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Bonita Gooch

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ON THE COVER

The Soul of Santa, AKA Tucket Lott. Learn more about this community hero and his Do Good Foundation, 365 days of the year. Photo by Kevin Harris.

BEHIND THE CARTOON

I was surprised at the margin of the House vote that expelled pathological lying fraudster George Santos. Santos is now just the sixth person to be expelled from the House.

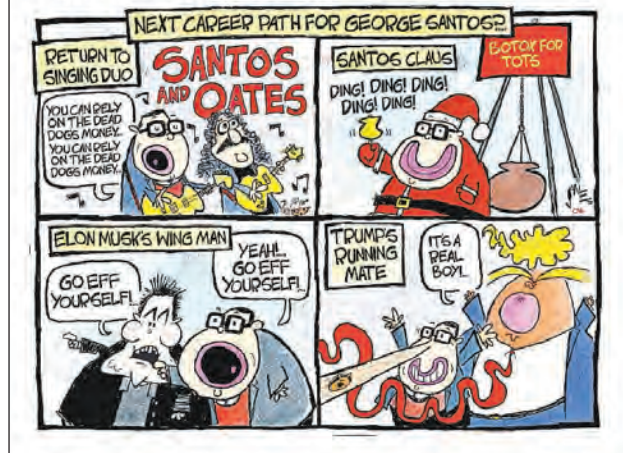
He was not expelled for lying but for 13 credible criminal charges against him.

As one Republican member said, "He is a disgusting human being, and he shouldn't be here," which can be said about most Republicans. But the entirety of GOP leadership voted against expulsion

(while wanting to impeach President Biden without any evidence of anything). Nevertheless, the two-thirds majority needed to expel the fraudster was achieved with 311 votes with 114 against (there were two cowardly present votes). Two Democrats voted against expelling Santos.

I respect the argument against expulsion because he hasn't been convicted yet and the fear of setting a precedent (Adam Schiff was removed from all his committees only because Republicans don't like him), but the Constitution says both chambers are to choose how they

SANTOS CAREER OPTIONS



conduct themselves.

So while Bob Menendez, a New Jersey senator who has been charged with bribery,

hasn't been expelled from the Senate, the House decided they couldn't live any longer with Santos.

THE COMMUNITY VOICE

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People With Felonies Have **Right to Vote**, Says Rep. Pressley in New Bill

By Matt Brown
Associated Press

Congressional Democrats have introduced legislation that would allow people convicted of a felony to vote in federal elections, a proposal that if enacted could restore the voting rights of millions of people in U.S. elections.

Rep. Ayanna Pressley of Massachusetts and Sen. Peter Welch of Vermont submitted the legislation, named the Inclusive Democracy Act, on Dec. 5 which would guarantee the right to vote in federal elections for all citizens regardless of their criminal record.

In a statement, Pressley said the legislation was necessary due to policies and court rulings that “continue to disenfranchise voters from all walks of life — including by gutting the Voting Rights Act, gerrymandering,

cuts to early voting, and more.”

Welch called the bill necessary due to “antiquated state felony disenfranchisement laws.”

In late 2022, about 4.6 million people were unable to vote due to felony convictions, according to a study by the Sentencing Project, a nonpartisan research group. The same study found that Black and Hispanic citizens are disproportionately likely to be disenfranchised due to felony convictions.

“With Republicans and the Supreme Court stopping at nothing to undermine voting rights and exclude Black and Brown folks from participating in our democracy, we must protect and expand access to the ballot box — including for incarcerated citizens,” Pressley said.

The legislation would also require incarcerated people to be educated on their voting rights and offered systems and resources for how to register to vote. The bill also requires means of vote by mail for incarcerated people.

States and territories currently determine a citizen’s voting eligibility for all levels of government. The proposed bill would not change states’ ability to expand or restrict access for state or local elections.

The legislation stands long odds of being passed by the Republican-controlled House. In 2021, all Republicans and a majority of Democrats voted against an amendment to Democrats’ then-flagship voting rights reform bill that would have permitted

people with felony convictions to vote. The bill later passed the House but stalled in the Senate.

“As someone whose family has been personally impacted by mass incarceration, I know how important it is for people to maintain ties to their community, including by voting,” Pressley said.

Voting rights for formerly incarcerated people can vary dramatically by state. While in states like Vermont and Maine people convicted of a crime never lose their right to vote in elections, 11 states generally bar formerly incarcerated people from voting indefinitely, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures.

Welch said the bill is meant to help voters “who have been systematically robbed of their right to participate in our democratic process” and promised that the legislation was part of a broader push for greater voting rights, including through potential reforms to the Voting Rights Act and limits on gerrymandering. Democrats broadly agree on a need for greater voting rights reform but differ in what specific policies are needed.

“We are still in the Civil Rights Movement and Jim Crow is not behind us when laws and courts continue to disenfranchise voters from all walks of life — including by gutting the Voting Rights Act, gerrymandering, cuts to early voting, and more,” Pressley said. “We must reject this unjust status quo and advance bold policies to strengthen our democracy and make it more inclusive.”

Rep. Ayanna Pressley (D-Mass.) has introduced legislation that would guarantee the right to vote in federal elections for all citizens convicted of felonies.

(AP PHOTO/MARIAM ZUHAIB, FILE)



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Wichita Council to Vote on Retaliatory Landlord Law

Key Points:

- Wichita City Council to consider ordinance against retaliatory practices by landlords.
- Landlords found in violation could face fines ranging from \$250 to \$2,500.
- Ordinance does not protect tenants from eviction for non-payment or property damage.

Proposed ordinance would fine landlords who retaliate against tenants who file complaints.

By P.J. Griekspoor
Wichita Reporter

Wichita landlords who retaliate against tenants for filing complaints about housing conditions with eviction notices or rent increases could soon face fines in municipal court if the Wichita City Council approves a proposed ordinance against retaliatory practices on Dec. 17.

The proposed ordinance is based on state law and models a City of Topeka law, the only city in Kansas with such a law.

Nate Johnson with the city's legal department brought District Advisory Board members and visitors up to date on the proposed ordinance at the December meeting.

Landlords found in violation would be subject to a fine of \$250 to \$1,000 for a first offense and increase with subsequent violations with the fine rising to \$1,000 to \$2,500 for a fourth violation. The ordinance would also provide for mediation if both parties want to try to reach an agreement. In that instance, the mediator would be paid by the city.

Johnson said mediation would cost about \$750 per case, but he doesn't anticipate that, in general, the city will incur significant expense. He said penalties and fines will offset most of the cost.

Neither mediation nor filing a complaint protects the tenant from eviction if he is behind on rent or has caused damage to the property that makes it unlivable.

If a tenant has a claim, he does not have to wait for an eviction notice to bring that to the city, but in most cases, a claim of retaliation will come after an eviction has occurred,

Johnson said, simply because most people are somewhat reluctant to bring a claim if they are still living in the property.

Must Pay Rent, Move if Evicted

A tenant who files a complaint cannot refuse to move out of the property if they do receive an eviction notice. And they cannot refuse to pay rent while a complaint is pending resolution.

Johnson acknowledged that the ordinance does little to reimburse a wronged tenant for any losses he sustains as a result of the landlord's retaliatory action.

It provides a fine for the landlord, but the money goes to the city, not the tenant. But tenants who prevail can then use that to help bring a claim for reimbursement against the landlord.

The ordinance also does not prevent a landlord from participating in Section 8 or other HUD-sponsored housing, but Johnson said a landlord convicted of retaliatory action would be subject to losing his right to participate in those programs.

One DAB member expressed concern about the imbalance of power between landlords and renters and pointed out that an eviction, even if later found to be unfair, could still be on the tenant's record and prevent them from



An eviction notice under any circumstances can be a traumatic event. Wichita is now considering an ordinance to impose a fine on landlords who evict tenants in retaliation for them making a complaint about living conditions. ADOBE STOCK PHOTO

renting another home.

Johnson confirmed that an eviction adjudicated in district court could not be stricken by a later municipal conviction for being a retaliatory action.

"Again, it doesn't seem totally fair, but it is state law and we can't have an ordinance that conflicts with state law," Johnson said.

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Brewer Center Faces Setback

Waiting for FEMA approval of new maps moving area out of flood plain will delay groundbreaking for the rec center.

By P.J. Griekspoor
Wichita Reporter

Construction of the expanded Carl Brewer Recreation Center at McAdams Park has hit a snag that will delay groundbreaking until at least next spring, City Councilman Brandon Johnson told community members

attending his December Saturday morning breakfast.

The problem is that McAdams Park, at 1329 E. 16th Street, is in a designated flood plain and the Federal Emergency Management Administration has to approve the maps that show water flow improvements at the Simpson Street Bridge bring the park out of the flood zone.

"We have a 120-day wait to give people time to object before the new designation can be final," Johnson said. "That means we won't break ground until spring of 2024, and it could be as late as summer of 2025 when it opens. I had hoped we'd be cutting the ribbon



A new grand entryway will link the existing recreation center to an addition that will triple the size of the facility.

in late summer of 2024, but it looks like that won't happen."

The \$13.7 million upgrade of the center will triple the facility's size.

It will add a new gymnasium, an indoor walking trail, a full basketball court, smaller courts, pickleball courts, a spectator viewing area, new locker

rooms, new showers, a lounge space, a dining room with a concession kitchen, a mirrored multi-purpose room, new parking spaces and a new grand entrance.

Meanwhile, a main artist for the project has already been chosen and there are three finalists in the contest

to provide more original art in the interior of the building.

The McAdams Recreation Center was renamed the Brewer Center in honor of Carl Brewer, who served as Wichita's first popularly elected African-American mayor, from 2007 to 2015. He died in June 2020.

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Kansas City Debates Need for \$250M Municipal Jail

Alternatives to incarceration considered as Kansas City debates costly municipal jail

By Thomas White
Kansas City Reporter

Key Points

- Kansas City considers building a \$250M municipal jail, but community input reveals little support.
- City has rented 105 beds from neighboring counties' jails for \$2.67M in 2022.
- In KC, 67.8% of people held before court, and 71.2% of people held after court in city jail are Black.
- Alternatives to incarceration include texting reminders and expanding specialty court systems.

Kansas City is looking into building a municipal detention center and held six community engagement sessions to gather community input that revealed little support for a jail that would cost around \$250M to build.

