

# THE VOICE

A Trusted Voice From The Community's Perspective



## VIBRANT SENIORS

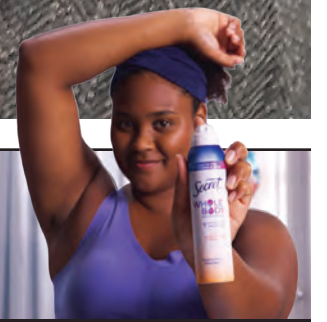
CELEBRATING THE SPIRIT OF ACTIVE AGING

A SPECIAL SECTION INSIDE



**David & Lynn Gilkey**  
King honorees and programs  
Across Kansas and Kansas City

**Whole Body Deodorant**  
What you should know about  
thisRapidly expanding product line  
Page 10



Volume 32, No. 2 · [communityvoiceks.com](http://communityvoiceks.com) · Friday, January 24, 2025

PRSRRT STD  
US POSTAGE PAID  
WICHITA KS  
PERMIT NO. 560

Change Service Requested

The Community Voice  
P.O. Box 20804  
Wichita, KS 67208

# THE VOICE

VOLUME 32, NUMBER 2  
FRIDAY, JANUARY 24, 2025

## LOOKING AHEAD

### CONTACT US



**Sign Up for Our Weekly Newsletter:** If you don't have time to stop by the website on a regular basis, sign up for our weekly newsletter. Once a week, we'll send you a newsletter summarizing our top five stories of the week.

**Stop Looking for a Print Edition of The Community Voice:** You can read editions of The Community

Voice on our website. Not just current and recent issues. You can read issues dating back several years. Go to [www.CommunityVoiceKS.com](http://www.CommunityVoiceKS.com), click on "e-editions." Plus, our archive is searchable. If there's a particular story you're looking for, just enter a defining word for the story in the search box.

### If You're Not Reading Us Online...

YOU'RE MISSING A LOT

Here is a story we've published.....

**Candidates Promised a Bigger Child Tax Credit**  
*Will that actually happen?*

### WHERE CAN YOU FIND THE VOICE?



ON YOUR PHONE  
[COMMUNITYVOICEKS.COM](http://COMMUNITYVOICEKS.COM)

# Trump Promises 'Restitution' To 'Victims' Of DEI 'Discrimination'

By Patrick Forrest  
Chicago Crusader

*(In the category of ICYMI, we're sharing a portion of the Nov. 14, 2024, editorial by Patrick Forrest, The Crusader Newspaper Group)*

Do y'all remember during Donald Trump's campaign when the president-elect spent significant time faking solidarity with Black people by likening the systemic racism we face in the justice system to his own legal problems, which he considered to be unjust prosecutions by "racist" Black prosecutors? Remember how he went on about how he's the best president for keeping Black people employed and that if Vice President Kamala Harris ascended to the White House, all of our "Black jobs" would go to illegal immigrants?

Well, it has barely been a full



Donald Trump

week since Trump won the election, and already he's doubling down on his promise to wipe the very concept of diversity, equity and inclusion — initiatives that help qualified Black people receive opportunities we wouldn't receive otherwise in industries that are traditionally dominated by White men (\*gestures widely towards every major industry in the nation\*) — and he's out here promising reparations for White people who have been "victims" of DEI.

This week, Trump dropped

a couple of video messages detailing his plans for his second term as president, which include directing the Dept. of Justice to go after DEI and "pursue federal civil rights cases against schools that continue to engage in racial discrimination and schools that persist in explicit unlawful discrimination under the guise of equity." He also said that schools engaging in DEI initiatives would have their endowments taxed and he proposed that a "portion of the seized funds will then be used as restitution for victims of these illegal and unjust policies, policies that hurt our country so badly."

It's just wild, man. It's such an uphill battle for Black people to convince White America that we've ever been "victims" of systemic racism, despite all of the data that backs the assertion. No such data exists that

indicates White people are discriminated against in America, which is why White conservatives rely on the many myths surrounding affirmative action and DEI — namely that they offer White people's positions to undereducated and underqualified non-White people — to make their case for anti-white discrimination. All White people have to do is cry about largely fictitious anti-whiteness and the president-elect is essentially offering them the reparations that have been denied to Black people after two-and-a-half centuries of slavery and another century of legally-sanctioned second-class citizenship limited (or eliminated) Black access to the same educational resources and hiring practices that White men have enjoyed throughout American history.

*This article first appeared on Crusader.com*

### Behind the Cartoon:

**Trump Dogg**  
By Clay Jones  
Cartoonist

I'm going to be honest with you. I'm not that up on Snoop Dogg. I don't know his music. But I am very aware of Snoop Dogg because I can't get away from the guy. He's everywhere.

Snoop Dogg has appeared in commercials for T-Mobile, Corona, Burger King, Dunkin' Donuts, General Car Insurance, Skechers, Hot Pockets, Old Navy, Pepsi, Wonderful Pistachios, Tostitos, SodaStream, and one



that is the most appropriate, King Size Rolling Papers.

I think Snoop appears where the money is,

which is why after criticizing Donald Trump for years, he's now performing for him.

In 2017, the cover for a Snoop Dogg EP shows him holding a gun while standing over a dead body draped in an American flag, and the body has a toe tag reading "Trump."

In a music video in 2017, Snoop Dogg is shooting a clown dressed as Trump.

Snoop Dogg performed at a pre-inauguration party for Trump called the Crypto Ball and performed in front of Trump. Snoop is just another sell-out surrendering to Trump and the oligarchs.

**THE COMMUNITY VOICE**  
PO Box 20804 | Wichita, KS 67214  
316.681.1155 | ISSN 1090-3852  
[www.communityvoiceks.com](http://www.communityvoiceks.com)

The contents of each issue of The Community Voice are copyrighted. Articles appearing in The Community Voice may not be reproduced without written permission of the Editor. All rights reserved.

**ADVERTISING RATES:**  
Email: [Hill@tcvpub.com](mailto:Hill@tcvpub.com)

**EDITORIAL:** Readers with story or photo ideas, tips, criticisms or suggestions on coverage are urged to contact the Editor. All submissions to the paper, letters and columns are subject to editing for length, style, taste and legal considerations.

**CORRECTIONS:** The Community Voice strives for accuracy and fairness. Readers who believe a story or headline is inaccurate or misleading should contact the Editor.

**SUBSCRIPTIONS:** Published BiWeekly  
\$27.95/yr. Sedgwick County  
\$35.95/yr. Outside Sedgwick County  
\$73.99/yr. Outside Kansas

**CONTACTS:**  
**Editor-in-Chief/Press Releases**  
Bonita Gooch  
[press@tcvpub.com](mailto:press@tcvpub.com)  
Wichita | [press@tcvpub.com](mailto:press@tcvpub.com)  
KC | [cvoicekc@tcvpub.com](mailto:cvoicekc@tcvpub.com)

**Press Releases:** [press@tcvpub.com](mailto:press@tcvpub.com)  
**Advertising:** [adcopy@tcvpub.com](mailto:adcopy@tcvpub.com)

**Contributing Writers:**  
Thomas White | [Kansas City](mailto:Kansas City)  
[twhite@tcvpub.com](mailto:twhite@tcvpub.com)

**Advertising Sales:**  
Cornell Hill | [hill@tcvpub.com](mailto:hill@tcvpub.com)

**Office Administration:**  
Elaine Guillory | [guillory@tcvpub.com](mailto:guillory@tcvpub.com)

# Understanding Federal DEIA Programs

Beyond the myths, here's what Federal DEIA programs actually do.

Donald Trump has issued a new memorandum to carry out his Inauguration Day executive order eliminating federal DEIA programs, by placing DEI employees on federal leave

DEIA stands for diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility, and Trump's action rescinds President Biden's executive order from 2021, which sought to make the federal government "a model" for effective DEIA.

Trump's order inaccurately describes DEIA as "radical," "illegal," and "immoral discrimination." So let's look at what the federal government's DEI programs actually do.

**Federal DEI programs set goals in eight different areas.**

**Data collection**, to give us a better understanding of who is and isn't in the federal workforce

**Paid Internships**, which provide valuable opportunities and experience for people from underserved communities

**Recruitment**, so that the government



doesn't just hire the usual suspects but posts job announcements in places where other people can see them,

**Professional development**, so that once people are hired they can continue to expand their skills and become better workers,

**Fair treatment of people with disabilities**, so that they can get a job and find appropriate accommodations,

**LGBT fairness**, so that spouses and

families of LGBT employees get the same benefits as other families do,

**Pay equity**, to review government policies, hiring, and salaries to make sure that women and people of color aren't being paid less to do the same jobs, and

**Opportunities for formerly incarcerated individuals**, to review barriers so that qualified job applicants who have served their time get a fair shot to get a job.

These are not radical, illegal, or immoral ideas. These are calls to the highest principles of America, with the stated goal that "all employees are treated with dignity and respect."

What DEI policies do is acknowledge our country's history of bias and discrimination in a number of areas to create a fairer and more inclusive workplace that benefits everyone. Thanks to DEIA, Black people are overrepresented in the federal government because historically that was the one place where we did not face employment discrimination.

Trump also revoked Executive Order 11246 on affirmative action, which has been in place since 1965 in the civil rights era.

**Check Out These Other Trump Related Stories Online**

Trump Outlines America First Agenda: What It Means for Black Americans

Fact Focus: A Look at False and Misleading Claims Trump Made at Inaugural Events

Trump Administration directs All Federal Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Staff to be Put on Leave



## Kansas Black Legislative Day at the Statehouse 2025

Engage with experts on critical issues and interact directly with legislators.

**Monday, February 17, 2025**  
10:00 AM - 2:00 PM (lunch provided)  
Kansas Statehouse, Topeka, KS.



Registration Required:  
[www.kansasblc.org/blackagenda](http://www.kansasblc.org/blackagenda)





## 29th & Grove Cancer Testing to Receive State & Local Funds

The Sedgwick County Commission has approved an agreement with the state that will release \$1.5 million for health testing, while the Wichita City Council voted to provide \$125,000 in local match funding.

**By Celia Hack**  
KMUW

Sedgwick County and the City of Wichita have passed several measures to finally begin unlocking \$2.5 million the state of Kansas made available last year for health screenings for residents living above groundwater contamination in Northeast Wichita.

On Jan. 22, the Sedgwick County Commission signed onto an agreement with the Kansas Dept. of Health and Environment (KDHE) that will release \$1.5 million in state funds for cancer screening.

"This is a step forward," said Dr. Elizabeth Ablah, professor and vice chair in the Dept. of Population Health at the University of Kansas School of Medicine-Wichita. "I think it has a load of opportunities to get community members engaged again, in feeling like they're

being heard and they're being taken seriously, that their concerns are actually a problem."

Another \$1 million from the state is available if the county, city or private donors can provide \$1 million in matching funds. On Jan. 21, Wichita approved a portion of that match: \$125,000.

"We've heard a lot of terrible stories from the community about what they have experienced, what their family has experienced," said Councilman Brandon Johnson, who represents the impacted area.

"So I feel good about ... moving from talk to action."

The Kansas Legislature made the state dollars available in June 2024 following public outcry about a toxic chemical spill near 29th Street and Grove that runs under several historically Black neighborhoods. Union Pacific Railroad contaminated the groundwater

with a carcinogenic chemical known as trichloroethylene in the 1970s or 1980s, though many residents first learned about it in 2022.

A health study later found high rates of liver cancer in the area.

Since the state dollars became available, representatives of the city, county, state, local health clinics and the Kansas Health Foundation have been locked in conversation – some of them contentious – about how the funds could be used.

Over the protests of some lawmakers, Johnson and County Commissioner Ryan Baty wanted assurance that the dollars could be used to buy medical equipment such as MRI machines to carry out the testing. Johnson and Baty said they recently received that assurance, triggering the two bodies' votes this week.

