

the Stand south side news

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Syracuse, NY

WINTER 2022/23 Issue 90 FREE

ANOTHER WAY

Local activist's likeness
added to portrait series

Reliable Messaging

Reporting project to explore disinformation

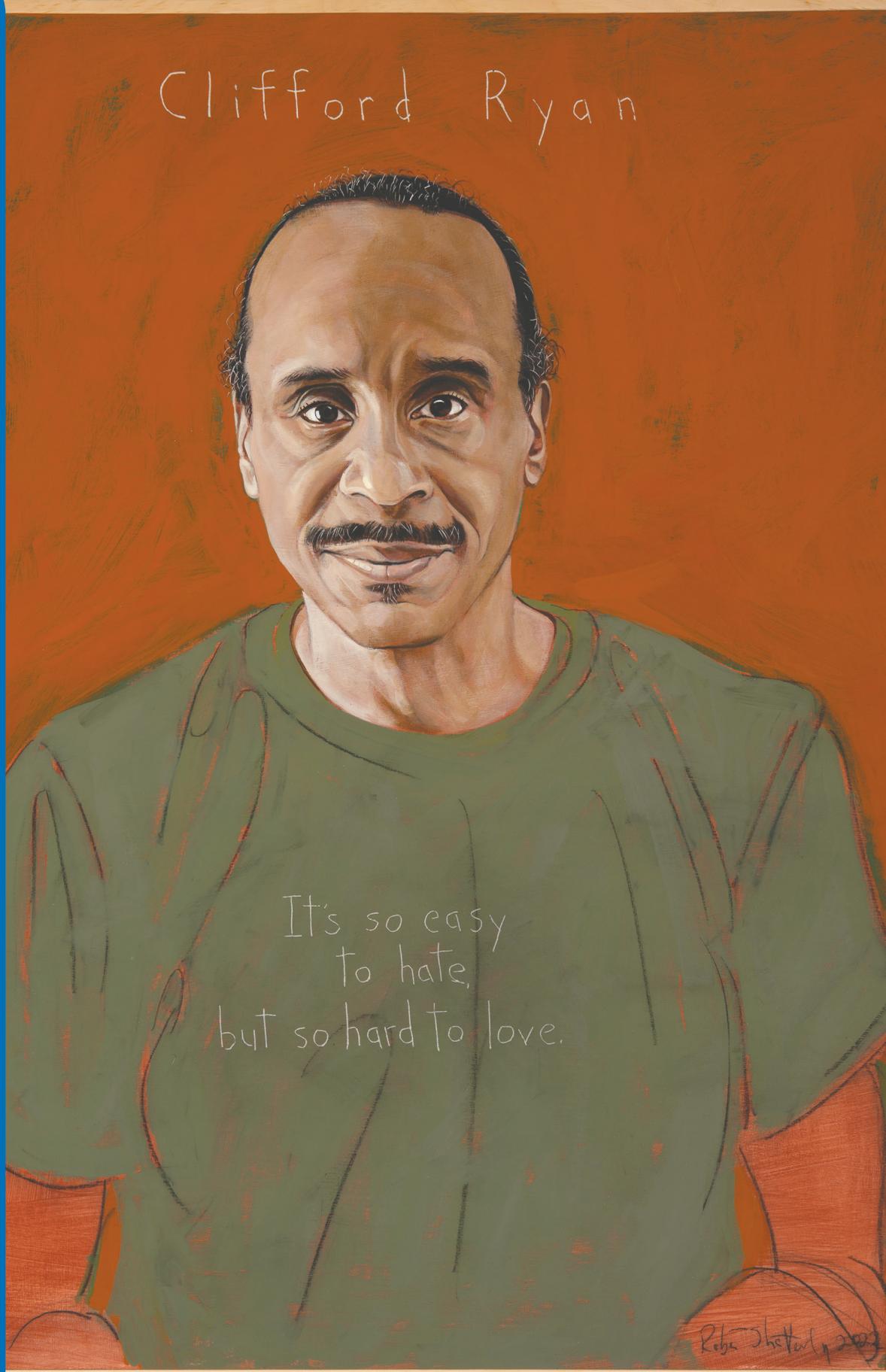
hive mind

Citizens can submit their
own design to become the
new city of Syracuse flag

Local nonprofit
expands its
housing footprint

Tiny Home

FEATURED FATHER



Clifford Ryan

It's so easy
to hate,
but so hard to love.

