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January 11 - January 17, 2014 48th Year Volume 37 www.ladatanews.com

A Data News Weekly Exclusive

Candidates Face Off in First Voter Forum

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Local Candidates Face Off in First Public Forum



Left to Right, Mayoral Candidates, Mayor Mitch Landrieu, NAACP President Danatus King and Judge Michael Bageneris addressed the audience with their vision for the Office of the Mayor if elected. The IWO gave dual endorsements in this race to both Mayor Landrieu and Judge Bageneris.

Data News Weekly Staff Report Photos provided by IWO

On Tuesday evening, candidates vying for the New Orleans Municipal Offices of mayor, sheriff, coroner and City Council all faced off in their first public forum hosted by the Independent

Women's Organization of Greater New Orleans.

The event, held uptown, gave the candidates the opportunity to address issues on the minds of voters, like combating crime, economic development and creating more opportunities for youth in addition to more contentious issues such as the Consent Decree which is forefront

in the race for Orleans Parish Sheriff.

The first city-wide debate of candidates for Sheriff, ended with a great deal of blame and finger pointing directed at incumbent Sheriff Marlin Gusman, who is running for a return to his position. Gusman's two opponents took shots at him for his management of the now notorious Orleans

On the Cover: Left to right, candidates for Orleans Parish Sheriff, School Board President Ira Thomas, Incumbent Sheriff Marlin Gusman who is the IWO endorsed candidate and former Sheriff Charles Foti, underwent the most contentious of debates during the IWO Voter's Forum and Debates on Tuesday in New Orleans.

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Cover Story, Continued from previous page.



Current Councilmember-at-Large Division 1 Stacy Head faces off against IWO endorsed candidate Eugene Green.



Former Councilwoman Cynthia Willard Lewis debated the incumbent Councilman, District E, James Gray who is the IWO endorsed candidate.



Candidates in the race for City Council District D, the seat being vacated due to term limits by Cynthia Hedge-Morrell, are (l to r) Dalton Savvoir, Jr., Dr. Joseph Bouie and State Rep. Jared Brossett, who is the IWO endorsed candidate.



IWO members and concerned voters braved the cold temperatures to listen to the candidates debate ongoing issues central to voters.

Parish Prison.

"The jail is not working," former Sheriff Charles Foti said. "For eight years he let it slip out of his hand."

"This jail is anything but decent. This jail is anything but human," Orleans Parish School Board President Ira Thomas said before jabbing a hand at Gusman. "This was done under this man's watch."

Gusman responded to his opponents by defending his record and saying that he had "embraced" the federal consent decree and that he was devoted to rebuilding the prison into a state-of-the-art complex. He deflected the causes of the problems back to Foti, who served as criminal sheriff for three decades prior to Gusman's election.

"I inherited a mess," he said.

"I would suspect that the sheriff's race is the most contentious," said UNO Political Science Professor Edward Chervenek. "The two individuals who have been responsible for the jail over the last several decades will be running for the job to reform the jail, and so you're going to see lots of attacks in that campaign."

The forum's moderator asked incumbent Mayor Mitch Landrieu to discuss

how the NOPD consent decree will be paid for.

"We were able through reorganizing government, cutting smartly to fund both consent decrees. The police department consent decree costs \$55 million and is fully funded," Landrieu said to a packed room.

Mayoral candidate and former NAACP President Danatus King said he'd help boost economic recovery in parts of the City still struggling from the storm by creating tax break zones.

"That's offering tax credits to people that employ residents from a particular area and to businesses that locate in a particular area," said King.

Judge Michael Bagnaris who resigned from the bench at Civil District Court to run for Mayor was asked how he would transition to governing that involves negotiating with other lawmakers.

"In a word: communication. You have to talk with people, not at them or down to them. You talk with people you communicate," said Judge Bagnaris.

Throughout this month civic groups will host forums where you can hear directly from municipal race candidates before Election Day on Feb. 1.

Here is a list of locations:

Wednesday (Jan. 8): The League of Women Voters and Urban League will be hosting a forum for City Council candidates in each of the contested Districts A, C, D and E at 6 p.m. in Georges Auditorium at Dillard University. The forum is open to the public.

Thursday (Jan. 9): The Alliance for Good Government will hold the first of its endorsement forums at Loyola University, starting with City Council District E at 6:30 p.m., then the District C candidates, then the mayoral candidates. The exact location is yet to be announced.

Tuesday (Jan. 14): The Alliance for Good Government will meet with candidates for Clerk of Court, Sheriff, Coroner and Council District D, starting at 6:30 p.m. at Loyola University.

Wednesday, (Jan. 15): The Alliance for Good Government will meet with candidates for the At-Large and District A City Council races, starting at 6:30 p.m. at Loyola University.

Thursday, (Jan. 16): The League of Women Voters and Urban League will be holding a forum for mayoral candidates from 7 to 8 p.m. at Dillard University's Georges Auditorium.

Coalition Of New Orleans Civic Organizations To Host Series Of Candidate Forums

The Urban League of Greater New Orleans along with WDSU Television, the League of Women Voters ® of New Orleans, The Public Law Center, the National Council of Jewish Women Greater New Orleans Section and the National Coalition of 100 Black Women, Greater New Orleans Chapter have joined together to host a series of four forums for candidates in the 2014 Orleans Parish municipal elections.

Forum 1 (Candidates for City Council Districts A, C, D, and E)

Friday, January 10, 2014, 7:00-7:30PM WDSU Studio Studio attendance by invitation only

Wednesday, January 8, 2014, 6:00-7:30PM Dillard University (Georges Auditorium Professional Schools Building) Free and open to the public



Forum 2 (Candidates for Orleans Parish Sheriff)

Forum will be broadcast on WDSU television Saturday, January 11 at 6PM and again on Sunday, **January 12 at 10:30PM.**

Forum 3 (Candidates for Mayor of New Orleans)

Thursday, January 16, 2014, 7:00-8:00PM Dillard University (Georges Auditorium Professional Schools Building) Free and open to the public

Forum 4 (Candidates for City Council-at-Large)

Friday, January 17, 2014, 7:00-8:00PM WDSU Studio Studio attendance by invitation only. Forum will be broadcast on WDSU television Saturday,

January 25 at 6PM and again on Sunday,

January 26 at 10:30PM.

