

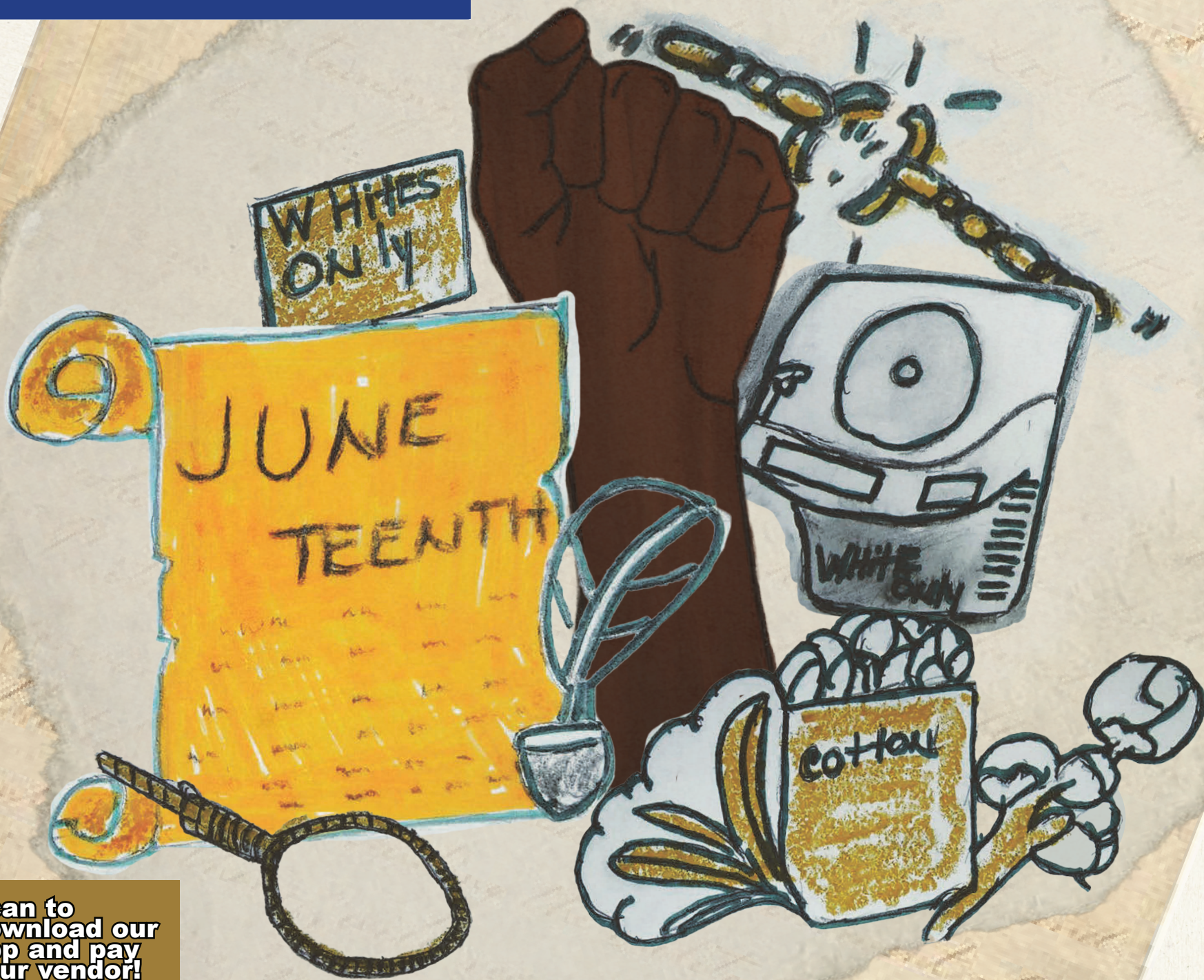
VOL. 23 ISSUE 16 JUNE 17 - JUNE 30, 2026

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COVER ART BY NIKILA CAMPBELL, COVER DESIGN BY ANNABEL FURTON



## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

# Street Sense brings home seven journalism awards



Dear Street Sense readers,

I'm so thrilled and honored to share the Street Sense team won seven awards at this year's D.C. Chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists' Dateline Awards. Our vendors and interns were recognized for their opinion writing, coverage of the federal takeover of D.C., and photos and cover designs against tough competition from the area's other weekly papers.

The news articles in our paper are written almost entirely by unpaid interns, often in or just out of college. These brilliant young journalists are often the first or only reporters to cover issues impacting people experiencing homelessness in D.C. This was the case for Sachini Adikari and Franziska Wild's series on the city's closure of migrant shelters, which was not reported in any other media, and won the category of non-breaking news in a weekly newspaper. It was also true for our team's extensive coverage of encampment closures during the federal takeover, led by Franziska Wild, Madi Koesler, and myself, which won best breaking news and beat reporting in a weekly newspaper for our live blog and subsequent feature stories.

In a perfect world, all of these interns would have been compensated for their effort and talents through a paid internship with Street Sense or a robust freelance budget. Sadly, we don't live in a perfect world, but we could get a little closer to it through your financial support to help raise \$10,000 to fund more grants of our Michael Stoops Fellowship to our award-winning interns. Use [tinyurl.com/StreetSenseIntern](https://tinyurl.com/StreetSenseIntern) to donate now.

One thing that sets Street Sense apart is our commitment to honestly and empathetically telling the stories of people experiencing homelessness. Our series profiling the residents of D.C.'s encampments, written by Shani Laskin, Alaena Hunt, and Franziska Wild, did just that and was recognized as the best series in a weekly newspaper. Photographer Madi Koesler, who took photos to accompany some of the pieces and regularly documented encampment closures in spring 2025, won for best photojournalism in a weekly newspaper.

Street Sense is so much more than just news. Powerful pieces from vendors on the realities of experiencing and surviving homelessness connect with our readers in ways nothing else can. Wendell Williams, one of our most talented columnists, won first place in editorial/opinion writing in a weekly newspaper for his personal reflection on turning 75, when he'd seen so many of his friends die much younger.

Finally, if you've bought the paper at all in the last year, you've seen one of Kevin Akakpo's compelling cover designs. He won best front-page design for a weekly newspaper for his covers on the federal takeover, benefits cuts, and the vendors behind Street Sense.

It means so much to us that both our peers in journalism and our customers see value in what we do. Your support makes all this work possible.

Gratefully,  
Annemarie Cuccia  
Editor-in-chief



(Left to right) Kevin Akakpo, Madi Koesler, Annemarie Cuccia, and Wendell Williams at the awards dinner. Photo by Kaela Roeder



**Phillip Black**  
**June 19**  
ARTIST/VENDOR



**Elynora Houston**  
**June 25**  
ARTIST/VENDOR



**William Shuford**  
**June 27**  
ARTIST/VENDOR



**Brianna Butler**  
**June 29**  
ARTIST/VENDOR

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Annemarie Cuccia

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Donte Kirby

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### SOCIAL MEDIA INTERN

Lucy Montalti

### DESIGN INTERNS

Annabel Furton, Kevin Akakpo

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Molly Pauker (Watercolor), Debbie Menke (Watercolor), JM Ascienzo (Yoga)

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## EVENTS AT SSM

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Street Sense offices are closed Friday, June 19, for Juneteenth!
- The June vendor meeting is Friday, June 26, from 2:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. Come for business, community, and pizza!
- Trying to stay cool? You can always pick up a bottle or two of cold water in the admin office!
- Find a list of vendor announcements and other useful information just for you at [streetsensemedia.org/vendor-info](https://streetsensemedia.org/vendor-info).

## VENDOR CODE OF CONDUCT

Read this democratically elected code of conduct, by vendors, for vendors!

1. I will support Street Sense Media's mission statement and in so doing will work to support the Street Sense Media community and uphold its values of honesty, respect, support, and opportunity.
2. I will treat all others, including customers, staff, volunteers, and fellow vendors, respectfully at all times. I will refrain from threatening others, pressuring customers into making donations, or engaging in behavior that condones racism, sexism, classism, or other prejudices.
3. I understand that I am not an employee of Street Sense Media but an independent contractor.
4. While distributing the Street Sense newspaper, I will not ask for more than \$3 per issue or solicit donations by any other means.
5. I will only purchase the newspaper from Street Sense Media staff and volunteers and will not distribute newspapers to other vendors.
6. I will not distribute copies of "Street Sense" on metro trains and buses or on private property.
7. I will abide by the Street Sense Media Vendor Territory Policy at all times and will resolve any related disputes with other vendors in a professional manner.
8. I will not sell additional goods or products while distributing "Street Sense."
9. I will not distribute "Street Sense" under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
10. I understand that my badge and vest are property of Street Sense Media and will not deface them. I will present my badge when purchasing "Street Sense" and will always display my badge when distributing "Street Sense."

## NEWS

# In first budget vote, D.C. Council finds funding to maintain housing vouchers

AUBREY BUTTERFIELD

Editorial Intern



Since Mayor Muriel Bowser proposed her fiscal year 2027 budget in April, lawmakers and homelessness advocates have scrambled to avoid her proposed cut of hundreds of housing vouchers. In its first budget vote, the D.C. Council has found the answer — for now.

On June 8, D.C. Council Chair Phil Mendelson announced he was adding more than \$400 million to the budget. The majority comes from savings via decoupling the city's tax code from the federal tax code.

Some of this money went to an increase of \$28.2 million in funding to the Department of Human Services and D.C. Housing Authority to support 469 existing housing vouchers. Additionally, the budget will fund 190 vouchers for families exiting Rapid Rehousing and set aside \$1.7 million to help voucher holders with security deposits.

"Many of these people, young and old, families, kids, grandparents, would have become homeless," Councilmember Robert White, who chairs the Committee on Housing, said at the June 9 vote. "The council stepped up."

Most of the 469 vouchers in question are currently used by D.C. residents. According to the council's budget documents, under Bowser's budget, the city would not have been able to support the current number of vouchers. When someone stopped using a voucher because they moved out of the city, died, or were no longer eligible for the program, the voucher would have ceased to exist. The funding preserves these vouchers to instead go to new families or individuals. It also reinstates 150 vouchers that were not allocated to new families last year, but does not add new vouchers to the existing pool.

Funding for the vouchers comes after months of budget hearings aimed at finding resources to support programs left out of Bowser's budget as the city copes with a \$1.1 billion budget deficit. Programs supporting the District's most vulnerable, including domestic violence survivors, at-risk youth, and residents experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness, were cut in Bower's proposed budget.

As a response to the cuts, advocates and residents participating in these programs testified at an April 30 hearing to urge the council to find funds for the city's vital resources. Following the announcement of increased funding, advocacy organizations like the Fair Budget Coalition and the Way Home Campaign expressed appreciation but emphasized remaining gaps, such as the cost-of-living adjustments for people in the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, and the 521 federal housing vouchers set to expire soon.

