

THE BLACK LENS SPOKANE
NEWS FROM A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE

RACE MATTERS IN EDUCATION

Disparities in Discipline Rates Impacting African American Students

A LOOK AT THE PROBLEM

Excerpts from the Kirwan Institute Issue Brief "Racial Disproportionality in School Discipline: Implicit Bias is Heavily Implicated" (February 2014)

Research shows that African American students, and especially African American boys, are disciplined more often and receive more out-of-school suspensions and expulsions than White students. Perhaps more alarming is the 2010 finding that over 70% of the students involved in school-related arrests or referred to law enforcement were Hispanic or Black (*EducationWeek, 2013*).

A 2009–2010 survey of 72,000 schools (kindergarten through high school) shows that while Black students made up only 18 percent of those enrolled in the schools sampled, they accounted for 35 percent of those suspended once, 46 percent of those suspended more than once and 39 percent of all expulsions. Over all, Black students were three and a half times more likely to be suspended or expelled than their White peers (*Lewin, 2012*).

Research suggests that implicit bias (the attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner) is implicated in every aspect of racial and ethnic inequality and injustice. Existing research also suggests that implicit racial bias may influence a teacher's expectations for academic success. An analysis of research in 2007 found statistically significant evidence that teachers hold lower expectations for African American and Latino children compared to European American children. (*Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968; Tenenbaum & Ruck, 2007*).

The Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity is a university-wide, interdisciplinary research institute, that works to deepen understanding of the causes of—and solutions to—racial and ethnic disparities worldwide and to bring about a society that is fair and just for all people. (www.kirwaninstitute.osu.edu)

To read the full brief visit <http://kirwaninstitute.osu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/racial-disproportionality-schools-02.pdf>

IN SPOKANE

The Seattle Times published an article in June of this year, titled "Race dramatically skews discipline, even in elementary school".

It was an in-depth look at the disproportionate rates of discipline in Washington state and included a breakdown of discipline rates by school district and ethnic group.

SPOKANE SUSPENSION/EXPULSION RATES

White	6.1%
Black	15.2%
Hispanic	8.4%
Asian	1.7%
Multi-Racial	9.8%

Numbers for Native American and Pacific Islander students not provided. Source: Washington state Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction. Reporter: Claudia Rowe, The Seattle Times; Data Analysis: Thomas Wilburn and Justin Mayo, The Seattle Times.

A LOOK AT SOLUTIONS

In January of 2014, The U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division and the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights issued a national "guidance" to assist public elementary and secondary schools in meeting their obligations under Federal law to administer student discipline without discriminating on the basis of race, color, or national origin.

Amongst other recommendations, the guidance listed interventions that can be effective in reducing and eliminating racial bias in the application of school discipline, they included the following:

- provide in-service training that exposes all teachers and school administrators to information about the causes and consequences of implicit racial and ethnic bias, especially in the form of "cultural deficit thinking;"
- facilitate meaningful relationship building between teachers and all of their students by ensuring that all undergraduate teacher certifica-

tion and Bachelor degree programs include substantial training in "cultural competency;"

- implement "Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support" (PBIS) practices and interventions in all schools. Schools that successfully implement PBIS have teaching and learning environments that are less reactive, aversive, dangerous, and exclusionary, and more engaging, responsive, preventive, and productive;
- implement "Restorative Justice" practices in all schools;
- as an alternative to out-of-school suspensions, implement in-school disciplinary measures that temporarily separate serious offenders from the general student population but keeps these students in school;
- Apply zero tolerance policies only in cases where this magnitude of action is warranted.

To read the full guidance visit: <http://www.justice.gov/sites/default/files/crt/legacy/2014/01/08/dcl.pdf>.

IT HURTS ME TO SAY: A LETTER FROM A SPOKANE STUDENT

By Ephraim Watkins (age 11)

Dear Black Lens,

As an African American male it hurts me to say that I can't walk down the street with a hoodie on because it makes the Caucasian population think I will rob them, or rob a store, or that I am simply a thug and up to no good.

I was called a nigger in my 3rd grade year at school and the teacher tried to justify it by saying that the kid was speaking Spanish, but the kid was not Spanish and he did not know how to speak Spanish.

I was called a nigger last year in my 5th grade year by a kid that got mad because I was beating him in a game of four square.

Myself and two other African American kids received notes on our desks at school last year that said we will die. We took that as a

racial threat because it was only put on the African American's desks.

These incidents have really hurt and ticked me off because the Spokane School District did nothing and the principal stopped investigating a couple weeks after the threat in-



cident saying "there is no way to prove the hand writing." I wanted the principal to keep investigating so that nobody would die or end up hurt and in the hospital.

I feel like people don't give African American people any credit for who we are and what we contribute to society. We are taken as a threat especially being an African American boy.

I play sports and I am aggressive like other kids, but I get called out of my name or parents say "get that big kid off the court, he can't be the age of my kid." I do the same things or better than Caucasian kids, but I get taunted. They get told "well done" or "good job" and I get told "don't play so hard next time", or I get told "great job you got 18 points in the game, but don't play so hard because parents are scared of your aggressiveness."

The confederate flag means slavery, and when Black people try to say its wrong to have it hanging at the courthouse in Columbia S.C., people just say the flag is history and it's not bad. A lot of racist people say racist slurs, and I don't feel that it is cool at all. We all have two eyes, two legs, and two hands. That means we're the same in God's eyes.

God said all men are created equal, but some Caucasian people don't feel that way. I know I can't speak for all Caucasian people because I have some very good friends that are Caucasian and they treat me very well.

I always see people online going on



rants about how stupid Black people are and how we can't do anything right. It saddens my heart to see that stuff, but this is America. You can say what you want and don't go to jail or anything like that, but we need to take a step back and think about how this will hurt people and maybe not say it. Thank you for reading this message! -Ephraim Watkins

ON MY MIND

THOUGHTS FROM THE EDITOR



by Sandra Williams

A Focus on Education

"Education is the passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to those who prepare for it today."

