

the Stand south side news

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Syracuse, NY
FEBRUARY 2020 Issue 80 FREE

LASTING LOVE

How three Syracuse couples said 'yes' to love and keep the flame alive

UPCOMING CENSUS
NYS offers funding to help reach 'hard-to-count' populations

featured father

Tedd Perry shares the joys of adopting young siblings with his wife

Targeting trauma
Street Addiction Institute Inc. expands to support even more neighborhood teens in need

MASS CHURCH SAFETY



INSIDE | FEBRUARY

the
Stand

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FATHERHOOD | Meet Tedd Perry, a teen dad who later in life expanded his love by adopting two children to raise with wife, Annaliese Perry.

COMMUNITY | Learn all the ways data from the 2020 Census will be used and how those numbers inform what funding will be allotted locally.

CHURCH | Local houses of worship gather at Tucker Missionary Baptist Church for training on how to keep their congregants safe.

FEATURES | Whether in a long union or still in the honeymoon phase, three Syracuse couples share marriage tips.

POETRY | Anthony Hines-Tecoy shares a poem on the love-hate relationship smokers find themselves in with their nicotine addiction.

FEATURES | Meet Nyquest Robinson, who has found support from the Street Addiction Institute Inc., which received funding to help even more local teens.

COMMUNITY | See a list of special events planned in honor of Black History Month, including film screenings at the local library, concerts and more.

■ Cover photography provided by couple Emad Rahim and Cjala Surratt

CALENDAR | FEBRUARY

What: Safe@Home & Safe Sitter classes
When: 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 18, for Safe Sitter; 6 to 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 19, for Safe@Home
Where: Cannon Street Community Center, 515 Cannon St.
Details: Safe@Home is for youth in fourth through sixth grades to prepare to be safe when left home alone, watching younger siblings and/or babysitting. Youth will learn to practice safe habits, prevent unsafe situations, what to do when faced with danger, power failure, weather emergencies and how to access and respond to emergencies. Safe Sitter Essentials with CPR class is intended for youth in sixth through eighth grades. This one-day class covers child care skills, CPR, choking rescue, internet safety and entrepreneurial skills.
Cost: Limited scholarships are available to attend for free
To Register: Call (315) 677-1664 or send an email to forcecny@aol.com

What: A Brief History of Syracuse
When: Noon to 1 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 27
Where: Erie Canal Museum, 318 Erie Blvd. E.
Details: The city of Syracuse rose from humble beginnings to become the fifth most populous city in New York state, growing as a result of the Erie Canal and the industry it spurred. During the museum's first curator talk of 2020, Ashley Maready will detail Syracuse's early history through its canal years to the present day.
Cost: Free and open to the public
More Info: To learn more, visit eriecanalmuseum.org

This issue features three local couples — Emad Rahim and Cjala Surratt; newlyweds Umar and Maria Karriem, and Joe and Connie Gregory — who share not only how they fell in love but how they work to sustain that love.

The Stand featured successful couples in our February issue last year, too. Readers told us they loved the profiles on the Billues and the Owens. And we loved the feedback! So we decided to do it again this year.

Our current three couples were selected based on their unique love stories.

Dr. Emad Rahim nominated himself and his wife, who have previously shared their love story on NPR's StoryCorps and in the documentary "Against the Odds." Rahim is well-known for arriving to Syracuse as a refugee of the Khmer Rouge Killing Fields and for an attempt at the city's third-district councilor seat. He shared in an email "we met and wed in a month, and this summer we celebrated our 20 year anniversary. I am a Cambodian refugee that survived the Cambodian Killing Fields and my wife Cjala is African-American and a Syracuse native."



I decided to nominate the second couple myself after learning the pair tied the knot last July. I found it touching that Umar, 86, and his bride Maria, 56, have found love late in life.

Our final pair, the Gregorys "are incredible people who have continued to grow together, support one another and demonstrate what true Black love means," wrote their daughter, Darien, who nominated them for this issue.

Both are former teachers and shared openly about how they overcame challenges in their marriage together. Darien added that both of her parents make personal investments in the community with their time, their knowledge and their love and are very deserving to have their story heard.

Other stories in the issue include our Fatherhood Q&A with Tedd Perry, an update on the Street Addiction Institute Inc. and an examination on whether South Side residents should participate in the 2020 Census (spoiler alert — yes!).

Looking ahead, The Stand will celebrate its 10th year in print next month. This milestone will be celebrated with a special anniversary issue and gallery show of some of the best photos captured by Stand photographers during the past 10 years. This photo exhibit will also include a collection of images from our 10th Annual Photo Walk.

The gallery show reception will be held at the Link Gallery at the Nancy Cantor Warehouse downtown. We'll have more details soon. To stay up-to-date and receive the latest news from The Stand, be sure to sign up for our eNewsletter at bit.ly/StandNews.

— Ashley Kang

TRAIN WITH FACEBOOK

Join The Stand at Newhouse for this special training

The Stand will kick off 2020 with a training for our contributors on Facebook best practices for journalists.

The training is offered through a partnership of the **Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ) and the Facebook Journalism Project** to provide tips on how journalists can share their work and better engage the public with stories about their communities. This training has been offered to journalists at national conferences, workshops and newsrooms around the country.

Hilary Niles, an independent multimedia and data journalist with roots in community radio, will lead the training. Niles holds a master's from Missouri School of Journalism, has produced stories for NPR and the BBC, and currently chairs SPJ's Freelance Community Committee and serves on its Freedom of Information Committee.

In the future, local journalism trainings by Newhouse faculty will be offered for community members interested in becoming contributors to The Stand.

If interested in attending our **2020 workshops**, sign up to be included in our mailing list by completing the form at bit.ly/StandNews. You'll receive invites to relevant workshops to learn how to become a part of our project and have your voice heard.

Theodore “Tedd” Perry

Nominated by his wife Annaliese Perry

By Alex Rouhandeh
The Stand Intern

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

A. I would have to describe that feeling as being excited but scared, not knowing whether I was going to have a boy or a girl at the time, but knowing that I was going to be a father ... and knowing that I was going to have to figure out a way to be a provider. I was still in high school and I was still trying to transition as far as having a part-time job. I was also trying to be a young rap star. So, being popular was on the list too, and trying to monetize that hobby into a profession.

Q. What year of high school was it you became a father?

A. When I was 16, so 11th grade.

Q. What was it like when your first child was born?

A. Unfortunately, I wasn't present when my first child was born. I went down to South Carolina to do a year of school there. My master plan was to get my driver's license there (because you can get your license there at age 15). If you're a New Yorker in the South, you're super popular, and I took full advantage of that. On my way back home after that year, I came back with my license and I also came back knowing that I had a baby on the way.

I was unable to be present when Andre was born; I couldn't get down there in time. It was a challenge for Andre's mother too, being a teenage mom. ... At that time, the families thought I abandoned my son, because I wasn't around. Fast-forward, I did gain custody of my son when he was 8 years old. From 8 to adulthood, he was under my guidance.

Q. What can you share about each of your kids?

A. My oldest son, Andre, is very athletic. I'm a grandfather because of him. He's very into his children because he has three children, and he's a good father himself. He's still a kid at heart. He still plays video games, and he's actually good at it to the point he's monetized that.

