

# THE VOICE

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## CARTOON



# Councilwoman Melissa Robinson Mulls Vote of No Confidence In City Manager

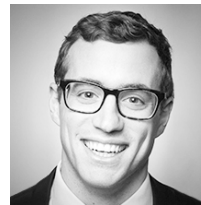
By Thomas White

Kansas City's third-district councilwoman Melissa Robinson said Thursday that she wanted to hold a committee meeting and a no confidence vote against City Manager Brian Platt.

If a no confidence vote were to pass, the city manager would be removed from office. Like many cities Kansas City has an appointed city manager who is the head of the city's administration and one of the most powerful positions in local government.

Robinson told KSHB 41, who broke the story, that the city council has received complaints about how Platt runs his office and city government. Robinson says people are objecting to Platt taking items out of the budget after ordinances pass while others take issue with hiring and firing practices. There's also concern about his inability to repair a discriminatory culture within the City's Fire Department along with other miscellaneous complaints about mis management across city departments.

As we've previously reported, when Brian Platt was hired in 2020, he arrived with controversy. Platt was one of four finalists for the job of city manager, he had the least amount of government experience and was the only White finalist, but ultimately got the job.



Brian Platt



Third-District Councilwoman Melissa Robinaon has put a vote to remove Brian Platt on hold for now.

Two days after Platt's hiring, it was revealed that in his previous job he was one of eight Jersey City, New Jersey city officials accused of racial discrimination in a lawsuit filed earlier that year. While that lawsuit was eventually dismissed, one of the plaintiffs, Frank Gilmore, said on Twitter that Platt was part of systemic racism that targeted Black and Brown workers causing them to lose their jobs, while their White counterparts received promotions.

According to an email we received, Robinson was prepared to introduce a resolution of no confidence in Platt. That resolution was not introduced. However after the completion of their regular agenda, the council met in a closed executive session. By law, special sessions are reserved for discussion of personnel and legal matters.

Fourth-district councilman Eric Bunch stated that he was aware of Robinson's effort but did not plan to support it. He said he viewed the vote of no confidence as too divisive and that he prefers to address personnel issues in a more deliberative and collaborative process.

After the executive session, Robinson said the vote of no confidence is on hold, for now.

While KC's city charter—which functions as the city's constitution— doesn't include the phrase "vote of no confidence" it does outline how the mayor and/or city council could remove the city manager.

Removing Platt from office would require an affirmative vote by the mayor and six council members. If the mayor does not vote to remove the city manager, Platt could still be removed but it would require an affirmative vote by nine or the 12 council members.

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## THE COMMUNITY VOICE

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# NFL Draft In KC: Everything You Need To Know

**From event details & times to parking & road closures this is your guide to navigating the 2023 NFL Draft.**

By Thomas White

Kansas City, you're on the clock.

The NFL Draft is likely the largest event KC has ever hosted, according to city officials. More than 300,000 attendees are expected with \$125 million in economic impact over the course of just three days.

Kansas City is the seventh city to host the draft. Las Vegas netted 300,000+ fans last year while Nashville saw over half a million two years ago.

The scale is as large as the spotlight. There are 1,300 people working the event and KC will see 70-plus hours of live national media coverage.

**When & Where**

**Union Station & Liberty Memorial**

**April 27 - 29**

The draft selections take place at the "Draft Theater," which is a 380-foot long, open-backed stage the NFL built directly in front of Union Station. Teams begin draft selections at 7 p.m. Thur.,



The NFL Draft Theater setup in front of Union Station features a massive 380-foot stage that is open in the back to highlight the architecture of Union Station. (AltText: An artist rendering of the draft stage at union station shows an open back where the architectural elements of Union Station are on display. Two large screens project video of the draft on either side of the main stage and podium)

6 p.m. Fri, and 11 a.m. Sat.

Across Pershing Street both sides of Liberty Memorial will host viewing areas and the "NFL Draft Experience" which is a large NFL-themed festival. The NFL Draft Experience runs from

noon to 10 p.m. on Thur. and Fri., and 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Sat.

**Street Closures**

A chunk of the city will be shut down to street

traffic. Broadway, Grand, 18th, and 31st streets remain fully open for those looking to avoid closures, but within that perimeter many roads are closed for the draft April 26 to 29.

City officials say Google Maps and other navigation services should have live updates, but here are the specific road closures:

- Main St. between 20th St. and Pershing Rd.
- Main St. between Pershing Rd. and Grand Blvd.
- Pershing Rd. between Kessler Rd. and Main St.
- Pershing Rd. between Grand Blvd. and Broadway St.
- Kessler Rd. between Pershing Rd. and Wyandotte St.
- OK St.
- Memorial Dr.

**Navigation & Parking**

Those looking to go to the draft should expect at least a 10-minute walk from just about any parking space to the draft. The main entrance to the draft is through the south lawn of Liberty Memorial at the intersection of Wyandotte and Memorial Drive.

See **DRAFT** Page 11 →



## Gallery Talk with Artist Sharif Bey

**Friday, May 5 | 6:30 pm**

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← Sharif Bey, *Nestle III*, 2021. Glass and mixed media, 33 x 33 x 3 inches. Wichita Art Museum, Museum purchase. F. Price Cossman Memorial Trust, INTRUST Bank, Trustee

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# Missouri AG Faces 'High Bar' in Effort to Oust St. Louis Prosecutor for Neglect of Duties

By Rudi Keller  
Missouri Independent

If the case seeking to oust St. Louis Circuit Attorney Kim Gardner gets to trial, she will argue that only corrupt and intentional refusal to do her job, not disagreement about prosecutions or mistakes by subordinates, are sufficient to remove her.

In a motion to dismiss the ouster case, Gardner cites the only two instances where the courts have removed sitting prosecutors as the standard for such actions. Attorney General Andrew Bailey, who in February filed the case, known in law as a writ of quo warranto, is engaged in a political crusade, Gardner's filings argue.

If the bar is lowered, attorney Jonathan Sternberg wrote, quo warranto "would be a political tool for an attorney general to remove a politically opposite prosecutor whenever he can comb through all the cases in her office and point to a few failings with which he disagrees."

Bailey filed the petition seeking Gardner's removal for neglect of her duties less than a week after Janae Edmondson, a Tennessee teenager, was severely injured in downtown St. Louis when she was struck by a car allegedly driven by Daniel Riley, who was free on bond while awaiting trial for armed robbery.

In an updated petition filed March 21, Bailey outlines 10 counts alleging Gardner has performed so poorly that it has left St. Louis residents at risk. He specifically alleges her office has failed to process and to prosecute cases promptly and with competence, failed to meet its legal obligations to give victims information about the progress of their case and provide defendants the evidence against them.

Gardner "has lost the trust of the people and left crime victims in the dark," the petition filed by Bailey's



St. Louis Circuit Attorney Kim Gardner faces an effort by the attorney general to remove her from office (Wiley Price/St. Louis American).

office states.

Bailey's petition also says she should be ousted for her office's purposeful violation of the Sunshine Law dating to a 2019 request by refusing to turn over documents to John Solomon, a Washington, D.C. reporter who is a Fox News contributor and former staff member of The Hill.

The case is up for a hearing Tuesday afternoon before Judge John Torbitzky, assigned to the case from the Eastern District Court of Appeals after all the judges in the St. Louis circuit recused themselves.

Gardner, a Democrat and the city's first Black prosecutor, is serving her second term as circuit attorney and would be up for re-election in 2024. She has repeatedly come under fire from conservative Republicans, and last year survived an effort to strip her of her law license based on the way she conducted a 2018 investigation of then-Gov. Eric Greitens.

After Edmondson was injured, Gardner lost support among Demo-

crats, with Mayor Tishaura Jones saying she had "lost the trust of the people," and several St. Louis lawmakers calling for her to resign.

A new legal problem developed Monday for Gardner in a case that parallels some of the specific cases cited in Bailey's petition. Judge Scott Millikan ordered Gardner to appear in court April 24 for a possible contempt citation after no one from her office showed up for a scheduled murder trial.

How it's Supposed to Work

On Thursday in Jefferson City, the history of quo warranto – from its origin in English common law to its use in Missouri courtrooms – was the subject of a discussion hosted by the Federalist Society Jefferson City Lawyers Chapter.

All the attorneys on the panel – former Missouri Supreme Court Chief Justice Mike Wolff, former state Senator and lobbyist Kurt Schaefer and Western District Appeals Court Judge Edward Ardini – have been involved in the pros-

Only two elected prosecutors have been removed from office by the courts. Both were in the 1930s and early 1940s and both were notoriously corrupt.

In one, Attorney General Roy McKittrick in 1940 won the ouster of Jackson County Prosecutor W.W. Graves on charges he ignored flagrant gambling, liquor and prostitution in Kansas City. The gambling and other vices were so open that newspapers published the addresses of known lawbreaking.

In the other, McKittrick proved in 1939 that Cole County Prosecuting Attorney Carl Wymore knew that slot machines, dice machines and other illegal devices and schemes were operated openly in Jefferson City.

"They were in hotel lobbies, public eating places, taverns, drug stores, cafes, gasoline filling stations and other places, and, with few exceptions, were in plain view of the public," the Missouri Supreme Court opinion ordering Wymore's removal stated.

ecution, defense or hearing of quo warranto cases.

The panel conspicuously avoided direct mention of the Gardner case.

The key points the panel made were that a quo warranto action, as interpreted recently by the courts, must cite violations of the official misconduct law during the current term of office and that it does not bar the official, if removed, from seeking and winning that office again.

Sometimes misconduct is "in the eye of the beholder, and you've got to be mindful, when is the next election?" Ardini said. "If the next election is in two months, what's the point of bringing it to the court, right? I mean, even if you're successful, it may be a month, you know, that the person is out, and then maybe put right back in."

Gardner announced in late March that she intends to seek another term.

Many of the specific cases cited in Bailey's action are from Gardner's first term, but a near-equal number are from the current term that began in 2021 or were cases that overlapped the two terms.

In a case McKittrick lost, and which Gardner's defense is using as

an example of why she should not be removed, St. Louis County Prosecuting Attorney Stanley Wallach was acquitted of neglect of duties. McKittrick alleged Wallach had failed to prosecute liquor law violations.

Wallach was able to show that his actions were within the scope of his prosecutorial discretion, Wolff said. Not every case presented by police will result in charges, he noted.

"You're going to have a certain number of cases where prosecution is declined, and you're going to have a certain number of law enforcement people who are going to be ticked off about that," Wolff said. "But that is the nature of discretion. So it seems to me that in the area of duty, or neglect of duty, there's a fairly high bar for prosecutors."

In Bailey's filing, the attorney general argues that Gardner should be ousted for neglect of her duties. She has an unacceptable backlog of unprocessed cases, with reviews taking as much as eight months, the petition states. Bailey also cites the large numbers of cases dismissed before trial and the office policy of only prosecuting cases where the evidence in hand leaves no reasonable doubt about the guilt of the accused.



# Black-Owned Classic Blends Brings 18th & Vine Vibe to North KC

**Obstacles helped William Harris create two spaces north of the river offering fellowship around cigars, coffee, bourbon, jazz, and R&B.**

**By Thomas White**

William Harris keeps making lemonade. Lemonade these days looks like running two cigar lounge locations with a twist. The two Classic Blends shops operate on opposite hours and are only separated by a brisk three-block walk in North Kansas City.

Harris and his wife Carolina are the primary employees of the two cigar lounges. The 21st Street location opens early in the morning and focuses on coffee, while the one on 24th Street and Burlington is much larger, opens at 5 p.m., and hosts musicians and events.

“It’s a place where you can kick back, relax and have a nice cigar,” says Harris. “The community loves it, we get a nice diverse crowd for the shows and all different types come in for business meetings or just to hang out.”

Classic R&B — loud enough to hear the words — greets guests at both locations when they aren’t hosting an event. The cigar lounges both feature comfortable seating in a warm interior with crisp air and dramatic portraits on the walls. Both have coffee and bar service, televisions, and, of course, a walk-in humididor full of boutique cigars.

## Lemonade Out of Lemons

Classic Blends and its unique setup all started when the 2020 pandemic handed



William and Carolina Harris enjoy a morning beverage at the 21st Street Classic Blends Cigar and Coffee shop.