~Malcom X

Several months ago I was approached by the father of a young man who attends elementary school in Spokane. His son wanted to know if he could write about the experiences that he had in his school.

I said sure, and that I would include it in the September issue of the paper. Then I came across a parent in the park while I was writing an article about the Police Athletic League. We struck up a conversation and I discovered that she had two children going to school in Spokane. When I asked where they were going, she made a face. I recognized that face as one of frustration and anger, because I had made it many times when my daughter was attending school. So I asked if I could interview her for the September issue as well. She agreed, and that was the beginning of what would become an Education Special Edition of the Black Lens.

I was fortunate that my daughter's elementary school experiences in Spokane were almost exclusively positive ones. I liked her principal very much and her teachers were exceptional.

The middle school my daughter attended was in California, and that was also a positive experience, due in large part to the fact that the Assistant Principal was an African American woman, who I believe took it upon herself to make sure that students like my daughter were successful. But by the time my daughter reached high school, also in California, I was pretty much a regular fixture on campus. Constantly challenging rules and policies and procedures, and intervening in situations that ranged from being biased and disrespectful, to down right racist. It was frustrating and exhausting. I grew increasingly angry, and I was so very happy when my daughter finally graduated and headed off to college. Whew!!!

As I began to put this paper together, interviewing African American students, parents, and educators, I was struck by the similarities of their stories. Whether the students were currently attending school in Spokane, or they had graduated from high school back in the 70s like me, there was a similarity to the stories that left me a little sad to to honest, the name calling, the bullying, the lack of response by those in charge at the schools, and an overwhelming sense of frustration and disappointment that nobody is doing anything about it. One of the most profound moments for me in an interview came when I asked a young man how he felt the first time that he was arrested, and he responded that it felt like it did all of the times that he had been sent to detention during the fifth grade, so it wasn't really any different for him. Wow!

There is a lot of work happening right now in school districts across the country to address the ongoing issues that exist in the public school system, the bullying and harassment that take place on a daily basis, the disproportionality in the suspension and expulsion rates, the dismal on-time graduation statistics, the lack of preparation for employment or college once African American students do graduate, and the embedded stereotypes and implicit bias that many educators carry inside of them that negatively impact African American children in both subtle and not so subtle ways.

Spokane Public Schools, which was the primary focus of most of the stories in this edition, has said that they are aware of the issues expressed here and are busy making changes. To their credit, there now seems to genuinely be a level of awareness by the "higher ups" that I have not seen before. So maybe, just maybe, the stories shared here will become a catalyst for *REAL* change in the future.

QUESTION OF THE MONTH

If a Black male drops out of high school what are his chances of ending up in prison by the age of 30?



SEVENTY PERCENT(70%), according to a report titled "Ten Economic Facts about Crime and Incarceration in the United States", published in May 2014 by the Brookings Institution's Hamilton Project, which says that for an African-American male who does not complete their high school education, there is a 70 percent chance that he will end up in jail by his mid-30s. The report also says by the time a Black child turns 14, they have a 50 percent chance of seeing their father end up in prison, compared to less than 10 percent for white children. To read the full report visit: <http://www.brookings.edu>

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THE BLACK LENS NEWS SPOKANE

The Black Lens is a local newspaper that is focused on the news, events, issue, and people and information that are important to Spokane's African American Community. It is published monthly on the first of the month by: Square Peg Multimedia, 9116 E. Sprague Avenue #48 Spokane Valley, WA 99206, (509) 795-1964, sandy@blacklensnews.com

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BLACK NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

Local, State, National and Around the World

William Poindexter Shooter's Charges Increased from Second to First Degree Murder, Bond Reduced

(Source: SpokesmanReview.com)

According to an article in the Spokesman Review, Edward Bushnell, the man accused of shooting William Poindexter in the back after an altercation July 21 on Altamont and 5th Avenue, will have his charges increased from Second Degree murder to First Degree murder. Bushnell, who told police that he fired in self defense, was initially viewed as a good samaritan who intervened in a domestic violence dispute. But witnesses stated that Poindexter and his girlfriend were walking away and 30-45 seconds elapsed before Bushnell retrieved a gun and fired three times, hitting Poindexter in the back and killing him. The Spokesman Review reported that Bushnell appeared in court on the new charges August 18 and his bond, which was set at \$500,000 when he was arrested, was reduced to \$300,000. A candle light vigil was held for William Poindexter at the site of the shooting on July 25 by friends and family members. Funeral services were held on August 1 at Holy Temple Church of God in Christ in Spokane.



Lorenzo Hayes Death Ruled a Homicide by Spokane Medical Examiner, Family Files Suit

(Source: SpokesmanReview.com, SeattleTimes.com)

The Spokane County Medical Examiner has classified the death of Lorenzo Hayes a homicide, according to a Spokesman Review article. Hayes died while being booked into the Spokane County Jail on May 13. The cause of death was attributed to Hayes choking on his own vomit while being restrained in a prone position due to methamphetamine toxicity. Hayes was arrested on suspicion of violating a no-contact order and unlawful possession of a firearm. The Washington State Patrol is the lead agency in the investigation, which is being conducted by the Spokane Investigative Regional Response (SIRR) team to determine if criminal charges will be filed. Results of the investigation have not been released and video surveillance footage has not been made available to the public. The Seattle Times reported that the Hayes family has filed a wrongful death claim seeking damages between \$6.5 - \$9.5 million. Hayes is one of four inmates that have died in the Spokane County jail in the past three months, prompting some community members to call for an outside investigation.



Police Group Report Says Many Police Shootings Could Have Been Avoided



(Source: Ryan J. Reilly, <http://huffingtonpost.com>)

A recent report titled "Re-Engineering Training On Police Use of Force" which was released by the Police Executive Research Forum, a research and policy group whose members include commanders from the largest U.S. police departments, said "many recent controversial police shootings could have been avoided, even though they may have been legally justifiable", and "officers generally receive far too little training in de-escalating conflict and often are embedded in a culture that encourages them to rapidly resort to physical force."