My oldest daughter, Chanelle, is an entrepreneur in her own right. Right now, she works for Niagara Mohawk, relocated to New York City and also has a side-hustle. She's into educating herself and pushing herself to do better. She takes pride in her independence. I love that about her.



MEET FATHER TEDD PERRY: With his wife Annaliese, Tedd adopted two young children, a sister, Nataylia, and brother Sabastian. | Justin Fogarty, Staff Photographer

Then, it's just my babies living with my wife and me now. Nataylia, 10, is very competitive academically, which I love. She really wants to impress, and she wants people to know that she's pretty smart. My daughter is a mini-me of my wife. She's into photography, she's into reading a lot, she's not so much into fashion, but she has her own style and is not afraid to express her individuality.

My son, Sabastian, 9, the youngest, looks like the baby because he's short. He's a romantic, as my wife would say. He wants to make sure everyone is happy. We call him "the mayor." He's really popular at school. Teachers love him. He's actually one of the kindest people you'll ever meet. You'll fall

in love with him. We think he'll be some kind of inventor. He likes to create things whether it's Legos or other toys we give him.

They're good children. My wife and I adopted Nataylia and Sabastion. They've been with us for about four and a half years. They're incredible. It was a rough start, but right now they're in pocket.

Q. What was your relationship like with your father?

A. I would say my relationship with my father was a fair one. I wouldn't say it was the best, but I wouldn't say we had a bad relationship. I know at times my father had to hold two jobs down. Looking back at it now, I think, (he) provided for the kind of lifestyle he was aspiring to give to us. I wish we had a lot more time to spend together, but, when you're old enough, you realize he had to do what he had to do. So, I can say this — when we did party, we partied. Even getting ice cream, it was like, "Oh! We're getting ice cream." He also made sure we got to some of the big amusement parks or attractions. It was all because of him and his work ethic, so I can appreciate that. I think just knowing he was a provider and understood that role and knowing that I had an example to be a provider myself.

Dad. ... There's no more Tedd and Annaliese, which is how our relationship started. To see them transition in such a natural way and you can hear that tone and emotion in their voice when they say, "Mom," "Dad." Boom! These are our kids, man!

To even say that they're adoptive kids feels so wrong, but I understand that you shouldn't be ashamed of that either. They know they're adopted, but that's just a word. They know that they are extra special, because we didn't just land into our family... we made our family!

Q. Any advice for first-time dads?

A. I would say to a young father when it's unexpected is that everyone in that situation is scared. Look to who you can lean on. Your family. My mother was upset at first, but then she accepted it. What can you do? You don't abandon these kids.

I knew even though I wanted to pursue my rap career, I was a father before an artist. The reality was that I had somebody to take care of, so I had to prioritize, and I'm not regretting that. When you're pursuing your dreams you then have to do double-time. You have to work hard at being a parent, your job, and your passion. Don't give

"It's cool to know that they're teaching you too"

Q. What do you love most about being a father?

A. Learning from our children. When we do homework, it allows that time to bond with our kids. My son is doing research on the White House, and he said, "did you know the White House has 132 rooms?" "No, I didn't know that!" It's cool to know that they're teaching you too, and I think that's beautiful.

Q. What has been one of your greatest challenges as a father?

A. What's challenging is a lot of things you try and hide from them that they're going to find out about when they leave your home. I think when you're raising a girl or a boy that the goal is for them to be responsible, whether it's sex, drugs, even music. That's always a debate. The only thing you can really do is hope you instill just enough for when they explore that they know what the consequences are. That's a challenge: making sure they're not in danger.

Q. How special is it to be an adoptive father?

A. I think what I admire most is when they call us Mom and

up on your dreams — learn how to navigate those waters the best way and maximize your time you're spending with your child and your art. Keep your head up and stay focused.

Q. Final thoughts?

A. I think it's very important that media outlets like this show this side. For many years there's just been a lot of negative images of the Black man family experience, and a lot of us were absent from the homes based on our history. We can often chalk that up to it being systemic. But, it's good to see this series is showing fathers in the home that are doing the balancing act in a positive way. And there're so many more stories out there that can give a glimpse to who those people are and how they do it.

FAMILY STORY



Visit The Stand's homepage at mysouthsidestand.com to watch a video produced by Emily Petersen on the Perry Family.

LOCAL FUNDING

The Central New York Community Foundation awarded a \$15,000 grant to Interfaith Works to promote completion of the 2020 Census with New Americans and seniors, two populations that are often under counted. This is one of five grants awarded by the foundation, totaling \$65,000, to ensure Central New York's residents are accurately counted.

Historically, hard-to-count populations have included immigrants, the elderly, those living in rural areas and low-income households, limited-English proficient populations and young children. The most common reasons for not completing have been identified as distrust in government, language barriers and frequent residency changes.

Also, the Digital Divide is likely to play a role in hindering responses. For the first time, the Census Bureau will collect responses using an online system, leaving households with no internet access at serious risk of being undercounted. To address this, Interfaith Works will use a portion of its grant to install a computer kiosk to make it easier for visitors of its James Street facility to complete the survey.

CENSUS CONCERNS

Syracuse is employing strategies to reach hard-to-count communities

By Jeff Kramer
The Stand Columnist

The New York State Census Equity Fund has awarded \$1.4 million for community outreach

Hard as this might be to believe, the U.S. Census was once as controversial as counting sheep. Injustices such as excluding former slaves and “Indians not taxed” were behind us. The census evolved into a routine act of civic maintenance, the equivalent of changing the oil in our democracy every 10 years.

“The plan,” the U.S. Census Bureau explains on its website, “was to count every living person in the newly created United States of America, and to use that count to determine representation in the Congress.”

Simple enough except nothing's simple in *The Time of the Great Divider*. These days even a Sharpie gets weaponized, so why not arm the census to solidify your goofy grip on power?

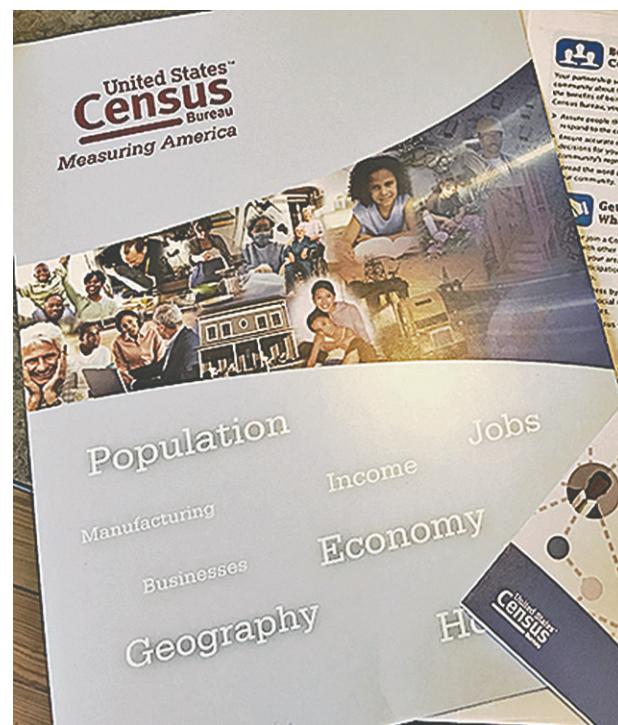
The good news is that the Supreme Court narrowly shot down the Administration's plan to include a citizenship question in the 2020 Census. But the long, scary debate almost certainly had a chilling effect that could dissuade many from participating. For that matter, immigrant roundups, family separations and hate speech from the Oval Office don't exactly encourage answering the census. Imagine working a 16-hour shift in a dairy barn, then coming home to learn that ICE deported your nephew — and, oh by the way, in the interest of maintaining a healthy democracy and getting our regional share of highway funding, the government wants you to disclose whether the people living in your trailer “are Hispanic, Latino or of Spanish origin.”