"[Chairman Mendelson] did some great things, but the work isn't done!" the Fair Budget Coalition wrote on X, formerly Twitter. "We need new recurring revenue for over 500 households facing loss of housing at the end of Dec, alliance health participants who lost care, lost COLAs for the poorest families, and so much more waiting for restoration."

Alongside the voucher funding, the council also announced an addition of \$27.3 million to D.C. Access to Justice to support domestic violence and other legal services. Organizations advocating for survivors like the D.C. Coalition Against Domestic Violence shared similar sentiments to the Fair Budget Coalition in their push for further financial support, including for domestic violence services and 521 federal Emergency Housing Vouchers.

Advocates and budget specialists also noted the temporary nature of the budget increases, as the city continues to face funding issues. Tazra Mitchell, who serves as the chief policy and strategy officer at the D.C. Fiscal Institute, highlighted many additions are one-time boosts, leaving the issue of funding resources for vulnerable residents that the mayor and council faced in April to continue into the next fiscal cycle.

"Their work is not done yet, largely because they're kicking the can down the [road] on how to solve recurring budget needs, just like they did last year," Mitchell wrote on X.

The council's work isn't done for this year, either. Lawmakers will take a final budget vote on June 23. As part of that vote, they could add an amendment creating a wealth tax and use the revenue to fund additional programs, as suggested in a proposal headed by Ward 1 Councilmember Brianna Nadeau. For now, the council has left the idea on the table, though Mendelson warned D.C. will likely need to raise taxes by 2027, when the city has a new mayor.

# D.C. Commission on Poverty is likely to go unfunded for the second year

NATALIE NOTE

Editorial Intern



The D.C. Commission on Poverty will likely receive no funding in the District's fiscal year 2027 budget, a move its volunteer commissioners fear will continue to stifle the body's ability to address poverty in the city.

D.C. Council Chair Phil Mendelson released the council's revised budget on June 8. The proposal restored some funding to homeless services, but left the Commission on Poverty unfunded. The commission, which falls under the Department of Employment Services (DOES), also received no funding in Mayor Muriel Bowser's budget proposal. In April, commission leaders testified at the DOES budget oversight hearing, advocating for funds to employ three staff members to support the commission, as required by law, and to bolster the commission's infrastructure and impact.

Without funding, Poverty Commission Vice Chair Khadijah Williams said the commission has struggled to establish a reputation within the D.C. government and fulfill its legally mandated responsibilities. The commission's founding legislation tasks commissioners with advising the mayor's office and council on policies and programs designed to reduce poverty and create economic opportunity in the District.

"The poverty commission is the only body in the District government body where the sole purpose is to address poverty in the District," Williams said in an interview with Street Sense. "And it is the only place where structurally, legislatively, agencies from across the spectrum that all touch poverty in different ways can actually come together."

Poverty remains an issue in the city. In the first section of the revised budget, the council highlights how poverty in the District has increased in the past few years after steadily falling since 2010. 2024 U.S. Census data cited in the budget states that 17.3% of D.C.'s population, or almost 117,000 Washingtonians, live under the poverty line.

Additionally, the revised budget states that the number of District residents receiving government assistance increased by 7.5% between 2023 and 2024. In 2024, 7.9% of D.C.'s population received benefits like Medicaid or Temporary Assistance to Needy Families compared to 4.2% of Maryland's population and 3.8% of Virginia's.

Without any funding, the commission has struggled to meet with agencies regularly to discuss initiatives to reduce these rates of poverty. When Williams was appointed vice chair in November, she said some agencies didn't know the commission existed.

"The goal is to make sure that thousands of people in poverty actually have a voice in government," Williams said. "How do you ensure that thousands of people in poverty have a voice in government when the commission itself is fighting to have a voice in that same government?"

Part of the body's founding legislation states the commission should have at least three paid staff members, including an executive director appointed by the mayor, who are charged with helping the commission produce its poverty reduction plan and annual reports. Williams said these staff members would also help facilitate conversations between the commission and other agencies, increasing its relevance and reach.

In fiscal year 2025, the commission was allocated \$87,000, which Williams said was used in part to pay for a staff member, but its budget was reduced to \$0 in fiscal year 2026. Williams said the lack of funding has resulted in the commission struggling to recruit members with lived experience in poverty, submit its legally mandated 2025 report on time, and advise D.C. agencies working to reduce poverty.

At-Large Councilmember Anita Bonds, who chairs the Committee on Executive Administration and Labor, which allocates funds to DOES and the Commission on Poverty, did not immediately return a request for comment on why the commission was left unfunded.

Previously, the commission worked with Medici Road, a third-party contracting company hired by DOES to research and draft a report outlining the commission's proposal for cutting D.C. poverty in half by 2026. The report was released to the public in March, despite relying on data from 2010 to 2022. Many commissioners expressed that the report did not fully capture the beliefs of the commission, calling it "outdated."

In a quest to increase the visibility of the commission, Williams said Commission Chair Elijah Moses has been paying out of pocket for commissioners to have Poverty Commission-specific emails and for the creation of a commission logo. At the DOES budget oversight hearing on April 22, Moses urged the council to restore funding to the commission, pointing to other advisory commissions, like the Commission on Latino Community Development and the Commission on Human Rights, that received funding.

"The decision to zero out the commission's budget risks silencing one of the few bodies specifically designed to elevate the voices of the most vulnerable affected residents in poverty," Moses said.

In the face of a challenging budget season, Williams said the commission hopes for funding in the finalized budget, which the council will vote to approve June 23, but would not stop advocating if it remains unfunded.

"We can't stop doing this work because we owe it to our communities in poverty to keep trying. They try through way harder circumstances than we're dealing with right now, and that's what keeps me going," Williams said.

# With no money to move, some voucher holders are trapped in poor housing

**DONTE KIRBY**

Deputy Editor

**I**n January, a shortage of funds caused the D.C. Housing Authority (DCHA) to suspend its security deposit assistance for local and federal voucher housing holders, citing a lack of funds. Some voucher holders say the pause in assistance has left them with no way to afford to leave poor living conditions.

When people move into housing with vouchers, they pay up to 30% of their income to rent, and the voucher covers the rest. But costs outside of rent, like security deposits, can fall entirely on the tenants. To help people move in, DCHA has previously provided funding for security deposits, though that money ran out earlier this year. The D.C. Council is poised to fund another pool of assistance in the upcoming budget, which will be available in October.

In theory, suspending the assistance this year could make sense, because the waitlist for vouchers is closed, and few new vouchers were funded for this year. But the security deposit assistance also helps people who are already renting a home with a voucher and may want to live somewhere new or live in poor enough conditions the city says they have to move. Without the assistance, they're obligated to pay the equivalent of 100% of their rent to secure a new apartment.

Organizations like the Children's Law Center and Bread for the City say they have seen an increasing number of voucher holders stuck in situations where they have a voucher and should be able to move into long-term housing, but can't because of the inability to pay a security deposit. Since the well of funds ran dry in January, housing advocates and voucher participants alike have been demanding that the council find room in the budget to provide security deposit assistance.

Quiana Mallory moved in in January of 2025. Since then, her housing has failed five housing inspections and three Department of Buildings inspections, she said. Her landlord declined to do the sixth inspection, and the contract through which the city pays for her housing was terminated in May, according to Mallory. Since an October 2022 audit by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, which identified 82 deficiencies in the agency, DCHA has been vigilant about housing conditions for its tenants. The agency will cancel payments to a landlord not meeting the standards and issue a transfer voucher to a tenant to help them get to better conditions.

Mallory received her transfer voucher in April, but says she is unable to move unless a landlord waives the security deposit or she deals with the financial burden of a payment plan for the security deposit. But Mallory is frustrated she's in this predicament to begin with.

"The things that are wrong with this house, unless I am an electrician, a plumber, a heating and air specialist, there is no way I would have been able to know that when I came to view this house," Mallory said.

Mallory doesn't know exactly which issue caused the failed inspections. She had no hot water, and the refrigerator was broken when she moved in. Eventually, inspectors found electrical hazards due to issues with the breaker box. But by far the biggest issue was a persistent rodent infestation so extreme Mallory and her two children found rats in their bed. The lack of response by the landlord was the primary reason she called for the first inspection in June 2025. It didn't occur until August.

"How is it possible that the place is crawling with rodents, but they're extending him all these inspections and waiting months in between to do them?" Mallory said.

In oversight hearings, DCHA officials have said the agency is doing its part to get inspections done, and not many participants go through what Mallory has. But Mallory's personal experience says otherwise, as she's had to move due to poor housing conditions every year since she entered the voucher program in 2019. In fact, an emergency transfer brought her to her current housing predicament.

What's changed this go around is DCHA is no longer providing a security deposit to move into a new home, and Mallory can't afford to pay the deposit herself. That leaves her stuck. Worse still, vouchers work on a use it or lose it system. She has six months, if she doesn't receive any extensions, to find new housing, or she loses the voucher and returns to living in a shelter.

This is a predicament not just for Mallory but other D.C. voucher holders, as many testified at a budget oversight hearing for DCHA on April 29.

Tara Martin, who needed to move because her pipes burst and the unit was deemed unlivable, said she had to go on a payment plan for her security deposit. She has to pay an additional \$400 on top of her rent each month for the next year and a half to pay off the \$7,200 security deposit.

"They said the money just disappeared," Martin said of the city's security deposit assistance during her testimony.

Martin now lives in the Columbia Heights area. Because of the time constraints in her moving process, she moved to a place she says is too dangerous for her two sons. She's cowering on the floors of her home due to gunshots.

"[DCHA] say one thing and do another," Martin said. "When they testify that they're doing this great job and they need more money, no, they need to maintain the money that they have and do right by the people."

DCHA used \$2 million towards security deposit assistance last year, according to testimony from DCHA Interim Executive Director Nicole Wickliffe. Although federal money was set aside for security deposits in previous fiscal years, the expectation is that there'll be less money coming from the Department of Housing and Urban Development this year, due to no increases in the budget to account for inflation.

"Right now, 100% of those [HUD] dollars need to be going to the vouchers," Wickliffe said during her testimony April 29.

The D.C. Council Housing Committee, in its budget report, recommended allocating \$1.7 million to security deposit assistance in FY27, \$1.3 million in FY28, and \$296,000 in FY29. In the council's first pass of the budget, security deposit assistance received the one-time funding of \$1.7 million, but not the recurring funding of FY28 and FY29.

D.C. At-large Councilmember Robert White's office expects interim funds of \$700,000, coming from the \$1.7 million in FY27, to be in the supplemental budget. This will fund security deposit assistance for people like Mallory, who are in danger of losing their voucher before October, when the funding from the new fiscal year kicks in.