See **CANCER TESTING**,  
Page 16 →

## Wichita Elected Officials Get in 'Heated Argument' in Topeka

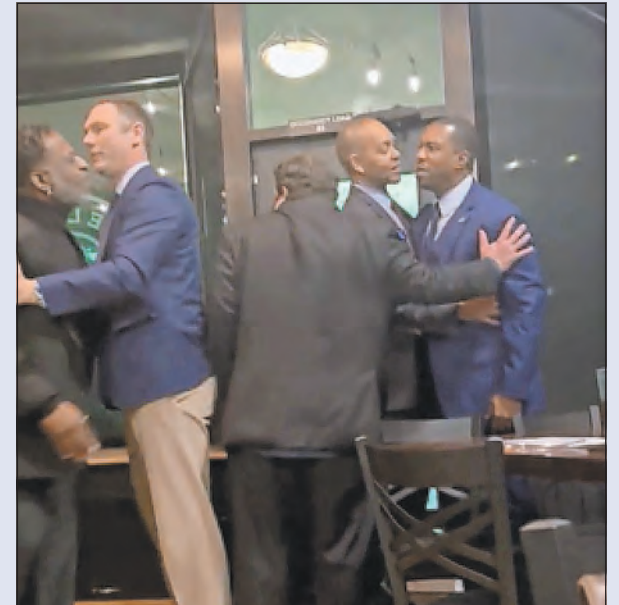
**By Bonita Gooch**  
The Voice Editor-in-Chief

Differences between Wichita Councilman Brandon Johnson and State Rep. Ford Carr escalated to the point that other Wichita leaders had to physically keep them apart. Caught on video, that's been picked up by several television stations and THE VOICE, it's clear the men were able to hold back the blows, but not the explosive-filled, derogatory name calling.

The confrontation occurred at a restaurant across from the State Capitol. Johnson, who is on his second four-year term on the Wichita City Council, represents core Northeast Wichita. He and other council members were in Topeka for a meeting to share their policy positions and concerns with members of the Kansas Legislature, who are only weeks into their 2025 session.

Johnson and Carr were both at a reception for Wichita elected officials that included members of the legislature who represent Wichita and Sedgwick County. Carr, who represents core Northeast Wichita in the Kansas House, was invited to attend.

The good news is the disagreement did not rise to the level of fists flying, but state Rep. Henry Helgerson ended up on the worst end of the argument when he was pushed out of the way by Carr. That push sent



Screen shot from video provided of the altercation shows KS Rep Ford Carr (L) being held back by Sedgwick County Commissioner Ryan Baty and Wichita City Commissioner Brandon Johnson being held back by Wichita Regional Chamber of Commerce CEO John Rolfe. Between them is Wichita City Councilmember Mike Hoheisel. You can see the video on our website at <https://bit.ly/4aA9IHB>



Brandon Johnson



Ford Carr

Helgerson tumbling back over a table, up against a wall, and down on his rear end.

Carr says he's apologized many times to Helgerson and says, in the moment, he didn't see who it was that was approaching him

because he was focused on Johnson.

### WHAT HAPPENED

Carr, Johnson, Helgerson, and several other elected officials

See **ARGUMENT**,  
Page 16 →

# Wichita Public Schools Schedule Open Houses on New Bond Issue

**By Voice Media Service**

Wichita Public Schools is inviting the community to a series of open house sessions for the public to learn more and ask questions ahead of next month's school bond vote.

Wichita Public Schools has placed a zero-tax-rate-change bond issue on the Feb. 25 ballot, which is focused on addressing infrastructure and educational needs that will accommodate teaching and learning methods and help improve overall student performance across the district.

The district invites the community to learn more and ask questions at any of the open houses planned from January 30 to February 13.

Open houses will be held

from 5 - 7 p.m. at each of the following locations:

**January 30**

- Seltzer Elementary - 11660 E Lincoln St.

**February 10**

- Isley Elementary - 5256 N Woodlawn Blvd., Bel Aire
- L'Ouverture Elementary - 1539 N Ohio Ave.

**February 11**

- Pleasant Valley Elementary - 2000 West 29th St. N.
- Truesdell Middle School - 2464 S Glenn Ave.

**February 12**

- Wilbur Middle School - 340 N Tyler Rd.
- Woodland Elementary - 1705 Salina Ave.

**February 13**

- Chisholm Trail Elementary - 6015 Independence St., Park City
- OK Elementary - 1607 N West St.

USD 259 released the following statement about the bond issue:

With more than 80 school buildings, many over 60 years old, the district seeks to update facilities and provide students with tools for success in a rapidly changing world. The bond issue focuses on providing funding for essential upgrades, including roofs, windows, heating and cooling systems, electrical, and plumbing, and improved accessibility for students with disabilities. Safety and security enhancements, along with updates to classrooms, labs, and career



training programs, are also priorities.

This zero-rate-change proposal will not change the district's current bond mill levy

- it would stay at the same level as it is today. By retiring outdated and inefficient buildings, WPS will consolidate resources, reduce operational

costs and reinvest in long-term facility needs across the district. This comprehensive approach, guided by community input and expert analysis, emphasizes efficiency while protecting taxpayers' \$5 billion investment in the district's buildings.

**Key projects include:**

- New and updated infrastructure systems.
- Enhanced safety and security measures.
- New and renovated classrooms that accommodate up-to-date teaching and learning methods.
- Accessibility improvements.
- A new construction trades FutureReady center to provide up-to-date career training and early childhood education center.

By addressing these needs now, WPS aims to prevent costly future repairs and ensure updated learning environments for all students.

## Care doesn't have to wait for open enrollment



**PACE is available year-round!**

**Call 316-830-5921 (TTY: 800-766-3777) to speak with a person from our local center today.**

**For more information about PACE services and benefits, visit [AscensionLiving.org/HOPE](https://AscensionLiving.org/HOPE)**



**HOPE**

*Participants must be at least 55 years old and live in Sedgwick County. All PACE participants agree to receive all services other than emergency services from HOPE staff and its network of providers, and may be fully and personally liable for the costs of unauthorized or out-of-network services.*



### Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE) benefits and services highlights

- No bills, co-pays or deductibles for covered services
- Door-to-door transportation with a familiar face
- Social work/care management and home health included
- Medication and medical equipment/supplies fully covered and delivered to your home
- Day center and activities
- A personalized plan to help you with your symptoms and to help you reach your goals

## ARISE King Breakfast Honors Six

The ARISE Dr Martin Luther King Jr Spirit Of Unity, Heroes, and Sheroes Breakfast was held Jan. 20 in the Beggs Ballroom at Wichita State University, and honored 12 individuals. While 11 were local heroes, one is a citizen of the world with strong Kansas roots.

Receiving the Sankofa Preserving The Past, Perpetuating A Bright Future were philanthropists Anne Garvey and local businessman Robert Boewe.

Jubilee Bedrock Of Faith Serving Celebrating Community were local community standouts Frankie Perkins and Frankie Kirkendoll.

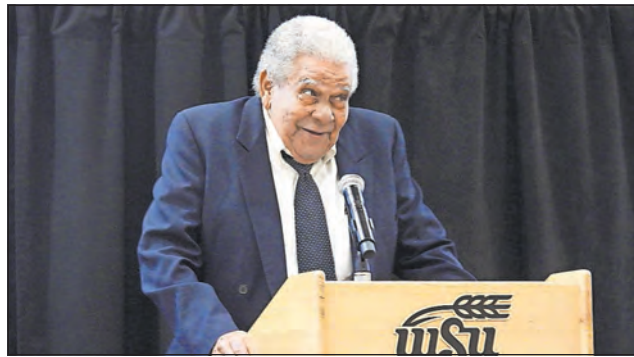
Two individuals received special recognition – the Sojourner Truth Modeling the Power of One Awards. Wichita native and internationally acclaimed architect Charles McAfee was one honoree. The other was director, author and filmmaker David Parks. Parks, the son of Gordon Parks, contributed significantly to students at Gordon



The Community Voice was in the house. Long-time Voice Account Executive Cornell Hill was in attendance with papers in hand.

Parks Elementary being invited to and participating in "I Needed Paris," a film that shows a group of students retracing the steps of the legendary photographer Gordon Parks in Paris capturing fashion, portraits and street photography.

In addition to a great breakfast by Jodee B Catering, the event included selections by ARISE and was MCed by Angela Smith of KWCH TV.



David Parks was on hand to receive his Power of One recognition from ARISE. Parks, the son of Gordon Parks, as well as the ARISE Ensemble, contributed significantly to a group of students from Gordon Parks elementary going to Paris last summer to be a part of the filming of "I Needed Paris."



Philanthropist Ann Garvey (center) is presented her award from ARISE member Prisca Barnes and ARISE president Gerald Norwood.



Internationally recognized architect Charles McAfee was also recognized with a Power of One Award. He's joined here in a photo with his Kappa Alpha Psi Brothers.



Members of Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority gathered for a photo with ARISE honoree Cornell Hill

## ARISE Members Heading to Paris for Performance

By Voice News Service

Members of ARISE, Wichita's spiritual ensemble, are heading to Paris next week for a special performance. They've received invitations to perform at the Concord Theatre, one of Paris' most renowned venues, as well as during the Villes des

Musiques du Monde, or World Music Festival.

Now in its 28th year, the month-long festival held in and around Paris aims to foster cultural diversity and to connect audiences with a wide array of traditional and modern music genres from around the world.

Last year, ARISE members Prisca Barnes, Sheila Kinnard, Sharon Cranford, and LaTonia Kennedy had the opportunity to travel to Paris with students from Gordon Parks Academy as part of an arts program. While there, they had the honor of performing for a group that included staff from the American Embassy, which helped lead to the group's invitation to participate at the World Music Festival.

The group will depart January 3 and return February 5.

ARISE was founded in 1989 by Josephine "Jo" Brown, now 95,



who will not be joining the group on this trip. Brown established the ensemble with the mission of preserving and promoting spirituals, a genre that blends Christianity with the African American experience of slavery. Although mostly comprised of retirees, the group is open to all ages and includes white as well as black members.

Over the years, ARISE has performed for schools, churches, civic groups, and various organizations. In November, the group participated in an event in

Topeka featuring a descendant of abolitionist and former slave Frederick Douglass. In 2023, they performed in Washington, D.C., singing "One Nation, One Dream," written by member Cherrie Dennis Baldon.

The Paris trip will mark the ensemble's first international performance, adding to a busy schedule. While there will be some time for sightseeing, ARISE President Gerald Norwood emphasized that the primary goal is to "bring harmony to the world" through their music.

**Mennonite Housing** *Realize Your Dreams*

**NEW HOMES FOR SALE WITH  
INCREASED ENERGY EFFICIENCY**

**HOUSE PAYMENT \$625 OR LESS**

**DOWN PAYMENT ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE**

For info, visit [mhrsi.org](http://mhrsi.org) or call Julie Smith at 316-942-4848

# KC Bans Discrimination Against People with Criminal Records

Kansas City become the second major U.S. city to classify the formerly incarcerated as a protected class.

By Thomas White  
Kansas City Reporter

Kansas City passed an ordinance that makes it illegal to discriminate against people with criminal backgrounds in employment, housing, and business.

The measure passed the city council with a 9-3 vote, making Kansas City only the second major U.S. city after Atlanta to designate formerly incarcerated individuals as a protected class.

The ordinance adds people with criminal histories to KC's existing protected classes, which include race, religion, and sexual orientation. It prohibits discrimination in hiring, housing, and public accommodations, though it maintains exceptions for cases

where federal or state law requires background checks.

"Once you're held accountable for your actions and you paid your debt to society, your sentence should not be a lifetime of shame, shunning, and severe debilitation," said Councilwoman Melissa Robinson, who sponsored the measure.

The measure builds on the city's previous efforts to reduce barriers for formerly incarcerated people. In 2018, the city passed a "ban the box" initiative prohibiting employers and landlords from asking about criminal history on initial applications.

The ordinance locally addresses a widespread national challenge. The Marshall Project reports that between 70 and 100 million Americans have criminal records, with employment restrictions making up 72% of all barriers people face after release from prison. These barriers persist despite more than half of U.S. states passing "ban the box" legislation to remove criminal

history questions from initial job applications.

The Rev. Thomas James, lead organizer for transformational justice at the Metro Organization for Racial and Economic Equity (MORE2), which pushed for the ordinance, explained the need for stronger protections.

"We had so much experience with people being denied basic accommodations, housing, employment, strictly based on their criminal history," James told the Kansas News Service.

The ordinance requires employers and landlords to evaluate applicants based on factors other than criminal records, including the recency and severity of convictions, rehabilitation efforts, and evidence of good conduct since the offense.

Landlords must consider personal references, actions taken to resolve past issues, and the applicant's age at the time of the offense when evaluating housing applications. The ordinance prohibits

blanket rejections based solely on criminal history.

Three council members opposed the measure: Kevin O'Neill, Nathan Willett, and Wes Rogers. They argued the ordinance's language was too vague and worried about unintended consequences, particularly for small businesses.

"One in three adults in the United States has some sort of criminal record," said James. "So surely we don't want to bar one-third of our country from participating in what we call the American Dream."

The ordinance includes important safeguards. Employers can still deny employment when the law requires or when a criminal record directly relates to job responsibilities. For example, convicted child abusers can't claim discrimination if denied work at childcare facilities.

Housing providers

maintain the right to deny applicants with certain criminal convictions when required by law or protective orders. The ordinance also allows consideration of evictions or property damage that occurred within the past year.