Harris lemons.

He was pastor of a small congregation that dissolved as a result of COVID. He had been a bi-vocational pastor, and always had an entrepreneurial spirit.

Previously, he worked as an accountant with a charter school and KC Parks and Recreation. Before his 15 years of pastoring, Harris and his wife also owned a couple of coffee shop franchises that moved them north of the river.

When no longer leading a flock, Harris, the serial entrepreneur, had some time to ponder his next move. He decided he wanted to open a cigar & coffee shop. He knew the coffee side, but needed to get more familiar with the cigar business. So Harris picked up a part-time gig at a popular Westport cigar shop to hone the tobacconist craft.

After working there for a year, Harris came home and told his wife that he was ready and the two started scouting for locations.

They wanted to open their shop in rapidly developing North Kansas City, but more lemons came his way when negotiations fell through on a busy corner location near Chicken N Pickle. Undeterred, Harris went old school, deciding to just drive around looking for real estate. The move paid off when he found the Burlington location.

But problems arose again when the cigar lounge had to open after 5 p.m. to ease concerns of second-hand smoke to neighboring businesses. Classic Blends has a state-of-the-art air purifying system but wanted to be a good neighbor, so Harris moved back its hours. The later opening time put a major dent in the coffee business; so the Harris started looking for a new space despite only operating their first location for a few months.

## COMING UP @ CLASSIC BLENDS

In addition to the music calendar found on their website (ClassicBlendsCigar.com/events) the location at 2425 Burlington in NKC is hosting a pre-draft kickoff party on Wed., April 26. The limited-capacity draft welcome party requires a \$20 cover charge but has a mixer and meal from 5 to 7 p.m. Then a Q&A session with former Chiefs players Neil Smith, Kimble Anders, and Danan Hughes will be followed by music into the evening.

The second location on 21st Street fits their idealized coffee shop business model, but William and Carolina had to put their heads together to figure out what to do with the larger Burlington location. Once again, the Harris took a problem and turned it into an opportunity.

## 18th & Vine Vibe North of the River

“There’s really not a big space north of the river for Black music,” says Harris. “So we thought, well, we’ll bring some of the 18th & Vine vibes here.”

The evening location of Classic Blends started hosting a jazz night with Max Groove on Thursdays.

Soon, the music venue became a hit and drew in more customers. Now, the Burlington Classic Blends hosts live music on Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights.

“Kansas City is driven by music, and you don’t know it until you start digging into it,” says Harris. “There’s talent everywhere in KC, so we get to be selective.”

Thursday nights have remained a classic jazz night, but other shows consistently showcase up-and-coming musicians in both jazz and classic R&B.

Harris sees both cigar shops as long-term ventures. The evening shop that doubles as a music venue complements the coffee shop and vice versa.

Classic Blends sells memberships that entitle members to a locker to store a private stock of cigars. Members can also use the morning coffee-focused shop as a personal hangout even when the business is closed.



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# What Should You Do With Your Old Smartphone?

**By Burton Kelso**  
The Technology Expert

The era of 3G is coming to a close and if you own a 3G smartphone, it's time to retire it and get a newer 4G or 5G phone.

One of the drawbacks to getting a new smartphone, regardless if it's 4G or 5G, is the ever-growing collection of old smartphones in your junk drawer.

What's even worse, your old phone still functions, and throwing it away feels wasteful, especially if you've spent hundreds of dollars getting a new one.

If you still have an old smartphone or two lying around, there are several things you can use them for. Check out these quick and easy tips to put those old smartphones to use and give them a new life.

## How is it Possible to Use my Old Smartphone?

Your smartphone is essentially a mini-supercomputer running either iOS or Android. Just like a computer, your smartphone can access any wifi network and perform functions like surfing the web, downloading apps and making video calls.

In the case of a smartphone being retired because it can't



**BURTON KELSO**  
TECH EXPERT

access your 3G cellular network, it just means you can't access the web or make phone calls on your provider's network.

For you, this means that without your cell network, you'd have to connect to free wifi to perform any function on your phone. Your smartphone is designed to work on a cellular network and a wireless network, giving you more function and freedom on your phone when you're out and about.

So what can you do with that old phone? Well, you could:

**Trade It In:** This is the most obvious choice as you don't end up with a junk drawer full

of useless smartphones.

**Turn It into a Remote Control:** Why waste money on a universal remote when you can turn your old smartphone into one? There are several apps that will allow you to do this, such as programs including Apple TV, Roku Player, ChromeCast, and Amazon Fire TV.

**Emergency Phone:** Even though your phone may not be under your provider's plan at the moment, you can actually still make emergency calls. All smartphones can connect to 911 emergency services regardless of having a plan or not. It's never a bad idea to have an emergency phone for you or even senior adult members of your family who don't own a phone.

**Pass It Down to Your Kids:** Not that I'm big on dumping a phone on kids, but if you're in



Do you have a drawer full of old cell phones? Here's a few ideas of things you can do with them.

that in-between stage of buying your kid their own phone, give them your old device. Once you remove all of your information, connect it to your wifi and your kids can search the internet, download games, make internet calls, and play games. Just make sure you get

them a case and screen protector.

**Video Chat Phone:** This can come in handy if you have younger kids who want to talk to grandparents or other family members via Zoom, FaceTime, or any other video chat platform. Your old smartphone can be used for chat and

you don't have to worry about the kids borrowing your phone to make calls.

**Media & Music Player:** When our boys were little, I used an old iPhone to stream Pandora lullaby music to help them go to sleep. You could do the same for standard music in your household. You can even connect it to a Bluetooth speaker for a more robust sound.

## Reset Your Phone

If you decide that none of the above tips are for you and you just want to sell, donate or recycle your old phone, make sure you erase all your data, including e-mail, text messages, photos, media, and apps. The best way to do this is to reset your phone back to factory defaults. For most devices, it's just a matter of going to "settings" to erase all your data and restore factory settings.

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# Community Standouts

By Voice Staff

## KCKPS Hires New School Administrators for 2023-24 School Year

Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools will begin the 2023-24 school year with four new principals who will officially start in their new roles on July 1. The district is pleased to announce the hiring of: Dr. Tawanna Hughes, Dr. Dana Jackson, Jammika Lawson, and Marica Rhone.

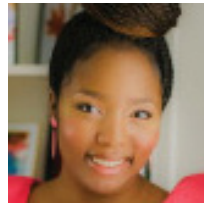
**Dr. Tawanna Hughes** currently serves as assistant principal at Eisenhower Middle School and will become the new principal at Hazel Grove Elementary.



Dr. Tawanna Hughes

Hughes has nearly 20 years of experience as an educator, beginning as an elementary school teacher in St. Louis. A lot of her early work focused in the area of math and science. She focuses on academic wellness and the social and emotional support needed for students' success.

**Dr. Dana Jackson** previously served as a consultant at an education consulting firm and will take on a new leadership role as principal at New Chelsea Elementary.



Dr. Dana Jackson

Jackson has been an educator for more than 10 years, with six years working in the KCKPS system, where she served as an instructional coach.

Her professional work experience also includes serving as a tenure-track English professor at the University of Saint Mary. She is a graduate of Sumner Academy.

**Jammika Lawson**, who has been assistant principal at Welborn Elementary since 2019, will become the new principal at Frances Willard Elementary.

Lawson is a proud product of the KCKPS system. She attended M.E. Pearson Elementary, Arrowhead Middle School and graduated from Sumner Academy in 2009.

As a lifelong learner, Lawson is dedicated

to providing opportunities to expand knowledge through new experiences, innovative practice, and reflection.

**Marica Rhone**, who is assistant principal at Banneker Elementary in KCK Public Schools, will become the principal at McKinley Elementary.

Rhone has more than 22 years of experience in education, including 17 years in various positions in KCKPS.

She began her teaching experience as a 2nd grade teacher, then as a kindergarten full-inclusion teacher.

Rhone joined KCKPS in August 2006, teaching 2nd through 4th grades at West Park Elementary.



Ms. Jammika Lawson



Ms. Marica Rhone

## Melody McCray Miller Seeking Election to USD 259 Seat

**Melody McCray-Miller** is running for an At Large Seat on the Wichita School Board. The seat is currently held by Sheril Logan who is not seeking reelection.



Melody McCray-Miller

Miller who is CEO of Miller's Inc. and a lecturer at Wichita State University, is coming out of political retirement to run for this position.

Miller served as a Democratic representative in the Kansas House of Representatives from 2005-2013 and as a Sedgwick County Commissioner from 1996-2000.

The deadline to file for election is June 1. "It's time for me to win so that there will be a voice for people that look like all of us," said McCray-Miller during her announcement speech.

USD 259 is a majority-minority school district, but there is only one minority currently on the seven member board, Hazel Stabler, who is native American.

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# Affects of Ralph Yarl Shooting May Require More Support for Our Children

**The proximity, unprovoked nature and how easily local children can identify with young Ralph Yarl, could make this attack even more traumatic for KC-area youth.**

By Bonita Gooch

Many Black people are experiencing the events surrounding the shooting of Ralph Yarl as vicarious racism.

Vicarious racism traditionally refers to experiencing racial discrimination indirectly through close contacts, such as family members and peers. However, some mental health scholars strongly believe this definition is not inclusive enough.

Vicarious racism can be experienced by those who are not directly involved with the event, but who identify with the victims of racism generally on the basis of race, with age and gender possibly additional factors.

Pediatrician Nia Heard-Garris is extremely concerned about vicarious racism's impact on Black children and youth.

"My concern is that Black Americans, especially youths, are impacted by vicarious racism more than we expect and that its impact on children is understudied," said Heard-Garris. "Also, I want to know how to best help all of our children. What can we do to help them deal with their feelings? And what can we do to help them and ourselves deal with racism?"

## Connectedness

There is research that shows



the more geographically close people are to a traumatic event, the greater the mental health impact.

A 2001 study showed that after the Sept. 11 attacks, higher levels of acute stress disorder (ASD), post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Researcher Edward Blanchard of the University of Albany-State University of New York studied three geographic different populations. One was in Albany, NY; the second in Augusta, GA; the third in Fargo, ND.

One predictor for PTSD and ASD in this study was "connectedness" to the victims in the World Trade Center, meaning having a friend or knowing someone directly involved in the event. ASD in the three populations was almost 10% in the undergraduates from Fargo, nearly 20% in those from Augusta and approached 30% in the Albany group.

The study showed children even 1,000 miles away were impacted by the event, children closer to the event had more psychological symptoms.

Not only do the events themselves affect youth, but the onslaught of media afterwards is traumatizing. The Yarl shooting gained national attention, and

with it came an onslaught of national media coverage of this event, in addition to the never-ending cycle of local media coverage.

Like media coverage surrounding this event, after 9/11, media coverage was extensive and constant. The Blanchard study found hours of TV watched was a predictor of ASD, PTSD or the accompanying symptoms.

## Children Feel the Pain, But Parents Can Help

While the 9/11 attacks are different from the Yarl event, there are similarities, including feelings of pain and fear, especially experienced by minorities. The Yarl event, and others across the nation" have evoked trauma, and children are not an exception," said Heard-Garris. "Children are traumatized and retraumatized by these events through the media, but can also be exposed to these events through the words and actions of their parents."

After the murder of Trayvon Martin, a 2013 study done including 104 African-American parents with children ages 6-18 showed that parents felt the need to protect their own children. Parents used the events to discuss racism and attempt to process it with their children, as

well as advise them as to how to behave if in a similar situation.

"The guidance or socialization parents impart to their children accompanies the oral accounts of these events and becomes a part of the generational heirloom passed down," said Heard-Garris.

"These tragedies are woven into the historical and multi-generational trauma of African Americans. This must be addressed, she said."

To help protect our youth from the impact of this event in close proximity, involving a young man with whom they can connect and relate, Heard-Garris makes the following recommendations.

- Start by caring for ourselves and making sure we seek the mental health care we need if we are severely impacted by these events.
- Talk to our children in an age-appropriate way, gauging their knowledge and dispelling rumors or heightened fears.
- Discuss concerning behavior with our child's pediatrician or primary care provider.
- Monitor and limit the exposure of these events through TV, radio, internet, social media and, yes, newspapers.