White's office of constituent services asks voucher participants who need assistance to reach out so the office can connect them to community-based organizations that can help with security deposits.

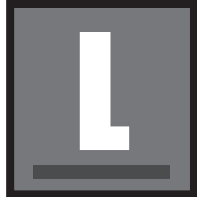


Housing and homeless services advocates at a May 12 budget rally. Photo by Annemarie Cuccia

# Legal Aid DC opens new location in Anacostia to increase access to services

CATHERINE KEIGHTLEY

Editorial Intern



Legal Aid DC opened a new, expanded office in Anacostia on May 21, aiming to make its free legal services more visible and accessible for residents east of the river. The office will also serve as the headquarters for DC Resource Bridge, a citywide legal services referral hub.

Legal Aid DC is a nonprofit offering free legal advice and services to low-income D.C. residents. The organization provides lawyers who advocate for clients in issues running the gamut from housing and public benefits to immigration and family law. Legal Aid DC Executive Director Vikram Swaruup said nearly 48% of the organization's clients live in Wards 7 and 8, which has driven the organization's decision to expand its services in Anacostia.

“There’s so many people in our city, even though they’re struggling with legal issues, they don’t know that free legal help is available to them,” Swaruup said.

In D.C., particularly in tenant rights and eviction cases where landlords nearly always have legal representation, free legal services like those provided by Legal Aid DC and the D.C. Children’s Law Center can be critical for low-income residents. Unlike in criminal cases, the court does not guarantee free legal representation in housing and other civil cases. Nonprofit organizations fill the gap, helping clients navigate disputes with landlords and access city agencies, public benefits, and programs such as Rapid Rehousing.

Legal Aid’s new office, located at 1911 Martin Luther King Jr. Ave. SE, replaced its previous second-floor location in the area with a larger, street-level space, which Swaruup said will make their services easier for clients to access. The new location will also increase the organization’s number of private offices in Anacostia from two to five, so staff can serve more people at once.

Swaruup said prospective clients do not need an appointment to receive staff help. While eligibility varies by the type of case, Legal Aid generally serves low-income residents, including families of four earning up to \$5,400 per month.

The new office also houses DC Resource Bridge, a citywide program that helps residents find the legal support provider that best fits their situation. The program connects clients to more than two dozen organizations with different specialties and eligibility requirements, helping residents navigate the city’s legal network. Without their services, residents may need to contact multiple organizations before finding one that can help them.

Since its launch in September 2025, DC Resource Bridge, which can be called at 202-933-HELP (4357) from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on Monday through Thursday, has helped 2,300 clients. The Anacostia office marks the first time residents can access their services in person. Previously, the program was only available online and by phone.

Amy Mix, director of DC Resource Bridge, said the storefront office allows their staff to build stronger connections with community members. She also said the office is helping spread general awareness of free legal services to people who may not have known this type of help is available.

“The navigators have really found it meaningful to be able to connect with people in person, and it makes the process just a lot smoother to be able to talk face-to-face to somebody,” Mix said.

With Legal Aid DC and DC Resource Bridge under one roof, residents can access a broader network of legal services. If Legal Aid DC is unable to handle a particular case, staff can immediately connect clients with a DC Resource Bridge navigator who can refer them to another legal service provider.

For Swaruup, the expanded office and partnership with DC Resource Bridge are about reducing barriers to legal services and making sure residents can find help when they need it.

“We just want folks to walk in and talk to somebody and see if there’s something that we might be able to help with,” Swaruup said.



City officials and Legal Aid DC leaders cut the ribbon at Legal Aid’s new office on May 21. Photo courtesy of Legal Aid DC



Protesters outside Cicero's conference, held in D.C. on June 5. Photo courtesy of Joy Asico-Smith/AP Content Services for Housing not Handcuffs

## Both local and national organizations protest Cicero Institute policy conference

**WILLIE FUTRELLE**  
Vendor Journalism Fellow

**L**ocal and national housing advocates protested against the Cicero Institute's Homelessness Policy Conference and the think tanks' influence over homeless policy on outside the Le Meridien Hotel June 5.

In *Grants Pass v. Johnson*, the Supreme Court upheld a city's ability to arrest people for sleeping outside without available shelter space for the unhoused, allowing for more punitive legislative measures across the nation, including several pushed by the Cicero Institute.

The Cicero Institute is a conservative think tank founded by billionaire surveillance tech entrepreneur Joe Lonsdale. Its lobbying arm is a key architect of model legislation that has been passed in states such as Kentucky, Florida, Texas, and, more recently, Louisiana, that ban camping and further criminalize homelessness. Housing advocates such as the National Coalition for the Homeless, The National Homelessness Law Center, VOCAL Kentucky, and Miriam's Kitchen organized a protest outside of the group's policy conference, where these laws that criminalize sleeping outside and then force those arrested to work unpaid labor for the state to pay for rehabilitation are drafted.

"Cicero's homeless policies have had a horrendous effect on homelessness in D.C.," said Andy Wassenich, the director of policy at Miriam's Kitchen. "Our shelters are full, our treatment centers are full. Our behavioral health organizations are overwhelmed, and we don't have any housing solutions right now."

Along with helping organize the rally, the National Homelessness Law Center released a report tracking the connections between the Cicero Institute and businesses that would profit off the increased criminalization of homelessness, like Palintir, also founded by Lonsdale, which sells data analytics software to governments for policing and surveillance, and a private prison known as Social Purpose Corrections. The fear from housing advocates is that the bills and policies being discussed at Cicero Institute's conference will continue to spread, and more states will jail people for sleeping outside.

Lindsey Krinks, co-founder of Open Table, a nonprofit homeless outreach organization based in Nashville, attended the rally. She recounted her own state's experiences with Cicero Institute's policies enacted in 2022, when the chief policy strategist for the institute testified in favor of a bill that made sleeping on public property a felony.

"That means that Tennesseans that are just simply existing can now get up to six years in prison, a \$3,000 fine, and the loss of voting rights," Krinks informed the crowd.

With Cicero's involvement with and support of the for-profit prison model and companies like The GEO Group, advocates worry they treat homelessness like a crime without caring about proven solutions. Krinks believes that if the current administration puts Cicero's policies into legislation, anyone opposing them could falsely be charged with "sleeping in public" and lose the ability to vote.

"And that's authoritarianism for you folks. They don't care about you. They don't care about your story or your circumstances," Wassenich stated before handing the mic off to the next speaker as the protest continued through the early afternoon.



Protest attendees spoke about homelessness in D.C. and anti-camping laws across the nation. Photo courtesy of Joy Asico-Smith/AP content services for Housing not Handcuffs

# RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS



A collection of Wendell's supporters at the Del Ray market in 2017, including several young children. Photo by Rodney Choice

## From Street Sense kids to graduates

**WENDELL WILLIAMS**

Artist/Vendor



I know some are wondering why I'm always out there in that same spot each weekend, rain or shine, in the hottest or coldest weather, standing on my virtual painted X on the ground. To some, at times, I'm looking and sounding like some late-night talk show host standing on his or her big X painted on the stage floor that the camera angle doesn't allow you to see. I'm there usually at the same time, carrying our message of progress, dignity, and self-sufficiency through the vehicle of my street paper, hoping you'll join

us in this important fight I've given 31 years of my life to.

The majority of the people in the crowds who shop at the two special farmers markets, which I've been blessed to distribute Street Sense from — Del Ray, Alexandria, for over 17 years, and Takoma Park for 10 — may think it's boring. At times between donations, I assure you, it can be like watching paint dry, and I start to negotiate my exit strategy in my head. "Well, this is a wash," or "these people," "it's too cold or hot," you know, when one is looking for a reason to quit this or that. The reality is I'm just like all vendors. No matter how long I've been at it, we all have these moments of doubt when we question ourselves, saying, "Tell me again why I'm still doing this?" or "I just don't have IT today."

And in the most Random of Acts of Kindness, that's usually when that special kind of a person, whose life allows them to say exactly what they want, when they want, and feel like, because of their sweetness, authenticity, and naivete, rumbles up the sidewalk with some adult in tow, and, like a bull in a China shop, comes to a full stop in front of me.

Some say nothing, some stand there just watching me interact with this look of "I want to know more" as their handler or handlers try to hurry them along. Some lacking complete command of the language will just point at the stand and sign attached to display my copies of Street Sense and say, "What's that?" And it's on as the accompanying adults, God bless them, have this apologetic look on their faces and great patience as I explain the street paper movement to a younger member of the most innocent, honest, and most amazing group I'd ever come in contact with. I've had just some of the most thoughtful, genuine interactions doing this with kids of all ages, from toddlers to college students. All have the same caring light in their eyes that no one has insisted they turn off. By giving them the time to explore their curiosity, these parents are taking the opportunity, when time permits, to begin to teach compassion.

My first of many of these close encounters came with Street Vibes Cincinnati with college and high school students, and now in the D.C. area with 23 years at Street Sense, I'm still in constant contact with young people. Now, I get to have different but special interactions in very small windows of contact with kids, the next generation of this paper's supporters, kinda like a grandparent gets to see their grandkids. And just like that, each one of them brings this big smile to my heart, and like a magic poof, they're gone, as parents try to maintain the schedule. I've hopefully gotten better at understanding the need to balance my involvement with the little person with their schedule by being aware of the Saturday or Sunday family plans and helping the parents out.

In some cases, it was the kid who was interested in the paper first, sometimes even before they could read, as is the case with Mr. Mike at Takoma Park with his girls. He's the nicest guy, who makes sure they always, as a group, say, "Hi, Mr. Wendell." I've watched him show up with the first one to support the paper himself, then watched as the siblings jockeyed for position to be the one to give the donation or receive it. It's also fun to watch when he's late pulling them in their red wagon, grabbing a paper on the run, rushing to meet their mom somewhere, I'll assume. Always telling them to "say hi to Mr. Wendell," which they sing out in unison as he dashes by. I've watched parents just let their child stand there and talk, as is the case with one young man of about 4, who talks about the places he and dad have traveled since I've seen him last. He was there with his grandmother, who, I was convinced, like other parents, uses their child's attraction to the paper to begin teaching them to read, and just as important, to accept others who are different by showing no fear, panic,



Wendell with Naomi Wadler, a young customer who advocated against gun violence. Photo by Wendell Williams

or concern for their little bundle of joy who had connected with someone a little different from them. And it gives them a wide range of subjects to talk about, as they start to develop a social consciousness that includes compassion much sooner than most. For those little ones, the parents would make getting the paper the kids' part of going to the market, giving them the money to make the donation themselves, bringing the paper back, and taking a moment together to breeze through it.

