AWARDED

A Tiny Home For Good receives funds to build seven more homes



> Andrew Lunetta, founder of A Tiny Home for Good, far left, poses for a photo with Dale Spicer, a tiny home resident; County Executive Ryan McMahon, and Stephanie Pasquale, commissioner of the city’s Department of Neighborhood and Business Development. | Provided Photo

Staff Report

Investment is part of county executive’s effort to address poverty and housing

A Tiny Home for Good received \$235,000 from Onondaga County to build seven new homes in the city of Syracuse.

County Executive J. Ryan McMahon joined by Andrew Lunetta, executive director of A Tiny Home for Good, announced April 9 that two homes will be located on property on West Matson Avenue, three on the corner of Highland and Knaul streets and the remaining two on a lot located on Marquette Street. The allocated funding stems from Medicaid reimbursements.

“The mission of A Tiny Home for Good is about more than housing. It is about providing a holistic approach to helping each resident including connecting them with a professional care manager to ensure they have access to the support services they may need,”

Lunetta said. “Thanks to the commitment and investment by County Executive McMahon and Onondaga County, we will be able to help even more of the most vulnerable in our community.”

In a release McMahon said a critical component to addressing poverty in the community is ensuring people have access to safe and affordable housing.

“Andrew has a tremendous track record of providing quality tiny homes to those who need help the most,” he said, “and when a program is working, we should be doubling down on our investment.”

In March, Lunetta’s effort was one of two local nonprofits to be awarded the 2019 Dan and Mary Lou Rubenstein Social Justice Award. Mothers Against Gun Violence was the second to be awarded.

The award is given in honor of the late professor Dan Rubenstein, a former Syracuse University faculty member in the School of Social Work and his late wife, Mary Lou, a former school social worker. The award has been presented over three decades.

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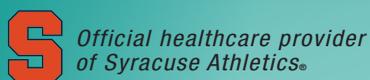
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crouse.org/ER



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MySouthSideStand.com