Good luck with that.

“There was this fear that existed especially before we knew if there was going to be a citizenship question on the survey,” says Tory Russo, the city's census coordinator. “I'm sure some of that fear is still out there.”

Other obstacles abound: Language issues and refusal to answer the door for fear that a census worker is a cop or a bill collector. Then by moving online, this assumed convenience in completing the form poses yet another challenge for some due to poor internet connectivity in neighborhoods such as the South Side.

Strategies to overcome those problems are supposed to be in the works, but there's much to do before mid-March when the bureau's online canvassing begins. Census organizers will need to go beyond merely explaining to people what the census is and why it's important



> National Census Day is April 1, but the 2020 Census will start to be sent out to households across the U.S. in March. | File Photo

to be counted. This time a more complex message must be conveyed: That the federal government has normal, necessary non-political functions that operate independently of the gibberish and cruelty generated by the child-maniac plopped at the pinnacle.

Kayla Kelechian, an organizer with the Workers Center of Central New York, put it this way:

“You tell people don't answer the door because it might be ICE, and now you're telling them to open it (for census workers).”

Factor in reports that the Trump Administration is forever trying to deport legal residents, and it's only logical that those on the fringes would be skittish about popping up for an official head count — assuming they're aware one even exists. I recently asked a New American friend from Sudan if he was planning to answer the census.

“What is this census you speak of?” he asked apprehensively. “What do I need to do?”

I explained that the census is no big deal, but on the other hand it is kind of a big deal. Eventually he seemed to understand, sort of, and calmed down. I'm leaving my friend's name out of this story because he's my friend, and I don't trust the government. But it's a small example of what census advocates will be up against in

terms of outreach.

Locally, the job of getting the count out falls to the snappily named 2020 Census Syracuse-Onondaga County Complete Count Committee (SOC-CCC). The panel's 50 members include representatives of businesses, nonprofits and educational institutions. The strategy is to use "trusted messengers" — particularly from organizations that work with immigrants and the poor — to educate clients that participating in the census is necessary and the information they provide is protected. Census data can be used for statistical purposes only and not passed on to law enforcement, nor can census officials disclose your identity for any reason.

Let's hope it stays that way.

"There's such a distrust of this government, but at the end of the day we have to work through it because it's about resources," Kelechian said.

To that end, Interfaith Works of Central New York, one of the city's primary refugee resettlement agencies (where I spend time as a volunteer) recently won a \$15,000 grant from the Community Foundation to create a wired kiosk to teach new Americans about the census. Abdul Saboor, a community navigator with Interfaith, acknowledged that education is only part of it.

"How do you motivate a population that is being constantly targeted?" he asked.

He believes the answer lies in casting the census as an opportunity for new Americans and other groups to shed their fear and passivity and instead take an active role in shaping the future of the country.

"This is not a political issue," Saboor said. "It's a civic issue."

There used to be little disagreement about that. Census data is used for far more than apportioning Congressional seats. It's the source material for drawing state legislative boundaries and as a basis for distributing federal aid for roads, schools, academic research and on and on.

The census may be boring, but its endgame is not. It's about sharing power, money and information in the most equitable way the framers could envision.

"We need to reclaim what the census is," said Rahzie Seals, who, like Kelechian, is a coordinator at the Workers Center. "Can you imagine if everyone in the city of Syracuse was counted, what that would look like, what that would mean?"

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

WHY GET COUNTED

It is estimated by the George Washington University Institute of Public Policy that for every one person not counted, communities **lose approximately \$1,000** in funding per year toward hospitals, schools, transportation, parks, public facilities and nonprofit organizations.

ON THE SIDE

EMERGENCY SERVICES

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TAKE A TRAINING

ALICE (Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, Evacuate) provides preparation and a plan for individuals and organizations on how to more proactively handle the threat of an aggressive intruder or shooter. ALICE Training tactics have become the accepted response, versus the traditional “lockdown only” approach.

ALICE Training Institute has created a House of Worship training program to:

- Maximize Survival of congregants, staff, volunteers and leadership
- Provide Accountability by documenting completed training and preparation
- Reduce Liability by implementing and training in alignment with state and federal standards of care for violent intruder events

Learn more about this offering by visiting alicetraining.com

PLANNING AHEAD

With rise in attacks on houses of worship, local deacon wants all ready



> Pete Owen from the New York State Police presents on safety planning for an active shooter during the Church Safety and Security Summit held Jan. 18. | Shrishti Mathew, Staff Photographer

By Shrishti Mathew
The Stand Intern

Church Safety and Security Summit organized to prepare local congregants in case of attack

At the end of 2019, a man walked into a Texas church in the middle of Sunday worship and began firing a weapon, killing two and wounding three. Two years before that, at the First Baptist Church in Sutherland Springs, Texas, another gunman shot and fatally wounded 26, further wounding another 20. These are just two church shootings that took place in the United States over the past two years.

With this in mind, the Tucker Missionary Baptist Church hosted a Church Safety and Security Summit for houses of worship last month. The summit was held in association with the New York State Police Counter Terrorism Intelligence Unit. Representatives from the Syracuse police and fire departments were also present.

According to presenter Pete Owen, a protective security advisor, there are three options for an individual to take during an active shooting: to run, to hide or to fight. He advised worshippers who run, to take action to protect lives, leave belongings behind and keep their

hands up when exiting the building so law enforcement officials will know they are not a threat.

It is important, he said, to ensure that worshippers were trained in basic techniques to keep themselves safe, such as how to hide and basic first aid like CPR because of current attacks on places of faith across the nation in recent years. He added that safety workshops need to be conducted as often as fire drills and suggested that members of the congregation take the New York State’s Safety Course which is available for free online. His presentation was followed by a talk by the fire department and the Department of Homeland Security.

“You can’t say where it will happen. No place is more vulnerable than the other. The best thing to do is to be prepared,” said Lt. Brian Novitsky of the Syracuse Police Department.

Owen also suggested that a member of the congregation stand by the entrance to identify any behavior that seems suspicious. This person would be able to lock the doors and call for help if they see someone questionable coming in once the service has begun. Alternatively, they would be able to identify anyone who was a known troublemaker or looked suspicious.

The event was the brainchild of Kyle Tape, a deacon at Tucker Missionary Baptist Church and director of the

Commission on Security. Tape began his career in security as a bouncer at a club. He started getting involved in church security after he was asked to help manage a youth event at his church.

“Church exists to fulfill a need. We can’t turn people away from the House of God. But unfortunately, with the way the world has been, we have to be careful and we have to watch out,” he said. “This is a sort of insurance. The shootings in Texas and other parts of the world told me that we also needed to keep ourselves safe.”

