

VOLUME 23 ISSUE 23 SEPT. 23 - OCT. 6, 2026

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New recovery center opens

OUR STORY

In 2025,

6 people moved into housing using case management services

In 2013, we began offering case management services to help anyone, including vendors, with their needs — from obtaining identification cards and emergency cash for bills and food to accessing supportive programs and applying for housing vouchers. Our team builds long-term relationships with our vendors and other clients to understand their needs and help them create plans to achieve their goals.



121

people, including artists/vendors, used case management services in 2025,

31

of which were new clients.

Physical and mental health services, emergency cash assistance and housing services were and are being provided hundreds of times throughout 2025 and 2026.

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The Cover

DESIGN BY KEILAH TUMAOb, PHOTO BY LUCY MONTALTI



NEWS IN BRIEF

DCHA appoints new executive director

LOUISA HANNOUCENE
Editorial Intern



C.'s public housing agency has a new leader. The D.C. Housing Authority (DCHA)'s Board of Commissioners appointed Nicole Wickliffe as the authority's executive director at its meeting on Sept. 16. Wickliffe took over the agency on a temporary basis after former Executive Director Keith Pettigrew left in April to lead the Chicago Housing Authority. Wickliffe previously served as the agency's deputy executive director. "The last 90 days you have really proven that you are the right fit for the job, and you allow us for continuity, which in this time of change is really significant," Theresa Silla, a commissioner and the executive director of the D.C. Interagency Council on Homelessness, said at the meeting. Wickliffe came with Pettigrew from the city of Alexandria's housing authority in November 2023. The duo assumed leadership of DCHA during a troubling time, after a 2022 U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) report found issues like unlivable units, low occupancy rates, and poor management of its voucher programs, and setting off two years of heightened oversight of the agency. During her update at the meeting, Wickliffe spoke about the future of the waitlist for public housing. Currently, there are 300 families and individuals on the waitlist. DCHA is seeking HUD approval to also open new, site-based

waiting lists for specific properties that might not work for the families remaining on the general waitlist. "By opening it, we can create a list of individuals that select properties that they want to live at and then we can start to occupy some of the public housing properties," Wickliffe said. DCHA has more than 2,000 vacant units in its portfolio, according to Wickliffe. Some are being converted through a repositioning strategy; while others are scheduled for demolition. Rickie Maddox, DCHA's senior vice president of property operations, is assessing and categorizing all of the vacant units, Wickliffe said. "We have some units that need substantial or extensive repairs or replacements which now is upwards to \$90,000 to \$100,000 dollars per unit," Wickliffe said, adding that the agency's challenge is "finding sufficient budget on some of those other units." DCHA plans to present a concrete plan to the board by the end of the year, she said. The board also approved six resolutions, including the operating budget for fiscal year 2027. Over the last years, HUD has given public housing agencies increases for inflation. This year, HUD has declined to do that, asking agencies to instead use their reserves and cost-saving measures, though it did grant DCHA \$62 million in shortfall funding.

BIRTHDAYS



Carlos Carolina
Sept. 23
ARTIST/VENDOR



Mkufu London
Sept. 24
ARTIST/VENDOR



Richard Mooney
Sept. 28
ARTIST/VENDOR



Jemel Fleming
Sept. 29
ARTIST/VENDOR

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Dear Street Sense readers,
It's time to let your voice be heard so we can make Street Sense the best paper it can be. Your input not only helps vendors with free papers but also helps the newsroom know what stories we should be covering more, how Street Sense can be a better asset to the community, and where there are readers eager to buy papers. We use your answers as a guide to direct newsroom and organizational efforts for the next year. So please take 10 minutes to let us know how we can make Street Sense better for you, our vendors, and the District. Best wishes - Donte Kirby, Deputy editor

EVENTS
AT SSM

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Street Sense audience survey is active! Earn five extra papers every time your customer fills out the survey.
- Two beloved workshops are back! Photography Workshop is every Monday at 11:30 a.m. And Theatre Workshop is every Wednesday at 12:00 p.m.



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Oct. 6
ARTIST/VENDOR



Andrew Anderson
Sept. 28
ARTIST/VENDOR



Darlesha Joyner
Sept. 27
ARTIST/VENDOR

Melody Byrd
Sept. 29
ARTIST/VENDOR

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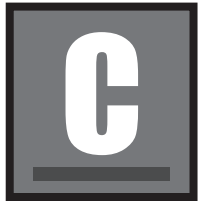
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NEWS

Community Connections opens new recovery center, expanding substance abuse disorder services in D.C.

LUCY MONTALTI

Editorial Intern



Community Connections held a ribbon-cutting ceremony on Sept. 15 to celebrate the grand opening of its Recovery and Wellness Center. The newly renovated space, located in the behavioral health agency's office in Capitol Hill, will provide services for people seeking treatment and recovery from addiction.

Community Connections is a nonprofit providing mental health care, supportive housing, crisis services, and homeless outreach to community members in the District. The new center was designed to fill a gap in its

services, offering expanded outpatient psychiatric and counseling services to treat substance use disorder, according to Damien Cabezas, president and CEO of Community Connections.

"There's not a family, a community, or a neighborhood that is not touched by this, and there's not a family, a neighborhood or community that isn't in need of services like this," Ward 6 Councilmember Charles Allen, whose ward the center is located in, said during the ribbon-cutting. "Having an open door that literally anyone can walk into [and] get connected to quality services means so much."

The center, which opened for services July 23, is currently seeing 15 clients, but the team behind the program hopes to see the number grow. Clients can access services by appointment or by walk-in at 801 Pennsylvania Ave. SE between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. on weekdays. The center is open to people of all sobriety levels with no need for a referral.

The expansion of Community Connections' services could address a significant need for people experiencing homelessness in the District; in 2023, opioid overdoses accounted for 57% of deaths among D.C.'s homeless population, according to the D.C. Office of the Chief Medical Examiner. The new center is one of 24 locations in the Department of Behavioral Health's (DBH) network of certified substance use disorder service providers; DBH also offers 24-hour drug-and alcohol-related crisis support at the D.C. Stabilization Center.

The center's renovations follow an earlier recovery-focused program at Community Connections that closed during the COVID-19 pandemic. According to Cabezas, the program closed when clinicians and staff shifted to working remotely, causing use of the physical space to decline significantly.

What distinguishes the new center from its predecessor is, in part, Community Connections' new certification that will allow the center to expand its scope of treatment. The certification, which the center received from the DBH in May, includes Level 1 Outpatient Services, Level 2 Intensive Outpatient Services, and Recovery Support services to help adults and adolescents at any stage of recovery.

As the over 50 attendees arrived at the grand opening, they were handed purple ribbons representing National Recovery Month, which is observed every September.

Soon after, attendees moved outside, where speakers addressed the center's potential impact on addiction in D.C. In his opening remarks, Cabezas emphasized the importance of care that makes people feel welcomed, respected, and treated with dignity.

"Today is not just that we're expanding a service line," said Cabezas. "It's about advancing the mission and that vision to being a community-based provider that's trauma-informed, evidence-based, and recovery-oriented."

Peer specialists, who have personal experience with substance abuse, are also part of the center's approach, providing recovery coaching, assistance with navigating treatment, and other support. Drawing on their lived experience — coupled with specialized training and certification — peer specialists bring a perspective to their care that can reduce isolation and stigma and demonstrate recovery is possible, according to Cabezas.

"To see this program go from a simple concept to a growing service impacting the community's most vulnerable has been such a privilege," said Caitlin Lee, senior clinical director at Community Connections. "Our intention for the center is to be a hub of healing and support for those who are courageously paving the way towards their own recovery."



Speakers and audience members at the ribbon-cutting wore purple ribbons in observation of National Recovery Month. Photo by Lucy Montalti



Community Connections team members celebrate the Recovery and Wellness Center's grand opening with attendees. Photo by Lucy Montalti

Inside one permanent housing program

REGINALD BLACK
Vendor Reporting Fellow

Many organizations are taking part in the Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) program in the District of Columbia. PSH is a mainstay in the homeless services system. D.C.'s strategic plans to end homelessness, Homeward D.C. 1.0 and 2.0, called for significant investments in PSH. During and after the COVID-19 pandemic, housing investments were at an all-time high. Many organizations have taken advantage of this funding to assist in housing people experiencing homelessness in D.C.

One organization is the United Planning Organization (UPO). UPO began its PSH program in early 2020, when it was assigned its first 17 clients, according to Andrea Thomas, UPO's president and CEO.

"We explored new opportunities to expand our impact and provide long-term housing stability to individuals and families experiencing homelessness," Thomas wrote in an email. "One of the greatest challenges is the limited availability of affordable housing, which is a problem amongst all income bands that UPO serves."

The program now has 206 clients across all eight wards, according to Vanessa Austin, the director of the UPO's PSH program. Several clients live in a unit-based building for seniors, which Street Sense was able to visit.

In D.C., unit-based buildings typically have funding from an agency like Department of Housing and Community Development to subsidize units. Participants must stay in the same building to maintain a housing subsidy. These set-ups can be helpful because, particularly in areas where many available units are considered luxury housing, it can be challenging to identify landlords and units that accept vouchers and meet the program's requirements, Thomas wrote.

"UPO is trying to end homelessness one person at a time," Austin said. "We take pride in the clients that we serve. They are not just numbers."

One such client has been Norris Charles, who was homeless for two years before being connected with UPO.

"My first case manager, Jeff, was cool. He worked with me, and he, you know, kept me motivated. Also, he was a good caseworker," Charles said. "They really helped me, and they stuck with me."



