

The RACINE MIRROR

free

A Reflection of the Positive in the Community

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~Dr. Shawna Whitehead~

Dr. Shawna
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Moments in the Mirror with the Lady in the Mirror! More Than a Friend

by Lisa Parham

Truly positive relationships of any sort, friend, family or lover are extremely valuable. I would never knowingly hurt a friend. Have you ever met someone, and or immediately clicked, and the two of you began hanging out regularly and quickly developed a friendship, and over time many stories were swapped about your lives and then you find out your new friend was always talking about money problems and every time you talk to her she's at a restaurant or drive-thru or even the mall spending money she says she doesn't have. So immediately I became concerned. I asked her if she was okay financially so, seeing what her habit consisted of I didn't want to say or do anything that would hurt her feelings or our friendship. Although she said she was fine with me asking her questions, she stopped calling me and made excuses not to hang out anymore.

Unsure of how to handle the situation I enlisted the advice of several friends (giving no names of course). The consensus was, "Girl if I were you I'd drop her as a friend," or they would say "it's not your problem so why should you worry your self about it." Initially, I listened to my other girlfriends and became somewhat annoyed at my new friend for being so touchy, because we had talked about any and everything in the past. But then I realized she was genuinely hurt by my actions. I would never knowingly hurt a friend. So I decided to make the best possible effort to clear the air and salvage our relationship. I called and invited her to events until she finally thawed and realized my intentions were sincere.

It took some doing but we are now



back on track. I put in the effort to understand her perspective and the work to rebuild our trust because I felt the friendship was worth the effort.

Too often, we are quick to throw away quality relationships because of pride,

stubbornness or reluctance to make things right. Truly positive relationships of any sort whether be it friend, family, or lover are extremely valuable. They are your most important possessions, to be treasured above all else. Be sure, however that the people in your life are positive and not toxic. Often, we spend more time trying to save dysfunctional relationships in which we give more than we get.

So in my closing put in the effort to save relationships you value. I have been pulled in different directions professionally and personally. I had to devote time working on preserving my perspective. I respect the bond I have with my family, friends, community, and co-workers, and the way in which I labor to protect the relationships I've accomplished. So, when you find yourself in conflict with someone you love, take a minute to think about whether you have benefited emotionally and spiritually from interactions with this person in the past, and if you have and you truly love them (him or her), don't let ego or complacency prevent you from fighting for the relationship.

Have a great and wonderful rest of the summer!

Always,

Lisa Parham
Chief Operating Officer

"I feel that we should all work to continue to make Racine a positive atmosphere for our Younger People, Thank you for helping to be a positive influence in our Community."



THE RACINE MIRROR

6233 Durand Ave., Suite 102
Racine, WI 53406

Office: 262-633-8677

Fax: 262-598-9120

Email: RacineMirror@yahoo.com

OUR STAFF

Publisher/Marketing Communication
and Public Relations:

LISA PARHAM

Guest Writers

DARRELL WOODARD

TOM KRAL

DOMINIQUE LAMBRIGHT

Website

NICHOLAS RAVNIKAR

Social Media

NICHOLAS RAVNIKAR

Photographer

RALPH TUNSTELL

Copy Editor:

CHERYL KUCZEREP

Distribution: OPEN

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- To uplift our community by being a reflection of what is positive and good.
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- To encourage interaction among diverse walks of life.

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- To retain a love and understanding for our community and its members.
- To be a positive influence and a profile for faith and hope.
- To endorse individual uniqueness and promote an appreciation for diversity.

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- Respect
- Integrity
- Positive Development
- Excellence
- Good Stewardship

The views and opinions printed in The Racine Mirror do not necessarily reflect those of the owner and management. Though articles, letters, and editorial perspectives may be edited for presentation purposes. The Racine Mirror does not suppress the editorial content or viewpoints of its writers.

Contribute story ideas by calling The Racine Mirror office at 262-633-8677 or you can email us at racinemirror@yahoo.com

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Dr. Shawna Whitehead

by Dominique Lambricht

Dr. Shawna Whitehead, a very successful entrepreneur, has planted her feet in the downtown area of Racine. As an author, motivational speaker, business consultant, business coach, seminar facilitator, organizer, etc. She is a busy woman helping the community in so many ways. One of the best ways to help a community is writing a book that can be used often for the struggling and well-off people who populate a community. She recently wrote the book *Breaking Generational Curses* to help those who can't seem to get out of the cycles handed down to them. But before, she wrote a book called *A Successful Way of Entrepreneurship & Obtaining Wealth* with her daughter.

So they teach people not only on how to grow your business, but how to get employees, how to take your business to a whole other level, whether it be with stocks and bonds, with offshore accounts, and just educating you on all aspects on how to obtain wealth without being adept. With Dr. Shawna being a business owner since she was about 20 years old, she has so much great experience to offer our community. She has owned daycare centers, a beauty shop, church properties, etc. She clearly has a spirit of entrepreneurship and has been blessed with it, so she shares her gift. She's very passionate about helping people, helping people to walk in purpose when knowledge is power, educating people on what they don't know, especially people of color.

get your credit repaired as you're becoming a new business owner. They help with 501c3(s) as well. God has blessed her to help open over 200 businesses. With the Destine to Succeed Employment Assistance Agency, an employment agency where they get people to get jobs and careers, the gratefulness of those in the community only continues to put a smile on her face.

Even those who think that they don't have a chance to do a quarter of the things other people have, Dr. Shawna presents an opportunity for you to turn your life around or start you off in the right direction. She conducts an adult school diploma program, which has been amazing. They have a traditional program for the adults, which is yearlong. Then they have a celebrated program, in which you can get your high school diploma in 45 days. It was awesome they just had their first graduation where people around the world graduated from her program. It was real graduation where they had full cap and gowns, celebrating those people, regardless of age. The oldest graduate was 65. There are just so many successes that have come from Dr. Shawna's help.

The new location, 4060 N. Main Street Suite 102, has been there since December of 2020, but Dr. Shawna just opened her doors for customers in June of 2021. And is having a grand opening on September 1, 2021. They've been servicing people already, which has been great. In the Milwaukee location, 4429 W. Fond Du Lac Avenue, she has been there



And to add to the amazement of her skill, she currently has eight businesses without being in debt. Originally located in Milwaukee and still growing, this makes the location in Racine her second one. She just opened and has five businesses in one building; she's a one-stop-shop. She owns Destine to Succeed Institute. They are an institution that does business startups and has entrepreneurial programs with certification programs. Dr. Shawna is certified by the state of Wisconsin. At Destine to Succeed, they teach cultural diversity and corporate etiquette, which is important as culture, diversity, and inclusion are needed worldwide. They also teach customer service, train and develop employees and employers, and background checking and job placement recruitment.

There are so many aspects to her businesses and what they do to help others succeed. Some of the other things to mention are web design to help those startups get themselves out there and noticed and create a great logo to brand themselves. You can

since June 2017. As a busy woman keeping the community close in her heart, she is over the economics division for NAACP, for the state of Wisconsin, bringing people together and helping people, especially small business owners, to tap into that champion and get some of that grant money that's out there. Also, connecting people on how to be better.

September 29, 2021, there will be a panel for our youth, something like a youth entrepreneur workshop with four entrepreneurs and people who want, who are already entrepreneurs and to grow their business, can. This event will be held in Washington Park from 10am-3pm, but more concrete details are to come. Dr. Shawna has hosted numerous events like this. She wants to get people that look like us and empower them. Let them know you can do it no matter what you can do all things. So right now, she and her team are on a mission.

Along with all that hard work, one needs some rest, so I asked what Dr. Shawna does in her free time. She told me she loves on



herself. Monday to Friday, she works, slays, but then on weekends, she really takes that time to just do self-reflection, meditate on the word of God, and just enjoy life. And then she also works out, so she tries not to do too many events on the weekend because everyone needs to take a day off. She seems to have found a great balance, but she says it didn't come overnight.

