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CARTOON

CLAYTOONZ: Free Speech Brouhaha



ICYMI -- A LOT OF STORIES ARE ONLINE ONLY LIKE:

How Rosemary Oil Might Help Your Hair



New Era, Familiar Fight: Black Press Prepares for Anti-DEI World

As tariffs loom and DEI support fades, Black media braces for multiple challenges ahead.

By Tannistha Sinha
Houston Defender

Black media outlets across the country are preparing for what could be a new era of financial and editorial strain that will put survival to the test in the upcoming years.

With an ideological backlash against Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives that help fund advertising in Black media, publishers are now anticipating a new landscape ahead.

President Donald Trump is implementing a 25% additional tariff on imports from Canada where 80% of newsprint paper is imported from. These tariffs could exacerbate the challenges newspapers have faced for years.

Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis Jr., president and CEO of the National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA), representing more than 230 regional and local Black newspapers, expressed his opposition to the tariffs.

"The tariffs will have a very negative impact on Black-owned newspapers and other Black-owned businesses," he said. "They will make it very expensive for our newspapers to stay in business."

Tariffs, DEI & the Shrinking Ad Dollar

Denise Rolark Barnes,

publisher of the Washington Informer, said Trump's stance on DEI will also impact the Black newspaper industry, as funds from advertisements will stall.

"People don't realize that the advertising dollars that corporations spend with us come out of a DEI budget," she said. "They're pulling back on what they used to do in spending in our publications ... folks are nervous about how they're spending their ad dollars and that entrenchment does impact us."

However, the economic pressure is only part of the story. Janis Ware, publisher of The Atlanta Voice, one of the longest-running Black newspapers in the South, anticipates adjusting the paper's overall operational costs to afford printing and distributing costs or slashing the number of pages.

Simultaneously, Ware is considering elevating The Voice's digital presence on social media and newsletter, which also comes with a hefty price tag. Older generations, who do not turn to digital media for news, may find it difficult to adapt to this transformation.

Will Writing the Truth Come at a Price?

Ideological changes across the U.S. are also impacting editorial decisions in newsrooms.

The Trump Administration is bringing pressure on the media and free speech. You've seen it! He kicked the Associated Press out of the White House News Pool and pressured ABC into a \$15 million settlement for something he didn't find

"fair." He's denied access to law firms with partners he doesn't like and continues to pressure universities to change their "woke" messaging.

Chavis admits newspapers are grappling with "increasing anxiety."

However, the Black press is no stranger to political headwinds. "The Black Press is resilient," said Chavis. "We don't retreat, we keep moving forward despite the obstacles that may be put in our path. Our mission doesn't change because of who's in the White House."

"The mission of the Black Press is to print the facts, the truth, but also be an advocate for freedom, justice and equality. We're going to keep pressing forward and do what the Black Press does best and represent the interest and the voice of Black America."

A Call for Community Support

Despite financial pressures and political threats, Ware says the community's support is more important than ever.

"We reach out to the community and say, 'We need you now more than we ever needed.' We go to the ministers and say, 'We need you as well,'" said Ware.

Barnes said Black publishers must continue to document historical moments.

"A hundred years from now, when people look back at this moment in time, they're gonna wanna know how the Black Press dealt with it, how the Black community dealt with it, how White folks dealt with us," she said. "It's a period that's rich in news."



From Bonita Gooch,
The Voice, Editor-in-Chief

Earlier this month I was in New York for a meeting that included at least 40 Black newspapers from across the country.

The focus of our conversation was how we can survive, let alone thrive, in an anti-DEI world. Every one of us had examples of long-time supportive advertisers and supportive organizations who had cut down or cut out completely their support for our publications.

At THE VOICE, we noticed it this year in our always-popular Black History Month special section. One of our most financially successful special sections was almost devoid of advertising. It became obvious: our regular advertisers weren't returning our calls and advertising in Black History sections was something to avoid.

In New York, we collectively came up with ideas for moving forward, but most of all, we spoke about the overwhelming need for our communities to support us as we continue to support them with our focused coverage.

As stated by Janis Ware, who was at that New York convening, "We need you now more than we ever needed."

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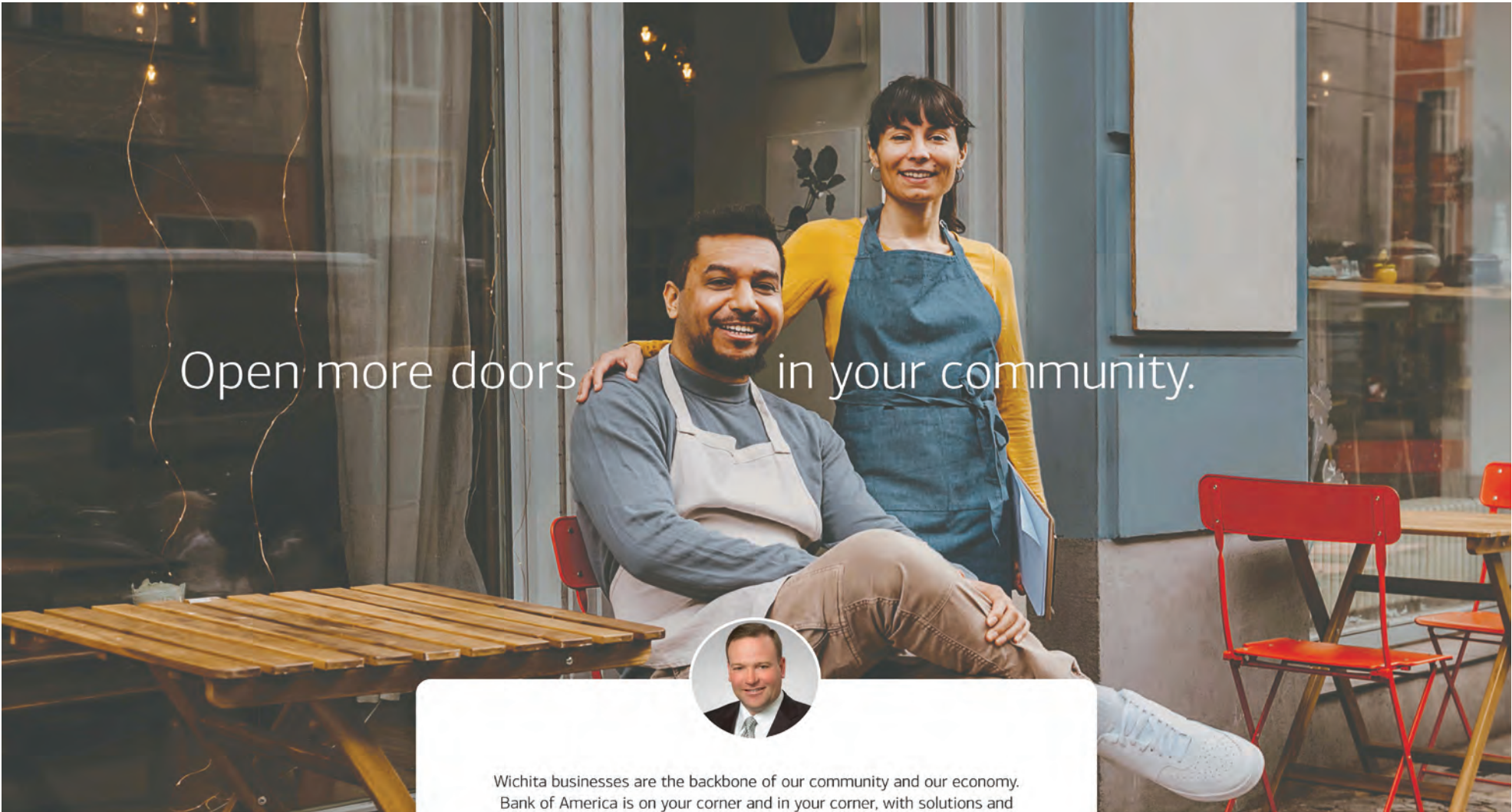
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No More Free Rides

City Council effectively ends zero-fare program, approves six-month transit funding plan, avoiding most cuts for now

Key Points:

- The KCMO Council approved stop gap funding that could delay new fare implementation for 60 to 90 days
- New fares aren't set but could be \$2 with plans to implement a cashless system.
- Functionally free fares are proposed that will exempt certain groups.
- Route frequency will be cut.