Robin Shetterly 2023

DIRECTOR

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- Cover art painting of Clifford Ryan by Robert Shetterly — *Americans Who Tell The Truth* series, copyright 2022

UPCOMING

What: Community Special Project Funding
Details: Tomorrow's Neighborhoods Today (TNT) has Special Project funds available for each city sector to propose community-enhancing capital projects or community-building events designed to benefit the public. Each TNT sector has a budget of \$8,750 for Special Project Proposals and \$2,000 for public art for the fiscal year.
Purpose: Collectively, each sector discusses and votes upon the project proposal(s) that will enhance their community and meet the criteria outlined in the Special Project Guidelines.
Deadline to Apply: Dec. 31
To Learn More: Visit tomorrowsneighborhoodstoday.org/special-projects



For full listing of events, visit
MySouthSideStand.com/events/

What: Harlem Globetrotters
When: 7 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 2
Where: Upstate Medical Arena at The Oncenter War Memorial, 515 Montgomery St.
Details: The Harlem Globetrotters 2023 World Tour presented by Jersey Mike's Subs will feature Globetrotter stars' basketball skills. The team will go head-to-head against the Washington Generals.
For Tickets: Tickets are on sale now and can be purchased online at Ticketmaster.com or in person at the Solvay Bank Box Office at The Oncenter (760 S. State St.). Tickets range from \$20-\$115; additional fees may apply.

Let's look back at highlights for The Stand from 2022.

Last Winter, the first class of high school students from the Syracuse Journalism Lab graduated. The Stand is proud to be a partner with the Syracuse Press Club and the media program at the Institute of Technology at Syracuse Central to inspire the next generation of budding journalists. I am so grateful to the efforts of Camalot Todd who served as last year's journalism educator and the opportunity to take the reins myself in the effort's second year. I can't wait to see how the endeavor grows in the future.



This school year, our first session was held Oct. 17, led by me with assistance from Emily Kenny, a digital journalist with Spectrum News 1 through a Report For America placement. J-Lab students have learned how to write op-eds (to date, two have been published!), structure a profile and feature story, examine social media and fake news and received tips from professionals on interviewing and shooting sports photography. Students say a top highlight was an Oct. 28 visit to Syracuse University to hear Nikole Hannah-Jones speak.

The Stand even became special when we were memorialized in the Special Collections Research Center (SCRC) at Syracuse University, which collects, preserves and provides access to rare books, manuscripts and other primary source materials. Its collection now includes nearly 90 print editions, annual reports and more from The Stand's last 13 years! The SCRC is located on the sixth floor of Bird Library. Access is provided by appointment only. To visit our "special" content there, contact the SCRC at scrc@syr.edu or (315) 443-2697.

This year also marked the third year we've held a Photo Contest. We celebrated 24 winning images and 17 local photographers at our Photo Bash. I am grateful to Michael John Heagerty who stepped in as MC, presenting prizes to finalists at Wildflowers Armory. By dusk, attendees paraded to the Everson Museum to view the reveal of this summer's winners.

Special thanks must go to my community volunteers — 2022 Photo Contest Judges: Terry Baker, Mike Greenlar, Marilu Lopez Fretts and Zau Nhkum. Additionally, special gratitude goes to the additional Photo Walk and Photo Meetup leaders: Shaneika Ford, Bob Gates, Herm Card, Jeffrey Perkins, Emily Kenny, Elijah Gustus, Tyrone Dixon and Greg Munno.

We even launched a podcast, "My South Side," in May. Abby Fritz, who now works as a producer at City Cast Philly, put together four episodes — a three-part series looking at the challenges Afghans faced while resettling in Syracuse and an episode on South Siders' relationship to the card game Spades.

We showcased our fourth photo gallery exhibit in 2022, featuring photos captured by residents to professionals who attended Photos Walks since 2010. The exhibit was curated by ArtRage Gallery. If you missed it, not to worry. The images will be rehung this coming January at Onondaga Community College and stay on view through Feb. 23, 2023.

Finally, a big shoutout to Habakkuk Nickens, who was previously featured in The Stand in 2016 for organizing a community cease-fire event — while in prison. Over the summer, Nickens was released from prison, returned home and began contributing a guest column, "Seeking Redemption," to share the sources of his personal motivation.

— Ashley Kang

Upcoming Exhibit

What: Reshowing of FROM WHERE WE STAND: Photographs from The Stand's Annual South Side Photo Walk

When: Jan. 23 through Feb.23

Where: The Gallery at the Ann Felton Multicultural Center at Onondaga Community College, located on the lower level of Storer Auditorium adjacent to Ferrante Hall

Exhibition Hours: 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Thursday; public receptions are set for noon and 5:30 p.m. Feb. 8

The South Side Newspaper Project has given voice to Syracuse's South Side community since its founding in 2010. The annual Photo Walk is our largest community event, bringing together photographers of all skill levels and ages to explore the South Side, take photos and practice one's skills.

This exhibition features photographs taken during this event throughout its 12-year history and is a visual testament to the struggles and resiliency of the neighborhood.