Dr. Shawna mentions how her daughter has taught her so much about work-life balance. She would call her daughter after hours, trying to talk about work-related things. Her daughter would tell her they can talk during the weekday business hours about it. After so long, she adopted the same habits

to still have the balance that so many of us are still learning to do. You must learn to cut it off. Otherwise, you'll get burned out. At the end of the day, life is what we make it, and we have to take advantage of what's presented to us and figure out what that can mean for ourselves, as Dr. Shawna has done.

On an ending note, Dr. Shawna reminds me that her business is a one-stop-shop. You are destined to succeed. You are destined to succeed no matter what when you come to their place of business. All of her businesses have meaning connecting back to you are destined to succeed.

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We're excited that Black Humanity Now Mural 2021 is quickly approaching on August 14, have you signed up to volunteer to help us paint? Our community mural is the largest and boldest statement of human rights in Racine County!

This year's mural Black Humanity Now weekend will offer more for all of our fellow human rights warriors. On deck this year we have a few powerful keynote speakers for the opening ceremony! The movement is still relevant, Black Humanity is still important, issues impacting Black Humanity in education, policing, government, health and the private sector still exist.

The work still needs to continue. Announcements about the keynote speakers and the activities of the day will be forthcoming in the next few days, so stay tuned.

If you'd like to get involved, there are many ways! **ADVOCATE, VOLUNTEER OR DONATE!** Share on your social media pages, send an email to your family and friends, print off the flyer and post at your church or club, I'd love to have you on board!

JOIN US!
For more information, go to www.mahoganygallery.com/black-humanitynow or contact Scott Terry.



Right: Fredricka Hunter of Mount Pleasant paints part of a "Black Humanity Now! Street Mural" in Downtown Racine in 2020.

GREGORY SHAVER, FOR THE JOURNAL TIMES

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Book Review:**‘Breathing Fire: Female Inmate Firefighters on the Front Lines of California’s Wildfires’ by Jaime Lowe**

© 2021, MCB / Farrar, Straus and Giroux, \$27.00, 303 pages

Your oversized plastic tote is all packed.

You don’t want to think about it, but if you have to bug out, you can. A backup laptop, extra dog bowls, every irreplaceable document, it’s all there, ready to slide into the car. You can never be too careful when it’s fire season and in the new book “Breathing Fire” by Jaime Lowe, you’ll meet some of the women tasked with keeping you safe.

Shawna Lynn Jones had made mistakes in her life. The biggest one got her sent to prison.

She was young, though, and in good physical shape, which ultimately helped her get into the CDCR’s (California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation) inmate firefighter program. She learned to be a buckler, tasked with cleaning up behind her partner, Carla, who was a sawyer with a chainsaw. Crew 13-3 consisted of two sawyer / buckler pairs, followed by other women with jobs specific to stopping wildfires.

Jaime Lowe grew up in California but until she read about Shawna, she was un-

aware of the role that female inmate crews have in fighting fire. Inmate firefighters take the same qualifications tests as do free-world firefighters. They do the same work, face the same dangers, and they save the state millions of dollars: when Lowe began writing this book, inmate firefighters averaged less than \$3 an hour for their skills.

Still, despite low pay, many inmates pursued positions in “fire camp.” Some, says Lowe, even hoped to fight fires after their release, although it was a long shot: their felony records follow them, no matter where they might apply.

In learning about the program, Lowe got a chance to meet Selena, who “wasn’t intending to go back to prison” after her release. She met Whitney, formerly a white-collar worker and ultra-marathoner. She met Laurie, who struggled to find a job after prison; Sonya, who delighted in a new grandson; and Marquet, who found solace in her religion.

And Lowe met Shawna, who gave her life to fight a fire....

Let’s start here: this is a good story. It’s very good. But for readers looking for boots-on-the-ground action and extended-wall-of-fire danger, it’ll be a disappointment because “Breathing Fire” isn’t that kind of book.

Rather than focusing on flames, author Jaime Lowe instead concentrates on the women of Crew 13-3 and the work they did for the State of California. In this, readers can expect pure honesty: Lowe unabashedly reveals what each woman did to land her in prison and the struggles each had in life, in prison, and on the line. She also makes absolutely sure that readers – especially those in California – understand the unfairness of a far-ranging system that denies good jobs to women who are essentially professionally trained, and who’ve paid their dues and are trying to move forward.

Overall, parts of “Breathing Fire” put you on charred grass and parts make you cell-bound. The rest of it shows flawed real-life heroes amid an area-wide “constant crisis,” and if you’re burning for stories like that, this book is packed.



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The Johnson Foundation at Wingspread Names New Trustees

Appointments Reaffirm Foundation's Commitment to Advancing Regional Resilience

Racine, Wisconsin, July 20, 2021. The Johnson Foundation at Wingspread today announced Gregory M. Wesley, Laura Gutiérrez and Tim Mahone have been named Trustees and will join its Board of Directors, effective immediately. The Foundation's Board is responsible for providing strategic oversight and guidance to programs and initiatives of the private operating foundation located in Racine, Wisconsin.

"We are very pleased to welcome Greg, Laura and Tim to the Johnson Foundation. Their strong roots in Southeastern Wisconsin, coupled with their breadth of experience and expertise, will bring added dimension and insight to our strategic programs focused on building stronger, more resilient communities," said Helen Johnson-Leipold, Chairman, The Johnson Foundation.



Gregory M. Wesley is Senior Vice President, Strategic Alliances and Business Development for the Medical College of Wisconsin (MCW), responsible for creating and deepening relationships with

strategic partners, enterprises and alliances to support opportunities for MCW's long-term growth in Milwaukee, Madison, Green Bay and Wausau. Prior to joining MCW, he was

a private practice lawyer from 1997-2016. He currently serves on the Board of MHS Health Wisconsin, Milwaukee World Festival, Inc., the Greater Milwaukee Committee, the YMCA of Metropolitan Milwaukee, Teach for America Milwaukee and Versiti, Inc. among others. Mr. Wesley is a fellow of the Wisconsin Law Foundation; former member of the Wisconsin State Board Blue Ribbon Task Force in Diversity; and past member of the National Bar Association Board of Governors. He earned his undergraduate degree from Indiana University-Bloomington and law degree from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.



Laura Gutiérrez is Executive Director, United Community Center of Milwaukee, the first Latina woman to hold the position in the organization's 51-year history. In this role she leads

UCC's programming for Hispanics and near South Side residents of all races and ages in education, cultural arts, recreation, community development and health and human services which is designed to help individuals achieve their potential by focusing on cultural heritage as a means of personal development.

Immediately before joining UCC, she served as Secretary of the Department of Safety and Professional Services for the State

of Wisconsin under former Governor Walker, and prior to her government service was Vice President of Academic Affairs at St. Anthony School in Milwaukee, the largest private Catholic K-12 school in the nation.

Ms. Gutiérrez earned her Bachelor of Science degree from Carroll College, holds a Master of Arts in Leadership and Policy from Marquette University, and after completing the District Administrator Licensure Program at Cardinal Stritch University, she received her Superintendent license in 2016.

Tim Mahone

is president and founder of Mahone Strategies, a public affairs firm offering government relations, civic and community engagement, corporate communications, crisis communications, and public relations services.



Tim is the Chair of The Mary Lou & Arthur F. Mahone Fund, which he created to honor the humanitarian and philanthropic legacy of his parents. Its mission is to provide educational opportunities for economically and academically deserving youth, while supporting healthy lifestyle initiatives in communities of color. Prior to starting his firm, he served as the State Political director for President Obama in 2008 and served in the administration of Governor Jim

Doyle as Southeast Regional Director for the Office of the Governor. Tim currently serves on the Advocate Aurora Health Community Outreach Advisory Committee, and the Kenosha County Health Equity Task Force. He also served as president of the UW-Parkside Foundation board, as a member of the Grants Committee for the Kenosha Community Foundation, several other local boards and committees, and is a member of the Association of Black Foundation Executives. He is a native of Kenosha and a graduate of Marquette University.