The city has been without a municipal jail since 2009 and rented space from the Jackson County jail until the county nixed the agreement in 2019. KC and Jackson County initially had plans to build a joint jail facility, but those plans fell through. Since then the city has been exploring the idea of building its own facility.

The debate around the jail has been framed around four questions: How big should the jail be? What should be the nature of the jail? How should it be paid

for? Where should the jail be located?

But Decarcerate KC, a group that looks to change policing and incarceration practices in the city, says that the bigger question is, does the city need a jail at all?

"It definitely seems like a lot of the community is in opposition to a city jail and that there's not enough [interest] to justify it," says Decarcerate KC member Sundiata Moon who attended several community engagement sessions.

Jail Costs

One of the main reasons given for opposing the jail is the cost. The city commissioned a needs assessment and an estimate for the cost of building the facility. In 2022 SFS Architecture said a stand-alone city jail would cost \$245M to build. A separate estimate from JE Dunn Construction in 2023 puts the number between \$240M and \$256M. These figures do not account for maintenance and operating costs after the jail is built.

"The funding that they're looking to use to build a jail could be better prioritized in other places," says Moon.

Megan Case, KC's administrator of corrections, says that in lieu of a jail, the city has rented 105 beds from neighboring Vernon and Johnson (MO) county jails. The city pays \$60 a day per bed used in those facilities for a total cost of \$2.67M in 2022.

Who's Put in City Jail

Case noted the types of charges the city houses



Decarcerate KC organizer Amaia Cook speaking at a rally. Decarcerate is among the many groups and individuals that don't think KCMO needs to invest in a new jail.

inmates for are largely trespassing, theft, breaking into motor vehicles, resisting arrest, misdemeanor assault, and pretrial holding.

Decarcerate KC invited the left-leaning Prison Policy Initiative (PPI) to examine the arguments made for a new jail. They reviewed City Municipal Court records and found that the city uses municipal jail beds largely for low-level charges that are non-violent.

One third of people booked into the jail between Mar-Dec 2019 were booked for a violent crime. The remaining two thirds were booked for a mix of non-DUI traffic charges, theft, drug charges, vandalism, missing court, or resisting arrest.

The municipal court and jail doesn't handle felony cases. In Missouri all drug possession and drug dealing charges are felonies meaning that the municipal court largely hears drug paraphernalia cases. The PPI also notes that assault becomes

a felony 'if someone knowingly causes physical injury to another person,' meaning that the city jail would only handle assault charges where no one was physically hurt.

Further, statistics show a massive racial disparity in who the city jails. Although Kansas City is only 26.5% Black, 67.8% of people held before court, and 71.2% of people held after court in city jail are Black.

City Jail Stays are Short but Have Consequences

According to a city report, the average overall length of stay is less than a day. For those who are incarcerated pretrial, their average length of stay is 1.68 days.

The majority of people moving through a municipal jail have not been convicted of a crime. City jails isn't a place where you go to serve a conviction, with the city's needs assessment report showing that only 9.4% of people who appear

in municipal court are sentenced to additional time.

The report doesn't give exact numbers but the PPI says that figure insinuates that the vast majority of individuals housed in jail are there because they are unable to pay a monetary bond while awaiting trial.

While the city jail short stays are better than longer ones, studies show that even short stints of incarceration can be damaging. A University of Missouri-Kansas City study found 38% of those incarcerated for less than three days lost their job, had to change jobs, or faced consequences at work because of their incarceration. Another 30% said incarceration of three days or less negatively impacted their housing and 32% said that it had a negative impact on their children.

Alternatives to Incarceration

Mayor Quinton Lucas appointed a 10-member

Alternatives to Incarceration Commission in June to study ways to reduce incarceration while still keeping the community safe. Since that time, the commission has heard a number of proposals including rehabilitative services for substance abuse or mental health issues to help confront the root causes of crime.

Chief Judge of the Kansas Court of Appeals Karen Arnold-Burger says judges face challenges determining who is most at risk of not appearing, but on average, around 20% of people miss their court date. She also says simple text message reminders of court dates have had a "tremendous effect" on lowering the number of people missing court.

New York City has experimented with texting reminders instead of issuing a cash bail, and an Oregon county did the same and said it saved them over a

See Debate Page 12 →




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Happy New Year*

'Tough Choices' Ahead for KCK & WYCO, Says Mayor in State of UG Address

Key Points

- Only 29% of wage earners in WYCO live there, causing a significant outflow of wages.
- WYCO faces a potential negative fund balance due to projected expenses exceeding revenue.
- Mayor highlights massive debt, high property taxes, and the need for BPU relief.

Wyandotte County faces economic and budgetary challenges.

By Thomas White
Kansas City Reporter

Kansas City, KS, Mayor and Wyandotte County CEO Tyrone Garner revealed the county is "not at its best" at his State of the Unified Government Address on Dec. 5.

"The economic, budgetary health outlook for the UG is not good," says Garner. "The harsh truth from the data is that Wyandotte County in this defining moment is nowhere near where we need to be to sustain a vibrant community, a resurgent economy, and a fiscally responsible municipal government."

Garner identified the UG's biggest challenges as massive debt and government shortfalls paired with the need for lower property taxes and Board of Public Utilities relief.

During the speech, Garner reiterated that the UG has an overreliance on debt, with a current debt liability of more than \$1.1 billion.

"Forty-four percent of the overall UG budget is allocated to pay down accumulated debt," Garner said. "Conservative estimates from our public works department indicate that Wyandotte County may need another billion dollars worth of infrastructure investments in the years to come."



Mayor Tyrone Garner delivers the State of the UG Address. According to the mayor, the state of the UG is "not good."

Potential Negative Balance

Garner said the UG potentially could have a negative fund balance in 2026-28 due to projected expenses outpacing projected revenue.

This year's budget is \$420M, and next year's is a historic high of \$467M.

WYCO Administrator David Johnston spoke after Garner and said that the county is limited in how it can raise money. The county can only generate revenue from sales taxes, property taxes, fees like the BPU Pilot fee, and grants when they are available.

WYCO already has one of the highest property tax levies in Kansas and the KC metro area.

"Citizens expect property tax relief and BPU tax relief; that's not going away and will always be on our minds as we proceed in the future," said Johnston.

However, Johnston noted, any reduction in those revenue sources means less money going into the

general revenue fund. He stressed that the county needs to take a long-term approach and needs to "take a hard look and set priorities." Both Garner and Johnston peppered their speeches with phrases like the need to "tighten the belt" and "not kick the can down the road."

"I want to be frank. We are at a critical crossroads in Wyandotte County," said Garner while addressing the county commissioners specifically. "A crossroad that offers an opportunity to get away from business as usual and to make the clear and necessary choice to work collaboratively to reimagine and improve Wyandotte County together."

BPU Relief

Garner said he's working with the county administrator and the BPU general manager to separate the PILOT (Payment in Lieu of Taxes) fee from the BPU bill, making the BPU bill strictly for water and utility charges.

Currently, failure to pay your

BPU bill in full – including the unrelated PILOT fee, can result in having your utilities cut off.

"No one should have to get [their utilities] cut off for not paying their PILOT tax," said Garner. "You should only get cut off for not paying your utilities."

Reversing Income Outflow

Garner noted that while Wyandotte County has the third highest wages in Kansas, only 29% of those wage earners live in the County. This means 71% of the wages earned in the county go elsewhere.

The result from this outward flow of wages is a loss of income in all revenue areas the Unified Government depends on heavily – sales tax, property tax, and utility revenue.

Reversing this trend is imperative to the fiscal growth and stability in the county. Improving the availability of quality and affordable housing stock in the UG will have the greatest positive impact on this

troubling stat and also help drive down UG rates for property taxes and BPU rates.

Quindaro Ruins

Both Garner and Johnston stressed that now is the time to reinvest in revitalizing the Quindaro Ruins historic site.

"We all recognize that the political stars are aligned today," says Johnston. "For a short window, we have the federal government, state government, the UG, and the owners of the ruins thinking the same way."

Johnston said the ruins site represents a "gateway to freedom" for many Americans and a story should be one we want to tell.

"The Quindaro Ruins is ready to be taken out of ruin," said Garner. "[We need] to make the site the national jewel it has always deserved to be."

The ruins are set to receive \$1 million in funding from a State of Kansas settlement with corporations OnGoal and Cerner.

Trial Challenges Missouri Voter ID Law for 3rd Time

Key Points

- Almost 10% of voters lacked required ID in Missouri's largest jurisdictions.
- There have been three different Missouri Voter ID laws with lawsuits against each.
- NAACP and League of Women Voters argue law imposes unconstitutional burdens on voting rights.

The NAACP & the League of Women Voters are challenging the law, the third time since 2006 that Republican lawmakers passed a photo ID law.

By Rudi Keller
Missouri Independent

Kenneth Mayer, is an expert witness for the Missouri NAACP and the League of Women Voters, who are challenging the voter ID law as unconstitutional testified on the second day of a trial before Cole County Circuit Judge Jon Beetem.

Mayer said Almost one out of every 10 voters who cast ballots in Missouri's two largest jurisdictions during recent elections lacked the identification now required at polls in the state, an expert testified late last month at a trial over the voter ID requirement. It's an issue that's behind the third lawsuit filed against Missouri voter ID laws.

Before the November 2022 election, acceptable identification at the polls included a voter registration card, a student identification card, a bank statement or utility bill or even an out-of-state drivers license if it had not expired.

Now anyone without the required state or federally issued identification is given a provisional ballot. For it to be counted, the voter must return to the polling station and show the correct



Missouri NAACP President Rod Chapel (center) speaks at a news conference about the state's voter ID law. Chapel was joined by attorneys and leaders of NAACP chapters across the state.

(RUDI KELLER/MISSOURI INDEPENDENT)

identification or count on the local election authority matching their signature to the one on file.

Overall turnout for 2022 was about 20% lower than the presidential election of 2020, Mayer testified, but the number of provisional ballots cast was four times higher than two years earlier.

Many people worried whether their identification would count likely didn't vote, Mayer said.

"Voters frequently misunderstand the kind of ID that is required," he said. "Half the people who don't vote and say they didn't vote because they lack ID actually had the proper ID."

This Lawsuit

The NAACP and the league argue the law imposes unconstitutional burdens on the right to vote without actually achieving the state goal of reducing fraud in elections. The current law is the third since 2006 seeking to require a photo ID to vote. The previous two versions have been struck down by the courts.