Lobby of building for seniors. Photo by Reginald Black

LaTona Keys is another resident UPO has assisted. She had previously faced homelessness for seven or eight months. Originally from Ingraham Street in uptown D.C., Keys was formerly employed by the Department of Human Services, and she has also worked in food services and child care. She got connected to UPO through Miriam's Kitchen, a D.C. outreach organization that caters to people experiencing homelessness.

"They hooked me up with a case manager. When he reached out and texted me, I thought it was a hoax, but it was real," Keys said. "It really works. I mean if you put the footwork in, they'll do the paperwork."

What sealed the deal for Keys about the housing program was "the washers and dryers," she said. "You ain't gotta go outside; I've been to the laundromat; it's none around here."

Keys wants the public to "believe, and you got to do the footwork."

"They can only do but so much. They are your backers. They can't push the paperwork if you don't do what you're supposed to do," Keys said. "I'd advise anybody if they could get in here."

items such as blankets and water for homeless individuals and families.

Luline Almonacy, a division director at UPO, told Street Sense via email she has worked in human services and community-based programs for many years, with experience overseeing housing programs. She explained how the hotline has changed over the years.

"For more than three decades, the Shelter Hotline has supported the District's efforts to connect individuals experiencing homelessness with shelter, transportation, outreach, and other critical services," Almonacy wrote. "As the needs of the homeless population have evolved, the program has continued to adapt and expand its services to better respond to residents and connect them with appropriate resources."

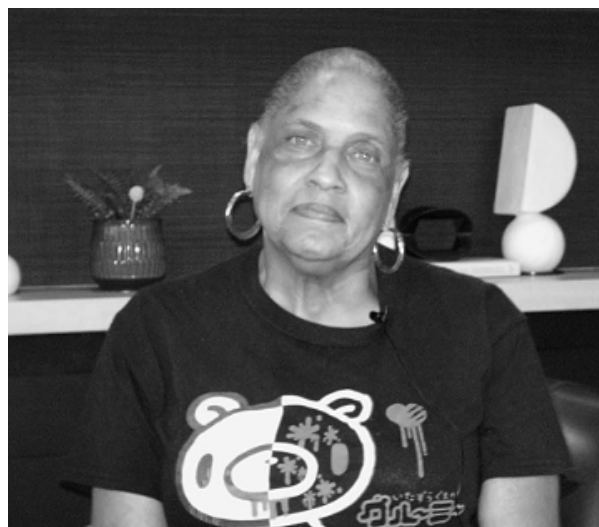
Street Sense has previously reported on inconsistencies and unreliable service that users of the shelter hotline have reported. Almonacy said the organization "understand[s] those concerns and take[s] them seriously."

"When someone is waiting for transportation — particularly during a difficult or urgent situation — even a short delay can feel like a very long time," Almonacy wrote. "Community feedback is very important to us."

Despite mixed feedback about the shelter hotline, PSH participants recommend the program.

Jeigh Jackson, who has suffered several episodes of homelessness, is a "born and raised Washingtonian" who's "lived all over" the city. Jackson said the last time he was unhoused was for about three or four years. Jackson, who went to school for auto mechanic work and has worked in construction, learned of the housing program under UPO as a member of MBI Health Services.

"I'm grateful to be a member, to be off the street; you know, I'm just focused on getting well," Jackson said.



United Planning Organization Permanent Supportive Housing participants, (left to right) Norris Charles, LaTona Keys, and Jeigh Jackson. Photos by Reginald Black

NEWS

“It’s worth the fight:” The journey of reintegration for returning citizens

ANDREW ANDERSON

Vendor Reporting Fellow



The United States has the highest incarceration rate of any independent democracy in the world, with a rate of 580 per 100,000 residents, according to a 2026 report by the criminal justice reform nonprofit Prison Policy Initiative. Every year, hundreds of people are released from prison with few or no resources. Many face an uphill battle reintegrating into society. Many of those individuals released from prison face homelessness and other obstacles such as family reunification, finding a job, going back to school, and staying out of trouble.

I wanted to know more about what the reentry process is like and to learn about the challenges facing returning citizens as they reintegrate back into society and how they can be overcome. I spoke with Rachelle Ellison and Beth Johnson, two formerly incarcerated individuals who have navigated the trials and tribulations of being returning citizens.

These interviews have been edited for length and clarity



Rachelle Ellison is now a homelessness advocate. Photo by Andrew Anderson

Rachelle Ellison

Andrew: When you were released from prison, how did you adjust to your new environment? What was it like for you? How difficult was it for you to find a job, et cetera?

Rachelle: It was very difficult because I had the criminal background, first and foremost. I didn’t have current identification. I didn’t have anything, and I couldn’t get hired. I couldn’t live where I wanted to live because of my criminal background. I was being denied everywhere. My first step was getting my birth certificate. I was born in Ohio. I had to send away for it, and I went through Miriam’s Kitchen, which received my birth certificate. That was the first step. Then going to get my Social Security card was the second step, and so this was a lengthy process. It took about 45 to 60 days just for me to get the birth certificate and Social Security card to be able to go get the identification. Not to mention, I was on parole, so I had to report to a parole officer. I had to take urine tests. I had a curfew, so I was abiding by all the rules and regulations that were set upon me for release, and then trying to fit everything in my day that I needed to do for me to become a productive member of society, which was really hard.

How was it getting housing? Was it difficult?

After 17 years of being homeless, my first apartment was still what you would call not exactly where my spirit was, but it was over there off Bladensburg Road, and it was okay. But I moved the whole homeless family in with me because I thought, “I made it into an apartment. How can I leave them out there?”

Quickly found out that doesn’t work. Right. So then after I was able to move from there, I quickly just said, okay, I’m going to do some more education. I started going to school and graduating, and doing different things: recovery coach academy, and medical office, and getting my associate’s, and then worked on my dual bachelor’s degree. But at this point, I’m moving to higher levels of where I want to live because I want to live where it’s peaceful.

Out of all this, what's your final message?

The final message is: I know it’s going to be hard. You’re going to want to give up. Don’t give up because on this side there’s so much more, so many more blessings, so much more growth, and it’s so much more peaceful.



Beth Johnson was incarcerated for a decade. She urges people in the same situation to not be hard on themselves. Photo by Andrew Anderson

Beth Johnson

Andrew: What was it like when you first got released?

Beth: I was scared because I had been locked up for 10 years, and I still had the mentality that the officers were following me, and I was afraid I was going to fail and go back.

How did you overcome that?

I had to get a therapist, and I had to talk, and I learned that what somebody else says does not define me. That I can do what I set my mind to do. So I started doing that, and that’s what I did. I started, you know, acting like a citizen, and instead of acting like I was still incarcerated, which was hard. It was absolutely hard.

Did you go back to school? Did you get with your family?

No, I went to school when I was locked up. So I tried stuff. I didn’t want to do college. I had like eight months before I graduated. Just

I didn’t want to do it, but I don’t know. It was just hard. I ended up getting married right after I came off parole. Oh, bad mistake. Bad mistake. I thought I was in love with him, but he was abusive. I had to learn a whole new thing. You know, I finally ran away, and then I ended up in D.C. And when I came here, I ended up in the shelter. I went backwards for a while. I went backwards for about six years. I ended up back in the shelter. I ended up homeless, and then I got with one of the programs here, and they took me off the street, and I’ve went forward since. I haven’t stepped backwards.

Everything I'm hearing. I mean, this is like inspirational. I think a lot of people would take that information and hear your story and be inspired.

Don’t give up. Don’t let nobody judge you. Don’t nobody have no right to judge you but the man upstairs. Don’t let them judge you. And if you fall, don’t stay where you fall at. Get up and get and pick yourself up and keep going. And it’s worth the steps. It’s worth the fight.



Over a third of households in the DMV experienced food insecurity in the past year. Photo by Matailong Du

Food insecurity in the D.C. area hits a new high

Cuts to SNAP, surging costs, and federal layoffs are making it difficult for District residents to put food on the table.

SAM DELGADO

The 51st



elle Perkins, a Ward 1 resident, has long had to be strategic to feed her family, visiting food banks like Bread for the City and Martha's Table, and shopping at discount grocery stores like Walmart, Lidl, and Dollar Tree. Last month, she had to stop working because of a health condition, she said, forcing her to squeeze her budget even tighter.

"Every day, I don't know what I'm gonna have to pick and choose," said 53-year-old Perkins.

More and more D.C. residents are in the same boat, according to a report from Capital Area Food Bank that came out on Sept. 15. The 2026 Hunger Report showed food insecurity in the D.C. region is worse than it's been in five years — worse even than around the height of the pandemic.

According to the report, 38% of households in the greater Washington region — which includes D.C. and nearby counties in Maryland and Virginia — experienced food insecurity over the past year, compared to 36% in the previous year's report, an increase resulting from a combination of low-income residents like Perkins continuing to struggle and other households experiencing food insecurity for the first time, including laid-off federal workers.

"This is serious," said Radha Muthiah, president and CEO of Capital Area Food Bank. "There's just no other way to slice it." She added that some households are making twice or even three times the poverty level, even while individuals work multiple jobs. "It continues to strike me how thin a margin many families have, because of this increase in cost of living in our area."

D.C. itself was among the hardest-hit areas in the region, according to the data. Out of seven counties surveyed, the 2026 Hunger Report found that the District had the third-highest rate of food insecurity at 39%, topped by Prince William County in Virginia and Prince George's County in Maryland at 47% and 56%, respectively.