The general public, candidates and elected officials are cordially invited to attend the forums held at Dillard University. Event coverage is open to the media only for the Dillard events. Air dates are subject to change. For additional information contact Cathy Washington at 504- 620-2332 or via email at cwashington@urban-leagueneworleans.org.

State Library Celebrates Black History Month



In celebration of Black History Month, the Louisiana Center for the Book in the State Library of Louisiana is hosting author Kim Marie Vaz for a discussion of The 'Baby Dolls': Breaking the Race and Gender Barriers of the New Orleans Mardi Gras Tradition. The presentation will take place at noon on Feb. 6 at the State Library Seminar Center.

Vaz's book is a history of the Million Dollar Baby Dolls, one of the first women's organizations to participate in Mardi Gras, and its post-Hurricane Katrina

comeback. The 'Baby Dolls' traces the tradition as it spread to different New Orleans neighborhoods and empowered women.

The book uncovers the fascinating history of the women who wore baby doll costumes—short satin dresses, bonnets and stockings with garters—and their bold behavior during their journeys into the predominantly male Mardi Gras celebration.

Vaz will share photographs from different time periods to highlight how the practice changed over time. The photos, along with short

video clips, bring to life the spirit of fun and play that constitute the practice of masking.

The 'Baby Dolls' served as the basis for a major installation on the Baby Doll tradition at The Presbytere as part of the permanent Carnival exhibit.

Vaz is associate dean of the College of Arts and Sciences and education professor at Xavier University. Her research focuses on art as a response to social trauma.

Registration is not required for this free event. Attendees are invited to bring brown bag lunches.

At left: They Call Me Baby Doll: Mixed Media Exhibition on the Black Carnival Baby Doll Societies, Through February, Presbytere, Louisiana State Museum, 751 Chartres St., 568-6968. Pictured left is Early 20th century Baby Doll Olivia Green, date unknown.

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De La Salle High School to Honor U.S. Attorney Kenneth Polite

School Celebrates Martin Luther King Day



De La Salle High School will honor Kenneth Polite (pictured above), United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Louisiana.

On Martin Luther King Day, De La Salle will honor one of its own distinguished graduates, Kenneth Polite, whose hard work and success embody the true La-sallian spirit and serve as an inspiration for generations of De La Salle students.

De La Salle High School will honor one of its most distinguished graduates, Kenneth Po-

lite, class of 1993, who was recently appointed by President Obama to the position of United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Louisiana.

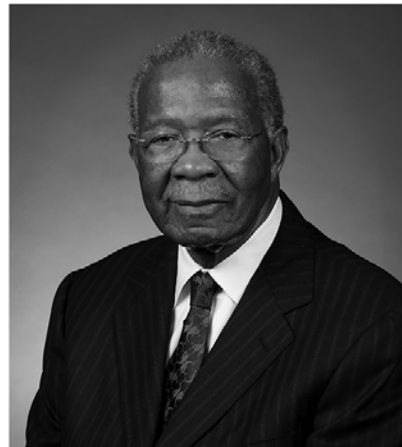
The school will host a private reception in honor of Kenneth Polite. Students and faculty, as well as various local and state leaders, including Senator Mary Landrieu, will be in attendance.

Prior to the reception, a select group of De La Salle student leaders will meet with Polite and several other local dignitaries for a workshop and group discussion on a social justice project that the students have been coordinating with Archbishop Gregory Aymond and NOLA for Life. At the workshop, students will have the opportunity to engage in

conversation, and gather advice and inspiration from Polite. The outcome will be De La Salle's roadmap for its 2014 social justice project.

The workshop will take place on Monday, January 20, 2014 (Martin Luther King Day) at 5 PM, at De La Salle High School, 5300 St. Charles Avenue, New Orleans, LA 70115

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Racism, Revolution, and New Orleans History Explored in Best Films of the Year

By Jordan Flaherty
Data News Weekly Contributor

We live in the era of Hollywood mega-budget sequels, where most theaters are filled with films based on comic books or children's stories or lowest-common-denominator fare. Originality is rarely rewarded: this year, the top five grossing films, taking in about a billion dollar each in ticket sales, were all sequels. But a few filmmakers still dared to fight the trends. The most powerful films of the year were personal visions that explored themes of racism, imperialism, prisons, and revolution. Below are five films released this year that you should see if you're sick of watching the same stories again and again.

5. *An Oversimplification of Her Beauty* – In this beautiful experimental film that blends animation with fiction and documentary, director Terence Nance tells a love story between two young Black bohemian artists. Nance plays himself (or a version of himself) in the film, while the object of his affection plays herself. The two of them shape the story of a budding romance from their perspectives. Brought to theaters with the help of a-list celebrities including Jay-Z and dream hampton, the film shows that it's still possible to tell a love story in a new way.