By **Thomas White**
Kansas City Reporter

In 2020, Kansas City became the first major U.S. city to offer universal free bus service, but after five years, zero-fare is ending.

The Kansas City Council voted unanimously April 3 to approve Ordinance 250247, a stopgap measure to fund the Kansas City Area Transportation Authority (KCATA) for six months. The funding comes with the caveat that KCATA look into a number of ways to generate revenue including searching for grant money and reinstating fares.

The KCATA will come back to the council with full details in the coming weeks, but initial plans include a \$2 fare per trip starting in 60-90 days. The KCATA will re-install fare boxes and transition to a new cashless electronic payment system that could take up to a year and cost about \$3 million, though the agency expects to use grant money for the conversion.

The city council expects a new “functionally free” fare model will exempt low-income residents, veterans, students, and people receiving social service assistance. No-cost rides will still be available for those eligible residents through various methods, including swiping a “fountain card” city ID.

“We want everyone who needs to ride the bus to be able to do that, but it needs to be in a way that is



The concept of “functionally free” fares is being floated with numerous groups – still not defined – being eligible to receive free ride cards. (CHASE CASTOR/THE BEACON)

comfortable and safe for everyone,” said Third District Councilwoman Melissa Robinson.

Robinson pushed strongly for the city to establish a clear plan for future funding beyond the stopgap six months, but the full council wanted to see progress from the KCATA before committing.

“Bus service is critical for our residents,” said Robinson. “To be left to chance, I think, puts us in a very challenging place.”

Service Cuts Despite Funding

The ordinance provides \$46.7 million to KCATA through October, preventing the agency from cutting 13 of its 29 routes and laying off more than 170 workers. However, the plan will still reduce service frequency and hours.

Buses will run from 5 a.m. to 11 p.m. instead of 3:30 a.m. to 1 a.m. The Main Max, Troost Max, Prospect Max and #24 routes will run every 15-20 minutes during peak hours and every 30 minutes at other times. All other routes will come just once per hour.

Councilmember Melissa Patterson Hazley expressed frustration that service reductions are happening despite the council’s direction.

“We’ve already directed them not to make those changes,” said Patterson Hazley. “I don’t understand... I mean, we just said, ‘Don’t do it.’ And they did it.”

Transit Activists Apply Pressure

The council’s action followed months of pressure from transit advocates. Council chambers were packed for the decisive meeting, and more than 85 individuals and organizations submitted testimony urging amendments to preserve zero-fare and prevent service reductions.

“I use the bus lines to socialize with friends, get to doctor’s appointments, volunteer in the community, and even get groceries,” said rider Fray Patton in public testimony. “This ordinance would make things increasingly worse for people who just want to live in the KC Metro and don’t have access to a car.”

Sunrise Movement KC, which organized demonstrations alongside the Amalgamated Transit Union and Stand Up KC, criticized the reinstatement of fares while acknowledging activists success in preventing deeper cuts.

“This did not happen because the council made transit a priority,” the group said in a statement after the vote. “This happened because thousands of people came out to defend a critical public service while our leaders were asleep at the wheel.”

Years of Financial Problems

The funding crisis stems from longstanding financial issues at KCATA. According to the ordinance, the city has “repeatedly stepped in to cover KCATA’s budget shortfalls” while the agency’s “efforts to control costs and/or increase revenues have been unsuccessful.”

Mayor Quinton Lucas has been critical of KCATA’s governance structure.

“The KCATA challenge, in my

opinion, isn’t actually a pure budget thing, but the governance and management type thing,” Lucas said in a radio interview.

Lucas reiterated this concern during council discussions, emphasizing the need for KCATA to show progress before additional funding. Councilman Darrell Curls echoed this sentiment. “I don’t think anybody on this council wants to defund the bus or not fund the bus to the extent that we cut routes or that we eliminate any jobs,” Curls said. “But... I don’t think that this city can continue to fund the bus service for eternity, and so that’s why a reasonable plan or regional aspect has to be looked at.”

IRIS Rideshare Program at Risk

The future of IRIS, the city’s rideshare service that costs about \$7.6 million annually, remains uncertain. The ordinance directs KCATA to evaluate the program for potential cost savings or elimination.

Six-Month Timeline and Enhanced Oversight

The funding runs through October 31. During this period, KCATA must submit to regular audits, present every two month progress reports to the city council, and develop a strategic plan that addresses service coverage and frequency.

The ordinance also requires KCATA to improve its financial structure and seek additional funding from regional partners, including requesting at least \$6.8 million from Missouri state government, \$2.5 million from Kansas state government, and \$11 million from the federal government.

“The goal of this ordinance is to ensure accountability, right sizing and streamlining processes so that we can create a regional solution that other jurisdictions in this region also want to partner in,” said Mayor Pro Tem Ryana Parks-Shaw. “Because we know it’s not sustainable as it is today.”

KC Council Greenlights SunFresh Lifeline Amid Food Desert Fears

By **Thomas White**
Kansas City Reporter

The Kansas City Council approved a \$611,500 support package for the struggling SunFresh grocery store at 31st and Prospect on Thursday, concluding months of negotiations over how to prevent a potential food desert in the city's east side.

The ordinance, sponsored by Councilwoman Melissa Robinson, restructures the city's approach to helping the store. The ordinance passed the full council vote of 11 - 0 after Mayor Quinton Lucas engineered a committee substitute deal that passed through the Finance Committee earlier in the week.

This funding represents the latest attempt to stabilize a grocery store as an anchor tenant in the city-owned Linwood Shopping Center, which the city has invested more than \$21 million in since 2015.



Private security helps guard the outside of the Sun Fresh Supermarket at 31st and Prospect in KCMO.

The approved package divides the funds between \$161,500 in rent relief for SunFresh's operators and \$450,000 for

settling operational claims. The arrangement includes a six-month check-in requirement where the operator, non-profit organization Community Builders KC, must present detailed future plans.

Owners of other eastside grocery stores questioned why city support isn't available to them.

"Our grocery store is in the same area," said Muhammad Abubakar, owner of Happy Foods, located about a mile from SunFresh. "If they get some benefits from that grant, why not we?"

Abubakar, who took over Happy Foods in 2023, told council members he spends \$10,000 monthly on security and has invested over \$100,000 in infrastructure improvements.

"This is a food desert area, no big chain wants to come here," Abubakar said. "We have a lot of hurdles and difficulties that we face: security, inflation, sales."

Councilwoman Robinson explained the distinction in the arrangement with the Linwood Shopping Center and the SunFresh operated by Community Builders.

"We [the city] own the grocery store," said Robinson. "That is why this is different from other grocery stores that are in the area."