Chuck Wexler, Executive Director of the Police Executive Research Forum, wrote in the report, that while many recent high-profile police shootings have been legally justified, there are sometimes "missed opportunities to ratchet down the encounter, to slow things down, to call in additional resources."

The study also found that many police agencies give officers extensive training on how to shoot a gun, but officers spend "much less time" learning the "importance of de-escalation tactics and Crisis Intervention strategies for dealing with mentally ill persons, homeless persons, and other challenging situations."

To read the full report visit <http://www.policeforum.org/assets/reengineeringtraining1.pdf>

President Obama Enjoys New York Outing with Daughters

(Source: www.afro.com)



LeBron James to Pay for 1,000 Kids to go to College



(Source: Hayley Byrnes, <http://SBNation.com>)

LeBron James announced that his foundation will pair up with the University of Akron to fully sponsor more than 1,000 scholarships for children currently in his I Promise program based in Akron, Ohio.

The LeBron James Family Foundation, which was founded in 2004 in Akron, OH, has been helping children from the third to the seventh grade. James is now extending support for the kids one step further by saying he will cover their tuition costs if they meet the requirements. A year's tuition alone at the University of Akron is around \$9,500. SB Nation did the math: 1,100 kids x \$9,500 x 4 years = \$41.8 million, which they said is two seasons with the Cavaliers! For more information visit:

<http://lebronjamesfamilyfoundation.org>

Three More Black Transgender Women Reported Murdered



(Source: Trudy Ring - <http://advocate.com>)

Three more African-American transgender women have been reported murdered since early August, bringing the total of known transgender murder victims in 2015 to 16, most of them transgender women of color. The body of 20 year old Elisha Walker was found buried behind a house near the town of Smithfield in Johnston County, N.C. Elisha had been reported missing by her family last fall. Angel Arias, 23, has been charged with the murder.

South Africa's Only Black Billionaire Donates Half Of Wealth To the Poor



(Source: Victor O - <http://www.financialjuneenth.com>)

South Africa's only black billionaire, Patrice Motsepe, who has a net worth of \$2.65 billion, has pledged to donate half of his fortune to help the poor people in his country. Motsepe acquired most of his wealth from the mining conglomerate African Rainbow Minerals which he founded in 1997. The publicly-traded company specializes in the mining of several valuable minerals, including platinum and gold. He is also the owner of the Pretoria based soccer club Mamelodi Sundowns.

Motsepe is one of more than 70 billionaires, including Bill Gates and Warren Buffett, who have joined The Giving Pledge, which aims to bring notable and wealthy figures around the world together to contribute part of their wealth toward assisting underprivileged people. According to BBC News, Motsepe said his charitable gesture was also influenced by the spirit of "Ubuntu," an African belief system which translates into "I am because you are." The money will be channeled through the Motsepe Foundation to help address health and educational issues confronting the poor.

Rainbow Push Partners with Google for Tech Forum



(Source: <http://blacknews.com> - Photo Credit: Earl Gibson III, Courtesy of the FrontPage Firm)

Rev. Jesse Jackson's Rainbow PUSH Coalition partnered with Google to present the "Dream Makers, Risk Takers and Money Makers: Diversity and Inclusion in Tech Forum" at the Google headquarters in Los Angeles. The forum is part of an ongoing program designed to identify ways to open access and create pathways for people of color into the technology industry.

YOU SHOULD KNOW

(Or Things You Probably Didn't Learn In School)

QUEEN ANN NZINGA Art and Article by Bertoni Jones (jbaguart@yahoo.com)



Bertoni Jones

One of the most extraordinary figures in the history of Africa was a woman born in 1583 A.D. named Queen Ann Nzinga. Queen Nzinga was the sister of the king of Ndongo in Angola. She originated from the Jaga peoples, who were notoriously fierce and militant, and she was the epitome of this as a cunning strategist, leader, and woman with incredible charisma.

In 16th century Africa the Portuguese had settled in Angola with three main intentions: (1) conquering the land and helping themselves to supposed gold mines, (2) colonizing and settling Europeans in her land, and (3) profiting from trade in African slaves. Unfortunately the less success the Portuguese found in their ambitions the more ruthless they became, and mercilessly they doubled their efforts in African slave trading. Queen Nzinga listened to local Jesuits preach of a god of justice who was an enemy of suffering but she wondered how this same god looked the other way at the enslaving of her people and plundering of her lands by Portuguese foreigners.

In 1623, at the age of forty-one, Nzinga became Queen of the unified lands of her forefathers, but

demanding people address her as king as she led her troops into frontline campaigns dressed in men's battle armaments.

Queen Nzinga proved her military intelligence by making a strategic alliance with the Dutch using them and the militias they supplied her to destroy the Portuguese, and demonstrated her political cunning by uniting African people through patriotism by offering all African slaves everywhere freedom and acreage in her land. In loyalty thousands of African slave-soldiers deserted Portuguese holdings, abandoned important posts, and whole battalions turned on their Portuguese masters. The Portuguese could not buy her and she accepted Catholic conversion only to meet her political needs, taking the name "Ann" as part of her "conversion".

Queen Nzinga's personal power became overwhelmingly apparent to the Portuguese and they knew that as long as this woman ruled, they would be plagued with "A War of Resistance". Suffering so many setbacks, the Portuguese were forced into treaty with Queen Nzinga at the capital of Luanda in Angola in 1659, where they witnessed her charisma first-hand.