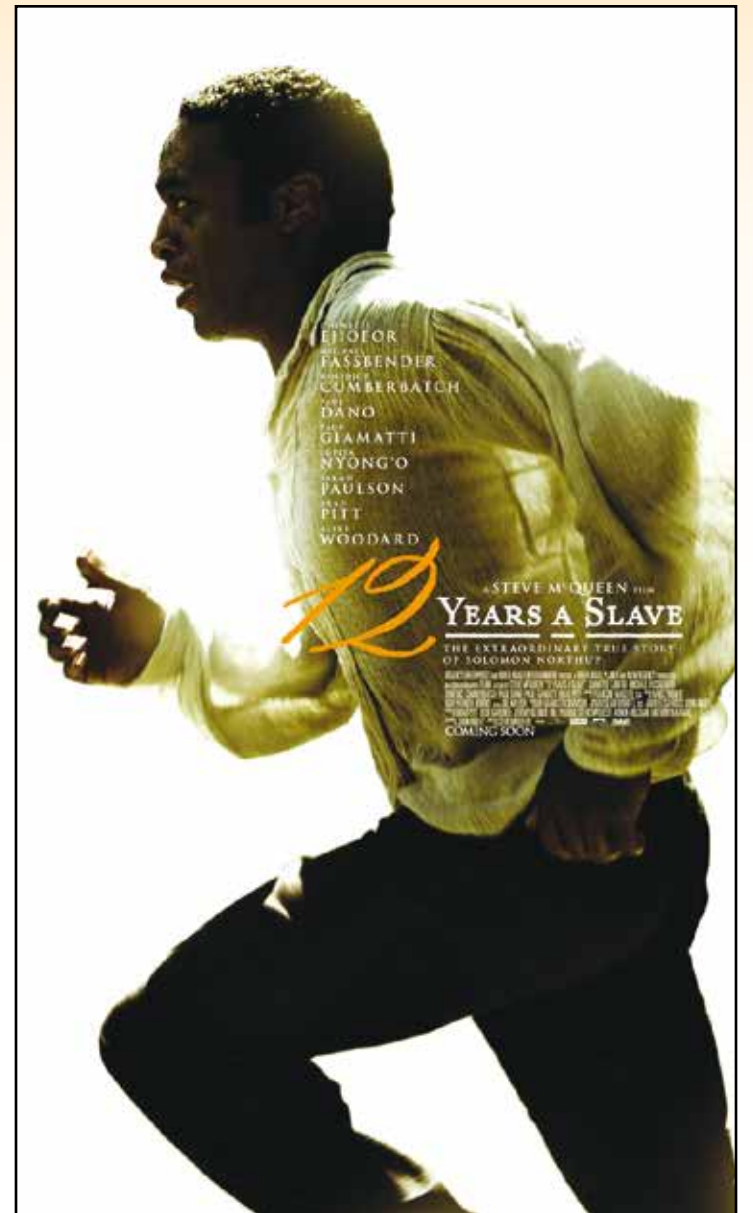
4. *Free Angela and All Political Prisoners* – With stunning archival footage, filmmaker Shola Lynch brilliantly recreates the 1972 trial of Angela Davis and its context within the early Black power movement. Any audience, whether they lived through the era or were born decades later, will be gripped by this thrilling documentary. Lynch, who also directed the 2005 film *Chisholm '72: Unbought & Unbossed*, finds rare footage and photos of key moments from Angela Davis' early lectures to Jonathan Jackson's ill-fated attempt to free his brother George Jackson.

3. *Upstream Color* – Multi-talented (and perhaps obsessive) filmmaker Shane Carruth wrote, directed, produced, cast the actors, filmed, acted, edited, composed the music, and distributed this film. While having a crew to collaborate with might help other filmmakers, Carruth seems to thrive on control. In this, his second film (after *Primer*, a 2004 low-budget science fiction mind-bender), he creates a beautiful mystery about memory, love, madness, addiction and loss that demands to be seen multiple times to unravel its secrets.

2. *12 Years a Slave* – Filmmaker Steve McQueen came to New Orleans to film this story about Solomon Northup, a free Black man kidnapped from the north and sold into slavery in Louisiana in 1841. McQueen never shies away from showing the torture and cruelty of American slavery, and has created a modern classic that makes clear the legacy of white supremacy in this nation. Chiwetel Ejiofor's riveting performance, appearing in nearly every minute of the film, captivates the viewer.

1. *Fruitvale Station* – Henry Glover, James Brissette, Ronald Madison, Adolph Grimes III, Raymond Robair, Kim Groves, Justin Sipp, Wendell Allen...The names of the young Black men and women killed by police goes on and on. But Hollywood and our media rarely explore these lives cut short by violence. By telling the story of Oscar Grant, a young man killed by transit officers on New Year's Day 2009, first-time filmmaker Ryan Coogler and rising star Michael B. Jordan give weight to a life that was brutally cut short.

There were many more films worth seeing this year. But in this modern blockbuster era, it's hard for films that don't fit the mold to get into theaters. Two of the best films I saw this year haven't yet gotten US distribution. When I



Films, Continued on page 11.

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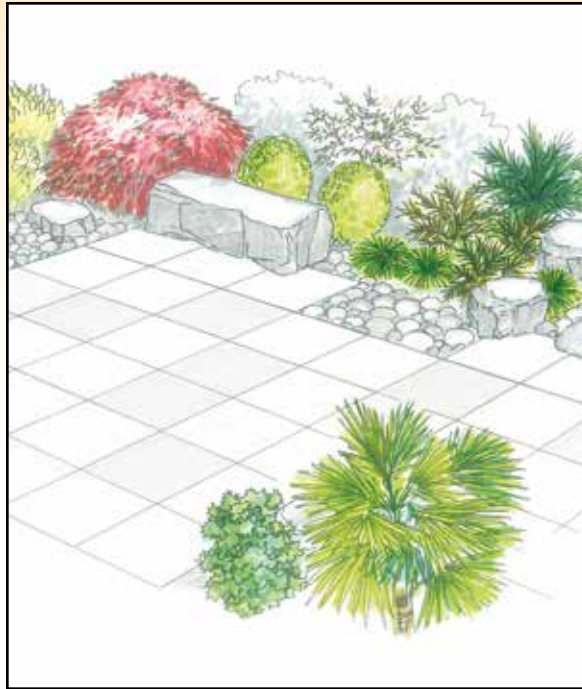
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Plan Your 2014 Garden



By MG Calla Victoria
Data News Weekly Columnist

There are few tips that will be of great assistance in acquiring a beautiful garden this year. You must observe the current state of your garden, provide a little maintenance, and select the right plant materials.