To schedule a visit outside of public hours, contact Kim LaRose at (315) 498-7330

Aaron Claiborne

Nominated by Marvin Ramos

By Sydney Gold
Staff Reporter

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

A. I was nervous and excited. I recorded a video for each of them [at their births] to capture the moment, the raw feeling and emotions that I had. My youngest, Aysis, has her video downloaded to her tablet, so hopefully she'll have it forever. That video will say it all. With children, there are so many emotions because you're bringing this amazing new life into the world. But with experience you know the world can be so beautiful and so ugly at the same time. So it's a culmination of a lot of raw nerve: excitement, fear, love, joy and worry.

Q. What was your relationship like with your father?

A. It was strange. My mother was a single mother for the most part. My father lived in the same city but spent limited time with me. His co-parenting was hit-or-miss. When I think of co-parenting, I think of the full scale of things. You're involved in the school activities. You're involved in the medical history. My father didn't even know who my doctor was. I have a relationship with their doctor, their therapists, their schools, their extracurricular activities — everything. They know me. And I try to put effort in and actually be involved.

Q. How did that relationship impact your approach to fatherhood?

A. For me, I did not want to be like that. It pushed me. Fatherhood, it comes two ways: There's either the choice that a man makes that he says, "I didn't have a dad, and I turned out OK," and they go with that, or they say, "I didn't have the father that I wanted, so I'm going to be the father I wanted for my children." And that was the approach I've taken. I've wavered in my ways. I've fallen into some of the traps of yelling and being stubborn and not listening and thinking that I know everything in the moment. Often parents make that mistake. You're dealing with a new human being, with a new personality, and no matter how much they are like you in certain ways, they're that much not like you in others. You have to give them the autonomy to be who they are. And often it's hard to do. That's easier said than done, and I try not to be a hypocrite.

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

A. I speak very candidly with my children. I don't mince words, and I don't use cute names for things. I'm very open and honest with my children about finances, more so than some parents. I really break



MEET AARON CLAIBORNE: He co-parents his three children: Aaron Jr., 14; Alaysia, 13, and Aysis, 7. | Provided Photo

down bills and the payment of bills. A lot of parents I've met don't do that. They question that or they think that it's unnecessary stress on children, and I don't think so. It just makes them aware. I'm not asking them to help pay the bill. I just make them aware. With speaking candidly, I refer to male and female genitalia as the proper names. From day one, I don't make a cute nickname for it. I do explain to my children that people do have different verbiage for these things.

Q. Any advice for first-time dads?

A. First, I start with telling my children that I will not lie to them, and that means any lies. So don't lie to your children. Give them honest information because that's how they can trust you and trust your word. Don't focus so much on what you didn't have or what you wanted to have as a father. Instead, focus on fathering the child for who they are. Grow with the child and you'll father them as they need. Some children need more hugs than others. Some children need more discipline than others. But you only learn that as you grow with a child. I think that we have these idealizations that we start off with and it becomes this blueprint for what we're going to do. If a child doesn't fit that, we try to make them conform to our own personal standards. And that's what I'm struggling with now, working on that, because now I have teenagers. The amazing teenager!



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SHINING A LIGHT

The **Disrupting Disinformation Project** explores disinformation, its effect on communities of color and how those communities are fighting back.

This work is funded by the Knight Foundation's Combating Disinformation in Communities of Color grant and a Syracuse University SOURCE (Syracuse Office of Undergraduate Research & Creative Engagement) grant.

The goal of the Knight Foundation in this effort is to support research that can inform near-term interventions that mitigate the impacts of disinformation and targeted online manipulation of communities of color.

WHAT'S NEXT?

A Syracuse Clinic for Women Closes as Roe v. Wade is Overturned



> The Dr. William A. Harris Health Center on Slocum Avenue, operated by the now-defunct Syracuse Family Planning Services, closed over the summer. | Greg Munno, Staff Photographer

April Santana
Staff Reporter

An information vacuum has led to an increase of disinformation on women's reproductive health

When Syracuse Family Planning Services announced it would close, it garnered a single mention in the local news.

The shutdown, Syracuse.com's James Mulder wrote, "could leave more than 3,500 patients who use the clinic at 301 Slocum Ave. in the lurch."

Susan Coots, the clinic's director, announced the sudden closing in a March letter, writing that it would leave "thousands of marginalized and low-income individuals without access to critical care."

And then, silence. Family Planning Services, which served nearly 30,000 patients a year in two local clinics and in eight city schools, closed in April. Its last day passed

without mention in the local news.

Keith Cuttler, the chief operating officer for Syracuse Community Health, knew it was a recipe for confusion and misinformation. His organization, along with Planned Parenthood, stepped in to pick up the slack in the wake of the clinic's closing. He said the lack of news coverage left patients confused about where to turn and created a vacuum where rumors flourished — including one that his organization had put the other out of business.