About The Johnson Foundation

We are the architect and convener of meaningful conversations where people are uniquely inspired to embark on new paths forward to a better world through thoughtful, deliberative and respectful collaboration. We believe that the individual and collective power of human ideas and force of the human spirit are what drives meaningful change in the world and devote ourselves to being an incubator for such drivers of change. The Foundation's Resilient Communities Initiative has launched a cross-sector regional conversation focused on finding ways to ensure our local communities' long-term economic and social wellbeing. Additionally, the Foundation provides a unique conference and retreat center experience on its Wingspread campus for select groups seeking to benefit from our expertise in creating effective meetings and outcomes. For additional information or to learn more about The Johnson Foundation at Wingspread, please visit www.johnsonfdn.org.

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AUGUST IS BLACK BUSINESS MONTH

August is National Black Business Month, and we recognize the Black-owned businesses across the country.

Black business owners account for about 10 percent of U.S. businesses and about 30 percent of all minority-owned businesses. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, that amounts to approximately two million companies owned by African Americans. Nearly 40 percent of black-owned businesses are in health care and social assistance, repair and maintenance, and personal and laundry services. Other categories include advertising firms, auto dealerships, consulting services, restaurants, barbershops, beauty salons, and more.

Among cities, New York has the most black-owned businesses in the U.S. followed by Atlanta. The highest ratio of black-owned businesses is in Washington, DC where 28% of all businesses are black-owned. The growth of black-owned franchise businesses has been explosive. In 2012 over 30% of franchise businesses were black-owned, up from about 20% five years previous.

HOW TO OBSERVE

Support and encourage African American-owned businesses in your community. Learn more about business opportunities for the African American community. Use #National-BlackBusinessMonth in social media correspondence. Discover more on the Black Business Month website.

HISTORY

Historian John William Templeton and engineer Frederick E. Jordan Sr founded National Black Business Month in August 2004 to “drive the policy agenda affecting the 2.6 million African-American businesses.”

Source: <https://nationaldaycalendar.com/>



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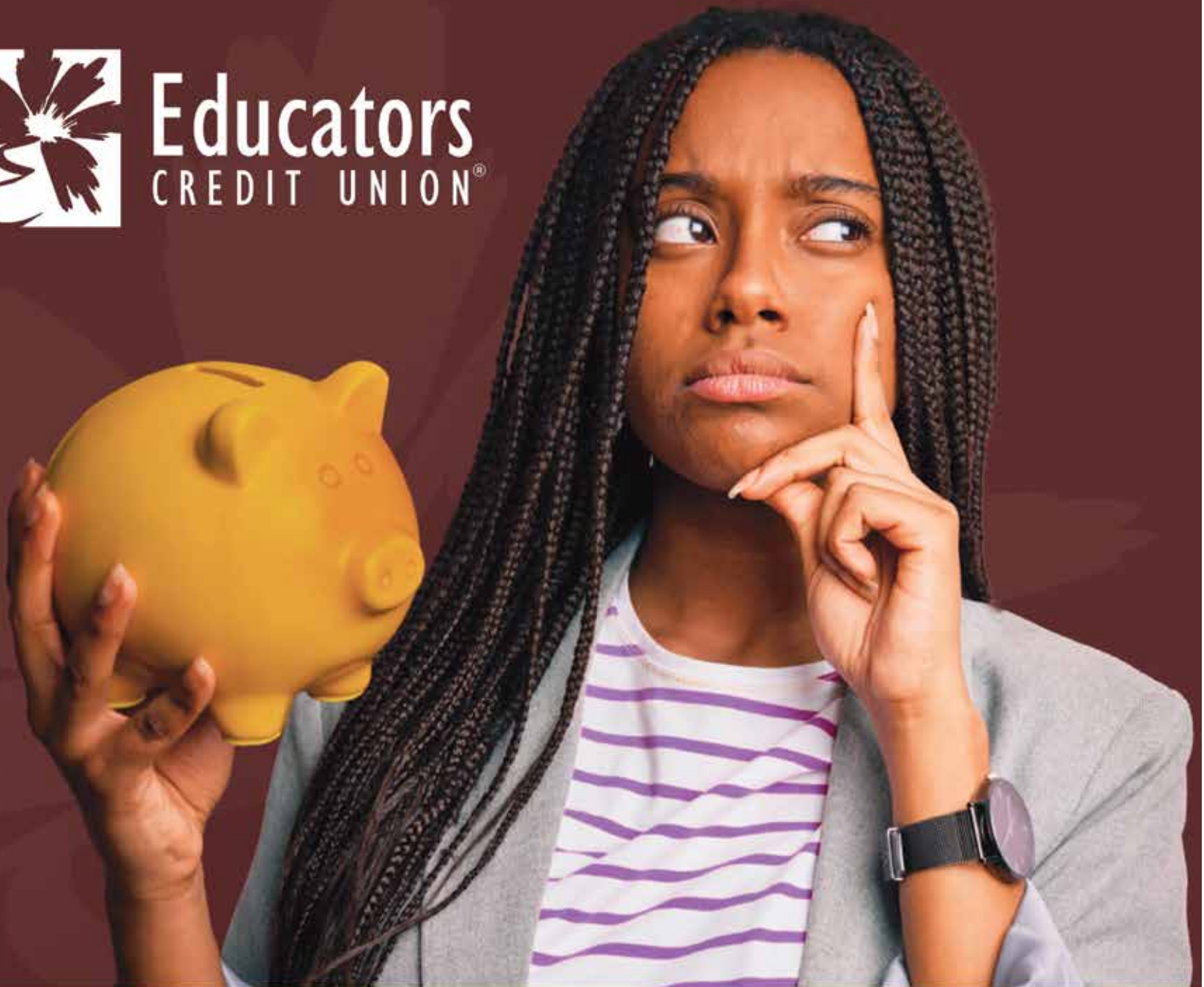
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Justice Initiative to Focus on Mental Health, Equitable Treatment and Police Accountability

Racine Women for Racial Justice (RWRJ) announces a new Justice Initiative with the intent to engage the 1,000-plus followers of the organization and other caring community residents in demanding equitable treatment for Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) when they encounter law enforcement and judicial systems in Racine County.

The Justice Initiative will focus on: • Challenging the incarceration of people with mental health issues and the lack of available services for them; • Examining policies and practices of law enforcement and legal systems; • Engaging members and other Racine County residents to call for change when clear disparities become apparent; • Establishing supports for people who experience disparities when they encounter these systems

The RWRJ Justice Initiative continues to request transparency from the Racine County Sheriff's Department. Earlier this summer, the Justice Initiative called attention to the death of Malcolm James, a young man of color who died while in custody in the Racine County Jail over the Memorial Day weekend. Many questions remain about the cause of James' death, particularly when it has been clearly documented that James was having a mental health crisis.

Not only do we ask for transparency from the Sheriff's Department about what happened when Mr. James was in its care, but we call on the County Board to take immediate actions as it prepares the 2022 County Budget to increase services to people with mental health issues and to stop the incarceration of people who are in crisis. RWRJ will continue to focus on the mental health crisis in Racine County and how it disproportionately impacts BIPOC People.

RWRJ is also releasing the body camera footage of a Racine County Sheriff Deputy in the apprehension of a person of color. The recording of the arrest, which occurred almost three years ago, was recently made available when an attorney for the person arrested, Deandre R. McCollum, filed a civil lawsuit on his behalf in the Eastern District of US District Court. The suit, filed against Racine County and Deputy Edward Drewitz, alleges the officer used excessive force in McCollum's arrest. RWRJ agrees that Drewitz's actions serve as an example of the excessive use of force often experienced by the BIPOC community.