Observe

Now that winter has officially wreaked havoc on your trees and shrubs, it is a great time to go out and have a good look at your garden so that you can do a little better job of planning for this year. Take note of which areas of your garden fared best through freezing weather and make a point of planting your more tender plant material there. Notice which areas of your garden gets the most wind, as indicated by pots being blown over, and remember not to put plants with delicate foliage like bananas there; as their leaves will get all torn up. Also that is not a good location for fruit bearing trees, as the fruit grows from the bloom of the fruit tree. So if you plant the fruit tree in a windy area of your garden there is a good chance of the wind blowing the blooms off of the trees, then bye-bye

fruit because the fruit grows from the bloom, and if the bloom is gone so is the fruit.

Maintenance

As the leaves have dropped on most of your trees, now is a great time to do some maintenance that could not be executed before. Some unwanted trees and vines that were not accessible because of the thick foliage on your trees are now exposed and easy to attack. I have a huge fig tree in my yard and behind it is growing some other kind of small tree that I did not plant nor do I want, as well as a thorny vine of some kind. During the growing season, I could see parts of the tree but could not get to it because of the Fig tree, and the same was true of the thorny vine. But now that Miss Big Fig stands naked in the winter winds, I can see clearly the culprits that have been robbing her of precious moisture and I can rip them from her nakedness.

Plan Selection

Gardening experts say that winter is the perfect time to plan your garden, and if your garden isn't beautiful in the winter, you did not properly plan your garden. Once all of the leaves have fall-

en then the bones of your garden are visible. Note hardscape (pavers, paths, and seating walls etc.), structures (statuary, garden benches, columns, outdoor fireplaces); evergreens, and water features. Jot them down so that you can work your plantings around them. Perhaps you want to plant some flowing vines near your columns or arches. If you are old-school take pencil to paper, and if you have graduated to technology you can download garden design apps with drag and drop features to help you visualize your garden design. No matter which method works for you by all means put something down on paper.

When planning your garden think color, sound, fragrance, and movement. Make it a point to include perennials, long-lasting bloomers like bromeliads, short-term fabulous blooming annuals like sunflower, also grasses, seasonal bulbs, and evergreens. The bloomers like Black Schwarzwald Calla lily, (botanical name *Arum palaestinum*) give you periodic color, so throw in some colorful foliage plants like *Cordyline fruticosa* to provide color when flowering plants are not blooming. Grasses like bamboo, and sugarcane (botanical name

Saccharum officinarum) provide movement and sound. Also trickling water from some sort of water feature is a must of any well-appointed garden. And fragrance is the most pleasant addition to any garden, that sweet smell lingering in the air. Mint is great for fragrance. In the old days people would plant mint near the front entrance and just before company would arrive they would run out and beat the mint plants with a broom to heighten the smell. I love mint but it is quite invasive so by all means plant it in containers or in a confined area in your garden. Mint is great year around in the south. Sweet alyssum is great this time of the year for that wonderful fragrance as well as delicate white blooms. Also lavender is great in containers or in a very dry sunny part of your garden for that great relaxing scent. For zones 10 and above the sweet smell of Ylang-Ylang which comes from the Ylang-Ylang tree, which is used in Chanel N° 5 perfume, is a must have.

Check out my "Gardening Tip of the Week" at www.thegardeningdiva.com

Remember, never get too busy to stop and enjoy the beautiful flowers!

Visit www.ladatanews.com for more photos, more news and more events.

My New Year Wishes



Julianne Malveaux
NNPA Columnist

Happy New Year! January first and second are the days when most think of the “new” year, yet with the first Monday in January falling on January 6, that’s probably when most people will return to their desks withy focused energy and ready to go. Post-its and scrawled notebook paper will trumpet “new” resolutions. Eat less, relax more, volunteer, tithe, save, all that good stuff. Some will even compose a bucket list of things they’d like to do before the end of their lives. Others will have a list of wants and wishes, both realistic and unrealistic. My

wish list focuses on public policy, since better public policy means a better 2014.

I WANT JOBS, JOBS, JOBS FOR BLACK PEOPLE. With the last reported official unemployment rate for African Americans at 12.5 percent, and the unofficial rate exceeding 25 percent, I’d really like to see some more jobs in the African American community. Joblessness leads to poverty leads to all kinds of maladies. While the stock market is soaring, is it too much to ask for a little job creation? Don’t Republicans, also, represent unemployed people? Help me, somebody. By the way, I’d like more jobs for everyone, but first things first.

And while we’re at it, why not fairer (and more equal) wages. There is talk of raising the minimum wage to \$10 or more by 2015, and some states are already moving to wage levels even higher. More than half of those now earning the minimum wage are raising children. If their employers don’t pay enough for them to

live on, the government will end up subsidizing their employers’ (and them) with programs such as SNAP (food stamps) and Section 8. Ooops! Those programs are being cut as well. What is a poor person to do in a nation that is both hostile to poor people and also absolutely needs them?

I want President Obama to say “Black” or “African American” sometime other than Black History Month. And I’d like him to say it enthusiastically, not reluctantly. His December 4th speech on poverty issues in Washington, D.C. went a long way toward addressing the concerns (education, housing, poverty) of the least and the left out, but his lips won’t be permanently puckered in a putrid position if he managed to give his most loyal constituency a shout out. I guess I’ve been wishing for this for the past five years; I guess I’ll be wishing for the next few. (And don’t tell me that President Obama is president of everyone. He doesn’t cringe when saying Latino, women, or GBLT).

I want our Congress to think long-term and provide more dollars for education, and for HBCUs, especially, because need more resources; most colleges that enroll fewer than 1,500 students with small endowments can use help. Many of these institutions are tuition-driven which means that cuts in financial aid, in Pell grants or Parent-Plus loans cut these colleges hard. Cutting education while suggesting the labor force should be more skills based is like eating your seed corn while hearing that food must be saved for less plentiful times.