"Their funding was no longer available from New York state," Cutler said of a \$1.2 million grant Syracuse Family Planning Services relied on and lost. "They were closing, so we were like 'Let's work together and try to bring the patients over.'"

Michelle Casey, president and CEO of Planned Parenthood of Central and Western New York, agreed that the media vacuum around the closing of Syracuse Family Planning created confusion. But she said the disinformation

storm was only beginning.

That's because, the very next month, someone leaked a draft Supreme Court decision that suggested the court would overturn *Roe v. Wade*, the landmark 1973 ruling that legalized abortion and made the work of organizations like Planned Parenthood, Syracuse Family Planning Services, and Syracuse Community Health possible.

And a month after that in June, the Supreme Court did just that, and many states immediately outlawed abortion, creating a confusing patchwork of reproductive health laws across the country. The new landscape created by the ruling supercharged already existing disinformation campaigns around abortion, Casey said. She said the disinformation takes many forms, including misrepresentations of abortion risk, availability, and legal consequences.

Casey said a source of a lot of the disinformation comes from crisis pregnancy centers, which often mislead women in their options by purposely omitting the correct number of weeks a woman may be pregnant for. They tell patients they might be at risk for cancer or that abortion pills aren't safe, statements that do not match up with the science, she added.

"Having an abortion is much safer than giving birth," Casey said.

The overturning of *Roe v. Wade* in combination with the closing down of the clinic has led to an influx of questions, said Hillary Warner, manager of outreach and education programs at the Syracuse Planned Parenthood.

People are now more invested in their health, Warner said.

"I think this is a critical time for people to receive adequate information," Warner said. "A lot of people are coming to us and asking us for sexual and reproductive health information, information about their rights, and we haven't seen this volume of questions in the past."

To help combat disinformation, Syracuse Planned Parenthood organizes multiple events in schools, youth centers and churches to put forth accurate health information. Warner said misinformation has made people afraid; they fear they'll be arrested or their privacy will be infringed upon.

In order to be fully autonomous, people have to be fully informed, Warner said.

"This is going to be a major effort for any kind of family planning, reproductive health, sexual health providers to absorb and really give people the care that they need, and they deserve," Warner said.

Across social media and other online forums, Casey has seen the continual spreading of misinformation — both intentional and accidental. She said having to resort to online forums for information increases people's risk of relying on unsafe and untrue methods to treat their conditions.

"They say we're doing abortions right up to the moment of birth," Casey said. "It's all false but it's emotional. It gets a hold of people's emotions and gets a reaction from people."

THE BLACK EQUITY & EXCELLENCE FUND

supports community-based projects for the Black community of Central New York that promote and encourage self-sufficiency and improve the physical and economic conditions that affect quality of life.

It also encourages dialogue that will strengthen race-related matters and support social and educational growth in the community.