Robinson, who says she shops at SunFresh herself, described the funding as necessary to "stop the bleeding," noting the area cannot afford to lose this vital resource. She identified declining sales stemming from safety concerns as the core issue facing the store.

Diane Charity, community advocate and

co-founder of KC Tenants, invoked Martin Luther King Jr. in her testimony supporting the store.

"There comes a time when one must take a position that is neither safe, nor politic, nor popular, but he must take it because his conscience tells him it is right," Charity said. "I'm supporting the SunFresh because it is the right thing to do."

Marquita Taylor, president of the Santa Fe Area Council, emphasized the importance of keeping the grocery store and said the city needs to address loitering that has plagued the location.

"We cannot lose healthy foods in our community," Taylor said. "We're trying to live like everybody else. Please open up, allow them to get what they need, but also work on our little community."

The SunFresh store has been battling significant challenges, losing \$1.3 million in 2023. Recent visitors have reported finding shelves across wide sections of the store completely bare.

Lucas responded to concerns from other grocery operators by framing the city's responsibility in landlord-tenant terms.

"We are making sure, in this situation, that we are fair in saying, if you are our tenant, we have a special relationship," Lucas said. "This is not us favoring one business over another. This is us instead making sure we can have a strong relationship between the parties."

Under the agreement's terms, if Community Builders fails to present its plans within six months, any remaining funds will be transferred to the city's Back to Business Grant Program. The store must also provide regular profit and loss statements to the city.

Stan Archie, speaking in support of the funding, reinforced the city's responsibility as a property owner.

"We are a landlord as a city, and this is a situation where a not-for-profit had made an investment, not to be profitable, but to be valuable to the community," Archie said. "I'd love for us to say that we're a quality landlord as well."

The ordinance takes effect immediately, with the full \$611,500 support package expected to help address immediate operational needs while longer-term solutions are developed.

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Taliaferro & Browne Finalists for KC Chambers Mr K Award

Company among 10 finalists for KC Chamber's Small Business of the Year.

By The Voice News Service

Engineering firm Taliaferro & Browne, Inc., one of Kansas City's largest minority-owned multidisciplinary firms, has been announced as one of 10 finalists for the Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce's Small Business of the Year or "Mr. K Award."

To be named Small Business of the Year signifies that a company has shown growth or sustainability of their business with strong employee relations, a commitment to DEI initiatives, and a record of giving back to the community.

Taliaferro & Browne was selected to advance from more than 70 candidates for the award, and they are one of just four companies selected to advance in the competition for the second consecutive year.

In 2024, Taliaferro & Browne won the chamber's Equity Award.

"Our company is the most diverse engineering firm in Kansas City," said Leonard



Leonard Graham and Hago Andevrhan are co-owners of Taliaferro & Browne

Graham, Taliaferro & Browne president. "We believe in people's individuality in terms of where they are, where they come from, what their race, ethnicity, or sexual orientation is, and we believe in respect; that's the bottom line for us."

In 2023, Parrish & Sons – President and Founder Fahteema Parrish – became the

first Black woman-owned business to win the Small Business of the Year Award. She won after being nominated for multiple years and the year after winning the Small Business Equity Award. Her path to the top might forecast well for Taliaferro and Browne.

About Taliaferro & Browne

Founded in 1968, Taliaferro & Browne has been instrumental in shaping the region's infrastructure and urban landscape for over five decades. The firm is led by Graham and CEO Hago Andevrhan, both alumni of the University of Missouri–Kansas City.

The firm's services include: Civil and Structural Engineering, Landscape Architecture, Surveying and field services (inspection, monitoring, and testing).

Under their guidance, T&B has contributed to significant projects such as the redevelopment of Union Station, the IRS Regional Service Center, renovations of Arrowhead and Kauffman stadiums, the Kauffman Performing Arts Center, and Berkley Riverfront Park. Notably, they played a pivotal role in the new Kansas City International Airport terminal project, serving as the lead

landside civil engineer and managing a team of eight subconsultant companies.

The Mr. K winner will be announced June 17 at the Small Business Awards Luncheon, at the Sheraton Kansas City Hotel at Crown Center, 2345 McGee St.

Other Awards to Be Presented:

Specialty awards also will be presented at the June luncheon, including:

The KC Chamber Emerging Business Award

The KC Chamber Small Business Equity Award

The KC Chamber Weida Award for International Small Business of the Year

The KC Chamber Legacy of Kansas City Award

The KC Chamber Luminary Arts & Creative Small Business Award

Other Finalists

For info on the other 9 businesses in the running for Small Business of the Year or the Mr. K Award, read our story online at: <https://bit.ly/4lITt10>

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Organ Donation Impacts Every Community

April is National Donate Life Month and the need for organs is highest in the Black community.

By Nez Savala
Midwest Transplant
Network

The need for organ, eye and tissue donation impacts people in every community, every day, including African Americans.

April is National Donate Life Month - a time to raise awareness about organ, eye and tissue donation, to encourage people to become registered donors, and to honor those who have saved lives through the gift of donation.

What does it mean to be a registered organ, eye and tissue donor? What does it mean to be a donor hero? It's a journey experienced in different ways by many families.

A Donor Family's Story

In life, Katharine Cooper was a wife, mother, teacher and trailblazer. She was licensed as the first Black person to open and operate a nursery school in Kansas

City, MO. She taught elementary school, high school and Sunday school. She loved people and gardening.

Ms. Cooper was a registered organ, eye and tissue donor. When she passed away in January 2021, she was 98. Her gift of donor tissue helped burn victims.

Donna Tyler, her daughter, describes her mother as "a willing donor" because she "gave while she was living and continued to give after her death."

Her mother, at 93, is an example that you're never too old to be a donor. She "planted seeds" of knowledge and care in the hearts and minds of many people throughout her life.

"My grief included hope in being reminded of the things my mother taught," said Tyler, that "each of us can bless others by saying 'Yes' to becoming an organ donor. I no longer mourn her death; I celebrate her life!"



Katharine Cooper was on the donor list. When she died unexpectedly at age 98, she was able to be a tissue donor.

Facts About Organ Donation

The demand for organ, eye and tissue donation vastly exceeds the number of registered organ donors.

One organ donor can save as many as eight lives and enhance the lives of up to 100 people through eye and tissue donation.

Organs that can be donated are the heart, kidneys, liver, lungs, pancreas and small intestine.

Everyone can be a registered organ donor, regardless of age or medical history.

Committing to organ donation never interferes with medical care. If you are sick or injured, saving your life is always a priority.

Most major religions support organ and tissue donation as a final act of generosity.

You can register to become an organ, eye and tissue donor at the driver's license or DMV office, or at ShareLifeMidwest.com.

What's The Need for Organ Donation in Ethnic and Racial Communities?

People of color are 40% of the U.S population, but



Members of Katharine Cooper's family gather around the sign recognizing Cooper during the Transplant Network's annual walk in 2023. This year's walk is June 25.

people of color make up 60% of the national transplant waiting list. That includes African American, Hispanic and Latino, Native American, Asian, Pacific Islander and multiracial people.

More than 85% of people on the waiting list need a kidney, and many of the people waiting are people of color.

The need is greater among communities of color because of health concerns like diabetes, high blood pressure or other conditions that lead to higher risk of organ failure. This is due to factors like unequal access to health care.

The availability of organs from deceased donors is an issue. Only three in 1,000 deaths medically allow for donation.

Matching organ donations is a challenge because of matching blood types and tissue types. The odds of a good match are better when donor heroes and transplant recipients share a racial or ethnic background.