WHEN AND HOW TO RESPOND TO AN ACTIVE SHOOTER

RUN — If there is an accessible escape, attempt to evacuate

Be sure to:

- Have an escape route and plan in mind
- Run whether or not your friends come with you
- Leave your belongings behind
- Help others run
- Keep your hands visible
- Follow what law-enforcement officials tell you
- Do not attempt to move wounded people
- Call 911 when you are safe
- If you cannot speak, leave the line open and allow the dispatcher to listen

HIDE — If you can’t run, hide

Your hiding place should:

- Be out of the active shooter’s sight
- Provide protection if shots are fired in your direction
- Have options to escape

FIGHT — As a last resort, and only when your life is in imminent danger, attempt to incapacitate the active shooter

Strategies include:

- Acting as aggressively as possible against him/her
- Throwing items and improvising weapons
- Yelling

— Source: Department of Homeland Security Brochure on how to respond to an active shooter

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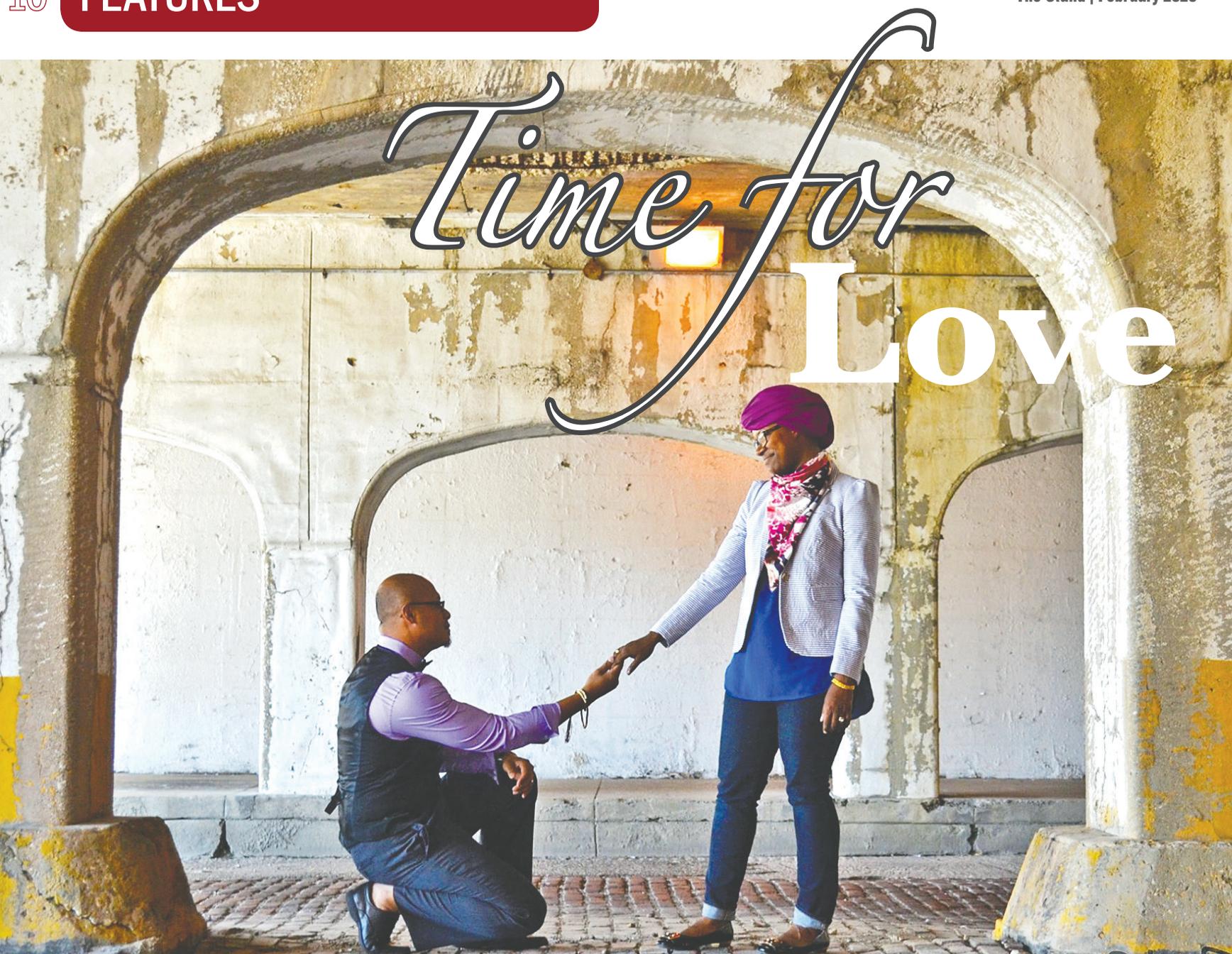


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> Emad Rahim, 41, and Cjala Surratt, 42, have been married for 20 years. Surratt is the communications coordinator for Light Work Gallery and sits on several boards such as the Community Folk Art Center. Rahim is a dean at Claremont Lincoln University and endowed chair and professor at Bellevue University. | Provided Photo

Marcus Navarro
The Stand Intern

&

Keith Muhammad
Community Contributor

couples about the evolution of their relationships and the things that make their marriages thrive.

Three Syracuse couples share their stories of finding love and tips on how to keep a marriage going strong

According to the Pew Research Center, marriage rates of white adults were roughly 24 percent higher than the marriage rates of Black adults. African-American marriage rates were also lower compared to Asians and Hispanics. But despite statistics, there are plenty of strong marriages in the South Side.

A Pew Forum Religious Landscape survey found shared interests, satisfying sexual relationship, shared household responsibilities, shared religion and having children among the most important attributes of a strong union. The Stand spoke to three South Side

LOOKING BACK ON TWO DECADES

Emad Rahim and Cjala Surratt had only been dating for a few weeks when she gave him a letter. It detailed the kinds of things she wanted in a man, a relationship and the future she envisioned. It was meant to ensure both were in the same place. She says he grossly misrepresents her one-page as a multi-page “manifesto.”

“I don’t read novels that thick,” Emad joked.

But, it inspired him to buy a wedding ring within the week.

He was attracted to her, and slightly intimidated, because she was well-traveled and well-educated.

At the time, he was a struggling student at Onondaga Community College. But he was attentive, which impressed her. For example, one day he surprised her with blueberry pancakes at work because in the span of a long conversation she had mentioned that she enjoyed them.

Reflecting on those early days, it was her bold letter that made him step up. “I was afraid that if she goes back overseas (to study abroad), I’d probably never see her again,” Emad said.

Within a month, they had gone from an awkward set up by friends at a small barbecue to marriage. Their introduction felt so formal: they sat in their friend’s living room but did not speak to each other. Instead Emad’s friend asked Cjala questions and her friend asked him questions, acting as liaisons bridging a language barrier. But once they saw that wasn’t working, they exchanged numbers.

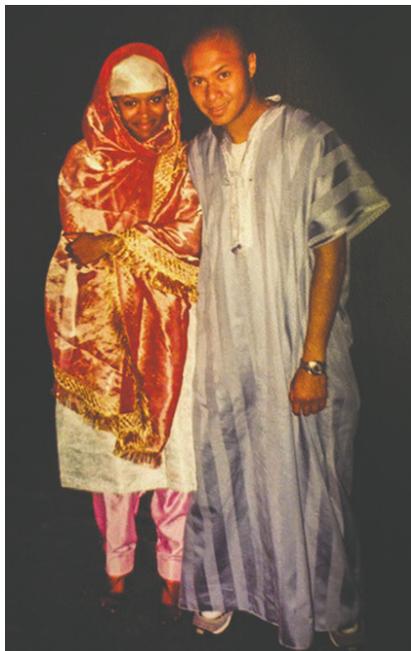
“That’s when we ran up my mother’s phone bill and my brother got very angry because I would never turn over the line,” Cjala said.