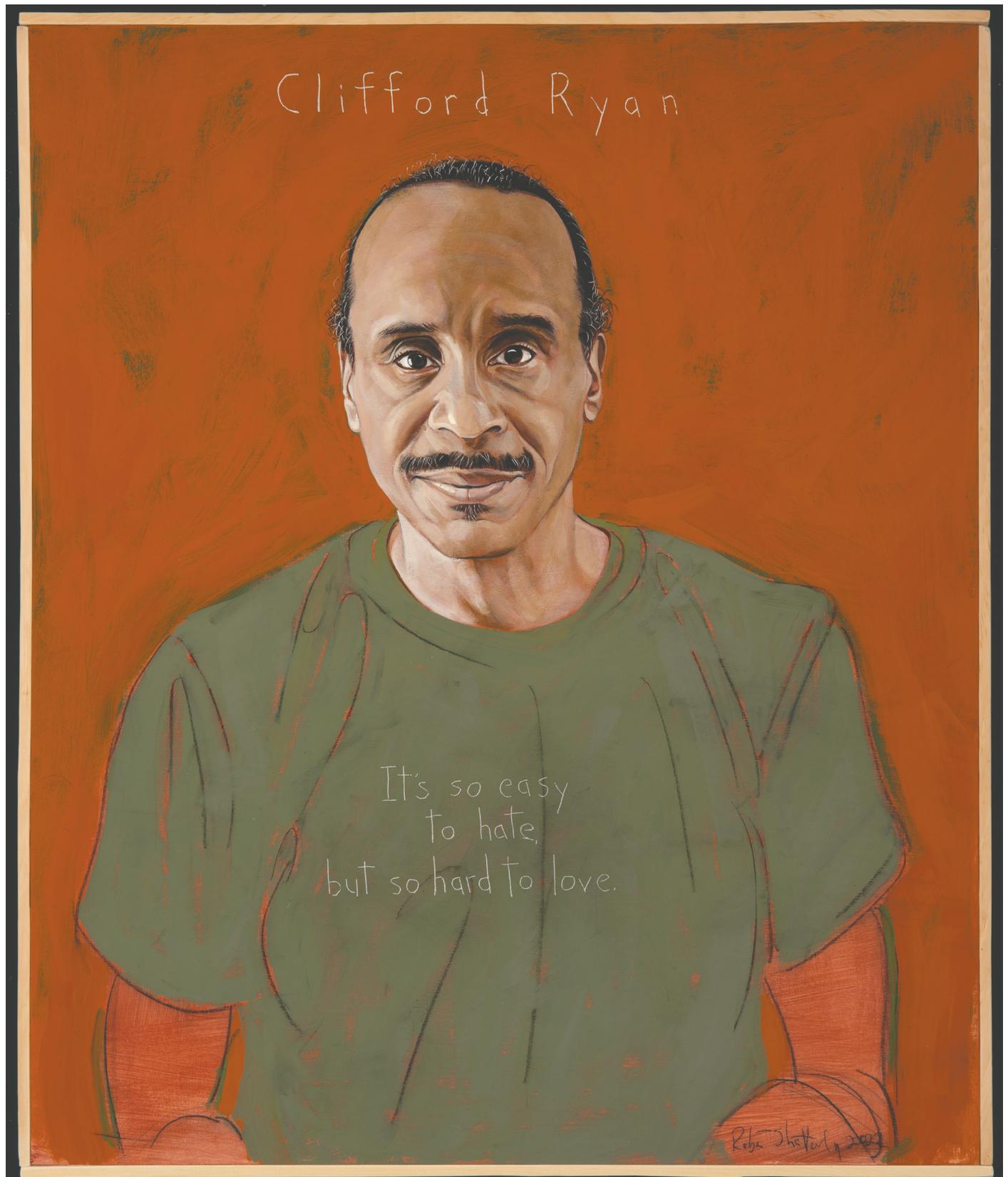
Since its inception in June 2020, The Black Equity & Excellence Fund has already distributed over \$500,000 in grants. For more information or to support the fund, visit cnycf.org/equity.



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“Clifford Ryan” by Robert Shetterly — *Americans Who Tell the Truth* series, copyright 2022.

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LEARN MORE AT AMERICANSWHOTELLTHETRUTH.ORG

RECOGNIZING CLIFFORD RYAN

Americans Who Tell the Truth, a series of more than 265 paintings of individuals throughout history who have had the courage to speak out against unjust power, now includes a portrait of our South Side violence interventionist. Artist Robert Shetterly learned about Ryan when he saw his photo displayed as part of The Stand's Photo Walk exhibit at ArtRage Gallery last May.

Inspired by his on-the-ground activism, Shetterly instantly knew he wanted to add Ryan's portrait to the series.

Daily. Step by step. Clifford Ryan is on a crusade — one man, on a street corner, holding a sign.

Ryan's street residency serves as a constant reminder to rivals on the verge of violence that there's another way.

He puts himself between the two (or sometimes more) in conflict. Even if guns are drawn, he steps into the fray. He approaches with sincerity, calm and reason. He makes a connection. He understands. His presence dials down the heat, shifts focus. He outlines what future consequences could unravel due to this anger. Because of hate.

He's an influencer — IRL (In Real Life). More importantly, he's there, in those moments . . . someone who really sees those involved.

His movement was established to interrupt a cycle of violence, the same force that killed his son Duriel Lamar Ryan in 1999. One day in July, as his son walked away from a heated argument, the 17-year-old was shot in the back of the head. Ryan later arrived, photographed on scene appearing to be both restrained and braced by officers. His entire body flushed with anguish.

His son's death propelled him to do more. He became involved in the Syracuse community and anti-violence efforts. But it's been just in the last seven years, he's become what he calls a credible messenger.

Outraged after an exceptionally grisly Fourth of July weekend in 2015 where 11 people were left with gunshot wounds, Ryan became compelled to take his message to the streets.

Ryan was born and raised in Syracuse, a city where the rate for teens charged with homicide is 13 times that of the nation. It's more than double the rate of New York City, Detroit, Los Angeles and any of the 10 biggest American cities that reported to the FBI. In his childhood household, he witnessed domestic abuse and drug addiction. When he was younger, he too could be violent. Nearly 20 years ago, he was charged with assault and possessing a weapon.

Answering in anger was his go-to in his 20s. Life has taught him another way. He shares these lessons while holding his sign with bold lettering that reads "O.G.s Against Violence," walking the streets to fend it off first-hand.