At a news conference during a trial break, Nimrod Chapel, president of the Missouri NAACP, blamed

Secretary of State Jay Ashcroft for pushing the new law as a political measure to suppress turnout.

Passing a photo ID law to vote has been a Republican priority since 2006. Most Democrats have been opposed to the idea.

"Jay Ashcroft, (Missouri Secretary of State who is in charge of elections), with this ridiculous measure, has worked hard to ensure that African Americans and other voters throughout the state would be disenfranchised, understanding that the burden would be borne harder and most upon us," Chapel said.

In court, the state is defending the law as a simple solution to make elections secure.

It is a "common-sense law designed to uphold that sacred right," Assistant Attorney General Peter Donohue said during the trial's opening arguments Nov. 17.

The trial took a two-week break and resumed Dec. 7. A ruling is expected soon.

Old Voter ID Law Challenges

Enacting a voter ID law has been a goal for Missouri Republicans since 2006. The first law, enacted

that year, was struck down by the Missouri Supreme Court in a decision that found it violated the state constitution's equal protection clause and the right of qualified, registered citizens to vote.

The law, the court wrote, was not "narrowly tailored" to prevent voter fraud.

The latest attempt began with the passage of a constitutional amendment in 2016 that allowed lawmakers to add a voter ID requirement. The intent was to address the issues the court found in its 2006 decision.

But a law enacted in 2018 to implement the requirement was struck down because, the Supreme Court ruled, it required voters "to sign a contradictory, misleading affidavit" that they did not have required identification to cast a ballot using non-photo identification.

The new law does not require the affidavit but it also eliminates the use of any non-photo identification, Lieberman said. As a result, she said, the plaintiffs will show that the use of provisional ballots has gone up substantially and that few of those ballots are actually counted.

Arguments From Both Sides

The lawsuit focuses on the burdens faced by three individuals obtaining state-issued identification. The problems include finding transportation to a state license office, misspellings on important documents or lack of those documents entirely due to age.

The main purpose of a voter ID law, proponents contend, is to prevent fraud at the polls. Such laws, the state argues in its legal filings, "protect the fundamental right to vote by deterring difficult-to-detect forms of voter fraud."

Missouri will issue an identification card for a voter who needs one at no cost and help obtaining the documents, Donohue argued in court. The burdens are minimal and the benefit is substantial, he said.

"Protecting the integrity of elections is absolutely a compelling governmental interest," Donohue said.

That argument was challenged during expert testimony Nov. 20. Over the past 20 years, there have been no instances where someone tried to vote at the polls using someone else's name.

The only documented instance of someone in Missouri using someone else's ballot dated from 2007, when a St. Louis County man was convicted of using the ballot mailed to his deceased mother to vote absentee and then voting in person under his own name.

The only type of voter fraud that a voter ID law prevents is in-person fraud at the polls, which is almost non-existent, attorneys for the plaintiffs wrote.

"Because the voter ID restrictions offer no discernable protection against voter fraud while imposing significant burdens upon voters — disenfranchising many in the process — there is no rational basis for them," plaintiffs' attorneys wrote, "they cannot be upheld under even the most deferential standard, let alone the strict scrutiny that properly applies."



Shop with a Cop is a great program where officers accompany kids shopping for Christmas, buying gifts for themselves or their families. It's a fun way to build positive relationships between the police and the community and bring joy during the holiday season. The experience of kids and officers shopping together creates a special bond, which we hope breaks down barriers and fosters friendships. The goal of the program is to make a positive impact between police officers and the communities they serve.

It's through the Random Acts Of Kindness program, what is that? The Random Acts of Kindness program is a program run by the Wichita Police and Fire Foundation that aims to assist families in need. This program offers quality-of-life items to families referred by officers in the community. At the same time, it builds impactful and positive relationships between police and the community.

Anyone can donate and help make a difference in someone's life. Your contribution can go a long way in helping law enforcement assist families in need. So please donate and help us continue our efforts to help those in our community.

What are some future ways people can get involved with programs like these?

Those who wish to contribute can visit wichitapolicfoundation.org to donate and support the Wichita Police and Fire Foundation.

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Debate, from Page 7 ↓

million dollars in a year.

Judge Arnold-Burger gives the analogy of emergency rooms being overwhelmed in decades past. She says the industry did studies to ease the burden on ERs and added urgent care facilities and doctors offices expanded hours. She says the incarceration system needs to do the same; look for alternatives to jail, which is expensive, has negative effects and often isn't the best remedy.

There's a lot of push for Kansas City to expand their specialty court system, which includes a drug court, mental health court, and a veterans treatment court. The city also has a specialty women's court that will open in a matter of months. These diversionary programs focus on treatment and rehabilitation versus punishment, however they are entirely voluntary and those going through the program are monitored closely for up to a year.

In a memo to the city council, administrators with the Kansas City Municipal Courts say most people in municipal jail have either mental health issues, substance use disorders or both.

The Prison Policy Initiative says that KC's short lengths of stay "make clear that true treatment is not occurring behind bars."

The alternatives to incarceration commission

is heavily considering a pre-arrest hotline similar to a program instituted in Miami. The program would send community responders rather than police to address issues related to substance abuse, mental illness or homelessness.

Advocates say jailing doesn't address the root causes of petty crimes that are being punished within municipal jail and many are calling for simple 'ticket and release' for nonviolent misdemeanors.

"I think a lot of people learned during COVID, when the jails had to let a lot of people go, that perhaps the world doesn't fall apart if jails aren't full," says Judge Arnold-Burger. "Actually more people showed up for court."

The city's alternatives to incarceration commission will present their recommendations alongside findings from the community meetings to the full city council Jan. 9.

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LEAGUE 42

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Five Gifts COVID Left For Us

By P.J. Griekspoor

At the risk of daring fate by looking at COVID-19 through the rearview mirror when the next round of disaster may be just around a blind corner, there are some things that we can say the world – and our community – gained from what we learned in “lockdown.”

1. Remote Working Works

Before the pandemic forced us to get creative, spending eight hours a day in the office was just the norm. When we HAD to stay home, workers learned that working eight hours minus the commute, left more time – in some cases A LOT more time – for family and personal time. Not having to have a “work wardrobe” for five days a week meant more money in the bank and a sandwich from the fridge was a lot cheaper lunch.

2. Getting It Delivered Is Awesome

The world was already moving toward online shopping before the pandemic.

But most people didn’t even imagine getting groceries delivered to the front door or having dinner, complete with cocktails, brought to the door. Especially in areas where you couldn’t get a pizza after 11 p.m., the emergence of a plethora of delivery services has been a major life gain.

3. Curbside Pickup Saves Major Time

One of the side effects of people spending far more time at home was the emergence of new interest in gardening and home improvement. Garden and home stores, however, needed to limit the number of customers in the store and curbside pickup provided an answer. Buyers could go online, order and pay. Store employees could pick and prepare orders and prepare them to deliver them to waiting vehicles. The resulting time savings for both customers and retailers has kept pick-up lanes busy even post lockdown.

4. More Family Time, Contact Matters

Early in the pandemic, the isolation of older family members from younger

generations and the inability to travel for visits was one of the greatest sacrifices families had to face. As more and more “meeting” technology emerged, it became routine and easy to “Zoom” or “Facetime” with relatives isolated from in-person visitation. It’s still not as good as being there, but the technology for family far away to “Zoom” to watch the baby taste his first birthday cake is truly a blessing.

5. Supply Chain Awareness

For more than two decades, American consumers reveled in getting the “lowest price” on the most supplies, essentials and toys without thinking much about how they magically appeared on store shelves. The pandemic taught us that some things are better “made in America” especially those that keep us protected and supplied with essentials. We even learned that computer chips are essential. As a result, permanent changes in what we make in America have been made that will help create jobs and energize industry in the future.



Happy Holidays

Have a wonderful, safe holiday season!



New Team Will Investigate Officer-Involved Critical Incidents

Team has 10 WPD officers & 10 sheriff's deputies; it will operate independently.

By P.J. Griekspoor
Wichita Reporter



Chief Joe Sullivan



Sheriff Jeff Easter

The Wichita Police and the Sedgwick County Sheriff's Office have teamed up to establish a new Advanced Law Enforcement Response Team (ALERT) that will have sole responsibility for investigations when an officer or a deputy is involved in a critical incident.

Police Chief Joe Sullivan said the team will incorporate the industry's best standards to maintain public trust and adherence to high standards.

Sheriff Jeff Easter said District Attorney Marc Bennett suggested such a team when he was elected in 2012, but that "it just didn't work out for whatever reason" until Sullivan became chief of police in November 2022.

"We discussed it and we were both in agreement that it would be best for this community because this community has been asking for a change

in how we investigate these critical incidents," Easter said.

Sullivan said ALERT uses both police and sheriff's department protocols in place "to conduct an independent and transparent investigation." The police team will investigate sheriff's incidents and the sheriff's team will investigate incidents involving the WPD.

Prior to the agreement, the

WPD and sheriff would investigate for their own agency and the Kansas Bureau of Investigation would provide oversight, according to Police Lt. Aaron Moses.

Now, the new team will independently investigate and present results directly to the district attorney.

Exceptions to the new rule will be deaths of prisoners at the Sedgwick County Jail. Kansas Law requires those to automatically trigger KBI involvement.

The team of police detectives and sheriff's deputies has already completed training from the Association of Force Investigators and has completed two investigations: an officer-involved shooting in Maize last month and another by the WPD this month.

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Kim Cowans

Union Pacific Files Motion to Dismiss Lawsuit over 29th & Grove Spill



Union Pacific Railroad has filed a motion to dismiss a class-action lawsuit over property value losses from a long-ago chemical spill. It said it remains committed to cleanup and remediation.

Railroad remains committed to working on remediation, but does not admit liability.

By P.J. Griekspoor, Wichita Reporter

Key Points:

- Union Pacific Railroad files motion to dismiss class action lawsuit related to decades-old chemical spill.
- Lawsuit seeks damages for loss of property value due to company's negligence.
- Union Pacific committed to cleaning up the site; signed consent order with state in 2002.

Union Pacific Railroad has filed a motion to dismiss a class-action lawsuit related to the now-notorious chemical spill near 29th and Grove streets in Wichita.

The lawsuit, filed in October, was seeking damages for property owners in an area affected by a chemical spill at a Union Pacific rail yard near 29th and Grove, estimated to have taken place

in the 1970s.

The suit named two plaintiffs — Faye Black and Jeannine Tolson — but the class-action lawsuit argues it's filed on behalf of everyone who owns residential property within the area impacted by the spill.