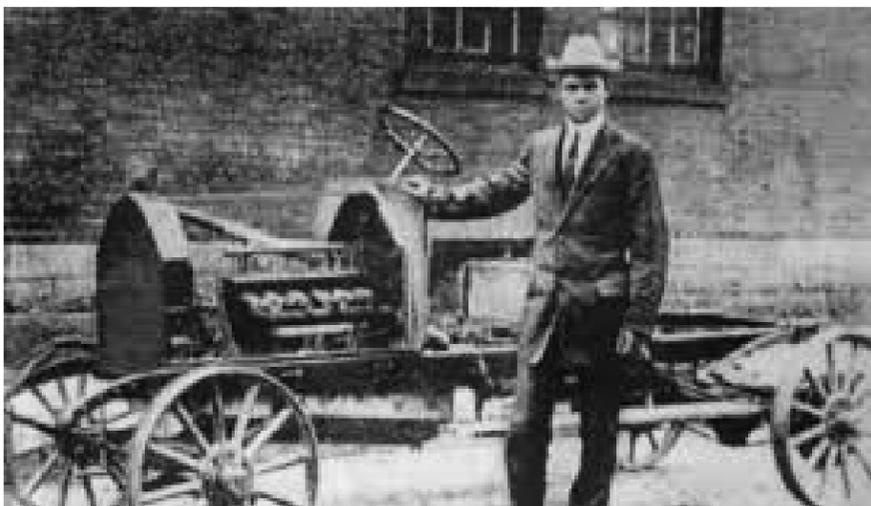
When Queen Nzinga arrived to meet with the Portuguese Governor, out of arrogance, he did not stand when she entered, and did not provide her a chair. Unfazed, she spoke to her male attendants and they quickly rolled out her royal carpet and one of them prostrated himself as a "throne" for her to be seated upon his back.

Queen Nzinga spoke to the Portuguese Governor in a language that did not recognize him as Governor, because she realized that the Portuguese Colony in Angola was neither legitimate, nor Christian.

Queen Nzinga dedicated her entire life and kingdom to resistance of European intrusion in Africa. With her passing on December 17, 1663, however, the old-guards of Angola faded away, the Jesuit Cross was planted, and the massive exploitation of African wealth and slaves began.

Sources:

The Horizon History of Africa, Chapter IX: A Time of Troubles (Professor John Henrik Clarke); The Destruction of Black Civilization (Chancellor Williams); The Portuguese Conquest of Angola (David Birmingham).



THE FIRST BLACK OWNED AUTOMOBILE COMPANY

The C.R. Patterson & Sons Company was the first African American-owned automobile manufacturing company. The company was founded by Charles Richard Patterson, who was born into slavery in April 1833 on a plantation in Virginia to his parents Nancy and Charles Patterson. He escaped from slavery in 1861, headed west, and settled in Greenfield, Ohio around 1862. Patterson went to work as a blacksmith for the carriage-building business, Dines and Simpson, and in 1873, he went into partnership with J.P. Lowe, another Greenfield-based carriage manufacturer. Patterson and Lowe developed a highly successful carriage-building business over the next twenty years.

In 1893 Patterson bought out J.P. Lowe's share of the business and reorganized it as C.R. Patterson & Sons Company. The company built 28 types of horse-drawn carriages and employed approximately 10-15 individuals. Charles Patterson died in 1910 and his son Frederick initiated the conversion of the company from a carriage business into an automobile manufacturer. The first Patterson-Greenfield car debuted in 1915, with a four-cylinder Continental engine, comparable to the contemporary Ford Model T. It was sold for \$850.

Excerpted from <http://www.blackpast.org> (Contributor Zach Schrempf, University of Washington)

AFRICAN AMERICANS AND EDUCATION

Looking Back in Order to Move Forward: A Seven Part Series By Lawrence Burnley, Ph.D.

Part I: "Education for Whom?: The Purpose and Function of Formal Education in a New Nation"

To understand the educational experience of Black people in the United States, one must review the genesis of formal education and schooling during the foundational years of the nation's development. To achieve such understanding, it becomes necessary to first examine the purpose and function of education and whose interest formal education was intended to advance.

The American Revolution gave birth to a new nation built upon a political foundation of Republicanism – a form of government in which leaders are elected for a specific period by the preponderance of the citizenry, and where laws are passed by leaders for the benefit of the entire republic, rather than a select aristocracy.

Republicanism was deemed to be among the highest moral social systems. To survive, Republicanism needed a system of education to foster the moral qualities of individuals. Virtue was understood to mean a citizen of the new nation who exercised self-control, self-sacrifice, and restraint, and was industrious and moral. American education had as its central purpose to produce such citizens. To Benjamin Rush, a signer on the Declaration of Independence, "it was both possible and desirable that education should nurture certain political ideas; indeed, it should endeavor to convert *men* [italics mine] into republican machines."

One of the principal challenges for the founders of the new republic was to develop a method of education that reconciled order and freedom. According to education historian Andy Green, "Education was caught between the twin poles of liberty and control. Its function, in a sense, was precisely to reconcile

freedom and order; to make sure that the liberties of a democratic state did not conflict with the basic structure of the capitalist system."

There was also a need for a system of education to galvanize a young republic consisting of an increasingly ethnically diverse population—and one that lacked a national identity, a cultural heritage, and mature national institutions.

The primary political and ideological thrusts that shaped and informed the thinking of the founding fathers in general, and the "fathers of common schools" in particular, were Protestant Republicanism and Capitalism. Education historian Carl Kaestle refers to these thrusts as "native Protestant ideology." Kaestle identified ten major propositions which he thought best described native Protestant ideology. Among these were "... the delineation of a highly respected but limited domestic role of women; the importance for character building of familial and social environment (within certain racial and ethnic limitations); the superiority of American Protestant culture; the grandeur of America's destiny; and the necessity of a determined effort to unify America's polyglot* population, chiefly through education." [*knowing or using several languages]

Native Protestant Republican Ideology (NPRI) during this period was fundamentally sexist, xenophobic and racist. Based on distorted interpretations of the Bible, proponents of NPRI presupposed the supremacy and superiority of those who identified as "White" racially (along with their histories and cultures), especially White Anglo-Saxon Protestant males, and the innate inferiority of those

with identities (as defined by White men) outside of this group.

In the context of the early Republic, this placed all people of color in a subordinate position to that of Western Europeans, with people of African descent relegated to the bottom of this social spectrum. Such efforts were driven by a desire of power elites to maximize profit and the accumulation of wealth at all costs. This necessitated the development of moral, ethical and theological (Christian) justifications for the enslavement of African people, the genocide of Indigenous populations, including the confiscation of their land, and a form of education that would function to reproduce a worldview that supported and protected such interests.