The stakes are high for successful reintegration. According to the Missouri Dept. of Corrections, 69% of convicted felons return to prison if they don't find employment within two years. That rate drops to 23% for those who secure full-time work.

The ordinance requires anyone denying an application to inform the applicant of the denial. If asked, they must affirm in writing that the denial was not based on protected class status and inform the applicant of their rights under the ordinance.

The city's civil rights and equal opportunity department



will oversee implementation, investigate complaints, and enforce the ordinance's provisions.

The ordinance takes effect immediately. It positions Kansas City among a growing number of jurisdictions working to reduce barriers for people with criminal records. Similar legislation is under consideration in Nevada, Oregon, and Arizona, while a bipartisan congressional task force is exploring federal options.

## Parade Park Home Redevelopment Project Receives \$15.5M Federal Grant

By Thomas White  
Kansas City Reporter

Parade Park Homes—formerly the nation's oldest Black-owned housing cooperative—will receive \$15.5 million in federal funding to support its \$275 million transformation, marking a critical step in preserving affordable housing in Kansas City's historic Jazz District.

The Department of Housing and Urban Development awarded the grant through its Section 202 Supportive Housing for the Elderly Program, providing capital and rental assistance for low-income seniors aged 62



A marker outside Parade Park Homes.

and above at Parade Park Homes.

U.S. Rep. Emanuel Cleaver II secured the funding after extensive negotiations with HUD officials, including Secretary Marcia Fudge and Acting

Secretary Adrian Todman.

"I am so happy that my staff and I were successful in convincing HUD that Parade Park is a viable and valuable

See **PARADE PARK** Page 11 →



A Home-At-Last loan from Capitol Federal® offers qualified buyers:

No minimum loan amounts

Low down payments & competitive rates

No up-front mortgage insurance premium

Local service for the life of the loan

Homebuyers education by recognized community organizations



View CapFed's loan options and apply today.

Or find the right loan for your needs with a Purchase + Improvement loan or Home Equity Line of Credit from CapFed®.



888.8CAPFED | capfed.com



# Civil Rights Warrior Keynotes KCK King Service

A third-generation warrior for civil and human rights, Rev. Dr. Otis Moss, III, was the keynote speaker at the 45th Annual MLK Celebration held in Wyandotte County on Mon., Jan. 20.

As Senior Pastor of Trinity United Church of Christ in Chicago, Ill., since 2008, Dr. Moss routinely preaches and practices a Black theology that unapologetically calls attention to the problems of mass incarceration, environmental justice, and economic inequality. Dr. Moss is part of a generation of ministers committed to preaching a prophetic message of love and justice, which he believes are inseparable companions that form the foundation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The KCK King service is sponsored annually by the Baptist Ministerial Alliance with the partnership of the Unified Government of Wyandotte County and Kansas City, KS and Wyandotte County District Attorney Memorial Hall, in downtown



The MLK choir provided several great songs for the event.

KCK.Baptist Ministerial Alliance with the partnership of the Unified Government of Wyandotte County and Kansas City, KS and Wyandotte County District Attorney



Dr. Otis Moss III delivered a powerful King message designed to move those in attendance into action



Pastors and dignitaries on the stage engaged enjoyably with the speaker and choir throughout the program.



A major part of the KCK King celebration is the awarding of scholarships. More than 30 scholarship participants were recognized on stage as part of the event.



*As the first corps of black military aviators, they would bear the burden of proving African Americans possessed the skills to fly modern war planes and to serve their country.*

## BLACK WINGS

AMERICAN DREAMS OF FLIGHT

on exhibit at the  
Bruce R. Watkins Cultural Heritage Center  
3700 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd KCMO

February 4, 2025 – May 3, 2025  
Tuesday – Saturday, 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.

ADMISSION – FREE

Learn about the history of African Americans in flight through this stirring collection of historical and contemporary photographs, first-hand interviews and inspiring stories of triumph and tragedy.

Smithsonian MetLife Foundation

*Black Wings: American Dreams of Flight* is organized by the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service in collaboration with the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum.

The exhibition was made possible by the generous support of MetLife Foundation.

Call 816.513.0700 for more information  
BRUCEWATKINS.COM



# DOJ Sues Major Apartment Landlords Over Alleged Pricing Scheme

Many of these companies operate in Kansas and Missouri

**By Stacy M. Brown**  
NNPA Newswire

The U.S. Dept. of Justice, joined by state attorneys general, has filed an amended complaint against RealPage and six of the nation's largest landlords, accusing them of engaging in an anticompetitive scheme that drove up rental prices for millions of Americans.

RealPage is a leading provider of property management software and services,



The U.S. Dept. of Justice joins the fight against Realpage and several landlord companies whom they say collaborated to raise rents on millions of Americans.

PHOTO: UNSPLASH/JOSE ALONSO

designed to help property managers and owners streamline operations,

enhance efficiency, and improve profitability. This time, the lawsuit alleges, the

software went too far.

The lawsuit alleges that Greystar Real Estate Partners LLC, LivCor LLC, Camden Property Trust, Cushman & Wakefield, Willow Bridge Property Company LLC, and Cortland Management LLC used RealPage's pricing algorithms to coordinate rental rates and share sensitive information, reducing competition in the housing market. These landlords manage more than 1.3 million units across 43 states and Washington, D.C.

The DOJ has accused them of exchanging sensitive information, including rent levels, pricing strategies,

occupancy rates and renewal rates, to align their rental prices. Federal officials allege that property managers frequently conducted so-called "call-arounds," contacting competitors to gather and share details about rents and discounts. Senior executives also communicated directly about planned price increases and other strategies, further undermining competition.

"While Americans across the country struggled to afford housing, the landlords named in today's lawsuit shared sensitive information about rental prices and used algorithms to

coordinate to keep the price of rent high," said Acting Assistant Attorney General Doha Mekki. "Today's action against RealPage and six major landlords seeks to end their practice of putting profits over people and make housing more affordable for millions of people across the country."

User groups hosted by RealPage provided another avenue for coordination. In these groups, landlords discussed modifying the software's pricing methodology and shared plans for price increases and acceptance rates.

See DOJ Page 11 →

# Mayor Lucas Appoints New Public Safety Director & More

**By The Voice News Service**

With the election of his director of public safety, Melesa Johnson, as Jackson County prosecutor, and several of his staff members joining the prosecutor's

team, Mayor Quinton Lucas had some position filling to do.

He announced his new team earlier this month

**LaceShionna "Lace" Cline**  
- Director of Public Safety

Appointed to the position

of director of public safety is LaceShionna "Lace" Cline. A Kansas City native, Cline brings 13 years of leadership to the position as an assistant county prosecutor in two urban jurisdictions and law clerk to a federal judge.

**Megan Strickland - Press Secretary**

Strickland previously worked in the city's communications department. A graduate of Arkansas State University, Strickland has years of experience in television, marketing, and content management.

**Katherine Nace - Policy Director**

A native of Springfield, MO, Nace obtained her undergraduate degree at Truman State University and a master of public policy from Brandeis University. She has worked in areas including drug use reduction, corrections, and community support. Nace previously served in the U.S. Peace Corps in Guyana.

**Jeffrey Lodermeier - Reta Jo Lewis Diplomatic Fellow**

Lodermeier has been appointed by the U.S. Dept. of State for another year as a

local government fellow for subnational diplomacy in the Office of Mayor, bolstering

Kansas City's global relationships in preparation for FIFA World Cup 2026.



Lace Cline



Megan Strickland



Katherine Nace



Jeffrey Lodermeier

**IF YOU HAVE PROBLEMS WITH THE IRS, PLEASE CALL.**  
Consultation is free.

- Business
- Personal
- Accounting
- Tax Preparation
- Tax Problems

**O.L. Jones & Associates**  
2405 E. 21st St. • Wichita  
**(316) 390-1860**  
ojones3@cox.net

Take the next step on your **Leadership Journey**

**STEP 1: AUTHORIZE YOURSELF**      **STEP 2: GAIN SKILLS**      **STEP 3: MOBILIZE OTHERS**

In a culture where everyone leads, individuals, organizations and communities make more progress on what matters most.

**Start on the KLC path to see leadership differently.**

**KANSAS LEADERSHIP CENTER**

Explore our 2025 programs: [KansasLeadershipCenter.org](https://www.KansasLeadershipCenter.org)

# What You Should Know About 'Whole-Body' Deodorant According to Experts

Are there any concerns about using these products "ALL" over your body and are there reasons not to use deodorant all over your body?

## By The Voice Health News

As if drugstore aisles weren't already overflowing with dozens of conventional and natural underarm deodorants, an array of sticks, creams and sprays from heavily marketed big brands now promises "whole-body" odor control. The products often come labeled with explicit or less than subtle nods to private areas.

"It is clearly a trend right now," said Dr. Marisa Plescia, vice president of the Society of Cosmetic Chemists, a professional association representing the cosmetics and personal care industry.

"Obviously we know that there are other areas that do have a tendency to have some body odor — areas, like the groin, that can be a little bit more susceptible to microbial growth," she continued. And after the success of small brands offering products for smelly pits, odiferous nether regions and everything in between in the past several years, "now everybody is like, 'OK, we need to launch an all-over deodorant.'"

Options abound. Here's what full-body deodorants do

— and how to tell them apart, according to experts.

## How do 'whole-body' deodorants work?

Many of the products marketed for all-over use are functionally the same as traditional deodorants or body sprays. They often have powdery elements that absorb sweat — such as arrowroot (Maranta arundinacea) powder, tapioca starch and magnesium carbonate — along with fragrances to mask odor. Most don't contain sweat-controlling aluminum salts like traditional antiperspirants, but some do.

Where it gets interesting, said Dr. Chris Adigun, a dermatologist in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, is in innovative products that incorporate antimicrobial compounds, which target the bacteria that cause stink. "If you don't mind sweating, then these are actually great products. They actually do work," she said.

One such ingredient is mandelic acid, a gentle alpha hydroxy acid that's known to kill bacteria on the skin (though the mechanism of how isn't entirely clear to researchers). This AHA is the heavy hitter in Lume,

the trailblazer of the all-over deodorant market, and its brother brand, Mando.

Another example is magnesium hydroxide, a common ingredient in natural deodorants. It increases the pH on the skin, making the environment less acidic and therefore less hospitable to odor-causing bacteria such, Plescia said.

The Curie brand, made famous on the reality TV show "Shark Tank," attacks bacteria with good old-fashioned witch hazel, along with a cadre of newer ingredients used to keep bacterial growth in check. Those ingredients are byproducts of the Lactobacillus and Saccharomyces bacteria commonly found on skin — what Plescia calls "post-biotics."

"I think it's really interesting that we're finally attacking body odor in a better way," Adigun said, pointing out that dermatologists regularly treat persistent body odor with topical prescription antibiotics. But they are only applied to the armpits, she added.

## Do you need a full-body deodorant?

From a biological perspective, should you add all-over



You've probably noticed the abundance of commercials for Whole-Body Deodorant. It's the new craze, but what are the experts saying?

deodorant to your daily routine? Experts say no.

"We don't stink everywhere. So I don't see why we need to put deodorant everywhere," Adigun said. There are sweat glands all over the body. But only a small portion of them are responsible for body odor.

Called apocrine glands, they are primarily concentrated in the armpits and around the groin. They release sweat that's rife with fats and proteins that provide an all-you-can-eat buffet for *S. hominis* and other members of the skin's microbiome. Body odor is the product of these bacteria digesting the nutrient in apocrine sweat and producing pungent compounds that we perceive as BO. The majority of your sweat glands don't provide such a nutritional bounty

and therefore don't give rise to odor.

On a more philosophical level, do you need full-body deodorant? Also no. Plescia doesn't appreciate the implication that we smell bad and need to put something all over our bodies to smell better.

In the past, she said, body sprays from Bath & Body Works or Axe were marketed for their scents. "Now, though, we're seeing it as: 'You need to use products all over your body to help you not smell,'" Plescia noted. "Is that really a great message to people?"

Adigun added that the message is particularly disconcerting when it's aimed at women.

"There is a part of me that struggles with the marketing when they're like, 'Yes,

everywhere, including your private areas,'" she said. "We have a culture problem of telling women that they're dirty."

## Is there a reason NOT to use deodorant everywhere?

As with anything you wipe, spray or rub on your body, there is a chance that some ingredient could irritate your skin.

"Unfortunately, many of my patients that have more sensitive skin find all the whole-body deodorants irritating," said Dr. Jeanine Downie, a dermatologist in Montclair, New Jersey. Common irritants include pentylene glycol, phenylpropanol, potassium hydroxide and fragrance.