The federal lawsuit sought damages for loss of property value as a

result of the company's negligence. Chemicals from the spill spread, contaminating groundwater as far as three miles south of the initial spill.



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The City of Wichita discovered the contamination in 1994. In 1998, the State of Kansas identified the Union Pacific rail yard as the source of contamination and issued a remediation plan.

Residents in the contaminated area only became aware of the continued contamination last year.

Attorneys in the lawsuit said the plaintiffs are concerned

about the spill's impact on people's home values.

"Who wants to buy a house that is on this plume, when you can buy one three blocks away that goes to the same schools and has the same access to community but doesn't live on this plume?" said Chris Nidel, a lawyer with the Maryland-based Nidel & Nace firm, which helped file the lawsuit.

In a statement announcing the motion to dismiss the case, Union Pacific said the request for dismissal does not change the company's commitment to cleaning up the site.

"We will continue to cooperate with the Kansas Dept. of Health & Environment (KDHE) to investigate and address the spill's effects," the statement read. "Union Pacific remains dedicated to working in collaboration with KDHE, the Sedgwick County Health Dept., the City of Wichita and community leaders on the cleanup and remediation of the site."

Union Pacific signed a consent order with the state of Kansas in 2002 to clean up the contamination but did not admit liability.

Gwendolyn D. Davis

Attorney & Counselor at Law

Wishes You



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Soul of Santa is Doing Good All Year

The Soul of Santa Do Good Foundation hopes to inspire community service in every season.

By **Thomas White** and **Bonita Gooch**
Kansas City Voice

If Santa Claus had a brotha - notice the missing "er"-- he'd be nothing like the big round guy. Nope, he wouldn't be a melinated knockoff. What brother would dare be seen in the community in those red flannel digs? Plus, what's with those elves, don't they know a brother needs a fresh cut and a trim?

If Santa had a brother, he'd be smooth, a man of style and class, and why not a red suit, it's certainly fly, with a hat to match.

He'd need a name that matched his calling.... SOUL of Santa ... that works for two reasons, not just one. Of course, he's a soul brother, but his focus is on maintaining the soul - the spirit - of Christmas in all of us the whole year through.

What's The Soul of Santa About?

The Soul of Santa is a spiritual movement that's divinely inspired.

Tucker Lott, aka Soul of Santa, says he was driving when the idea "dropped in his spirit." It was an idea he couldn't shake, so he decided to do something about it. He began by explaining his vision to an artists, who -- guided by Lott -- was able to put on paper the Soul of Santa look. However, the rest of the vision was Lott's to implement.

"The idea that came to him was never to be a Black Santa," says Dennis Powell, Jr, executive director of The Soul of Sant, and Lott's son-in-law. "It's not like we're competing with Santa."

Instead, it's about keeping the spirit of Christmas alive 365 days of the year.

"That spirit of Christmas where everyone is joyful, we're speaking to strangers, we're holding the door, those moments tend to pass after the holidays, said Powell. "The Soul of Santa is about taking that spirit and extending it all year round,



giving back, being connected to the community, being considerate."

Hence the Soul of Santa slogan, "Do good 365."

Soul of Santa Holiday Events

In 2018, Lott wanted to put up a Christmas tree on the patio of Soiree in the 18th and Vine district. That turned into hosting a Christmas tree lighting ceremony where he debuted his Soul of Santa character in person.

"He wanted this historically under-resourced and underserved area to have the same experience that the Plaza or Crown Center has," says Powell. "So, out of his own pocket, he put on the first tree lighting in 18th & Vine."

The event has grown from one tree lighting to two huge trees and lightings - the 18th and Vine ceremony and another at the Shops of Blue Parkway. The event has gained sponsorships

and added two community breakfasts for children, with each participant receiving toys and clothes.

With the growing number of events and wanting to extend their reach, in 2019, Lott, along with family and friends, formed a nonprofit called The Soul of Santa Do Good Foundation. In keeping with the Soul of Santa vision, the focus of the foundation is to give back and uplift under-resourced communities, particularly on Kansas City's east side.

The foundation has also added an annual benefit concert, this year the concert featured local legend Lonnie McFadden. In 2022, the sold-out concert featured national recording artists Eric Benet and Cherule.

This year, there was a Christmas album release, a karaoke event with artists from the album performing,

How to Help Do Good 365

The Soul of Santa Do Good Foundation welcomes support from the community. Interested individuals can participate in a number of ways:

Listen to the Soul of Santa Christmas Album:

All proceeds from the album go towards the Soul of Santa Do Good Foundation. The album features Aria Camille as well as a host of local hip-hop, jazz and soul artists. To find the album, search "Soul of Santa Christmas Album" on your preferred music streaming platform.

Donate your time: The foundation is always looking for volunteers. You can volunteer to help with future holiday events, the monthly food distribution, the weekly food pantry, or you can become an ACE program mentor. For more info, visit TheSoulOfSanta.org.

Purchase Soul of Santa Merchandise: Hoodies, aprons, Christmas ornaments, coffee mugs, and more are all available on the Soul of Santa website and proceeds go toward the Do Good Foundations work.

Donate dollars: Monetary donations are also welcome at TheSoulOfSanta.org.

Beyond the Festive Season

"The 'Do Good 365' model that [Tucker Lott] talks about, he lives that," says Powell. "That

See SOUL Page 30 →

Soul Of Santa Christmas Album is a Real Gift

Photo: The Soul of Santa Christmas Album *TFIBKC*

By **Bonita Gooch**
Voice Editor-in-Chief

The Soul of Santa gave us all a very special Christmas gift this year - a 12-song holiday album - performed by talented singers, performing all new songs - except one - that are sure to become part of your annual holiday mix.

This album is not just Kansas City at its finest, it can stand up against any holiday CD you're listening to. All of the singers are local KC performers who wrote and donated their songs and performances for this CD

that benefits the Sou

The album has a but it's a well-balan everyone. The Christ mix, makes it the k your family's holid ducer Jo Macklin fo manner that flows Grammy-nominate

What talent!!

Let's begin with Ar





KC Mayor Quinton Lucas' Favorite Christmas Tradition

By Thomas White
Kansas City Reporter

More than 100 years ago, former Kansas City Mayor George Shelley began the Mayor's Christmas Tree tradition, bringing together Kansas Citians from around our community to decorate a Christmas tree and raise money for families in need.

Since then, KC's mayors have kept the tradition alive, celebrating the arrival of the 100-foot-tall tree — one of the largest Christmas trees in the country — and raising funds for the Mayor's Christmas Tree Fund to support thousands of families during the holidays. I look forward to the holiday cheer the Mayor's Christmas Tree Lighting brings to so many in our community each year.

Learn more about the Mayor's Christmas Tree Fund at <https://t.ly/yRUdo>.



of Santa's Do Good Foundation. A great mix of genres and styles, mixed with something for everyone. The CD has a Christmas vibe that runs through the kind of CD that's just perfect for a holiday gathering. Hat's off to producer engineering these songs in a seamless way. We see why he's a top producer.

Aria Camille, Tucker Lott's daughter

who died unexpectedly last year. What a beautiful voice. For several years, the two of them had been working together on the five songs she's featured in. Lott, a poet, wrote the words for four of the songs, and Aria wrote one of the songs, for her parents.

Paula Saunders delivers Pentatonic style on a song skating and then really delivers Kansas City Jazz style on the one non-original song on the album "Winter Wonderland."

Andrea Tribitt delivers on the soulful "Holiday Blues." This is one of my new holiday favorites and the

sister wrote it. Another great talent who used to sing with The Sounds of Blackness.

"As good as it is quality-wise, there's a lot of substance to the lyrics as well," said Soul of Santa Do Good Foundation Executive Director Dennis Powell Jr.

The rap songs on the CD are all original holiday songs with positive messages and no cussing. Contributors include Roblo Dastar, The Royal Chief, "Xta-C really deliver some "cute" holiday rhymes. I hope I didn't ruin their reputation by calling their lyrics "cute?"

HOLIDAY MEMORIES

County Executive Frank White



Frank White with his siblings and parents.

I have always loved Christmas and as a child I remember wishing for snow every holiday. The excitement of the season grew among my siblings and I on Christmas Eve. I always had trouble sleeping that night in anticipation of the morning. In our house, the first sibling to wake up was responsible for waking the others. Then we'd decide who would wake our parents to start opening gifts. As an adult, that tradition carried on with my children, always remembering this is a time to celebrate Christ's birth, share love and appreciation with family and friends, and embrace the spirit of giving.

KCK Mayor Tyrone Garner



I grew up with a Pentecostal evangelist father and a missionary mom, so a lot of my Christmas memories are about church and the real meaning of the season. I'm the oldest of five children and we all participated in the Church Christmas program and had to memorize our lines. After the program we would get our gift from the church. It was always a bag of fresh fruit and nuts and maybe a small gift like a Hot Wheel.

At home, dad would read us the Christmas story from the Bible and reinforce the reason for the season. We'd be so excited about our gifts and could hardly sleep. Christmas was a special day for us, unwrapping our gifts and playing outside with friends. Those days went by so fast.

Admiral Windwagon Smith Kaye Monk Morgan



Kaye Monk Morgan (second from front on the right) at her multigenerational family Christmas.

My favorite Christmas memories are of time with family, usually around food.

Our traditional meal, brought together by multiple generations, is plentiful and a reminder of our myriad blessings and the abundance provided by our God.

Jokes, full tummies, and love are served, with multiple helpings available. Naps typically follow a passionate game of UNO, where feelings are hurt and bragging rights are won.

In "A Big Dawg Christmas" Roblo DaStar delivers her version of the 12 Days of Christmas. As a mom, I had to laugh out loud on the ninth day of Christmas.

"On the 9th day of Christmas, my momma gave to me ... NOTHIN, she said my present was her raisin' me."

Also, shout out to Sawn Edwards for bringing this talented group of performers together.

You can listen to the album on any of the streaming platforms. You can also listen to it on their YouTube channel.

SOUL, from Page 16 ↓

inspires me and challenges us to make sure we're doing that through the foundation."

The Do Good Foundation partners with Harvesters to distribute food to those in need on the first Friday of the month. They give out 20,000 to 25,000 pounds of food. They also host a food pantry that's open every Wednesday night to service the needs of KC's east side.

Soul of Santa also visits schools and passes out financial literacy books.