Predictably, friends and family thought they were moving too fast. Emad told his mother he was getting married, and she thought it was a joke. She had yet to meet Cjala and missed the wedding because she didn’t believe it was real.

Friends were confused by the idea too because both seemed so different. Although both are Muslim, Cjala came from a middle-class, Black family in the suburbs outside of Syracuse, and Emad was a Cambodian refugee who grew up in poverty and struggled through high school.

The two look back now and believe they were in “deep juvenile

infatuation.” They saw themselves as Romeo and Juliet — it was them against the world. Now, they conceptualize love as “something that withstands something” and their relationship had yet to be tested at that time. But that would soon change.



> The couple on their wedding day in 1999. | Provided Photo

In the same week of their marriage, their apartment burned down and the newly-weds moved into Cjala’s mom’s unfinished attic. But it happened to be a gift in disguise because it gave her family a chance to know Emad and see that he was committed.

The pair celebrated their 20th anniversary last July. They now have two daughters: Sarhia, 16, who they say is smarter than they are, and Safia, 7, who is a ball of energy. They’ve celebrated successes in education and careers; they’ve lost jobs and struggled over a miscarriage. No matter the hurdle, they’ve jumped together and their love endured it all.

“I think those moments when we’re like, ‘Oh, you’re still here, I’m still here. OK. All right, no one is bailing out of this,’” Cjala began. “Those are the moments where I think this is built on something really strong and profound.”

One of those moments for Cjala was when doctors believed their eldest daughter might have had Downs Syndrome. Although, everything is fine now, the news invoked fear.

“I didn’t know what to do with that emotionally,” Cjala said. “At that time, Emad worked with several different social service agencies that dealt with people

who are differently-abled. And he said, ‘All right. That’s what God has given us. And actually, this is the perfect family because I know where all the resources are, I know how to advocate for this child. If this is the child that we have been gifted with. Then we were set.’ I was blown away by that.” —MN

THEIR TIPS TO KEEP LOVE ALIVE



EMAD RAHIM & CJALA SURRATT

- **Have a Strong, Supportive Network of Friends and Family** — After the miscarriage, Emad did what he could to be supportive but was also suffering. Cjala saw that but was still emotionally traumatized. So, she reached out to Emad’s best friend to tell him what had happened, and to say “(Emad) may not broach it, but he needs you.”
- **Tag-Team** — There has been a give and take in the relationship that has allowed the two to succeed. Emad focused on school and Cjala worked multiple jobs, then once he finished, it was time for Cjala to focus on education while Emad worked multiple jobs.
- **Be Open and Honest** — They say it’s important to share each other’s history and, most importantly, to unpack it. They’ve come to understand that some things may trigger painful memories. They have learned that if one is upset, they don’t leave the house, which can trigger abandonment issues — neither had their fathers present from an early age — but instead go to blow off steam in the basement.
- **Take Stock of Your Own Personal Inventory** — Cjala says it’s important to be clear about who you are. “Sometimes people go into something seeking out things that are lacking in themselves in the other person, and that person isn’t responsible for making you feel whole.”
- **Continue to Date** — Emad planned their 20th anniversary, which included a dinner at a rotating restaurant in New York City and to see “The Lion King” because Cjala loves theater.

NEWLYWEDS SHOW IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO FIND LOVE

If you are wondering if you'll ever find the right person, you're not alone. Almost everyone has had this thought at some point. However, don't despair. Regardless of your age, it's never too late for love.

Just ask the newlyweds, Maria and Umar Karriem who are 57 and 86 years old, respectively. The South Side couple spoke with *The Stand* to share how they met and the challenges of marriage.

Maria had been living in Toomey Abbott Towers for about five years before Umar realized that the wife that he had been looking for all these years had finally come. He says he saw her every day, but the distractions of life prevented him from fully recognizing her presence.

Sometimes people can't see what's right in front of them because of mental blind spots, called Scotomas, says Alan Akridge, author of "Why We Can't See What's in Front of Us." These blind spots influence our perceptions and determine our reality. So it was with Umar who says, "Satan kept me occupied with other things and not seeing reality."

Maria took fate into her own hands and made the first move. One day she walked up to Umar and told him that she had been watching him for some time. She placed a gift, a watch, in his hand and said, "This is for you."

In some countries, giving a watch or timepiece to your love interest is considered bad luck. In China, for example, receiving or giving a watch is considered a curse. When combined, the two Chinese symbols for "to give" and "watch" mean wake or funeral. Because of this, the gesture of giving a watch became known as "counting down the days" on a relationship, according to Bronya, the author of the article, "Time Superstitions to Watch Out for This Halloween." One way to counter this superstition is to offer a small sum, a penny, for the gift. In this way, the watch is actually sold and not given.

But for Maria and Umar, the watch represents the start of a beautiful relationship. That is not to say that they have not faced challenges. Their first challenge: age. People tend to be less pliable as they age and become set in their ways. Second, Umar is Black and Muslim. Maria is Brown — a Latina — and Christian. Cross-cultural relationships can bring unique challenges: language barriers, unsupportive families and religious differences.

Through self-sacrifice, commitment and compromise, the couple has overcome their challenges. For example, the marriage ceremony took place July 5, 2019, in Maria's home church, The New Beginnings Missionary Baptist Church, on Delaware Street. Although Umar says they



> Before his retirement, Umar Karriem worked with the New York State Division of Youth at Annsville, New York. Maria Karriem still holds strong ties to Puerto Rico and returned last month to check on family affected by the recent earthquake. | Brenda Muhammad, Staff Photographer

were actually shooting for July 4, which is the founding of the Nation of Islam (NOI). They were surrounded by a supportive assembly of family members as they exchanged marriage vows.

Umar is no stranger to marriage vows having been married before. He says getting married this time around is the proudest moment in his life because he sees God in their marriage.

"This marriage is the fulfillment of a dream," he said. "This lady (is) a blessing to me."

Maria nods her head and says, "I love that man; not important how old he is." She says Umar is a good husband, father and grandfather, noting that the children love him and call him grandpa.

She confirms how she watched Umar for five years, but he never noticed her. "I saw him before, but he didn't see me." She shrugs her shoulders, waves her hand and continues, "it's not

time before; the time is now."

"Real love comes in the moments—morning, night," she pauses, "or whatever — but, it comes no matter what age." —

KM



> The couple on their wedding day. | Provided Photo

THEIR TIPS TO KEEP LOVE ALIVE



UMAR & MARIA KARRIEM

- **Learn to Compromise** — Maria is a Christian; Umar, a Muslim. They compromised on the venue and the date of the wedding ceremony. Maria chose her family church as the venue, and Umar chose a date which was significant to his religion.
- **Treat Each Other with Respect** — One way to show respect is to build up one another. Umar calls Maria his queen. Maria refers to Umar as her beautiful baby.
- **Have Adventures While You Can** — The couple did not have a honeymoon. Umar would like to spend two weeks at his birthplace, Kings Tree, South Carolina. Maria is a little more adventurous. She would like to honeymoon in Alaska.
- **Set Realistic Expectations, but Dream Big** — The couple still maintains two apartments in Toomey Abbott Towers and have applied for a larger unit. For Maria, this has been their biggest challenge. She looks forward to the day when they can fully live together. Umar has big dreams. He hopes to one day purchase a small house with a yard where he can plant a garden and entertain his grandchildren.
- **Good Marriage is Like Good Wine** — It gets better with time!