Adigun stressed that people with vaginas need to be careful about what they put near them. The skin in the area is very sensitive, and the vagina supports a delicate balance of microflora. Bacteria-killing ingredients can disrupt that balance, potentially leading to yeast infections and bacterial vaginosis. Even if a product's instructions say that it's for external use only, the line between external and internal is not always clear.

If you don't have sensitive skin and like the way deodorant creams and sprays feel and smell, there is nothing concerning about using them. But if you bathe regularly, you shouldn't need them, according to Downie.

"My patients are constantly asking me what I think about these products," Downie said. "I tell them that I still like soap and water in the shower."

It all starts with one class.  
Contact us today to get in tomorrow.

Apply Now for FREE!

Butler Community College

# Kneeland Brown Keynotes Greater Wichita Ministerial League King Celebration

Dr. Kneeland Brown, Senior Pastor of Tabernacle Bible Church, Wichita, delivered a powerful message to the theme “Dream Delayed, Mission Possible” at the annual Greater Wichita Ministerial League MLK Worship Service, held Mon., Jan. 20 at the Wichita State University Metroplex.

David and Lynn Gilkey with Rise Up For Youth received the Spirit of Unity Award, based on their collaborative efforts implementing and promoting the advancement of community progress and promoting unity throughout the Greater Wichita area.

Dr. William Polite received the Martin Luther King, Jr. Visions and Dreams Award, given to an individual who represents the vision and dreams of Dr. King by their participation in making our community a better place.

Mother Dilcie Polite, a revered woman of God known for her deep faith and dedication to her community, received the President’s Award.



Dr. Kneeland Brown, senior pastor at Tabernacle Bible Church, was the keynote speaker at the Greater Wichita Ministerial League King Worship service held at the Metroplex



The children’s choir is always a special treat at the annual worship service.



2025 Program honorees were (L-R) Dr. William Polite and Lynn and David Gilkey of Rise Up For Youth.



The audience enjoyed the contributions from two Praise Dance Teams during the event.

## Parade Park, from Page 7 ↓

place to invest in the future of Kansas City’s Jazz District,” Cleaver said.

The development, which sits on 26 acres near 18th and Vine, will expand from 510 units to more than 1,000 residences. Developers Flaherty & Collins Properties and Twelfth Street Heritage Development Corp took ownership in spring 2024 after HUD foreclosed on the property.

Mayor Quinton Lucas emphasized the development’s significance for Kansas City.

“Parade Park Homes on 18th Street is an important part of our history, Kansas City’s Black heritage, and will continue to be a vital housing development welcoming Kansas Citizens of all ages,” Lucas said.

The cooperative’s decline began when maintenance costs exceeded resident payments. By 2022, with over half the units vacant, the co-op

defaulted on a \$10 million loan, leading to HUD’s intervention and ultimate sale to a redeveloper.

The redevelopment plan protects current residents through Tenant Protection Vouchers, ensuring affordable housing costs throughout construction. The approximately 165 current residents can return after completion while maintaining their rent rates unless they choose market-rate units or homeownership.

“From HUD to the local officials in Kansas City, this has truly been a team effort to ensure the residents of Parade Park can remain in their homes,” Cleaver said.

The development team plans three construction phases through 2030. Phase one focuses on low-income, senior, and market-rate housing. Phase two introduces ownership opportunities, while phase three adds retail development.

Alexis Williams, director of operations at Twelfth Street Heritage, emphasized community involvement in the renovation process.

“We want the residents to feel like they are a part of this and have some input in the design phase,” Williams said. “If we find out that all the current residents want to own, we’ll work with them to try to figure that out and make it possible.”

Though most existing

structures face demolition, developers pledge to preserve the property’s legacy through commemorative displays and continued community input.

The project represents the largest development on Kansas City’s east side, with completion expected by 2030.

“The work is not finished, but this is a major victory for the people of Kansas City, and I’m thrilled to have helped play a role in making it possible,” Cleaver said.

## DOJ, from Page 11 ↓

According to the amended complaint, the landlords directly collaborated to suppress market competition. Greystar, for example, shared quarterly pricing strategies with Camden, while executives from Camden and

LivCor exchanged information about rent increases over several months.

In conjunction with the lawsuit, the DOJ announced a proposed consent decree with Cortland, a landlord managing over 80,000 units in 13 states. Under the

agreement, Cortland would stop using competitors’ sensitive data, cease employing shared pricing algorithms without oversight, and cooperate with the investigation.

Attorneys general from California, Colorado, Connecticut, Illinois,

Massachusetts, Minnesota, North Carolina, Oregon, Tennessee and Washington are co-plaintiffs in the case. The landlords named in the lawsuit are headquartered in cities such as Charleston, Chicago, Dallas, Houston and Atlanta.

“While Americans across the country struggled to afford housing, the landlords named in today’s lawsuit shared sensitive information about rental prices and used algorithms to coordinate to keep the price of rent high,” said Acting

Assistant Attorney General Doha Mekki. “Today’s action against RealPage and six major landlords seeks to end their practice of putting profits over people and make housing more affordable for millions of people across the country.”

# Manhattan King Event Includes Exhibit Opening

The Manhattan Dr. Martin Luther King Community Celebration was held on Sat., Jan. 18, at the Manhattan Arts Center and included the opening of an art exhibit and recognition of the winners of the student art and writing contest.

The exhibit “Roots and Resonance” opened at the Manhattan Arts Center, featuring the work of four Manhattan-area African-American artists: Craign Green, Paulicia Hungerford, Cierra Marrero and AniQueia Shay. The exhibit, curated by the Black Entrepreneurs of the Flint Hills in collaboration with the Manhattan Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Committee, runs through Feb. 7.



Paulicia Hungerford, standing in front of some of her work, is one of the four artists whose work is featured in the exhibit “Roots and Resonance.”

See **EXHIBIT**, Page 16 →



Manhattan King Community Celebration honorees were Randi Dale (left), Linda Teener (right), and keynote speaker Curtis Pitts (center), a Topeka-based community activist.

## KC Alphas Look at What's Next For Our Community

The Kansas City men of Alpha Phi Alpha celebrated the holiday honoring their Alpha brother Martin Luther King Jr. with their 27th annual program. This year, their event was a breakfast held at UMKC.

The breakfast, held two days before the inauguration of Donald Trump, featured a timely panel discussion on “What’s Next for the Black Community.” Panelists included Pastor Darron Edwards of United Believers Community Church; Dr. Vernon Howard Jr., president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference of Greater Kansas City; and Terry Riley, former Kansas City councilmember and Missouri state representative.

The discussion turned to our need to focus on building our community, something panelists said we have done in the past during periods of renewed segregation ethic. “We tend to turn to



Ken Baccus, Alpha Phi Alpha member and community leader, shared his comments on King’s tenets for moving ahead as a community.

each other a little bit more. We tend to engage in Black institution building a little bit more because we then reject the myth that somehow

our freedom and our liberation and our healing as a people is in those systems and structures anyhow,” said Howard.

To see more King photos and videos visit our website at [communityvoiceKS.com](http://communityvoiceKS.com)



Albert Ray, president of Beta Lambda Chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha, provided opening remarks and facilitated the panel discussion.



People of all ages engaged in the discussion.

## Leavenworth NAACP Produces a Play for King Holiday

In a change from its normal Freedom Fund Dinner, this year the Leavenworth NAACP treated the community to a play "Divine Resistance: Covenant of Faith" featuring adult and youth members of the branch plus a supporting crew of community members.

The play tells the story of a Black told the little known story of the Oblate Sisters, an order of Black nuns who came to Leavenworth in the late 1800s to operate a boys and a girls orphanage. They also started a school for Black children and helped thousands before finally closing and leaving the area in 1959.

The play written, directed and produced by Leavenworth resident Lolita Law, was staged in University of Saint Mary's Xavier Hall and included a pre-event reception, with food and drinks.



Rev. Joesph Clark, the new NAACP Branch president welcomes the audience to the play



The four major characters from the play were the four nuns who here are waiting for the train to take them to Leavenworth.

## SCLC King Mass Celebration Honors Lamb Family

The family of Cameron Lamb received special recognition at the annual King Holiday Mass Celebration sponsored by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference of Greater Kansas City. The Monday evening, Jan. 20, event was held at St. James United Methodist Church.

Lamb, an unarmed Black man, was shot and killed by Kansas City police detective Eric DeValkenaere, who was convicted of second-degree involuntary manslaughter in Lamb's death and sentenced to six years in prison. His sentence was controversially commuted by Missouri Gov. Mike Parson in December 2024, after he spent just one year in prison.

Also honored was Kevin Woolfolk, SCLC's director of membership engagement and activism. He hosts a radio show "People Power in Motion" on KPRT 1590 AM/106.1 FM.

A distinguished panel discussed the question "Where Do We Go From Here?" The panelists were: U.S. Congressman Emanuel Cleaver II; Dr. Jennifer Collier, KCKPS; Kerry Muhammad, Nation of Islam; Councilwoman Melissa Robinson; Kansas City Defender founder Ryan Sorrell; Bishop James Tindall Sr; and Dwayne Williams, CEO of 12th Street Heritage Development Corporation.



A press conference was held before the mass celebration to speak to next steps from the community in response to the governor's release of the police officer who shot Cameron Lamb. Lamb's mother stands to the left with two of Lamb's young sons.



Kevin Woolfolk, SCLC-GKE director of memberships engagement and activism, received the President's Award.



Instead of a keynote speaker, a distinguished panel of participants discussed the question "Where Do We Go from Here?"



The event included a great mix of talented performers, including Bria Douglas.



**OUT & ABOUT**  
WITH THE VOICE  
SUMBIT YOUR EVENT ONLINE @ IT'S FREE!!  
<https://bit.ly/4dftOSD>

## WICHITA

**Wed., Jan. 29, 5 pm: KMWU Literacy Fest** - "The City and Its Uncertain Walls," KMWU, 121 N. Mead, Ste. 200. A group discussion on the book. Dinner provided by Public. Guests are invited to bring a beverage to share with the group. **FREE**

**Tue., Jan. 28, 6:30 pm: Medicare Planning Workshop**, Auburn Hills Golf Course - Clubhouse Banquet Room, 443 South 135th St. Reserve a spot at <https://bit.ly/4jgfs89>. **FREE**

**Tue., Jan. 28, 5 pm: The Housing Trap**, Kansas Leadership Center, 325 E Douglas. This presentation from Charles Marohn, the founder and president of Strong Towns, offers a serious yet accessible history of housing policy in the United States and explains how it led us to this point in time: Where we face a market that is rigged against people who, only a few decades ago, could have been homeowners or stable, long-term renters. Only local change, on a neighborhood or city-wide scale, can begin to restore balance to the housing market. Must register to attend, limited seating - THIS EVENT HAS REACHED CAPACITY. TO INQUIRE ABOUT THE WAITLIST, CONTACT STAFF AT 316-263-3167. **FREE**

**Sat., Feb. 1, 9 am - 4 pm: 2025 Wichita Local Food Producers Workshop**, K-State Research and Extension - Sedgwick County, 7001 W. 21st St. Kansas Local Foods hosts this workshop in collaboration with the Kansas Dept. of Agriculture and the Kansas Center for Sustainable Agriculture and Alternative Crops. <https://bit.ly/3PG7Fmq>. COST \$25

**Wed., Feb. 5, 12 pm: Lunch & Learn for Women Entrepreneurs** The Hive Coworking & Coffee, 200 N. Broadway #110. An event exclusively for women entrepreneurs looking to connect, learn, and grow together. You'll hear successful women entrepreneurs share their experiences, insights, and tips for building a thriving business. irque du Soleil "OVO," Intrust Bank Arena, 500 E. Waterman. From mighty crickets bouncing off trampolines to a hypnotic spider contorting inside her web, "OVO" exudes extraordinary showmanship, captivating the imagination of all ages. COST \$68+ For Tickets: [selectseat.com/ovo](https://selectseat.com/ovo)

**Sat. Feb. 8, 1- 4 pm: NAACP Youth Council Vision Board Workshop**, Urban Prep Academy cafeteria, 2821 E 24th St. Supplies provided new member and potential member meet up. Snacks brainstorm and set goals for youth. RSVP via text 817 903 9433



**Sun., Feb. 9, 8 pm: "Lifting Jane - An Inspirational Movie,"** AMC Theater, 3151 Penstemon St. In the family movie "Lifting Jane," Jane is abandoned by her abusive husband, left with her

teenage daughter to care for. She is emotionally bruised and feels that love or marriage is not worth it. Reserve tickets at [www.LiftingJane.com](http://www.LiftingJane.com) or stream the full movie on your device at <https://lewabo.com/programs/lifting-jane>.