ACE Program

The foundation also looks to aid high-functioning adults with disabilities with their recently established ACE Program (Aria Camille Empowerment), named in honor of Lott's daughter, who passed away unexpectedly last year. Aria's journey with epilepsy and her dedication to teaching students with special needs inspired the foundation to refine its mission.

The ACE Program assists individuals with disabilities by providing scholarships and wraparound services to ensure they can pursue their desired career paths. Anyone with an ADA disability can apply and they are currently accepting scholarship applications. Those looking to enroll in a trade school or college can receive a \$1k scholarship as well as mentorship through the program.

Those interested in enrolling in the ACE Program are encouraged to reach out to dgood365@thesoulofsanta.org for application instructions.

Warm Up Your Winter with Brandy Cocktails



By **Thomas White**
Kansas City Reporter

I spent nearly two decades in the bar & restaurant industry, and in the back half of that time I got to come up with cocktail

recipes and write drink menus.

To pull back the curtain a little, the drink list at your favorite watering hole typically changes with the seasons. All of my favorite drinks fell in the same season: winter.

The drinks in winter are darker, more robust, and have warm flavors to make you forget about the chill you feel outside. Brandy is the star of winter, with many classic cocktails that'll be sure to please even the Grinch of your group.

Personally, I make large batches of a special cocktail to bottle up and give out to friends and family. Brandy is the main ingredient, but it's an over-complicated clarified milk punch based on a recipe by Ben Franklin that takes me a full day.

I won't advocate for everyone to get to that level of alchemy (although if you're interested, email me), so here are two

brandy winter warmers that are sure to brighten your spirits.

Brandy Old Fashioned Cocktail

2 Ounces Brandy
2-3 Dashes of Bitters (Angostura or Black Walnut)
1 Sugar Cube
1 Orange Slice or Cherry

Place a sugar cube in a pint glass, soak the cube with bitters. Add just enough hot water to dissolve the sugar and mix it to a paste with a spoon. Add your brandy of choice and fill the glass with ice. Stir until the glass has begun to frost or the ice has diluted the cocktail by roughly 25%. Strain into a new cocktail glass with fresh ice, add cherry and/or orange slice for garnish.

Brandy Alexander

1.5 Ounces Brandy
1 Ounce Dark Creme de Cacao
1 Ounce Cream



Garnish: grated nutmeg/
cinnamon

Add the measured liquids into a cocktail shaker with ice. Vigorously shake to combine the ingredients. Strain into a chilled martini glass and garnish with grated nutmeg or cinnamon.

Chef Shanita's Roasted Carrot Soup Recipe for the Holidays

Warm up holiday guests with this favorite soup

By **Thomas White**
Kansas City Reporter

Chef Shanita McAfee-Bryant has long been a staple in the KC food scene. Her brick-and-mortar restaurant, Magnolia's Southern Cuisine, enjoyed a cult following and she also gained national attention by appearing on the Food Network shows "Chopped" and "Cutthroat Kitchen."

McAfee-Bryant started The Prospect KC in 2019, which is a social venture job program that trains future chefs while addressing food insecurity and access.

The Spot, located at 2000 Vine St, is the physical space where the public can see the work of the nonprofit, with a cafe featuring a rotating seasonal menu, coffee shop, and

a small grocery selection.

Chef Shanita shared the recipe for one of their most popular dishes, just in time to warm up guests at a holiday get-together.

The Prospect KC's Roasted Carrot Soup

Prep Time: 1 Hour
Makes 2 quarts

Ingredients:

3 pounds carrots, peeled and sliced
1 medium red onion, cut in quarters
1 Honeycrisp apple, cored and cut in quarters
Extra-virgin olive oil
2 cups vegetable stock
4 cloves garlic, roasted
1/2 teaspoon ground coriander
1/2 teaspoon ground turmeric



The Prospect KC's roasted carrot soup from Chef Shanita McAfee-Bryant.

1 Inch fresh ginger, grated
1/2 cup heavy cream (optional)
Caramelized onions, for garnish
1 tablespoon chopped parsley, for garnish
Optional Garnish: Thai Chili Crunch Oil

Directions:

Preheat oven to 400° F.
Line a sheet pan with parchment paper.
Place carrots, apple and red onion on a sheet pan.
Coat fruit and vegetable chunks with 2-3 tablespoons of olive oil and a generous



amount of salt and black pepper.

Roast mixture in the oven for 15 minutes, or until the fruit and vegetables are tender when pierced with a fork.

Place the roasted vegetable into a heavy bottom pot.

Add vegetable stock, roasted garlic, coriander, turmeric and ginger, cover and simmer for another 20 mins until slightly thickened.

Blend soup with a hand blender or in a stand blender (whatever you have available is fine).

If desired, add heavy cream and simmer on medium heat until reduced and thickens for another 15 minutes.

Serve garnished with caramelized onions and parsley.

Top with Thai Chili Crunch Oil, if desired, and enjoy.



Jackson

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bit.ly/CommunityVoiceMagDec23

Deadlines:

Northeast HS & Middle Magnets - Jan. 26
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BeGreat Together Grants \$30K to KC BIPOC Educational Programs

Addressing funding disparity: BeGreat Together has invested \$100K in local schools since 2021.

By Thomas White
Kansas City Reporter



Avrell Stokes presents a check to Northeast High School.

Avrell Stokes, president of BeGreat Together, surprised an early childhood center in Kansas City's urban core and two teachers with \$10,000 checks to enhance their educational programs.

Stokes' gave the checks on behalf of BeGreat Together, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit formed in 2021 by Assemble, a BIPOC-owned tech company. BeGreat Together's mission statement says that these grants will "support elevating effective Black-led and Latino-led community endeavors by uplifting existing local changemakers while investing in future leaders."

According to Forbes, school districts predominantly attended by students of color receive what equates to \$2,200 less per student each year, even though students of color and students from low-income communities often require more, not fewer, resources to create the inclusive learning environments they need to thrive.

"We turned our commitment into action," says Stokes. "With this \$30,000 boost, we reached a milestone of

\$100,000 invested in local schools. It was a momentous occasion for education in Kansas City."

This Year's Grant Awardees

Northeast High School: Vice Principal Rheanna Egli accepted the \$10,000 grant alongside the student council. The money will go to support the school store that helps students acquire entrepreneurial and other life skills. Northeast High, a KC public school, is located at 415 Van Brunt.

Boone Elementary School: Scott Bounds of the Boone Elementary gifted program received a check to enhance his robotics program. Boone Elementary, part of the Center School District, is located at 8817 Wornall.

Grace United Early Learning Center: The preschool, at 801 Benton, looks to help kids ages 3 to 5 get a head start on their education and reading. The \$10,000 grant will allow them to expand programming.

BeGreat Together looks for K-12 schools in the greater Kansas City area with innovative program ideas for improving the educational experience and environment for students. Winners are selected from a group of programs nominated for consideration for the award. For more info visit www.BGTogether.org.



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Wichita Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.

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New Grants to Focus on Closing 67214's Educational Gap

Key Points

- Nonprofits have until Feb. 2 to apply for grants to improve education in Wichita's 67214 ZIP code.
- The summer programs will focus on getting kindergarten to third graders on track.
- Grants up to \$25,000 will be given to organizations aligned with Wichita Public Schools' strategic plan.

Program is awarding grants for creative summer programs to help bridge the K-3 learning gap.

By Bonita Gooch & P.J. Griekspoor
Wichita Reporter

Professionals know that making sure students are on track early in their education is essential for their long term success.

In fact, research shows that a child who can't read on grade level by third grade is four times less likely to graduate by age 19 than a child who does read proficiently by that time.

That's why a new summer program is focusing on third grade proficiency starting with kindergarten students.

"Instead of starting in high school and trying to catch our kids up, this initiative is about starting early," said LaWanda DeShazer, senior program director for Wichita Collective Impact, the program leading the initiative.

Wichita Collective Impact is a three-year initiative funded through a \$2 million gift from Wichita-based

Cargill Protein North America. The effort is led by the Greater Wichita YMCA, United Way of the Plains, USD 259 and the WSU Public Policy Center.

The program's focus is in the 67214 ZIP code, the second poorest ZIP code in Kansas. Last year they awarded grants to fund two one-month summer learning programs, and the YMCA operated a third, all in the 67214 area.

This summer, they're hoping to have more sites and to do so, they're accepting applications for grants of up to \$25,000 to plan and operate a one-month educational program during July 2024.

One-month Summer Programs

Since USD 259 runs its summer program during June, the month-long educational programs under this initiative are designed to continue summer learning with a one-month program in July.

Programming for the summer programs can be fun and creative, but must have an educational component that aligns with the Wichita Public Schools' strategic plan to:



LaWanda DeShazar, senior program director with Wichita Collective impact, greets a young participant at one of the program's 2023 summer educational sites. This year, they hope grants can be used to expand the program to more sites in 67214.

- Boost competencies among kindergartners, first graders, second graders, and third graders using curriculum-based measurements.
- Engage parents in the literacy process.

To make sure all programs align with school standards, potential grant recipients are asked to participate in curriculum-based measurements training.

The programs must be offered for free to the participants.

The deadline for proposals will be noon on Feb. 2 and grantees will be

announced at noon on Feb. 16. An awardees workshop is at 10 a.m. on March 1, and summer programs begin in July.

2023 Summer Programs

Summer 2023 programs were operated by nonprofits in cooperation with St. Mark United Methodist Church and Holy Savior Catholic Church. The third program was operated by the YMCA at The Center, a facility operated by Iasis Christian Center.

DeShazer, who was director of the Y's summer program, says the program

See GRANTS Page 24 →

67214 Stats

The 67214 ZIP Code is the most impoverished in Kansas, with an average adjusted gross income of \$27,906 in 2018. Almost 20% of households have an income below \$10,000 and 39.2% are not currently in the labor force.

Of those age 25 and above, only one in four completed high school and almost 25% of the population does not have health insurance.

Demographically, the population is 43.6% Black or African American and 24.8% is Hispanic.

Fifty percent of young people entering kindergarten in Wichita Public Schools come in without the fundamental reading skills of recognizing letter names or sounds and 48% are not able to regularly recognize numbers or a number of grouped objects.

Time to Vote for 2024 Kansas Black Teachers Hall of Fame

By Bonita Gooch
Editor-in-Chief

The Kansas Black Teachers Hall of Fame, founded in 2017, now has 54 members and in February 2024 a new class of honorees will be inducted.