COUPLE CONTINUES TO ‘CHOOSE’ EACH OTHER AGAIN & AGAIN



> Connie Gregory, 66, and Joe Gregory, 70, recently celebrated their 46th anniversary. Connie works for Upstate University Hospital and founded “Lit for Life,” a literacy program to encourage parents to read to their children. Joe is retired from the Hillbrook Detention Center and was a former basketball coach at Manlius Pebble Hill and continues to coach soccer. | Justin Fogarty, Staff Photographer

Joe and Connie Gregory first met at Corcoran High School. She was modeling in a fashion show and he worked as a stage-hand. But they began dating years later when they found each other again at Syracuse University. Both had enrolled in the teaching program, which started in the summer.

“I would offer to give her a ride,” Joe said. “And she would say, ‘No, I’ll take the bus,’ for about three or four times. Maybe by the fourth time, she accepted. So that was the start.”

The two began hanging out in Joe’s apartment, talking at the restaurant where Connie worked nights and went to class together every day. Eventually, they spoke about their different family experiences and discussed what they wanted in a marriage. Both valued independence. They would be together because they wanted to be married, not because they had to.

After seeing each other through the summer, discussions turned into a decision. As a devout Christian, Connie’s mother would not approve of her moving in with Joe before they were married. So, in September, they drove to Washington D.C. to elope.

“We started out on a beautiful Sunday morning,” Connie said. “And we drove and then we decided to call my mom. ... She was awfully upset. She convinced him that we should come back and have a wedding.”

They came home, and Connie’s mom orchestrated a beautiful candlelit wedding by December, during their next break from school. About 100 friends and family packed into the South Side’s Gospel Temple Church of God in Christ to watch the couple wed

ON THE SIDE

CELEBRATE MATRIMONY

World Marriage Day Celebration

The 35th Annual World Marriage Day will be celebrated at 2:30 p.m. Feb. 16, at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, located at 259 E. Onondaga St. in Syracuse.

Bishop Douglas Lucia will celebrate Mass and invite all couples in attendance to renew their commitment to Holy Matrimony. He will specially honor couples who will celebrate their 25th, 50th and beyond 50th anniversary in 2020.

after 5 months of dating. The newly-weds decided that after a year, they would evaluate the relationship to see if that's what they truly wanted. But a year and a half later, the marriage was treading rocky waters. Joe admits he had some maturing to do.

Then their son Marcus was born. Joe believed his child needed a strong family structure because of his own childhood. His parents had separated when he was 7 and he remembered "needing and wanting to have a father figure."

"I wanted to be there for him," Joe said.

He is an avid sports fan and Connie is anything but. She does, however, have strong opinions on education, and the two worked to combine those to instill strong values in their kids, Joe says. Both Marcus, now 44, and their daughter Darien, now 39, were artistic and athletic; Connie says they got those attributes from Joe, who was often their coach.

"They came first during those years," Connie said.

The couple centered around getting the kids to college and to support them, especially when Darien was sick. She was diagnosed with Stage IV Wilms tumor when she was 11 and needed surgery as well as months of chemo and radiation therapy.

"I really had to be like the general," Connie said. She ensured the family kept to their structure to

persevere, whether it was school or sports, she wanted to keep things as similar as possible so they wouldn't fall apart. The support of friends and their faith in Christianity helped as well.

"Prayer has a lot to do with anything that we do," Connie said.

She notes they also had a strong example in Connie's parents: John and Audrey Gomez have been married for nearly seven decades. The Gregorys have watched the prototypical couple grow old and continue to care for each other.

Soon the pair faced a new challenge: an empty nest. They needed to decide if they wanted to stay married, or if it would simply be the status quo. At year 23, they again chose to be together because they wanted to, not because they had to.

"We had the conversation about what kind of marriage we want when they're gone," Connie said. "[W]e decided that we wanted to have fun."

They began taking trips: the Philadelphia Flower Show each year, concerts in Saratoga and visited Frank Lloyd homes outside of Chicago.

Connie says the decision made a big difference because other couples may not know what to do once the kids leave the house and that it gave their marriage direction. "We wanted to keep making the effort for it to be fun," Connie said. "And to stay together for those reasons rather than just the fact that we've been around so long." —MN



> The couple on their wedding day. | Provided Photo

THEIR TIPS TO KEEP LOVE ALIVE



CONNIE & JOE GREGORY

- **Know What You Want in a Partner** — Both had a list of attributes they thought good spouse should embody. Connie had an idea of what she wanted her relationship to look like and Joe wanted someone "smarter than him."
- **Embrace Independence** — Both wanted someone with their own interests, and both agree it's important to let that person keep their interests. You can't change them and understand that they will likely change and grow from when you first marry.
- **Be Observant** — Joe says it's important to pay attention to the relationships of those around you and see how they deal with issues. If the outcomes were positive, think about how they handled it, and if it was negative, think about how you might manage the situation differently.
- **Communicate** — "You have to talk about certain things so you can navigate through things," Joe said. "It's not always going to be easy." It's not always easy to maneuver around Joe's coaching schedule but they figure it out and know that the season only lasts a few months.
- **Be Goal Oriented** — Connie says that by making a choice, it gave them a direction to work towards. "Do we still want to be married? Yep!" Connie said. "So let's keep it going, keep it going. And it makes a difference. It's a choice."

Having a Relationship with a Cigarette

— By Anthony Hines-Tecoy

With you

In you

I am yours

I am you

Oh, How I love the way

You cough

And my name comes out

At times

I can be too much

At times

I am never enough

God, How I love the way

You light my fire

For all the world to see

How I wish I could

Show the world your heart

From the time you breathe my air

That would make a great start

But you

Are not me

You use me

Until I wither away

And lie with the ashes

On the earth

I am yours

I am you

Oh God, How I love you

There are others in your life,

I'm sure

But each time you touch me

I know that I touch you, deeply

Heart and soul

What's so sad is

I'll be there for you

Even when you're gone

I am you

I will be you

There will be others like you

Others like me

And I'll touch them

as you did me

As I wither

So will you

I want you

When you want me

Need me

Oh God,

How I love the way

I kill you

I want you

When you want me

Need me



ON THE SIDE

THREE OFFERINGS

Let Me Be Great Program

- Provides education to students enrolled in city schools on street violence and how to develop healthy ways to process trauma
- Works in partnership with the Syracuse City School District

Street Court Program

- For ages 13 to 17
- Rehabilitates youth exhibiting street addictive behavior
- Enrollment is done through Onondaga Family Services or the Juvenile Detention Center
- Works in partnership with local law enforcement

Trauma Response Team

- Targets 13202, 13205 and 13207 zip codes, which are particularly prone to violence
- Handles 300 to 500 families and 15 to 18 consistent cases of traumatized community members
- Works in partnership with Upstate Medical University

To learn more, visit streetaddictioninc.org

MODEL MENTORSHIP

Intervention program receives funding to expand after-school offerings

By Matti Gellman
Staff Reporter

Street Addiction Institute Inc. continues to grow to support South Side youth and beyond

Would you still get to school on time, if you had to walk through a war zone?