In his encounter with Deputy Drewitz, McCollum, a black man, was approached by the white deputy for having tinted car windows. The encounter escalated to a chase, and Drewitz then released a canine to stop McCollum. The officer tased McCollum multiple times and allowed the dog to continue the attack even after McCollum was handcuffed and showing no signs of resisting arrest. The case calls for public scrutiny and review. It raises serious questions about why McCollum was stopped and how he was treated during his arrest.

The video of the McCollum arrest can be accessed here: <https://www.dropbox.com/s/qy0hpevqt6puxut/edward%20drewitz%20body%20cam.mp4?dl=0>

"The Justice Initiative will be studying this incident," said Kelly Scroggins-Powell, Executive Director and co-founder of RWRJ. "We feel the public has the right and the responsibility to review what happened in this case and others like it, including the use of canines and tasers in the apprehension of non-violent Black, Indigenous, People of Color county-wide."



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UW-Parkside Professional & Continuing Education offers online language courses starting in September

SOMERS, Wis. - Take advantage of UW-Parkside's Professional & Continuing Education online language courses starting this September and begin your journey to learn Mandarin Chinese, Russian, and Spanish.

Are you curious why so many people read Tolstoy and Dostoevsky? Join us in the Russian language class starting from scratch on September 15 and explore Russia through its language. Learn Russian and open up an area of the world that has produced some of the greatest writers and composers, and has long fascinated people from around the world.

Starting on September 18, take your first steps into the most widely spoken language in the modern world, Mandarin Chinese. Whether for fun or travel, these courses will give you the foundation you need to start communicating in spoken Mandarin. We will highlight Chinese historical and cultural insights while learning the language. Through practicing dialogues and common phrases, you'll find that speaking Chinese can be a breeze.

Begin your journey to becoming fluent in Spanish on October 5. Whether you want to expand your knowledge of culture, travel, or communicate more fluently, learning Spanish is full of benefits personally and professionally. This course will allow you to engage with other language-learners. No prior knowledge of Spanish is required.

Register for an online language course and learn more about these and other classes. Also, look for more information soon on In-Person Retirement Planning Courses. Visit <https://www.uwp.edu/explore/news/uwp.edu/mini>.



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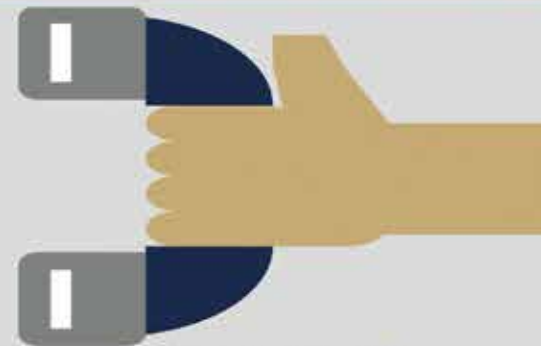
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-  **Keep 6 feet apart**
-  **Stay home if you can**
-  **Wash your hands**
-  **Symptoms? Get tested**

RSO: Join us for our August Pops concert!

The musicians, staff, and board of directors of the Racine Symphony Orchestra invite you to celebrate with us again on Friday, August 27 at 7:30 pm for our August Pops concert! We return to Fountain Banquet Hall, located in Sturtevant.

The concert experience in August will be similar to June's. Seating will be at tables of eight to 10 and will be spaced a little further apart than in the past to address enhanced physical distancing. There will be no general admission seating. Premium seating is located in the first three rows; then regular seating for the remainder of the tables. You can purchase a whole table, or individual

seats, as we have done in prior years.

We have decided not to have a meal available in August. Also, you will not be allowed to bring in food per the Racine County Health Department regulations. However, there will be full bar service available to purchase wine, cocktails, beer, coffee, soda, and water.

In lieu of tickets being mailed to your home ahead of time, you will check in at the box office at Fountain Banquet Hall the night of the concert.

We ask that you wear a mask if you are not fully vaccinated. There will be hand sanitizing stations located throughout the Hall.

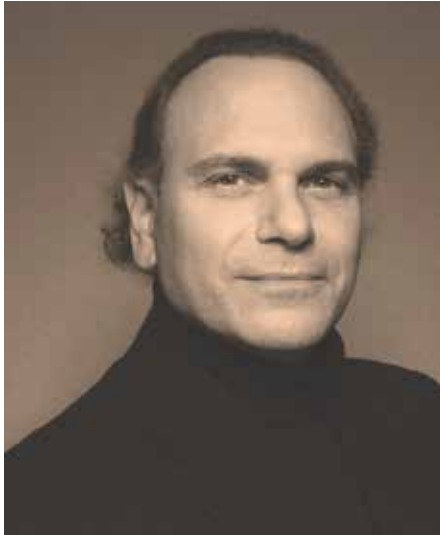
Purchase tickets at https://racinesymphony.org/event/rso-pops-august-2021/?blm_aid=26079.

We welcome back guest conductor, Dr. Robert Tomaro, along with guest artist, Celtic troubadour Jeff Ward.

Music selections will include Leonard Bernstein's Overture to Candide, Felix Mendelssohn's Hebrides Overture, and the last movement of Amy Beach's Gaelic Symphony. Miscellaneous selections for the RSO and Jeff Ward will round out the program.

We are very excited to welcome you back to an RSO concert, as we continue celebrating our 90th Season!

The RSO would like to thank our business partners for their continued support: Miller's Flowers, Butter Buds, Educator's Credit Union, Riley Construction, Habush, Habush & Rottier, Gemineye Design, First Call Heating & Cooling, CRB Insurance, Uncorkt.



Guest Conductor, Dr. Robert Tomaro



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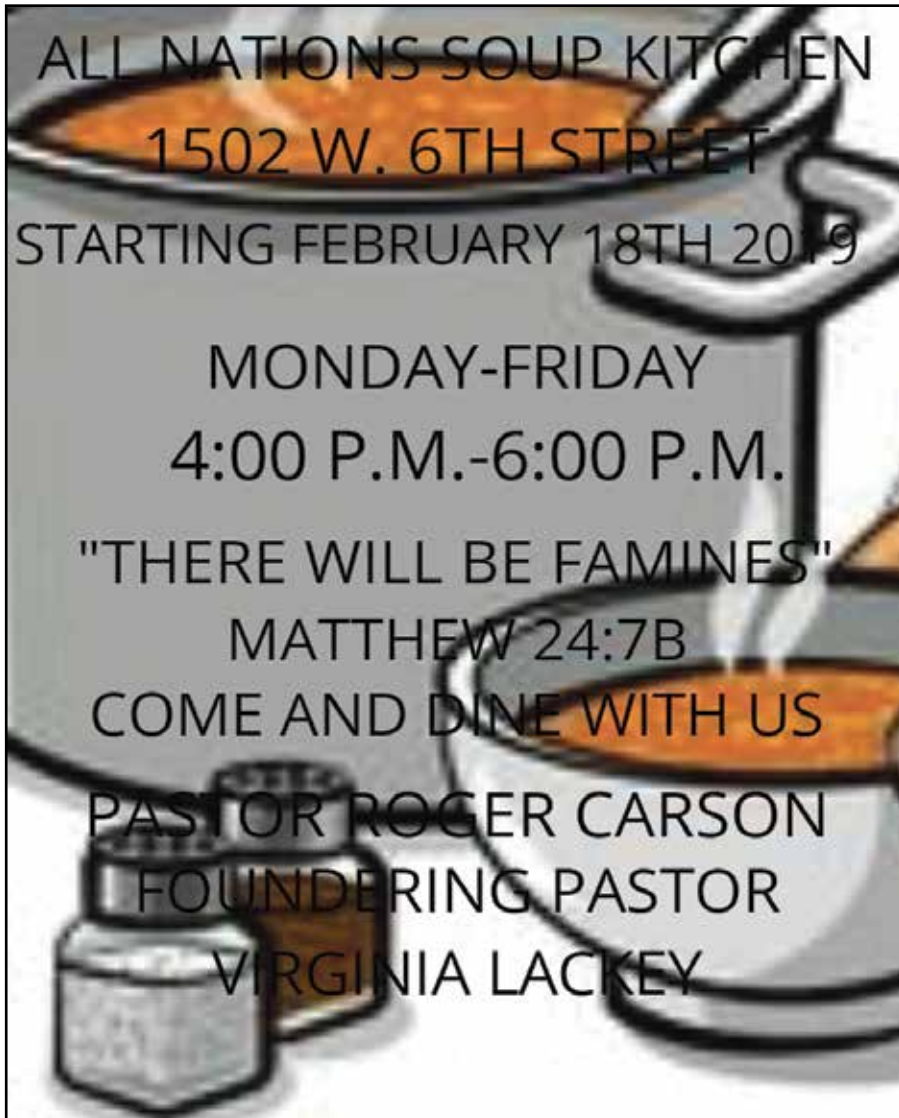
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Have Questions About Disability Income Insurance?

by Yvette Stewart

Here are some answers.