**Mon., Feb. 10, 9:30 am: Career Fair**, Hilton Garden Inn, 401 E. Douglas. Open positions: Hiring managers are onsite to fill positions in sales, retail, customer service, education, admissions, production, financial services, banking engineering, healthcare, project management and more. Hiring companies: For a list of open positions and attending companies please forward your resume, city of employment and salary requirements to: [hr@nationwidecareerfaairs.com](mailto:hr@nationwidecareerfaairs.com). **FREE**

**Mon., Feb. 10, 6 -7 pm: Expand Your Shelf Book Club**, Wichita Public Library, 711 W. 2nd St. Looking to broaden your reading horizons? Join library for this quarterly book club that explores diverse authors and perspectives. This quarter's book is Maya Angelou's "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings." Register at 316-261-8500 or [WichitaLibrary.org/events](http://WichitaLibrary.org/events).

**Sat., Feb. 15, 7 - 9 pm: 2025 Miss ICT & Miss ICT Teen Pageant Preliminary Competition**, Duerksen Fine Arts Center, 2102 N. Hillside. Witness an unforgettable evening of grace and beauty as contestants vie for the coveted crown. Marvel at their confidence, poise, and charm as they showcase their skills in various categories. Be a part of this extraordinary event and cheer on your favorites. COST \$35

**Sun., Feb. 16, 7 - 9:30 pm: 2025 Miss ICT & Miss ICT Teen Pageant Final Show**, Duerksen Fine Arts Center, 2102 N. Hillside. <https://bit.ly/4asQfDw>. COST \$25+

**Sun., Feb. 23, 3 - 5 pm: Celebrating Black Athletes & Entertainers**, Fred Douglass Lodge #99, 2221 E. 12th. Door prizes, family fun, trivia and dinner. **FREE**

## HUTCHINSON

**Mon., Feb. 17, 2 - 7 pm: Hutchinson Black History Month Program** -What's Emancipation Got to Do With It?, Memorial Hall, 101 S. Walnut St. Workshops and panel discussion. **FREE**

## TOPEKA

**Mon., Feb. 17, 10 am - 2 pm: Kansas Black Legislative Day at the State House 2025**, Capitol Building, Topeka. Engage with experts on critical issues and interact directly with legislators Food provided with ticket purchase. Registration required at [www.KansasBLC.org/](http://www.KansasBLC.org/)

[blackagenda.com](http://blackagenda.com). COST \$15

## KANSAS CITY

**Fri., Jan. 31, 6 - 9 pm: "THINK TO WIN" - Creating Culture and Developing Community Networking Event**, Equal Minded Cafe & Event Center, 4327 Troost Ave. Bringing together visionary leaders to share insights, strategies, actionable steps to create a culture & develop community. Brent Darden, Now formerly known as King Enlighten on Social Networks. Inspirational Speaker, Rapper and Certified Speaker, and Student of the world's most renowned motivational speaker, Les Brown. Panelists include Jamia James, CEO and founder of KC Business Besties Real Estate Developer, Lauren Conaway, founder and CEO of innovate-Her KC, Bizzy Benton promoter creator of 816 days and KCWYA, Ryan Harvey guest speaker and motive motivational speaker COST \$10

**Sat., Feb. 1, 8 am -12 pm: Black Women Get Fit - A Moment in Black History**. Southeast Community Center, 4201 East 63rd. Black Women Get Fit is a unique health & wellness experience created for Black women by Black women. Join County Prosecutor for a conversation - A Moment in Black History. Welcome Dr. Rita Stanley and Latasha Jacobs. Body Sessions, MixxedFit - Stress Relief Yin Yin (Flow and Stretch)- Combining the benefits of Yin and Vinyasa yoga, Mind & Soul Sessions, Get Financially Fit 10:00 a.m. - Workshops begin. **FREE** Must register. <https://bit.ly/4asgVEc>

**Sat, Feb,1, 5 - 10 pm: 13th Annual Black History Month Celebration** Riverfront Community Center, 123 S Esplanade St. Leavenworth. The 2025 theme of African Americans and Labor highlights the significant role that Black labor has played in the development of American communities, industries, and rights. It also aims to celebrate the many ways that work has intersected with the collective experiences of Black people. Soul Food buffet, an exquisite variety of raffle prizes, a 50/50 raffle, and a phenomenal local guest speaker to highlight the theme. Attire: Semi Formal or Afrocentric COST: \$25+

**Thu, Feb, 6, 6 - 8 pm: Tiya Miles**, The Student Union @ UMKC, 5100 Cherry Street Kansas City, MO. Join The National Museum of Toys and Miniatures for the Black Dolls Symposium keynote speaker Dr. Tiya Miles, Michael Garvey Professor of History, and Radcliffe Alumnae Professor at Harvard University. **FREE**

**Sat., Feb., 8, 3 - 5 pm: Zach & Friends Comedy Show**. Kansas City Kansas Community College Performing Arts Center, 7250 State Ave KCKS. The city's most exciting up-and-coming actors, comedians, and puppeteers! This talented crew has come together to create a one-of-a-kind show that's bursting with energy and packed with fun. From hilarious sketches to catchy original numbers, Zach & Friends have crafted a performance that will keep you

laughing, singing, and maybe even dancing in your seat! COST \$12

**Sat., Feb. 15, 11 am - 2 pm: 33rd Annual KCK Black History & Scholarship Celebration**, Memorial Hall, 600 N. 7th Street. A memorable event celebrating the Legacy Building Through the Foundational Pillars of HBCUs. Awarding scholarships to local deserving students. The UG Black History Committee will also be presenting a community and business award to voted-on community members that have demonstrated cultural pride and community leadership for Wyandotte County and KCK. COST \$60+ <https://bit.ly/4g5qyK4>

**Sat., Feb. 15, 2 - 3 pm: Books and Brews Feb: Black Authors**, Aizen Root Remedy, 1106 E 30th. Bring a book written by a Black author wrapped up for a white elephant-style exchange and leave with something new to read. COST: \$5

**Sun., Feb 16, 6 - 9 pm: Kiji Universe Presents: The Black August Art & Fashion Show**, Gem Theater, 1615 E 18th. Come for a night of creativity and style, Kiji Universe commemorates all the real-life Black heroes and sheroes who put their lives on the line for the liberation of our people from national and global oppression. Those who threw bricks back and never get mentioned during Black History Month (i.e. Nat Turner & Assata Shakur) There will be a fashion and art show that enables up-and-coming Black designers to showcase their talent and allows local businesses to sell their products to promote and advance Black Owned Businesses. COST: \$50+ <https://bit.ly/3E5ldWc>

**Sat., Feb. 22, 8:30 am - 3:30 pm: The Summit 2025: Restore**, Kauffman Foundation Conference Center, 4801 Rockhill Rd. The Educator Academy's annual educator conference, The Summit. Each year our programming creates space to recognize all the good happening in education while also envisioning an even better future in education. This year's conference theme is Restore: imagining a fresh tomorrow today. This year's Summit will focus on rejuvenating teachers. Keynote Speaker Omkari Williams **FREE**

**Sat., Feb. 22, 5:30 - 8 pm: Harlem Nights: Celebrating Resilience & Community Supporters**, Advocates, and Friends of the Kansas City Black Mental Health Initiative (KCBMHI), Park39, 300 E 39th St. What to Expect: Great food and music! Together, we'll weave stories, share laughter, briefly listen to speakers, enjoy good food and drinks, dance and ignite constellations of hope. General Admission Price: \$75.00 per ticket <https://bit.ly/3Cjkb0P>

**Sat., Feb. 22, 11 AM- 3 PM: Women's Empowerment Brunch**, Southeast Community Center, 4210 E 63rd, KC MO. Panelists: Marquita Davis, Stacey Hardman, Royce Martin, Felicia Tyler, Andrea Shelby, Dolores Woodard Davis, Latonya Long, Dee Barker. COST \$65+ register at: [www.zeffy.com/ticketing](http://www.zeffy.com/ticketing)

A HEARTWARMING PLAY THAT EXPLORES THE COMPLEXITIES OF FAMILY, SACRIFICE, AND RESILIENCE.

KC REP  
KANSAS CITY REPERTORY THEATRE

# Broke-ology

BY NATHAN LOUIS JACKSON  
DIRECTED BY FRANCOIS BATTISTE

FEB 11 THRU MAR 2  
COPAKEN STAGE

Set against the backdrop of a working-class neighborhood in Kansas City, Kansas, the King family navigates the challenges of love and duty as they confront the realities of limited resources and unbreakable bonds. With a perfect blend of humor and pathos, *Broke-ology* invites audiences to witness the strength of familial ties and the enduring power of hope in a touching and beautifully crafted exploration of the human spirit that will resonate long after the final curtain falls.

Order today for the best seats!

Visit [KCREP.ORG](http://KCREP.ORG) or call **816.235.2700**

Kansas City Repertory Theatre is the professional theatre in residence at UMKC

Supporting Sponsor:  Health Forward FOUNDATION

## Cynthia Erivo Could Reach EGOT Status

Oscar nominees were announced this week, and leading the small pack of Black artists nominated this year was Cynthia Erivo, who was nominated for Best Actress in a Leading Role for her portrayal as Elphaba in the box office hit "Wicked." If she wins, Erivo could join the few artists to achieve EGOT status, winning awards at the Emmys, Grammys, Tonys and Oscars.

### Also nominated for Oscars are:

#### Colman Domingo

Best Actor in a Leading Role  
"Sing Sing"

#### Zoe Saldaña

Best Actress in a Supporting Role  
"Emilia Pérez"

#### Kris Bowers

Best Original Score  
"Wild Robot"

#### RaMell Ross

Best Adapted Screenplay  
"Nickel Boys"

#### Paul Tazewell

Best Costume Design  
"Wicked"

## George Clinton Selected for Songwriters Hall of Fame

George Clinton and Rodney "Darkchild" Jerkins are among six new members selected as inductees in the



Cynthia Erivo

2025 class of the Songwriters Hall of Fame.

From Parliament/Funkadelic to his solo work, Clinton is an innovator of American popular music heard on timeless hits (like "Atomic Dog" and "Give Up The Funk (Tear the Roof off the Sucker)") but also across the songs of Kendrick Lamar, Tupac, OutKast, Dr. Dre, Busta Rhymes, Missy Elliot, De La Soul and beyond.

Clinton was inducted into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame in 1997 as the leader of Parliament-Funkadelic.

Groundbreaking producer Rodney "Darkchild" Jerkins' touch is heard across countless R&B and pop hits. His music includes hits like "Say My Name" (Destiny's Child), "The Boy is Mine" (Brandy), "You Rock My World" (Michael Jackson), "Deja Vu" (Beyonce), and "Telephone" (Lady GaGa and Beyonce).

Jerkins previously received a Record of the Year Grammy for co-producing

Sam Smith's "Stay With Me (Darkchild Mix)," the subtitle a nod to Jerkins' nickname.

They're joined by The Doobie Brothers, Ashley Gorley, the Beach Boys' Mike Love and Tony Macaulay.

## Nene Leakes Has New Podcast

The first episode of "Me & My Homegirl," featuring "Real Housewives of Atlanta" alumna Nene Leakes and "Love & Hip Hop: Atlanta" star Sierra Glamshop, hit the airwaves Jan. 16. In the first episode, the two friends discussed personal stories, industry insights, life lessons and plastic surgery rumors. The next episode is set for release Jan. 30 on all major platforms.

Leakes is best known for starring on Bravo's "The Real Housewives of Atlanta" and becoming one of the franchise's most recognizable faces. Following her rise to fame, Leakes also acted, appearing in Ryan Murphy's "Glee" and starring in the sitcom "The New Normal." Leakes can next be seen guest-starring on Netflix's sitcom "The Upshaws."

Sierra Gates, known as Sierra Glamshop, is one of the stars of MTV's "Love & Hip Hop: Atlanta," a reality series in which she has appeared since Season 6. She is the owner of The Glam Shop, an Atlanta staple for all things beauty. Sierra's latest venture is "Ghetto Girlz Eat," a YouTube cooking show featuring celebrity guests.



George Clinton

**Robert A. McClellan Sr., 71**

March 28, 1953 - Jan. 20, 2025

Service will be held at 2 pm on Sat., Feb. 1 at the Jackson Mortuary Chapel, 1125 E. 13th.

**Covette Barnes, 51**

Sept. 3, 1973 - Jan. 15, 2025

Service was held Jan. 25 at Maple Grove Cemetery.

**John Allen McGill, 69**

July 5, 1955 - Jan. 15, 2025

Graveside Service was held Jan. 24 at Maple Grove Cemetery.

**Corey J. Jefferson, 49**

Feb. 11, 1975 - Jan. 10, 2025

Homegoing celebration was held Jan. 24 at Tabernacle Bible Church.