Students living on Syracuse’s South Side have seen peers killed in the blocks between a bus stop and a front porch. They turn each corner, never knowing if it will be their last. In 2017, Syracuse’s South Side was found to have one of the highest teen murder rates in the nation. Much of the violence was found to be motivated by retaliation from gangs, with 27 different gangs operating in the South Side alone, according to data from the Trauma Response Team. The Syracuse Police Department reports gangs members can be as young as 12.

Nyquest Robinson, 16, grew up in housing projects on the South Side and says living among this level of violence clouds the line between a victim and a perpetrator. At 14, he was placed on probation for a felony charge of robbery.

“My mom tried to move me out of the projects when I was getting into trouble so I could focus on school, but I kept going back. Everyone I knew was down there. I could not just leave. It was like an addiction,” Robinson said.

In October, Gov. Andrew Cuomo’s Hope Initiative awarded \$205,000 to the Street Addiction Institute Inc. (SAII), a local nonprofit, for the creation of an after-school program that provides an outlet for students like Robinson to cope with trauma from street violence. The nonprofit’s model has garnered interest due to its focus on treating violent behavior in youth as an addiction to street crime, often brought on by trauma. The money serves as the latest acknowledgement of the South Side’s increased need for trauma services as violence among teens continues to rise as well as Street Addiction Institute’s success in creating programming run by South Siders for South Siders.

Since launching in 2015, SAII says it has increased its non-recidivism rate from 80 to 92 percent for all youth enrolled to curb violent behavior. SAII’s trauma team has also grown to help 300 to 500 families within the past year. The new after-school program is designed to build on SAII’s Let Me Be Great program, one of the three branches of SAII’s services for the community — each of which focuses on a different community demographic.

The Let Me Be Great program focuses on educat-



> Nyquest Robinson works with a Street Addiction Institute Inc. sponsor to receive the program’s intervention methods to address trauma. | Cherilyn Beckles, Staff Photographer

ing students affected by street violence and offering them activities such as yoga and basketball where they can create a community among peers who are experiencing similar trauma from their neighborhood. Students perform a minimum of 10 community service hours per month and must create “smart goals” with SAII mentors, or sponsors, to ensure improvements to grades and attendance.

This component is also incorporated into the funded Hope Initiative after-school component. The Hope Initiative works with 12 organizations, including SAII, to empower local organizations to mitigate issues of poverty or violence.

Students attending the Let Me Be Great after-school program are city students who have missed at least 85 percent of school during the 2018-2019 school year, often due to complications from street violence. Students are required to attend a “Greet the Law” workshop, where they partake in open dialogue with law enforcement over finding positive outlets to deal with trauma. Such positive outlets may include art or photography, which the students will turn into a project and showcase within the program by the end of the quarter. The success of the

program will be determined by their enrollment rate and how many of the students reach their “smart goals.” Ultimately the \$205,000 will go toward ensuring students have access to their newfound positive outlets and other community-building activities that inspire them to focus on school and receive the trauma support they need.

The model of trauma support introduced by SAIL was created by South Side native Timothy “Noble” Jennings-Bey, and published in his 2012 study “Street Addiction: A Theoretical Model for Understanding the Draw of Street Life.” Alongside Syracuse University Falk College researchers, Jennings-Bey analyzed the behavior of gang affiliated men associated with street crime in an attempt to understand why they perpetrated violence. The study showed that consistent engagement with violence can create a release of dopamine within the brain. This release creates a sense of gratification that encourages the cycle of behavior and makes it highly addictive. Victims of trauma and kids are especially vulnerable since the brain can develop triggers that stifle the development of healthy, socially acceptable behaviors.

“These kids experience all this trauma before their brains are fully developed so their behaviors do not meet the expectations of society,” Jennings-Bey said. “Their growth is stunted by being exposed to so much violence.”

Jennings-Bey’s discovery about the addictive nature of violence drove a new wave of cultural understanding — shifting from one of law and order to a need for rehabilitation. Last June, an Israeli research institute contacted Jennings-Bey looking to incorporate his theory into tactics to discourage gang violence in Gaza. Also agencies in the United Kingdom called looking to use Street Addiction’s strategies on Nigerian gang populations. Jennings-Bey says the hope is his model continues to be applied to communities around the world, allowing those similar to his South Side friends killed at the hands of street violence a second chance.

“Street Addiction’s model applies to any community. We can give you a formula and train your staff but we cannot go in and do it for you. You need people from the community that children can connect to,” explained Dr. Najah Salaam, the chief operating officer behind the Street Addiction Institute.

Salaam is also a South Side native and former administrator at Dr. King Elementary School. She has spent 20 years working as a liaison between the community, local law enforcement and city schools. She says that the next step for the SAIL is providing respite services for youth. Respite services are usually afforded to those seeking rehabilitation for substance abuse, allowing addicts to undergo rehabilitation outside of their normal environments. For these kids, respite will mean spending time outside of the neighborhood to heal from trauma. Noble says this is all a part of the detox, or “streetox,” necessary to treat those exposed to high levels of violence.

Currently SAIL has 60 youth enrolled in its Street Court program

that focuses on youth displaying street addictive behavior and often with prior convictions for street crime. Robinson is one of these youth. As part of his probation, he was invited to attend Street Court.

Since then, Street Court has taken him to museums and block parties set up by Jennings-Bey to show kids the impacts of investing within the community. He undergoes regular meetings with sponsors who set attendance and academic achievement goals as well as emotional and mental goals to promote healthy well-being. Salaam says she hopes to set up more trips outside the community to show all the opportunities just beyond reach, as long as they work on their addiction. SAIL has also expanded its Trauma Response Team after a record number of full-time and part-time volunteers joined during 2019. Volunteers for the trauma team have also increased their caseload from 15 to 18 in the past year while making themselves available to families 24/7.

As of this year, SAIL is financially independent with no need to funnel money through United Way, instead it operates through contracts with the county, state and the city of Syracuse.

Jennings-Bey and Salaam explain that what kids like Robinson need now is empathy.

“When we see veterans come back traumatized with behaviors that are maladaptive, we don’t say where’s the accountability on your behalf, we get them help,” Salaam said.

Dejuan Johnson says empathy is why he first volunteered at SAIL. This past year Johnson began also sponsoring Robinson and 39 other kids who are a part of the Street Court program, even though he already has three kids at home.

“Not every kid has a father in their life so to step up into that role, you feel good,” Johnson said.

Sponsors have 48 hours upon meeting the child to contact their families. Together, they establish a schedule to meet with the children throughout the week and support their growth within the program. The sponsors give out calendars and help kids with their probation, occasionally attending court alongside them. Sponsors are also required to be available to their sponsorees 24 hours a day, 7 days a week in case of an emergency.

“As a mother or a father, we just picture that it could be our kids,” said Nina Mattison, another sponsor for Street Court.

Robinson says he hopes to one day be a sponsor for SAIL. The close relationship he’s developed with his sponsor, he says, has opened his eyes to the opportunities within his community. The two often meet up after Robinson finishes school.

