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A Data News Weekly Exclusive

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Baton Rouge Floods 1 Month Later



Ascension Parish Sheriff Public Information Officer Allison B. Hudson. Photo by Blair Lyons



An East Baton Rouge street is lined with piles of destroyed household items. Photo by Blair Lyons.

Eric Craig
Multimedia Editor

In Mid-August, Gov. John Bel Edwards declared the floods in the East Baton Rouge area a historic disaster and the worse since 2013's Hurricane Sandy. Between

August 12 - 15, constant rainfall led to the devastations of over 40,000 homes, according to state officials.

According to the Washington Post, the 2016 storm dropped over 7 trillion gallons of water, which is roughly three times the amount of water produced during Hurricane Katrina, and enough to fill

Lake Pontchartrain nearly four times.

Over 100,000 people registered for Federal Emergency Management Agency since the flood and the organization was approved of \$132 million in assistance.

Roughly a month later, thousands remain without shelters and tens of thousands are currently in the

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Cover Story, Continued from page 2.



Patricia Anderson, resident of East Baton Rouge, discusses how five-feet of flood water damaged her house.



Leon Clippis stands in front of his ruined home with one of his grandchildren.



The items in Anderson's home were recently removed on Sept 5, 2016. She said due to her health condition, she had no one to help her clean up.

process of applying for funding through FEMA.

The Storm

Leon Clippis, a resident in the East Baton Rouge Parish was devastated by the storm. He said that the water caught him by surprise.

"The flood came from the backwater from the canal. They had just worked on the sewer system here, and it didn't hold at all. It flooded so quickly, and the water was so high we had to get out by boat," Clippis said.

The water continued to rise as residents began to evacuate the neighborhood, he added.

"Within two hours the house was completely flooded. At that time, I had to wade out of the house with water up to my neck," Clippis said.

Clippis came back to his house

four days after the storm subsided and the water receded. He reviewed the damages and continued to clean out his house nearly a month after the storm hit. Clippis was accompanied by his grandchild.

"It will be at least 6 months' tops before everything is rebuilt. People are price gouging. For electrical work some people want to charge up to \$7,000," Clippis said.

"You don't get that kind of money from FEMA to pay that, so it's outrageous to deal with the contractors and everybody is money hungry," he added.

Every house in Clippis neighborhood had piles of items damaged by the 2016 flood. Most residents in Clippis neighborhood were displaced, living in motels and shelters, Clippis said.

"The neighborhood is complete-

ly empty. All of my neighbors are gone and feel the same way I do. It's unbelievable to think about what the water has done to everyone's homes," Clippis added.

Patricia Anderson is another resident of East Baton Rouge Parish. The items in her house were removed nearly a month after the storm. Anderson's medical condition prevented her from doing lifting, and had to wait for volunteer assistance to help remove the items from her home.

Anderson was not concerned about the material items.

"I have four children, two boys and two girls, and 13 grandchildren, but they're all still living," Anderson said.

Media Coverage

Allison Hudson, a Public Information Officer at the Ascension Parish Sheriff's office was directly affected by the storm. One-third of houses in Ascension Parish were damaged during the floods.

"It hadn't flooded here since 1983, but it was the furthest thing from my mind," Hudson said. The information officer was previously displaced by Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

"After going through something like Katrina, it was minimal at this point. This time all I missed was my shoes," she added.

Hudson handles the community policing and relations to the community for the Sheriff Department. During the storm, Hudson was in contact with several media organizations both national and local.

"CNN, The Morning Show and everyone called and my message to

them was 'we're going to take care of our local reporters first. When you guys leave, they're still going to be here covering the event,'" Hudson said.

"My main focus was getting those local reporters that also lost homes and I was catering to them," she added.

Hudson was not the only one that was disappointed in national media coverage.

"The coverage wasn't too good locally or nationally, but the help from the Salvation Army, Jesus Christ Ladder Day Saints and all of the people that were here, they were great," Clippis said.

Both Hudson and Clippis thought Livingston Parish got more media coverage than their home parishes. Hudson noted that much of the National Media Coverage focused in the touring of presidential candidates Trump and Clinton, and of President Obama's visit rather than the devastation of the communities.

FEMA Assistance

After the parishes affected by the flood were federally recognized as national disasters, FEMA supplied \$132 million in funding to assist in home and business repair.

While many individuals give to organizations to support relief efforts, residents of the flooded area believe there is one thing that is most important: Housing.

"People need housing. We can keep these shelters open as long as we can, but people want to be in their own space as they should be. We have to come up with some kind of plan to get people housing," Hudson said.