An often overlooked but key area of your overall protection strategy is the need to protect your income stream if you are unable to work due to illness or injury. Think about the financial impact if you were unable to earn a paycheck for an extended period.

Disability income insurance is designed to protect against that risk but is a type of insurance many aren't familiar with. Here are answers to many questions we frequently hear from clients:

Q: What is the chance I might be subject to a disability-related event?

A: It may be more likely than you think. It is estimated that more than one in four of today's 20-year-olds will miss at least of year of work because of a disabling condition before they reach retirement age¹.

Q: What if I don't work in a high-risk occupation?

A: The fact is that injuries can happen anywhere, not just on the job. An injury could result from a car accident, a bad fall, a mishap working around the yard or even a sport. Then, there are more debilitating illnesses. COVID-19 reminded us all of our vulnerability and that some illnesses have debilitating effects for an extended



period.

Q: What can disability income insurance do for me?

A: Disability income insurance provides a source of monthly income

to replace what is lost if you are unable to work. This is important to help pay for your household expenses on an ongoing basis. Funds can also help you keep pace with savings for monumental goals in your life such as retirement or your child's college education.

Q: Do I really need disability income insurance? What about the financial support from my occupation or the Social Security disability program?

A: Employer-provided policies, if offered, often pay the equivalent of about half your salary, but these benefits are generally subject to income tax, leaving you with a gap to bridge to meet your needs. Social Security benefits are not always easy to qualify for, may take months before payments are approved and often pay only a modest amount (the average monthly benefit is \$1,234). These two options leave large gaps for most people.

Q: What financial support would

I receive from a disability income policy I purchase?

A: Disability income insurance will typically pay in the range of 60 percent of your income, depending on how your policy is structured. Premiums are paid with after-tax dollars, so the benefits will not be taxable. On an after-tax basis, the disability income benefit should come very close to matching your regular income from work.

Q: Will a disability income insurance policy protect me if I can't work in my specific field or if I can't work at all?

A: This depends on the type of policy you choose. With an "own occupation" policy, you can collect benefits if you are unable to work at your regular occupation. With an "any occupation" policy, you are only eligible to collect benefits if you can't work at all.

Q: How soon do benefits begin?

A: This also depends on how your policy is structured. Policies come with an elimination period, ranging from 30 days to 180 days. This is similar to a deductible on your auto insurance. For example, if you have a 60-day elimination period, you won't receive benefits for the first two months you are disabled. A longer elimination period will lower the cost of your

policy but widen the income gap you will need to be prepared to fill.

Learn more today.

Disability income insurance should be included in a review of your overall protection needs. Consider talking to your financial advisor or insurance specialist about what it can do for you.

¹Social Security Administration, "The Faces and Facts of Disability."

Yvette M. Stewart, is a Financial Advisor with Ameriprise Financial Services, Inc. in Brookfield, WI. She specializes in fee-based financial planning and asset management strategies and has been in practice for 15 years. To contact her, visit www.ameripriseadvisors.com/yvette.m.stewart, email: yvette.m.stewart@ampf.com. PH: 262-901-1540. Ameriprise Financial Services, 16650 W Bluemound Rd, Suite 800, Brookfield, WI 53005. She resides in Racine, WI Investment advisory products and services are made available through Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC, a registered investment adviser. Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC. Member FINRA and SIPC. © 2021 Ameriprise Financial, Inc. All rights reserved.

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National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) Delegation Tours Racine County Water Shed Areas

Mount Pleasant – County Executive Jonathan Delagrave met with the leadership contingent from the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) last Friday during a visit to Racine County. The group came to Wisconsin as part of their 75th Anniversary celebration and annual summer meeting being held in Chicago.

Members of the NACD viewed the new Regenerative Stormwater Conveyance system being constructed at Hwy 31 and KR. The project is a highly innovative approach to stormwater management and benefits both Racine County and Kenosha County.

County Executive Delagrave expressed strong support for the work of conservation departments in those respective counties, specifically recognizing the important work performed daily by Racine County Conservationist Chad Sampson and his staff, as well as the work NACD does on behalf of those departments through federal and state agency partners, and the valuable partnership Racine County enjoys with Root-Pike WIN, without whom many of these projects would not be possible.

“Innovative projects like these save dollars by reducing infrastructure and environmental damage from stormwater runoff within an area half the size of a traditional catch basin, minimizing the impact on private lands surrounding the area,”



commented County Executive Delagrave. “In the long run, it is a win-win for the environment and for the community.”

The delegation also toured Sam Meyers Park Beach and Racine North Beach with County Supervisor Melissa Kaprelian pro-

viding details and data about the restoration projects being implemented on these beach areas.

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HEALTH: COVID has to stop, must do all we can now

Let's please stop and "face reality" about COVID and what else plagues us, and see what we can do about both of them the most. For example:

- Development and rise of COVID 19 variants.
- "Breakthrough infections"---those vaccinated getting COVID.
- The unvaccinated--those who won't or haven't been vaccinated.
- Plus COVID 19 and its variants are not all that is plaguing us. It's the bad, poor state our health is in, such as:
 - Our health, life-threatening junk, processed "food" diet saturated with unhealthy, addicting sugar, salt and oils.
 - Widespread disease, sickness you see and hear about so much, too much like heart attack, cancer, diabetes, Alzheimer's or dementia. See more in 1 and www.maxfulfillment.com/health-purpose/

That means we can no longer delay doing all we can and all of us doing what we can to stop or minimize COVID, and the unhealthy diet and diseases and drugs that plague us.

It impacts, affects us all---in our community, the US and around the world. We are truly "in this together" and need to help each other out. No one can escape responsibility for doing their part, fair share.

So WHAT CAN BE DONE, WHAT'S THE BEST WE CAN DO?

- Yes, increase the number being vaccinated.
- Implement face masks, social distancing and staying out of crowds again if necessary.

But that's not all that you don't hear about in the news and is maybe the ultimate answer.

• And that is strengthening, improving our health, wellness and immune system.

What does that mean, how is that done? It can start with fulfilling all of the basics, fundamentals of health, wellness like:

- 1 Exercising.
- 2 Drinking water and keeping your body hydrated.
- 3 Sleep.
- 4 Breathing and keeping your body oxygenated.
- 5 Eating natural, plant-based foods like fresh fruits and vegetables.
- 6 Lessening, eliminating junk, processed "foods".
- 7 Taking a multivitamin each day and supplements for any vitamin, mineral deficiencies you have. See www.maxfulfillment.com/healthfundamentals/

How do you make health basics, fundamentals a part of your life and a healthy lifestyle?

It's with biweekly baby step changes or improvements using SMART goals. See www.maxfulfillment.com/biweekhealth-changemeet/

However, most of us know perfectly well what we need to do like lose weight, exercise more, drink more water; eat less junk, processed foods and more fresh fruits and vegetables.

But we don't do it or only randomly, not on a regular, consistent basis.

Why, what is preventing you and I from making the health, wellness changes, im-

provements we know we need to make, but aren't making?

What are barriers, blocks or excuses? What holds us back?