Sometimes, it was the kids' interest that sold the parents on picking up paper. And years later, a lot of those kids have grown up and gone to other things, like one special Street Sense young lady whose parents are still getting the paper for themselves, mainly her dad. He knows I miss seeing her and recently said, "Adie says hi, and she'll be by to you soon." I hear that a lot, and wonder if they even remember me. It's quite natural that at some point, they get "busy" with life and stop going to the markets. Then



Wendell has known Jose, who worked at the market, since he was 16. Photo courtesy of Wendell Williams

one Saturday, out of nowhere, her dad says, “Yeah, Adie is up the street with her friends and says she’s coming down to see you.” Oh no, I go, I don’t look well compared to maybe when she last saw me.

I heard her before I saw her; she was calling my name. I was so happy, I hadn’t laid eyes on her in what seemed like years. They grow so fast. Her hair was green with this hip, funky look. She sounded great, just a more mature version of her already awesome self. Her friends approached, and just like that, the reunion I’d waited for was over. As they left, I think she sensed my sadness and turned and said, “Hey, I’ll be back.” And just then I thought of the Harry Chapin song, “Cat’s in the Cradle,” and I wanted to say, “and we’ll get together then.” My experience has taught me that at her stage of life, chances are we won’t. But I know I had a chance to be a very small part of her life for a few minutes on Saturday, while her dad shopped. As time passes,

those, however brief, moments will fade, but for an old vendor, her face will be on my virtual wall of the next generation of caring, compassionate movers and shakers who enjoyed visiting me on those long-ago weekends. She’s now finishing the 10th grade, so in a couple of years, which will go by so quickly, it will her time to graduate high school, and I can’t wait to hear about it.

And then there was my buddy Jose, whose mom had a bakery up a few blocks from the Del Ray market. They sold fresh-baked treats delivered straight from the oven while Jose manned a fold-up table. Their empanadas were a big hit, selling as many as she could bake. While Jose would be waiting for a new batch, he would come talk, and he started getting a paper. That’s when I found out how young he was. Newly arrived from Bolivia, he’d talk of his dream of providing housing in his community by buying and then renting to others just like him and his mom. We spent every Saturday side by side until the pandemic left his mom with no other choice than to shut down the market stand, and he went to work at the bakery. But from time to time, he’d stop by for a paper. So last week I stopped at the bakery. He had finished school and now manages the bakery. He’s saved and bought that first house, rented it for a while as planned, and just recently sold it and got married. From boys to men, I’ve seen it with Street Sense kids.

There was one Street Sense kid who took on a whole city. Sorry, I don’t recall his name, but he was also in high school and understood the reasons for the racist name of Alexandria’s only high school. This kid, with all the people opposed to changing the name, put a simple sign in his front yard saying, “Change the name.” After decades of back and forth, you know, tradition versus progress, the ball quickly rolled toward change. Who knows, reading Street Sense might have inspired him. He was only a sophomore.

Everything has not gone completely well with all the Street Sense kids. One, whom I just love to death, grew up too fast a few years back. No matter how hard his mom tried, it got worse. I could see it because he lived in a house converted to apartments right next to the Alexandria market, and we’d spend 20 to 30 minutes together every Saturday while he “helped me” with the papers. Now I hardly see him. The other day, I even wore the shoes I bought at Potomac Yards when we went shopping one Saturday, and he recommended I update my look.

One day, sadly, his mom stopped by, knowing what kind of work I do, and told me what was happening and asked for suggestions. He was lost in the worst way imaginable. We all, his sister included, prayed and put our heads together, and I shared with them every potential solution I knew to work for other kids. But he was lost and not ready; years went by. One day, I put those shoes on and had to call his mom. And wonderful news awaited me. He was three years sober, married with a daughter, working, and living in San Diego. And based on the obstacles he faced and how far he had come back from, I couldn’t be prouder of a Street Sense kid.

Now, there are some of these weekend mornings I think maybe I should stay in bed because my legs are saying, “yeah, I’m done.” And then I remember all the possibilities that await me through contact with the people, and that includes the special opportunities to interact with their kids. And as time goes by, I interact with them more through the parents, who are blown away I still remember their child’s name. How could I not? Or I’ll say they are this old now, and that they should be in this grade, or what college did they choose? It’s a skill I work on based on my experience as a kid, who was amazed by some carny with The James E. Strates Shows. The carnival came to the RFK park every summer when I was a kid, and I absolutely went nuts over these guys who would guess your weight and age. Each summer, I’d study them and those doing the same thing in Atlantic City on family vacations. But it was watching the old children’s show, “Kids are People Too,” that I got it and learned from the Amazing Kreskin, a mentalist, on how to store names and remember things. And although my skills are fading, in most cases, parents are happy to see that I get at least one out of the two correct. I can’t reveal my secrets, or the magician’s union may come after me. But ask me at the market, and I’ll tell you one-on-one. I think this “skill” may have endeared me to some.

In a lot of cases, I get up and go out so as not to miss my next class of graduates from grade school, high school, or college. In their own way, the Street Sense kids are a substitute for my relationship with my ever-faster-growing grandkids living a little less than 700 miles away, with the added distance of a break right now between my daughter and I. They’re now 4 and just about 7 years old.

If I would have stayed in bed on one particular cold, wet Sunday morning, I would have missed some of the most special of benefits. The compassionate ones who were simply raised by a parent who insisted they be that light in a world that can seem not to care about their fellow man.

This is why RAOK is so powerful and even more powerful when it’s kids doing them. It was so long ago, but I remember it like it was yesterday. I needed extra money desperately and decided to go to a 7 a.m. mass in front of a Catholic church in Old Town Alexandria. While in the city’s new shelter, I remembered seeing a plaque on the lobby wall thanking this parish. So I went to see what kind of reception the paper would get. This one particular family, on their way into mass, stopped. Her two small kids wanted to donate, got a paper, and said we’ll see you on our way out. In this weather, let’s just say I was underdressed for the conditions. I was already sick and nose running from living in my car when I came down with something. As the crowds filed out of mass and families rode away, I stood there wondering if I’d missed that family that was so nice.

And it happened as it almost always does, when I least expect it, humanity shows up and performs this RAOK on my behalf, and it’s one I’ll remember. For the rest of my days, I’ll be sharing this as a testimony to the power of teaching kindness. The streets are empty now, and one lonely car comes rolling down the street. A car door opens, and two tots jump out, Mary Kate with a jug of orange juice and little brother Brady holding a bag with cold meds, wipes, and cough drops, simply saying, “Here, we hope you feel better.” They jump back in the car, and before they can drive away, I shout a thanks to their mom. She says, “No it was their idea.” It was the beginning of a beautiful friendship between us for years as they supported the paper, even stopping by when they were with their dad. Then, getting sober again, I stopped going to the church, lost phones, and lost touch. At the time, they were in the 4th and 6th grades at the parish school.

A month ago, at the Del Ray market, I could not believe my eyes when I saw what I thought was their mother manning a political election table. I ran up and started to guess ages and grades. Time has not been so gracious to the Amazing Wendell, and I got both wrong. Brady is a sophomore, and Mary Kate is a graduating senior later this month from the University of Dayton. It’s the alma mater of their mom, Marianne, the site of my first radio job, my late sister-in-law’s alma mater, and home to many of my friends.



Vendors like Wendell get to see families develop. Photo by Wendell Williams

## OPINION

# Movie Review: 'Justice League vs. the Fatal Five'

VINCENT WATTS II



We got another one from DC, and it's an unlikely tale of the future. Charge your phone, grab your HDMI cable, pop the popcorn, and search YouTube for free... "Justice League vs. the Fatal Five!"

DC has an awesome, and kinda weird, timeline of their animated movies. So this one should beckon the question: will we see more of these characters or spin-offs of the existing, semi-modern ones? Priority is taking place in the Green Lantern Universe, and this covers Jessica Cruz and her tag-along Star Boy. Although this is drawn a little dated, it jumps into a series where the Justice League is put together a little differently. Ya know the Justice League team with Brainiac from the more updated series? Well, this one takes a step back; dated, but the computer-generated graphics still make up for environments and powers. Still quite an enjoyable animated movie for an hour and 17 mins. It almost feels like a full two. Everyone's in this thing: we've got Superman, Mr. Terrific, Wonder Woman, and Batman. The second team the movie introduces is pretty damn terrific, too! Comprised of five, with Star Boy being an originator: "they're teenagers!" The Justice League of the 21st century is a bunch of teenagers! I'll keep the roster a secret, but you'll probably be able to fill in the gaps.

The Fatal Five are pretty damn decent, too. As far as villains go. Good combatants communicate without really speaking to one another... they're like a six-man short... or woman short in this case, and she goes by Sarya. She's held in a prison that would hold the Juggernaut from the Marvel Universe. This chick alone can bring hell back from the gutter, completely zap, bam, boom, and whomp your abilities and obliterate the Earth all alone. The Green Lantern Corps unfortunately falls from the universal protectors guild, and we can only wonder if this eyeball-wielding femme fatale is the cause of it. Jessica Cruz really gets into it, though. Her combat skills are pretty notable when pushed to her absolute will, and she's a cutie pie for all her teenage boy counterparts. This one got pretty intense and emotional for an animated film that didn't delve into any origin story. The sound is great, the past heroes are great. All were represented almost in their entirety. I enjoyed this animated short. I wanted more of it.

Oh, but in case you haven't read more about the DC Universe's actual graphic novels, we finally got writers who really put their blood, sweat, and tears into hits of the Absolute series. Excellent, excellent reads. Jeff Lemire wrote "Absolute Flash,"

Kelly Thompson wrote "Absolute Wonder Woman," and Jason Aaron wrote "Absolute Superman." I can get behind all of them with the exception of "Absolute Batman" written by Scott Snyder... the cape, and the battle axe... gotta go! I just didn't understand, but with James-fidgety-Gunn back in the project lab seat, looking at comic sales, and backlogs... I know he's going through some old-timey Green Lantern stuff by the looks of the HBO series. Which, I dunno, could turn out good, but rumors spread of cross generational stuff and Guy Gardner making an appearance from the big screen to the small screen, putting comic watchers on the edge of their home theater seat. But in a very bad, please don't make that mistake, kind of a way.

In other news, outside of our ring-wielding fav, we got Sydney Sweeney reading scripts for upcoming Power Girl projects, but absolutely, absolutely, don't quote me on that, it is purely rumored. I got it from a source, and they got it from another source... so we'll see. All these guys look like cousins, though: David Corenswet, Milly Alcock, and of course Sydney Sweeney. If they swap out, hopefully they'll replace him with someone cute, female, and charming (Power Girl)! "Cheers: from the crowd!" Gunn may have the jump on Snyder, and thank the new gods, because this earth needs a pick-me-up! Look out, Marvel, you're blowing the game! Until next time, tube surfers. Keep coming back to get your free movie review!



Illustration by Vincent Watts II

Vincent Watts II is an artist/vendor with Street Sense Media.