**Laurent Gasasira, 59**

Dec. 1, 1962 - Jan. 9, 2025

Service was held Jan. 16 at Three Angels Seventh Day Adventist Church.

**Kenneth Hadley, 82**

Oct. 12, 1942 - Jan. 6, 2025

Service was held Jan. 18 at Tabernacle Bible Church.

**Donald Walker, 92**

Aug. 20, 1932 - Jan. 5, 2025

Service was held Jan. 17 at Antioch Baptist Church.

**Albert Wyss, 52**

Aug. 9, 1972 - Jan. 3, 2025

Service was held Jan. 13 at St. Jude Catholic Church.

**ARGUMENT, from Page 4 ↓**

were discussing funding for cancer screening of residents impacted by a chemical spill near 29th Street and Grove that spread south almost two miles, contaminating groundwater in the Northeast Wichita area both men represent.

In May 2023, the Kansas Dept. of Health and Environment reported it found a rate of liver cancer in the area's Black residents more than twice the rate of the same population in the state as a whole.

Liver cancer is one of several cancers that have been shown to be associated with exposure to trichloroethylene, or TCE, the toxic chemical involved in the spill believed to have occurred in the 1990s.

Carr was frustrated by the pace at which the City of Wichita and Sedgwick County were moving to get funding in place for the testing. In May 2024, the State agreed to provide up to \$2.5 million toward the testing and treatment of residents from the impacted area. The funding came with a

number of stipulations, including a requirement that the city and county come up with \$1 million to contribute to the effort before the state's funds would kick in.

The city finally took action in January 2025, eight months after the funds were pledged by the state. The county also finally executed a memorandum of understanding for the use of \$1.5 million of the funding, and yet, funding still seems a long way from getting underway.

If you want to learn more about the complexities of the funding, read the related story in this issue or online.

**WHAT MADE THINGS ESCALATE?**

Carr says, beyond words, things escalated for him when Johnson put his hand up. Carr wasn't clear whether it was a finger, his whole hand, and whether he was coming towards his face, but it was a gesture he found threatening.

"So I'm up out of my seat ... and I'm prepared to go wherever it is you want to go. But I'm not going to do

it in my seat," says Carr.

Then Johnson was up and people were holding the two of them apart. One of the individuals who tried to hold him back and Carr pushed off was Helgerson.

"Hey, I didn't even recognize it was him, because I'm tunnel visioned and focused and on this person that I feel is being aggressive toward me."

Carr admits things could have turned out worse, but clear-headed individuals helped keep the situation from escalating further.

**JOHNSON'S STATEMENT**

Johnson returned our text with a text.

"I'm not going to speak about the incident in Topeka. That event will be properly investigated and the video and those present can speak to the specifics of what happened and by whom. I don't want that incident to in any way distract from the genuine, positive efforts and progress we're making for residents to address the vitally needed testing and remediation at the 29th and Grove neighborhoods."

**CANCER TESTING, from Page 4 ↓****NEXT STEPS**

Because of the county commission agreement, \$1.5 million in state dollars will flow to the county to allocate.

County manager Tom Stolz said the county aims to pass the money to a third party, possibly the Kansas Health Foundation. The third party would distribute the money to health care providers to undertake the testing.

"Any provider in the community with the ability and mission to provide such tests would be considered, including federally qualified health centers, Guadalupe Clinic and other providers who provide service to underinsured and noninsured people," Stolz said.

Ablah said the money will likely be distributed using a request-for-proposal process, where providers could lay out their plan and the dollars they need to test community members for free.

But to maximize the amount of money the county can get from the state, it must raise \$1 million in local match funding. County officials say they will likely vote in the near future on whether to provide \$125,000, as the city did.

That leaves \$750,000 still to be raised. Johnson said the Kansas Health Foundation is helping with that.

Local match dollars must be provided to the state by June 30 in order to get the full \$1 million match.

And any subrecipients receiving money from the county must spend it by the end of 2026, or else risk having to return it to the state.

**CONCERN AND FRUSTRATION**

The sluggish process to utilize the state's dollars has to not come without critics.

Former City Councilwoman Lavonta Williams, who grew up near the groundwater contamination, said the city should give more matching dollars.

The city pulled the \$125,000 from about \$157,000 left over from the proceeds of the sale of the Hyatt Regency hotel.

Williams asked why the city wouldn't use the entire bucket of money.

"For me, this is saying those lives don't matter," Williams said. "You're saying they don't matter – but they do. They deserve more. We deserve more."

The rest of the Hyatt proceeds are being directed toward transit funds.

At the county, Commissioner Jim Howell felt the dollars coming into the county were a "Band-Aid" to the

long-term challenge of cancer screening, which may require affected residents to be tested over a lifetime. Even if the dollars are spent on medical equipment like MRI machines or ultrasounds to do the testing, those will require recurring expenses like staff or maintenance, he said.

"This is a lousy way to solve a problem," Howell said. "It doesn't really solve a problem, honestly. It just creates a tiny little opportunity for a few people for one time."

Baty said the county is doing its best to respond to state funding that it didn't have the chance to weigh in on before it was passed.

Howell also contested that the dollars should be focused on moving residents in the plume from well water to city water. Drinking contaminated groundwater is unsafe, according to Sedgwick County.

"My biggest concern is we're not even addressing the issue of people drinking contaminated water today," Howell said. "... And we don't have any plan to make sure that they have another option for safe drinking water."

Union Pacific announced in 2023 that it would work with the city, county and state to survey the impacted neighborhoods to find out how many homes had private wells. The railroad said it would offer funding to homes with unsafe wells for the cost of connecting to city water.

The survey was meant to be completed at the end of June 2024. When contacted about the results of the survey, Union Pacific directed questions to KDHE.

**MORE CONTAMINATION SITES?**

In addition to 29th and Grove, there are dozens of other active contamination sites in Sedgwick County; Baty says there's at least 220. Some, such as the Forest Hills neighborhood in East Wichita, have similar chemical contaminants and similar health concerns.

Stolz, the county manager, said that the latest funds from the state must prioritize residents who have been impacted by the plume at 29th and Grove. But, ultimately, the dollars can serve residents throughout the county that have been exposed to contamination.

"I know I have sites down south and sites out east and west and all over the county that we're going to have to address," said Councilman Mike Hoheisel. "But we also want to recognize the particular disparity that goes on within this particular neighborhood, as well."

# VIBRANT VOICES

A Special Publication for Seniors

**WINTER 2025** GROUP EXERCISE OFFER VARIETY AND ACCOUNTABILITY



**Living With  
Adult Children**

How to Make it  
Work

**Options to  
Nursing Homes**

PACE Programs  
Popularity  
Expanding

**Jackson  
County  
Commissioners**

Making a  
Difference for  
Seniors

# VIBRANT VOICES

A Special Publication for Seniors

## VIBRANT VOICES CELEBRATING THE SPIRIT OF ACTIVE LIVING WINTER 2025

*A special publication of  
The Community Voice*

**Bonita Gooch**

Publisher & Editor-in-Chief

**Tom White**

Reporter

**Elaine Guillory**

Special Contributor

**Cornell Hill**

Account Representative  
hill@tcvpub.com

**Submit story ideas or comments**

[https://www.communityvoiceks.com/  
submit-news/](https://www.communityvoiceks.com/submit-news/)

**Want copies of this publication delivered  
to your senior-serving facility, or for  
additional VOICE contact information:**

[https://www.communityvoiceks.com/  
contact/](https://www.communityvoiceks.com/contact/)

# Welcome to Vibrant Voices: Celebrating the Spirit of Active Aging!

## Dear Readers,

We are thrilled to introduce the inaugural edition of Vibrant Voices, a special publication of The Voice, dedicated to celebrating the dynamic, fulfilling, and joyful lives of our senior community. At Vibrant Voices, we believe that aging is not just about growing older—it's about embracing life with wisdom, purpose, and passion.

This special edition is designed to inspire, inform, and uplift. Inside these pages, you will find stories of remarkable individuals redefining what it means to age, practical tips for staying active

and healthy, and resources to help you navigate this exciting chapter of life. Whether you're looking to explore new hobbies, deepen your social connections, or find ways to give back to your community, Vibrant Voices is here to guide and inspire you every step of the way.

As a special publication of The Voice, our mission remains the same: to empower and uplift our community through quality journalism and storytelling. We are honored to add Vibrant Voices a a quarterly addition to our list of special sections/publications.

## It joins:

The Reflector – our annual Black History edition – out Feb. 21;

Feeling Fine, our special health publication – this year quarterly

PLUS .a series of other special focus issues throughout the year.

If you have any ideas for stories in this section or any edition of our publications, we welcome your input at <https://www.communityvoiceks.com/submit-news/>

Thank you for joining us on this journey. Together, let's continue to celebrate life, embrace

opportunities, and share the stories that make our community so extraordinary.

*With gratitude and excitement,*  
**Bonita Gooch**  
Publisher & Editor-in-Chief



## Do These 4 Simple Things to Be Happier in 2025

With these tips, you can create a lifetime of joy.

**By Janice Kaplan**

Okay, listen up! We have a right to be happy at any age. Changing your perspective, even in dark times, can make a huge difference in your general well-being. Research for my new book, What Your Body Knows About Happiness, led to



some surprising insights and strategies that I am excited to share here.

The big news is that while we usually assume happiness comes from our minds, it turns out that our bodies do a lot of the work of making us calmer, less stressed and more joyful.

Your brain is constantly receiving messages from your body, and everything from how you move to the furnishings in a room can make a difference.

Understanding this can be life-changing. When you make a few small tweaks, you can go from feeling blah to — joy! Here are some body-mind tricks to try, setting you up for a truly happy new year.

### 1. Stand or Sit Up Straight

As we get older, we tend to slouch, as if the weight of the world is bearing down on us. And that's exactly how your brain interprets it. Erik Peper, a professor at San Francisco State University and an expert on biofeedback loops, told me that being slouched tells your brain that something is wrong. It

See HAPPY Page **VV6** →

**“Reach a Vibrant Market:  
Engaged Seniors, Active Lifestyles, Real Results!”**



**Advertise in Vibrant Voices**

Contact: Cornell Hill • Hill@tcvpub.com • (316) 681-1155

**PLAN AHEAD**  
Don't miss  
our next issue.

# What to Do When Your Adult Children Move Back Home

**By The Voice News Service**

Life takes unexpected turns and twists that can lead adult children back home. About 45% of adult children are returning back home and sleeping in their old bedrooms.

A crowded home can create new opportunities and issues that should be addressed before a grown child makes the move back home.

Here are some things you can do to make the moving situation easier for everyone.

**SET BOUNDARIES**

Maintain a good relationship by sitting down together and discussing boundaries for both the parents and grown kids.

While your son or daughter is no longer a minor, you should still let them know

what they can or can't do in the house.

If you don't allow smoking, alcohol, or people coming in and out at all hours, let them know the limits.

At the same time, it might be good to know what their habits and expectations are. If they get up early in the morning to go to the gym, you will have to adjust to hearing early risers.

Taking vehicles, food, or toiletries should all be discussed upfront.

Remember to let your children have a say in the conversation. If you want to make the living arrangement work, then the boundaries need to be set together.

**MOVE BACK HOME & CONTRIBUTE**

Since you're giving up space and adding cost to your utilities, your grown child

should be contributing towards the household bills.

Most of the time, their move home is financially related. So you don't want to overburden them with tons of bills, paying rent, or making them pay for everything.

If your son or daughter is looking for full-time employment, encourage them to get a part-time position to help pay for their own expenses.

Be wary of putting a lot of chores on them. Your kids should want to help out, but if they are working full-time they may need a few hours to relax before pushing chores.

For those who moved back home to save for their own home, ask them how much their last mortgage or apartment payment cost per month. Charge them a fraction of that per month to offset any expenses.

This lets them save money



ALLISTAIR/PEOPLEIMAGES.COM - STOCK.ADOBE.COM

but continue to contribute and be responsible.

**KEEP CALM & CARRY ON**

If you're shocked that your

adult child or children want to move home, stay calm. You didn't fail as a parent, and they certainly haven't failed as an adult.

All the different reasons that surround moving back with the parents have one

See CHILDREN Page VV6 →



## Looking for heart care close to home?

Schedule with a leading cardiologist

Don't put off heart concerns. At Via Christi, our highly skilled cardiologists are leaders in heart surgery, providing the most advanced heart care regionally, including:

- A comprehensive heart and vascular program
- Minimally invasive treatments such as aortic, mitral and tricuspid valve replacements to help shorten recovery time
- Commercial and clinical trials that keep patients close to home
- Kansas' only training center for one of the world's leading heart valve repair device manufacturers



Learn more about our comprehensive heart and vascular program. Appointments are available for a first consultation or second opinion.