O.G., Ryan says, came from the term old school but evolved in meaning on the West Coast. "It meant Old Guys, Old Gentlemen or Older Generation," he explains. "Then gang culture in California took the term and dubbed it 'Original Gangster.'" He says O.G. is a term of endearment. He wants his community to know it in no way is affiliated with gang influence.

Ryan says the mission of Our Generation Against Violence is violence

intervention, with a boots on the ground strategy. This makes his work unique.

Ryan feels that there is no presence focused on perpetrators. He believes they've been cast aside and labeled unworthy.

"Oftentimes, we overlook the individuals that are doing the violence," Ryan says. "We try and go around them." Too often, outreach is indirect. "There's no one directly offering help to those putting up their fists, pointing a knife or pulling out a gun, to see a different path forward."

He became that person. Someone who could make the personal connection. To say, and to show, there are alternatives. What's needed is guidance, help and care from individuals who won't look down or demean them, Ryan says.

He estimates he walks 10 miles a day. He rarely takes a day off.

At any given time, fights can occur. "I seem to be in the right places at the right time during most of it, which is how I've prevented so much."

He says he's able to de-escalate fights 99.9% of the time. When he walks through the city, he might hear two individuals arguing. "I'll go and stand nearby to see what's going on. If it doesn't escalate, I'll push forward, but if it intensifies, where individuals are getting ready to pull their fists out or more, I intervene."

His consistent, physical presence dampens anger before it fuels into rage. To date, Ryan says he's stopped 44 shootings, 300+ stabbings and 1,082 fights.

He says that being consistent and actually doing the work you speak about resonates with residents and maintains trust. When he's seen, residents receive a reminder not to resort to violence. Not to allow oneself to be provoked. To be above board. And more often than not, the impact of his message reaches them daily.

Ryan has completed multiple conflict resolution trainings, supports similar organizations, attends outreach events and speaks to youth. During the day, he works with senior programming and helps with youth camps. He says he'll live out his life devoted to his community and being a positive role model.

As his organization has grown, he's enlisted and trained others in conflict resolution to help carry out alternatives to violence. He has established a board of directors, brought in an administrative coordinator and is now working to hire staff. He's seeking grants and partnerships to grow resources. He distributes signs and now offers bracelets and buttons to spread his message. He even developed a coloring book to teach children how to stay away from guns and gangs and how to practice safety measures in the event of a shooting.

"As human beings, we can hate each other in a heartbeat," he says. "The love process is more difficult."

CUPS FOR A CAUSE

The **Independent Potters' Association (IPA) of Central New York** chose A Tiny Home for Good (THG) for its famous Cups for a Cause fundraiser to support the build of 615 West Ostrander Avenue.

The IPA was the lead sponsor for this build, raising more than \$27,000 for THG over three years of fundraising.

Volunteers even designed the ceramic address plaque to give the property added curb appeal and also made custom switch plates out of clay.

The artisan organization is a community-minded group of ceramic artists and potters who support and promote others while developing resources to mentor and recognize excellence in ceramics.

Since its founding in 2011, the group has:

- Sponsored ceramics workshops
- Participated in gallery exhibits & craft shows
- Supported and organized community events

To learn more, visit online at ipacny.org/

A TINY HOME FOR TWO

Nonprofit completes its first property intended for someone with disabilities



> This two-bedroom home, which is unlike A Tiny Home for Good's typical model, features a full kitchen with a concrete countertop, two bedrooms and several homey touches. | Piper Starnes, Staff Photographer

By Piper Starnes
Staff Reporter

Volunteers came together to make A Tiny Home for Good's very first two-person home a reality

There's a new home in Syracuse's Brighton neighborhood. What was once an empty house, engulfed by overgrown trees and high grass, is now a charming, beige and pale green home with patio chairs and a multicolored, ceramic address plaque.

A Tiny Home for Good (THG), founded by Andrew Lunetta, has built 25 homes in Syracuse to help individuals facing homelessness.

Number 26 is different.

It has lowered porches and widened doorways. The 1,000-square-foot house provides an accessible entry for anyone who might call this small but welcoming place home.

Behind the stained-glass front door is a furnished two-bedroom, one-and-a-half-bathroom space, laundry room and full-sized kitchen decked out with an assortment of repurposed cabinets.

This is the organization's first home designed and built with a person with disabilities and their caregiver in mind. After seven months of construction, the house became ready for its new residents to occupy this September.

In the past year, the number of people facing homelessness nearly doubled in Onondaga, Oswego and Cayuga

counties, according to the Housing and Homeless Coalition of Central New York. Its data also showed that some groups are hit harder than others.