Unfortunately, there is a need to protect our children from being the next victims of these events, but there is also a need to protect our children from being the indirect – psychological – victims of these events as well.

"We need to continue to fight against the injustices of this world on all fronts, including ensuring we have healthy, resilient children to whom we may pass the torch," prodded Heard-Garris.

## Ralph Yarl: an Outstanding Young Man

Ralph Yarl, a junior at Staley High School in North Kansas City, is described as a high-achieving student and a talented musician.

He is a section leader in his school's marching band and is also in its jazz and competition band, his aunt Faith Spoonmore wrote on a GoFundMe page raising money to cover his medical costs.

Yarl recently earned Missouri All-State Band recognition and plays multiple instruments in the Metropolitan Youth Orchestra.

Ralph Yarl was shot Thursday, April 13 when he mistakenly rang the doorbell of a home in Clay County. He was picking up his brothers, who were at an address about a block away.

His family noted that he is also a member of the Technology Student Association and Science Olympiad Team. Spoonmore wrote that her nephew's goal is to attend Texas A&M to major in chemical engineering.

"When asked how he plans to get into this university, he said, 'Well, if they have a scholarship for music or academics, I know I can get it,'" Spoonmore said.

North Kansas City Schools Superintendent Dan Clemens said in a statement that the district is "devastated" to learn about the shooting.

"Ralph is an excellent student and talented musician. He maintains a stellar GPA while taking mostly college-level courses," Clemens said. "While he loves science and hopes to pursue that career path, his passion is music. Thankfully, we know he is now recovering alongside family."





# Community Organizations Call For Federal Intervention in Ralph Yarl Shooting Case

**A lack of trust in Clay County officials is driving locals to seek federal help.**

By Bonita Gooch

A coalition of representatives of civil rights organizations were joined by elected officials at a press conference held April 18 on the steps of the Federal Courthouse in downtown Kansas City.

The meeting was called before charges were filed against Andrew Lester in the shooting of Ralph Yarl. However, the press conference proceeded with the coalition using the press conference as an opportunity to call for federal hate crime charges to be filed against Lester. In addition, citing mistrust in the Clay County officials, the group called for the Dept. of Justice to get involved in the case.

Nimrod Chapel, president of the Missouri State Branches of the NAACP, said the problem isn't just a problem in Kansas City, that it's a statewide problem and that Lester "is a symptom of what's going on in Missouri. It's



Councilwoman Melissa Robinson speaks during a rally held on the steps of the Federal Courthouse. Other speakers at the rally included civil rights leaders and elected officials.

the culture in Missouri that led Lester to believe he can get away with shooting Yarl," Nimrod concluded.

Rep. Jamie Johnson, who is the only Black

state official representing any part of North Kansas City, spoke about the culture she sees in the Missouri capitol.

"Last night, we passed bills in the house that

would allow for firearms on public transit and in places of worship. That is unacceptable," said Johnson.

KC Councilwoman Melissa Robinson brought a message of action. "Today, my office sent a letter to the U.S District Attorney's Office asking for an investigation regarding a hate crime," in the Yarl shooting incident.

Robinson said she took the action based on a lack of trust in Clay County officials who are currently in charge of prosecuting the case. She and others expressed concern that despite the evidence and statements given, Lester was initially let go after just three hours and that charges were only filed after the incident gained national attention.

"The way the perpetrator has been described, the way that the victim was being described, you could clearly see the implicit bias. You could clearly see there's two justice systems in America, one for Black people and one for White people, because there's no way that an African American who would have done that would still be allowed to walk around."

## Missouri's 'Stand Your Ground' Law Could Play Role in Shooting of 16-year-old Ralph Yarl

**The law allows for a person to use deadly force in public or private settings, if they 'reasonably believe' their life is in danger.**

By Meg Cunningham  
The Kansas City Beacon

On April 17, Clay County prosecutors announced charges against 84-year-old Andrew Lester, a White man accused in the shooting of 16-year-old Ralph Yarl. The teenager, who is Black, had knocked on Lester's door the night of April 13 after he went to the wrong house to pick up his siblings.

As the case progresses, one factor that may come into play is Missouri's Stand Your Ground law, which allows

the use of deadly force as long as the shooter believes that firing a gun is a necessary act to protect oneself or someone else. Shooting suspects must prove their claim of self-defense to prosecutors.

### Missouri's 2016 Expansion of Firearm Rights

Stand Your Ground was enacted in Missouri in 2017, after Republican supermajorities in the Missouri General Assembly voted to override then-Gov. Jay Nixon's veto of a sweeping gun bill.

Chapter 563, Section 031 in Missouri's statute says that under Stand Your Ground, a person may use deadly force on public or private property or "any other location such person has the right to be," if they believe it is necessary to protect themselves or another against death, serious physical injury or a forcible felony. The law

was enacted as part of the omnibus gun bill that also allowed Missourians to carry concealed weapons without a permit and eliminated training requirements for concealed carry.

In a major change to previous law, the 2016 legislation eliminates the "duty to retreat," meaning a person is no longer expected to try to leave a potentially dangerous situation before resorting to lethal force.

### Who Opposed Stand Your Ground? Who Supported It?

Missouri's Stand Your Ground law was opposed by the state Police Chiefs

Association and Missouri Fraternal Order of Police. Sly James, then the mayor of Kansas City, joined the mayors of St. Louis and other larger cities in voicing concerns. Catholic bishops in Missouri opposed the expansion of gun rights, as did gun safety groups.

The National Rifle Association made the law a priority, sending lobbyists to Jefferson City to help persuade Republican legislators to override Nixon's veto. The Missouri Sheriffs' Association also supported the expanded gun provisions, including Stand Your Ground.

Homicide rates have increased in Missouri since 2016, but it is difficult to isolate the Stand Your Ground law from other measures encouraging firearm ownership and use, and from other factors. "Stand your ground" laws, however, lead to

heightened concerns about the role of race in public safety and criminal justice.

A paper from the Urban Institute, a nonprofit think tank dedicated to social equity, analyzed FBI data and found that in states with "stand your ground" laws, the use of defense by White people in the shooting of a Black person is found to be justifiable 17% of the time, compared to a 1% justifiable rate if the roles were reversed.

St. Louis Rep. Peter Merideth, who has tried for years to pass tougher gun control legislation, pointed to the data that Black people are far more likely to be impacted by "stand your ground" statutes than others.

"It's hard to ignore the racial element of it, which we talk about all the time when it comes to gun laws and this whole 'shoot first' mentality," Merideth said. "It seems to constantly victimize Black folks more than anyone else, because of this subjective idea of being afraid for your life and being entitled to shoot first."



Andrew Lester



# KC Celebrates Black WWII Hero

**Kansas City's only Black WWII Medal of Honor recipient, PFC Willy F. James Jr., is remembered with honor.**

**By Thomas White**

Private First Class Willy F. James Jr. finally got his hero's welcome home.

A wreath in his honor was placed at the Black Veterans Memorial at 12th Street and Paseo on April 7. A chaplain led a prayer before a 21-gun salute and a trumpeter played taps. Then, a horseback colorguard led a memorial procession of marching bands, firefighters, veterans, and Buffalo Soldiers on motorcycles down Paseo to 18th Street and the Black Archives.

It was all for PFC Willy James, who was one of only seven Black World War II vets to receive the Medal of Honor, the U.S. military's highest decoration, and the only one from Kansas City.

"This is a historic event," said onlooker Brian Wilson. "It's something I wouldn't want to miss. [It's] long overdue."

James was recognized for his bravery in capturing or killing 40 Nazi SS troops. He died in combat in April 1945 from sniper fire while attempting to save his commanding officer.

Due to bias and discrimination, it took until

1996 for him to be honored as a Medal of Honor recipient.

James' only surviving family are nieces who donated his Medal of Honor to the Black Archives of Mid-America for display. There are no known photographs of James, and, for a time, it looked as though his story could have been lost to history.

"[In the past] he was seen as Black and therefore not worthy," said Lt. Gen. Milford H. Beagle Jr. "But there's no caveat with a Medal of Honor, he's not a 'Black' Medal of Honor recipient, he's a Medal of Honor recipient who will always be remembered as a hero."

In 1996, the U.S. government recognized seven Black WWII veterans, including James, had been unjustly denied the Medal of Honor. In response, in 1997, President Bill Clinton presented Valcenie James with her husband's Medal of Honor.

It had taken more than 50 years, but PFC Willy F. James finally received recognition for his bravery. Generations to come can see his Medal of Honor on prominent display at the Black Archives of Mid-America at 1722 E. 17th Terrace in KCMO.



PFC Willy James is one of only seven Black WWII vets to receive the Medal of Honor

## PFC JAMES BACKSTORY

Willy F. James Jr., was born in Kansas City, MO, on March 18, 1920, and grew up there as the only child of a widowed mother. He was drafted into the Army in September 1942, just before his marriage to wife Valcenie, and was recognized for his marksmanship and leadership during training.

On April 7, 1945, James's unit crossed the Weser River near Lippoldsberg, Germany. He was sent forward to scout the enemy position and made critical observations while pinned down by heavy fire for more than an hour.

Despite the danger, James raced back to his company to report the observations. Undaunted, he volunteered to lead the attack on Lippoldsberg.

As the men advanced, they drew fire from every direction, and SS troops emerged from the windows and doorways of the town. Platoon leader Lt. A.J. Serabella was gravely wounded, and James raced to his aid, intending to pull him to safety. Before he could act, James was struck and killed by German sniper fire.

James' legacy lives on at the National WWII Museum and in the exhibition "Fighting for the Right to Fight: African-American Experiences in World War II."

He is buried in the Netherlands American Cemetery in Margraten, where his grave and those of the other 8,300 Americans buried there are lovingly tended by the American Battle Monuments Commission, the Dutch people, and visitors who come year-round to pay respects.

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*Rev. James A. Terrance, Jr., Pastor - and Choir  
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3:30PM*

**Rev. Donald A. Williams, Sr., Pastor**

**THEME:**  
*"When the Humble is Exalted"*  
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# City Council Approves Go-Ahead with 18th & Vine Pedestrian Mall

By Bonita Gooch

After considerable community engagement and input, the Kansas City Council voted to proceed with a plan that makes considerable streetscape design improvements in the Historic Jazz District.

The plan includes new lighting, sidewalk amenities, park-like features and lighting along 17th, 18th and 19th streets, Woodland, Highland and Vine. However, a major focus of the redesign is the transition of 18th Street between Woodland and Vine into a pedestrian mall.

The idea is to decrease the number of cars in the area and increase the number of pedestrians.

To accommodate the pedestrians, the



The new pedestrian mall will be located on 18th Street between the Paseo and Woodland. Parking will be eliminated along 18th and additional improvements will be installed to increase pedestrian traffic.

plan eliminates parking along Vine and makes the area part of a 25-foot-wide sidewalk. Curbs will be eliminated to create a single-level surface.

Traffic would still travel one lane in

each direction, but attractive gate features are planned at Vine and Woodland that can easily be used to close off the street. The road is often closed off for community events, including

Juneteenth, 816 Day and First Friday gatherings.

A small public square is planned for performances next to the Gem Theater at 18th and Highland. The historic Boone Theater, one block east of the Gem, proposed an outside performance area as part of its renovation project that is currently underway.

"I'm glad that we're moving in a direction that really lets the community have a gathering space," said Mayor Quinton Lucas ahead of the vote.

Funding for the project was made possible thanks to Congressman Emanuel Cleaver, who secured \$4 million in Housing and Urban Development funding for the project. So far, the city has authorized the use of \$1.5 million in Tax Increment

Financing Funds for the project.

The council also entered into a \$1.184 million agreement for local firm Taliaferro & Browne to complete the design of the Pedestrian Mall, which is the first phase of the project. The second phase calls for the improvement of 17th Terrace from Paseo to Highland.

For those worried about the loss of parking on 18th Street, the plan calls for relocating the parking to 17th Terrace for a "net zero" parking loss.

The work on 18th and 17th is fully funded. Since funding for the streetscape improvements proposed for the rest of the district isn't secured, Taliaferro & Brown's contract only authorizes partial design on the balance of the improvements.