"FEMA came to us and said first responders would be taken care of first because it's hard to police a city when you don't have anywhere to lay their head at night," Hudson said it will take up to 14 days to file and complete the process to apply for funding.

Clippis is also disappointed with the FEMA operations in the affected parishes.

"FEMA is giving us the blues right now. There's so many processes you have to go through and basically I don't think they're giving us enough money to fix our homes. But the money that we do get we appreciate it, but I think they can do a bit better," Clippis said.

While FEMA is currently relieving the housing issue with trailers, Hudson does not think they will help solve immediate problems.

"FEMA has come up with this trailer thing which was unlike Hurricane Katrina and these trailers are huge. You can't put this anywhere. It's ridiculous how big these things are. It's like a full-size mobile home. And you have to meet all these criteria to put it there," Hudson said.

"I know a lot of people have backlashed FEMA. But we have to understand this was wide-spread. It wasn't like Katrina where it was one area, but this was wide-spread and it affected several parishes," she added.

Organizations such as Baton Rouge Area Foundation: Flood Relief, Salvation Army, and Red Cross are taking donations of all sorts. When donating monetary goods to any donations, ensure that it is going to a particular parish or area.

Demonstrators Protest Eric Harris' Death

Ronald Davis
Data News Weekly
Contributor

On Friday, Sept. 2, supporters of the Justice for Eric Harris NOLA held a demonstration for Eric Harris. Harris was a 22-year-old male shot and killed by police in Jefferson Parish on Feb. 8, 2016.

"It is our duty to fight for our freedom. It is our duty to win, we must love and protect each other. We have nothing to lose but our shame," protestors chanted.

The Harris family believes police lacked justification for killing Harris. Activist are currently demanding the indictment of the officers involved in the Feb. 8th shooting.

The Harris Family awaits answers on Harris' case. On Sept. 2nd, several supporters protested U.S. Attorney Kenneth Polite, Jr. at



Angela Kinlaw, New Orleans activist, advocates for the release of video evidence in the Eric Harris case.

his downtown office at 650 Poydras St. They demanded that all videos of the killing to be released and to call for a federal indictment of the deputies involved.

"Is the system as a whole functional when eight months can go by and there I no response," Angela Kinlaw, a local activist with the Justice for Eric

Harris NOLA Group, said.

"There are no answers, and we're supposed to be okay with that?" she added.

Kinlaw called out the U.S. Attorney for his repeated attempts to ignore the family and activist group. According to Kinlaw, Polite avoided phone calls and in-person interviews.

Kinlaw believes Polite is avoiding the release of evidence in hopes that attention of the case has died down.

Polite's office has not responded to any contact regarding the case.

Kinlaw noted that Polite's office was closed and vacated during the Sept. 2 protest. She condemned Polite for leaving the office early while other "tax paying citizens" are at work.

Kinlaw was not the only demonstrator displeased with authorities.

Sandra Harris, the mother of Eric Harris, spoke at the rally.

Sandra Harris said they wanted it be clear they did not want sympathy from officials, but for justice to be done.

After the shooting, the mother cares for her son's the 2-year-old daughter with the child's mother Tyshara Blouin. She has struggled through depression since her son's death, reminded of his life through the portraits that hang around her house, she said.

Kinlaw, Sandra Harris and other protestors will continue to demonstrate against authorities until all video evidence related to the Harris case is released.

The organizers urged all supporters to attend their weekly protest from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. at the corner of South Claiborne Ave. and Washington Ave.



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Beulah Production to Host Social Event, Free Concert

Data News Staff Edited Report

On Friday, Sept. 16, 2016, Beulah Productions is hosting a Love Social Expression Event in New Orleans. Beulah Production is encouraging citizens of New Orleans and Baton Rouge to use love to deal with the issues that plague their communities. The event takes place at the Carver Theatre located on 2101 Orleans Ave. Organizers will host a social media gathering, a social bike ride and a free concert for all participants.

Beulah Productions is a Music Production Company that assist artists in creating musical projects and creating community-centered events. The production company adopted the hashtag #LoveNolaBr on social media to encourage citizens to use love instead of anger and violence to solve issues in the cities of New Orleans and Baton Rouge.

"We want to confront the anger that's going on in our communities. There are everyday issues plaguing our communities, and some people have forgotten how we deal with issues in a com-



munity. We solved them through love," Glenn Jones, an Organizer for the #LoveNolaBR Campaign.

"These cities and the state has gone through so much, from flood waters to police brutality and conflict. With all of that said it's all about bringing our community together," he added.