"There are tens of thousands of D.C. residents that are really struggling," said Tazra Mitchell, chief policy and strategy officer at D.C. Fiscal Policy Institute, a progressive tax and budget research organization. "They're doing their very best to get by, but the economy is just working against them."

Much of this, Mitchell said, is the consequence of federal decisions that have hit D.C. residents hard. That includes deep cuts to the federal workforce, an industry that employed over 13% of District residents as of March 2025, according to the Economic Policy Institute. The 2026 Hunger Report found that the D.C. metro area — which included Arlington and Alexandria — lost 104,000 jobs between January 2025 and January 2026, far more than any other major metropolitan area in the country.

There's also the 2025 passage of President Donald Trump's One Big Beautiful Bill Act, a wide-ranging tax and spending package that included major changes to social safety net programs like SNAP. New provisions mandate states pick up a much bigger part of the tab for running the nutrition assistance program. It also added work requirements, requiring a significant number of SNAP recipients prove they're working at least 80 hours a month or volunteering in an approved program — a change that DCFPI says could result in 1,200 D.C. residents losing their benefits by October.

About 141,000 D.C. residents, including Perkins, are on SNAP. The minimum monthly benefit for D.C. beneficiaries is \$30 a month, and in October 2025, the average monthly amount for a household was \$318.

LaMonika Jones, director of D.C. Hunger Solutions, estimated her organization received a roughly 10% increase in calls from residents seeking assistance in applying for SNAP over the summer. She pointed to the federal workforce layoffs and new work requirements, as well as the October 2025 government shutdown, as the reason for a spike in calls.

Jones said they're seeing households who haven't experienced food insecurity in the past now reaching out for help. After the government shutdown, D.C. Hunger Solutions received a call from a furloughed federal worker and new mom who had never applied for SNAP before. "She called us crying because she needed help," said Jones.

The 2026 Hunger Report found that the price of consumer goods has outpaced average weekly earnings in the D.C. metropolitan area, which means that for many residents, their income just doesn't go as far as it once did. "As household budgets become increasingly strained, food is often one of the most flexible expenses families can reduce," the report says.

While most food-insecure households are low-income, middle-income households (defined as families making between \$92,000 to \$183,000) make up 17% of the region's food-insecure population.

D.C. may not be prepared to respond to this multi-pronged crisis. One of the recommendations in the 2026 Hunger Report is protecting and strengthening local investments in food security. But when Mayor Muriel Bowser issued her budget proposal for fiscal year 2027 in April, it included what Mitchell of DCFPI called "the deepest cut to our local safety net program in a generation." Impacted initiatives included a subsidy program for low- and moderate-income households to access child care, the city's paid family leave program, the D.C. Food Policy Council, and more.

While the D.C. Council ultimately reversed many of these cuts, it was only through one-time funds, making their future uncertain. Some cuts were sustained, such as those to the city's emergency rental assistance program and to the anti-poverty commission. Last week, D.C. Chief Financial Officer Glen Lee said in a presentation to the D.C. Chamber of Commerce that "economic and revenue signals are flashing red" for the city.

Muthiah acknowledged the budget pressures faced by the District and surrounding counties. "But you also need to ensure that the situation doesn't continue to devolve into something that's worse," she said. Investing in food security also pays "multiple dividends," she argued, like better health outcomes for people with chronic health conditions and improved life-long outcomes for children.

In the meantime, nonprofits like Capital Area Food Bank are taking their own steps to address rising food insecurity in the region. Last year, the organization distributed 60 million meals. Over the next few years, they're preparing to distribute an additional 10 to 20 million meals annually.

But nonprofits can't stabilize D.C. families on their own. Anti-hunger advocates say that it's an all-hands-on-deck situation: D.C. Council, state agencies, social service and community-based organizations, and the private sector are all needed to address the growing problem.

Muthiah says this situation isn't "inevitable." She gave the example of the child tax credit: when Congress expanded the benefit in 2021 to provide families some relief during the pandemic, it led to a historic reduction in child poverty.

"We know that investment and positive policies are able to make a really meaningful difference in people's lives," said Muthiah.

In the meantime, households like Perkins' are having to make trade-offs, and face the emotional repercussions of doing so. Recently, after a long and busy weekend, she said she wanted to treat herself with a meal. She went to Ledo's Pizza, where she ordered an iced tea and the value meal: three wings and a personal pizza. But when Perkins saw the total — almost \$15 — she felt a powerful guilt.

Holding back tears, she said, "Why do you have to feel like you can't even treat yourself to something, because you're worried about [how] that could have been a pack of toilet paper or some laundry detergent?"

This story was originally produced by The 51st.

NEWS

UDC launches new Master of Social Work program backed by District legislation

LUCY MONTALTI

Editorial Intern



Since 2023, D.C. has sought solutions to the District's social worker shortage. Now, one answer — a new Master of Social Work (MSW) program and scholarship at the University of the District of Columbia (UDC) — is about to launch, as the school reviews applications for its first cohort.

The program, which is set to begin Oct. 23, was established by the Pathways to Behavioral Health Degrees Act, which At-Large Councilmember Robert White introduced in 2023 to reduce financial barriers preventing D.C. residents from pursuing careers in social work. When White introduced the law, D.C. was facing a social worker shortage that caused people approved for housing vouchers to endure months-long waits to sign leases and move into apartments.

Social workers, also referred to as case managers, are an essential piece of the homelessness services system. They walk clients through applications for vouchers, housing, and benefits, and provide support to people throughout their experience with homelessness. The shortage inspired the creation of other avenues for working in social work across the city, including the Peer Case Management Institute, a Howard University training program for people who have experienced homelessness.

White said UDC's flexible, hybrid master's program is designed

to accommodate full-time workers and non-traditional students. The scholarship tied to the program covers tuition, books, exam fees, and living expenses for some students who are D.C. residents seeking to become licensed in a behavioral health and human services occupation. Scholarship recipients will also make a three-year commitment to work in D.C. after completing their degree and obtaining the required professional credentials.

The MSW curriculum emphasizes experiential learning, according to a Sept. 2 UDC news release. Throughout the two-year program, students will complete 900 hours of supervised practicum experience in a hands-on environment. Students may also select specialized tracks in civic and community engagement or trauma prevention and concentrations in family and community violence, substance abuse prevention, and more.

Applications for the MSW and scholarship closed on Sept. 18., and UDC plans to complete admissions and scholarship decisions no later than Oct. 9. While the school remains busy verifying final application data, White has seen "overwhelming interest" in the program through direct outreach and across social media.

"The response from our community has proven exactly what we believed when we fought for this funding: District residents are deeply eager to step up and serve their neighbors, but the massive cost of graduate school was holding them back," White said.

White was inspired to author the Pathways to Behavioral Health

Degrees Act after visiting homeless encampments while in office. He observed a need for increased investment in behavioral health services, with a specific focus on growing a local workforce to address the issue. The bill was one of two meant to address the social worker shortage; the other was the Social Work License Modernization Amendment Act of 2023. That bill would have exempted associate and graduate social workers from examination for licensure, but it died in D.C. Council committees.

"Seeing that reality firsthand made it undeniably clear that we had to do more than just manage crises," he said. "We had to invest heavily in mental health and find a sustainable way to build up our care systems by supporting more pathways to behavioral health."

White expects the MSW program could help create a strong pipeline of locally trained social workers to fill job vacancies in the field and provide healthcare, case management, and housing services to residents.

"When District leaders identify a critical workforce need, UDC is ready to be part of the solution," UDC President Maurice D. Edington said in the news release. "By preparing talented residents for careers in social work and behavioral health, we are not only expanding economic opportunity but also strengthening the network of support services our neighbors, schools, families and communities need to thrive."

Catch an intelligent hoodlum

LEVESTER GREEN

Artist/Vendor



Can you imagine being a mailman and having apartment building managers in your favor? As in lending you a hand, leg, key, and room to spare, say, if you had a hot date after work to get ready for expediently. Or how about a hotel worker with the same type of steez, access, and power?

I once knew this pizza man who ain't have it too bad. Not that I had witnessed any of it for myself, but he sure enough had an abundance of pics filling his photo album! I mean, it was packed pretty thick! I hadn't been there that long but I did see the movie "Lover Boy," about a flamboyant pizza delivery guy. So of course I harbored some of those aspirations with me when I signed up as well, plus I had a fast car!

I didn't score any of those bonuses but I did manage to wrangle in faster delivery times for our store. Those were two different pizza gigs too, by the way. I used to deliver for this Chinese carry-out in Hampton Mall on Central Avenue, close to the Motel 6 there on Brightseat Road. In fact, I didn't get back into the job market until I utilized the privilege of my driver's license to bring me back into the workforce. I regained employment at yet another pizza joint when I first became homeless and had just bought and gained my truck, which I thought to sleep in during tired spells. It's one of three paycheck-producing jobs I had while I was homeless. Only lasted two months though, and somehow or another I lost my privilege. They suspended me! Too many incidental accidents. Three in one day, I say they were hunting me and got me and my truck off-road! Too much riding around listening to "Watch the Throne" and "Thug Motivation 103: Hustlerz Ambition!" Takeout taxi right before the Uber and Lyft craze and takeover... Oh well.