DRAFT, from Page 3 ↓

With the influx of visitors, parking will be at a premium. Fans can park in a lot in River Market or Downtown then ride the streetcar south toward Union Station. During the draft, the

Crossroads stop is as close as the streetcar will take you, and from there to the main entrance is a 15-minute walk.

Alternatively, fans can take the Main Max bus, which gets closer to the main entrance of the draft. The Main Max is free and runs from

Downtown along Penn Valley Drive. The 29th Street stop puts you a five-minute walk from the draft.

If you pre-book, there is a park-and-ride shuttle from the West Bottoms Garage near the Hy-Vee Arena. Parking is \$15 with free shuttle service, but you must prebook for either April 27 or 28. The park-and-ride shuttle will bring you within a 10-minute walk of the draft entrance. Pre-booking can be done in the NFL Draft section of VisitKC.com.

Rideshares like Uber or Lyft must drop off at East 27th Terrace, just south of Crown Center; from there, it's a 10-minute walk. When you go to leave, rideshare pickup spots are designated at McGee near Pershing, Grand near SEA LIFE Kansas City, McGee near 27th Terrace.

The closest a fan can get is Crown Center, which is a five-minute walk to the draft entrance - but parking is set at \$50 per day. Crown Center parking is available on a first-come first-served basis.

### Security & Getting In

The entire draft site and fan fest area is bordered by fencing or concrete barriers. Fans will go through security checkpoints and metal detectors similar to an NFL game.

It's free to go to the draft but those interested must register through the NFLOnePass app or online at NFL.com/DraftAccess to enter.

The secured area can be entered and exited from three points with signage available for

those walking up to the draft. Most are encouraged to enter the main entrance near the intersection of Wyandotte and Memorial Drive

No outside food or drink is allowed. Unlicensed vending and sales in or near the draft is also not allowed. A full list of prohibited items is available at VisitKC.com or the NFLOnePass app.

Those with accessibility or mobility concerns should contact the mobility hotline at 888-745-1455 or email in advance to nfl-draftmobility@gmail.com.



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Aside from the draft itself, all three days have a concert on the main stage in front of Union Station.

Throughout the Draft Experience, there are concessions, bars, food vendors, autograph tents, games, and photo opportunities with Super Bowl rings and the Chiefs' three Lombardi trophies.

On Saturday there is the Smoke Show BBQ competition featuring demonstrations and showdowns of KC's best pitmasters. The Smoke Show competition is hosted by former Chief Mitchell Schwartz and features 20 BBQ icons from around the city, including teams from Gates, Arthur Bryant's, Joe's, Jack Stack, and Q39.

The National WWI Museum at the Liberty Memorial will also be open Thur. noon to 7 p.m.; Fri. noon to 6 p.m.; and Sat. 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

A full list of events and attractions is available in the NFLOnePass app or VisitKC.com.

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# Youth Horizons' Mentorship Mission Steady

**Program that matches caring adults with children in need continues to be faith-based as it grows in size and expands its services.**

By P.J. Griekspoor

**G**rowing up is hard. Growing up with only one parent is harder. Growing up with only one parent who works two or more jobs is the hardest of all.

In the almost four decades since Earnest Alexander and Jeff Wenzel decided to dedicate their lives to helping fatherless boys grow up to be good men and good fathers, the organization they founded, Youth Horizons, and its mission have grown.

Today, Youth Horizons has a three-pronged mission. It provides mentors for young people in need of the attention of a caring adult, it provides housing for teens in foster care who cannot find placement and it provides advocacy to raise money to provide services to young people.

The current executive director, Robert Garner took the helm about four years ago when Alexander retired. Garner is a former Wichita Public Schools administrator with more than 25 years experience in public education.

Since then, Garner has worked to expand the founding duo's dream by helping even more children reach their potential as adults.

When Alexander and Wenzel started in 1986, they called the organization Christian Community Services and the venue functioned from a coffee house called The Dandelion. In 1993, the nonprofit status was updated and the name changed to Youth Horizons and the organization's mission was expanded from weekly Bible study to providing Christian mentorship to at-risk children in the community.

The organization suffered a big loss in 2007 when Wenzel died after a four-year battle with brain cancer. Alexander continued to lead Youth Horizons alone until his own health battles led to his retirement.

## The Mentoring Mission

Since its founding, the core mission of Youth Horizons has remained the same: finding mentors for children in need of one more caring, supportive adult in their lives. That leg of the stool is supported by Van Williams, vice president of strategic communications and mentoring.

Williams said the program, aimed at children from 5 to 18 years old, has grown to about 120 matches.

These children live with their parents or more often a single parent. Mentors can volunteer for a school-based setting or in the com-



Earnest Alexander



Van Williams. Vice President of Strategic Communications and Mentoring



Robert Garner. Executive Director



Brian Hutton. Residential Programs

munity. Male mentors are matched with boys and female mentors are matched with girls.

It remains a Christian-based program, working with 50 local churches to find mentors. Garner has the organization's reach beyond churches to businesses and community organizations.

"Our core support is still churches," he said. "But we are trying to improve our resources by reaching civic organizations as well."

Aside from being a faith-based model, the Youth Horizons mentoring program stands out from other models because it offers program volunteers formal mentoring and advocate training with coaches who are also available for consultation when a mentor is facing challenges.

"We have six to 10 training sessions a year," Williams said. "We bring people into the office and provide an opportunity for them to socialize, share some food and do training."



A Youth Horizons mentor and his young match are ready for a day of fun at All-Star Sports. Mentors spend one or two hours a week with children who need one more caring adult in their lives. (Photo by Fernando Salazar)



This is the living and dining room in Wren House, the first Youth Horizons residential facility for girls. This first Wren House opened in November 2022; the second was completed this spring. (Photo by Fernando Salazar)



# dy as Business Grows



In 1996, 10 years after its founding, the organization opened its first full-time residential group home for boys. It was named Martin House and had room for only a few boys in downtown Wichita.

Ten years later, thanks to a generous gift from Richard and Harriet Kinloch Price, Youth Horizons was able to buy about 75 acres of land near Valley Center, to open Kinloch Price Boys Ranch.

Hutton Construction donated the cost of building the first home on the ranch. Today, there are four homes on the ranch, providing full-time residential services to about 28 boys ages 10 to 18 years.

There are no cattle or horses, says Brian Hutton, who oversees the residential programs for Youth Horizons. The ranch does have some chickens and there is plenty of space for outdoor activities.

Youth Horizons leadership realized that similar residential placement was also needed for girls.

They received help reaching this goal from the donation of about 50 acres of land in Kechi by philanthropist Keith Penn, who wanted to establish a home for girls at risk of human

See **YOUTH** Page 23 →

Williams said he remembers the men who helped him in his youth.

“I was a sports kid,” he said. “So I had coaches that were sort of mentors. But the first real, personal mentor I had was Linwood Sexton.”

He said many kids need just one more caring adult in their lives to reach life success and he feels fortunate to make a career of helping them find that person.

“I call this God’s work,” he said. “And the opportunity to do this for a living is pretty cool.”

### Providing a Home

Early in the history of Youth Horizons, Wenzel and Alexander recognized the need for a group home for boys. Alexander dreamed of a working ranch, complete with crops and livestock, but the resources weren’t there.

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# Equity Initiative Dedicated to Helping Young People Succeed

**Juvenile detention officer ShaQiyla Banks founded Equity Initiative to give young people a safe place to hang out, learn & stay busy.**

By P.J. Griekspoor

ShaQiyla Banks has always wanted to help young people overcome the hurdles in their lives and reach their full potential as adults.

That led her to a career in criminal justice and into an entrepreneurial venture, Equity Initiative Inc., a nonprofit dedicated to providing a safe hangout space with plenty of activities to keep young people in marginalized communities busy and productive.

"I've been working for the Dept. of Corrections for eight years as a detention officer," she said. "I put together programs, recruit volunteers and try to keep the kids in custody busy all day. It made me aware of the need for similar programs for kids who are not in trouble with the law and, hopefully, avoid them ever getting into trouble."



ShaQiyla Banks

She founded Equity Initiative in 2019, holding events on Wednesday nights in her lifelong church home, Greater New Testament Missionary Baptist Church, led by Senior Pastor Keith Cullers.

"Then, in 2021, I was blessed with a grant that enabled me to secure our current building and fully establish Equity Initiative Inc. as a 501(c)3 organization. And now we are open from 6:30 to 9 p.m. Mon. through Thur.," she said.

Since 2021, Equity Initiative has served more than 400 young people in the Wichita area.

Banks posts a monthly activities calendar at [EquityInitiativeKS.com](http://EquityInitiativeKS.com).

Mondays are typically life skills lessons or peer-to-peer group activities. A recent activity was "Open Your Own Restaurant" and participants made flyers and printed menus as well as cooking and serving a meal.

Tuesdays are devoted to life-skills training



Young people work on projects at Equity Initiative. The activity room is open 6:30 to 9 p.m. Mon. - Thur. (Photo courtesy of Equity Initiative)

such as tips on self control with community partners Renewed LLC, or tips on succeeding at work. Wednesdays are tutoring nights, while Thursdays are devoted to just hanging out with a movie and popcorn or shared activities.

Snacks and soft drinks are part of every session.

Special events outside the lounge are planned for some Saturdays and include attending sports or community events such as Open Streets ICT, and Equity Initiative also offers programs in the schools one or two days a month.

Twice a month on Mondays, the Activity Lounge is closed to the public and open exclusively for kids from the Ahn's Place Group Home in Wellington to come in for activities. Those children are all in foster care, Banks said, so developing trusting relationships with adults is doubly important.

## Partnerships Broaden the Program

Banks also partners with other organizations

to offer special programs in the community aimed at helping young people gain the skills they need to be successful adults.

Most recently, she offered a special session on developing leadership skills in partnership with two fellows at Lead for America, Brad Richards and Jeremiah O'Bryant.

"That program was focused on self-care, time management, goal setting," she said. "We try to get the kids out into the community. That program was at [The Kansas African American History Museum], so they got to have a tour and learn more about the museum at the same time."

She said the Equity Initiative also encourages kids to look into higher education opportunities and offers employment to young people.

Another important focus is mental health programming. Participants learn skills they need to be able to cope with the challenges they face.

"Our kids often experience violence in their lives. My ultimate goal is to play a role in mak-



A tutor helps a student master a math concept at Equity Initiative. The program is a way for founder ShaQiyla Banks to give back to the community. (Photo courtesy of Equity Initiative)

ing our communities safer and in teaching young people how to make good decisions and how to communicate effectively," Banks said. "They need to be taught how to share their thoughts, how to handle give and take in conversations and how to ask questions to get the help they need."

## Giving Back Matters

Banks said she was raised by a single mother and knows first hand how hard it can be for parents to cope.

"I played basketball in middle school and high school, and my coaches were my mentors," she said. "They encouraged me and helped me and I feel like I'm giving back."

She knows plenty about kids in trouble and kids lost in the system from her day job and it feels good to be able to help a child before he or she gets in trouble, she added.

She said her next goal is to find a larger space with a gym area and get more boys involved in the program.

The ultimate goal is to know that her home community in Wichita is a safer place for adults to flourish and kids to grow up with all the life skills, guidance and resources to ensure the success of future generations, she said.

The Equity Initiative Activity Lounge is open Mon. through Thur. from 6:30 to 9 p.m. at 1608 E. Waterman. All activities and events are free of charge.



# Kansas Legal Services Ready to Work Now on Expungement Cases

**Offenders can get help from lawyers without charge to expunge criminal records through a special Kansas Legal Services program.**

By P.J. Griekspoor

It's a scenario all too familiar to many people: a mistake from years ago is still preventing you or someone close to you from having a full life.

"Sorry, you failed our background check," is a familiar but heart-sinking sentence that haunts anyone with a criminal record, even a juvenile record. It prevents them from finding a place to live, getting a job, and even from volunteering with many charitable or service organizations.

For a lot of people, however, there is a way to make it go away. It's called expungement and Kansas Legal Services is actively seeking people they may be able to help.



"In most cases, if you have not had any new offenses in the past two years, your prior record can be expunged so it no longer shows up on the computer when prospective landlords or employers conduct a background check," said Joy Springfield, director of pro bono services with Kansas Legal Services.