Jones said he

wants the #LoveNolaBr to be the largest digital movement for solidarity in the nation.

The Love Social Expression Event will begin at 5:30 p.m. on Friday at the Carver Theatre, located on 2101 Orleans Ave. The event will consist of a Social Media Expression for Love Session. The campaign will utilize all major social media platforms, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat.

After the social media campaign, the organizers will lead a 30-minute bike ride around the mid-city community from 6:15 p.m. to 6:45 p.m. At the end of the bike ride, the event will conclude with a free concert to be hosted at Carver Theatre. The featured artist includes Love Evolution, Dee Day and Leon Dreamz.

Beulah Productions partnered with Air to Host the Love Social Expression Event and the event is sponsored by Cumulus Media.

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 09.16.2016
 CARVER THEATRE
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5:30 Meet

6:00 Social Media Expression of Love

6:15 NOLA Love Bike Ride

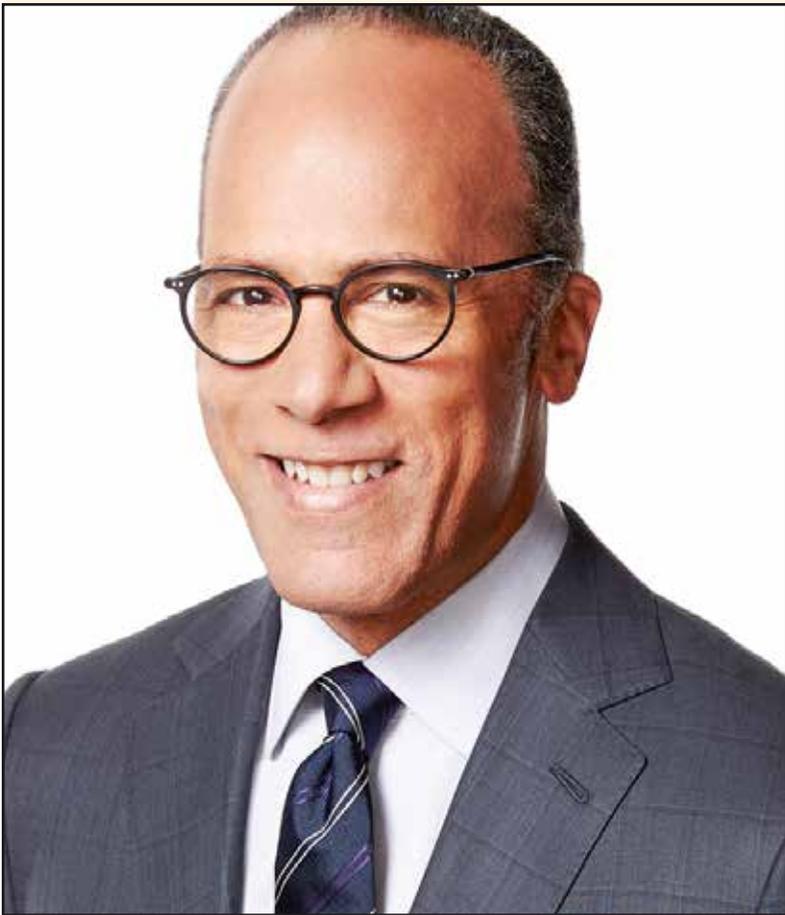
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NABJ Congratulates Lester Holt as Moderator of First 2016 Presidential Debate



Data News Staff Edited Report

WASHINGTON, D.C. (Sep. 2, 2016) - NABJ congratulates Lester

Holt, NABJ Journalist of the Year and Anchor of "NBC Nightly News with Lester Holt" on being selected as the Moderator for the first 2016 Presidential Debate.

Holt will moderate the first debate on Sept. 26th at Hofstra University in Hempstead, N.Y. The commission also announced today that Martha Raddatz of ABC and Anderson Cooper of CNN will moderate the Town Hall Debate on Oct. 9th; and Chris Wallace of Fox News will moderate the final debate on Oct. 19th.

All of the 2016 moderators are first-time Presidential Debate Moderators. CBS News Correspondent Elaine Quijano will moderate the Vice-Presidential Debate on Oct. 4th.

"NABJ is pleased that the Commission on President Debates selected Lester for this important

role and for ensuring that diverse voices are at the table to lead the discussion. We know that Lester will do an exemplary job as moderator, and that the public will learn more about the two nominees," said NABJ President Sarah Glover.