I WANT CONGRESS TO THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX. As soon as another program is mentioned, recalcitrant Republicans and blue dog Democrats start worrying about cost. Here’s a thought – cut everything related to military spending except pensions. Or, how about getting rid of some of the hundreds of millions dollars spent on pork. What would happen if colleges such as Harvard and Yale (really, I’m

not hating) got smaller grants or were required to partner with smaller schools when they get research grants, channeling a few dollars to those schools who really need them, and to the students who need ore research opportunities.

I want Obamacare to work well. If affordable health care is part of the Obama legacy, then I want it to work, really work. It will take time for the president to live down the computer debacle, and heads should have rolled in response to the faulty rollout of the program. By the end of the first quarter of 2014, Obamacare should be working seamlessly, and people should really be able to see a difference because Obamacare exists.

Bottom line – I’d like joy, peace, and economic justice by whatever means necessary. Happy New Year!

Julianne Malveaux is a Washington, D.C.-based economist and writer. She is President Emerita of Bennett College for Women in Greensboro, N.C.

Voting Matters



By Edwin Buggage
Editor, Data News Weekly

As the citizens of New Orleans get ready for major elections in February, many have offered themselves up for service. And as many have placed their platforms in front of the people, one must ask how does one come up with their platform and how much real citizen input is put into the thought process? Also of note is how can citizens get candidates passed simply making campaign promises and actually getting

these things done? Today as citizens get ready to go to the polls, this election is expected to have a higher turnout than some held recently with the number of people casting a vote hovering at percentages of around 10%, so with this seemingly shameful low number we must examine why people do not participate and find answers as to why they should.

The conventional wisdom for some is that they would argue that people are not concerned and that is why they choose not to make it to the polls and with low numbers of people when you are talking about 10 or 12 percent that means many citizens of our city choose not to vote from all backgrounds. Establishing the fact that is a citywide problem not just limited to African-Americans as it is often incorrectly framed, conversely, there may be a larger reason as to this low

turnout may be citizens actually making a statement when they do not vote. And that statement could be that because over the years that they have witnessed a political system that has been rife with corruption, nepotism and cronyism that’s ineffective and has not changed the lives of most New Orleanians in any significant way. It is perhaps that the political system has not given the people the results they desire and deserve even when they participate, so regardless of any individual who offer themselves up for service regardless of how charismatic or committed they may be, if the system is flawed then nothing really changes. Unfortunately, for many especially our most vulnerable citizens this has been the case. In another scenario we have seen a game of musical chairs, where officeholders or those affiliated with them

get in seats of elected office and hold them into perpetuity and the status quo is maintained.

And while this has been the sad reality, it is time for citizens to take back control and make those who we entrust with holding office accountable to the needs of the people. As issues such as a living wage, affordable housing, relief and help for small businesses or more educational and vocational opportunities for our city’s youth or a real committed effort to believe that all citizens should not have to live in neighborhoods where blight and all that accompany it is a part of their everyday life. These things will not happen until people get organized and get involved and realize that making this City what it can be rest in the hands of the people, not the politicians and yes voting matters but that is only the first step towards building a brighter

future for all our citizens.

It is incumbent upon community groups, churches, small businesses, educators and many individual citizens doing what they must and that is key to eradicating the problems that continue to exist in New Orleans. It is time to turn the corner in a City that almost a decade ago suffered collateral damage changing it forever, but moving forward we must get serious about the theme of “One New Orleans” being more than just a talking point and manifest itself into a reality. That people can look at their lives and see real changes for the better. Better is a matter of perspective and the toutting statistics and national magazines about the improvements of the City means something to some, it means something very different to someone living on

Voting, Continued on page 9.

January is Cervical Health Awareness Month

Questions about HPV and Cervical Cancer Answered

January is Cervical Health Awareness Month, and the New Year is a perfect time for women to take charge of their health with important preventive screenings such as Pap and HPV tests, which detect irregularities that can lead to cervical cancer.

HPV and cervical cancer are often overlooked or misunderstood. So as you think about coverage around Cervical Health Awareness Month in January, we want to provide you with some handy facts about cervical health, and urge you to use these to educate your audience. Planned Parenthood's website has more information on how to protect oneself from cervical cancer and infections like HPV.

If you need additional information, Planned Parenthood has medical experts available that can answer your questions. Please feel free to get in touch at (504) 390-3243 or jewel.bush@ppgulfcoast.org.

What exactly is cervical cancer?

Cervical cancer is caused by certain types of HPV, or human papillomavirus, a very common sexually transmitted infection. Most HPV infections are harmless, do not require treatment, and go away by themselves — but if left untreated, high-risk HPV may lead to cervical cancer in some women.

How common is HPV?

Genital HPV infections are very common. In fact, HPV is so common that most sexually active people should expect to be exposed to it and, if not vaccinated, infected by HPV at some point in their lives. Most people who have or have had HPV don't know it. About 79 million Americans are currently infected, according to the CDC.

How exactly does HPV turn into cervical cancer?

In most cases, the body's immune system clears HPV naturally. But if it doesn't, when left untreated, abnormal cells caused by HPV can develop into cervical cancer. Cervical cancer takes years to develop. It can be prevented if changes in the cervix are found early and treated.

So what can I do to protect myself from HPV?

Get the HPV vaccine. Talk to your doctor or health care professional to learn more about getting vaccinated. Planned Parenthood health centers offer the HPV vaccine.

Use protection if you have sex. Condoms can lower the risk of passing HPV if used correctly every time you have sex. But HPV can infect areas that are not covered by a condom — so they may not fully protect against HPV.

Talk with your sexual partners. You can be exposed to HPV by having skin-to-skin contact just once with someone who has the

virus, so it's important to talk with your partner about the importance of being protected and safe.

Get regular Pap tests. A Pap test can find abnormal cells (that are caused by HPV) in the cervix before the cells become cancer. Women aged 21-29 should have routine Pap tests every three years and women aged 30-64 should have a Pap test every three years or a Pap and HPV test every five years.