“Certainly those who have disabilities, whether physical or mental health challenges, have a significantly harder time in the shelter system or outside than those who don’t,” Lunetta said. “And oftentimes, a shelter isn’t going to allow a caregiver to be there and live with them.”

Since 2016, THG has provided housing for its tenants, following a one-person-per-home policy. This is to instill a sense of pride in home-renters and avoid forced, incompatible roommates, such as in shelters or group homes.

However, in December 2021, THG decided to stretch the rules. Lunetta and his team acquired a 4,000-square-foot lot from the Greater Syracuse Land Bank on West Ostrander Avenue, an area zoned for single-family residences.

“It would have been hard to justify building one tiny home for one person on this particular vacant lot,” Lunetta said. With more square footage to work with, it became an opportunity to build a tiny home for two.

Katie Weaver, THG’s director of development, said the goal is to meet the needs and safety of whoever may live in the home.

Site supervisor James Sevigny widened the doorways and lowered things like the porch, bathtub and countertops to make the property accessible for potential tenants. The kitchen’s mismatched cabinets of black and browns were also repurposed from old materials to maintain quality and affordability.

Typically, THG’s projects cost around \$60,000 for each 300-square-foot unit. But, for a “tiny home” nearly three times that size, it was closer to \$70,000, Weaver said.

Throughout the development process, THG welcomed support from volunteers and local organizations. From 2018 to 2020, Independent Potters’ Association of Central New York raised funds for the build. One member even created the home’s address plaque, marking “615.”

By keeping its tenants off the streets and out of shelters, Lunetta said THG also relieves some strain on social services funded by taxpayers and the government. He said the Housing and Homeless Coalition oversees a database with information and a ranked list of individuals and households utilizing homeless service providers in Syracuse.

“By compiling all that data, they can really identify who’s using the most services —ultimately, who’s costing the county the most amount of money,” he said.

Syracuse University Maxwell School found, on average, THG saves Onondaga County \$117,694 per tenant. Those savings are based on fewer ambulance rides to the emergency room and overnight stays in the hospital or jail.

Many tenants struggle with mental health and substance abuse problems that make it harder to maintain their living environment, Weaver explained. “But I feel like our houses and the fact that we have support services on staff provide a lot of stability that these people wouldn’t have had otherwise,” she said.

Lunetta added that THG has long-term plans to expand, including more than just traditional tiny homes.

“I see this two-bedroom Ostrander home as a gateway towards that,” Lunetta said. “Our real goal is to provide housing permanently for the tenants who are in our places. They can stay for as long as they want.”



> Peter Valenti, with the Independent Potter’s Association of Central New York created the multicolored address plaque. | Piper Starnes, Staff Photographer



> The typical 300-square-foot tiny homes feature a small kitchenette, but the property on West Ostrander has a full kitchen with mismatched cabinets because, as Andrew Lunetta explains, in the nature of their work as a nonprofit, they must repurpose old material. | Piper Starnes, Staff Photographer

PROPER PROTOCOL

The **North American Vexillological Association** (NAVA) is the world's largest organization of flag enthusiasts and scholars. Founded in 1967, the group has more than 900 members across most states and provinces in the United States and Canada, with additional members hailing from more than 25 other countries.

Members also participate in annual Vexi-Day celebrations. Did you know World Vexillology Day is every Oct. 1?

Online: Visit at nava.org

Social Media: Twitter and Instagram @flagstudies or at [Facebook.com/nava.org](https://www.facebook.com/nava.org), where three discussion groups are sponsored for flag enthusiasts: "Flags and Vexillology," for discussing flags, flag news and flag studies; "Designing Flags," for discussion and promotion of flag design, and "NAVA Matters," for news and discussion about NAVA's mission and members.

CITIZEN REDESIGN

Submissions on new Syracuse flag accepted through Feb. 17, 2023



> In a citizen-driven process, the Syracuse Flag Committee is working to engage residents in the redesign of Syracuse's flag some have called "objectively ugly." | Provided Image

Staff Report

Community input sought to incorporate history, culture of Syracuse on a new flag design to be revealed summer of 2023

Adapt CNY, a non-profit civic community organization, is accepting submissions from the public for a new flag representing the city of Syracuse.

Citizens may submit designs to the Flag Redesign Committee, which can be done electronically at syracuseflag.com. Paper submission forms are available at libraries, community centers and other civic spaces throughout the city.

"A city flag is an opportunity for a community to express its identity," said Syracuse Common Councilor At-Large Michael Greene in a release. "Our current flag does not represent the Syracuse of today. This process is an exciting opportunity to show who we are as a city."

Design submissions will be accepted now through Friday, Feb. 17, 2023. The committee will conduct a public input process, host community workshops, determine three to five finalists and ultimately recommend a final design to the Syracuse Common Council for consideration next summer.