"As an advocacy organization, we have continued to champion diversity inclusion. Just four years ago, Black journalists and journalists of color were not selected for the moderator roles. While we celebrate Lester and Elaine Quijano's participation, it is unfortunate that a Latino journalist won't be represented in a moderator position this year." Holt follows in the great foot-

steps of NABJ members Bernard Shaw, co-moderator of the 1988 Presidential Debate and Vice-Presidential Debate in 2000; Carole Simpson, the only Black woman to moderate a Presidential Debate in 1992; and Gwen Ifill, moderator of the Vice-Presidential Debate in 2004 and 2008.



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Veteran Black Journalist George Curry Will Always be with Us

By Lauren Victoria Burke
NNPA News Wire Columnist

On Saturday, August 20, I was at my mother's house in Virginia when I received a text message, late that night, telling me that George Curry had suffered a heart attack. After a series of phone calls with friends, I was told the Washington Post was calling around for comment on George and that the truth no one wanted to believe was real. It was truly unbelievable. Anyone who knew George Curry understands why. George was a force of truth-telling, freedom-fighting journalism that loomed large in media circles. And if you were a member of the Black Press, his presence was felt even stronger. So many of the people that I know who are writers, journalists and broadcasters, I met through George, one way or another.

At his funeral on Saturday, Au-

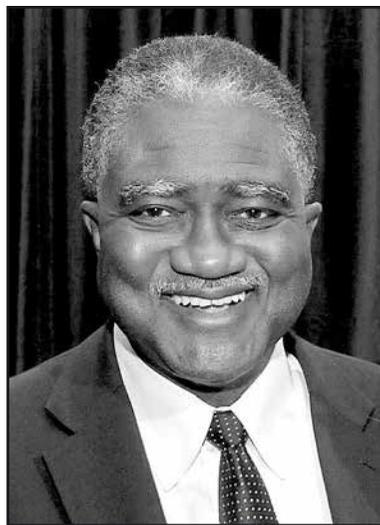
gust 27, in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, which was thankfully livestreamed by Roland Martin, many friends, civil rights leaders, and pastors spoke in tribute to Curry, striking the essence of who George was right on the head.

Benjamin Chavis, the president and CEO of the National Newspaper Publishers Association, called George a colleague and friend in the Civil Rights Movement.

"If there is one word I can say in tribute of our brother it is 'courage,'" said Chavis. "'Courage' to speak truth to power, and 'courage' to speak about us."

Chavis continued: "There's a price to tell the truth. There's a price to lift up Black people. There's a price for fighting for the struggle and for equality. There are forces gathering to take us back when we're trying to move forward."

It's incredible to think about the fact that George's life ended right



towards the end of the historic presidency of Barack Obama.

Rev. Al Sharpton said that he respected the fact that George would take him to task on issues they disagreed on.

"People who do that really have a respect for you and make you better," Sharpton told a packed church

at Curry's funeral. "You remember people who correct you when you need correction."

George was on Sharpton's radio show "Keepin' It Real" every Friday. I used to make sure that I listened to the last hour of the week of Sharpton's show each Friday, because I knew that George was going to be on and that he would say something that was relevant and insightful. Chavis was right when he said there was a price for telling the truth.

In 2015, George wrote a two-part series on the state of HBCU funding last year. What was the title of the series? "Is the Obama Administration Trying to Kill HBCUs?" It was a series that few other Black journalists in the U.S. would have delivered — a completely scathing appraisal of the first Black president of the United States. That was George.

Even though George was buried

on August 27, he's still with us and thanks to his incredible work ethic, his legacy of mentoring young journalists and his countless on-air appearances, he will always be with us. George Curry was one the few African American journalists in the U.S., who would say the uncomfortable things that needed to be said and who brought to light subjects that few would even acknowledge and most journalists just chose to ignore. That level of integrity in journalism set him apart from the pack.

As Dr. Chavis said at his funeral: "Well done, George. Well said, George. Well written, George. We love you and we'll always keep your spirit alive."

Lauren Victoria Burke is a political analyst who speaks on politics and African American leadership. She can be contacted at LBurke007@gmail.com and on twitter at [@LVBurke](https://twitter.com/LVBurke).

Why do Black Businesses Struggle to Grow?



Julianne Malveaux
NNPA Columnist

The most recent data on minority-owned firms in the United States was collected in 2012 (and released at the end of 2015). It showed that the number of minority-owned firms rose from 5.8 million in 2007 to 8 million in 2012. Hispanic-owned firms grew the most rapidly — by 46 percent to 3.3 million. African American-owned firms grew by 34.5 percent to 2.6 million. Asian-owned firms grew by 23.8 percent to 1.9 million. Women-owned firms grew by 26.8 percent compared

to firms owned by men that grew by just 6.8 percent. Since the total number of firms grew by just 2 percent, to 27.6 million, the growth in minority and women-owned firms could define the way that business is being done in our country.