# Positivity and good health

LILLIE THOMAS II



How often is it that when things go well for a while, a disaster strikes? A sickness occurs. A car breaks down. A pet dies. It's easy to begin to feel as if having low expectations or no expectations is better than getting your feelings hurt. This outlook seems safe. However, studies show a positive outlook, hope, and expectations for good promote

good health. The purpose of this article is to describe three actions that promote positivity and good health, including keeping a gratitude journal, creating a vision board, and participating in acts of kindness.

Journaling develops clear communication. While to-do lists organize tasks for the day, journaling describes the day's events. Keeping a journal of the good things that have happened throughout the day focuses the mind on the positive. Writing about what you are thankful for produces feelings of hope, love, and comfort. Shifting thoughts from negativity or even the darker aspects of reality can develop a new perspective or point of view. It's not that we completely ignore the pain, but feeling the pain and frustration while acknowledging what the encounter is teaching or giving us allows us to grow into more mature human beings with effective coping skills and the ability to assist others. Writing down what we're grateful for, big or small, prepares us for a time to share our experiences and contribute to another persons' well-being.

Along with keeping a gratitude journal, creating a vision board promotes health and well-being. The Bible says, without vision, the people perish. Writing goals, missions, or personal vision creates focus. Even better, mapping, graphing, and producing photographic boards can give you a general idea of where you want to go and how to get there. Feel free to include ideal weight, friendship goals, events and occasions, grades, skills development, and dream objects. Pin, staple, or glue your ideas to a posterboard, powerpoint, or online application like Pinterest, and visit your creation often to track your progress. Some say keep your goals a secret to increase your chances of accomplishing them. Others say share as you move along to encourage others on their journey. To increase effectiveness, speak your vision into existence every day, believing it will manifest. Need proof? Visit Terri Savelle Foy or Leaders in Heels online for examples.

Finally, to promote good health and positivity, not only will a gratitude journal and vision board help, but so will participating in acts of kindness. Twenty-one days of consistent change produce a new habit. Challenge yourself to do something nice for a stranger or loved one. Open the door for the person behind you, offer to pay for someone in line with you, offer professional products or services pro bono to create goodwill. Doing kind things produces endorphins and dopamine, feel-good chemicals in the brain that can help combat lethargy or depression. But don't just do nice things when you feel a little unbalanced or sad, but every day until it becomes a part of your lifestyle.

This article describes three actions that promote goodwill and positive feelings. Keeping a gratitude journal, creating a vision board, and participating in acts of kindness give the participant good feelings and better habits. Keeping a gratitude journal focuses the mind on the good aspects of life. Creating a graphical vision board promotes hope and drive toward short and longterm goals. Acts of kindness, when done consistently, become good habits that create feel good hormones. Sharing these three actions is sure to remind you of the benefits of focusing on the positive. Good health, best wishes, and speedy recovery for those who are unwell.

Lillie Thomas II is an artist/vendor with Street Sense Media.

## ART

# We are brothers

**REGINALD DENNY**

*Artist/Vendor*

“Sometimes I wonder where I’ve been, who I am, do I fit in? Make-believing is hard alone, out here on my own... When I’m down and feelin’ blue, I close my eyes so I can be with you...”

These lyrics were vocalized by the songstress Irene Cara in the movie “Fame” from the ‘70s. I often reminisce about movies and musicals of the 1970s. They would give me a warm, fuzzy feeling and a sense of belonging. I loved singing and dancing back then; it filled the void of whatever I was lacking. Music, writing, poetry, dancing, and competitive sports involvement (boxing and basketball) kept me content when I was in need of community.

My mom (God rest her soul) used to always encourage me to be great in whatever I set my hand to do. “I’ll always love my mama, she’s my favorite girl,” a songwriter once penned back in the day. I remember when I used to iron (sometimes) her blouse and skirt to help her get ready to go to work. Once dressed, I would sometimes walk her to the bus stop and watch her board D.C. transit. Then I would be off to school with my brown paper lunch and book bag. These were the days when life was simple... or so it seemed.

I was always inquisitive about the tasks my mom performed around the house. Mom was a wiz at baking cakes, breads, pumpkin pies, sweet potato pies, pineapple upside-down cakes, and most other baked goods. That woman had genius exploding from within, and I was like a sponge absorbing every last drop of it. To this very day, I can still mentally express the entire process.

The ingredients for the specialty she prepared, the pound cake: Swans Down cake flour; Land O’Lakes butter, vanilla extract, roughly six eggs, Calumet baking powder, sugar, and, last but not least, Crisco shortening. She would let me mix the dry ingredients, crack the eggs, and use the measuring cups for proper proportions. Oops! I forgot another main ingredient, half-and-half milk.

Mom was a genius!!! Awesome in all her ways!!! I love her and miss her so!!! She showed me how to get that cake mixer with its flat beater for mixing the dry and liquid ingredients. The bundt pan, filled, went into the preheated oven at a temperature of somewhere around 325° to 375°. Oohm, oohm, good!!!

Sometimes, every now and then, icing would be an option, depending upon who she was preparing them for. My mom was strategic with her hands!!! She was an entrepreneur!!! The labor she delved into also aided and assisted our household when financial lack would try to rear its ugly head. Praise God!!! God would endow her with power through the works of her hands. My mom was a woman in and of authority. When she spoke, things manifested!!!

Amelia Denny (my mother) birthed nine children into this world, five boys and four girls. While most boys growing up wanted to be like their fathers, I was just the opposite. It was my desire to be like my mom, more so than my father.

My father (now deceased) was a tall, handsome, powerful, intelligent, decorated soldier of the Army branch of the military, a recipient of the Purple Heart and Silver Star. He was also a great bass voice vocalist,



yet there was something differently special about my mom, which took precedent over Joseph Denny (my father). Both of my parents were great, but I gravitated more towards my mom because we spent more time with one another. She was magnificent!!! My everything!!! Mom had a way with words. She said stuff like “a bird in hand is worth more than two in a bush,” or “the cat looked at his, didn’t he,” or “the coffee can’t call the kettle black,” or “if the cream don’t rise.” I miss her.

I am always reminiscent of my time spent in the presence of my mom. It almost seems like yesterday, the aroma of freshly baked dough permeating from the oven as she prepared cakes and pies to be distributed to her clients for monetary gain. That old gal (my mom) from Bristol, Virginia/Tennessee. She had a true knack for cooking. Watching her prepare different dishes and recipes was a jewel, a diamond in the rough!!! She was very passionate about anything she set her hands to do, and perfect!!!

Salvation and glory! Honor and power unto the Lord, our God! For the Lord our God is omnipotent!! For the Lord our God is mighty. Oh praises be; to the king of kings, the Lord our God is wonderful!!! As I look back and think things over, I can truly, truly, truly say, “I am blessed!!!”

I got a testimony!!! To this very day, I can say the sin of drug addiction had me in bondage, in chains and shackles. The scales have fallen from my eyes, and I can see the forest through the trees. What a glorious day of confirmation for me in my life. I struggled for a long time, silently in my mind, due to low self-esteem. I always wanted to be a part of the in crowd, but to my surprise, I did not fit in. I was always different, and it took me 50 years to actually recognize this happening. I once heard it said, “Mommy’s baby, daddy’s maybe!!!”

I knew very early on!!! That all my siblings were not only from my father’s seed, but we are brothers regardless!!! For whatever reason, God, the spirit, revealed that to me around the ripe age of maybe 8 to 10 years old. Never did this make no mind to me because these were who I grew up with.

I’ll always love my momma; she’s my favorite girl. I would sometimes walk past my mom’s bedroom door, glue my ear to the door, and hear her crying and weeping ‘cause my dad was gone for days. It made me feel some type of way, yet still, I love my dad just as much as I love my mom. I love them differently, yet the same!!! I am 62 years young and blood bought, signed, sealed, and delivered by the king of kings and the lord of lords!! Everlasting father, prince of peace!!! (Rev: 4:10, 11)

By the grace and mercy of God, I’m still here!!! I am the last of Amelia Denny’s (my mom) baby boys. They’ve all gone home, hopefully to see the Lord at his return. We are living in perilous times and know not the hour the Lord shall appear, but we do know when he does, we shall be like him!!! I can’t bring my brothers back, but I can leave a legacy for these great men of God, military, mighty athletic, and entrepreneurs!!! This is my plight. God has a ministry on my life. I am one of his chosen disciples. Restoration through Christ Deliverance Ministries.

# BFF

**TASHA SAVOY**

*Artist/Vendor*



I remember the word “friend” coming up when I was five years old during elementary school. That’s when you and a friend you see every day play at the sandbox. This person is your friend, with whom you then build a real friendship. A real friend is there for you no matter what throughout your life. A real friendship is a blessing. My best friend is amazing. Let me describe why. S — is for the simple things she does that mean so much.

H — is for the heart God gave her for me.

A — is for the availability she has for our friendship.

N — is for nourishing the nature of our friendship.

I — is for the insight to fix the situations in our lives.

T — is for the time she always has for me.

A — is for the attention she gives to our friendship.

I am delighted to have a friendship with a person God gave me. Cherish your moments with those who matter because you get only one BFF and one life.

# My vote

**JENKINS DALTON**

*Artist/Vendor*

Your vote is your voice.

“Vote for me as the president of this nation. You know I won’t accept the results of the election, unless I win!”

Sir, why did you ask me? If you won, then I am the runner-up. This is the last time I am telling you that I don’t like it. Understand we run the nation, and you are just talking.

Win or lose, my vote is a secret, but let one say this: “I lose, don’t CARE.”

# Life or death

**WILLIAM SHUFORD**

*Artist/Vendor*



Today is critical; I literally have to go through surgery. I really don’t like hospitals because of my past and family history. So today I have to get my pride out of the way, and take a chance good results will come out of it all. I’m keeping my faith in God’s hands that He will keep me safe. Even though I’ve never been scared of death, I feel like there’s a reason I’m still here after going through near-death to change my way of thinking in life around.

# Life with the DC One Card

**JENNIFER MCLAUGHLIN**

*Artist/Vendor*



I used my DC One Card on many occasions when I lost my ID. The card is not the same, but it’s pretty close. According to the Office of the Chief Technology Officer, “the DC One Card is a consolidated credential designed to give children, adults, and seniors access to DC government facilities and programs, including public schools, recreation centers, libraries and the Metro. The DC One Card is also a building access card for DC government employees and includes a bonus - Metro SmarTrip capability for travel within the WMATA transportation system.” I used it for all these services, particularly the library and the rec centers. The One Card was very helpful when I lost those IDs. The card has also helped many of our homeless, who sometimes struggle to get an ID. And... guess what? I have my ID now. I’ll try my hardest not to lose it.