William Watkins's critique of Benjamin Rush serves as an example of this point. Watkins writes, "Architects of colonial, racial, and ethnic ideology, such as the respected Dr. Benjamin Rush, declared American Indians as unclean and 'strangers to the obligations both of morality and decency.' Further, Indians were not only 'too lazy to work but even to think.' As for Blacks, Rush associated their skin color with leprosy, and wrote of their 'morbid insensitivity of nerves' and repeatedly proclaimed them diseased." In fairness to Rush, it must be stated that he also held views of blacks that would place him in the minority among his peers. The late historian Ronald Takaki reminds us that "Rush was a critic of Slavery and believed blacks had the potential of Republican virtue.... Rush insisted that blacks were not inferior to whites in their intellectual ability and capacity for virtue."



From the beginning of our nation's history the purpose of education was to secure both freedom and order in the new democratic and republican government, and at the same time, solidify the position of dominance and superiority of White men with access to higher forms of education reserved for White males belonging to the upper classes (I will examine the issue of gender and education in part 3 of this series). Over time legal measures, policies and practices (including violence) were developed to keep Black and Native peoples, other immigrant populations (voluntary and involuntary), women, and to a lesser degree poor Whites, in a state of virtual ignorance..

The importance of examining and understanding the role systemic and structural racism and other forms of discrimination played in the evolution of Native Protestant Republican Ideology (NPRI) and the system of education it created to perpetuate itself cannot be overstated. Development and implementation of effective education reforms aimed at reversing persistent negative learning outcomes for which African American and other children of color are grossly overrepresented depends on such examination. To achieve equitable education outcomes for all children we must look back in order to move forward!

Next in this Series - Part 2: "Protestant Christianity and Schooling"

WORKING ON THE OPPORTUNITY/ACHIEVEMENT GAP

By Dr. James Smith

The *Educational Opportunity Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee (EOGOAC)* was created during the 2009 legislature to address the achievement/opportunity gap amongst Washington State students, which is the significant and persistent disparity in academic performance or educational attainment that exists between different groups of students.

The committee's membership consists of a representative and an alternate from each of the state's ethnic Commissions; representatives from the Office of the Education Ombudsman; a representative from the Tribal Nations-Governor's Office of Indian Affairs; three representatives from both the Senate and the House, as well as a representative from the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

The EOGOAC is charged by RCW 28A.300.136 to synthesize the findings and recommendations from the five 2008 Achievement Gap Studies into an implementation plan and to recommend policies and strategies to the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the Professional Educator Standards Board, the Legislature, and the State Board of Education in the following areas:

- Supporting and facilitating parent and community involvement and outreach.

- Enhancing the cultural competency of current and future educators and the cultural relevance of curriculum and instruction.
- Expanding pathways and strategies to prepare and recruit diverse teachers and administrators.
- Recommending current programs and resources that should be redirected to narrow the gap.
- Identifying data elements and systems needed to monitor progress in closing the gap.
- Making closing the achievement/opportunity gap part of the school and school district improvement process.
- Exploring innovative school models that have shown success in closing the achievement gap.

The statute requires OSPI to identify school districts that have the most significant achievement/opportunity gaps among subgroups of students and for large numbers of those students, and districts that should receive priority for assistance in advancing cultural competency skills in their workforce.

The Committee's 2015 recommendations and priority focuses are:

- 1) Reduce the length of time students of color are excluded from school due to suspensions and expulsions and provide student support for reengagement plans
- 2) Enhance the cultural competence of current and future

- educators and classified staff
- 3) Endorse all educators in English Language Learner/Second Language Acquisition
- 4) Transitional Bilingual Instructional Program Accountability for instructional services provided to English Language Learner Students
- 5) Analyze the opportunity gap through deeper disaggregation of student demographic data
- 6) Invest in the recruitment, hiring, and retention of educators of color
- 7) Incorporate Integrated Student Services and Family-Engagement
- 8) Strengthen Student Transitions

The EOGOAC is committed to elevating student community voice and believes in modeling culturally responsive communication. In addition to regular monthly meetings, the EOGOAC holds community forums, with the intent of increasing community understanding and involvement in the work of the EOGOAC.

*Parents, students, and members of the Spokane community are invited to attend a community forum, held at the Washington State University Spokane campus (Riverpoint) on September 15 from 3-5pm **see calendar*

Visit the Educational Opportunity Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee site at: <http://www.k12.wa.us/Workgroups/EOGOAC>

EDUCATION STORIES: STUDENTS

TAHLYKE'S STORY:

"I Was A Straight A Student Until Fifth Grade"

Tahlyke attended high school in Spokane and earned his GED in 2015.

Were you a good kid in school?

Up until the fifth grade I was a straight A student. The teachers loved me and they treated me like everybody else, but when I went to a different school for fifth grade, I had a racist teacher and I was singled out a lot and stuff like that.

Give me an example:

Every Friday there would be a class party, but if you got a notch next to your name or something that week, you would have to go and sit in the special education room with your head down for an hour. Every Friday, while everybody else was eating snacks and stuff, I was in the special education room. Every week on Friday.

What did he give you a notch for?

Whatever he could. Basically anything and everything. You name it.

Do you remember being angry at that teacher?

Yes, because he just kind of made me not included with everybody else. I started getting angry, started acting out, and stuff like that. Then it got to the point where either he was singling me out, or I was singling myself out. The one person he included me with



all of the time was someone who had real bad behavioral issues and he taught me how to talk back. Before that I was real quiet and just stand-offish.

I went back to my old school after the year was over, but by that time I was already interested in the gang community and stuff because I visited family in California and they told me about my dad's legacy, the bad parts not the good parts, so it kind of turned me on to being interested in that life.

So did you think at all about what you wanted to be when you grew up?

I wanted to play basketball and I've always wanted to go into psychology or law or something like that, but once I started getting into all of that other stuff, you could tell how my goals just altered.