It is possible that the growth in minority and women owned firms could provide opportunities for women and people of color outside the traditional labor market, outside traditional corporate work. Maybe. But the ugly underside of the growth data is the fact that only 11 percent of minority-owned firms have employees. In other words, most of these firms are one-person businesses, providing consulting and other services from just one individual. Only 4 percent of African-American-owned firms — just 109,137 of the total 2.6 million businesses — have employees. The growth in new businesses, then, may be the result of people forming

businesses when they lost or left jobs, as opposed to people entering business with an entrepreneurial vision that includes hiring and expansion.

Why aren't more Black entrepreneurs trying to do more? It isn't for lack of ideas. Not a day goes by when I don't run into someone with a great, new, business idea. Sure, some of them are whacky, and some are far-fetched, but many are solid ideas that can't get off the ground because people need capital to start a business. The biggest challenge that Black entrepreneurs face is access to capital, or the difficulties experienced in attempting to get a bank loan. Some of the reasons have to do with lack of collateral, or with the fact that African Americans experience a wealth gap so large that few can jump through the fiscal hoops that many banks require. Some estimates say that Whites have 12 times more wealth

than African Americans and Whites also have an advantage when going to lenders. African American entrepreneurs, good ideas notwithstanding, won't get a loan unless they have assets or collateral to back the loan up.

Yet, it is in the national interest to promote minority entrepreneurship and particularly Black entrepreneurship. Even Republican President Richard Nixon "got it" when he authorized the establishment of the Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA) and used the term "economic justice" to talk about the barriers to entrepreneurship that African Americans had experienced. Though the agency, established in 1968, has been in existence for nearly 50 years, many African Americans find entry barriers as daunting as they were when the agency was established. Why? Many, thinking that we live in a "post-racial" era have reverted to

old patterns of giving opportunities and contracts to their friends, instead of tapping a diverse pool of businesses that can deliver. Others say they can't deal with those tiny companies that have no employees and just one principal scrambling to do all the work. Small minority businesses do themselves no favors, when they can't manage the scope and scale of work that some larger employers require.

For all the barriers and challenges of scale, minority businesses are important, because they are more likely to hire minority workers, those affected by the persistent unemployment rate gap. Minority businesses, when they have employees, are also more likely to hire and advance women in executive positions. Entrepreneurship matters because it expands the realm of possibility for people of color, allows people to participate fully in

Commentary,
Continued on page 9.

Spiritually Speaking...

Remembering Because I Said So



James A. Washington
NNPA News Wire
Columnist

them to do out of respect and love rather than simple discipline and consequence. If a wholesome relationship does indeed exist, then the child will want to comply out of the recognition of the parent's love. Mom or Dad is telling me this because they've got my back.

If all one does is obey the rules because of the consequences of the punishment associated with disobeying the rules then, the rules are generally thrown out the window when the rule maker is no longer around. I guess what I'm really trying to say is, when grounded in love, people respond favorably according to the wishes and will of the person who is the object of that love. By our very nature, we want to look good in the eyes of the people we're trying to impress. Jesus says, "If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching." John 14:23. Examine

this use of the term obey. What Christ is saying is the same thing that many a mother and father want to believe about their kids. We all know the things that would upset Mom and Dad. We know this because they spent a lifetime (yours) instilling their values and integrity into your character. You might still do things they wouldn't condone, but you certainly know the difference between the right and wrong of it because of your upbringing. That upbringing, if nurtured in the spirit of love, reveals to all of us the source and nature of the consequences and the resulting discipline. It's still all about love. Y'all know that 'this is going to hurt me more than it's going to hurt you' thing.

Christ is merely reminding us that if you love Him, then obeying His rules, His teachings, which were given to us out of love of the

Father, should come from the heart out of our Christian experience. Our desire to please should override our mere compliance to the rules. The point is obedience to God has so much more to do with wanting to do the right thing for the right reason, than doing the right thing because it is law. One is the result of relationship and the other is the result of fear of consequence. Throughout scripture, Jesus constantly refers to the love of the Father. How many of you do what your mother would expect of you and your mother has been dead for years? How many of you try to pass those same expectations along to your kids? Why? I submit that you do this because of the relationship you have or had with your mother. That's why I am convinced the key to understanding obedience to God is establishing or reestablishing a re-

lationship with the Almighty. This is achieved by studying His Word, getting inside His commandments and emulating as best you can the life of Christ, who carried out the wishes of His Father to the letter. "I will not speak with you much longer, for the prince of this world is coming. He has no hold on me, but the world must learn that I love the father and I do exactly what my Father has commanded me." John 14:30-31.