No Greater Love

REGINALD DENNY

Artist/Vendor



Lord of lords, king of kings
Emmanuel, God is with us
He's the source of my salvation
Jesus, he promised me eternal life
If only I believe and trust in him
He would take away all of my sins

God commended his love toward us
In that while we were yet sinners
On Calvary, Christ died for us
By giving his life as a substitute
For a poor wretched man like me
No greater... for a man...
To lay down his life for his friends



SHAWN FENWICK

Artist/Vendor

ART

ART

LUCIFER SATAN BAAL
part 1EL-O-HIM
Artist/Vendor

From the dark and out the blue, authorized and directed
I come in the light of many and every name
That is in my likeness and image
Being in the word as the works, actions, and deeds to create the word
A word, be word, see word... I am, and I done it all

Named it from original as a possibility
I am infinite to come in the light
As all possibilities due to man
In the making of what is made
I am the natural way, creating and crafting into work, actions, and deeds,
Forming pure hate, jealousy, envy, slander, and lewdness
As foundation to be

To do art thy will, in my name, my word
All for the sacrifice, glory; to be I Almighty
To have a say and second my nature
I am the way; me, me, me
I am the mastermind of it all
And I alone have it all, to offer it all
Look at me, see me; I'm the one!
In one, doing my deeds from past to present for I and all eternity
Legions of doom, as I, mighty devourer, conquer
I am full of myself

As I am the stronger devouring the weaker
In it all, who is he to I
When I created thee, and all thoughts are thine alone
For many minds as all for one mind; mines! Mines, mines
One world order, as there is nothing new under the sun
All for the taking

I am opposed to all that is not for I am in the works and know
How all feels in all passions and desires to everything
That is, was, and evermore to be
Cause I am that I am
The son of man, the light of my consciousness
Thought of flesh made flesh-like so I in all things, and bring light
In light of the death before was and shall be what it
Was, is, and evermore to be
If I so choose, cause I do as I please, creative fate I have in all things
And the end shall be just cause, and the cause of it all
If it doesn't serve me as I am
Adding to I, the one that counts
Kill, steal, destroy, wrath;
Sure I subtract
Mine, mind, minds all mine!!!
Mine alone, I have it all
Soul of man, lord, and every
other title imaginable
All the sum of I,
When there is nothing under
the sun
To one, but forgetfulness
Like death as no enemy,
I am death, a friend
Might for one to be a new
Born again for the things of the
world
I am

Illustration by El-O-Him



To be continued...

OPINION

Aesop strikes home with unhoused

JAY B. WILLIAMS



nce upon a time, there was a man named Aesop. He wrote many short stories, and, over the years, many of them have become favorites of mine. Every now and then, I revisit one of them and find a new story to add to my collection of favorites. My favorite is “Mercury and the Woodman” because it speaks to my love of irony.

Anyway, I was perusing a collection of Aesop's stories during my most recent vacation at the Heartbreak Hotel when I found a new favorite. In this essay, I want to share one of those stories with y'all because it touches something that has been on my heart for a lil minute now.

For those of y'all unfamiliar with “The Boy Bathing,” the story goes sum'n like this: A boy was bathing in a river, and den da river got out of his depth, so he was in great danger of being drowned. A man passing along the road heard his cry and went to the riverside.

When he saw the boy splashing in the water, instead of helping, the man began to scold him and yell at him, cuz the boy wasn't supposed to be so careless as to get dat deep into the water. The boy, afraid of death, cried out, “Oh, sir, please help me first, and beat me after.”

Every time I read one of Aesop's stories, I'm just like... taken aback by how relatable these words still are all these centuries later. I see so many parallels I can come back to in these stories. The more I look, the more comparisons I see between his world all those years ago and our world today.

Because it's like, boom, it starts off looking like a simple, kinda poetic story about a child in a river tryna figure out a place to bathe... But when I really sit with it, I realize it's about so much more. For me, “The Boy Bathing” is a story about how we as a society in the nation's capital — my hometown, Washington, D.C. — respond to people who are struggling. And also, people who are striving in their struggle.

You know, so many times I hear conversations about the unhoused community, and I find myself returning to that image of the boy struggling in the water — literally drowning

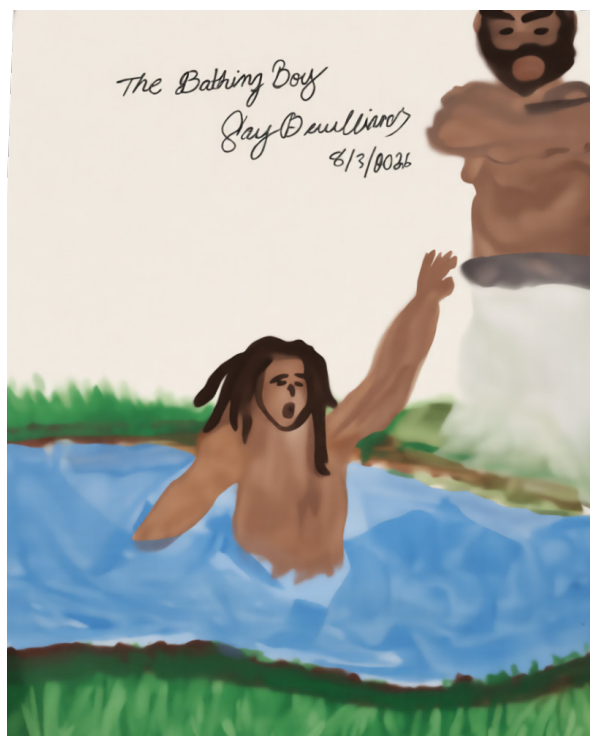


Illustration by Jay B. Williams

— job application after job application, drowning; rejection after rejection, drowning; someone on the shore is choosing to critique instead of choosing to preserve life.

What does that say about how we value life? For me, although this story was written centuries ago, I feel its message continues to resonate. It has become a question I carry with me: When someone is drowning, what is my response? Do I reach for their hand, or do I simply point my finger?

I feel anxious when I hear conversations about homelessness because, to me, the discussion often begins with accountability before compassion. I hear people asking what choices were made, what mistakes led someone there, or why they should be responsible for helping. Those questions may have a place, but I often wonder why they come first.

When I think about “The Boy Bathing,” I hear a child saying, “Please help.” When I look at this painting, I hear someone saying, “Please help.” And it becomes a metaphor for any vulnerable person who finds themselves in a moment where they need someone to see them. You hear this person saying, “Help me first and discipline me afterwards.”

Those words stay with me, because I imagine how frightening it must feel to be drowning, watching someone watch you as you're screaming for help. You see this person; they have the power to help you in some meaningful way out of the water, and they are exclusively interested in explaining why you need help not to drown. And you don't have time to explain this to them; you see, you understand? It is because you are drowning!

I don't want to come across like some know-it-all expert who thinks they understand everybody's story, because I don't. I don't believe every situation is the same. I only know how this particular story makes me feel. It reminds me that sometimes there is a world of difference between being right and being helpful. And also, someone can be correct about another person's mistakes and still fail to show the compassion necessary for those criticisms to help the person receiving them.

I wholeheartedly believe there is a place for accountability. I believe there is a place for tough love. I've seen honesty help people confront difficult truths. But I also feel there are moments when life itself has already become the lecture. Sometimes hardship has already taught the lesson. And in this case, we see people need to be alive to demonstrate the growth we want to see from them. In those moments, I wonder if maybe what a person needs most isn't another kick at their attempt to stay above water. Maybe they don't need another person standing on the shore explaining how they got there. Maybe they just need somebody willing to reach out a hand.

Or maybe they may just need someone to buy a copy of the Street Sense Media newspaper. LOL. But seriously though, sometimes support can be exchanged in ways we don't always expect. Sometimes it's a conversation. Sometimes it's a resource. Sometimes it's simply reminding someone that they are still seen. Sometimes a soft word, a listening ear, or a literal hand up can mean more than another reminder of what went wrong. Stay blessed. Until next time.....

*When someone is drowning,
do I reach for their hand, or
do I simply point my finger?
blah blah blah
poem*

Jay B. Williams is an artist/vendor with Street Sense.

OPINION

Could we use a PMP in D.C.?

LISA BLACKBURN ULLVEN AND ANGIE WHITEHURST



Why a PMP in DC? With over 1 million Project Management Professionals (PMPs) staying non-stop busy ensuring project delivery in the business world, imagine if we extend this role to the high-impact and often high-visibility (hot potato) Oval Office projects?

What if we start with something that 100% of us can do?

You will soon realize there are “no small potatoes.” Research shows how adding “positive” experiences, like a buddy or mentor, add up, having the cumulative power to dramatically benefit health, hopelessness, and homelessness.

Can we really make a difference? For those who faced four or more Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE), the landmark Positive Childhood Experiences study shows adding 6-7 positive experiences ultimately improves health, with people 43% less likely to report heart disease and 28% less likely to report diabetes. It also makes it 62% less likely people report depression, and the benefits to homelessness cover all three areas. Nearly 90% of homeless adults had at least one ACE, with nearly 60% having experienced cumulative childhood trauma, according to a study in The Lancet.

Clubs and schools across the nation are eagerly seeking mentors, with many facing a shortage. There are thousands of children without mentors. Boys & Girls Clubs of America shared a mentor in a student's life results in them being 40% more likely to graduate on time and 55% more likely to enroll in college.

Christina Bethell, lead author and principal investigator of a 2019 Positive Childhood Experiences study, along with Dr. Robert Sege, are spreading a vision called The HOPE Transformation. While the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report found three in four U.S. high school students experienced at least one ACE trauma, experts argue the number will soon be 100% impacted as traumas like violence and shootings are being added to the growing list of ACEs.