That is the BIGGEST QUESTION OR ISSUE WITH CHANGING, STRENGTHENING OR IMPROVING OUR HEALTH, WELLNESS, and help stop or lessen COVID and the bad, poor state of our health.

So let's face the facts and truth. Sit down or look in the mirror and be completely honest, truthful or straightforward about what the barriers, obstacles or excuses are. For example, is it:

- 1 Not knowing or realizing how serious the situation is; don't think it's that bad, in denial.
- 2 Not realizing, sinking in or getting it that we, you and I must strengthen or improve our health, wellness. That it's crucial for stopping or minimizing COVID and the diet, diseases and drugs that are in effect killing us.
- 3 Thinking you don't have time for eating well, or a healthy diet costs too much (there are ways to make it affordable).
- 4 Thinking you can eat and drink whatever you want and don't have to exercise because medicine, doctors will save you with drugs, a new heart or knees.
- 5 I am young in my twenties or thirties and it doesn't make much difference what I eat and drink; I can get away with just about anything.
- 6 Maybe you don't take your life and health seriously or care about the quality of your life or how long you live. I will eat and drink whatever I want, live as long as I can

and that's it.

7 Maybe you are only thinking about yourself and what you believe about COVID, vaccines or health, wellness and not considering others---friends, family, loved ones, your community and how you impact, affect them. I was vaccinated because of how much my son cared and wanted me to.

8 Other possible barriers, blocks or excuses from being totally honest, truthful or straightforward about why you are not doing what you know perfectly well what your health, wellness calls for?

Now, what are your blocks, obstacles or excuses for not strengthening or improving your health, wellness the way you know you should? Any of the above or others?

• Start with looking at yourself in the mirror, and sitting down with those who know you well and will lovingly confront you and hold you accountable, "tough love".

• Be completely truthful, brutally honest about what your block, barriers or excuses are and

• What you can do about them, starting with support and accountability and input, feedback.

Please do so now, don't delay helping yourself, family, friends, community, US and the world with COVID, and the unhealthy diet and diseases and drugs that plague us all.

For questions, further info; discussion, support, assistance; coaching; talk, workshop or webinar, contact Randy.

Randy Bennett Ed.D., HCT (Health Change, Support and Accountability Team), 847 809-4821, randy@maxfulfillment.com.

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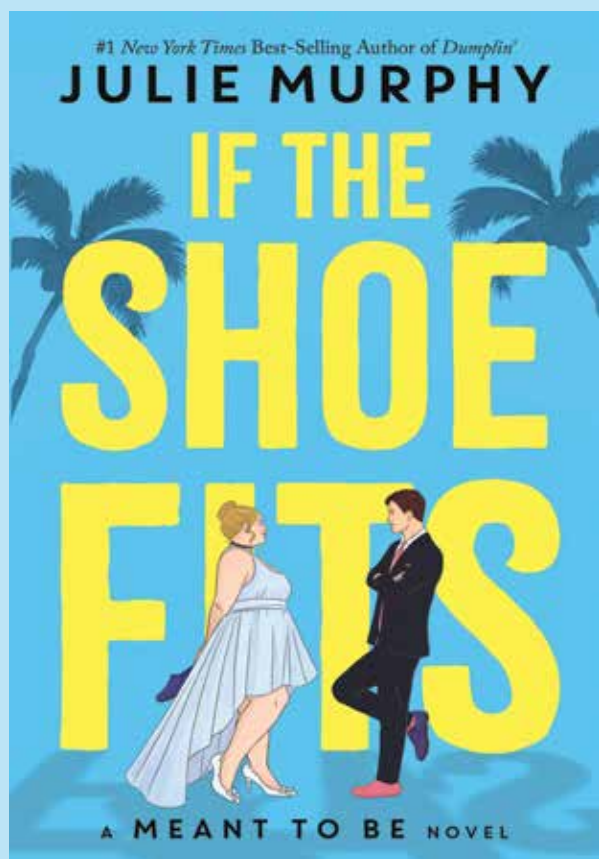
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Book Review:

‘If the Shoe Fits: A Meant to Be Novel’ by Julie Murphy



© 2021, Hyperion
\$26.99, 304 pages

Your little toe hangs off the side. Urgh. Behind your ankle, your foot sticks out a half an inch, too, and you simply must face it: the sandals you lust after, the last pair marked down, are too small. Unlike Cinderella’s sister, you can’t cut off your toes. Maybe, as in the new novel “If The Shoe Fits” by Julie Murphy, you should just cool your heels awhile.

Taking care of preschool triplets is a great summer job.

On a plane from New York to L.A., Cindy Woods tried to tell herself that. It would be nice to see her little half-siblings. She missed her step-sisters and her stepmother, too, but it was hard to leave New York because all her dreams were there. At least they were, back when the world was hers for the taking; once she graduated from college with no job in sight, though, her hopes for a career in shoe design were dashed.

Caring for the triplets would at least be some sort of distraction, although not as good as the handsome distraction on the flight. That distraction flirted shamelessly with Cindy, and he admitted to having a thing for reality romance shows. Both of these surprised her: overweight her whole life, she wasn’t used to the “Prince Charming” type flirting with her. And since her stepmother, Erica, was the producer of one of those shows, and since Cindy knew allllll about them, well, she figured every-

body saw through the silliness.

Alas, the ratings of Erica’s show needed a boost and a bold idea began to take place once Cindy arrived in L.A., one that secretly included her as contestant.

She couldn’t say “NO” fast enough, until she thought a minute.

She wasn’t the kind of girl that Before Midnight would normally have on-camera, but being a contestant could put her shoe designs in front of a national audience. It might lead to a move back to New York City, and a job with a designer. It might lead to a great career.

It might lead to love.

From here until Labor Day, your schedule is packed. Last-minute this, shoehorned-in that, your brain doesn’t have much room for reading, which is why you need “If the Shoe Fits.”

The easy thing to know about it is this: you already know how it ends. You do. Like any good fairy tale, there’s a Happily-Ever-After that’s promised and delivered, but not in a way that loses a reader’s interest between meeting and true love. Author Julie Murphy ensures that you won’t have to worry that the hero and heroine will lose their respective paths to bliss because this isn’t that kind of book. Predictability is key here, characters, setting, and all, but it’s exactly what you want in a romance.

Be aware that there’s a touch of minor profanity here but it’s realistically used and nothing you can’t handle, so go ahead. Immerse yourself in a little escapism with a kiss. For you, “If the Shoe Fits” is sized just right.



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Keeping People Protected on Public Transit as Life Returns to Normal

(StatePoint) With the post-pandemic phase on the horizon, people are reconsidering the meaning of the word "safety." This is particularly true for those who ride public transit.

Public transportation keeps America running by connecting people to their jobs, essential services and more. But experts say that as new COVID-19 variants emerge

while ridership returns to pre-pandemic levels, transit agencies will need a strategic solution to keep riders and employees safe from germs.

"People underestimate how quickly viruses can be transferred via surfaces. In fact, the hand is quicker than a sneeze when it comes to how quickly a virus or bacteria can cause infection," says University of Arizona researcher and leading expert on infectious diseases, Dr. Charles P. Gerba, Ph.D. "The subway is the second highest-risk place for germ exposure after cruise ships, where you have a lot of people coming and going, standing close together and touching the same handrails, poles and surfaces."

According to Dr. Gerba, keeping people safe in such highly-trafficked conditions needs to go beyond cleaning with just soap and water, which can't guarantee full coverage, provides only momentary disinfection and leaves surfaces immediately vulnerable to recontamination.

A new EPA-approved product, SurfaceWise2 from biotechnology company Allied BioScience, offers hope of more reliable protection on public transportation. Providing continuous protection from COVID-19 with a single application when used as directed, it has the potential to be the foundation of transit systems' comprehensive safety plans to protect against coronaviruses and other viruses and bacteria, which often

spread via surface transmission. Independent lab studies conducted by Dr. Gerba found it effective against Human Coronavirus 229E, the EPA-approved surrogate, demonstrating its ability to successfully protect against COVID-19. Coated surfaces were found to reduce the concentration of these viruses by greater than 99.9% after two hours of contact, much quicker than the time it takes for the viruses to die naturally.