Attorneys from Koch Industries will be working with people starting at the end of April with a goal of

doubling the caseload of pro bono expungement cases this year, which marks the fifth year of the service. The goal is to have clients placed with an attorney by May 15.

The Sedgwick County District Attorney's Office is also a partner in the effort.

### Requirements for Eligibility

Springfield said there are some requirements for eligibility that people

need to take into account.

All offenders must have completed their sentence at least five years ago for felony offenses and three years ago for all others. All fines, fees and restitution must be paid. The person cannot have had a new conviction in the last two years and cannot have a pending case, she said.

For this program, the crime and conviction must have taken place in Kansas. Convictions in other states must be expunged in those states because the laws governing expungement differ from state to state.

Drug offenders' names are placed on a registry for five years and expungement is a two-step process. First, an offender must apply for relief from the registry and after his name is removed, he can apply for expungement.

If your name is on a registry for sex offenders or violent offenders, your record can't be expunged.

"The cleaner your record, the greater your chances of success,"

Springfield said.

### Important Things to Know

Springfield pointed to several more things it is important for anyone convicted of a crime to know about their record.

1. A record does not automatically go away. Even after expungement, it's still there but it no longer shows up on a criminal background check.
2. Completing diversion and having a charge dismissed still requires asking for an offense to be removed from the record.
3. Juvenile records don't disappear; they have to be expunged.
4. Even if your case was dismissed in court or you were found not guilty, you should check the record to make sure the arrest isn't still on the record.

To learn more about Kansas Legal Services or to get help, call Kansas Legal Services at 1-800-723-6953 or visit [www.KansasLegalServices.org](http://www.KansasLegalServices.org).

# Suspended Driver's License? New Wichita City Program Can Help

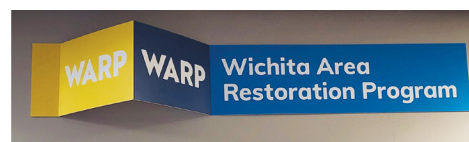
**Wichita Area Restoration Program gets drivers back behind the wheel legally with help for getting suspended license restored.**

By P.J. Griekspoor

If you are a Wichita resident with a suspended driver's license, a new Wichita Municipal Court program called "Wichita Area Restoration Program" or WARP may be able to help you get your legal driving privileges reinstated.

The program is modeled after a similar effort in Durham, N.C., and is aimed at helping people remove obstacles to employment and housing.

The city authorized \$150,000 to help get the program started and is partnering with Kan-



The sign is up over the office door in city hall: The Wichita Area Restoration Program is open for business.

sas Legal Services to implement it.

Andi Elmore, a longtime professional in the criminal justice system as a paralegal, college professor and civil law administrator for Kansas Legal Services, has been hired as administrator for the program.

Elmore has offices in both city hall and the district courthouse to work directly with the courts and with clients in need of help.

Elmore has worked with KLS in its pro bono program helping people with expungements

and driver's license clinics.

"The need is just so great. The quarterly clinics help but the number of people who need help is just so huge that an ongoing program is the only answer," she said.

Across Kansas, there are about 227,000 driver's license suspensions, a number that is double what it was in 2007. About 85,000 of those are in Sedgwick County and almost 70% of all suspensions are for failing to pay fines or fees.

"Once it starts, it's a snowball," Elmore said. "You don't show up for court because you know you can't pay the fine. Your failure to appear generates another fine and a license suspension. Then, you get stopped and get another fine for driving on a suspended license. Or you get into an accident and you have no proof of insurance so you get a ticket. By your court date, you haven't had the money to get insurance, so you get another fine."

Through WARP, people can get legal help to get fines and fees paid and all the procedural things that have to be done taken care of. The help is free and there are avenues to appeal for reductions of fines and fees.

"I think of it as a roadmap that helps a client get everything checked off," Elmore said. "It can get pretty complicated and it's easy to miss a step and go backward if you don't have help."

Elmore said the ability to get a job often hinges on "reliable transportation" and that many jobs, such as delivery services or commercial driving, require both a license and a good record.

"This program helps people get back on track," she said.

The Wichita Area Restoration Program has an office in city hall, 455 N. Main. People in need of help can also call 1-800-723-6953 for more info or visit [KansasLegalServices.org](http://KansasLegalServices.org).



## HEALTH

THE  
VOICE  
ONLINEWeight Loss may  
mean a Risk of Death  
for Older Adults

## STDS Are on the Rise. This Morning-After-Style Pill May Help

By Associated Press

U.S. health officials released data earlier this month showing how chlamydia, gonorrhea and syphilis cases have been accelerating, but doctors are hoping an old drug will help fight the sexually transmitted infections.

Experts believe STDs have been rising because of declining condom use, inadequate sex education and reduced testing during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Millions of Americans are infected each year. Rates are highest in men who have sex with men, and among Black and Hispanic Americans and Native Americans.

“Sexually transmitted infections are an enormous, low-priority public health problem. And they’ve been a low-priority problem for decades, in spite of the fact that they are the most commonly reported kind of infectious disease,” said Dr. John M. Douglas Jr., a retired health official who lectures at the Colorado School of Public Health.

To try to turn the tide, many doctors see promise in doxycycline, a cheap antibiotic that has been sold for more than 50 years.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is drafting recommendations for using it as a kind of morning-after pill for preventing STDs, said Dr. Leandro Mena, director of the agency’s STD prevention division.

The drug is already used to treat a range of infections. A study published last week in the New England Journal of Medicine showed its potential to prevent sexually transmitted infections.

In the study, about 500 gay men, bisexual men and transgender women in Seattle and San Francisco with previous STD infections took one doxycycline pill within 72 hours of unprotected sex. Those who took the pills were about 90% less likely to get chlamydia, about 80% less likely to



get syphilis, and more than 50% less likely to get gonorrhea compared with people who did not take the pills after sex, the researchers found.

Using an antibiotic to prevent these kinds of infections won’t “be a magic bullet, but it will be another tool,” said Dr. Philip Andrew Chan, who teaches at Brown University and is chief medical officer of Open Door Health, a health center for gay, lesbian and transgender patients in Providence, Rhode Island.

Experts noted the CDC will have many factors to weigh as it develops the recommendations.

Among them: The drug can cause side effects like stomach problems and rashes after sun exposure. Some research has found it ineffective in heterosexual women. And widespread use of doxycycline as a preventive measure could contribute to mutations that make bacteria impervious to the drug, as has happened with antibiotics before.

Nevertheless, the San Francisco Dept. of Public Health in October became the first U.S. health department to issue guidance about doxycycline as an infection-prevention measure.

## Wyco Accepting Applications for Casino Health Grants Through May 3

Wyandotte-based or Wyandotte-based serving nonprofits can apply for Wyandotte Counties annual Hollywood Casino Grants. Grant applications are due by May 3, at 5 p.m.

The grants should align with Healthy Communities Wyandotte and “work toward a happier, healthier Wyandotte for everyone.” Grant proposals are encouraged to include collaborative efforts to help minimize duplication of effort and have clearly established measurable outcomes and the ability to monitor and

report them. Priority will also be given to programs that reach at-risk or underserved populations.

The grants should be used for programming and there is a strict list of items the grants can’t be used for including capital campaigns, debt retirement, direct support to individuals including scholarships, or activities that specifically benefit the members of an organization.

This year, each member of the Wyandotte County Board of Commissioner

and the mayor will receive \$42,187 to award in grants. Last year the grants ranged from \$1,000 to \$30,000 and the average grant was \$9,300.

Applications must be submitted online at [www.growyourgiving.org/grants](http://www.growyourgiving.org/grants). Submitted grants will be reviewed for eligibility and all eligible grants will be forwarded to the commissioners. Grant notifications will be sent to recipients in July.

Organizations that are not 501c3 nonprofits can apply using a fiscal sponsor.

## FIT & FAB

### Rashad Tucker

By Voice Staff

Age: 34

Occupation: Business owner, personal trainer, regional sales director

Education: Ottawa University and Kansas State University

Degree: Bachelor’s of Business Administration

Motto: “Deposit into your fitness journey.”

Unknown fact(s): “I love to play video games.”

Fitness Start:

From birth, really. My dad was on me to be active. He was a professional boxer, so we were always into sports and boxing growing up.

My real passion is football, and I have a funny story about that. Dad forced me to play football when I was in 7th grade, but I didn’t want to get tackled.

**Favorite Workout (s):** Boxing, agility work, pushups, weight training, running, jumping, and push press

**Fitness Advice:**

You don’t really know what you can do until you do it. Anything is possible, and it’s all up to you. Ask if you are really satisfied with yourself and who you want to be, and decide where you want to go.

**Top three fitness tips:**

1. Focus on and start with your mindset.
2. Get the body moving. Do something that you love to do, whether that’s walking, biking, or taking a jog.
3. Be consistent and move at least 30 minutes a day.

**Social Media:**

**Instagram:** @rashadtuck

**Website:** <https://bit.ly/40id9Xr>

**Nutrition:**

Breakfast: Oatmeal & fruit, pancakes & bacon, or a protein shake

Lunch: Chicken salad with a turkey sandwich

Dinner: Chipotle, Chicken breast or salmon with rice and beans and vegetables

Cheat meal/drink: Chicken wings, bar food, and Sprite

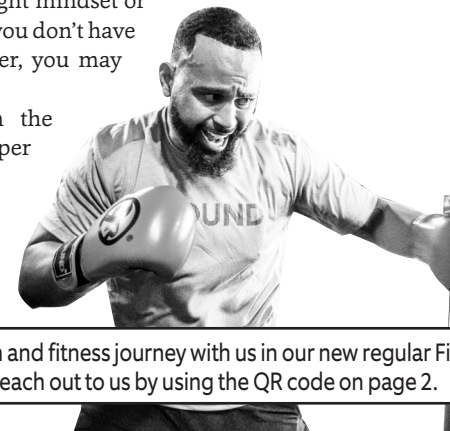
**Mental:**

If you don’t have the right mindset or mental, you’ll give up. If you don’t have that person in your corner, you may give up easily.

**Spiritual:** It starts with the soul and digging deeper than a workout

**What Motivates You?**

My family, God, and members of the community.



Want to share your health and fitness journey with us in our new regular Fit and Fresh feature? Then reach out to us by using the QR code on page 2.



## Gov. Kelly Announces Program to Provide Parents \$1,000 per Student to Promote Learning Recovery

**Parents, you have to apply to get this money - but many qualify.**

### By Voice Staff

As Kansas students continue to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, Gov. Laura Kelly has announced the creation of the Kansas Education Enrichment Program (KEEP), which will provide qualifying parents and guardians with a one-time \$1,000 award per child to pay for educational goods and services such as tutoring and school supplies.

KEEP opened for applications on Feb. 22. Kansas businesses that provide educational materials or services are urged to join the KEEP Marketplace.

Students whose household income is less than 185% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines will be eligible for KEEP funds. For a family of two, the income maximum is \$36,482; for a family of three, it's \$45,991; and for a family of four, it's \$55,500.

KEEP funds will be able to be used on enrichment and educational activities including:

- The purchase of curriculum and educational materials, including school supplies and certain allowed technological devices.
- Camps with academic-related curriculum such as music, arts, science, technology, agriculture, mathematics, and engineering.
- Tutoring.
- Language classes.
- Musical instruments and lessons.
- The funds will not be eligible for private school tuition.

Parents and guardians may select enrichment and educational activities from approved service providers via the online KEEP Marketplace or request that a service provider be approved and added to the statewide directory.



### More on How it Works

The program website is [www.Keep.KS.gov](http://www.Keep.KS.gov). It showcases businesses who are already approved to provide services under the program, but if you have a business you want to use, encourage them to apply.

However, if you want to purchase Curriculum / School Supplies / Technology, you MUST shop at one of the stores in the Curriculum / School Supplies / Technology section of this marketplace. If you submit a receipt for a purchase you made for one of these items elsewhere, it will NOT be reimbursed.

The same goes for the purchase of a musical instrument. You must shop at one of the stores in the Music Lessons / Instrument Purchases section of this marketplace to be reimbursed.