Reflection: At a Peace4Tarpon meeting with educators, community advocates asked, “How can we help?” Both students and school staff are clearly stating, “Our #1 priority is mentors.” At the same time, nearly 20 chapter presidents from the Project Management Institute (PMI) headed to Washington, D.C., to essentially ask D.C. leaders that same question: “How can PMI and our PMI volunteers help?”

Today, we are doing this work with minimal collaboration with project managers. Imagine the possibilities if we get these two groups together to give children and communities a little boost!

Sege shared how cross-grade mentors are highly successful with eighth graders mentoring fifth graders. They can relate, as they just went through the experience of transitioning from middle school to high school.

An idea we plan to explore is to check with 55-and-over communities to see if they are interested in using a shuttle service to take a few seniors to a school to be a mentor or a listening ear for the children. When we asked Judy Nye, an active resident of a top-rated retirement community, for her thoughts, she exclaimed, “Mentorships would be a win-win for everyone involved.”

Let's hop on board and build better solutions together! To stay tuned, follow our YouTube channel @GuidedResults.

Angie Whitehurst is an artist/vendor with Street Sense. Lisa Ullven is a community success coach and author of “Secrets to Sustainable Solutions.”

Timeless man (Cuban cigars and rum)

INVISIBLE PROPHET



Exile from Havana, the atrocious constructs of a demise with no moral ground in the succession: communism. There are two parts of Cuba: the elite side, the fancy hotels, houses, land, and food-filled side of la isla bonita, and then “her people-humanity,” no food, and secrets that lay in darkness.

Stolen land of tobacco, farms and plantations, homes and businesses; construction, to be exact. Immigrant to the land of broken American promises, home of the brave, land of the free. “Yo soy esta mi vida. No place where I want to be as an immigrant with my family.”

The Cuban Adjustment Act of 1966 gave refugees a fast legal track to residency. Flights out to Miami for the safety of a timeless man and his family. Everything was supposedly stolen by a communist leader; now, he was starting over in a land unknown to him.

A cluster of refugees entered in the '70s, '80s, and '90s. Did they receive citizenship? I don't know because, according to this timeless man, the U.S. government lied to him too. Little Havana, land of the free, home of the brave, what an American dream in this fake America. Freedom flights in 1966 and 1973 brought over families of refugees in the thousands.

There was also the matter of refugees floating in the flotilla of private boats heading to the peninsula in Florida. Land of the free, home of the brave; the broken promises of the American dream. Rebuilding a life, once known, now a refugee, shook up his lineage. Memories of a timeless man (mi abuelito).

Cigars and rum, a special man proud of his great success. Life without communism, his children's freedom as American citizens, not refugees. Is this land known to them? Faith in the epiphany of a timeless, classy woman, his wife: “la negra.” That term should be something informal or a term of endearment, but now, it's derogatory.

Timeless man, his lineage, a white European man of Spanish descent and Cuban blood. Colorism of “la negra,” because her siblings did not want her. They blamed her for their mother's death after her birth. Hateful vengeance beneath deep-rooted secrets of la isla bonita. Waves of chaos lead to the opportunism of the timeless man: white superiority.

Memories of a timeless man who never thought he was the shit. He taught me confidence is different than being an asshole to someone else. He said the desire to instill disappointment in someone's life makes a man a piece of garbage. Why did I listen to his discernment? He left a communist country, no matter the circumstances or cycle of deep-rooted secrets. He understood life.

A man I respected because he embraced his inner child, taking control of his past and present life in that moment. He told me about his sins and temptations. None that I forgive or enable on his part. Our relationship was different than others. He didn't teach me hate, jealousy, envy, or cruelty toward myself or to project onto humanity. His ancient wisdom honored the importance of sacred healing, grounding his chaotic past in the present.

Abuelito taught me evil people were once good people, and somewhere down the road they lost their spirit and soul. That's their journey, and it's not my business to pass judgment. Humanity is a life hidden behind truths and faults that are made-up lies for debts not owed to anyone.

Timeless man taught me who I need to be as a classy woman. He always taught me about consent, and that I never have to ask for permission to be a woman who wears the pants with a “mind of my own.” He taught me to never be a hoe or side piece for any dude that does not respect himself, no matter

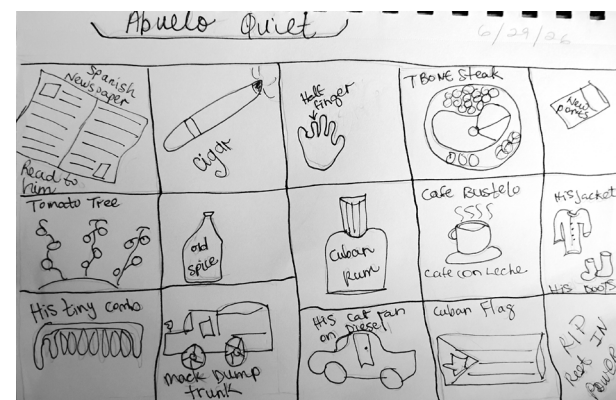


Illustration by Invisible Prophet

his status, income, the car he drives, career, or popularity. He always reminded me: a true man does not whisper, demean a woman, or associate his hate for his debts upon her existence. Crappy men will always think women want them, and when they don't, they will always believe you're playing hard to get. Walk away and take back your love. He doesn't deserve a piece of my spirit and soul.

His gentle love kissed my third eye and crown. He respected me with side hugs, tightly embracing me to say he loved me.

“Mi Linda,” he would always say as a term of endearment. “My value is to be grounded in my spirit, soul, and heart of God, Jesus, and Mary. I am life. I am of God, and I am his light; I am his heart.” He told me to never be ashamed of who I am. I never believed him. I felt his words were contradicting his old beliefs against my reality.

There is always a part of me that disliked what he said because I endured a lot for being a “goody two-shoes.” He always said the world is a hateful place and it will be hard. I asked, “Why did creation make me the way I am when everyone hates that I exist?”

I feel this broke his heart, and he didn't know how to answer; instead, he advised, “Never wake up angry or go to bed angry at the world. Leave envy and jealousy outside of me.” He said, I was his prayer for this family to change our ways.

His statements were based on family baggage where my parents chose not to teach me self-worth. Instead, he said, never rely on any human being because they have their own rooted curses to heal. Build success on hard work while not harming another human soul. Mi abuelito built foundations for me to unlearn hateful patterns, not to self-destruct. To never be like my parents, him, and others who have caused chaos for their unresolved debts.

Never carry someone else's burdens. He said, “This is not the home of the brave or land of the free. Immigration, asylum, and diplomatic immunity are a lie to entrap many under false advertisement. Too many immigrants hurt Americans and their own people.”

He taught me to stand up for myself and not take anyone's shit. When he passed, I felt his love leave and like a pop, it was no longer my protection. His best advice was to never have children for a man's selfish reasons, to never be married for others, love who I want, address anger and hate with peace and discernment, control my thoughts against cruel individuals, and never choose violence or hate.

He was the only positive experience of a man I've had in my life. He wasn't cruel or abusive. He built my worth and mental health. He was the only family I had that embraced my spirit and heart. This timeless man was of God; his heart was mine and my heart was his. We were the same as one spiritually. I'm grateful for his presence in my blood.

A timeless man of Cuban cigars and rum. I miss you greatly. I wish you were here to protect me. Te amo mucho...

Invisible Prophet is an artist/vendor with Street Sense.

Every day I stand

FIVE FIFTY-ONE



Every day I stand on a street corner with this paper in my hand to distribute and disseminate its content. I'm not only earning a living while advocating for those who suffer from the disparities in our society; I'm working on developing some very important virtues. While I'm getting some money in my pockets, I'm supporting the home-free individual and the poor, which is such a revolutionary action it brings dangerous adversity and purifies your inner self. Jesus is a good example; the highest price sometimes comes with the highest purposes.

Selling Street Sense is quite a highway to develop generosity. Generosity and gratitude for the team of paid employees working to create this newspaper and for those who do it for free as interns. Sometimes I wish they could get these benefits too, and all of them had the opportunity of having to distribute the paper like us vendors/artists. I mean, as part of their contribution, they should have to come to the street and sell the newspaper for two hours at least once a week, especially our CEO and our board members. I'm sure it would have great benefits for them, benefits they shouldn't miss; nobody should.

This paper is one of the most wonderful and important things happening in our society, and it passes inadvertently to so many! Everyone should have the opportunity to experience the adversity of rejection and indifference of our streets in order to also experience the glorious hope that comes with meeting those who give generous, offering words, a smile, or the needed supporting eye contact. When you intervene with a person, ask for their time and their contribution, and sell them a copy of Street Sense, and you find the few people who are aware of the greatest opportunity of engaging with us, you realize the kingdom of happiness is a domain of the generous people and, ironically, also that these happy people are a rarity. Most of the people who ignore you when you sell the paper are carrying a suffering indifference that brings you to develop another virtue. If you engage attentively with their suffering, it triggers you to develop compassion for those who can't give even a gaze of solidarity because they are missing out on the true wealth that brings joy... poor people.

When a person stops and buys the paper, that person is, almost invariably, happy. Not always a big happiness, not necessarily dramatic happiness, but they have something calm and light that sits on their faces like sunshine after rain. And the ones who look away, who quicken the step, who avoid my eyes like my presence is a problem to be solved fast — those faces carry a different weight. Tight. Closed. Agitated, even, like something inside of them is arguing with itself. I began to ask: why is this so?

I am not a scholar of religion or a sociologist, but if anything, a man who pays his share of attention and talks with people from many backgrounds. I have come to believe every serious tradition on this earth arrived, by its own road, at the same discovery: giving is not a sacrifice we make for others. It is a door we open for ourselves.