What were your goals when you started getting connected to the gang?

My goals were to be accepted in the gang community. To have a lot of money. To be

accepted by my dad's friends. Basically what I was trying to do was relive his legacy because I felt like it got cut short.

What was it like when you were arrested for the first time?

It was slightly scary, but at the same time it was just another progression in the streets. It's like going from the 3rd grade and graduating to the 4th grade. It just turned juvie into just another place that I had to be, because I mean it wasn't too much different from having to go hold my head down in the special education class when I was in the fifth grade. It wasn't much different, and it didn't feel much different.

What happened when you went back to school?

Part of me was already angry at the school system and already had my thoughts about the school system that were being built from the 5th grade. Plus I learned how to be the class clown and learned how to not be afraid

to break the rules, and I came up with this thought, that I don't know the teachers, so I don't have to do their work, and they don't care about me anyway. So I kind of looked at it like not doing school stuff was fighting back at my mom and at the system. So a lot of times I would be asleep in class and I'd be goofing around and whatever.

I didn't really know anybody, and it seemed like I was the only black kid. I was an outcast in the school, and I came from being the popular kid, so I didn't like the environment. But I started meeting a couple of people and started having more reason to go to school and I was starting to like school again.

Then one day I go to my P.E. class and I had to speak with the teacher after class. When I came back to the locker room everybody was already gone. I had the only locker without a lock on it, and all my new clothes had been thrown in the shower and stuff like that. I knew it was a race thing. I didn't want to take it to the school, but my grandparent's did. They sat me down and said, we're going to do something about this, and I'm like, okay, but nothing happened.

So that just made me feel more non-trusting of the schools and like I shouldn't put any input into anything. I was really militant after that.

Continued on Page 8

TERRANCE ANDERSON'S STORY

"All they talked about was how Blacks were slaves and how they ran away"



Terrance attended both public and private schools in Spokane. He graduated in 1975.

My experience in the school system in Spokane was twofold. I was in an all white school which made you feel outnumbered completely. Academically it was okay, because I was smart, but the disadvantage was that you didn't have anybody from the African American culture, so the culture that we studied was the caucasian culture. All they talked about was how Blacks were slaves and how they ran away. They never talked about the positive things, such as Eli Whitney, George Washington Carver, the man who invented the stop light, or who performed one of the first heart open-heart surgeries. Nothing positive.

My first year I was called nigger so many times I didn't know what to do. They had corporal punishment at the time and I got 67 whacks my first year because of fights. As I got older and in to higher grades, they realized, this kid is kind of good in athletics, so then things started to lighten up. They gave me a full scholarship, and basically catered to me. So overall, in the beginning until I got to know people, it was hard, but then as I became a junior and a senior, I ended up being president of the Letterman's Club, and I was all city in basketball and football, and a high school all american.

The positive thing was that by going to Prep it allowed me to have more doors and opportunities opened up to me as far as college. It also taught me to be tolerant of other races, because being outnumbered you have to be tolerant, otherwise you're going to be fighting all day.

I think they could have brought in Black teachers, Black counselors, or even somebody Black to kind of teach you about racial diversity and what things Black people actually go through. It's a matter of teaching acceptance instead of exclusion.

TA NEIL'S STORY:

"Academics Can Either Enhance or Murder"

TaNeil attended both Spokane and Spokane Valley Schools and graduated from high school in 1995.

Academics, I learned early, wasn't about who had the highest intellectual prowess. It was about conditioning outside the home as to your worth.

I learned I was a nigger. Heterosuggestions, which are simply stating something as fact that is in fact not true, were always used (i.e., Blacks aren't proficient in math and science). It made me so uncomfortable and my innate outspokenness only made matters worse.

School was never hard for me. Anyone can learn anything if they desire it. Many of us have natural gifts, and academics can either enhance or murder, depending on what type of person has the power.

I don't do well in hostile environments. I immediately go on the defensive and



shut down. In class that was a no no because the instructors that I had wanted me to be available and to say what would propel their program. When I wasn't willing to be drained, there would be repercussions.

I remember an old Jewish science teacher getting so mad at me for correcting him that he threatened to assault me.

Other times, both white male and female teachers would make me the butt of their jokes, not because I acted out or was disrespectful. This was my conditioning along with anyone with Black skin.

At Spokane Valley High School I was one of two dark-skinned students. I had a secretary that helped me get through by giving me cards with Christian scriptures. I have to say that it provided little solace though when walking through halls laden with pee stained pictures of Martin Luther King Jr. and sitting in class listening to the Biology teacher lie and say white genes were superior and Black genes were inferior. I know now the opposite is true.

Today I detest academic machines. I won't go back unless it's fully paid for and the spiritual energy is positive.

EDUCATION STORIES: PARENTS

NAKIA'S STORY:

“When You See The Light Dimming You Know There’s A Problem”

Nakia Roberts is a parent that has two children in Spokane schools, Diamond, age 10, and D’Allyn, age 12.

I met Nakia in Liberty Park and in the process of casually talking about her kids, I asked where they went to school. She made a face. It was that facial expression that prompted me to ask about her experiences with Spokane schools.

What were you thinking about when you made that face?

Just thinking about all of the problems that my children have had at their schools concerning just racial comments or racial discrimination and that they don’t do anything about it.

Can you give me some specific examples?

My son was targeted. He was bullied for being black, and we approached the school about it, and they said unless they see the

children doing it, then they can’t do anything about it. But he was being harassed at school. He was also being threatened. They were saying mean words to him. They were calling him faggot, and nigger, and stuff like that, and threatening to kill his family. And the school did nothing about it.

Who did you go to at the school?

I called the school and spoke with the principal and the assistant principal at the school. They were the ones that told me, if they don’t see it or hear it, they can’t do anything about it. I didn’t talk to anybody else.



Did the bullying start when you first moved to Spokane?

No, it wasn’t as bad at first, but it got worse. It seemed that the kids knew they could get away with it, so they kept doing it.

How have you seen it impact-

ing your son?