Is the HPV vaccine unsafe?

No. The HPV vaccine is one of the best ways to prevent the spread of HPV, is safe, and is supported by leading medical organizations. The FDA has approved this vaccine and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has recommended it for girls and boys aged 11-12. The American Cancer Society, the American Academy of Pediatrics, as well as Planned Parenthood, support ensuring all young people get the vaccine.

Who should get the HPV vaccine?

Medical guidance recommends that both girls and boys get the vaccination when they are 11 to 12 years old because the vaccine works best when people receive it years before they start having sex. But even those who have had sex can benefit from the vaccine; it is available to anyone aged 9-26.

What about older women?

For women over the age of 26, the best way to prevent cervical cancer is to get routine cervical cancer screenings, as recommended. Still, some people may be candidates to receive the vaccine and should talk to their health care provider for more information.

What about pregnant women?

Pregnant women are not included in the recommendations for HPV vaccines. Studies show neither FDA-approved HPV vaccine (Gardasil and Cervarix) caused problems for babies born to women who were vaccinated while they were pregnant. But, to be on the safe side until even more is known, a pregnant woman should not get any doses of either HPV vaccine.

Is the vaccine less effective for women of color?

One recent study found that African-American women might be less likely than white women to become infected with HPV 16 and 18; however, more research is needed in this area. The HPV vaccine offers full protection for any woman who is exposed to HPV 16 and 18, as well as potential protection for other types, and is still recommended for all women as a way to protect themselves against cervical cancer.

Does the HPV vaccine promote sex?

No. Research shows that the HPV vaccine keeps young people healthy and safe, and it can give parents an opportunity to talk with their kids about sex and sexual health. Despite the myths, young people who get the HPV vaccine are no more likely to have sex than those who don't.

Is there a cure for HPV?

Most HPV infections are harmless, do not require treatment, and go away by themselves. However, there is treatment for the abnormal cell changes in the cervix that are caused by HPV that is available at some Planned Parenthood health centers. Treatment is also available for cervical cancer, which, when caught early, has a nearly 100 percent five-year survival rate. Planned Parenthood health centers can help those who do need additional care connect with trusted, quality resources.

What about the Affordable Care Act?

Under the new health care law, people who already have insurance will gain access to Pap tests, HPV vaccines, and other no-cost preventive services, will no longer be discriminated against for having a "pre-existing condition," and young people can remain on their parent's insurance until age 26. Those who are uninsured can enroll in new, more affordable health care plans right now.

Voting, Continued from page 8.

Sixth and Baronne in Central City where, death, blight, crime and a host of other factors impact the lives and life's chances of many of the residents who are hard-working people whose lives have not improved in the last 4,8,12 or even 20 years. Or in the Lower Ninth Ward where it looks the same way it did in 2005 or New Orleans East where some have returned home and have a limited quality of life.

And right now until election day there are candidates who will be in communities talking to residents telling them why they are best qualified to hold office, and it is the people's responsibility to help shape the agenda and

began to ask them not to speak in generalities, but specifically what will they be fighting for to change the lives of the citizens of the City. And also begin to hold people charged with serving their interests to be more accountable. And most importantly begin a real conversation and move into taking steps towards changing the political culture that sometimes resembles a Third World Country. If we are to become the City and yes we have the capacity to do this then we must work to do more than vote, but stay involved because our future is in our hands and while sometimes it seems like it doesn't make a difference...voting matters.

Regional Transit Authority Announces Service Increases

The Regional Transit Authority (RTA) is increasing service to better meet the transportation needs of the community. The RTA Board of Commissioners recently approved its 2014 Budget. The Budget includes additional bus services targeted at reducing wait times, increasing later evening access, and providing more service in Orleans Parish.

The service changes which began on January 5, 2014 are an investment in more bus service in Orleans Parish by the



RTA Board of Commissioners. Another Rider Alert will be posted announcing community workshops and a public hearing to review additional investments in new bus services in

2014. For detailed information about the service enhancements visit us online at http://www.norta.com/rider_tools/Service_Updates/index.html or call 504-248-5900.

New Orleans Neighborhood LIFT Program Offers Down Payment Assistance Grants

Representatives from Wells Fargo, NeighborWorks America, and Hope Enterprise Corporation announced the \$5.15 million New Orleans NeighborhoodLIFT® program which will boost homeownership opportunities for low and moderate income households and to assist with the City's coordinated development strategy to bring investment into all areas of New Orleans.

Of the \$5.15 million commitment from Wells Fargo, \$4 million will fund an initiative to help potential homebuyers overcome the lack of a sufficient down payment.

Down payment assistance grants of \$15,000 will be available for eligible homebuyers with annual incomes that do not exceed 120 percent of the New Orleans area median income – which is \$70,550 for a family of four – with income maximums varying depending on family size and type of loan. To be eligible, homebuyers must meet criteria including completing an eight-hour homebuyer education session with Hope Enterprise Corporation or other HUD-approved counseling agency.

Participants buying homes with LIFT \$15,000 down payment assistance grants must commit to live in the home for five years and qualify for a first mortgage on the property. The down payment assistance grants may also be used to take out a new mortgage purchase renovation loan known as a 203k.



tion loan known as a 203k.

“Like many cities, New Orleans was impacted by the economic crisis – and that’s on top of the challenges caused by Katrina,”

said Hugh Rowden, Wells Fargo Home Mortgage Community Outreach Manager in the Southeast. “But New Orleans is coming back strong and housing is extremely important. While mortgages are available at low-interest rates, some families are unable to purchase a home or buy and renovate a home because they struggle with making the down payment. The NeighborhoodLIFT® program can help local homebuyers realize their dreams of owning a home.”

In addition to providing grants for homebuyers, the Wells Fargo program will also donate a total of \$500,000 to help further stabilization efforts in New Orleans neighborhoods. The balance of the local financial commitment will provide homebuyer program support including the large-scale kickoff event.