Members of the hall, a

project of the nonprofit Art That Touches You Heart, are selected through a community-led nomination and voting process - and you can help select the new honorees with your vote.

Many of the original members were legacy educators from the '50s, '60s and '70s, many of

whom started their careers in fairly segregated schools. Now, as reflected by this class of 2023 honorees, a number of the newest members are recent retirees, who, while working in integrated schools, connected well with and inspired African-American students.

Eight teachers were inducted into the Hall-of-Fame.

People are encouraged to nominate (VOTE) three Black teachers who impacted their lives before the Jan. 7 deadline. Votes can be entered at <https://t.ly/tU2WP>.

GRANTS, from Page 23 ↓

hired educators from USD 259 to run the classrooms. In the morning, participants worked on traditional learning, sounds, ABCs, numbers, etc. In the afternoon, the program focused on nontraditional learning.

Some of the nontraditional programming DeShazer mentioned were horticulture, arts and crafts, Music Theater of Wichita, and kids doing music and skits.

There's a pre-test and post-test for all students. The pre-test helps identify a student's strengths and weaknesses and the post-test measures the gains/success of the program.

Collaborative Program

Success for this program will require getting more community organizations and individuals involved. Hence the program name, "Collective Impact."

"No one entity can push

the trajectory on this third-grade reading proficiency," said DeShazer. "So we want as many organizations, as many nonprofits and for-profits on board with us reaching that third-grade proficiency level.

When she was first hired, DeShazer said she went out into the community to see what nonprofits already existed, what work they were doing, and how the program could partner with people already doing the work.

"We've been out there grinding, knocking on doors, emailing people just trying to get people involved," said DeShazer.

Although WCI is looking for organizations that can run full programs, they're also looking for people and organizations that can help support programs. As an example, last year, they funded organizations who taught art, another that came in to read to children, and they

also paid organizations with a building for the use of their facilities.

Capacity-Building Workshops

WCI is conducting a series of three workshops designed to help organizations prepare their grant applications and to help smaller nonprofits working in the community to grow their capacity to deliver services. Organizations who attend all three workshops, even if they don't submit a grant application, will receive a \$300 stipend.

The three workshops will focus on: understanding USD 259 Standards, curriculum-based measurement, and grant writing.

"We want all of our partners to be on the same page, to know the direction we're going," said DeShazer.

For additional info, contact DeShazer at lawanda.deshazer@ymcawichita.org

May Your Days Be Merry & Bright



The Wichita Black Nurses Association

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Disclaimer: This project was supported by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of a financial assistance award totaling \$1,499,999 with 100 percent funded by CMS/HHS.



Our Health Matters: Get Vaccinated Against COVID-19 to Protect Your Loved Ones

With an arsenal of vaccines and treatments now available, the cookouts, celebrations and gatherings are in full swing, but it is important to remember that the coronavirus is still a potential threat, especially for unvaccinated and other vulnerable people.

Vaccination is the most important tool to ensure a safe and healthy summer.

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This increase the Reach grant program is supported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) of the US 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>



HEALTH BRIEFS

People Accidentally Overdosing on Weight Loss Drug

Poison control centers across the US are seeing a steep increase in calls related to semaglutide, an injected medication used for diabetes and weight loss, with some people reporting symptoms related to accidental overdoses.

From January through November, the America's Poison Centers reports nearly 3,000 calls involving semaglutide. In most of the calls, people reported dosing errors.

Some have even needed to be hospitalized for severe nausea, vomiting and stomach pain, but their cases seem to have resolved after they were given intravenous fluids and medications to control nausea.

Semaglutide was approved by the US Food and Drug Administration in 2017. It is sold as Ozempic when used for diabetes and Wegovy when used for weight loss. Even when used as directed by a doctor, people can have stomach and bowel side effects, including nausea, vomiting and constipation.

Trial Testing HIV Vaccine Halted for Poor Results

An HIV vaccine trial dubbed this decade's "last roll of the dice" has stopped vaccinations following disappointing results.

The PrEPVacc prevention study, led by African researchers with support from European scientists, was testing two experimental HIV vaccines.

However, PrEPVacc's leadership says that while there are "no concerns about the safety of the vaccines," they halted the vaccine trial due to its ineffectiveness in preventing HIV.

The failure of the experimental vaccines is a massive blow to the medical community, which has hit countless dead ends since the first HIV vaccine trial began 36 years ago.

DIY Artificial Insemination Kit for \$129 gets FDA Approval

Artificial insemination can cost up to 1,000 and isn't always covered by insurance. Now, startup Mosie Baby has been approved by the Federal Drug Administration for an alternative program that cost \$129.

The Austin-based company announced this month that its DIY kit had become the first at-home kit cleared by the FDA for intravaginal insemination (IVI).

Mosie Baby's kit, which has been on the market since 2015, isn't the same as intrauterine insemination, or IUI, in which sperm is directly inserted into the uterus by a health-care provider. Instead, with IVI, sperm is inserted with a syringe into the vagina; it doesn't go as deep as an IUI and is more akin to what happens during sex.

Menthol cigarettes generate billions of dollars in sales for tobacco companies, which argue a ban would replace regulated sales with illicit trafficking.

CHRISTOPHER SCOTT HABERMANN



Black Leaders Divided on Proposed Menthol Cigarette Ban

Biden White House delays decision on banning menthol cigarettes largely due to pressure from Black leaders

By Bonita Gooch
The Voice Editor-in-Chief

Since 2009, when the Federal Drug Administration banned flavored cigarettes, the Black community has stood in the gap, ensuring menthol cigarettes were the only flavored cigarettes that weren't banned.

Forward 14 years to 2023 and Black leaders remain at the forefront of a consistent movement against banning menthol cigarettes. This month, the Biden administration delayed a decision on banning menthol cigarettes yielding to intense lobbying from tobacco companies, convenience stores and a loose coalition of Black leaders and organizations.

Key Points

- Black leaders lobby against menthol cigarette ban, citing policing concerns.
- Menthol cigarettes marketed to Black community by tobacco industry for decades.
- Biden administration delays decision on ban, sparking rumors of political motivation.

Menthol Cigarettes and the Black community

For cigarette manufacturers and convenience stores, the fight to save menthol cigarettes is clearly about the dollars. However, for Black people it's personal – and yes, it's a little about the money as well.

In 2020, approximately 81% of Black adult smokers used menthol cigarettes, compared to 34% of White smokers. According to the FDA proposal, menthol enhances nicotine's addictiveness.

and the flavor makes the cigarettes "easier" to use, making them a great "starter product" marketed by the industry.

The Black community didn't gravitate towards menthol cigarettes on their own, instead, they were nudged there – not so gently – by the cigarette industry according to Keith Wailoo, author of the book "Pushing Cool: Big Tobacco, Racial Marketing, and the Untold Story of the Menthol Cigarette."

In 1964, when federal regulations barred tobacco companies from advertising to the under-21 market, the industry pivoted aggressively toward marketing to the Black community.

Along the way, they bought the silence of Black media and major Black organizations. Beyond sponsorships like the popular Kool Jazz Concerts, Black media like "Ebony" magazine became dependent on cigarette industry advertising revenue and Black organizations and politicians could count on the industry for large sponsorship contributions.

So, in 2009 when flavored cigarettes were banned, menthol

cigarettes slipped by because of a split in the Congressional Black Caucus, many of whom looked to cigarette manufacturers for campaign donations.

The Black Split Today

The plan to eliminate menthol cigarettes has been years in the making. The Food and Drug Administration formally proposed an official rule last year, saying it was also aimed at reducing health disparities in the Black community.

This time, the Black leaders are more divided on the issue. Very vocal and organized against the ban is Al Sharpton and the National Action Network and a large coalition of Black law enforcement agencies including the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE). They've been joined by the National Newspaper Publishers Association, an organization of more than 200 Black newspapers, of which The Community Voice is a member.

See MENTHOL Page 27 →

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MENTHOL, from Page 26 ↓

Citing the 2017 case of Eric Garner who was killed by NYPD officers for illegally peddling cigarettes on the streets of New York, these organizations have taken a position that banning menthol cigarettes will make Black smokers the targets of aggressive police tactics.

"It is clear that there is no factual basis to assert that a menthol cigarette ban will stop people of color from

smoking," says Dr. Benjamin Chavis, President & CEO of NNPA. "The unintended consequences of such a racially discriminatory ban will set the stage for more negative and more likely counterproductive interactions between law enforcement and people of color."

Some Black leaders, top lawmakers and government officials dispute their position and say that tobacco companies are financing and fueling those fears. A majority of the

Congressional Black Caucus, have dismissed the policing argument. The NAACP has also spoken up against the policing argument.

"What we're seeing now," said Patrice Willoughby, vice president of policy and legislative affairs at the N.A.A.C.P., "is the reaction of a very well-organized industry that has been peddling death to the Black community."

Biden Campaign Concerns

Still, some Black leaders say Biden's delay in

implementing the ban is politically motivated as he heads into a tough re-election year.

Senator Richard J. Durbin, the Democratic majority whip from Illinois, addressed the rumors of political motivations for the delay on the Senate floor on Wednesday, saying concerns that Black people would vote against the president in the next election because of the ban were "greatly exaggerated."

The F.D.A. has said it would like to see the proposal finalized this year, and Michael Felberbaum, an agency spokesman, said on Wednesday that it remained committed to issuing the rule "as expeditiously as possible."

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KC'S 42ND ANNUAL

Kwanzaa Celebration to Focus on Youth

By Bonita Gooch
Editor-in-Chief

For the 42nd year, the National Black United Front – Kansas City, will celebrate all seven days of Kwanzaa with free community gatherings open to the public. This year's theme is "Up You Mighty Youth, You Can Accomplish What You Will!," with many of the daily program activities including youth participants.

"The annual celebration will be held Mon., Dec. 26 through Sun., Dec. 31, at the historic Gem Theater, 1615 E. 18th St., in the 18th & Vine Jazz District. Programming will begin each day promptly at 7 p.m. The African Marketplace, featuring vendors, artisans, crafts-persons and food, will open at 6 p.m.

The final day of Kwanzaa,

Mon., Jan. 1, will be held at the Nefertiti Banquet Hall, 1314 Quindaro Blvd., Kansas City, KS. This program will begin at 3 p.m.

Kwanzaa was created in 1966 by Dr. Maulana Ron Karenga as an African-American and Pan-African holiday that celebrates history, values, family, community and culture.