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At WPS, we offer free, half-day pre-k for students who will be 3 or 4 by August 31, 2023. Spots are available on a first-come, first-serve basis, so fill out an interest form now at <https://bit.ly/prek23cv>.

### INTRO TO KINDERGARTEN AT SCHOOLS ON TUESDAY, MAY 2

Our elementary schools are excited to welcome the parents and caregivers of incoming Kindergarten students to Intro to Kindergarten on May 2. The time and activities for each school can be found at <https://bit.ly/wpskinder23>.

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# KanCare Coverage Subject to Review, Renewal as COVID Expanded Coverage Ends

**As many as 104,000 Kansans who had coverage during the pandemic could be subject to losing health insurance over the coming year.**

**By P.J. Griekspoor**

As many as 104,000 Kansans could soon lose their Medicaid coverage as a result of a state-by-state “re-determination of eligibility” that coincides with a winding down of expanded coverage during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Families First Coronavirus Response Act included a requirement that Medicaid programs keep people continuously enrolled through March 31, 2023, in exchange for enhanced federal funding.

Now, states are going through and determining which current Medicaid enrollees are eligible to remain on Medicaid and which are not.

The process is called “unwinding” but it basically just goes back to the process of completing paperwork for the renewal that was in place before COVID-19.

The Kansas Dept. of Health and Environment

will be sending out notices to households currently enrolled in KanCare over the next year. Households where the information in their file that will be used to review eligibility can be electronically confirmed will get a letter that shows what data is being used. The household only needs to return the letter if the information is NOT correct.

If KDHE cannot electronically verify all of the information used to determine eligibility, the letter will include a form that must be filled out and returned for processing. The letter will give instructions and timelines for returning the form.

In general, households will have about 30 days to submit the review. If they do not send it in, KDHE will notify their insurance carrier to contact them. Members who miss the window will be disenrolled but will still have 90 days to return their review.

If it is determined they should not have lost coverage, their enrollment will be backdated to provide continuous coverage.

Rebecca Witte, a public relations specialist with Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas, said the most important thing for anyone now on KanCare is to go on the KanCare website and make sure that

contact information is up to date.


“These kinds of letters are not typically forwarded,” she said. “So verifying your contact information is very important.”

KanCare enrollees can go to the website at KanCare.KS.gov to check their information on file. When the page comes up, a chat box pops up in the lower right corner that will take you to a page where you can correct errors in your address or

phone number.

Letters started going out in April, but the process will stretch over the coming year, so it may be several months before all the reviews are completed.

The redetermination is considered a “qualifying event,” which means that people losing their coverage will be able to enroll in private insurance through the ACA Marketplace even though it is outside the open enrollment period.



**Diabetes is the 7th leading cause of death in the US**

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# ARTS & CULTURE

THE VOICE ONLINE

Riverfest Concerts Announced: Our Picks



## Work of Four Black Female Artists Featured in 2023 Parade of Hearts

**Public project places large heart-shaped artworks throughout KC and then sells them for charity.**

**By Thomas White**

The heart logo is synonymous with Kansas City. Long before local clothing store Charlie Hustle embraced the heart symbol, the city was one of the earliest to embrace the idea of being the heart of America.

Railroad workers wore heart pins in the early 1900s and the historic KC Monarchs literally wore their hearts (a patch) on their sleeves. So it's only logical the city has enthusiastically embraced the Parade of Hearts.

Back for its second year, the Kansas City's Parade of Heart takes that heart logo and turns it into a city-wide celebration of art, and all for a good cause.

Local artists take the five-foot fiberglass hearts etched with "KC" in the middle and create artistic wonders designed around a Kansas City-based theme. The completed hearts are displayed across the city for public viewing and enjoyment for about two months.

This year, 287 artists submitted designs and only 40 designs were selected. Of this year's 40, four are from Black women: Ann Johnson, Anita Eastman, Keisha Jordan, and Taylor Sanders.

"It's been amazing," says Taylor Sanders. "My inner child is just, like, doing cartwheels it's just a dream type of project."

Artists receive a \$1,000 stipend when they are selected and another \$1,000 when the heart is completed. The hearts are auctioned off, and the highest bidder is given the opportunity to place the heart wherever they want in Kansas City.



Taylor Sanders, a self-taught artist, titled her heart "The Heart of the City." It shows two perspectives of downtown, the front takes an up close view of the streetcar and 12th Street jazz mural while the back has a broad view from the Scout sculpture at Penn Valley park.



Anita Eastman is a local artist from KCK whose heart, "Beauty of Grace," features a ballerina of color. The back of the heart is a quote that reads, "Find a reason to dance through it all."



Keisha Jordan's heart, "A Pathway Forward - Wheatley Providence," celebrates historic Black excellence. Wheatley Provident Hospital operated in KC from 1902 to 1972 and was one of the only places in the U.S. that exclusively staffed and trained Black doctors and nurses in the early 1900s.

In 2022 the Parade of Hearts raised \$2.56 million for local charities. Funds raised in 2023 will benefit the University of Kansas Health System, Children's Miracle Network, the Family Conservancy, small/

minority-owned businesses, local artists, and hospitality and tourism.

The artists apply by digitally designing a two-sided blank heart template they submit online. An independent jury panel reviews the



Ann Johnson, an art teacher at Allen Village Charter School, designed "My Heart Belongs to KC," featuring a number of KC's iconic landmarks like the Gem Theater, and the sky stations above Bartle Hall. Under the landmarks are two hands representing the city's diversity.

submitted designs to ensure they hit certain guidelines, then sponsors select hearts to commission for production. Each artist can only submit one heart design per year.

"I had about 10 people send me the application encouraging me to

apply," says Anita Eastman. "I had this piece that I was working on but hadn't released, I thought about that with the KC heart and it was a perfect match."

See **HEARTS** Page 23 →



## A Hearty Play "Stew" at The Melting Pot

Local production of the critically acclaimed play 'Stew' comes to KC Melting Pot Theatre, May 12-20.

By Thomas White

Kansas City theatergoers are in for a treat as "Stew" comes to KC Melting Pot Theatre. The play, written by Zora Howard, was a 2021 finalist for the Pulitzer Prize for Drama.

"Stew" is a drama that follows three generations of Black women as they gather at their mother's home to prepare a traditional stew for an annual family celebration. While the women prepare the stew, some family secrets simmer to the surface.

Director Ile Haggins describes the play as a universal story despite being centered on a Black family. The play takes place all in one day in Mama's kitchen.

"It's a slice of life," says Haggins. "But like life, it has its dark moments as well."

The cast of "Stew" includes Lynn King as Mama, Jackie Price as Lillia, SyKnese Fields as Nelly, and Anaya Morrow as Lil' Mama. The production promises to be a powerful exploration of the complexities of family dynamics and the impact of trauma on future generations.

Haggins notes that KC Melting Pot Theatre is the perfect venue for this thought-provoking and timely play.

"The Melting Pot, since its inception, has had a mission to tell Black stories and stories that resonate with our culture," says Haggins. "The plays there are almost always by Black authors."

The Melting Pot production shows at the Just Off Broadway Theatre, 3051 Penn Valley Drive in KCMO.

"Stew" showtimes are: May 12 & 13, May 17 -20, 7:30 p.m.

Tickets are available at [KCMeltingPot.com](http://KCMeltingPot.com) for \$27.50 or \$23 for seniors or students.

Written by Zora Howard

**Stew**

Directed by Ile Haggins

## Local Director Blends Social Work With Theater To Tell Empowering Stories

UMKC social work professor by day and theater director by night, Ile Haggins uses dual expertise to highlight Black stories.

By Thomas White

If you met Ile Haggins at a dinner party, she'd tell you that she's an activist artist.

Haggins has directed plays and musicals for more than 30 years, so that makes sense, but she's also an associate teaching professor at UMKC in the School of Social Work.

Social work and directing plays may not seem related right away. Through formal education and years in social work, Haggins developed expertise in cultural competency, behavioral health, working with children and families, and substance abuse prevention & treatment. She brings all of that to her social work classes at UMKC, but that experience also helps her direct plays.

"My work has always been more than a job, it truly was a calling," says Haggins. "I've figured out ways to blend the two things that I'm passionate about: my love of theater and the arts with my social work."

Working with different personalities while seeing the bigger picture and articulating your thoughts are all traits that help Haggins in the



Ile Haggins is an in demand director.

director's chair but also serve her in social work and teaching. Having a full-time day job also drives her to be selective with her theater projects, even if the days can sometimes be long.

"It's a little rough to do eight hours at the university and then roll over to the theater for another three, four hours at night," says Haggins. "But when I get to the theater it rejuvenates me and gets me charged

up again."

In the past, Haggins thought she was doing well when she could do a production every six months, but the recent shift in social awareness has made her as busy as she's ever been. Now there are only short one-to-two-month breaks between plays.

"There's not only a recognition but a hunger for the stories of marginalized people to be told," says Haggins. "So more theaters are looking for those stories."

That's where the activist part of "activist artist" comes into play. When Haggins is looking for a show to direct, the story has to speak to her and have a social conscience.

Take the recent production of "Begetters" that Haggins directed: The play tells the story of an aging Black couple reflecting on their dysfunction and how it affected their now-adult children.

See **HAGGINS** Page 23 →

**PBS KANSAS**

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Saturday, April 29, 2023  
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## JAZZ DRAFT takes over 18th and Vine!

UNESCO Creative City of Music-USA in collaboration with the American Jazz Museum will present a 12 hour jam session at the Blue Room on 18th and Vine, Thursday, April 27, from 9am to 9pm. The Jazz Draft will feature local and national musicians in a 12 hour "jam session" and will showcase our musical heritage as only KANSAS CITY CAN, with JAZZ playing all day and evening of the opening day of the NFL Draft in KC. "We are inviting musicians who may be visiting KC at this time to come to the Blue Room and join us for the music that made us an international scene for over 100 years." Said Bukeka Blakemore, coordinator of the Jazz Draft and board member of UNESCO Creative City of Music-USA. This opportunity showcases for thousands of visitors our commitment to our UNESCO Creative City of Music-USA designation, the ONLY Creative City of Music in the United States! For more information or to sign up for a spot in the jam session contact: [creativecitykc@gmail.com](mailto:creativecitykc@gmail.com)





## 2023 NFL DRAFT

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### FEATURED EVENTS: **THE PARTY'S ON: NFL DRAFT WEEKEND IN KANSAS CITY**

Obviously, the city is going to be lit the week and weekend of the NFL Draft, with an abundance of events across the city.

Here's what we have at press time: Check our website [CommunityVoiceKS.com](http://CommunityVoiceKS.com), click on "calendar" for additional events that may have missed our press deadline. If you have an event, go to the website to add it now ... It's free.

Also, there are other events that we may not be able to include here, due to space, that are happening before or after NFL Weekend. Go to our website to check them out.

#### **Wed., April 26, 5pm-?: Pre-Draft Kick Off Party**, Classic Blends

Cigar Lounge, 2425 Burlington, NKC. The limited-capacity draft welcome party requires a \$20 cover charge but has a mixer and meal from 5 to 7pm. Then a Q&A session with former Chiefs players Neil Smith, Kimble Anders, and Danan Hughes, followed by music into the evening.

**Thur., April 27, 9am-9pm: Jazz Draft**, The Blue Room, 1600 E. 18th St., KCMO. It's a full-day of jazz, featuring a 12-hour jam session to showcase KC's musical heritage and the city's Historic Jazz District. Presented by UNESCO Creative City of Music - USA and the American Jazz Museum. Stop by to jam or to enjoy the music. FREE.