## ART

## American questions

CRAIG THOMPSON

Artist/Vendor

Tim Tebow and Curtis Sliwa are right  
For what reasons are we to fight?  
Kennedy, too, speaks TRUTH TO POWER  
Where do you stand in this pinnacle hour?  
Now our beloved God, Jehovah, said  
It's His call when one should be dead  
He wrote in stone, "THOU SHALT NOT KILL"  
And who are we to try his will?

But terrorists at home and abroad are  
Killing too many by far  
Who will show enough is enough?  
For babies and the young, we must be tough  
Greta Thunberg warns us, why do we wait?  
If evil would kill us, let it be fate  
But Gaza, Gaza, Gaza dies  
Thousands of babies, I wonder why

One thing I know for sure  
An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure  
When dealing with nuclear toxins and other crap  
Would you ever pour it in your lap?  
We are told and taught, "WATER IS LIFE"  
By our Indigenous brothers who face evil's knife  
We all must stand for babies' sake  
Don't wait for too many fires, floods, or the  
next earthquake

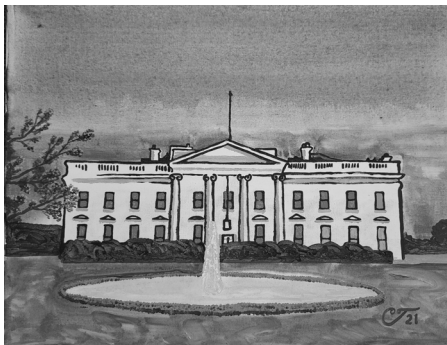


Illustration by Craig Thompson



We vote them in, we vote them out  
Their being bought is giving me gout  
Yet I will stand and sing my song  
Like Rodney King, "Can't we all just get along?"  
We are the many, evil is few  
If we all stand together, what can evil do?  
Gandhi was right, Christ makes us free  
In the now, and eternally

But would we lie down and die, instead of arrow  
and bowed  
Or the Constitution's guns to load  
For babies all have rights to life,  
Liberty, happiness pursuit, what says your wife?  
What does our Commander in Chief march us to do?  
The pen is mightier than the sword, and all of us knew

What will we tell our own offspring?  
That healthy ecology doesn't mean a thing?  
That human rights are not for abroad?  
What exactly says our God?  
Are we ready to follow his teachings true?  
Everybody, please say I DO

His precious commandments, there are ten  
From the oldest pyramid to the land of Zen  
Every single one of us is a child of God  
When will we wake up? We all return to sod  
We only get one chance at this  
For 1,000 years in Heaven's bliss

The earth is a gift we must recover  
What is more precious than our Earth Mother?  
Each one of us has a responsibility  
Get off your ass and plant a tree  
Stop polluting, all big and small  
When our Earth dies, we all will fall  
The evil too, and they know well  
Methinks no one wants to burn in hell  
So what will we tell our Maker  
Did we stand in our love or serve the faker?

## What's budding in ME!

JEANETTE RICHARDSON

Artist/Vendor

I'm trying to create a new lifestyle (in my new, wiser age) to become a professional writer in this downtown area around Street Sense, and where I live in Ward 5. I'm also trying to regain my strength that somehow was drained along with the reservoir in my community.

I never realized all that was happening around me until I was hit with so much destruction and hurt in this District neighborhood. So I'm trying hard to rebuild my education, my dignity, my health, and my integrity to be a very good writer, no matter where I am.

Rectifying a race:  
Triple Crown switch

## The Preakness takes a dip

FREDERIC JOHN

Artist/Vendor

As we age, our preferences lock down. Just as the gangly colt morphs into a champion thoroughbred racer, so the eager young adult becomes a cheerful curmudgeon. For instance, I practically lived at the Biograph Theater — when the last movie, "Anchoress," was shown, and they announced a CVS would soon replace the Biograph, I shed very genuine, not crocodile, tears.

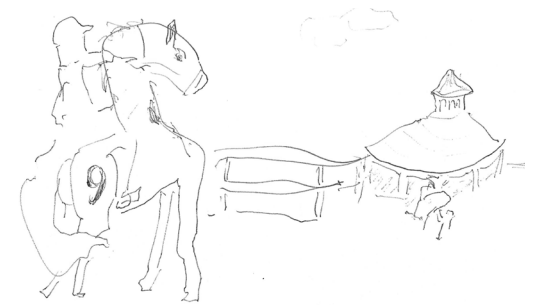
When Schwartz's Pharmacy at Connecticut and R ceased to exist, I knew I'd never enjoy my sinful combination of BLTs and vanilla shakes again there. And now Laurel Park, which has been the seat of my creature comforts and most engaging friendships of the last 40 years, and which I previously chronicled its near demise, will, at the end of its extended season this year, revert to a training track for horse racing.

I feel unduly privileged to be in attendance for the Preakness Festival, but it's not a normal year. Only one of the entrants from the Kentucky Derby even ran in the race, Ocelli, and he came in third at 70 to 1. (At the Preakness, Ocelli managed fourth, at high odds also). Some of the outliers, who I had selected and who fate had rejected from the Derby field, were seen here on this day: Robusta and Great White, named after the shark, who fell in the gate at the previous Triple Crown arm, were there. And then there's Napoleon Solo, who was named after my favorite TV spy series from junior high days.

So I now reflect on the rare privilege of attending this credentials-only event, which allows the Preakness to continue while its original home, Pimlico, is totally rebuilt from the ground up. I may or may not attend races at Pimlico; it's a long stretch, and most of the "SUV chauffeurs" who took us that distance have retired or passed on to the great finish line in the sky. But I am going to follow through on my gentle pleadings from when I encountered the estimable Governor Wes Moore as he was (just up the block from Street Sense), attending a meeting of civic leaders. I said, "Governor, it's great to see you, and please consider keeping Laurel in the racing calendar." He smiled back and intimated he would do the best he could, and I know that's true.

And if Laurel ceases to become the home of the sport of kings, demoted from crown jewel to poor relative, I will treasure memories of my evolution from student rider with little crop, hard hat, and jodphurs to natty handicapper of outrageous horses who gave us exactas like Sharpith and The Play's the Thing. The second part of the exacta was a Vanderbilt-owned steed. I didn't have the \$3,400 exacta (a bet where you pick first and second place horses in the exact order), but just witnessing such amazing exotics and the roaring fans in such profusion back in the '80s, when Laurel also hosted the International Stakes, will remain with me always and beyond.

By the way, Napoleon Solo won the race, and I won the exacta!



"Riders Up" At Laurel

Frederic John

Illustration by Frederic John

## Music

SHARON LESLIE BROWN

Artist/Vendor



Samson ain't got nothing on Diddy. I have been listening to P. Diddy; he made a song with G Dep and Black Rob I really enjoyed. What grabbed me about the song is he foresaw people may try to take him down with a line stating, "send the cops, the D.A., and feds to come get me." And made it clear he doesn't go after other men's women, stating "If your girl keeps comin' around, then I'mma blaze her."

This song is good, and others are good because they show his reverence for God while still honoring the Bible scripture, "God is a man of war." His father, Melvin Combs, was an Air Force man. Sean John Combs, aka Sean Love Combs, has contributed to the music scene with hits that reflect the Bible.

I write music based on the Bible. I play instruments, produce, etc. I discovered my music writing and singing theatrics at about 4 years old. It may have been earlier, but the specific songs I wrote are from about 4 years old. I last performed in 2026, and my music was played in France. Music's impact on my life: The Bible says, "He hath put a new song in my heart, even praise unto our God. Many shall see it and fear and trust in God."

## Spontaneous poetry

**JAMES DAVIS**

Artist/Vendor

Spontaneous combustion could be a volcanic eruption  
An eruption of words for your ear consumption  
Using all 26 letters of the alphabet  
Is just something that hasn't happened yet  
Vowels and consonants like the Big Bang theory  
K's and Q's, X's and Z's  
Coming down like ashes in an infectious disease  
All these letters can't live alone  
So I've put them together in this spontaneous poem



## It's summertime!

**ERIC THOMPSON-BEY**

Artist/Vendor

The days are longer, and the temperatures are high  
Now we can watch caterpillars transform into butterflies  
The family reunions and the barbeques are fun  
But going to grandma's house is always number one  
No school or homework, so the kids are up late playing games,  
Having fun and eating ice cream and cake  
The pools are full, the parks are packed  
We don't want to come back!  
The smell of freshly cut grass in the air  
It's summertime! How can we not care?

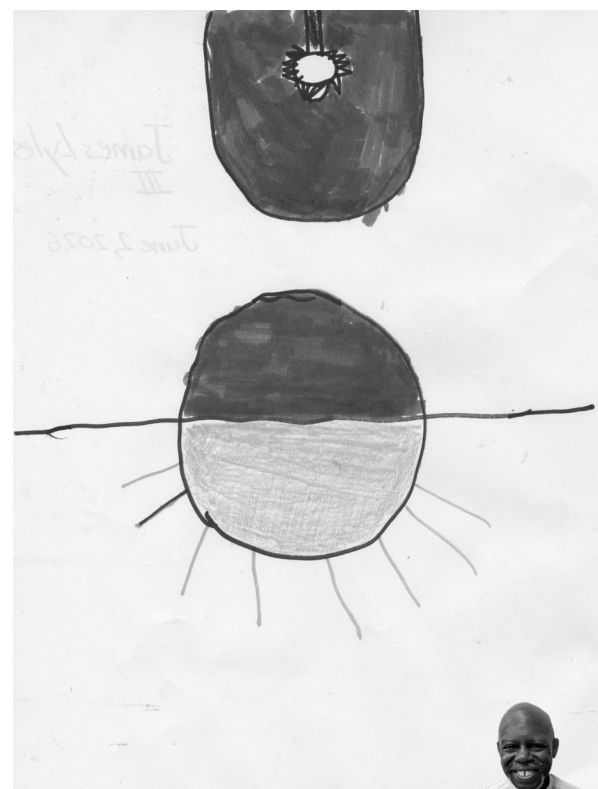


Illustration by James Lyles III



On this very holiday, people from different communities celebrate around the country by having parades. It's about the U.S. Military serving in wars, World War I and II, the Korean War, the Gulf War when Iraq invaded Kuwait, and now the war with Iran. Memorial Day is not only a holiday, but it also marks the unofficial start of summer.

## Happy Father's Day in June

**WARREN STEVENS**

Artist/Vendor

Father's Day is the day to be with families and children. When we were kids, our father would take us to the fair on the rides. Help us with our homework, take us to school, and take us to the skating rink, which was fun. He'd teach us right from wrong, take us bowling, teach me how to use a bow and arrow, and take us fishing where we lived in Yellow Springs, Ohio.