To obey should be an act of love. Our goal should be to understand God's love for us and simply do our best to return it. Act accordingly, so to speak.

May God bless and keep you always.

James

James A. Washington is Publisher of the Dallas Weekly Newspaper. You can reach him by email at jaws@dallasweekly.com.

Commentary, Continued from page 8.

the economic realm, and provides people with the opportunity to earn profits and to share those profits with family and community.

In order to fully encourage minority business, Fortune 500 companies must commit to supplier diversity and set numerical procurement goals. Federal, state and local governments, must also ensure that there is full minority participation in the contracts they award. Those who work with minority firms must provide incentives for firms to do joint venture activities or to merge so that they can deal with issues of scale. Further, while many minority businesses crave independence, the acceptance of outside investors to facilitate growth. Finally, banks must "do the right thing" and provide more capital to minority businesses than they currently do.

But minority businesses must also understand that economic development can't happen without economic justice. Minority businesses must provide jobs that pay living wages to the workers that they hire. It makes no sense for the Black community to advocate for Black business, if Black businesses will not pay a living wage with reasonable benefits.

Minority entrepreneurship matters. It matters most when it is both profitable and community-transforming. During this presidential election year, candidates need to be challenged to talk about minority business participation. Do they subscribe, as Richard Nixon did, to the principle of "economic justice." How does that manifest in their campaign spending?

Julianne Malveaux is an author and economist. Her latest book "Are We Better Off? Race, Obama and Public Policy." is available via <http://www.amazon.com>. For booking and wholesale inquires visit www.julianmalveaux.com.

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Central City Goes Back to School

Blair Lyons
Data News Weekly
Contributor

On Sept 1, 2016, Council Member LaToya Cantrell hosted a Back to School Night Event from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. Around 50 elementary, middle school and high school children, attended the event hosted at the People's Health New Orleans Jazz Market. The evening consisted of music, games and other education activities. Joining Cantrell were several members from both, The New Orleans Jazz Orchestra (NOJO) and the Youth Empowerment Project assisted Cantrell to host the Back to School Night Event. Upon completion of the program, students were given brand new backpacks, equipped with school supplies and a surprise pair of headphones.

"The impact of this Back to School Night Event on the community is tremendous," Cantrell said.

"This event was to let the stu-



New Orleans Councilwoman LaToya Cantrell hosted a Back to School Night event at the People's Health New Orleans Jazz Market. Photos by Blair Lyons

dents and parents of New Orleans understand that the New Orleans Jazz Market was made for their entertainment," she added.

Multiple stations had been set up for the students to use, including yoga, art and instrument stations, along with a Connect 4 tournament and puzzles. "Every recent investment made in Central City has been about children," Cantrell said.

Sarah Bell, Development Coordinator for NOJO, assisted with the school-oriented event. While daily activities are held for students at the People's Health New Orleans Jazz Market, Bell said this event was conducted in the hopes of bringing the community together through music.

"The New Orleans Jazz Orchestra was created with the surround-

ing community in mind," Bell said. "Us having this space provides children with different musical experiences, as well as other resources," she added.

While this was one of the first events of its kind at this venue, community activities are continuously being put on by NOJO, including Family Day, which takes place every Saturday.

"Family Day activities include Story Hour and different arts and crafts workshops, starting at around 10 a.m.," Bell said.

With overall crime down six percent in New Orleans from 2015 to 2016, many organizations such as NOJO wish to put the community back into the hands of the young students of the City. With the help of Council Member LaToya Cantrell, more in-need youth had the opportunity to explore different resources and become united through music.

According to Cantrell, with more students exposed to these events, the better the surrounding community gets.

"Whether or not you live, work, worship, or attend school in Central City, this event was to showcase not only the New Orleans Jazz Orchestra, but to highlight why it was made, which was to service the children in this community," Cantrell said.

NOCCA Student Filmmakers Partner with Data Center

Nigel Palmer
Data News Weekly
Contributor

This summer, Pittsburg filmmaker Isaac Webb, reached out to his New Orleans high school students to give them an opportunity to showcase their talents.

Webb, a Teacher, Filmmaker, and Mentor at the New Orleans Creative Arts Academy brought young filmmakers together to examine sensitive topics such as teen pregnancy, obesity, and teen violence. The goal of the project was to give the filmmakers the chance to use their voice to speak on these trends and how it affects their community.