**Thu., April 27-29, Omega Blitz Draft Weekend.** April 27: 1st Round Draft Party - 7-11pm, Delta Athenaeum. April 28: 2nd Round, KC Step Show and Culture Showcase, Folly Theater at 1401 Grand Blvd; 3rd Round, KC Step Show After Party, 9pm - 1am, College Basketball Experience, 300 W. 12th. April 29: 4th Round Jerseys, Jeans & Dresses, 8pm - 1am; College Basketball Experience, Overtime, KC Daiquiri Shop 1-3am. Cost \$25+ <https://bit.ly/43zPWCP>

**Fri., April 28, 6pm-12am: Kelce Jam**, Azura Amphitheater, 633 N 130th St, Bonner Springs, KS. Featuring Loud Luxury, Rick Ross and Tech N9ne. Cost \$49+. Tickets [Kelcejam.com](http://Kelcejam.com)

**Fri., April 28, 8pm-1am: FreakNik**, 1401 Grand. Litest Undergrad Party to hit KC during NFL Draft weekend. Come turn up with the Bruhz for a night you won't forget. Cost \$10+ <https://bit.ly/43KKEEO>

**Fri., April 28, 9pm-1am. Draft Afterparty by Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.** Omicron Xi Lambda Chapter. Delta Athenaeum, 900 E Linwood. Dance the night away, socialize, let loose and have a good time. Friendly and energetic hosts will ensure that you have a night to remember, and the exciting activities will keep you engaged and entertained all night long. Raffle. Cost \$25 <https://bit.ly/3MKzBFE>

**Sat., April 29, 11am-6pm: N.F.L. [Nineties For Life]** -- Soiree 1512 E 18th St. '90s R&B vs '90s Hip Hop - 2023 NFL Draft Brunch ++ day party, the sexiest, mature and diverse party crowd (representing ALL NFL Team Favorites) will mix, mingle, drink, dance, and socialize. COST \$15+ <http://bit.ly/40tTpRc>

COVID. COST \$75

**Thu., April 27, 6-8pm: Civic Engagement Community Listening Session**, Wichita Public Library - Evergreen Branch, 2601 N Arkansas. Do you have ideas on how local journalism can help the Wichita community understand civic engagement? We want to hear from you! The Wichita Beacon and The League of Women Voters are partnering on a community listening session, sharing ways to be engaged and talk about your ideas for seeing civic engagement grow in Wichita. Refreshments provided. **FREE**

**Fri., April 28, 5-10pm: Final Friday Food Truck Rally & Art Show**, Wichita Boathouse, 515 S Wichita. Facestuffers Food Wagon, Funky Monkey Munchies, Brazita Bites, Smokin Diner, The Artichoke, Busy B's, U-Hungry Truck, Taters N Toppings, Bongo Fruit Smoothies, The Big Nerd, The Wing Express and more, Over 25 local artists & small business vendors. **FREE**

**Sat., April 29, 1pm: Strengthening Mental Health Through ART.** 2400 S. Greenwich Rd. 1 to 2:30pm we'll be socializing, eating snacks, and able to shop. At 2:30pm the canvases and the paint come out for the main event. Cost \$10+ <https://bit.ly/3M2kz>

**Sat., April 29, 11am-3pm: ICT Brunch Fest.** OJ Watson Park, 3022 South McLean. Brunch Fest includes a curated and diverse list of 15 local restaurants, caterers and food trucks showcasing various delicious bites. Attendees can also enjoy Mimosas, Sangria, Tequila Sunrise and coffee while supplies last. Brunch Fest also includes a favorite bite competition which will be judged by three locally renowned judges. COST \$65 <http://bit.ly/3z1Jczz>

**Sat., April 29, Noon: Zumba with Melody Miller**, Brewer Community Center, McAdams Park, 1326 N Ohio. A pivotal member of our community is running for USD 259 School Board Seat (at large). We invite you to come and show your support for her and do something that she truly loves. **FREE** event but donations will be accepted for the Melody Miller Campaign Fund.

**Sat., April 29, 8:30am: 20th Annual Step Up For KIDS 5K Run & Memorial Walk**, Old Cowtown Museum, 1865 Museum Blvd. Signature fundraising event for the Kansas Infant Death and SIDS Network. Ages 12 years and older are \$35. Ages 2-11 are \$20; T-shirt included if registered by April 10. Children's fair and memorial bubble release. <http://bit.ly/40hzvZV>

**Sat. April 29, 9pm: Liquid Nites Reunion Party.** Fever Night Life, 116 N Mead. The official Club Liquid & Chrystanites Reunion Party. Music by DJ Cadence & DJ Fluid. The hottest music from then till now. Come party with new & familiar faces. Dress code: Back in the days or current. Music entertainment. Photo booths. Hookah & more COST \$30+ <https://bit.ly/42QFczt>

**Sat., April 29, 12-3 pm: COVID Testing & Shots** by the Black Nurses of Wichita. Paradise Baptist Church, 4401 E 17th St. Covid testing and shots.

**Sat., April 29, 11am-4pm: Release Rally for Young People to Create a Healthy Mind, Body, and Soul**, WSU Metroplex, 5015 E 29th. Join the Wichita Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. and R.O.S.E. (Reach Out to Someone Else). For youth ages 12-18 and parents/caregivers have discussion of topics from anxiety, depression, and PTSD. The rally will also feature dancing with Charles Coleman and a poetry and creative writing session led by Desmond Bryant of Progeny. Lunch will be provided. **FREE**

### KANSAS CITY

**Sat., April 22, 11am - 6pm: Earth Beat Festival**, West Bottoms, 1105 Hickory Street. Earth Beat Festival is Kansas City's first "waste-less" block party and green vendor market. Artists/ Vendors, Music, Dancing, DJs, Food Trucks, Drinks, Earth Day Workshops, Recycle/Compost Pop-Ups, Kids Crafts COST: **FREE** + <https://bit.ly/3M2xs7Q>

**Sat., April 22, 3-4:30pm: The Veto Session: Relax or Act?** KCK Public Library Auditorium, 625 Minnesota Ave, KCKS. Presented by Voter Rights Network of Wyandotte County. One last item remains - The Veto Session. Join us as legislators discuss what to expect.

**Sat., April 22, 5-8pm: Billy Byrd Sr. "I Trust You" Album Release Party**, 2940 N 17th St. Guest music artists: D.R. Stuckey III on the song "GO," Tramaine Long on the song "Father," and Brotha Mike on the song "Praise You Lord." Comedian Carrington Lopez will host and Minister Kai Brown will minister a few new songs from his newly released album. COST \$15 <http://bit.ly/3JIG94n>

**Sun., April 23, 3-7pm: Smoke Out Sundays KC Edition**, KC Daiquiri Shop, 1116 Grand Blvd. Absolute Cigars in collaboration with Fumée Chic welcomes you to come enjoy cigar vibes with fellow cigar enthusiasts and non-enthusiasts. Your ticket includes a complementary cigar, whiskey tasting by Den Of Thieves Whiskey, a 16oz daiquiri, your choice of Calliope Catfish or Chicken A La Mer, and live music by DJ Boogie. COST \$10+ <http://bit.ly/3TEgPRs>

**Tue., April 25, 8-11:59pm: Tuesday Night Jazz Jam, Uptown Lounge, 3400 Main.** Tuesday Night Jazz Jam hosted by Eboni Fondren and friends every Tuesday. All musicians and listeners are welcome. **FREE**

**Fri., May 5, 6-9pm: First Friday Pop Up**, Black Rose Co., 1739 Oak St. in the Crossroads Arts District. Shop our pop-up vendors and enjoy music in the alleyway at Brewer's Alley (18th and Oak) in Downtown KCMO. **FREE**

**Sat., May 6, 1pm: Kentucky Derby Day Party - Philo Affiliates Celebrating 80 Years of Service by Sigma Gamma Rho**, The Galleria, 7540 Leavenworth Rd, KCKS. Ladies, grab your best hat and beautiful dress. Gentlemen, grab your best bow ties and hat. Plan to have a fantastic time with friends. A portion of the proceeds will be donated to the Friends of Yates. Cost \$35+ <https://bit.ly/41G5XVU>

### WICHITA

**51st Annual Wichita Jazz Festival.** The annual festival is back and runs through this weekend.

**Thur., April 20:** Kick off is "A Night of Guitars" at the Wichita Art Museum.

**Fri., April 21, 6-10pm:** Trumpeter Terell Stafford with WSU Jazz Arts Ensemble 1 and the Mid-Kansas Jazz Ensemble, Wichita Art Museum.

**Sat., April 22, 7-10pm:** An Evening with the Yellowjackets, Crown Uptown Theater. Cocktail hour 6pm.

**Sun., April 23, 4-6pm:** Sunday at the Arb, Bartlett Arboretum, 301 N. Line Street, Belle Plaine. An afternoon of gypsy jazz featuring Shelby Eicher on violin, Bill Harshbarger on clarinet, and Kenny "Kentucky" White on guitar.

[www.WichitaJazzFestival.com/events](http://www.WichitaJazzFestival.com/events)

**Sat., April 22, 9am-3pm: SWE Engineering Expo 2022.** Century II Expo Hall, 225 W. Douglas hosted by Society of Women Engineers presented by Spirit AeroSystems. A day of fun learning for children to explore science, technology, engineering and math. Children in grades K-8. **FREE**

**Thu., April 27, 5:30pm: 2023 Midwest Winefest Walkabout.** 835 E 1st. The Walkabout includes stops at local restaurants and venues in Wichita's Old Town. Enjoy a variety of food, wines, and music by local talents. This year, the gated area in the Farm & Art Market is back, where you can visit a number of wine and food spots in this centralized area. The larger wine tasting, typically held two days later, still has not returned due to





**Sheinelle Jones Enjoys 'Magical' Moment With Janet Jackson**

"If this is a dream, please just don't wake me," Sheinelle Jones said live on "The Today Show." Janet Jackson superfan Jones, a Wichita native, appeared as a backup dancer on stage with the Grammy winner April 16 during opening weekend of the singer's "Together Again" tour at the Hard Rock Live in Hollywood, Florida. Jones only had a few hours to learn the moves and came out during the encore to show her stuff when Jackson performed "Together Again." She worked through the routine with the dancers, spending two hours in her own room practicing before the show. "Suddenly my nerves melted away and I just embraced the magic of the moment and

the next thing I knew I was dancing with Janet Jackson," she said. Back in December, Jackson invited Jones to appear with her in concert when the singer appeared on "Today."

**Jamie Foxx Still Hospitalized But 'Healing'**

Jamie Foxx's health struggle continues. While the 55-year-old actor is improving following his recent undisclosed "medical complication," he remains under professional care. A source tells "Entertainment Tonight" that Foxx remains hospitalized six days after his daughter Corinne first announced that her father had suffered from an unspecified health crisis on April 12. When Corinne first announced the news, she wrote in a post on social media, "We wanted to share that, my father, Jamie Foxx, experienced a medical complication yesterday. Luckily, due to quick action and great care, he is already on his way to recovery." She did not



go into detail about the "medical complication." One day before his hospitalization, the Oscar winner had been photographed on the set of his film, "Back in Action." "He is healing," a source says. "He feels the love from everyone."

**Halle Berry & Angelina Jolie Set for Fierce Spy Thriller**

Academy Award-winning actresses Halle Berry and Angelina Jolie will face off as secret agents in the upcoming spy thriller "Maude v. Maude." Info about the movie has been closely guarded, but Deadline reports that the highly anticipated film is poised to be a riveting international action thriller, reminiscent of a Bond-Bourne showdown. Both Berry and Jolie are also serving as producers for the project. "Maude v. Maude" marks the first time Berry and Jolie will appear on screen together. However, neither are strangers to the spy and action genres. No word on when production for the upcoming movie will begin.



**Jonathan Majors Dropped By Valentino, Won't Attend Met Gala**

After being arrested following a domestic dispute, actor Jonathan Majors and fashion house Valentino reportedly agreed to mutually part ways and he will not attend the Met Gala, the annual fundraiser for the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art's Costume Institute. Jonathan Majors' fall from grace continues as the "Creed III" actor was not only dropped from his PR firm the Lede Company and talent management Entertainment 360 due to "issues surrounding the actor's personal behavior," he has also been dropped by Valentino. Majors was arrested March 25 following a domestic dispute with a 30-year-old woman. After news of the alleged assault made headlines, Majors' lawyer Priya Chaudhry assured fans the "Ant-Man and the Wasp: Quantumania" villain would be vindicated.



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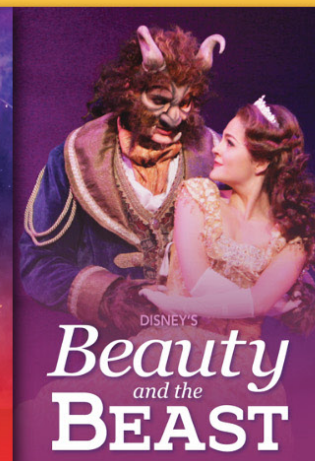
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**HAGGINS, from Page 20 ↓**

Haggins' largely chooses plays like "Begetters" to give a more complete view of life in marginalized communities.