More registered organ donors who represent diverse ethnic and racial communities will give more hope to every patient who is waiting for a match.

Who's Waiting for an Organ Transplant?

In Kansas, nearly 500 people are waiting for a lifesaving organ transplant, and in Missouri, there are more than 2,000 people. The wait list includes people of all ages, ethnicities and cultures.

In both states combined, the majority of people on the wait list need kidney transplants.

Across the United States, more than 104,000 men, women and children are currently waiting for lifesaving organ transplants. Tens of thousands more are waiting for tissue or corneal transplants.

On average, 17 people die each day because of a lack of available organs for transplants.

Every 8 minutes, another person is added to the waiting list.

95% of U.S. adults are in favor of being an organ donor, but only 60% are registered.

For more national data, go to OrganDonor.gov.

About Midwest Transplant Network

Midwest Transplant Network saves lives in Kansas and western Missouri through organ, eye and tissue donation. Incorporated in 1973, MTN is a federally certified, not-for-profit organ procurement organization that works with organ, eye and tissue donors, their families, hospitals, and other professional partners to extend legacies, provide hope and give life.

In 2024, MTN reached a milestone of 1,075 organs transplanted in a single year with gifts from 399 donor heroes, illustrating the thoughtfulness of people in Kansas and western Missouri.

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Toxic Inequity

How Environmental Racism Threatens Black Lives—and What We Can Do About It

ICT Tree Huggers: Addressing Environmental Injustice in Northeast Wichita

By providing information, gardening and wellness events, ICT Tree Huggers aims to teach and heal the community.

By Bonita Gooch
The Voice Editor-in-Chief

Sarah Myers traveled the country for her makeup business for more than a decade before she decided to return home for family.

When she came back to Wichita four years ago, Myers said she witnessed difficulties that had been bubbling for 50 years in the city's District 1, the Northeast Wichita community.

What Myers saw inspired her to begin ICT Tree Huggers, a non-profit that aims to stimulate sustainability practices and gardening in vulnerable communities.

By sustainability practices, she means actions that meet the needs of individuals today without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

Myers realizes her work can't just worry about the future. It must also address what she saw in the community – the impact of decades of historic injustices, systemic racism, policy failures, and economic marginalization that have left these communities in a unique and disproportionately harmful environmental condition.

Educating the Community

Despite the Tree Hugger name, Myers says the organization's work is about more than hugging trees, planting trees or just recycling. It's about addressing and



Sarah Myers, founder of ICT Tree Huggers, plants seedlings in one of the organization's garden beds. *MIA HENNEN*

bringing attention to the harmful environmental conditions that exist in the communities she serves.

"Because if our environment is sick, the people on top of it are going to be sick too," says Myers.

Myers says the choices individuals make to help improve the health and sustainability of their community is a personal decision, but everyone can do something.

"It's about taking responsibility for how we take care of each other and the earth," says Myers. "It's really about making intentional choices within our community to protect the natural resources like water, air and soil.

As an example, Myers chooses to forgo driving and rides her bike everywhere. That's a buy-in level many people may have trouble



Sarah Myers says she and her team can't wait to get their hands in the soil and start gardening in March. *MIA HENNEN*

committing to, but Myers says it's important to choose something(s) and commit to them.

Often, Myers says, what's keeping people from taking action is a lack of knowledge. That's one of the areas where ICT Tree Huggers fits in – education.

They teach individuals and families about being a part of the long term solution, because a lot of people don't know how to take care of the environment.

Almost any weekend, you can find ICT Tree Huggers at popup events across the city, providing information and answering questions about sustainability, wellness and gardening.

Allison Williams, partnership coordinator for ICT Tree Huggers, leads weekly yoga sessions. It's a program she says helps bridge the wellness aspect of ICT Tree Huggers. Currently, the organization offers Slo Flo Yoga each Wednesday from 7 to 8:30 p.m. at their office at 1200 Waterman.

However, the bread and butter of the program's educational efforts centers around gardening.

ICT Gardens

There are plenty of activities that can be done to address environmental injustice and sustainability. Myers decided ICT Tree Huggers would focus on gardens as a way to address food deserts and provide low-to-no-cost healthy produce in a community where it's too often lacking.

This is the organization's third year gardening in Wichita's District 1. While most amateur gardeners limit their regime to the spring and early summer months, ICT Tree Huggers go at it at least 10 months a year. They're planting cool-season vegetables in January and starting seedlings indoors for planting outside in the spring.

By March, Myers says, they're ready to get outdoors and put their hands in the soil.

While core team members attend to the gardens daily, logistics lead Alec Mortimer says Tuesdays and Saturdays from March through September are

See **ICT**, Page 12 →

What Can You do About Environmental Racism

Here are five powerful actions Black individuals and communities can take to confront and combat environmental racism:

Get Educated and Spread Awareness

Learn how environmental racism impacts Black communities – like higher rates of pollution, toxic waste sites, and poor water quality – and share that knowledge in your circles, churches, schools, and social media.

Organize & Advocate Locally

Join or support local environmental justice groups, neighborhood associations, or advocacy coalitions pushing for clean air, water, and safer communities. Your voice matters at city council meetings, public hearings, and planning boards.

Vote & Hold Leaders Accountable

Elect and pressure officials who prioritize environmental justice. Demand policies that protect vulnerable communities from harmful development and pollution.

Support Black-Led Environmental Movements

Uplift and partner with Black environmentalists, scientists, and organizations already leading the fight – like WE ACT for Environmental Justice or the Black Environmental Collective.

Push for Equity in Green Solutions

Advocate for clean energy jobs, tree planting, public transit, and sustainable housing projects that benefit – not displace – Black communities, ensuring we're not left behind in the green transition.

Take Personal Responsibility for Improving the Environment in Your Community

Here are just a few things you can easily do personally: Help clean up dumped trash, responsibly dispose of your own trash, plant a tree to improve the tree canopy in your neighborhood, reduce your use of single-use plastics, cut idling time at drive-in windows, consider going inside or pass when the lines are long and backed up.

Toxic Inequity: The Environmental Justice Movement and How it Began

By The Voice News Service

You're right if you're thinking the environmental issue is one that has been led and championed predominantly by White people. But, there is a growing movement of people of color who have joined the movement with a lens to the disproportionate impact of environmental decisions on communities of color.

The environmental justice movement — championed primarily by people of color — was born of a statistical fact: Those who live, work, and play in America's most polluted environments are commonly people of color and those living in poverty.

Because of environmental justice advocates, we now know this as environmental racism, and it's precisely what communities of color have been battling for decades.

What is Environmental Justice?

Environmental justice essentially means that everyone — regardless of race, color, national origin, or income — has the right to the same



Protesters prevent trucks filled with soil contaminated by polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) from reaching the proposed Warren County landfill in Afton, NC, in September 1982. (CREDIT: RICKY STILLEY/HENDERSON DISPATCH)

environmental protections and benefits, as well as meaningful involvement in the policies that shape their communities.

But rarely has this been the reality for people of color and those with

low incomes. That's because virtually all environmental injustice is shaped by the same patterns of racism and inequality that have existed in the United States since its founding.

For example, to this day,

majority-White and wealthy communities are where investments into infrastructure are more likely to be made, where environmental laws are more likely to be properly enforced, and where polluters are more likely to be held accountable or kept away entirely.

By comparison, the most marginalized communities are routinely treated as the areas where highways can be built, waste can be stored, industrial warehouses and facilities can be concentrated, and where natural resources can be readily exploited or destroyed.