When I got older, my father would give me bike riding lessons, which was fun. I rode until I got used to it. I have been riding it and riding it for a long time. Now I turned pro, and I have my own bike. Both my mom and dad gave us driving lessons at Carter Barron. We purchased our own cars, which was nice to have. And we have been driving for a long time. When our father was living, he would drive us to Philadelphia, where he was from. We had a good Thanksgiving dinner, took pictures of the whole family, and saw our cousins and family. We spent the weekend there and drove back. Our father passed away in 2006. We went to see him in a nursing home. We miss him very much. He is in a better place in heaven; he is in the Lord's hands.

It was voting time on June 16, 2026. We hope and pray we vote for a new mayor in 2027. Mayor Muriel Bowser is stepping down. She did a fine job as mayor, working and placing homeless people in apartment homes or hotels in the city, where people can live safely. I hope and pray the Democrats will win and take back Congress in the Nov. 3, 2026, election so the American people can get their Social Security and Medicare that they earn and work for.

My loved ones have birthdays this month of June. I will be sending them cards, flowers, and balloons to make their day happy, or go out to a fine restaurant to have a pleasant brunch, have fun, and walk, or sightsee and enjoy an outing. The pools will be opening, so I can go there to swim and stay. School will be closed for the summer. Enjoy your rides at the fair. I hope that my son, his family, and I will meet up on Father's Day to take a trip out of town to enjoy life. Stay safe.



## Haikus



**QUEENIE FEATHERSTONE**

Artist/Vendor

Don't let Trump stress you  
In people's minds, he's not kind  
Get rest, do not stress

Winter was really harsh  
We could not control that season  
God was in season

Readers support us  
We are the best street paper  
Read and be informed

## I'll keep working to make it — and make it better



**GERALD ANDERSON**

Artist/Vendor

After I got better from my accident, one of the first places I went was the Capitol. My friend Melissa arranged a tour for me, the public tour. It was wonderful. I always looked at that place, but I never thought I would be in it. Man, it was funny: I just got out of the nursing home, and then I toured the whole Capitol. The whole history of the country is there, reminding me of where we live.

You know, it's amazing how things can happen. Just before that, the main thing I was wondering was, "Am I gonna make it again?" And I thank all my people, everyone who worked with me, everyone who helped me to get back, and thank the Lord for helping lift me and guide me to this.

Now that I'm out, I have my own place to live, and it's sure good to have your own place. I go in and out when I want. I don't gotta worry about no one putting me out.

I'll be honest with you, after I injured myself and got in the nursing home, I got to really know who I am. I worked with my friend Melissa, and now I have a Social Security card, an ID, and everything I need. Like a real American citizen, you know? Now I'm back to being me again. I'm back with Street Sense. I'm thankful for being back with them and opening up and letting everyone know my story. Now that I'm back, I'm gonna open up some other things and see what I can get going on in my life.

Because you know, sometimes I felt like throwing the towel in. Like giving up on life. But with support, I know I can keep going, I know I can do it. Because that's the title of my book — "Still Standing." And I am still standing, no matter what I go through.

My mobility chair's broken now, and I'm so frustrated by how I'm gonna make it, but I walk it out, just take it day by day. I have dreams sometimes that I'm back together, all the way back together. Then, when I wake up in pain, I know I'm not. But no matter what the situation may be, I'm gonna stand and face it. It's gonna get better or get worse, and I'm gonna try with everything I have to make it better.

## Memorial Day

**JAMES LYLES III**

Artist/Vendor

Memorial Day is that special day we as Americans celebrate our armed forces who defend our great nation. It's not only a holiday, but a time to be with family and go to cookouts. Every year, a motorcycle organization called Rolling Thunder celebrates our fallen heroes who served in the U.S. Military from different branches from six different branches: Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, Coast Guard, and Space Force.

# FUN & GAMES

## Across

1. Round sound or the telephone inventor
5. Horn sound
9. Temperate, as weather
13. Carpet layer's calculation
14. Abbr./init. for a Seattle Mariner or a Los Angeles Angel
15. Roast host
16. Dad says this is a kind of camel that drinks milk and favors plays and movies that are very serious and highly emotional
18. The ranch in "Giant" (the book and film) or a rodeo rope in Spanish
19. National anthem starter (1,3)
20. Armed grp. Trump has unleashed on several U.S. cities (abbr./init.)
22. Letters on a bounced check
23. Crude container?
25. African antelope
26. Home loan (abbr.)
27. Dad said "I thought it was the clothes dryer that's been shrinking my clothes, but, no, it's actually been \_\_\_\_ (2 wds.) (3,12)
31. Back muscle found near a trap? (abbr.)
32. Cincy player
33. Letters before an alias (abbr./init.)
34. Punny cornball humor that my father and 16-, 28-, 45- and 60-Across revel in (3 wds.) (7,3,5)
41. Some gas stations or ER vitals stat, briefly (abbr./init.)
42. Anger
43. "Evil Woman" band, for short (abbr./initialism)
44. According to my father his favorite Chinese restaurant features these items with a quartet of catchy melodies (2 wds.) (4-4 7)
50. Paris airport
51. The "p" in mph, rpm, or wpm
52. Anatomical nerve network (TREE anagram)
53. Actress Merkel
54. Dog command that might score Fido a 64-Across
55. \_\_\_\_-Cola
57. So out it's in
59. What dad says truly funny elevated rises are that puts him in stitches (2 wds.) (4,5)
64. Pick up the tab for
65. Fancified word for a sewing needle case (Fr.)
66. Jules Verne captain
67. Jekyll's alter ego
68. Prefix for call or cop
69. Concrete section

## Down

1. Good, in the 'hood
2. Drop the ball
3. Cancer and Virgo connector
4. Hope/Crosby co-star Dorothy
5. Triumphant cry made out of data? (2-2)
6. Skin care brand that dropped "Oil of..." from its name
7. "\_\_\_\_ the la-and of the free ..."
8. Difficult and wearing, as an acting up child
9. Fr. title (abbr.)
10. "Stop. Please. The pain is overwhelming" (4 wds.) (1,4,4,2)
11. "C'mon, get with it. We're late!" (2 wds.) (4,2)

## LAST EDITION'S PUZZLE SOLUTION

1	R	A	S	T	A		6	S	E	L	L		10	R	A	M	P		
13							15	E	N	O	S		16	A	S	E	A		
14	A	F	T	E	R														
17	R	A	I	N	F	O	R	E	S	T		19	P	I	N	S			
20	E	R	R			21	W	I	R	E		22	S	I	N	U	S		
23						24	R	E	I	N	F	O	R	C	E	D			
27	I	R	I	S	H							29	H	A	S		31	E	D
33	L	E	N	T	O		34	M	A	Y	A		37	P	R	B	I		
38	H	I	G	H	P		39	R	O	T	E	I		40	N	F	O	O	D
42	A	N	U			43	A	M	E	N		44	A	L	M	A	Y		
45	N	A	P		46	O	L	I				48	S	E	P	T	A		
49					49	T	I	N		50	F	O		51	L	H	A	T	
54	S	P	A	T	E		57	O	R	C	A		58	I	M	P			
61	E	L	S	E		62	I	N	S	I	D		63	E	I	N	F	O	
65	N	E	A	R		66	U	D	O	N		67	O	R	G	A	N		
68	D	A	P	S		69	D	A	N	G		70	M	E	S	S	Y		

12. Less willing to listen (FEARED anagram)
15. Palindromic "before", in poetry
17. Salinger short story heroine
21. Performer's tip-off or a pool shark's tool
23. Indian dish made with stewed legumes
24. Organized data into tables again (A LATER DEBUT anagram)
25. More lightheaded and silly
26. Powerful mackerel shark of the Atlantic and Pacific
27. R.N.'s forte (abbr./init.)
28. Thurs. follower (abbr.)
29. Tape deck button (abbr.)
30. British rule in India
35. Like a geezer who's still got game
36. Bygone initials at JFK (abbr./init./acron.)
37. Parenthesis, essentially
38. "In excelsis \_\_\_\_"
39. Best-known Robert of the C.S.A. (2 wds.) (1,3) (incls abbr.)
40. "Send help!" ltrs. at sea (abbr./init.)
44. Twenty-five %, fractionally, with "a."
45. Cantankerous
46. Wire service ltrs. since 1958 (abbr./init.)
47. Word for lower regions often serving as a lead-in to "land" or "world"
48. SeaWorld creature
49. Pulitzer-winning historian Doris \_\_\_\_ Goodwin
54. Over imbiber
55. Kind of sandwich with toothpicks
56. Mishmash
58. Norma \_\_\_\_ (Sally Field role)
60. "What was \_\_\_\_ think?" (2 wds.) (1,2)
61. Electric fish
62. Doctors' org. (abbr./init.)
63. Have a bawl

1																			
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## PIECES OF THE WEEK

### Untamed manes



L.Q. PETERSON  
Artist/Vendor

Untamed manes and broken chains, it's now time to rejoice.

Victims of sin, melanin-tanned skin, it's time to hear our voice.

Harsh behavior, forced free labor, but now that is no more.

Angel inside, new American pride, like there's never been before.

A bright new day, I'm proud to say, this is hope we've never seen.

Remember the past, freedom at last, we celebrate Juneteenth.

### What I think about Black history



MARC GRIER  
Artist/Vendor

Black History Month is a time when you look at the past, look at the future, and look at the present. It's no longer a time when you have to get up from your seat on a bus, or you can't drink from this water fountain. You're almost a human. Even though some people still have a snarl on their face, treat you badly, and think that you are different because you are Black. Even though God made all of us equal, there is no respect for people. So just like the monks who walked from Texas, we need to share love and give love to everyone.