"Movies and television for so long depicted African Americans in a certain frame or light that normalized things that might be a part of our culture but are a very small part," says Haggins. "Violence and broken families were normalized, but what we didn't see was the love that's there or traditions being passed on."

Haggins has three more directing projects coming up.

"Stew" at KC Melting Pot Theatre runs May 12-20. That will be followed by a production of "Skeleton Crew" for Kansas City Actors Theatre, at City Stage in Union Station. "Skeleton Crew" is the story of four Black workers at a car factory that is about to close down.

**YOUTH, from Page 12 ↓**

trafficking. That site now has two homes with space to serve 10 girls, ages 13-18.

At each of the boys and girls homes, there are two "house coaches" who offer support and supervision for the residents in a family-style setting. Volunteers provide help with teaching extra-curricular activities including some with vocational pathways.

"A lot of the kids prefer hands-on projects," he said. "We encourage that. The world is always going to need builders and machinery operators and repair technicians."

Looking ahead, a primary goal is to add a transitional living program that supports boys and girls who are "aging out" of the foster care system at 18, but who still need a bridge to independent living.

**Voice of Experience**

Brian Prahm and his wife Karen lived and he worked at Kinloch Price Boys Ranch for three years and he remained another year as residential director a decade ago.

"We loved our time at the ranch," Brian Prahm said. "But I would be the first to acknowledge that it is a very, very difficult job. We knew going in that it would be tough, and we felt we had the strength and the gifts to withstand the difficulty."


Prahm said he started out in "drill sergeant mode" employing discipline in a manner similar to the original "Boys Town" model.

"My grandfather was actually one of the first residents of Boys Town," he said. "I thought I needed to run a tight ship, make sure that house was always neat as a pin. Earnest Alexander was a great mentor. He

taught me about reaching a kid's heart. I've been spit on, attacked, punched. These are kids who have been through hell. Sometimes you get to them. Sometimes you don't. And sometimes, they seem to be better and they slide back."

After leaving Youth Horizons as employees, the Prahms have stayed involved as mentors to children there and Brian says he is still in touch with some of the boys who lived there when he did.

"I've been to a couple of weddings and have been proud to see them become good husbands and fathers. I just had one man reach out after being released from prison and one of my young men was murdered. I wonder 'why did he go back?' There's no answer. Yet, I'm grateful for having the experience. I tell people absolutely, I miss it. It was my favorite worst job ever."



**Rau Construction Company is accepting bids for the Amethyst Place – Tracy Housing project at 2750 Tracy Avenue, Kansas City, MO 64109.**

**The project is all new construction of (1) 26-unit apartment building, (1) 7-unit townhome building and (1) 5-unit townhome building.**

**All 3 bid packages will need to be priced separately.**

We are requesting bids for the following scopes of work: site work, underground utilities, landscaping, concrete, gypsum floor topping, masonry, steel, carpentry, glass & windows, sheet metal, roofing, drywall & metal studs, cabinetry and millwork, countertops, flooring, ceramic tile, painting, shelving, specialties, toilet accessories, building signage, mailboxes, fire proofing, elevators, mechanical, electrical, plumbing, fire sprinklers. Certified MBE/WBE & Section 3 firms are strongly encouraged to bid.

The project goals are 15% MBE and 15% WBE. Firms will need to comply with section 3 requirements, Residential Prevailing Wage, E-Verify program participation and OSHA 10hr training. Requests for pricing documents and questions should be directed to

**Rena Manixai**  
[rena@rauconstruction.com](mailto:rena@rauconstruction.com) or  
**Alison Reynolds** [alison@rauconstruction.com](mailto:alison@rauconstruction.com) at 913-642-6000.

Bids must be submitted to Rau Construction no later than Thursday, April 27, 2023, by 12:00 noon.

**HEARTS, from Page 19 ↓**

Eastman is a local artist from KCK whose heart is called "Beauty of Grace" and features a ballerina of color dancing through the "KC" initials. Eastman enlisted the help of her father to fabricate a ballerina-slippered foot that they added to the bottom of her heart for added depth.

The back of the heart is a quote that reads, "Find a reason to dance through it all." Eastman's heart can be seen at the corner of 16th Street and Central, across from the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts.

Ann Johnson is an art teacher at Allen Village Char-

ter School who designed "My Heart Belongs to KC." Her heart features a number of Kansas City's iconic landmarks, like the Gem Theater, the Scout statue, and the sky stations above Bartle Hall. Under the landmarks and skyline of Kansas City are two hands representing the city's diversity. Her heart will be on display near the corner of 18th Street and Vine.

Keisha Jordan is a digital artist, a creative director and CEO of Complex Flavors, where she takes her Afro-futuristic pop-art aesthetic and makes homewares & fabrics. Her heart is called "A Pathway Forward - Wheatley Providence," which celebrates historic Black excellence. Wheatley Provident Hospital operated in KC from 1902 to 1972 and was one of the only places in the U.S. that exclusively staffed and trained Black doctors and nurses in the early 1900s. Jordan's heart will be on display near the corner of Cleaver and Brookside Blvd.

"[The heart] is an homage to the founder of the Wheatley Provident Hospital," says Jordan. "It's very colorful, very reflective of Pan-African colors, tones, shapes and textures."

Taylor Sanders is a self-

taught artist who primarily works on canvas, where she layers oil paint over acrylic to create a dramatic effect. Sanders' heart is located in the Power & Light District at 14th and Walnut and is called, "The Heart of the City." Her heart shows two perspectives of downtown, the front takes an up-close view of the streetcar and 12th Street jazz mural, while the back has a broad view from the Scout sculpture at Penn Valley Park. Sanders said she really admires what the Scout sculpture represents.

"I really wanted to honor the Native American community in the city," says Sanders. "It touches on how important I think diversity is to have in any city."

The initial placement of the hearts, just in time for the NFL Draft, will be focused around Downtown, the Jazz District and Country Club Plaza.

The hearts will be relocated beginning May 1 with a much broader spread across the metropolitan area. Officials will begin removing the hearts July 5. The online charity auction for the hearts begins in August.

To see all the hearts and their current locations, download the Parade of Hearts app.

**NOTICE OF PUBLICATION**  
 IN THE EIGHTEENTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT  
 DISTRICT COURT, SEDGWICK COUNTY, KANSAS  
 IN THE MATTER OF THE MARRIAGE OF  
 Kenneth Ray Butler (Petitioner)  
 and  
 Clementine Hozron Magon (Respondent)

**Case No. 23DM067**

PURSUANT TO CHAPTER 23 OF KANSAS STATUTES  
 ANNOTATED NOTICE OF SUIT THE STATE OF KANSAS TO:

YOU ARE HEREBY NOTIFIED that a petition has been filed in the District Court of Sedgwick County, Kansas by Petitioner, praying for an absolute decree of divorce, and you are hereby required to plead to such petition on or before the 20th day of May, 2023, in said court at Wichita, Sedgwick County, Kansas. Should you fail therein, judgment and decree will be entered in due course upon said petition.

Kenneth Ray Butler  
 Petitioner

**NOTICE OF PUBLICATION**  
 IN THE EIGHTEENTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT  
 DISTRICT COURT, SEDGWICK COUNTY, KANSAS  
 IN THE MATTER OF THE MARRIAGE OF  
 Ash R. Cooper-St Clair (Petitioner)  
 and  
 Aaydyn Cooper-St-Clair (Respondent)

**Case No. 23DM0123**

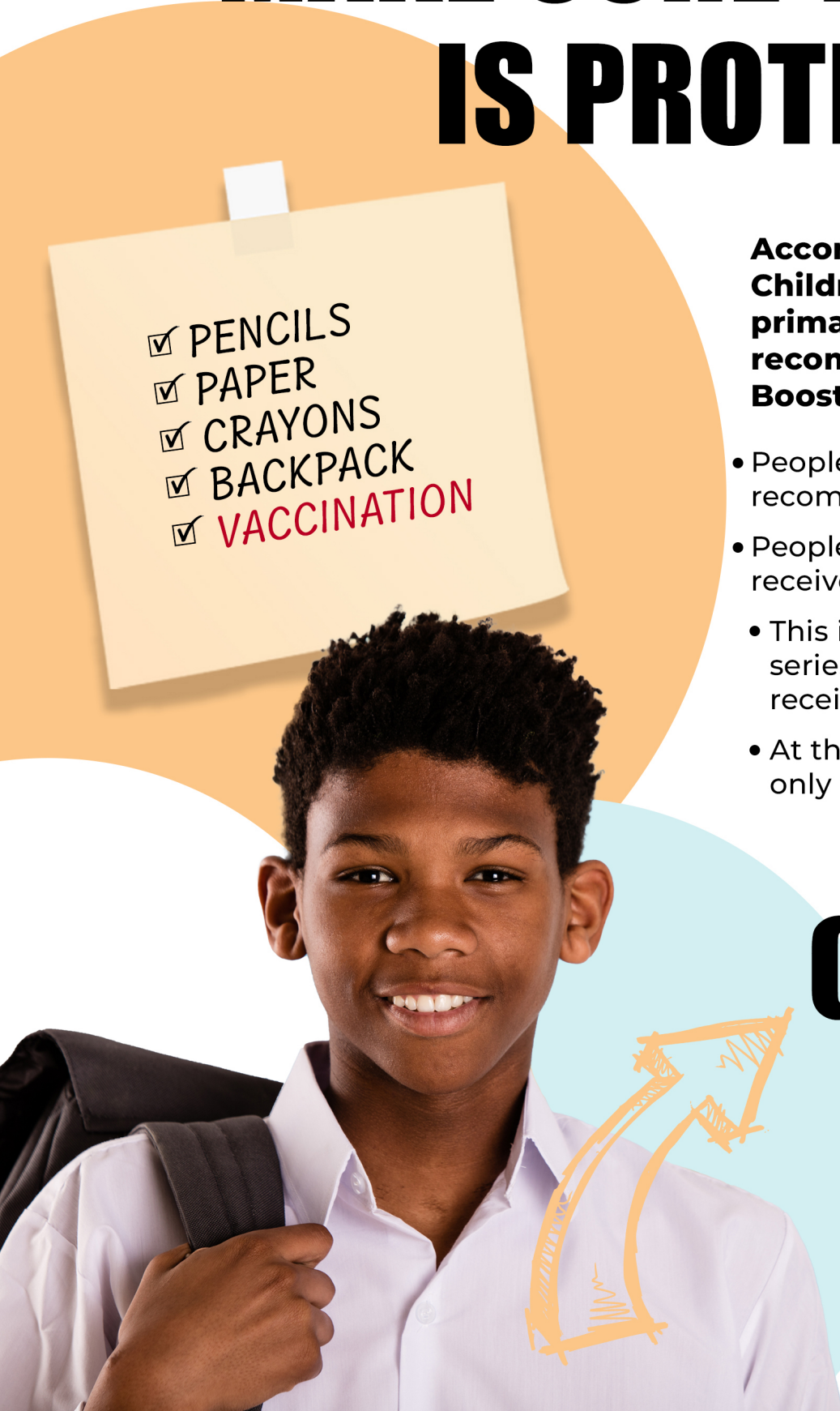
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Ash Cooper-St. Clair  
 Petitioner



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**According to the Center for Disease Control Children age 5 years and older should get all primary series doses, and the booster dose recommended for them by CDC, if eligible. Booster recommendations:**

- People ages 5 years to 11 years are currently recommended to get the original booster.
- People ages 12 years and older are recommended to receive one updated Pfizer or Moderna booster.
- This includes people who have received all primary series doses and people who have previously received one or more original boosters.
- At this time, people aged 12 years to 17 years can only receive the updated Pfizer bivalent booster.

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This Increase the Reach grant program is supported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of a financial assistance award totaling \$79,278,482 with 100 percent funded by the CDC/HHS. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by the CDC/HHS, or the U.S. Government.  
For more information, please visit <https://www.cdc.gov/>. v10-01-2021

**THE VOICE**