Schedule now. Visit [ascension.org/ViaChristiHeart](https://ascension.org/ViaChristiHeart) or call 316-369-4935.



# Jackson County Legislator Turns Retirement Into Platform for Change

Venessa Huskey leads by example, helping fellow seniors while maintaining an active public service and volunteering schedule.

**By Thomas White**  
Kansas City Reporter

Jackson County Legislator Venessa Huskey, 71, has transformed what could have been a quiet retirement into an impactful period of public service, highlighted by her co-sponsorship of legislation freezing property taxes for seniors and her work preserving civil rights history.

The Senior Property Tax Credit Program allows Jackson County residents aged 62 and older to freeze their property taxes at current levels. As both a sponsor and beneficiary of the program, Huskey actively helps fellow seniors navigate the application process at community events like the recent Third District Convention.

“It’s an easy sell because I use the program myself,” says Huskey. “If they were having trouble [filling out the online application], do like I do with my grandson, call them over and tell them ‘help your grandma do this.’”

Beyond tax reform, Huskey serves as Freedom Wall Commissioner, overseeing the Monument to Freedom, Justice and Courage at Leon Jordan Memorial Park. The commission recently selected 88 new honorees for the monument, which can recognize up to 100 individuals annually for their contributions to civil rights in Jackson County.

## EARLY ROLE MODELS

Her path to public service began in what was then unincorporated Jackson



Venessa Huskey being sworn in as a Jackson County Commissioner. The 71-year-old has transformed what could have been a quiet retirement into an impactful period of public service.

County — present day 53rd and Montgall — where she witnessed her mother’s progression from teenage parent to registered nurse and her grandfather’s role as the

neighborhood’s primary handyman. This early exposure to community service shaped her future career choices.

“I grew up used to seeing

my family assisting the community,” says Huskey.

After graduating from Southwest High, she attended community college alongside her mother, before earning both her bachelor’s degree and master’s in human relations and family studies from the University of Missouri-Kansas City.

## WORK WITH THE COMMUNITY

Her professional career began at AT&T, where she worked for 18 years before taking a buyout. After AT&T, Huskey spent a year substitute teaching before becoming a neighborhood and community liaison for the city in 2007.

For eight years, she built bridges between residents and local government,

while researching successful community programs in other cities. This role established her reputation for effective community service and laid the groundwork for her political career.

“I would attend community meetings and provide whatever resources they needed,” says Huskey. “I built relationships between the community and the various departments of the government.”

Today, Huskey serves on multiple Jackson County legislative committees, including Budget, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (chair), Justice & Law Enforcement (chair), Public Works, Rules, Veterans, and 911 Oversight.

See HUSKEY Page VV5 →

# Twice-Retired Jackson County Legislator Donna Peyton Leads Push for Senior Services Fund

**By Thomas White**  
Kansas City Reporter

Donna Peyton could have settled into a quiet retirement after 26 years with the U.S. Postal Service. Instead, she chose a path of continued public service that led to her recent selection as vice chair of the Jackson County Legislature.

“I do like being active,” says Peyton. “Sitting at home watching ‘The Price is Right’ just wasn’t my thing — I wanted to be in this space.”

That space now includes co-sponsoring legislation to create a Senior Services Fund to help elderly residents age in place. The initiative gained voter approval in the November election joining 55 similar funds

across Missouri supporting home repairs, transportation services, and meal delivery programs.

The program, which will begin allocating resources in January 2026, is just her latest achievement in a career dedicated to community service.

“It’s going to be so important because it will provide services that will allow seniors to age in their home,” says Peyton. “This will be able to fund organizations that could come in and do minor repairs or get them a ramp or ensure they can receive meals on wheels, whatever they need.”

## EARLIER YEARS

Born and raised on 34th and Chestnut in Kansas City,

MO, Peyton’s path to public service wasn’t direct. She became a mother as a teenager, attended Bishop College in Dallas, then returned home to raise her children as a single parent, something she’d watch her mother do. Today, she has two grandsons and a great-grandson.

After retiring as a mailing standards specialist from the Postal Service in 2015, Peyton joined the Hickman Mills School District. What started as a plan to work as an attendance clerk evolved when she became administrative assistant to the superintendent and board secretary.

“Until I actually was board secretary, I didn’t realize the value of my voice,” Peyton says. “So I wanted to use

that power, the power of the voice of a single mother, to work on policies, to work on procedures, so that I could bring my insight and my experience to the table.”

## PATH TO PUBLIC SERVICE

This realization led her to run successfully for the Raytown School Board in 2021, bringing her experience as both a parent and administrator to educational policy. Now, as vice chair of the Jackson County Legislature, she heads both the Anti-Crime and Housing & Homelessness committees while serving on seven other legislative committees.

Between her local governmental duties, Peyton devoted eight years as KC’s outreach coordinator for



Donna Peyton steps to the mic in support of the Seniors Count ballot issue. Voter approval sealed the deal on the legislation she co-sponsored.

Convoy of Hope, organizing massive community service events that served up to 6,000 guests annually. These events provided healthcare, employment opportunities, and essential services while requiring coordination of hundreds of volunteers and raising up to \$50,000 yearly.

“It was a wonderful event, and I was honored to help,” Peyton said. “It was just a blessing, a blessing for me and to the community.”

A 1974 graduate of Central High School, Peyton recently celebrated her 50th

See PEYTON Page VV5 →

# The Far-Reaching Consequences of Loneliness in America

In her story, Venessa Huskey spoke about the health concerns of loneliness. That encouraged our sharing this story.

By Eliza Siegel, Stacker

“It’s hard to put a price tag, if you will, on the amount of human suffering that people are experiencing right now,” Dr. Vivek Murthy, U.S. surgeon general, told *All Things Considered* in 2022, shortly after issuing an advisory that sounded the alarm on the epidemic of loneliness in the U.S.

Human connection keeps us healthy, but many Americans report feeling lonely and isolated. According to an October 2023 Pew Research poll, 8% of Americans have no close friends.

Since 2003, the amount of time the average American spends alone has increased by roughly 24 hours a month, while hours spent socializing with friends in person has declined by about 20 hours a month, even before the pandemic, according to the 2023 Surgeon General’s Advisory on the loneliness in the U.S.

Meanwhile, according to Census data, the number of single-person households more than tripled from 1940 to 2020. Currently, over a quarter of Americans live in one-person households.

## Loneliness The Profound Implications

Loneliness isn’t just about being alone. “You can feel lonely even if you have a lot of people around you because loneliness is about the quality of your connections,” Murthy added.

Loneliness can have profound ramifications. The surgeon general labeled it an “epidemic” that can have serious consequences for the health and well-being of individuals and societies.

Social connections allow people to live longer, more fulfilled lives. When those connections start to fray, the consequences can be far-reaching and serious.

Loneliness and isolation can have impacts that reach far beyond the more obvious domains of personal mood and happiness—everything from heart health to academic performance has been linked to the quality of our social connections.

The advisory noted that “social connection is a significant predictor of longevity and better physical, cognitive, and mental health, while social isolation and loneliness are significant predictors of premature death and poor health.”

The effects of loneliness on individual physical health have been a subject of study. Higher risk of heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, diabetes, and even lowered immune response to infectious diseases have all been traced back to isolation. It’s not just loneliness in adulthood that can have detrimental effects on health; social isolation in childhood can also have a long-lasting impact



BOMBREAL

on physical and mental wellness into adulthood.

The mental and cognitive health effects of loneliness and isolation have also been widely observed. Loneliness is a risk factor for developing Alzheimer’s and dementia, as well as anxiety and depression.

## Building Connectedness

Social connectedness on a community-wide level also boasts a number of benefits. Greater closeness within communities leads to better population health, more resilience in response to natural disasters, lower levels of violence, more economic prosperity, and higher civic engagement.

Building social connections can happen on national, community, and individual levels

According to the Surgeon General’s Advisory, fostering more meaningful social connections must occur both between individuals and on a

cultural level. This includes everything from governments to institutions like schools and churches. Even tech companies and the media play a role in creating opportunities and infrastructure for social connectedness among people.

The advisory outlines many ways society can foster connections, including many ambitious suggestions. At a national level, the report suggested having a dedicated leader to advance pro-connection policies across sectors.

On a local level, organizers and individuals are already working to unite people. Community gardens, readings and open mics, and volunteer work are all ways for those feeling isolated to get involved.

According to the advisory, another important part of building connectedness is nurturing the relationships that already exist in your life, whether with friends, family, or romantic partners. These relationships aren’t

“ Social connections allow people to live longer, more fulfilled lives. When those connections start to fray, the consequences can be far-reaching and serious.

limited to people just like you but also those from other generations or backgrounds.

In an op-ed for *The New York Times*, Murthy argues that even small steps can make a difference. He recommends what he calls “medicine hiding in plain sight,” meaning connecting with loved ones for even just 15 minutes a day, sitting down with people with different perspectives, and seeking ways to support others, “recognizing that helping people is one of the most powerful antidotes to loneliness.”

Data reporting by Karim Noorani. Story editing by Carren Jao. Copy editing by Tim Bruns.

*This story originally appeared on Northwell Health and was produced and distributed in partnership with Stacker Studio.*

## PEYTON, from Page VV4 ↓

class reunion, commemorating the occasion by sponsoring a county resolution honoring the milestone. She remains active in her church, Macedonia Baptist Church, and she’s continuing her education, pursuing a master’s in theology from Fuller Seminary and expects to graduate in June.

The Senior Services Fund represents a cornerstone of her legislative agenda. The initiative will establish a seven-member board to manage funds collected through a property tax levy.

## ADVICE TO OTHER SENIORS

To other seniors considering an active retirement, Peyton offers clear advice:

“We, as seniors, we don’t have to imitate what anyone else is doing. We don’t need approval to do what we want to do,” says Peyton. “We can be in our passion and do what we love, and that’s a wonderful thing.”

Her journey from postal worker to county legislator demonstrates the impact seniors can have when remaining engaged in their communities. Peyton proves that retirement can mark the beginning of an impactful chapter in public service.

## HUSKEY, from Page VV4 ↓

### STAYING ACTIVE AND ORGANIZED

Between legislative sessions, she maintains an impressive volunteer schedule. She volunteers with the Folly Theater, Kansas City Rep, KC Symphony, KC Ballet, Negro Leagues Baseball Museum, American Jazz Museum, Starlight Theatre, and has worked Kansas City Chiefs games for 15 years.

Her secret to managing such a packed schedule? “I have one calendar,” says Huskey. “Everything I do is on one calendar - church, volunteer activities, meetings, going out of town, doctor appointments.”

This active lifestyle, she believes, contributes to her good health. For seniors considering retirement, Huskey emphasizes the importance of staying active and maintaining social connections.

“As long as you interact with other people, you need to have some social skills to remain healthy,” says Huskey.

Looking ahead, Huskey shows no signs of slowing down — including still mowing her own yard. Her advice to other seniors is straightforward: stay active, maintain social connections, and find ways to serve others.

“I enjoy interacting with people,” says Huskey. “I’m a servant. That’s who I am in my heart and my head. And as long as I can serve, I will.”

**HAPPY, from Page VV2 ↓**

translates a droopy physical state into droopy emotions.

“When we feel hopeless and depressed, our bodies collapse inward,” said Peper. “Put your body into that position later and you evoke those same feelings.”

In research studies, Peper found that people have to work much harder to have positive thoughts when in a slouched position. Sit up straight and upbeat feelings and memories are much easier to access.

Consider how the winners at every track meet throw their arms up and out as they cross the finish line. One study found that even blind runners who had never seen anyone making that gesture did the same thing. It's instinctual.

In victory, we stand tall and happily take up a bit of extra space.

Put your body in that winning position and you'll immediately feel more positive. You don't have to run a race either. Sit up a little straighter while you're reading this article and you'll feel more enthusiastic about the information!

**2. Have Fresh Flowers**

During the winter, I like to

buy an orchid for my living room. The beautiful blooms can last for weeks and always make me happy. I discovered in my research that being around flowers causes an increase in the feel-good hormone dopamine.

This connection could be a link from long ago when people relied on nature for sustenance and seeing flowers meant that food and berries would soon follow. We're still wired to get that sense of hope and expectation and gratitude from our natural environment.

Working out of Rutgers University, psychologist Jeannette Haviland-Jones did several studies on the effect of flowers on mood. In one study she sent three different gifts to people — a candle, a fruit basket or flowers. The people who got the flowers reported being less depressed and less anxious than the others and reported higher levels of gratitude.

She concluded that flowers have “strong positive effects on our emotional well-being that can last for days.”