Warren County Protests: The Spark

The modern environmental justice movement was catalyzed by protests in Warren County, N.C., a predominantly Black rural area in North Carolina. The state chose this community as the site for a hazardous PCB (polychlorinated biphenyls) landfill. Residents, civil rights activists, and environmentalists organized massive demonstrations, even though the protests didn't stop the landfill. It was the

first time civil rights and environmental activism joined forces on a national scale.

Dr. Robert Bullard, The Father of Environmental Justice

Sociologist Dr. Robert Bullard, often called the “father of environmental justice,” conducted pivotal research in the 1980s showing that hazardous waste sites and polluting industries were overwhelmingly placed in Black and poor neighborhoods. His 1990 book, “Dumping in Dixie,” gave the movement both academic and national credibility.

In 1994, President Bill Clinton signed Executive Order 12898, directing federal agencies to identify and address environmental justice issues affecting minority and low-income populations. This legitimized the movement at the national policy level.

Since then, countless grassroots movements have kept environmental justice at the forefront, led largely by those most affected.

Source: National Resources Defense Council

Addressing the Diminishing Tree Canopy in Inner Cities

By The Voice News Service

Over the last several decades, cities, including Wichita and Kansas City, have seen far more trees removed than planted from both city-owned and private land.

Our hot, dry summers are hard on trees, and high winds and ice storms cause tree branches to be broken off and trees uprooted or damaged. In many lower socioeconomic areas, replacing those lost trees is not

affordable.

The result has been the loss of tree canopy over many densely populated or commercial areas, which often have far more concrete and asphalt than vegetation — which results in major fallout like:

Urban Heat Island Effect

Trees provide shade and release moisture, which helps to cool urban areas. As tree cover diminishes, urban areas become hotter, leading to increased energy consumption for cooling and

heat-related illnesses.

Air and Water Quality:

Trees filter pollutants from the air and intercept rainfall, preventing stormwater runoff and pollutants from entering waterways.

Social and Economic Benefits:

Trees contribute to the overall quality of life in urban areas by providing aesthetic beauty, reducing noise pollution, and potentially increasing property values.



Where to Get Free Trees

There are a number of organizations that give out free trees, however they do it during limited periods - so they accept names on a waiting list.

In Wichita, homeowners in ZIP Codes 67214 and 67208 can go online to www.arboday.org/ictrees to get on a waiting list.

In Kansas City, the city had a goal of planting 10,000 trees and has been giving them out during limited periods since 2023. To get your name on a list and to know about upcoming tree giveaways, go to bit.ly/FreeTreeKC. The organizations typically distribute trees in the spring and fall.

ICT Tree Huggers says there are plenty of free trees for digging. They suggest checking almost any alley in Wichita. Your neighbors or friends may have sucker or off-shoots of their existing trees that they would appreciate you digging up and propagating.

Want to know how to propagate a tree? Visit <https://bit.ly/4js7A34>.



MARVIN SAPP & GOSPELFEST
JUNE 2

RIVERFEST
WICHITA - KANSAS

Urban League to Posthumously Honor Kiah Duggins at 2025 Equal Opportunity Dinner

By TyJuan Davis
Wichita Contributor

The Urban League of Kansas will posthumously recognize Kiah Duggins, a Wichita native and civil rights attorney, with the Emerging Leader Award at its Equal Opportunity Dinner and Awards Ceremony on May 1.

Duggins died Jan. 29 in an aviation accident in Washington, D.C., at the age of 30. She was among 67 individuals who lost their lives when American Airlines Flight 5342 collided with a U.S. Army Black Hawk helicopter over the Potomac River during its approach to Ronald Reagan National Airport.

Duggins graduated from Wichita State University, where she co-founded the Shocker Food Locker and



The Urban League of Kansas will posthumously recognize Wichita native Kiah Duggins with the Emerging Leader Award.

served as an ambassador for diversity and inclusion. She interned at the White House under First Lady Michelle Obama and eventually earned her law degree from Harvard University.

Duggins worked as a civil rights attorney with the non-profit Civil Rights Corps, focusing on unconstitutional

policing and money bail reform. At the time of her death, she was preparing to join the faculty at Howard University School of Law.

“Kiah pursued her dreams, overcame challenges, and stood as a beacon of what’s possible when opportunity meets determination,” said Cindy Miles, president and CEO of the Urban League of Kansas.

The Equal Opportunity Dinner will be held at the Holiday Inn East ballroom, 549 S. Rock Road, Wichita. The evening begins with a reception and silent auction at 5:30 p.m., followed by dinner and the awards program at 6:30 p.m.

Additional 2025 honorees include:

Jondalyn Marshall & TyJuan Davis – Community Advocate Award

The Rev. C. Richard Kirkendoll – Volunteer of the Year

Commissioner Ryan Baty – Whitney M. Young Leadership Award

Jodee B. Catering Service (Jodee Bradley) – Willie Kendrick Small Business Award

Thrasher Systems, Inc. (John Thrasher) – Corporate Diversity Award

Tickets are available at <https://bit.ly/3EsENfv>.

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Simply Sangria: Winning Wines & Cultural Connections

Wichita business has a winning combination: wines, an events space and slamming poetry.

By TyJuan Davis
Wichita Contributor

A Home for Creative Events

Brian Miller's sangria shop in Wichita offers more than handcrafted wine — it's a cultural space where creativity and Black expression are always on the menu.

In 2020, while many businesses were scaling back, Miller expanded. He re-modeled the space himself, creating the warm, brick-accented environment guests enjoy today.

Tucked inside a modest commercial strip at 243 N. Cleveland, Simply Sangria has evolved into a local gem. Founded by Kansas City native Brian Miller, the idea began in 2017 when he brought a few bottles of homemade blackberry sangria to a family gathering.

Simply Sangria has become a vibrant community hub, especially known for its Simply Poetry nights every third Thursday.

Encouraged by his son and niece, Miller officially launched Simply Sangria in 2018 with four signature flavors: Blackberry, Tropical White, Classic White, and Peach.

"Working with Simply Sangria has been a blessing," said local poet Black Sol. "We've created a space where poets can be vulnerable and the crowd truly values quality poetry — Wichita's [poetry] scene is becoming a powerful example of community."

In 2023, his Blackberry sangria earned Best-in-Show and Double Gold at the American Sangria Challenge in South Carolina. In 2025, he returned to the competition with his Cherry Limeade, which took top honors, while Tropical and Peach tied for second.

"It's awesome to host poetry in a city where Black poets don't usually have outlets," Miller said.

"Winning confirmed that I had something special," Miller says. "Every blend is crafted and bottled right here, in-house, on Cleveland. Not a single drop of my sangria is outsourced — I keep it all local and authentic!"

The vibe is welcoming, but Miller keeps it peaceful.

Diagnosed with cancer in 2013, Miller has undergone multiple procedures and calls himself a walking miracle. His faith has only grown stronger.

"No fights. No drama. That's how we've kept it."

"People think being rooted in faith makes you soft," he says. "But even Jesus flipped tables."

Simply Sangria continues to grow its presence across Wichita. Bottles are available at Aloft Hotel, Da Vinci's Pizza, and the Hampton Hotel in Goddard. Full bottles can also be purchased during office hours at Simply Sangria's location on Cleveland. Miller also encourages people to call or text if they need a bottle outside regular hours.

"If I'm available, I'll meet you," he says.