The only lasting antiviral surface coating with EPA approval, SurfaceWise2 offers weeks of protection against a variety of illness-causing pathogens with just a single application, making it a viable and affordable choice for busy transit systems currently tasked with regular and time-consuming deep cleans of stations, buses and trains. Its quick electrostatic application reduces human error, cuts downtime -- critical for transit systems -- and ensures precise, complete coverage on virtually any surface. Carrying the lowest possible EPA toxicity rating, it's also safe for people and the environment. To learn more, visit www.surfacewise.com.

"Using an effective long-term coating to protect surfaces, alongside other precautions like mask-wearing and social distancing, is how our country can keep these transportation lifelines safe for the American public," says Dr. Gerba.



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Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

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UW-Parkside providing scholarships and other incentives to encourage vaccinations this fall

SOMERS, Wis. – UW-Parkside leaders are encouraging faculty, staff, and students to get vaccinated as soon as they are able to help protect the health of the campus community as the fall semester is set to begin Sept. 8.

“We are encouraging our entire campus community to Vax up,” said UW-Parkside Chancellor Debbie Ford. “Supporting efforts to provide a safe and healthy environment for faculty, staff, and students is our top priority, and vaccinations will help do that.”

Chancellor Ford also noted that individuals who upload their vaccination information into the Student Health & Counseling Center’s protected MyChart system will be eligible for a variety of incentives throughout the Fall 2021 term.

Those incentives include Parkside Ranger Bear socks, sweatshirts, and gift cards as well as parking passes, dining and book vouchers and a laptop.

Parkside student scholarships are also part of the incentives, including a new “70 for 70” incentive program announced last week by UW System President Tommy Thompson that provides an opportunity for UW students vaccinated against COVID-19 to win a \$7,000 scholarship.

Under the 70 for 70 campaign, vaccinated students who attend universities that achieve at least 70 percent vaccination rates will be eligible for one of 70 scholarships valued at \$7,000 each. Students at all UW System universities except UW-Madison are eligible for the drawing.

“As we welcome students back to campus this fall, we want their experience to be as normal and safe as we can make it,” Thompson said. “That means students should get vaccinated, and we will incentivize it knowing that high vaccination rates are critical to our success. The ‘70 for 70’ campaign is key to helping our universities achieve higher vaccination rates, especially in the face of the looming threat the Delta variant poses.”

More information about the 70 for 70 campaign is available on the UW-Parkside website. Vaccination locations and other information are located on the Ranger Recovery website, along with instructions on how to safely upload their vaccination information into MyChart.



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“And, behold, two blind men sitting by the way side, when they eard that Jesus passed by, cried out, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou Son of David. And the multitude rebuked them, because they should hold their peace: but they cried the more, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou Son of David.” (Matthew 20:30-3)

Today’s verse talks about two blind men that no one really paid attention to. No one gave them much of a chance — but Jesus did! All through scripture we see that He had such great compassion and mercy, everywhere He went and He still has it today. Maybe you feel like life has overlooked you. Maybe you feel like the people around you don’t really see what you are going through. Today, know that God sees you.

He’ll never overlook you even when people overlook you. He is good and no matter what has happened in your life, remember that His mercy endures forever. Notice what these men did — they called on Jesus.

Even when people tried to quiet them, they called even louder. They had confidence that He would hear them and you can have confidence, too! Be bold and step out in faith, call on Him and trust that He sees you and hears you and He will have mercy!

Father I thank You for Your mercy and grace. Today I have the confidence to trust and call on you. Thank you for hearing me in Jesus Name. Amen.

Apostle Charles C Jones D.D.

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Many in the world have heard of the topic of Lean Manufacturing, very few people truly understand it. Monte Mitchell is the best we've ever met at implementing Lean Manufacturing with a group. What is Lean Manufacturing? How do I understand it? How do I make it truly work? One thing we know is that Lean Manufacturing means a lot of different things to different people. Most consultants explain the tools and steps – the “what and how”. But they miss the “why”, meaning the culture and people side.

Join us in a conversation with Monte Mitchell, a Toyota Sensei, to understand how Lean Manufacturing can help you and your business achieve world-class performance.

Monte Mitchell started working in the Toyota organization, on the line, making cars, in California. As he would tell the story, “he made suggestions for things that he did not see as right in the plant”. One day, a Toyota lead suggested that he use those thoughts to solve the problems, instead of just pointing them out. That step began a life-long journey through the Toyota organization and mastery of the Toyota Production System.

Today, Monte is now the principal of Fourte Consulting which he leads with a group of highly-skilled, past professionals from the Toyota organization. He applies years of experience from working with companies and individuals from around the world, to help solve complex challenges, by applying simple solutions.

We will have a great discussion regarding business optimization using the principles of lean, from an individual that I will personally

suggest is the most skilled in “what makes it work” that I have met.

Come join the discussion to learn the “Secrets of Lean” from an individual that truly gets it!

Attendance for this session is Virtual. The session will start at 10:04 AM CST. Date: Saturday, August 7th, 10:00-11:00 AM CST. Location: Virtual - Facebook Live: <https://www.facebook.com/TechPrizeRacine/live>. Registration and Event Details can be found at <https://www.tech-prize.org/events/lean-manufacturing>

This event continues the Tech-Shop series of Technical Webinars. These are panel-based discussions designed to introduce individuals to experts in the technical area. Attendees will be able to ask questions to clarify their understanding and also access resources they can follow up with to gain formal education or ongoing mentoring/consulting. The series will offer two sessions per month for the next year. The topics are selected to represent areas of interest that our community and any other needs to compete in the future. This also means these are great career opportunities for students picking their own direction or adults that would like to evaluate an alternate direction.

Visit the Tech-Prize website at <https://www.tech-prize.org/>, or specific questions can be sent to info@tech-prize.org

The leadership teams for Tech-Prize, Gateway College, UW Parkside & the City of Racine

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Tips From a Doctor Who Survived COVID-19

(StatePoint) No matter how strictly you follow the rules, those with firsthand experience know that anyone can get COVID-19.

“Given my role helping shape COVID-19 policies and procedures since the pandemic surfaced, I know the rules better than most: wear a mask, limit social gatherings, stay six feet apart and so on,” says Dr. Gina Conflitti, chief medical officer for Medicare products at Cigna, one of the nation’s largest health care insurers. “Like many others, I did my best to follow the safety guidance. Yet, in late November 2020, I contracted the virus and faced months of recovery.”

While Dr. Conflitti hopes this doesn’t happen to others, she offers the following advice to those who do contract COVID-19:

- COVID-19 impacts everyone differently. There are those who cruise through COVID-19 with no symptoms while others have mild symptoms. Some people literally fight for their lives. Don’t expect to have the same experience as others, and be sure to communicate with your doctor about the best treatment approach.

- Don’t get caught in the blame game. Once you contract COVID-19, there’s a tendency to blame yourself. Or you might blame others for infecting you. Many never find out how they were exposed. While contact tracing is important, don’t waste time blaming yourself or others. Save your energy for recovery.

- Don’t be afraid to ask for help. COVID-19 is humbling, and even active, independent people may suddenly need help with normal daily activities, like getting groceries and medicines. People want to help, so don’t hesitate to ask so you can concentrate on recovering.

- Take care of your mental health. COVID-19 is isolating and can cause depression and anxiety. Stay connected with friends and family safely via phone or video calls. Talk to a professional if things become too difficult to manage on your own. You may have access to behavioral health support through your medical insurance or Medicare plan.

- Listen to your body. There’s no good time to get sick. Nevertheless, it’s important to listen to your body before returning to work, school and daily activities. Don’t rush it. Prepare by eating healthy, getting enough sleep, drinking plenty of water, taking vitamins or supplements if your doctor recommends and reducing stress.