Kwanzaa means "the first fruits of the harvest" in the Swahili language. By studying ancient and modern African harvest celebrations, Karenga created a holiday that focused on the African-American people as a collective rather than on the individual.

During Kwanzaa the people of the community are called together to reflect on the blessings of the past year and prepare for the future.

The foundation of Kwanzaa is the Nguzo Saba, or seven principles. The principles are unity, self-determination, collective work and responsibility, cooperative economics, purpose, creativity and faith. Each night of Kwanzaa one of the principles is celebrated to remind everyone of its significance in the lives of Black people and the good it can bring to the community.

John Riley will serve as MC each night of the celebration. The schedule for the celebration is as follows:

■ **December 26 – Umoja (Unity)** – The host is the Esoke Cultural Arts Center, Yaminah Muhamma (African Dance).

■ **December 27 - Kujichagulia (Self-Determination)** – The host is Art In Motion, Danny Diallo Hinds (African Dance



The kinara is lit each day at the beginning of Kwanzaa celebration at the Gem Theater.

& Storytelling).

■ **December 28 – Ujima (Collective Work and Responsibility)** – The host is the Nia Project, Terri Barnes (Youth debate on reparations).

■ **December 29 – Ujamaa (Cooperative Economics)** – The host is Buy Black Empowerment Initiative, Kathy Persley.

■ **December 30 – Nia**

(Purpose) – The host is the A-Flat Youth Orchestra, Darryl Chamberlain (Musical presentation).

■ **December 31 – Kuumba (Creativity)** – The host is the American Jazz Museum.

■ **January 1 – Imani (Faith)** – The Kwanzaa Feast at the Nefertiti Banquet Hall (everyone is asked to bring a dish for the feast).

Wichita Kwanzaa Celebration Dec. 26

Wichita residents wanting to make celebrating Kwanzaa part of their holiday season can join the Wichita African American Council of Elders at their annual celebration on Tues., Dec. 26, 2 - 4 p.m. at The Center, 1914 E. 11th. There will be music, food, art, a gift for the kids, and enstoolment of new elders.

All Kwanzaa events are free and open to the public. For more info, call **816-645-7303**.

Season's Greetings
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Trailblazing TV Actress Ellen Holly Passes Away at Age 92

Ellen Holly, the pioneering actress who became the first Black person to star as lead of a daytime show, has passed away at age of 92 in Bronx, NY.

In September 1968, Holly wrote to The New York Times detailing her challenges in landing roles for “a Black actress” due to her light skin. A section of her extensive six-page letter was published in an op-ed titled “How Black Do You Have to Be?”

This caught the attention of “One Life to Live” creator Agnes Nixon, who offered her a groundbreaking one-year contract for \$300 a week to play Carla Benari, a character who passed as a White woman.

She portrayed this role until 1980 and later returned to reprise her character from 1983 to 1985.



Ellen Holly

Black Actors Receive Nods for Golden Globes

The 81st annual Golden Globe nominations have been revealed.

Brooks, who reprises the role of Sofia in the new “The Color Purple” film after earning a Tony Nomination for the role in 2016, received a nomination for Best Performance by an Actress in a Supporting Role in Any Motion Picture. Fantasia Barrino, who takes on the role of Celie in the film (also reprising the role she took on in the Broadway show’s original run) earned a nomination for Best Performance by an Actress in a Motion Picture – Musical or Comedy.

Domingo was nominated for his role as gay Black American Bayard Rustin in the Netflix film “Rustin.” He is not competing against Wright who received his nomination for Best Performance by a Male Actor in a Motion



Fantasia

Picture – Musical or Comedy, for his role in “American Fiction.” Domingo was nominated in the Drama Category.

“The Color Purple, the story of Black Americans living in the early 1900s, was left out of the race for best movie musical or comedy. However, “American Fiction,” which confronts our culture’s obsession with reducing people to outrageous stereotypes,” did receive a Best Picture nom.

“Abbott Elementary” star Quinta Brunson was nominated for Best Performance by an Actress in a Television Series, Musical or Comedy

CBS will air the three-hour award show live on Sun., Jan. 7.



Dave Chappelle

network. “Leave the World Behind,” is a star-studded post-apocalyptic thriller adapted from a 2020 novel of the same name. The film stars a whole host of big-name on-screen celebrities, including Julia Roberts, Mahershala Ali, Ethan Hawke and Kevin Bacon. The story follows two families as they navigate life when a blackout becomes a major crisis.

Debuting this week is “Kevin Hart and Chris Rock Headlines Only.” In this 1 hr and 22 min documentary, the comics provide a behind-the-scenes look at their tour, as they talk about their early lives, their triumphs and their brotherhood.

Controversial comedian Dave Chappelle is back with a comedy special launching globally on Netflix, Dec. 31. The upcoming event, whose title has not yet been released, will mark Chappelle’s seventh special and the first in three years following his controversial performance in “The Closer,” when he made remarks that many people found transphobic.

Netflix “So Black” This December

If you’re looking for some cultural viewing this month, turn to Netflix.

Barack and Michelle Obama’s first non-fiction release through their Higher Ground Production company agreement with Netflix debuted this past weekend as the number one film on the streaming

Happy Holidays!

As we approach the holiday season, we want to take a moment to express our heartfelt thanks to everyone who has supported us this year and send some holiday cheer your way.

From the heart of our stage to your homes, we wish you and your loved ones a joyous holiday season wrapped in love, laughter, and the magic of the arts.

Looking ahead, may the coming year unfold with new opportunities for a wealth of creative possibilities.

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Woman Arrested For Pouring Gasoline On King's Birth Home

According to a report WSB-TV, an Atlanta woman was arrested after she was seen pouring gasoline all over the historic birth home of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Police were called to the property and found two off-duty NYPD officers holding the woman for subsequent arrest.

A witness captured video of the desecration and uploaded it to social media.

26-year-old Laneisha Shantrice Henderson was arrested and charged with criminal attempt arson and criminal attempt interference with government property. For those who don't know, the MLK house is a protected piece of history and damage done comes with a much greater consequence than simple vandalism.

Two tourists from Utah of all places saw the woman and made an attempt to stop her until the off-duty officers intervened.

Atlanta Fire Department Battalion Chief Jerry DeBerry said that if not for the bravery of witnesses, the property could have burned down in "a matter of seconds".

Thank God for the people who were willing to intervene.

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Tue., Dec. 19, 6:30 - 7 pm: Family Pajama Storytime, Angelou Library, 3051 E. 21st St. Join us for stories and songs before bedtime. Don't forget to dress in your jammies and bring along your favorite stuffed toy for snuggles and fun! For children ages 3-8 and their families. FREE

Wed. Dec 20, 6-8 pm: Christmas Fun Night. The Center, 1914 E 11th. Join us for an evening of games, music, food, prizes and Santa.

Thu., Dec. 21, 6:30-10:45 pm: Candlelight: Holiday Special Featuring "The Nutcracker" & More, Kansas Aviation Museum, 3350 S. George Washington Blvd. Candlelight concerts bring the magic of a live, multi-sensory musical experience to awe-inspiring locations like never seen before in Wichita. Get your tickets now to discover music inspired by the winter and holiday spirit at the Kansas Aviation Museum under the gentle glow of candlelight. COST \$31.18 <https://feverup.com/m/141390>

Fri., Dec. 29, 6:30 pm: Christmas Color 'N Sip, Simply Sangria, 243 N. Cleveland. A festive evening of creativity and relaxation. Get into the holiday spirit and unleash your artistic side as we provide you with coloring materials and a variety of Christmas-themed designs. COST \$10

Tue., Jan. 2, 7 pm: Wichita's Local Jazz Legends Live, Walker's Jazz Lounge, 252 N. Mosley. Tribute to the heart and soul of Wichita's jazz scene. It's an evening of homegrown talent and timeless tunes, as local artists take the stage at Walker's Jazz Lounge. Join us for an unforgettable celebration of the city's jazz legacy. FREE

Sat., Jan. 6, 2 pm: Draw Yourself Calm, The Center, 1914 E 11th St. Join us for a relaxing and creative event. Take a break from your busy life and immerse yourself in the therapeutic power of art. This in-person event is the perfect opportunity to unwind and express yourself through drawing. No experience is necessary - just bring your imagination and an open mind. COST \$30 <https://bit.ly/3GHnR28>

Sat., Jan. 13, 8 pm & Sun, Jan. 14, 2 pm & 7 pm: "Here's Little Richard: The Architect of Rock n' Roll," a Live Tribute by Forum Theatre, Wilke Center, 330 N. Broadway. Singer and songwriter Little Richard is a celebrated artist known for his charismatic showmanship and dynamic music. Hear in his own words and music how he fought to become the architect of rock and roll. COST \$30+ <https://bit.ly/3uV6Qz5>

KANSAS CITY

Fri., Dec. 22, 9 am: Unity Brunch - Cafe Reflections, 7016 Troost. Annual Unity Brunch features photos with Santa, free brunch, and toys for the whole family. Register at <https://bit.ly/40T4HQm> FREE

Sat., Dec. 23, 7 - 10 pm: Winter Wonderland Fashion Show, Klymax Restaurant & Lounge, 4242 Indiana Ave. Join us for a fabulous and glamorous fashion extravaganza. Get ready to witness the hottest winter trends on the runway. COST \$20+ <https://bit.ly/489bhEL>

Thu., Dec. 28, 4 - 7 pm: Oasis - KC's Home for Young Black Professionals, Privee Restaurant & Lounge, 700 Southwest Blvd. Presented by Black Excellence KC, Brothers Liberating Our Communities, Professional Women of Color, and The Houses Built By Love, Inc. FREE Reserve spot: <https://bit.ly/3RgguDO>

Sat., Dec. 30, 9 pm: Capricorn VS Everybody Gold & Black Party. Top Tier Venue, 4701 Blue Ridge Blvd. Dance the night away and immerse yourself in a night of glitz and glamor. Dress to impress in your finest gold and black attire and show off your unique style. COST \$10 <https://bit.ly/49QLN0w>

NEW YEAR'S EVE EVENTS WICHITA

Sun., Dec. 31, 8 pm: New Year's Eve Scholarship Benefit Party, Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc. Gamma Upsilon, The Winslet, 1550 N. Lindberg Circle. Enjoy live music by DJ Rickey and vocalist Kimberly Paige. Tickets include dinner, balloon drop and party favors. COST \$125 - contact sellers Curtis Whitten (316) 518-8074; Harry Willis (316) 992-1420; Dana McElrath (316) 305-2692; Joe Patrick (316) 210-6388.