Registration now open for free event Jan. 31 and Feb. 1

The New Orleans NeighborhoodLIFT® program will begin with a free homebuyer event on

January 31 and February 1 from 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. at the New Orleans Morial Convention Center at 900 Convention Center Blvd.

Prospective homebuyers can register and learn more about the program at www.neighborhoodlift.com or by calling (866) 858-2151. Pre-registration is strongly recommended for an opportunity to reserve a \$15,000 down payment assistance grant, although walk-ins will be welcome while funds are available. The event will also include a Wells Fargo Affordable Home Tour® viewing center where attendees can preview local homes available for sale.

Participating homebuyers can obtain mortgage financing from any qualified lender and Hope Enterprise Corporation will determine eligibility and administer the down payment assistance grants. Approved homebuyers will have up to 60 days to finalize a contract to purchase a home in New Orleans in order to receive the \$15,000.

“This innovative partnership between NeighborWorks America, NeighborWorks network member Hope Enterprise Corporation and Wells Fargo will put more New Orleans families and individuals on the path to homeownership,” said Donald Phoenix, NeighborWorks America’s Acting Senior Vice President, Field Operations. “The required eight-hour homebuyer education class has been shown to help homebuyers achieve successful and sustainable homeownership.”

New Orleans is the first city in 2014 to receive the NeighborhoodLIFT® program, and is now one of 23 housing markets across the country that will benefit from a total of \$185 million Wells Fargo has committed through its LIFT programs. Since February 2012, LIFT programs have helped create more than 5,000 homeowners in housing markets where the programs have been introduced.

“At Hope Enterprise Corporation we have seen firsthand how homebuyer education and proper financing can foster successful homeowners and stronger neighborhoods,” said Bill Bynum, Chief Executive Officer of Hope Enterprise Corporation. “That’s why we are very excited about participating in the New Orleans NeighborhoodLIFT program.”

District D Councilmember Cynthia Hedge-Morrell said, “Homeownership has long been a foundation of New Orleans’ communities. Homeowners are not just buying a house; they are buying into the community. They become personally invested in our city’s success. This program to help first time homebuyers reach their goal is a great thing and I thank Wells Fargo for their investment.”

State Representative Jared Brossett said, “I commend Wells Fargo for investing in the future of New Orleans by supporting sustainable homeownership and community development. This program not only helps families hoping to achieve the dream of owning a home, but it also helps the city of New Orleans. Homebuyers spur economic development, promote neighborhood stability, and make New Orleans a better place for all of us to live.”

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How College Pricing Is Like Holiday Retail Sales

By Marian Wang

NNPA Washington DC - You know all those seemingly great sales during the holidays? It turns out, they are often a "carefully engineered illusion." A recent piece in the Wall Street Journal defines what it calls "retail theater," noting that often the discounts being offered to bargain-conscious consumers are carefully planned out by retailers from the start.

The common assumption is that retailers stock up on goods and then mark down the ones that don't sell, taking a hit to their profits. But that isn't typically how it plays out. Instead, big retailers work backward with their suppliers to set starting prices that, after all the markdowns, will yield the profit margins they want.

The red cardigan sweater with the ruffled neck on sale for more than 40 percent off at \$39.99 was never meant to sell at its \$68 starting price. It was designed with the discount built in.

Some retailers that sell online even set their discounts depending on user information, as the Journal reported last year:

The Staples Inc. website displays different prices to people after estimating their locations. More than that, Staples appeared to consider the person's distance from a rival brick-and-mortar store, either OfficeMax Inc. or Office Depot Inc. If rival stores were within 20 miles or so, Staples.com usually showed a discounted price.

Higher education may seem like a different world, but universities in many ways have been working from the same playbook.

Savvier college-bound consumers know that the so-called "sticker price" of tuition and fees at a given college or university isn't what many – or even most – students pay.



Higher education may seem like a different world, but universities in many ways have been working from the same playbook as major retailers. Savvier college-bound consumers know that the so-called "sticker price" of tuition and fees at a given college or university isn't what many – or even most – students pay.

Take American University, where 74 percent of full-time freshmen got a grant or scholarship – essentially, a discount off the list price – for the 2011-2012 school year. Or Drexel University, where that figure was 98 percent.

At nearly 200 schools, 100 percent of full-time freshmen got a scholarship, as DePaul University's Jon Boeckenstedt points out.

A recent study of discounting at private non-profit colleges found that the average institutional grant has grown as a percentage of sticker price, hitting an all-time high of roughly 53 percent. But the report, released in May by the National Association of College and University Business Officers, also pointed out that while larger discounts are generally a good thing, students could still end up paying more depending on how much the sticker price is going up at the same time.

Like retailers, colleges and universities are increasingly getting more sophisticated about how they give out discounts, offering so-called "merit aid" to students they especially want to enroll.

Private universities have led

the way in discounting, but as we've detailed, the practice has spread to public universities as well. Many state schools have moved toward the "high-tuition, high-aid" model by discounting for students with high test scores or for out-of-state students who will ultimately pay more than residents, even with a small discount.

Some colleges – mostly private colleges – will even price-match if students know to ask. (It's not unlike your local Best Buy, really.)

The growing discount rates and the lack of transparency in the pricing of higher education have prompted some schools to try another approach. A few colleges and universities have opted for "tuition resets," announcing they're slashing sticker prices by as much as \$10,000 – while often reducing aid.

Call it the J.C. Penney strategy. The retailer tried to move away from high-low pricing and move to "everyday low prices," only to find out the hard way that customers really, really love a discount.

Yet at least initially, some colleges such as Concordia University have gone the "tuition reset"

route and have found that the lower rates (and the accompanying PR boost about the lower rates) got more student applications in the door, raising enrollments and ultimately, net tuition revenue. Whether that interest from consumers will keep up after the headlines fade remains to be seen.