- Pay it forward. Even with all the bad things COVID-19 brings, it’s also revealed some of the best aspects of humanity. Pay kindness forward by showing gratitude to clinicians, teachers, restaurant and grocery store workers and others who courageously give their best so our lives are better during this pandemic.

- Get the vaccine. Take control of your health by getting vaccinated. Follow your local health department news, and get your COVID-19 vaccination as soon as medically approved. It’s available at no cost and critical to ensuring your safety and the safety of others.

For Cigna’s COVID-19 resources, visit cigna.com/coronavirus.

“It’s been a difficult time for all of us, but I’m confident the most challenging days are behind us. Stay safe, follow safety procedures and get vaccinated. The only way we can move forward is if we do it together,” says Dr. Conflitti.



Dr. Gina Conflitti, chief medical officer for Medicare products at Cigna.



How are you feeling today?

Check in with your co-workers, friends, family and neighbors. Ask them, “How are you feeling today?” Someone you know may be delaying important emergency care, chronic care or emotional care. Remind them to get the care they need.

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After Recent Attack on DACA, Voces de la Frontera Holds Forums to Inform Community; Pressure Congress to Pass Citizenship for All

What: This weekend, Voces de la Frontera is hosting immigration forums throughout Wisconsin to address concerns around the recent federal court ruling partially ending the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, as well as update the community on positive advances in policy relating to U-Visas and deportations. Immigration attorneys will be present to answer legal questions. Voces will also update the community on recent gains made to pass citizenship for all 11 million undocumented essential workers, Dreamers and families through the budget reconciliation process in Congress. Local members of U.S. Congress are invited to attend.

When & where: Milwaukee Immigration Forum: Saturday, July 24 at 1:00 p.m. at new Voces office at 733 W. Historic Mitchell Street, Milwaukee, WI

Madison Immigration Forum: Sunday, July 25 at 1:00 p.m. at the Madison Labor Temple, 1602 S. Park St., Unite 109, Madison, WI

Green Bay Immigration Forum: Sunday, July 25 at 1:00 p.m. at Voces Green Bay Office, 1221 Bellevue St, Green Bay, WI

These events will also be broadcast via Facebook Live. Tune in at facebook.com/Vocesde laFronteraWI.

Why: Last Friday, a federal judge ruled to partially end the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, halting any new DACA applications from being approved while only permitting current recipients to renew their status. Over 600,000 Dreamers are enrolled in the program nationally, with nearly 6,540 young people in Wisconsin currently in the program. An estimated 20,000 Dreamers are eligible to receive DACA status in Wisconsin. Many immigrant high school and college students, parents and essential workers have been waiting months for their applications to be approved after the government reopened the process for new applicants in December 2020. Those young people, who've called the U.S. their home since they were children, are now at risk of deportation, family separation and are unable to get a job and provide for their families.

This attack on DACA comes amidst some positive changes to federal immigration law under the Biden Administration that grants work permits to people caught in the backlog of U-Visas (protections provided to immigrants who witness or are victims of a crime) and deportations, and underscores the urgent need for Democrats in Congress to pass an inclusive pathway to citizenship for all 11 million essential workers, Dreamers and their families this year through the budget reconciliation process. Last week, Senate Democrats released Biden's Jobs Budget Bill that includes funding for a permanent pathway to citizenship for millions of immigrants. Polls show broad bipartisan support nationally for immigration reform - including from a majority of Republicans, Democrats and independents. Voces de la Frontera and other immigrant rights advocates are urging President Biden and Democrats in Congress to do everything in their power to pass Citizenship For All this year.

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Senators Baldwin and Sullivan Announce Reintroduction of Bipartisan Legislation to Improve Access to Veterans' Services

The CVSO Act will expand community-based outreach that will help veterans access services to improve their health and wellness and prevent suicides

Washington, D.C. – Senators Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) and Dan Sullivan (R-AK) reintroduced the Commitment to Veteran Support and Outreach Act, a bipartisan bill to authorize federal funding for county veterans service officers (CVSOs).

Out of the estimated 19 million veterans in the United States, only a small fraction utilize the care and benefits they've earned from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). CVSOs are often the first to inform veterans of their eligibility in these programs and services, particularly in rural areas. CVSOs are local county employees who are nationally accredited by the VA to help veterans process their VA claims. These employees are responsible for successfully processing more than \$42 billion in claims annually for direct compensation and pension benefits for veterans. They also provide assistance to veterans on a range of benefits and services, including compensation benefits, home loans, education benefits and job placement assistance. Unfortunately, there is currently no federal funding support directly available for CVSOs.

"County Veteran Service Officers are often the first point of contact for our veterans to access the benefits and services available to them—particularly in rural communities," said Senator Baldwin. "It is nothing short of

our duty to ensure that those who bravely serve our country can better access and utilize their VA benefits with ease. This bipartisan legislation will make federal investments to help connect veterans and their families to the resources and care they've earned."

"Less than half of Alaska's more than 75,000 veterans are currently enrolled in the VA system, meaning a majority are not accessing the benefits and health care services that they have earned, including those struggling with mental illness. That is unacceptable," said Senator Sullivan. "Alaska's vast size and sparse population certainly contribute to this challenge, but local partners and veteran service officers present an opportunity to reach these off-the-grid veterans. Senator Baldwin and I are introducing legislation that will reinforce the VA's mission to expand its reach and ensure veterans who live in rural, frontier states—like Alaska—do not get left behind."

"We have a responsibility to ensure that veterans and their families have easy access to the benefits and services that they have earned," said Rep. Levin. "That is why my colleagues and I are reintroducing this bipartisan legislation to support the work of county veterans service officers who interact directly with our local veterans every day. I'm proud to introduce the bicameral CVSO Act

and look forward to advancing this legislation through the House with bipartisan support once again."

"Navigating the VA's bureaucracy can be a nightmare for those who have served, but our county's veteran services officers are at the tip of the spear helping our veterans access the benefits they've earned," said Rep. Ryan. "The least we can do for the men and women who serve our country is to make sure they have the support they need when they get home. This bill is a step in the right direction to ensure the federal government does more to support our community heroes."

"I have had too many conversations with veterans in Eastern Washington who tell me they don't have the resources they need to access their benefits. This is heartbreaking, and it should not be the case," said Rep. Rodgers. "By funding additional VSOs in communities across the country—especially in rural areas—we are making a commitment to our veterans that we will not let them slip through the cracks. This common sense legislation is overdue, and it will go a long way towards ensuring those who served receive the benefits they've earned."

The CVSO Act will authorize \$50 million annually for five years for competitive grants to expand the work of CVSOs or comparable entities. The VA will award grants to states in order to improve outreach to veterans, assist in the development and submittal of claims on behalf of veterans, hire additional CVSOs, and train CVSOs for VA accreditation. To receive funds, a state must submit an application

including a detailed plan for the use of these funds, how they will meet underserved veterans' needs, and other relevant information. States must also show that these federal funds do not simply supplant current state or local funding. By increasing the number of CVSOs, states will be better able to leverage their local and federal resources to serve our veterans.

"NACVSO applauds the introduction of the bipartisan Commitment to Veteran Support and Outreach Act by Senator Tammy Baldwin," said Herm Breuer, NACVSO President. "Federal investment for County, Tribal, and State Veterans Service Officers is an investment in the men and women who served this Country. It is critical to ensure that veterans seeking to utilize their VA benefits have continued and expanded access to advocates right in their communities that can help guide them through the bureaucratic VA systems to secure the services they need."

"As President of the National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs, I would like to express our support for the Commitment to Veteran Support and Outreach Act and applaud Senator Tammy Baldwin for reintroducing this legislation," said Thomas Palladino, President of the National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs. "This proposed grant program will definitely assist the State Departments of Veterans Affairs in the efforts to improve outreach and assistance to veterans and their family members. It will directly help with funding and training for State, County, local and Tribal government service officers."

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