In undertaking the flag project, Syracuse joins other cities that have recently redesigned their flags, such as Tulsa and Milwaukee.

DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Flag designs are encouraged to incorporate important parts of Syracuse's history and identity. Entries should follow the five principles of good flag design established by the North American Vexillological Association:

- **Keep It Simple:** The flag should be so simple that a child can draw it from memory.
- **Use Meaningful Symbolism:** The flag's images, colors, or patterns should relate to what it symbolizes.
- **Use Two or Three Basic Colors:** Limit the number of colors on the flag to three which contrast well and come from the standard color set.
- **No Lettering or Seals:** Never use writing of any kind or an organization's seal.
- **Be Distinctive or Be Related:** Avoid duplicating other flags but use similarities to show connections.

Earlier this year, Adapt CNY convened interested community members and created the Syracuse Flag Committee to facilitate a citizen-led creation of a new city flag.

The flag committee met numerous times over the summer and early autumn in order to develop guidelines and the process for the flag redesign initiative. The committee was established following an open call for nominations from the community in Spring 2022 for those interested in supporting the initiative.

Meet the Judges



For more than three decades, **Winn W. Wasson** has built a collection of over 600 miniature flags. Since 1992, he has held an annual aesthetic competition among his collection of flags. In the past, he also served on the design selection committees for the North American Vexillological Association's 2020 and 2022 annual conference flags. He works as a social science librarian at Syracuse University. He is excited to have this opportunity to serve the broader community of the city of Syracuse and chance to apply his enthusiasm for and interest in flags.

LEARN MORE...

Visit syracuseflag.com or follow on Instagram @SyracuseFlag

Neal Powless serves as Syracuse University's ombudsman, supporting individuals to manage conflict. He is also a father, husband and coach. He most enjoys exploring ideas, dreams and supporting others in finding their gifts that they will then share with the world.



Sarah Seib is a life-long Syracuse resident interested in the arts, especially passionate about the creative side of Central New York. She is the co-owner and board vice president of Wildflowers Armory. In the past, she has supported amateur artists through the CNY Arts' On My Own Time program.



Barbara Bell was born and raised in Syracuse. She graduated from Nottingham High School, has three sons and four grandchildren. She is a retired freelance copy editor and has lived in the Salt Springs neighborhood for the past 25 years.

Joel Winkelman is originally from Tulsa, Oklahoma. He says he was drawn to this process because of Tulsa's experience with its city flag initiative and the way the flag became a part of the city's civic renewal. He's lived in Syracuse since 2016 and is a professor at Hamilton College.



Ikechukwu Okereke first learned about vexillology from a TED Talk by podcaster Roman Mars. Wondering what Syracuse's city flag looked like, he discovered while it did follow some design rules, it was very bland and unrepresentative of the wider community. Additionally, he launched two clubs, one in high school and one in college, to help design school flags. He also started a podcast and has written an op-ed in support of this initiative. Ultimately, he hopes to bring a youthful and minority perspective to this process to create a flag that all of Syracuse can see within themselves.



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Tai Ngo Shaw moved to the United States after growing up in Vietnam during the war and living in Thailand as a refugee. He settled in Syracuse, where he launched a retail business, got married and raised two children. Today, he is a local business owner and has a strong commitment to serve the Vietnamese Community of Syracuse. He has served as a board member and vice president of the New American Forum, as well as chair of World Refugee Day events. Since 2020, he has led the CNY Blessing Box, which operates a weekly food pantry. He also serves on the board of several local organizations.



Bridget Dunn grew up in Central New York and is now a Westcott resident. Her favorite Syracuse things are Thornden Park, the Landmark Theatre, the St. Patrick's Parade (which she manages the PR for) and the ample places to hike and take walks.

Tyler Holcomb is a member of the New York Air National Guard and serves as historian of the 138th Attack Squadron. He is passionate about local history and relishes the opportunity to capture that passion in assisting with the design process of the new flag.



Owen Hunter came to Syracuse to study at SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry. He now works downtown as an environmental engineer, specializing in stormwater and erosion control. He believes a new city flag will foster stronger civic pride.



Vernita King grew up in Syracuse from the age of 5. She is a retired assistant commissioner with the New York Department of Housing and Community Development and worked for Onondaga County's Commission on Human Rights for 27 years. In retirement, she is excited to support community activities.



Michelle Fuller works at King + King Architects, and says when the call for Syracuse Flag committee members was announced, she thought it was the perfect opportunity to merge her passion for design with her love for the city she now calls home.

When **Brad Fetes** watched the TED Talk, "Why city flags may be the worst-designed thing you never noticed," he recognized Syracuse's flag. He feels the city deserves something better than a seal on a bedsheet and can't wait for a flag all residents can be proud of.





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