Sun. Dec. 31, 10 pm - 12:05 am: 2024 New Year's Eve Bash. The Center, 1914 E. 11th. Open gym, basketball, skating, games, music, food and more. FREE

KANSAS CITY

Sun., Dec. 31, 8 pm: New Year's Artist Appreciation, Klymax Restaurant & Lounge, 4242 Indiana Ave.. Get ready to groove to their incredible performances and enjoy a night filled with music, dance, and art. COST \$30+ <https://bit.ly/3td4ZoI>

Sun., Dec. 31, 6pm: Omega Psi Phi New Year's Eve Gala, Hilton Garden Inn, 196 E Jackson, Independence, MO. Bring the New Year with the brother of Omega Psi Phi and the sisters of Delta Sigma Theta. A night filled with live music, delicious food and a festive atmosphere. COST \$125 <https://bit.ly/3NndzIk>

Sun. Dec 31, 6 pm: Raise Your Glass to a Night of Class, Embassy Suites Airport, 7640 NW Tiffany Springs Pkwy. Featuring the sounds of Norman Liggins Band along with Dj Fresh & Dj Tee Styleez., COS \$75+ <https://bit.ly/47UOcWF>

Sun., Dec. 31, 6 pm: New Year's Eve Gala, Embassy Suites by Hilton, 7640 Northwest Tiffany Springs Pkwy. Night of fun, laughter, and dancing, delicious food, sip on refreshing drinks, and groove to the beats of our live DJ Fresh & DJ Tee Styleez. COST \$75+ <https://bit.ly/4abVDu7>

Sun., Dec. 31, 9 pm: Black Party XIX, New Year's Eve Kansas City 2023, The Truman, 601 E Truman Rd. DJs, dancing, party favors, open format / Top 40, all-inclusive, unlimited premium cocktails, upgraded VIP liquor options. COST \$75+ <https://bit.ly/3taeRzF>

Sun , Dec 31, 9 pm: New Year's Eve Party, Uptown Lounge KC, 3400 Main St. Your ticket includes live entertainment, a complimentary welcome cocktail, party favors, and a champagne toast at midnight. COST:\$50 per person. <https://bit.ly/47WB7vN>

Sun , Dec 31, 8 pm: New Years Eve 2024, Nye 24' Champagne Toast & Balloon Drop At Midnight. Atrium at the American Jazz Museum, 1616 E 18th. COST: \$25 <https://bit.ly/3GIEdYm>

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. EVENTS MANHATTAN

Sat., Jan. 13, 2-4 pm: Spirit of MLK Jr. Award, Manhattan Arts Center, 1520 Poyntz Ave. Lets celebrate writers and artists who entered our Annual Arts and Writing contest. Spirit of MLK Jr. Award, plus many more things to see, hear and enjoy.

Mon, Jan. 22, 5:30 - 7 pm: 20th Annual Diversity Student Leader Reception, Student Union Wildcat Chamber. The 2024 reception will feature Corey Williamson, executive director of the K-State Student Union and leader of the Truth, Racial Healing & Transformation Framework Action Team at K-State. Contact Dr. Zelia Wiley, 785-532-5793.

Tue., Jan. 23, 6 - 8 pm: "Brother Outsider" Film Screening, K-State Multicultural Center - Oneok Room. This documentary tells the story of Bayard Rustin, the African American civil rights activist, notable for his activism for racial equality, gay rights, socialist issues and organizing the 1963 March on Washington.

Thu., Jan. 25, 11:30 am - 1 pm: MLK Presidential Lecture, K-State Alumni Center Ballroom. MLK Observance Week keynote speaker is Dr. Juan Gilbert, University of Florida. COST \$25. Must register. Contact Mirta Chavez, 785-532-6276,

Fri., Jan. 26, 1:30 pm: Laying of the Wreaths and Candlelight Ceremony, K-State Union Courtyard & Martin Luther King Jr. Bust. The annual ceremony marks the end of our MLK Jr. week. Campus and Manhattan community are invited. The program will begin with the candlelight ceremony and end at the MLK bust in front of Ahearn Field House.

WICHITA

Sat., Jan. 13, 11:30 am - 1 pm: MLK Jr. Commemoration & Awards Luncheon, Wichita State University, Rhatigan Student Center - Beggs Ballroom, 1845 Fairmount. The event, sponsored by Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity will feature a luncheon and recognize individuals and organizations that have made significant contributions to the community. COST \$50 <https://bit.ly/3NpSGfM>

Mon., Jan. 15, noon: Greater Wichita Ministerial League 2024 MLK Worship Celebration - "Shifting the Cultural Climate," WSU Metroplex, 5015 E 29th St. Guest speaker is Dr. Dorinda Clark-Cole, Grammy-winning gospel singer with The Clark Sisters. FREE

Mon., Jan. 15, 2 - 4 pm: Luncheon for 2024 GWML Dr. MLK Celebration, WSU Metroplex, 5015 East 29th St. Keynote speaker Dr. Brian Black, Global Director of DEI with Hexion Inc. Commemorate Dr. MLK's inspiring message of equality, justice, and peace. COST \$40+ <https://bit.ly/3GFOzZ8>

KANSAS CITY

Fri., Jan. 12, 11 am - 1 pm: 2024 Metropolitan Community College Chancellor's MLK Jr. Scholarship Luncheon, Loews Kansas City Hotel, 1515 Wyandotte. Keynote speaker Martin Luther King III with Lisa Ginter, CEO of Community America Credit Union. The conversation will center on King's continuation of his family's legacy and work for equality, the current state of the American civil rights movement, and what business and civic leaders in the Greater Kansas City Area can do to be part of The Dream. COST \$200 <https://bit.ly/3uQv1hU>

HUTCHUNSON

Mon., Jan. 15, 9 am: MLK Jr. Day of Service, Stringer Fine Arts Center, 640-698 E. 11th St. Embrace the spirit of MLK Jr. by participating in a day of service that echoes his vision of unity and compassion.

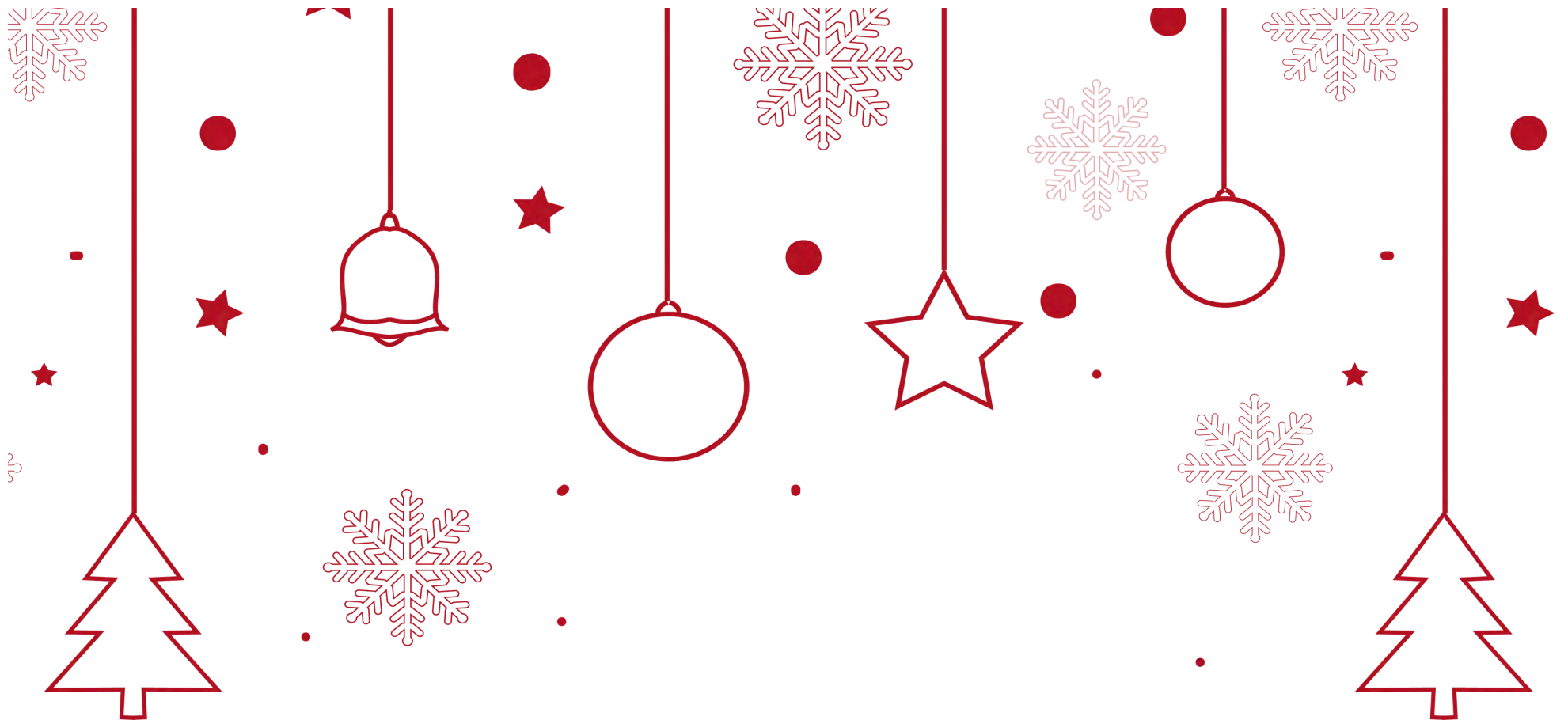
TOPEKA

Tue., Jan. 16, 6 - 8 pm: MLK Jr. Celebration, Washburn University Memorial Union, Washburn Rooms A and B, 1700 SW College Ave. Dessert will be served and keynote speaker is Amri B. Johnson, a Topeka-born author and international consultant on inclusion.



Are You Sponsoring a King Holiday Event?
Submit Your King Holiday Events:
 Community, church, education or cultural events.

Submit Early. We're building our calendar coverage now online. We'll also have a complete listing of all submitted King events in our Jan. 5 issue. Deadline for submissions is Dec. 31. Submit your events via our online calendar and/or email them to Guillory@tcvpub.com



MERRY CHRISTMAS!



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**It has been a pleasure serving you in 2023!!
Wishing you a blessed holiday and prosperous 2024.**