In Islam, this idea is not left to chance; it is structured — a pillar of the faith itself. Zakat requires a Muslim who has wealth beyond his basic needs give a fixed portion of it to his suffering community, traditionally two and a half percent, it is not charity in the casual sense; it is closer to a law of the heart, written down so that no year passes, no matter how busy or how selfish a person might feel,

without this door being opened. Besides Zakat, they also have Sadaqah, voluntary giving that can happen any day, for any reason, simply because the heart moves that way.

Christianity carries its own version. The old tradition of the tithe — giving one tenth of one's earnings — comes from the same instinct: put a number on generosity so it does not depend only on feeling. And beneath this sits the word caritas, the Latin root of "charity" itself, meaning something closer to love in action than to pity from a distance.

In Buddhism, they speak of Dana — generosity — as one of the first steps on the path toward a mind free of grasping. It is a Parami, one of ten virtues needed to accrue to perfection; Dana is offered because it helps the giver to develop toward the path to enlightenment. A strong practice of Dana sooner or later gets you to discover the truth of real wealth. The irony of the realization is that what is truly yours and brings true happiness is what you give away; with giving comes the gratitude of developing wisdom and the benefit of feeling the path of righteousness, even when it is difficult to give or when you have to suffer the highest prices for doing it. From living the experience and facing the adversity that comes with engaging in it, you fully experience generosity and the liberation of becoming one with your own suffering and the suffering of others.

None of these traditions ask you believe a particular thing about God, or heaven, or the next life, to receive this benefit. This is what convinces me the discovery is real, and not merely religious decoration. A Muslim businessman calculating his Zakat, a Christian grandmother leaving her tithe in the collection plate, a Buddhist monk who owns almost nothing and still gives what little he has — they arrive, from three different roads, at one same address: a mind at peace engaged in the purpose of walking toward what's good and beneficial to all.

Altruism is one of the most valuable and purest hopes of justice in a capitalist society. You do not need to believe in anything to test this for yourself. Come and join us; on Tuesdays and Thursdays, we give you ten papers for free to liberate the flow of the river of your loving experience, in gratitude, in generosity. Engage with your community through Street Sense; share your own effort towards developing truth and generosity, empathy, compassion. Suffer the vicissitudes of standing with a paper in your hand asking for "money;" experience the aversion of the world firsthand, the lack of joy in a great number of people in your society. Get the valuable experience of it, get transformed by it, truly feel what comes with observing the face of indifference and then also rejoice with the face of the generous beings; be one with them and with those who suffer (all this you can get by joining us and helping us distribute our newspaper). Give and get in the liberated flow of exploring your virtues with effort (another important virtue to develop)! Enjoy the righteous wealth of engaging with the poor, with the differing experience that purifies; be a force that promotes the opportunity of generosity for those who walk our streets. Stand with the givers of the world and get the benefit of being one with them; pay the highest price, get the highest reward. The revolution is finding happiness and following the path to it. Here is one of these opportunities: join our team at the Street Sense gang and transform your life with the goodness of engaging with generosity in our streets and our communities.

Five Fifty-One is an artist/vendor with Street Sense.

ART

Movie review: "Under the Skin"

VINCENT WATTS II

Artist/Vendor

Hey moviegoers... I'm back, in case you missed me. I'm still without a phone, but hey, movies can still be free. Check Tubi, Xumo, and of course, Youtube. Which still has it free every now and again; you just have to catch it... and it's usually whenever those idiotic guys are ready to re-release it. Until then... let's clean our apartment, and watch: "Under the Skin."

Shot so very cool, posh even. The eerie, desolate trailer turns into a smeared, beautifully lit Eastern European, "right next door to the red light district," kind of a town setting. You've got families, businesses, men, women, kids, older men, and older women plopped right next to Scarlett Johansson, and they all look like they're doing improv. In the beginning scenes, we find our Scarlett character a little frayed, hopefully not expired.

Tragic, because she's so very cute in this movie, then that desolation we talked about starts to roll in. Our commute with Scarlett in her truck is a little scary. The creepy music is catchy and is along for the ride. This girl has got all the right equipment, and the smooth talk for your ride. If you fall into her charm, and almost into her arms in the middle of this movie, that's what this director wants. You want this film to go somewhere, though. Poor guys. They could just be mama's boys. "It seems like we've been driving for an hour and a half now." Who is this mysterious woman? Why does this truck-van hybrid thingy have no end? And where the hell is this woman's creepy house at? Her scavenging: intricate, persistent, brutal. If these guys had any more naivety, you'd need a box of Kleenex somewhere in the middle of this movie. It's so original, but it's chucked full of the wrong surprises.

Check this guy out though: Jonathan Glazer. He's very heady, strong visually, and has placed all the right actors in the right places. He's got some what looks like fantastic early work. I haven't seen any of these, but I plan to: "Sexy Beast," from 2000, and "Birth," from 2004. His more recent work, "The Zone of Interest," from 2023, is again very, very strong visually, earning an Oscar. Out of all the indie films, you want ol' gurl Scarlett to get more gruff roles. The intricate, scholarly, cerebral roles that would ask her character to do some method acting. This particular role is kind of bare. I had to challenge myself, though, and write about it. If she could just perform out of the blonde hair dye, "I prefer her brunette," and delve into the suspenseful, thrilling side of her psyche. She gets quite a few nods for "Lost in Translation," "Vicky, Cristina, Barcelona," and "Match Point."

We want Scarlett to star in a film like "Paper Tiger," but with deeper, more engaging dialogue, satire, plot points, and emotion, you know, more gruff. It seems like America's shy but semi-sweetheart is trying to skip out on the straight path to her Oscar win. Though with people wondering, and clamoring for her on the set of "The Exorcist: Martyrs," a 2027 release, we normal tax-paying Americans could be unconsciously molding her into a sure-fire portfolio. This could only catapult her, or pull her to a gravitational Oscar win. I don't know; we'll see what finds Scarlett: heaven, hell, or an actual spaceship. Until next time, interwebbers, stay posh, stay keen, stay reviewing!

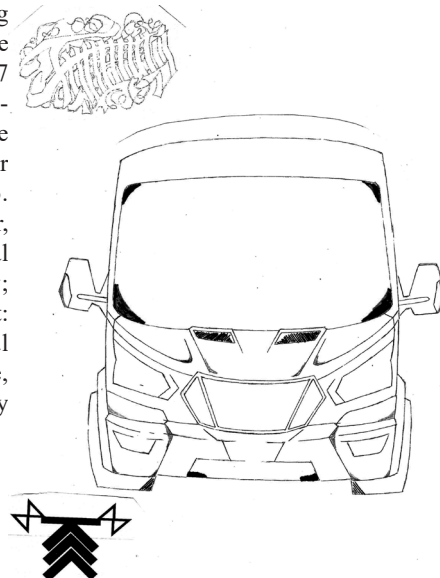


Illustration by Vincent Watts II

ART

Darkness to destiny

RACHELLE ELLISON
Artist/Vendor

I walked in the darkness for so long;
Every day something went awry and wrong
Life seemed like an endless day,
And out of the darkness, I didn't see a way
One day I saw a tunnel with a spot of light;
I walked through it, all day and night
There were hurdles, bumps, and bruises, and still the light seemed so far away
God said: Come through me; I am the only way
For you to have some relief, you have to step through the pain,
Through the storms and desperation,
Then the light will be something you can obtain
I listened, and from the pressure I exploded;
I turned from a caterpillar into a butterfly
My life was new and positive; I knew I had to give back,
To keep all I had, and to stay on track
Doors started opening. God said I could, so I did,
And all the negative feelings I was able to rid
Then the light I was able to reach;
God said all valuable lessons are ones he's able to teach
Though I had to do the footwork and stay on track,
So reaching your destiny is all up to you; what are you willing to go through?
Because today there is nothing that I lack
I'm stronger and wiser because of life's lessons and under daily attack
You have to know it's only because you're on the right track
I'm now living proof you can get to the light; all you have to do is live life right
Now I'm closer to my destiny than I am to the darkness and pain
And every day there is something new to gain



Photo courtesy of Rachelle Ellison

Don't trust nobody

CHRISTOPHER BOONE
Artist/Vendor

A family member had a company and I used to work for him in West Baltimore for years. Everything was good until he was getting big-headed, and he was using women and me, and people were forced to sign contracts to make his company grow, and that ain't right. But I learned my lesson from this: do not trust your family when you are homeless.



Peace: A new song

ROCHELLE WALKER
Artist/Vendor



“You and I must make a pact / We must bring salvation back / Where there is love, I'll be there (I'll be there) / I'll reach out my hand to you / I'll have faith in all you do / Just call my name and I'll be there (I'll be there)
And oh, I'll be there to comfort you / Build my world of dreams around you, I'm so glad that I found you / I'll be there with a love that's strong / I'll be your strength, I'll keep holding on” - “I'll Be There” by The Jackson 5.
Just repeat after me: Salvation.
Romans 10:9 says: “If you declare with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart God raised him from the dead, you shall be saved.”
Temptations: I won't give in! Save me. Help me. Bless our children. We are saved by his grace and his choices. He is rejoicing over us with this song that will save us. Where there is love in the streets in our community, he will be there.
Salvation, salvation: don't stop until you get saved. Then help someone else. We can bring peace, not only here but also around the world.