Upcoming Events:

In addition to Simply Poetry events, you can connect with Simply Sangria at these upcoming events:

Simply Sangria will serve mimosas at Create



Brian Miller stands in front of his award-winning sangrias. His company, Simply Sangria, won three top awards early this month at the America Sangria Challenge.



Competitors, judges and the host of the Third Thursday Poetry Slam held at Simply Sangria gather for a photo

Campaign's Power Brunch on Tue., April 29, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

This summer, the shop will co-host the Spades With Love Card Tournament on Sat., Aug. 9, from 6 to 10 p.m. with Left on Read and BlackPrint.

Simply Sangria
243 N. Cleveland,
Wichita, KS
Hours:
Wed. – Fri.: 11 a.m. - 3 p.m. | Sat: 1–5 p.m.
Sun. – Tue.: Closed
(Hours may vary on holidays)
Contact: Brian Miller
at 620-482-2350

TAKE ACTION TO END HUNGER in your community

The Kansas Health Foundation is accepting applications from Kansas organizations and community partners with innovative ideas for ending hunger and food insecurity. Up to 70 submissions will receive a mini grant for as much as \$5,000 to put the project in action with support and training provided by the Kansas Leadership Center.

Applications are due May 16.



Learn more and be part of the movement.



KansasLeadershipCenter.org

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WICHITA FEDERAL CREDIT UNION



ICT, from Page 8 ↓

scheduled days for community gardening support. On those days, long-term volunteers, individuals, families and often groups want to give back help in the gardens.

Myers notes, individuals needing community service hours are also welcome to participate.

The day begins at 8 a.m. with coffee and socialization, then the group goes over the planned work for the day. People often come and go, but all participants can stay for as long or short as they like.

What participants get out of the work depends on what they're looking for. Lots of individuals are interested in learning about the sustainable gardening practices the group practices, like no-till gardening and regenerative soil practices. Both are part of a growing movement to farm and garden in a way that heals the land instead of harming it.

These methods are especially powerful because they restore soil health, increase resilience to climate change, and promote long-term sustainability — all while growing healthy food.

Some individuals join to plant a row and take or share their yield with family, friends or donate them to the community. All of the produce from the gardens are donated to volunteers, members of the surrounding community, or organizations who make the produce available for individuals in need.

In addition to home-hub, business, and

other small-pot and community gardens in District 1, this year the organization has a large demonstration garden behind CHD Boxing near 9th Street and Grove. Also this year, the organization is guiding the nonprofit Cure Violence in developing a major garden location in Planeview.

Looking Ahead

ICT Tree Huggers, is a nonprofit that so far has operated on donations and a small amount of grant funding. Myers says the organization wants to do more, but the lack of funding is limiting their work.

Myers says the organization wants to offer more educational programming. For example, she wants to add classes that teach individuals how to can and preserve the produce they grow so they can enjoy the fruits of their labor all year long.

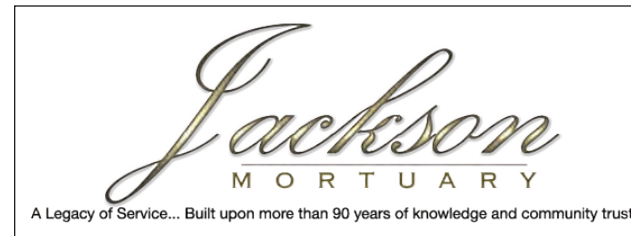
To help make that class a reality, Myers says the organization needs donated Mason Jars. The organization is also in need of a dry preserver, in case anyone has one hanging around they'd like to donate.

Donations of cash, no matter how big or small, tools and supplies are always appreciated. The organization is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, so donations made to them are tax deductible.

Also, if you know of any grants the organization can apply for, let them know.

For more info about donating or their programming, visit their Linktree at <https://linktr.ee/ictreehuggers>.

- Contributing: Mia Hennen, KMUW



Mortuary for more information. www.thejacksonmortuary.com

Charles Love, 64

July 26, 1960 - April 14, 2025

Service will be held at 11 a.m. Tue., April 29, at Jackson Mortuary Chapel, 1125 E. 13th St.

LaShara D. McPherson, 44

Sept. 24, 1980 - April 9, 2025

Service was held April 24 at St. Mary Missionary Baptist.

Vernon Baptiste, 74

April 1, 1951 - April 19, 2025

Service will be held at 10:30 a.m. Sat., May 10, at Holy Savior Catholic Church, 3000 E. 13th St.

William "Buggs" R. Polite, 58

July 1, 1966 - April 19, 2025

Service will take place on Sat., May 3. As of this printing the official time and location has not been determined. Please check the Jackson



WICHITA

Mon., April 28, 10 am - 6 pm: Neighborhood Leadership Conference, Wichita Advanced Learning Library, 711 W. 2nd St. Join the City of Wichita, Wichita Independent Neighborhoods, and the Wichita Public Library for the first-ever Neighborhood Leadership Conference. The goal is to bring together fledgling and experienced leaders across all the neighborhoods of Wichita. No matter where you're at in your leadership journey or where you live, come get involved in connecting and innovating together. Sessions will focus on ways to create/run neighborhood associations, foster connections amongst neighbors, and generate new ideas to bolster thriving communities. **FREE**

Tue., April 29, 6 - 7:30 pm: Unlocking the Door to Homeownership: Homeowner's Insurance, Wichita Habitat for Humanity, 2220 N. Opportunity Dr. This class covers the different types of coverage and what you need to look for on a policy. Learn the difference between deductible and premium. You will also discover ways to save money on your premium and the basics of filling an insurance claim. This is a required course for family partners. Register at <https://wichitahabitat.org/events/2025-04-29-homeowners-insurance>

Tue., April 29, 11 am - 1 pm: Power Brunch, The Canopy at Fountain Grove, 2333 E. 21st St. An electrifying experience at the Power Brunch, featuring Dr. Kaye Monk-Morgan, president of the Kansas Leadership Center. This is where bold ideas collide, ambitions soar, and connections turn into unstoppable collaborations. Info at GoCreate.com. **COST \$25**

Thu., May 1, 5:30 pm: Equal Opportunity

Dinner & Awards, Holiday Inn, 549 S. Rock Rd. The Urban League of Kansas will posthumously recognize Kiah Duggins, a Wichita native and civil rights attorney, with the Emerging Leader Award at this annual event. **COST \$100** <https://bit.ly/4lEv06C>

Fri., May 2, 5 - 8 pm: First Friday at Revolutsia, 2721 E. Central. Local art & handmade goods, live music & entertainment, food & drinks, popup vendors and surprises. Interested in being a vendor? Apply at <https://tinyurl.com/yavc8hbm>. **FREE**

Sat., May 3, 2 - 5 pm: Turn Your Debt into Wealth Conference, Urban League of Kansas, 2418 E. 9th St. America is in a crisis - 78% of Americans are living paycheck to paycheck; want to escape the cycle? Speakers are wealth strategist Al Ward and Financial Legacy Firm owner Jesse Smith. Learn to build wealth strategies, credit repair, tax strategies, investment strategies and more. Learn how to cancel years of interest off your debt, saving thousands of dollars. Reserve your seat at <https://tinyurl.com/3nz6d9dv>. **FREE**


Sat., May 3, 10 am: 2025 Women's Veterans Health Fair Expo, Metroplex, 5015 E. 29th St. Discover 20+ services and Veteran Service Organizations designed to support women veterans. Come for the resources, stay for the sisterhood. Mammograms will be on a scheduled appointment basis. Please contact Breast Cancer Nurse Navigator at Ascension Via Christi Hospital, 316-268-5349. **FREE**

KANSAS CITY

Fri., May 2, 10 - 11 am: Jazz Storytelling, Negro Leagues Baseball Museum, 1616 E. 18th St., Jazz Storytelling is led by vocalist Lisa Henry, storyteller Brother John, drummer Mike Warren, and bassist Tyrone Clark. Their master storytelling skills bring an innovative, engaged approach for the whole family to enjoy. **FREE**

May 2 (5:30 pm) - May 3 (1 pm): Festival 2025, Union Station, 30 W. Pershing Rd. A

See **CALENDAR**, Page 15 →



Public Notice

AHF Project Based Voucher Waiting List Opening

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT ON May 15, 2025 the Wichita Housing Authority will open the Project Based Voucher (PBV) Waiting List for Sedgwick, Butler and Harvey County (except the city of Newton). This list is only available for families who will qualify for a 4, 5, or 6-bedroom voucher.