You don't need to do anything fancy. A small bouquet from the local grocery can send a happiness message to your brain. It's a small price for a big reward. So don't wait

for someone to send you flowers! Go get some for yourself

**3. Find Joy in Water**

Where you put your body has a profound effect on your mood, and being near water has a kind of magical effect. Mathew White, an environmental psychologist now at the University of Vienna, told me that “health, well-being and life satisfaction” all improve when we are around water — whether ocean, rivers, lakes or streams. People who have contact with blue spaces for just 120 minutes a week report better health and a more positive sense of well-being than those who don't have the same experience.

As White reported: “Whether you get the time (near water) as a two-hour walk on a Sunday or a half-hour several times a week doesn't matter. However, you can weave it into your week will improve your well-being.”

Many cities around the country including Austin, Boston, Seattle, Minneapolis, New York and San Francisco have spent billions of dollars reclaiming and renovating their waterfronts into public spaces. Make sure to enjoy them! If you live in a dry inland region, be innovative and buy an inexpensive

mini-waterfall to put in your home. The calming gurgling sound and the mesmerizing flow of the water will improve your mood.

**4. Clear the Clutter**

There are many books about how to clear clutter, but you're not going to do it until you realize that the problem is actually making you unhappy. In the visual, what makes people happy, key elements include openness and a sense of calm.



**LEGACY AT COLLEGE HILL**  
Skilled Nursing Care

Located in the heart of Wichita, KS, we offer personalized care with a focus on restoring independence and enhancing quality of life. Our services include:

- Skilled Nursing
- Short-term Rehabilitation
- Long-term Care
- Physical, Occupational, and Speech Therapy

www.legacyatcollegehill.com

5005 E 21st St N, Wichita, KS 67208 (316) 685-9291



**Now Enrolling Seniors!**

Safely serving seniors, age 55 and older, who are coping with dementia, Alzheimer's or loneliness.

- Nursing services & care coordination
- Opportunities for socialization
- Meals and snacks

**Call today: 316-942-2008**

**Adult Day Services**  
CATHOLIC CHARITIES

**CHILDREN, from Page VV3 ↓**

thing in common: your kids feel safe with you. Take it as a compliment that your kids want to be around you at a vulnerable moment in their life.

During this time don't ignore your own life and needs.

**SAVE TIME**

It's important not to push your kids quickly out the door after they get settled, but it's equally vital not to let them become too comfortable.

One of the first conversations you should have is setting up a timetable. When will they move out of the house?

Part of setting the exit date involves establishing obtainable goals for the kids.

**WATCH THEIR HEALTH**

Be open and ask them to talk through their feelings and thoughts. They may appear to be strong and focused, but feelings of inadequacy and inferiority in comparison to their peers might flood their heads.

Look for signs of depression. If they exhibit the symptoms, talk to them about possibly getting therapy.

Go on walks and ask them to join you. You'll both get exercise and a chance to talk about the wins and losses of

the day or week.

Keep healthy food around the house such as fruit and vegetables to ensure that everyone is getting good nutrition.

Open the curtains and shades in the house and let natural light into the house. People's moods can be improved with natural vitamin D.

**ROLL OUT THE WELCOME MAT**

Before you roll out the welcome mat, make sure you take these steps to heart and talk to your children in-depth about their move back home.

**YOU'RE INVITED!**

**February 19: Curating Spring Exhibitions**

**March 19: Ulrich Co-Lab Local Artist Panel**

**April 16: Hidden Side of EMS: Exhibition Talk**

**May 21: Photo Critique with Jennifer Ray**

**June 18: Build-a-Bowl for Empty Bowls**

**July 16: Printmaking with Doug Billings**

THIRD WEDNESDAY OF THE MONTH

**SENIOR WEDNESDAY**

1845 FAIRMOUNT at WICHITA STATE  
10 A.M. REFRESHMENTS  
10:30 A.M. PROGRAM | FREE AND OPEN TO ALL



# 'Are Nursing Homes Our Only Option?'

PACE Centers offer older adults in Missouri and Kansas an alternative

## By Associated Press

George Raines cracked jokes as physical therapist Brad Ellis led him through a series of exercises designed to strengthen his legs.

Raines, who is 79, pretended to be in pain, but his grin belied his tone of mock suffering. The men were in the therapy room at Ascension Living Alexian PACE in Chattanooga, Tennessee, where older clients spend the day getting medical care and other services.

"We have some spicy patients," said Libba Llewellyn, an occupational therapist at the center. Raines had worn a hat with fake pigtail braids during the center's Crazy Hat Day the week before, prompting everyone to say he looked like country singer Willie Nelson.

PACE (Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly) centers provide government-funded medical care and social services to people older than 55 whose complex medical needs qualify them for nursing home care, but who can live at home with the right sort of help. Most PACE clients are enrolled in both Medicaid and Medicare, though a small percentage pay for the program through private insurance.

Nationally, PACE centers are owned by a variety of health care organizations, including nonprofits, for-profit companies, large health care systems and religious organizations. Once a state Medicaid program opts — either through legislation or a policy change — to cover PACE care, providers receive fixed monthly payments from Medicare

and Medicaid (and in rare cases from private payers) for each enrolled client.

PACE has long flown under the national radar as an elder care option. But it's recently attracted interest in even more states because it can keep people at home and may cost less than nursing home care.

I think a lot of people were asking, 'Are nursing homes our only option?' They started looking around and discovered the PACE program made a lot of sense.

— Robert Greenwood,  
National PACE Association

More large companies and health care systems, armed with capital and attracted by growing consumer and state interest, are opening PACE centers or buying existing ones from smaller nonprofits. But the explosive growth has come with challenges: Three years ago, California and Colorado investigated and later sanctioned one of the country's largest for-profit PACE providers after finding it failed to provide services that should have been covered. And some studies have shown mixed results on the centers' effectiveness.

Many families are desperate for alternatives to nursing homes. By 2030, 1 in 5 Americans will be over age 65, and most older adults say they would prefer to remain living in their homes for as long as possible.

"One of the things about COVID is that it really focused attention on long-term care, because of the experience that nursing homes had," said Robert Greenwood, senior vice president for communications and member engagement



Participants at Ascension HOPE in Wichita play dominoes, enjoy other activities, eat meals, see their doctors, get prescriptions filled and enjoy friendships and companionship of others.

at the National PACE Association, a professional network of PACE providers.

"I think a lot of people were asking, 'Are nursing homes our only option?' They started looking around and discovered the PACE program made a lot of sense."

## How it Works

Each day, the Alexian PACE center hosts about half of its 300 clients. Beginning at 6 a.m., the center's bright purple buses pick up people like Raines from their homes in the surrounding county and bring them to the center for the day.

As Raines received his physical therapy on a rainy Tuesday in March, dozens of other older adults sat at small tables in the dining room, eating lunch and working on jigsaw puzzles. Down another hall, clients were visiting medical providers, getting fitted for orthotics or picking up prescriptions. The center



The ribbon cutting at PACE KC on MLK Blvd ushered in the era of PACE facilities in KCMO. Ascension HOPE in Wichita is a PACE center. PACE (Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly) centers provide government-funded medical care and social services to people older than 55, and they are a growing alternative to nursing home care. ANNA CLAIRE VOLLERS/STATELINE

provides dental and vision care, counseling and laboratory services. Social workers help clients obtain needed items such as walkers and at-home wheelchair ramps.

"I love the model," said Vicki Guertin, the CEO at the Alexian PACE center. "I love that we can put in air conditioners [in clients'

homes] if we need to. We can buy people shoes. There's just so much we can do that most medical insurances could never do."

Medicaid and Medicare don't require states to provide PACE centers. But in those states that have them, about 90% of enrollees qualify for both Medicaid and

Medicare, a population that includes some of the most medically complex people in the nation. Medicaid is the federal-state insurance program for people with low incomes, and Medicare is the federal program for those 65 and older. Both programs cover some people with disabilities.

Greenwood said the fixed Medicaid and Medicare payment per client — which varies from state to state — incentivizes PACE providers to focus on preventive medicine and other support services that reduce hospitalization and keep participants as healthy as possible.

In 2022, researchers from the University of Arizona found that the few published studies comparing PACE outcomes with those of other elder care programs showed mixed results. A 2014 study found that PACE enrollees experienced lower rates of hospitalization than similar populations who weren't in PACE programs, though the study's authors noted "substantial" variation among different PACE plans.

Jasmine Travers, an assistant professor of nursing at New York University, found in her 2020 study of PACE enrollees that the health care disparities she was used to seeing for Black and Hispanic older adults in nursing homes weren't as pronounced in minority PACE clients.

"A lot of things really affect health care access disparities, like transportation or copays or meals. Those kinds of things aren't always accounted for in an external [health care] setting," Travers told Stateline. "PACE accounts for those."

# The Power of Group Workouts: How Group Fitness Keeps You Accountable

By Whitney Ostott  
Girl Power Fitness

Some things are best done alone, and others are better in groups. Getting fit and reaching your fitness goals can fall into either of the above categories depending on who you are as a person and what your relationship with fitness and working out is like.

There are some people, who've been working out for years, that are so incredibly focused and determined that they don't need to work out in groups – in fact, they're better off powering on alone. Then there's everyone else – the people who at times find working out challenging; this is where group fitness comes into play.

If you think about it logically, the pack element when working out makes sense. We're social creatures who generally love doing things with others.

All you have to do is to think back to your childhood and teenage years to know how true this is. Back then, our friends and peers dictated the kinds of activities we did, and when you think about it,

things haven't changed that much.

Today, being active with our friends is just as appealing as it was in the past; the only difference is that we have fewer opportunities to do so since we spend a great deal of our time 'adulting'.

## Group Fitness Sessions Offer More Variety

There are many benefits of group exercise. First, the greatest benefit of working out in a group would have to be the many forms of exercise you can do. It's pretty easy to find a group exercise session that fits your personal taste that you can enjoy. Think aerobics, dance, Pilates, step, body pump, boot camp, swimming, walking, fencing and skating. The variety is almost endless.

## The Social Opportunities of Working Out in a Group

I love how one of the best group fitness benefits is social-related. Not only does it get you off the couch, it also gets you out into the community to meet new people. Exercising in a group is more social than exercising alone, and this is the perfect way to



There are group fitness classes for all skill levels and the good news is it's not that hard to find one that will work for you. SABRINA - STOCK.ADOBE.COM

meet likeminded people that might have the same goals as you.

And if you're new in town, there's no better way to meet new friends!

## The Motivation Factor

When you work out in a group, you'll notice that you push yourself harder, far beyond your previous perceived limitations.

In front of others, you're likely to work harder and it may even get a bit competitive! Since everyone's working towards the same goals, this is the perfect motivation to keep going hard and attending your group exercise class.

## Group Exercise Sessions Give You Accountability

Accountability, in my opinion, is the biggest group fitness benefit. When you're in a group exercise scenario, you'll feel a lot more accountable to attend your class. Once you become a regular, if you happen to miss a class, the instructor and the other participants will wonder where you are and genuinely be concerned for your well-being.

What's more, if you prepay for your group fitness classes, there will also be another layer of accountability. Prepayment encourages you to go more, to ensure you get your money's worth.

## Find a Group Fitness Class Near You

The great news about group fitness classes is they're not hard to find and they're often low cost to no cost.

### Places to check:

- Recreation Centers
- Senior Centers
- Gyms
- Community health centers and hospitals
- Personal trainers – they often offer small or large group classes at a rate much lower than their one-on-one services.
- Churches
- Social online – you might find groups meeting in not so typical places including outside during the summer
- CommunityVoiceKS.com – we often have information about group exercise activities

## Gain Confidence

We all know that exercise is good for us. But the biggest problem is the first step – many just don't know how to begin. For a beginner, the idea of working out can be overwhelming. Therefore, another group fitness benefit is it helps remove doubt and unnecessary stress.

Group classes are made up of all types of participants. You'll see all ages, all sizes and all levels from the novice through to the more experienced, which makes it less daunting, especially if you lack experience and confidence.

All you must do is show up with the right positive attitude and enjoy the class and the social buzz that comes with a

group exercise program.

## Group Fitness is Time Friendly

Typically, group fitness sessions are scheduled at certain times. Another factor that causes people to stop working out or not even start is the time constraints they have.

Group fitness sessions are typically scheduled and always run on time. This consistency will allow you to choose the right time for you to ensure you're able to get in the exercise you need while also getting on with your other daily activities – it's a win-win!

What are you waiting for? Reap the group fitness benefits today and find the right class for you!

# Sign Up for a VOICE Newsletter



**THE VOICE  
WICHITA**  
Every Monday



**HEALTH  
Wednesdays**  
On Wednesdays



**THE VOICE  
Kansas City**  
Every Monday



**FRIDAY  
Top Five**  
On Fridays



Click to sign up