Keys to the Barzz

FRANKEY BARRZ
Artist/Vendor



Verse 3:
I am Frankey Barrz, got the keys to the double doors /
If we keep doing what we doing, they'll be coming for us/

Trapper activist, at the same damn time /
Was with the homeless people in the same damn line /

Made it out through my belief, OG in the streets/
Legalize it everywhere, I vote for world peace/

Loud when we cheef, wear this hat cause I'm the chief /

ACLU, LGBTQ /
One world religion, no more Christian vs. Jew /
On the block raising funds for me and you /
Hey called us baby killer, co-worker got spit on too /

The voice of my city, or an orator /
I am Frankey Barrz, got the keys to the office door /

I am Frankey Barrz, I got the keys to the whole house /

(And I'm not just talking about the delegate of the House of Representatives, like Eleanor Holmes Norton, even though I worked with her too).

Chorus:
I am Frankey Barrz got the keys to the bars /
Wear this hat cause I'm the legacy of this family /

I am Frankey Barrz got the keys to the stars /

I pray for clarity that one day they'll understand me /

For the album version of this song, buy the album “Trust, Truth, and Law: The Frankey Barrz Show” exclusively on Patreon at tinyurl.com/FrankeyBarrz

Love

RONNELL WILSON
Artist/Vendor



Love is you
Love is me
Love is charity
Why can't you see?

Love in the end
Love from the start
Love is even buried deep, within the dark
Love shines through every piece of art

When our final day comes,
Hearts beating stronger than any drum,
That's the moment we'll clearly see
Love is stronger than anything evil could ever be

Evil

NIKILA CAMPBELL
Artist/Vendor



Evil is not lurking
It's in front, not underneath
Who is a victim and who is the abuser?
There are evil people wrapped up in themselves
So I will wrap myself and keep away from evil,
Even the evil that comes and goes

Keep it moving,
Hands on is the thought
Not from me
I'm hands off

Can't be mad at evil; it's been there all the time
Old school victimized, making fun of victims,
Creating new school abusers
I'm sad evil can't blossom into a rose
But you can't blossom without
Evolution is a real word, so evolve into something different

If you find joy in someone being
Stabbed, shot, beat up, or just suffering,
You're the evil that's lurking in front
Not underneath

Evil is attracted to evil, so I'm unattractive
A sight for sore eyes
The treatment in a so-called safe place
Long-winded conversations go on and on
Don't try to interrupt,
Evil will be activated
Some people can't see evil,
Because that's their image of excellence

Your opinion doesn't matter, just your number
Evil is always waiting with open arms



Illustration by Nikila Campbell

Migration

MARQUIS SAVANT
Artist/Vendor



They packed their eggs and extra feathers —
as if they were sweaters for the weather —
and so prepared for the trip ahead.
They gathered up, counted off, and fled.
Took off one-by-one in the air.
I wish I'd been there.
I wish I could go ocean-to-ocean,
coast-to-coast. One day —
I hope so.

Where I come from

CYNTHIA HERRION
Artist/Vendor



Born in Scotland Neck, North Carolina,
a small town where people leave the door unlocked,
where people help each other.
I lived under segregation.
My mother lived in the country.
That's where I grew up;
every summer
we would go to my grandmother's house.
She taught me how to gather eggs from hens.
She had many animals on her farm.
She had different kinds of fruit trees,
and she didn't have a car.
She had a horse and wagon;
that was how we got around.

Weather change

MARCUS MCCALL
Artist/Vendor



The upcoming weather is fine. Nice breezes. Not too cool,
not too hot. The temperature is just right. Summertime was
fun time: live, laugh, love. Time for comfort and healing.
Change comes unexpectedly when we plan for a family
outing. Just traveling from state to state, enjoying the
summertime weather. Weather means different views with
different shoes.

The best meal

MKUUFU LONDON
Artist/Vendor



The best meal was at Columbus Church. It has been
over eight years since I've made a meal for somebody.
To have a nice dinner with someone would be great.

You two, we are not with you

RITA SAULS
Artist/Vendor



Just because we didn't mention it, let me affirm: it is not Black people's intention to be led
on ungodly missions by people who act as if they have an addiction, e.g., heroin, fascism,
or garish entertainment.

I'm talkin' Donald Trump and Pete Hegseth, who seem to love the Ultimate Fighting
Championship. They are being challenged to step into the ring to fight anyone the same
color as Martin Luther King, Jr.

Please, let's do that on TV, so the world can see you both are just wannabes. Like Michael
J said, "you wanna be starting something" 'cause you ain't about nothing but chaos and
destruction of things so far above you, you know you shouldn't be touching, like God.
He's so smart he knew you would do this, so he's hitting you with an iron fist. Or is it an
Iran fist? Ha-Ha. LOL!

Written on behalf of the Black Nation USA and associates. Please forward this to all
nations and all news sites around the world.

Beautiful me

AIDA PEERY
Artist/Vendor



Who, me?
I am me,
beautiful indeed
to those who can see

Specifically
perfect with a capital "P"
humanly kind
made of effective fertile ground

Beautiful me

From homelessness
to thriving
to striving
being man-conniving

Just beautiful me
in my poetry,
can't you see?

Fog

BRIAN HOLSTEN
Artist/Vendor



do not be frightened
the mist tightens

the field's bladed grass
are hidden within
a realm of blindness

the awesome dew
that moistens our shoes
our senses anew
with smells of life renewed

Blocks on Blocks

DRAKE BRENSUL
Artist/Vendor

Food distribution from a signal streams through the stomach content for measurement, setting
its availability to conditionalize a uniformity to own the land.

signal - corpse - reports
average - seeks - switches
freedoms - borders - distribution
switches - volume - move

Copulation from a signal confirms through genital control for the clone, completing the birth
to conditionalize the uniformity to own the land.

Its failure is because uniformity is childless, while calculating its destination as if it was alive.

Where people sleep

FREDERICK WALKER
Artist/Vendor



D.C. Councilmember Robert White, and D.C. Mayor Muriel Bowser: Help homeless people.
Stop letting people sleep in front of the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library. They should
have access to the shelter hotline van. Thank you so much for helping homeless people by
the library.

Summer vacation ends

JOSIE BROWN
Artist/Vendor



Summer vacation is a time to be with family and remember the good old days
Summer vacation is a time to praise and not live in a maze
Summer vacation is to set the stage and try to be amazed every day with no dismay
Summer vacation is a day to obey every day with no regrets
Just peacefulness and sweetness

What do you think is best?

WILLIAM YOUNG
Artist/Vendor

We were born on this planet we call Earth. It had beauty and many unknowns. Learning about
nature alone was a very good thing. Learning how to exist and stay alive with all creatures was
the ultimate challenge. It was balanced to perfection. We have overpopulated our only home. We
now have transformed 75% of the land of our only home with bricks, stone slabs, concrete, and the
most damaging thing of all is the blacktop and all of the buildings man has built. Most buildings in
America are larger than they have to be. I look around and see many empty buildings.

The rich people are always looking for more money, and they care more for the money than they
do for life itself. They are always raising taxes, and they never goes back down. We need wildlife
to make plants grow. Without wildlife, plants can not grow, such as fruits and vegetables. Without
fruits and vegetables, there is no wildlife. The meat eaters eat the creatures who eat the plants.

The water that is underground is running out. When that is gone, it will be too late to fix everything that
is broken. We need to rebuild all water springs and forests that have been destroyed over the last 70 years
to stop our only home, Earth, from falling apart due to lack of moisture and water. When the water runs
out, so does plant life, wildlife, and then people. No water means nothing to drink. It also means nothing
to eat. When we run into this problem, the rich men can eat their fancy buildings, parking lots, airports,
overpriced vehicles, and railroads. Maybe they'll drink the oil that means more to them than all types of life.

I cannot do anything by myself. But if we can get everyone to vote on the idea of rebuilding the
forest and all water springs from the past 70 years, we might have a chance. The choice is yours.

FUN & GAMES

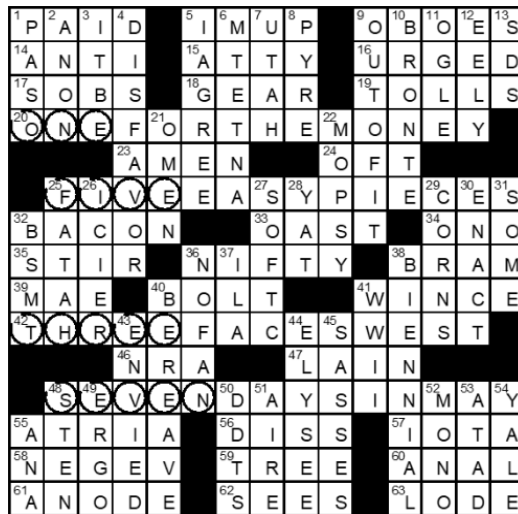
Across

1. Hissy fit
5. Event attended by Cinderella
9. ____-mo replay
12. Fancy-schmancy, as a formal event
13. Carcinogenic fireproofing
15. Common sentiment expressed in a romantically-motivated anniversary card (4 wds.) (1,5,4,3)
17. Opposite compass heading of SSE
18. Fa - la go-between
19. Real estate ad abbr.
20. Think tank nugget
22. Something all college and professional football teams do during the half-time break (3 wds.) (2,3,5)
28. Blue ____ special
30. Popular all-lady album by Dolly, Emmylou and Linda
31. Mononomous Irish singer
32. Determined to accomplish or possess (2 wds.) (3,2) (NOTES anagram)
33. D.E.A. agent, slangily
35. Band performance
36. Activity enabling animal lovers to view lions, tigers, rattle snakes and penguins without traveling to distant lands (2 wds.) (3,6)
40. Draft pick
43. Cowboy boot attachment
44. Put up, as a building or other structure
48. Wal ____ or K- ____
50. The Beatles' "Back in the ____" (abbr./init.)
52. Part of a raptor's picker-uppers
53. Braised beef entrees often presented with mushrooms and served with red wine (2 wds.) (5,5)
56. Word before dragon or peas
57. Nonetheless, in a text (abbr./shortening)
58. Brazilian hot spot
60. Mork's planet
61. A feature of free enterprise also contained in the answers to 15-, 22-, 36-, and 53-Across? (2 wds.) (6,7)
66. Up close and ____
67. ____-bag (common giveaway)
68. Gained a lap without running or even walking fast
69. Like a crossword, in a way
70. A black cat or a blood moon is a "bad" one to some folk