Applicants will be able to apply electronically for the AHF Project Based Voucher waiting list at www.wichita.myhousing.com on May 15, 2025 and will remain open indefinitely. Applications that are mailed, faxed, e-mailed or hand delivered will not be processed.

Applicants will be placed on the waiting list based on the date and time that they apply, and any selection preferences established by the Wichita Housing Authority. This new waiting list is also available for existing applicants on our regular waiting list as long as they qualify for a 4, 5, or 6-bedroom voucher. Existing applicants who want to apply for the AHF Project Based Voucher waiting list must log into the portal and update their application.

Applicants requiring assistance completing an application may contact Housing and Community Services Department, Shara Horton, 316-462-3721 at least 5 business days in advance. If you require an oral interpretation in a language other than English, please call (316) 462-3721. Si requiere una interpretacion oral en un idioma que no sea ingles, por favor llame al (316) 462-3721.

VIBRANT VOICES

A Special Publication for Seniors



Senior tennis players and friends (L-R) Avon DeGraffenread, Alex Lee and Ron Thompson.

These Vibrant Seniors Expect to Play Tennis All of Their Life

Tennis, considered a game you can play for life, can also help extend your life.

By Bonita Gooch,
Tennis Fan and Player

If you're looking for a way to have a long healthy life, consider playing tennis.

Research suggests playing tennis can increase your lifespan by up to 9.7 years. That's far more than any other sport tested, including those regular workouts at the gym, that only increase your life span by 1.5 years.

In fact, the U.S. Tennis Association is billing itself as "The World's Healthiest Sport." While it might not be, it's definitely a game with an array of positive outcomes such as improved cardiovascular and bone health, better agility and coordination, and overall happiness.

Friends and competitors at tennis: Ron Thompson, 71; Alex Lee, 69; and Avon

DeGraffenread, 66, will tell you they're a pretty, healthy and happy bunch.

When the weather is right, you can find the three of them almost any evening on the McAdams Park Tennis Courts in Wichita, KS. They've been regulars at the court for more than 35 years.

All three of these guys are among the top players in their age group. Ron, a natural athlete who played basketball in high school, didn't switch to tennis until he felt he was too old to run and gun on a basketball court. That was 35 years ago.

Alex, who started playing tennis in 1974, says he got his interest in tennis from a brother who kept talking about Jimmy Connors, one of the top pros at the time. Alex took up the game as a freshman at the University of Pine Bluff Arkansas, and by his junior year,

he was good enough to make the school's tennis team.

Avon, can up on the game, thanks to historic Wichita Coach Charles "Goose" Doughty. Doughty was his teacher at L'Ouverture elementary school, which is located across the street from the McAdams Tennis Courts.

"He introduced everybody in the school to tennis. He even had a program for the kids," said Avon. "He told us tennis was a game for life and that you could meet a lot of people playing tennis."

Pretty soon, thanks to Coach Doughty's training and support, they'd developed a group of fairly strong tennis players. Coach Doughty started taking them around the state to tennis tournaments and they started winning. He even took a group of the best players to a national American Tennis

Association tournament, in San Diego. Avon was just 16, and tennis was taking him places.

He went on to play tennis in high school and in college.

Avon says one of his biggest Kansas competitors in youth tennis, from 12 years old, was Bobby Grout. Amazingly, they still play against each other to this day and they both still have a competitive game - confirming you meet people in tennis and you make lifelong friends.

McAdams Tennis players are a close-knit group of friends. They see each other regularly during the summer, often three or more times per week.

Most players will tell you, it's their most

See **SENIORS**, Page 14 →

SENIORS, from Page 13 ↓

enjoyable time of the day. You're out in nature, either playing or watching others play, shooting the breeze and often engaging in some fun and competitive chatter.

More than just playing, these three are helping grow a tennis community at McAdams Court and beyond. They're all active in the McAdams Tennis Foundation and the United States Tennis Association.

The McAdams Tennis Foundation has continued the free summer tennis lessons that Coach Doughty started more than 50 years ago and maintained until his death in 2013.

This year's summer tennis program gets underway May 13 and will run every Tuesday and Thursday until the end of July.

Classes are from 6 to 7 p.m. for children 10 and under. Sessions for youth 10 and over and adults are from 7 to 8 p.m. Players at all levels, including individuals who've never picked up a racket, are welcome to attend.

Several McAdams youth Tennis players have gone on to college on tennis scholarships, including Sheree Pruitt, Kerry Dunn, Paris Cuninghame and Sidney McGrown.

Continuing the tennis for life theory, all of them still play.

Outside McAdams, Alex is on the USTA Missouri Valley Section Board and he's the board's recent past president. Ron is the diversity chair for USTA Kansas. His role is to introduce the game of tennis to minority youth.

The three, along with other members of the McAdams Tennis club, also travel to tournaments across the region sponsored by other Black tennis clubs. Regular trips for the group include the annual tournaments in Pine Bluff, AR; Tulsa, Dallas

and Houston.

Houston is the biggest of the tournaments, often attracting as many as 400 players.

The McAdams Club also has an annual tournament each year in July that attracts about 130 players, many of whom attend from out of state. This year's tournament is July 24-26 at Riverside Park.

What they all enjoy is the friendships they build with people across the country.

"You see a lot of the players at different tournaments, and it's always good to see them," says Alex. Like the survey says, tennis is a social sport that helps improve your overall well being.

Even though tennis is a game for life, Avon says, the group is interested in attracting younger players.

"We're getting older," he said, "and even though it's a game for life, we need to start bringing up players to replace us."

Tennis Helps Extend Your Life

The Copenhagen City Heart Study (CCHS), out of Denmark, demonstrated that playing tennis may actually extend your lifespan by 9.7 years. The study's authors looked at sports and activities other than running that increase your lifespan when compared to those with a sedentary lifestyle.

Below is a summary of the results ranked by number of years of gain in life expectancy:

Tennis: 9.7 years
Badminton: 6.2 years
Soccer: 4.7 years
Cycling: 3.7 years
Swimming: 3.4 years
Jogging: 3.2 years
Calisthenics: 3.1 years
Health Club: 1.5 years



Extending Your Health Span, the number of years you live a healthy life should be our focus versus life span, that may not be very enjoyable.

Focus on Health Span Versus Life Span

By Voice News Service

Modern medicine has increased life expectancy – over the past 100 years the global life expectancy has more than doubled. But, this has not necessarily been accompanied by an equivalent increase in healthy life expectancy. People are living longer but many of those years are burdened by chronic diseases such as heart disease, diabetes and even cancer. T

This is where it's important to understand the difference between lifespan and healthspan. Lifespan is the total number of years we live whereas healthspan is how many of those years we remain healthy and free from disease.