It impacts him alot. It has changed his personality. It has changed how he talks to people. It has changed his whole attitude and everything, because he feels like no one really cared about him, and no one cared about what he was going through.

What do you mean it changed how he talked to people?

He’s more aggressive.

He wasn’t that way before?

No

What about your daughter?

She’s been through the same thing. Kids have randomly come and pushed her down. They’ve

poked her with pencils. Pulled her hair. Called her ugly.

How has it impacted her?

I’ve seen her confidence go down. A lot. She’s like a bright star. She just shines, and when you see the light dimming, you know there’s a problem.

How have you been treated you as a parent?

I feel like they kind of just brush it off. I feel like if I was white they would have done something about it, but I’m not, so they’re just brushing it off.

What would be helpful?

I think they really should enforce the bullying thing. They should really do something about it, instead of saying “if I didn’t see it or if I didn’t hear it, that means it didn’t happen,” because it *is* happening, so they really need to enforce that. It’s not just “I see it” or “I hear it”, you’ve gotta know what’s going on.

TIA'S STORY:

“The Black kids were getting police records for protecting themselves from being called nigger every day on the school grounds.”

Tia was born on Fairchild Air Force Base and lived in Spokane from birth to eighteen years old, attending the Mead school district. She left Spokane but returned in 2002 with her four children who attended Spokane schools. All of her children have, or will, graduate from high school.

Tell me about your experience with Spokane schools?

I grew up in the Mead school district in the 70s and it seemed that there was a willingness to change back then, but coming back in 2002, there was a disdain to change, there was a rebellion against it. You had some people (teachers and staff) that were excited to make changes, maybe half of the staff, but the other half was saying, “why do I have to change, I will not change.” I saw that it was kind of a house divided against itself, and in between that you had the parents.

You do grassroots work helping parents in Spokane. How did you get started working with parents?

There were parents around me in my neighborhood, Pacific Islander or multi-racial parents, and their kids would be walking on the street and I would say to them why are you out here, why aren’t you in the school, and they would say that they got in trouble but couldn’t explain why because they didn’t know why they got it trouble, but they had been kicked out of school.

That’s when I really started seeing that something was really wrong. I was also fighting for my own kids because they were constantly being bullied. They were being called monkey and racial names by some of the students, and then the teachers would punish my kids for their response. The African American kids were being

called the N word, and they’d get into a fight with the kid that called them the N word. Police would come and hand cuff them, no questions asked. Just everybody was going to jail.

The Black kids were getting police records for protecting themselves from being called nigger every day on the school grounds.

What I started to see was this pattern where these kids, kids of color, were being mistreated, kicked out of school, severely punished, not getting access to sit in the classroom and really learn. They were accused, put out, came back behind, had to try to catch up, then were mistreated again. So they weren’t getting a lot of learning. They were just getting a lot of discipline, and it wasn’t just African Americans, it was also low income white children.

There was one Caucasian parent who started telling me her stories, then a couple of other parents from the Marshall Islands were telling me their stories. It was hard to understand, but I did understand enough to know that they didn’t know why their kids were getting kicked out of school either, and there was no advocacy.

Parents started talking to each other. We started gathering our stories and sending them in to the school district, but it didn’t do any good. The School district leader-



ship wasn’t going to change. They weren’t going to show up. They weren’t going to answer any questions and they weren’t going to be accountable for anything.

So what did you do?

We (parents) came up with what we thought was the answer, what we thought could

have solved the problem. Student Advocates. People that were different from the school district employees, that were on the school grounds, that parents could have had access to, and that the kids could have talked to before the police came. We even came up with where they could come from, the local colleges and universities, students who needed internships, but the school district wasn’t interested.

That’s when lot of parents just gave up. They were tired and they just wanted their kids to graduate.

And you?

I got the same way. I looked for other options, alternative schools. I tried looking into Havermale, but I was told there were no programs there, so then I tried home schooling. They gave us computers and everything, but it was just too hard for my kids because they were used to having friends and being in sports, so I had a really hard time getting them adjusted. Then I found On Track Academy. My daughter’s friend was going there, and she told my daughter about it and they went there

How was alternative school for your kids?

My son became interested in Criminal justice and I was excited because my brother happens to be a correctional officer for the state. He started taking a class in criminal justice at the Skills Center. The teacher, who was Caucasian, started picking on him, asking him why he was wearing blue, and assuming that his clothing meant he was a gang banger. If a current event came up, like a Black person getting shot by police, the teacher would single my son out and ask him why he thought that happened, and if he thought the Black person was doing something bad? This was in the 11th grade, and my son finally had enough and dropped the class. He decided that he wanted to join the military, but had to pass a test in order to join, so he spent the whole summer teaching himself the math so he could pass the test, and he did.

My daughter is a senior this year, and I have to say that On Track Academy has been very helpful and wonderful for her. Heidi and Greg should get awards. People can learn from them. These two teachers came in, didn’t care about skin color, they just came in to teach. They were a breath of fresh air.

What should school districts do so that African Americans can be successful?

Stop the school to prison pipeline process, utilize university students as advocates, be accountable for what you know is going on with your staff, and screen the teachers better.

Tia is currently working on an online campaign that she calls “Keeper of the Letters” to encourage parents take their stories and complaints directly to legislators and demand that the legislators respond with what they are going to do to make change and how they are going to help.

NAACP UPDATE:

SPOKANE
NAACP

<http://www.SpokaneNAACP.com>

BEYOND BROWN: Integration v. Diversification

By Naima Quarles-Burnley
Spokane NAACP President

For more than sixty (60) years the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and its' legal offspring, the Legal Defense and Educational Fund have been in the forefront of working to remove barriers to educational access and opportunities. The landmark case known as Brown v. Board of Education was the consolidation of five separate cases sponsored by the NAACP Legal Defense Fund. These cases were heard by the U.S. Supreme Court on the issue of public school segregation.



A sense of inferiority affects the motivation of a child to learn."

Sixty-one years later the words of the Supreme Court in Brown v. Board of Education still ring true, a child's motivation to learn is indeed affected by a sense of inferiority.