“Sometimes we’ll go out to eat and talk about girls. We always find a way to make it about girls,” Robinson joked.

During these talks, Robinson is given permission to be neither victim nor perpetrator. He’s just a kid, looking for advice from someone who knows the struggle and diligence to guide him around the corners.

“You need people from the community that children can connect to.”

— Dr. Najah Salaam

LIBRARY EVENTS

Beauchamp Branch Library, located at 2111 S. Salina St., has the following Black History programs planned:

- Screening of **“Ruby Bridges”** — 2 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 8. A 1960 film on a 6-year-old African-American girl who helped to integrate the all-white schools of New Orleans.
- **Black History Button Making** — 5 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 20. Buttons to feature pictures and quotes from historical and modern Black figures. Walk-ins are welcome. For teens and adults.
- Screening of **“John Henrik Clarke: A Great and Mighty Walk”** — 2 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 22. A film on a young African American’s quest to learn his place in world history. A discussion with Jerome Walker will follow. Walker is the founding member of Syracuse’s chapter of 100 Black Men, a founder of the Dr. John Henrik Clarke historical study group and one of the founding members of the diversity and inclusion committee at Crouse Irving Hospital.
- Screening of **“Selma”** and panel discussion on the African-American vote — 1 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 29.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Black History Month to be recognized with music, family-friendly programs



> With a multi-decade career behind him, Gerald Veasley will be joined with up-and-coming Jazz artist Jazmin Ghent to perform, participate in a panel discussion and lead a community master class this month. | Provided Photos

WHAT: LE MOYNE COLLEGE’S DIVERSITY CENTRAL EVENT SERIES

WHEN: 4 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 5

WHERE: Le Moyne College, 1419 Salt Springs Road, in the Grewen Auditorium

DETAILS: Johonna Turner from the Zehr Institute For Restorative Justice to speak about “Facing Violence with Love and Power”

COST: Free and open to the public

MORE INFO.: Accessible accommodations are available.

To learn more, contact Tabor Fisher at fisherct@lemoyne.edu or (315) 445-4256.

WHAT: VAN ROBINSON PAN AFRICAN VILLAGE AT THE SYRACUSE WINTER FAIR

WHEN: 2 to 10 p.m. Friday, Feb. 7; 10 a.m. to 10 p.m.

Saturday, Feb. 8, and 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 9

WHERE: New York State Fair, Syracuse Fairgrounds, 581 State Fair Blvd.

DETAILS: Join the Syracuse National Association for the Advancement of Colored People at the Van Robinson Pan African Village Booth at the New York State Fair Grounds Expo Center. Sunday, will feature a Gospel Explosion Celebration directed by Dr. Joan Hillsman.

COST: Entrance to the NYS Winter Fair is \$3 for teens and seniors or \$5 for adults

MORE INFO: Contact the Syracuse NAACP by email at SyracuseNaACP@gmail.com or call (315) 440-6340

WHAT: ADULT READING AND DISCUSSION FORUM

WHEN: 6 to 7:30 p.m. Friday, Feb. 7

WHERE: Cannon Street Community Center, 515 Cannon St.

DETAILS: This Reading and Discussion Forum will examine excerpts from Maya Angelou; Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.; W.E.B. DuBois, and more. There is no need to read ahead of time, just come with an open mind. Sessions are being offered by FORCE, Focusing Our Resources for Community Enlightenment.

COST: Free

MORE INFO: Contact Brenda Muhammad at (315) 677-1664 or forcecny@aol.com

WHAT: THE BLACK COMPOSER AS JALI: COMPOSITION, IMPROVISATION AND THE AFRIKAN EPIC

WHEN: Noon to 2 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 20

WHERE: Community Folk Art Center Gallery, 805 E. Genesee St.

DETAILS: In the West Afrikan storytelling tradition, the Jali serve as the professional musicians tasked with preserving the history, rituals and experiences of the culture in which they were born. Using examples from his

work, "400: An Afrikan Epic," Composer Mark Lomax discusses the process by which he worked with composition and improvisation to create aspects of his epic which honors the West Afrikan tradition and is inspired by the work of Duke Ellington, Renee Baker, Anthony Davis and Wadada Leo Smith.

COST: Free and open to the public

MORE INFO.: Visit communityfolkartcenter.org/upcoming-events

WHAT: BLACK HISTORY MONTH CULTURAL EXPO

WHEN: 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 22

WHERE: Bethany Baptist Church, 149 Beattie St.

DETAILS: Expo will include vendors, storytelling, literature, historical artifacts, living museum, salute to seasoned saints, activities for children, refreshments and more.

MORE INFO.: Contact Patrona Jones-Rowser at (315) 876-1887 or Cynthia Knighton at (315) 427-5160

WHAT: BLACK HISTORY MONTH CABARET WITH GERALD VEASLEY & JAZMIN GHENT

WHEN: 4 to 8 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 23

WHERE: Marriot Syracuse Downtown Finger Lakes Ballroom, 100 E. Onondaga St.

DETAILS: This year's Black History presentation is multi-generational. Gerald Veasley, a world-renowned bassist will be joined by Jazmin Ghent, a saxophonist/vocalist/educator from Florida. The performance is sponsored by Brackens Financial Solutions Network and will include a free buffet provided by Bill and Nancy Byrne.

COST: \$35 in advance, \$40 at the door, \$10 for students

TICKETS: Purchase in advance at cnyjazz.org or call (315) 479-5299

WHAT: CURATORIAL CONCERNS IN JAZZ PANEL DISCUSSION

WHEN: Noon to 1 p.m. Monday, Feb. 24

WHERE: Peter Graham Scholarly Commons, Room 114, Bird Library on the Syracuse University campus, 222 Waverly Ave.

DETAILS: Gerald Veasley, renowned bassist, founder of the "Bass Boot Camp," host of the Berks Jazz Fest and curator of the jazz series "Unscripted," with Jazmin Ghent, a Veasley protégé and 2019 NAACP award winner, will reflect on their paths to success in the music industry.

COST: Free and open to the public

MORE INFO.: Call (315) 442-2230

WHAT: CURATORIAL CONCERNS IN JAZZ COMMUNITY MASTER CLASS

WHEN: 7 to 8:30 p.m. Monday, Feb. 24

WHERE: Community Folk Art Center, 805 E. Genesee St.

DETAILS: Gerald Veasley, musical polymath, and Jazmin Ghent, a fast-rising female saxophonist/vocalist/educator, will reflect on their careers and coach a master class. Veasley played in West Philly RnB bands in his teens and entered the international marketplace as bassist for the legendary Joe Zawinul, playing in The Zawinul Syndicate from 1988 to 1995. A successful recording and touring career followed. Ghent was voted "2017's Best New Smooth Jazz Artist" and awarded the prestigious "2019 NAACP IMAGE AWARD" for Outstanding Jazz Album. She has three Billboard #1 singles to her credit: "Work Wit It," "Heat" and "Compared to What."

COST: Free and open to the public

TO RSVP: Contact Spencer Stultz at (315) 442-2230 or slstultz@syr.edu by Friday, Feb. 21.



The Black History Museum and Gift Shop

February 21 & 28 4pm-6pm

Southwest Community Center

401 South Avenue, Syracuse, N.Y. 13204



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