Genes are Only 20% of the Picture Well, it turns out only about 20% of how long we live is dictated by our genes, whereas the other 80% is dictated by our lifestyles. This means we have incredible power and control over our health in preventing chronic diseases and increasing our

longevity.

Americans, on average, can expect to live to about age 76. But their health will start to decline much earlier than that, around age 64.

Lengthening Health Spans

There are currently two main ways experts think we may be able to extend our health spans. The first is by adopting everyday healthy behaviors we already know we should be engaging in: exercising regularly, eating nutritious food, getting good sleep and investing in our social bonds. The second is using more experimental approaches that target cellular processes involved with aging through drugs, genetic manipulations or extreme diets.

These innovative anti-aging interventions have been shown to lengthen the lives of worms and mice. But it would take decades, and billions of dollars, to determine whether they can help humans live longer, too. So instead, researchers are beginning to test a few of them

in people to see if they can prolong health spans. The hope is that the drugs and other interventions will slow down how fast someone is aging, which in turn could delay the onset of disease.

Health span and life span are intrinsically linked, so if people live healthier for longer, they are also likely to live longer, period. Studies of centenarians have found that 42% did not experience an age-related chronic disease before the age of 80. In Japan and Singapore, the two countries with the highest life expectancies (on average about 84), people's health starts to decline around age 73.

It will take years before the research can tell us whether it's possible to reliably and safely slow down the aging process using experimental approaches. But we can all start adopting some of the lifestyle changes to try to extend our own personal health spans now.

Sources: *UVMhealth.org* and the *Associated Press*



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CALENDAR, from Page 12 ↓

fun-filled weekend at Union Station brings KC's best restaurants and chefs together to serve up some goodness just for you. Give in, give big and consume for a great cause. COST \$45+ www.KCFestival.com

Sat., May 3, 2 - 5 pm: Power & Light Summer Concert, Power & Light District. Live from the big stage KC Rukus and The Kentucky Derby from the huge monitors. Dress like you're at Churchill Downs: Big hats and Big drinks. Great places to eat and stay for the hottest Kentucky Derby Party. **FREE+**

Sat., May 3, 8 pm: KPRS 75th Anniversary Jam, The Serenade 2025, T-Mobile Center, 1323 Grand Blvd. JMaxwell & The Serenade 2025 tour w/special guest Lucky Daye & Marsha Ambrosius. COST \$45+ <https://bit.ly/4ch8QDf>

Sat, May 3, 1-4 pm: MISD Art Show, Westport

Presbyterian Church, 201 Westport Rd. The amazing works of art created by incarcerated artists in the Missouri-DOC. MISD, the local advocacy group that supports families impacted by incarceration received the ART for a benefit art show. An opportunity to purchase one-of-a-kind art rendered for any and everyone. **FREE**

Sat., May 3, 3 - 8 pm: 4th Annual KC Alpha Derby Day Party, Vine Street Brewing Co., 2010 Vine, #Building 2A. Get fly in your best Derby attire and enjoy the atmosphere. Experience the thrill of the Derby like never before at this exclusive event. DJ Diamond Diva will spin the hottest tracks from now to back in the day, all day long. Sponsored by Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. Beta Lambda. COST \$35 <https://bit.ly/3Gxyhoc>

Sat., May 3, 6 - 9 pm: Kijji Universe Presents Black August Art & Fashion Show, Gem Theater, 1615 E. 18th St. Commemorating all the

real-life Black heroes and she-roses 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 (i.e. Nat Turner & Assata Shakur). In their honor, this fashion and art show 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 \$30+ <https://bit.ly/42DCwpK>

Sat., May 3, 8:30 - 11:30am: Black Women Get Fit, Cliff Drive, in the historic Northeast. It's time for our annual bike ride. We always look forward to spring and the opportunity to get out and get a little sun. We will kick off the morning with a little Soul Qi, a blend of Tai Chi and Qigong and then prepare for the ride. We are thrilled to have Angela Habeebullah back to lead us. Some bikes are available. Register at <https://bit.ly/4ivW715>. **FREE**

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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.



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Collaboration Generates \$3.5 million for Testing Individuals Impacted by Groundwater Contamination

By Bonita Gooch
The Voice Editor in Chief

Funding has finally been secured for testing individuals from the community impacted by groundwater contamination sites in Sedgwick County, with a particular focus on the neighborhoods near 29th Street and Grove, officials have just announced.

A full \$3.5 million in funding has been secured from a coalition featuring government, private-sector and non-profit partners.

“While this situation has been complicated and at times tense, I believe we all need to applaud our local and state officials for their spirit of collaboration and for prioritizing the needs of residents in the 29th and Grove neighborhood,” said Ed O’Malley, Kansas Health Foundation president and CEO.

Background & Funding

The community first learned about a chemical spill at 29th and Grove that

contained a carcinogen called TCE in 2023. The spill, which occurred decades before, had contaminated groundwater beneath the area, creating a plume that extends for 2.9 miles.

Efforts began in the Kansas Legislature to provide funds for health testing of individuals who might be impacted by the spill. This led to an initial commitment of \$1.5 million in state funds, with an additional \$1 million from the state dependent on securing a \$1 million local match.

The April 24 announcement includes \$1 million in local funds and the \$1.5 million from the state, matched by the \$1 million local contribution.

The total amount of \$3.5 million in funding consists of contributions from each of the following:

- State of Kansas: \$2,500,000
- Kansas Health Foundation: \$500,000
- City of Wichita: \$125,000
- Sedgwick County: \$125,000
- Wichita Foundation: \$100,000

- Fidelity Bank: \$50,000
 - Blue Cross Blue Shield of Kansas: \$50,000
 - Stand Together Foundation: \$35,000
 - Sunflower Foundation: \$15,000
- “This effort reflects what’s possible when we come together across business, nonprofit, city, county and state lines for the health and safety of our community,” said Chairman Ryan Baty, Sedgwick County Commissioner for District 4.

Grant Program

The Kansas Health Foundation will administer the funds through a grant program. Healthcare entities interested in providing services to those impacted will be able to apply for grants to cover testing costs, including staff time, equipment and process expenses.

Program leaders say giving the money directly to local health clinics will give everyone who needs testing an affordable and convenient way to be tested. KHF will not receive any funding for

administering the grant program, ensuring all \$3.5 million will be available in grants.

An advisory group composed of city and county officials, healthcare experts and community members, will support administration of the grant program.

“The integrity of this effort hinges on the meaningful involvement of impacted community members,” said Wichita City Councilman Brandon Johnson. “Ensuring they receive regular updates and have the opportunity to provide valuable input on both the process and potential solutions. Recognizing this from the beginning, we have actively engaged with community health professionals and prioritized understanding the perspectives of those directly affected by the tragic spill.”

The grant program will be available starting June 1, with all information and application materials available that day at KHF’s website, www.KansasHealth.org. Grant funds should be dispersed no later than Oct. 30.

If You Weren’t Clear

what the January argument between Wichita Councilmember Brandon Johnson and state Rep. Ford Carr was all about, this is what it was about: Securing funding for testing individuals who might be contaminated by the groundwater contamination spill in Northeast Wichita. Carr had helped secure the state’s share of the funding, but he didn’t believe the city was moving quickly enough to raise the required \$1 million in matching funds.



Brandon Johnson



Ford Carr



Photo Courtesy of Paula Green

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