It's worth mentioning that one big difference between the pricing of higher education and other consumer goods is the ease of comparison shopping: When you're shopping for a new TV set, it's relatively easy to compare prices with a little research. It's much harder to do that with colleges, especially when you have to narrow down your options to a manageable number and submit applications before knowing for sure how much each option will end up costing.

There are, of course, tools out there intended to make college costs more transparent. Colleges are required to post net price calculators to give prospective students – or, at least, those who put in the time to find the calculators online and enter in their personal information – a better sense of what a given school might cost them after discounts. But the calculators have their limitations: Some estimates are more accurate than others, depending on the complexity of the colleges' calculators, which are not standardized. (In more recent news, lawmakers have introduced a law aimed at making the calculators more user-friendly.)

As it stands, it's not always clear whether consumers actually win when colleges – or retailers – tinker with their pricing and discounts. What is clear is that when the system isn't especially transparent, discounts can get people overexcited, whether they're real savings or not.

Films/ Continued from page 6.

Saw You is a brilliant film by director Annemarie Jacir about a young boy displaced along with his mother from Palestine in 1967. Capturing both the pain of refugees and the steadfastness of liberation fighters, the film is a stunning accomplishment and needs to be seen widely. Bayou Maharajah: The Tragic Genius

of James Booker is filmmaker Lily Keber's loving and thorough documentary about the man who has been called "the best Black, gay, one-eyed junkie piano genius New Orleans has ever produced." The film is a gift for those that love New Orleans music, and a revelation for those less familiar.

Another great film that nearly made the list: Stephen Vittoria's film Long Distance Revolutionary, about imprisoned freedom fighter Mumia Abu-Jamal, explores the context of Abu-Jamal's life through an all-star cast of interviews that includes Ruby Dee, Dick Gregory, Giancarlo Esposito, Cornel West, Alice Walker,

Pam Africa, and many others.

The only way for these films to continue to get made and seen is for viewers to support them. For every Thor or Iron Man you see, make the time for some of these films that challenge the status quo.

Jordan Flaherty is a journalist, television and film producer based in New Orleans.

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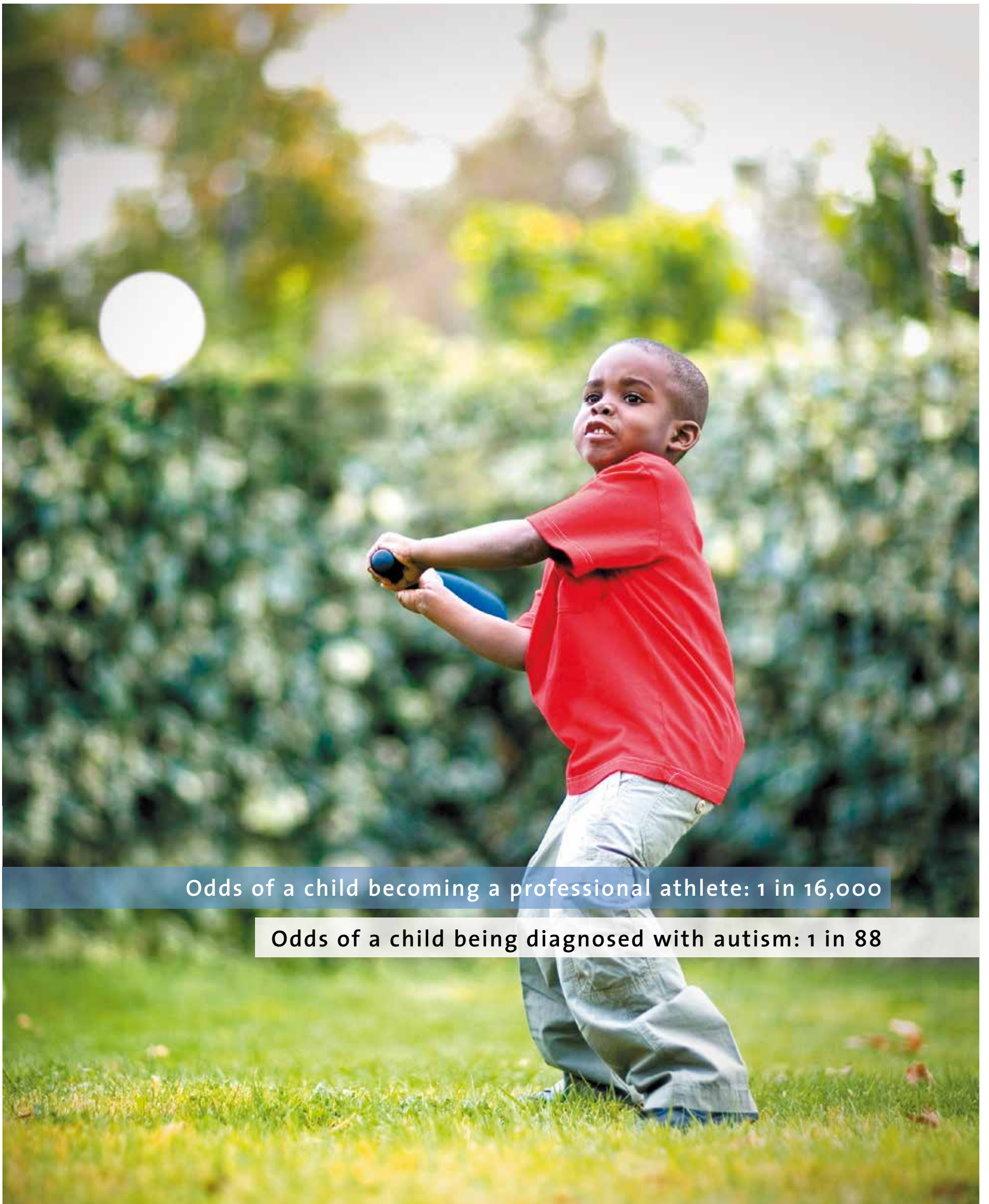
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