On Sept 1st, the student unveiled their projects as part of the Youth Index Series, housed at NOCCA's Lupin Hall.

"I am the product of a teen preg-



Organizer Dr. Andre Perry and NOCCA filmmaker Philip Youmans. Photo by Nigel Palmer.

nancy, so the data on teen pregnancy really touched home for me," said Myron Solomon who co-directed and co-produced the film "Teen

Pregnancy." Solomon is a senior at McDonogh 35 High School who attends the New Orleans Creative Arts Academy part-time.

As part of the Creative Project Exercise, the students were given statistics on major issues affecting New Orleans. They were then asked to give their own interpretation of the data through visual media.

The New Orleans Data Center and NOCCA collaborated on the series and its launch in order to give the data life and show meaning behind these

statistics from the community.

"The goal is to give students a platform to use their voice to speak on what's going on," said Andre Perry, PhD., who works with The Data Center as a consultant and writes a column for the Hechinger Report. Perry has also served as Chief Academic Officer of NOCCA for a semester and said the project would give young people a voice in social justice because he believes the youth can develop solutions to solve the problems the community faces.

"In the future, we would like more students, city-wide, to get involved and generate their own data," Perry said.

At the series launch, the students used this platform to capture the public's attention to these statistics and to inform the audience about issues such as childhood obesity, child poverty, and the lack of high

school diplomas in Louisiana.

"Creating these films required a certain level of vulnerability, which easily was the most difficult part of creating it," said Phillip Youmans, 16, from NOCCA. Youmans, who was among one of the youngest students participating in the Youth Index Series, said his film was based on his personal struggle with obesity.

The filmmakers put together stories that expressed and interpreted their data. The students said they learned time management skills as they juggled their projects with the start of the school year.

"It was way harder to keep the project going, than beginning it. The waiting process and having other tasks to complete made it worthwhile," Myron Solomon said.

The Youth Video Series are available for viewing on the Data Center's website at dataresearch.org.

The NNPA Launches Historic Black Voter Turnout Project for 2016 Election



By Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr.
NNPA News Wire Contributor

The National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA) proudly asserts that, "We are the authentic voice of Black America." We must use that voice as an urgent clarion call for a massive, historic and unprecedented Black American voter turnout on November 8, 2016 across the nation.

Today, the NNPA is launching "Project Black Voter Turnout 2016: 20 Million Black Voters to the Polls." We're calling on our entire NNPA membership, comprised of more than 211 Black-owned media companies operating in the United States, to issue front-page news coverage and motivational editorials and to present banner ads on their publication websites, to promote effective Get-Out-The-Vote (GOTV) campaigns in the Black community.

It is an undisputed fact that a record number of Black Americans (16,133,000) voted in 2008 and helped Barack H. Obama to become the first Black President of the United States. Then, in 2012, Black Americans broke their 2008 record for voter turnout, casting 17,813,000 votes. In 2012, for the first time in American history, Black voter turnout (66.2 percent) at the national level exceeded White voter turnout (64.1 percent).

The United States of America is once again at a pivotal and crucial political crossroads. The outcome of the November 8th national elections will determine the future of the nation and of the world.

This is a propitious moment, not only for 47 million Black Americans, but this is also the time for all Americans to decide whether or not American democracy will finally fully embrace the goals of freedom,

justice, equality and empowerment for all people.

Don't let anybody attempt to suggest that your vote doesn't count. Every vote counts. For some strange reason, there are several national pundits that are once again predicting a low voter turnout by Black America. These external pollsters and political observers really don't know Black America.

This is one of the reasons why the NNPA and other Black-owned media companies are so strategically important. The NNPA not only knows the facts about Black America, the NNPA also reports and defends the interests of Black America without apology or compromise of principle and integrity.

For nearly 190 years, the Black Press in America has been and continues to be the "trusted voice" of Black America. No political party should take the Black vote for

granted. Our votes have mattered and our votes will continue to matter. We will make the critical difference in the outcome of the upcoming national elections.

We have both a sacred obligation and a historic responsibility to ensure that we will have the largest Black American voter turnout in history. Why? Because the overall quality of life of our families and communities is at stake. Our energy, actions, and spirits must remain high and we have to fully engage the electoral process locally, regionally and nationally.