*This crossword puzzle is the original work of Patrick "Mac" McIntyre. It is provided to us courtesy of Real Change News, a street paper based in Seattle, Washington. Learn more about Real Change News and the International Network of Street Papers at [realchangenews.org](http://realchangenews.org) and [insp.ngo](http://insp.ngo).*

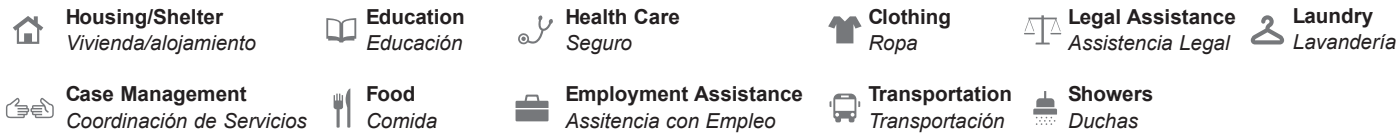
# COMMUNITY SERVICES

**SHELTER HOTLINE**  
Línea directa de alojamiento  
**(202) 399-7093**

**YOUTH HOTLINE**  
Línea de juventud  
**(202) 547-7777**

**DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOTLINE**  
Línea directa de violencia doméstica  
**1-800-799-7233**

**BEHAVIORAL HEALTH HOTLINE**  
Línea de salud del comportamiento  
**1-888-793-4357**



All services listed are referral-free

**Academy of Hope Public Charter School**  
202-269-6623 // 2315 18th Pl. NE  
202-373-0246 // 421 Alabama Ave. SE  
[aohdc.org](http://aohdc.org)



**Bread for the City**  
1525 7th St., NW // 202-265-2400  
1700 Marion Barry Ave., SE // 202-561-8587  
[breadforthe-city.org](http://breadforthe-city.org)



**Calvary Women's Services** // 202-678-2341  
1217 Marion Barry Ave., SE  
[calvaryservices.org](http://calvaryservices.org)



**Catholic Charities** // 202-772-4300  
[catholiccharitiesdc.org/gethelp](http://catholiccharitiesdc.org/gethelp)



**Central Union Mission** // 202-745-7118  
65 Massachusetts Ave., NW  
[missiondc.org](http://missiondc.org)



**Charlie's Place** // 202-929-0100  
1830 Connecticut Ave., NW  
[charliesplacedc.org](http://charliesplacedc.org)



**Christ House** // 202-328-1100  
1717 Columbia Rd., NW  
[christhouse.org](http://christhouse.org)



**Church of the Pilgrims** // 202-387-6612  
2201 P St., NW (1-1:30 on Sundays only)  
[churchofthepilgrims.org/outreach](http://churchofthepilgrims.org/outreach)



**Community Family Life Services**  
202-347-0511 // 4860 Fort Totten Dr, NE  
[cflsdc.org](http://cflsdc.org)



**Community of Hope** // 202-232-7356  
4 Atlantic St., NW  
[communityofhopedc.org](http://communityofhopedc.org)



**Covenant House Washington**  
202-610-9600 // 2001 Mississippi Ave., SE  
[covenanthousedc.org](http://covenanthousedc.org)



**D.C. Coalition for the Homeless**  
202-347-8870 // 1234 Massachusetts Ave., NW  
[dccfh.org](http://dccfh.org)



**Father McKenna Center** // 202-842-1112  
19 North Capitol St., NW  
[fathermckennacenter.org](http://fathermckennacenter.org)



**Food and Friends** // 202-269-2277  
(home delivery for those suffering from HIV, cancer, etc)  
219 Riggs Rd., NE  
[foodandfriends.org](http://foodandfriends.org)



**Foundry Methodist Church** // 202-332-4010  
1500 16th St., NW  
[foundryumc.org/idministry](http://foundryumc.org/idministry)

Identification services

**Friendship Place** // 202-364-1419  
4713 Wisconsin Ave., NW  
[friendshipplace.org](http://friendshipplace.org)



**Georgetown Ministry Center** // 202-338-8301  
1041 Wisconsin Ave., NW  
[georgetownministrycenter.org](http://georgetownministrycenter.org)



**Jobs Have Priority** // 202-544-9096  
1526 Pennsylvania Ave., SE  
[jobshavepriority.org](http://jobshavepriority.org)



**Loaves & Fishes** // 202-232-0900  
1525 Newton St., NW  
[loavesandfishesdc.org](http://loavesandfishesdc.org)



**Martha's Table** // 202-328-6608  
[marthastable.org](http://marthastable.org)  
2375 Elvans Rd, SE



2204 Martin Luther King Ave. SE



**Miriam's Kitchen** // 202-452-8926  
2401 Virginia Ave., NW  
[miriamskitchen.org](http://miriamskitchen.org)



**My Sister's Place** // 202-529-5991 (24-hr hotline)  
[mysistersplacedc.org](http://mysistersplacedc.org)



**N Street Village** // 202-939-2076  
1333 N St., NW  
[nstreetvillage.org](http://nstreetvillage.org)



**New York Avenue Shelter** // 202-832-2359  
1355-57 New York Ave., NE



**Patricia Handy Place for Women**  
202-733-5378 // 810 5th St., NW



**Samaritan Inns** // 202-667-8831  
2523 14th St., NW  
[samaritaninns.org](http://samaritaninns.org)



**Samaritan Ministry**  
202-722-2280 // 1516 Hamilton St., NW  
202-889-7702 // 1345 U St., SE  
[samaritanministry.org](http://samaritanministry.org)



**Sasha Bruce Youthwork** // 202-675-9340  
741 8th St., SE  
[sashabruce.org](http://sashabruce.org)



**So Others Might Eat (SOME)** // 202-797-8806  
71 O St., NW  
[some.org](http://some.org)



**St. Luke's Mission Center** // 202-363-4900  
3655 Calvert St., NW  
[stlukesmissioncenter.org](http://stlukesmissioncenter.org)



**Thrive DC** // 202-737-9311  
1525 Newton St., NW  
[thrivedc.org](http://thrivedc.org)



**Unity Health Care**  
[unityhealthcare.org](http://unityhealthcare.org)  
- Healthcare for the Homeless  
Health Center: 202-508-0500  
- Community Health Centers: 202-469-4699

1500 Galen Street SE, 1251-B Saratoga Ave NE,  
1660 Columbia Road NW, 4414 Benning Road NE,  
3924 Minnesota Avenue NE, 765 Kenilworth Terrace  
NE, 850 Delaware Ave., SW, 3240 Stanton Road  
SE, 3020 14th Street NW, 425 2nd Street NW, 4713  
Wisconsin Avenue NW, 2100 New York Avenue  
NE, 1333 N Street NW, 1355 New York Avenue NE,  
1151 Bladensburg Rd., NE, 4515 Edson Pl., NE



**Washington Legal Clinic for the Homeless**  
1200 U St., NW // 202-328-5500  
[legalclinic.org](http://legalclinic.org)



**The Welcome Table** // 202-347-2635  
1317 G St., NW.  
[epiphanydc.org/thewelcometable](http://epiphanydc.org/thewelcometable)



**Whitman-Walker Health**  
1525 14th St., NW // 202-745-7000  
1201 Sycamore Dr., SE  
[whitman-walker.org](http://whitman-walker.org)



**Woodley House** // 202-830-3508  
2711 Connecticut Ave., NW

For further information and listings,  
visit our online service guide at  
[StreetSenseMedia.org/service-guide](http://StreetSenseMedia.org/service-guide)



## JOB BOARD

### Guest Experience Representative

Washington Nationals // Washington, D.C.

Part-Time (Onsite)

Welcome guests, provide customer service at the ballpark, assist with directions and event operations, and help create a positive fan experience.

Requirements: Strong customer service skills, communication skills, ability to work events and game days.

Apply: [shorturl.at/x9IE6](http://shorturl.at/x9IE6)

### Evening Barista

Blue Bottle Coffee // Georgetown, Washington, D.C.

Part-Time (Onsite)

Prepare coffee beverages, assist customers, maintain cafe cleanliness, and support daily store operations.

Requirements: Customer service experience, ability to work evening shifts, interest in specialty coffee.

Apply: [shorturl.at/volFo](http://shorturl.at/volFo)

### Guest Advocate (Cashier / General Merchandise / Stocking)

Target // Washington, D.C.

Part-Time (Onsite)

Assist customers, operate registers, stock merchandise, organize displays, and maintain a clean shopping environment.

Requirements: Customer service skills, teamwork, ability to lift merchandise, and flexible availability.

Pay: \$18.50-\$27.75/hr

Apply: [shorturl.at/k8C8s](http://shorturl.at/k8C8s)

Hiring? Send your job postings to  
[esmat@StreetSenseMedia.org](mailto:esmat@StreetSenseMedia.org)



# Untitled

**STARCHILD BLK**

Artist/Vendor



She slipped through the winter crowd like a shadow they chose not to claim.

Whenever the coldness hit different, she tapped her hidden signals — gold for breath, green for spine, indigo for clarity.

People threw their quiet daggers, but her colors hummed back, reminding her who carried the real warmth.

Each step, the green rooted her deeper than the stares could shake.

By the time she reached the end of the road, the indigo halo in her mind whispered the code: unseen don't mean undone.



Illustration by Starchild Blk

# The Why Experiment:

**S. SMITH**

Artist/Vendor



Transparency: 001/? by S. Smith

Why?

Why ask "Why?"

Reasons to ask "Why?"

Try asking someone,

A stranger, a friend, a family member.

That one word.

No context.

Find out their reaction.

Why did they react that way, if they even did, if they ever told you at all, how did you react?

Why would you participate in this?

A compulsive curiosity? To find humor? To troll? Trauma?

To find empathy? Sympathy? Apathy? Antipathy? Just think about it. Think. About. It.

To make a comforting connection?

To make a dismissal missile?

A serious inquiry of a true

Philosophy of Why. "Why?" Did I just make this up? Or is that specifically real?

If you did, why did you participate? If not, why didn't you? Why wouldn't you? Why ask "would," "did," "didn't," "wouldn't?" They're "close but no cliché," but why?

Why did I decide to write this? Why, I was haunted. Why was I haunted?

I have theories, maybe a serious inquiry of the

Philosophy of Why. Did I just make this up? Or is that specifically real?

Or maybe no reason at all?

Why, it's correct that, must always have to have a reason to be asked, right? That's the logic? Right?

Reason Being

being reason.

Reason being

Being reason.

Reason must be

Otherwise....

Why? It must Exist, must It?

That's the Wisdom in it? Isn't it? Is it?

The Reasoning Is

That Reason Is

That Is Reason

Why? Someone said so. It must be so, right? Think about it. Thought about It? In, in good, in a, Fear? Fun? Funk?

If you're going to ask "Why?" To whom? Her, him, them. No psychic, someone will try.

A classmate? A colleague? A congressperson?

And Why? Ask anyone, how well do you know someone you claim you know? Or not, and wonder.

The Philosophy of Why?, "Why?"

The Philosophy of "Why?" Why?

Haunted?

I wrote a letter to my.... it said "Why?" I. Wrote. A. Letter. "Y."

I haven't sent it yet, I'm contemplating. Why did and I do that? I have theories.

Why not? Not why. How come?

# Mum

**ELIZABETH WINDSOR**

Artist/Vendor

Thanks for showing me unconditional love. Life doesn't come with a manual, it comes with a mum. I learnt to be more thankful than I already am to be blessed with a mother as loving and caring as you. I just want you to know you are always in my thoughts.

God made mums generous, strong, and caring, shining through them, blessed their families with his amazing love. Everything I am you helped me to be. I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart for everything you do. But I don't know where

to start, I thank you for endless love, for being by my side, through the good times and the tough times.

As we enjoy life on this rollercoaster, I may not often say it but I notice all you do, how you strive to make my life the best, putting me in front of you. The times we've spent together are etched in my mind. I had the perfect mum.



Illustration by Elizabeth Windsor



**CHRIS COLE**  
Artist/Vendor

Thank you for reading Street Sense!

From your vendor, \_\_\_\_\_

JUNE 17 - JUNE 30, 2026 | VOLUME 23 ISSUE 16

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