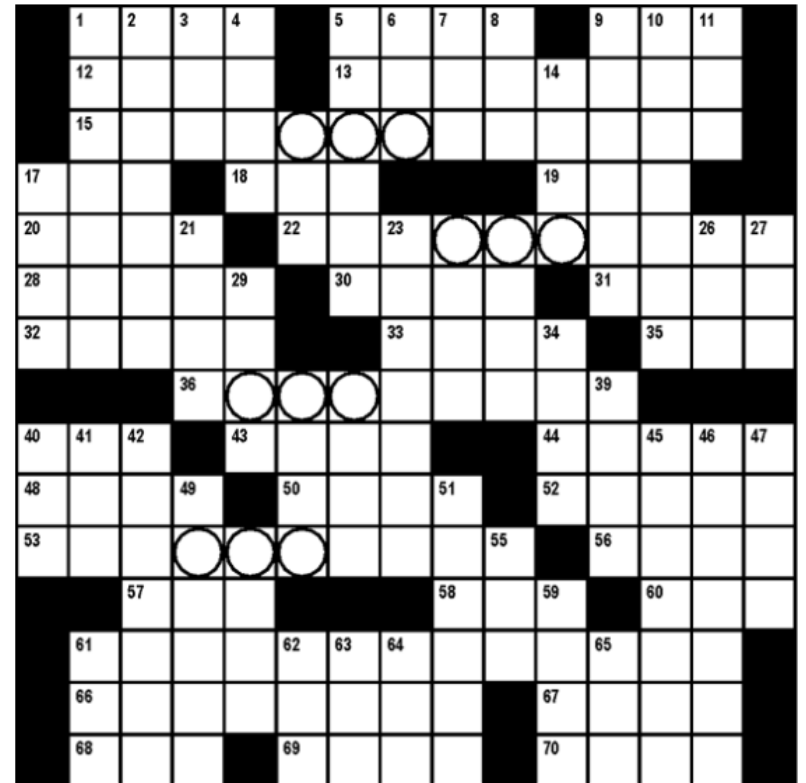
Down

1. Part found on spinning wheels and old record players and juke boxes
2. "Piece of cake" alternative
3. Suffix with arson or social
4. "____, too, shall pass"
5. Voting slip
6. Communication for the deaf (abbr./initialism)
7. Certain Wall St. corp. takeover (abbr./init.)
8. O.T. book between Exod. and Numb.
9. Frustrate or block, as a plan or effort
10. Unties
11. Midwest college whose athletes are known as the Buckeyes (abbr./init.)
14. Lord's worker
16. Captain's journal

LAST EDITION'S PUZZLE SOLUTION



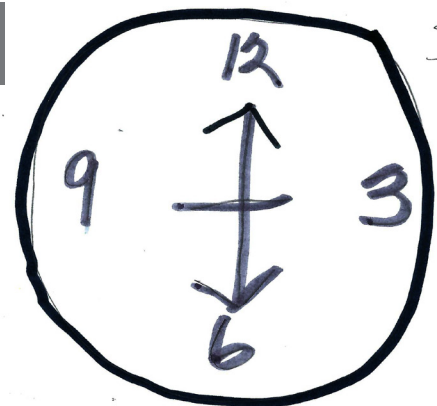
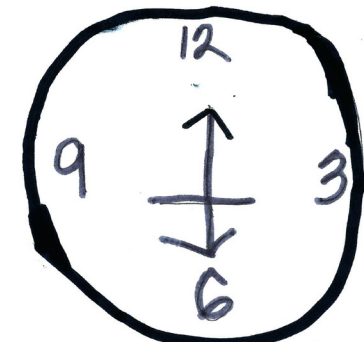
17. What Jack Frost does in a popular holiday carol
21. The entire gamut, in a popular phrase (1,2,1)
23. Surgeon's asst. (1,1,5) (incls. abbrs./init.)
24. Auto make that sounds like an order
25. "____ am a sinful man" (Luke 5:8) (2 wds.) (3,1)
26. Caustic chemical used in soap-making
27. Not dis
29. 1961 chimp in space
34. Tech news website (abbr.) (CENT anagram)
37. Major creative music project, typically numbered
38. Remove from office
39. Mardi ____
40. Mornings, for short (abbr./init.)
41. A-list actor Jude
42. Neighbor of Sudan whose capital is Asmara
45. The U.S., to Mexicans (2 wds.) (2,5) (Sp.)
46. Something a laborer's hands or a sailor's language may do over time.
47. Penn. crosser that takes its toll? (abbr.)
49. Wearable souvenir from Super Bowl LX that could herald the Seahawks as World Champs (1-5)
51. Scarcely ever
54. Soaks (up), as gravy
55. Caboodle's partner, (with "whole")
59. Good first name for a car mechanic
61. Festoons with Charmin, for short (abbr./init.)
62. High lofted tennis shot
63. Ambient music pioneer Brian ____
64. Maj. Calif. airport code initials.
65. Billing time (abbr./init.) (typically around the 30th)



PIECES OF THE WEEK



MELODY BYRD
Artist/Vendor



The covenant

MICHELE HELIES
Artist/Vendor



a bow in the clouds
shone after a gloomy time
love to all from high

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 and insp.ngo.

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*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

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Vivienda/alojamiento

Education
Educación

Health Care
Seguro

Clothing
Ropa

Legal Assistance
Asistencia Legal

Laundry
Lavandería

Case Management
Coordinación de Servicios

Food
Comida

Employment Assistance
Assitencia con Empleo

Transportation
Transportación

Showers
Duchas

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](#)

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

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

Catholic Charities // 202-772-4300
[catholiccharitiesdc.org/gethelp](#)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Identification services

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

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

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

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

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

2204 Martin Luther King Ave. SE

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

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

N Street Village // 202-939-2076
1333 N St., NW
[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](#)

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

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

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

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

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

Unity Health Care
[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](#)

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

Whitman-Walker Health
1525 14th St., NW // 202-745-7000
1201 Sycamore Dr., SE
[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](#)

JOB BOARD

Store Support

The Home Depot // Silver Spring, Maryland

Onsite

Assist with customer order fulfillment, customer service, lot support, administrative tasks, order status questions, cash management, and other store operational responsibilities.

Requirements: Strong customer service and communication skills, attention to detail, time-management skills, ability to work cooperatively with associates and vendors, and ability to work with limited supervision.

Pay: \$19.00–\$20.50/hr

Apply: [shorturl.at/GmoMt](#)

Restaurant Server

The Westin DC Downtown // Washington, D.C.

Onsite

Serve food and beverages to guests, take and enter orders, answer menu questions, communicate special dietary requests to the kitchen, process payments, maintain tables and work areas, and provide professional guest service.

Requirements: High school diploma or GED preferred, at least 1 year of related work experience.

Apply: [shorturl.at/XQHD4](#)

Assistant Sous Chef

The Mayflower Hotel, Autograph Collection // Washington, D.C.

Onsite

Support daily kitchen operations, supervise culinary staff, prepare food, maintain food quality and sanitation standards, coordinate kitchen activities, manage supplies and inventory, assist with menus, train staff, and help maintain excellent guest service.

Requirements: High school diploma/GED, five years experience in the restaurant industry

Apply: [shorturl.at/HxD3u](#)

Hiring? Send your job postings to
esmat@StreetSenseMedia.org



SOME • SO OTHERS MIGHT EAT

EXPANDING CARDIOVASCULAR CARE

Building Healthier Futures in Washington, D.C.



At SOME, we believe healthcare should be within reach for everyone.

Thanks to support from the AstraZeneca Foundation, SOME is expanding its Medical Clinic to include specialized cardiovascular care for individuals facing poverty and homelessness in Washington, D.C.

High blood pressure, heart disease, and stroke are leading threats to our community's health, especially among people of color and low income residents.

Our new program bridges this gap with screenings, treatment, education, and ongoing support. Patients receive free blood pressure monitors, learn how to manage their health, and get the follow up care they need in a safe, supportive environment.



PERSONALIZED CARE

Our experienced providers offer comprehensive cardiovascular care tailored to each individual.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Through local partners and outreach events, we meet people where they are and help build healthier communities.

EDUCATION & PREVENTION

We provide education, resources, and regular follow up to empower patients to take control of their heart health.

STORIES OF TRANSFORMATION

One patient entered the program struggling with high cholesterol and heart rhythm issues. Through coordinated care, nutrition support, and ongoing follow up, he stabilized his health and reduced smoking dramatically.

Today, he is employed, working toward permanent housing, and making healthier choices every day.



CONTACT

appointmentdesk@some.org
202-797-8806
SOME.org



*Thank you for reading
Street Sense!*

From your vendor, _____

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**25
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