The NNPA's "Project Black Voter Turnout 2016: 20 Million Black Voters to the Polls" will work in coalition with other national organizations: The National Coalition on Black Civic Participation, NAACP, Rainbow Push, National Action Network, National Urban League, Southern Christian Leadership Conference, Black Lives Matter, National Baptist Convention, Progressive National Baptist Convention, AME, AME Zion, COGIC, UCC, and the National Council of Churches.

"Project Black Voter Turnout 2016" will engage the Black community and all voters in print, online and through social media. Please join our efforts by following us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram @BlackPressUSA, @NNPA_BlackPress and @NAACP and using the hashtags #BlackPressMatters and #BlackVotesMatter.

Our time is now. Let's all work together. Let's get out the vote!

Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr. is the President and CEO of the National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA)

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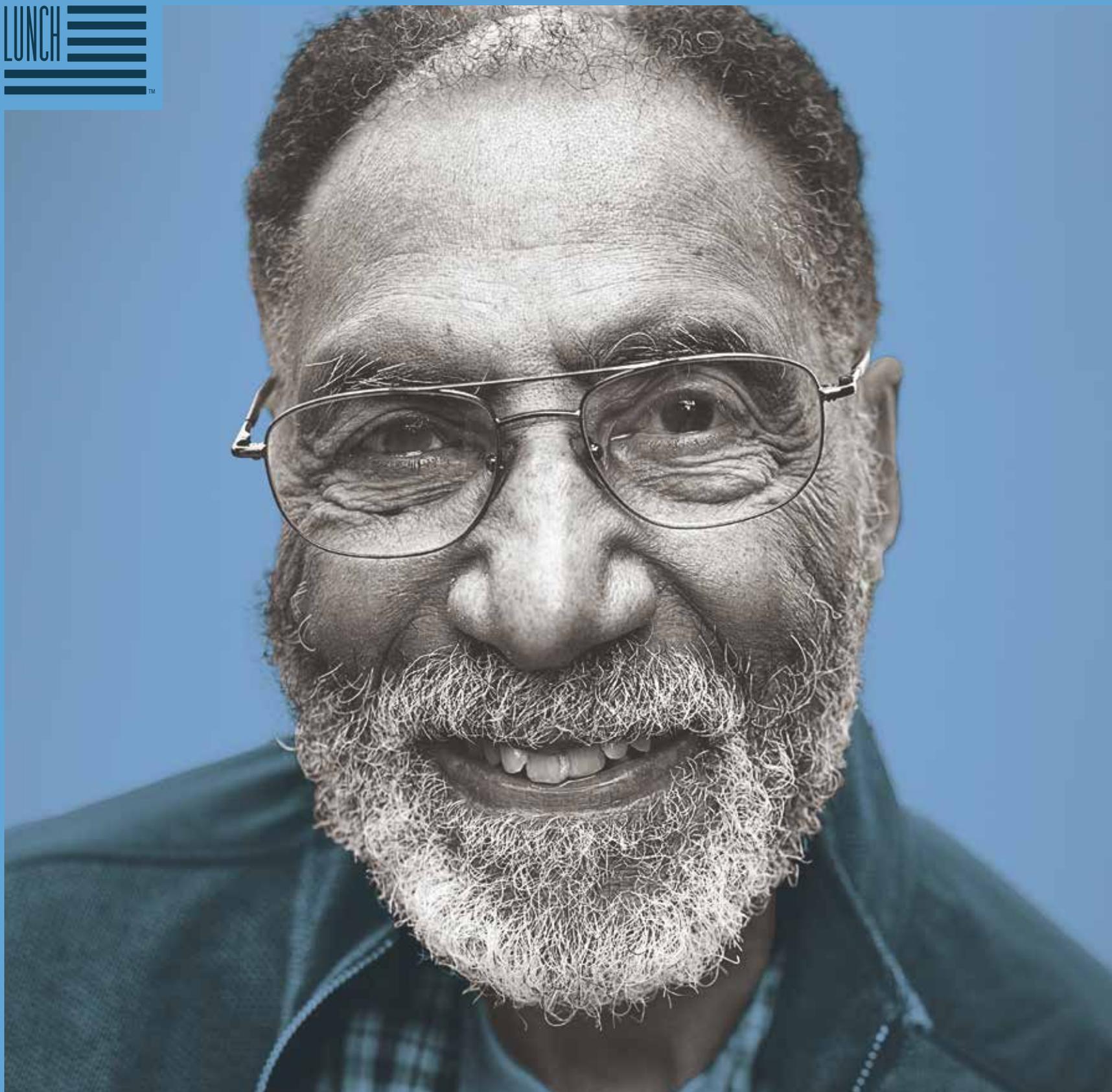
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