We may have integrated schools but most children of color in Spokane, WA have never had a teacher or school administrator that looks like them. During segregation all the teachers and school administrators were black and they likely lived in the same

The Supreme Court's decision in Brown ultimately determined that "separate was inherently unequal," but this occurred only after a hard-fought, multi-year campaign to overturn the "separate but equal" doctrine of the Court's 1896 Plessy v. Ferguson decision. The NAACP and its Legal Defense and Educational Fund, developed a systematic attack against the doctrine of "separate but equal."

The campaign to overturn the "separate but equal" doctrine was conceived in the 1930s by African American Attorney Charles Hamilton Houston, who was then the Dean of Howard Law School. Charles Houston's star pupil, Thurgood Marshall (also African American), executed this effort in a series of cases over the next two decades. The strategy introduced by Houston and Marshall involved using social science research to prove that state-enforced racial segregation in education negatively impacted African American children.

The social science research included the "Doll Test," which validated the negative impact of racial segregation on the self-esteem of Black children. The Court referenced the research in its opinion, noting that, for African-American children, racial segregation "generates a feeling of inferiority as to their status in the community and may affect their hearts and minds in a way unlikely ever to be undone.

neighborhood, shopped at the same stores, and went to church together. During segregation families most often would have had a relationship with the teacher that went beyond school. A child was affirmed by virtue of being a part of the Black community. I imagine that the teaching styles of the Black teachers were adapted to the cultural norms of the Black community. I am sure the teachers adjusted the content of what they were teaching to reflect the culture of their students.

The children had role models in all sectors of the segregated society, the butcher, the baker, the doctor, the nurse and the lawyer all lived in the neighborhood. We had to since we were prohibited from living in white neighborhoods.

For better or worse there were some benefits to segregation. We were forced to pull together as a community and we had to rely on one another. Now we live scattered, surrounded by people of different cultures, people with power and privilege based on their race. Some of these people still look upon us as inferior. We thought that assimilation into the broader culture would make us more acceptable and therefore more successful. We cannot expect our children to "leave their culture at home" and not end up feeling inferior. We have sometimes traded our cultural uniqueness for a semblance of success.

NAACP TABLE AT UNITY IN THE COMMUNITY



NAACP members staffed a resource table on Aug. 15 at Spokane's 21st Annual Unity in the Community held in Riverfront Park. It is the region's largest multi-cultural celebration.

The Brown decision was the catalyst for the subsequent integration of many areas of American public life, from public schools to public transportation, housing, swimming pools, hospitals, golf courses and other public settings. We have experienced progress as we are not relegated to substandard accommodations based on our race. Yet integration, in and of itself, was not the goal, equality was and is. We have not achieved educational equality; the achievement gap of students of color in Spokane is alarming, although there has been some improvement of late.

As a community, a state, a nation, we are failing to provide the high-quality educational opportunities that are critical for all students to succeed, thereby jeopardizing our nation's ability to continue to be a world leader. As a civil rights organization, we in the NAACP believe that access to a high-quality education is a fundamental civil right. We need to find ways to affirm students of diverse backgrounds, with various learning styles by employing a variety of teaching techniques using a culturally diverse curriculum. We have achieved integration, beyond Brown, we need diversification.

For morning information, contact the NAACP at (509) 209-2425 (extension 1141), or visit the Spokane NAACP website at <http://spokanenaacp.com>.

STUDENT STORIES CONTINUED

DESEURE'S STORY

Deseure was born on a military base in Buffalo NY and her family transferred to Spokane when she was 4 years old. She attended Grant Elementary, Chase Middle School, and several schools on the west side of the state, before returning to Spokane to graduate from Ferris High School in 2002.



Before the Common Core stuff and before any awareness of standardized testing, going to school at Grant seemed to be relatively calm and peaceful. There seemed to be a lot more diversity and a lot more promotion of accepting other people's differences. I had a few friends from different backgrounds. The teachers, especially the first and second grade teachers, were very strict about their expectations of their students. They had very high expectations of what outcomes the students should have. All of my teachers

were white, but I felt like they were treating everybody the same and they had the same or higher expectations for everybody, including myself.

When I went to Chase Middle School, things were a little bit different as far as how the kids were. There seemed to be a bit more cultural and racial segregation amongst the students in general, and people tended to clique up a lot more.

High school at Ferris was pretty easy to forget because I felt a lot more like an outsider at that time and a part of that might have been my appearance. I haven't been back to Ferris because my experiences weren't all that positive. People were segregated, possibly into their privilege, and they didn't seem to embrace difference at all. Like you were either the same as whomever, or you were an outliar or an outsider.

For students to be successful, I feel like the teachers themselves will have to be more culturally competent. I feel like Grant Elementary school did a great job with their level of inclusion and awareness of different cultures, and even different economic issues that the kids might have been going through. I kind of feel like middle school and high school could do the same thing that they do at the elementary level.

TAHLYKE'S STORY

Continued From Page 6

This one kid in my P.E. class said some racist remark to me and I just blew up and I attacked him. I attacked him in gym and them in the lunchroom when we were walking, I hit him with my backpack. I kind of just hit him with it to make a statement in front of everybody as opposed to hurting him necessarily. That got me suspended for a week.

Tahlyke was back in school for about a week before an incident with a teacher and a resource officer got him expelled.

After that they put me in Bancroft and it was in a trailer and there were only five kids in my class, so I didn't even go. That just got me to go super harder in the streets. Because not only was I acting out because of how I felt, but I was actually angry at police and judges and teachers.

Then I went to contract based education. I didn't like that school because it was so simple and basic, like 1 + 3, and they just pushed you along. I felt like it was dumming me down.

It was either my sophomore year or my junior year, I went a whole year without going to school, because when you are expelled, you are expelled for a whole year, and once you get kicked out of enough schools, there's no place else to go.

I came from being put in AP classes in middle school, and scoring the highest scores on the WASL test, so I by the time I was in alternative schools, I would see the work and I would start to do it and I would say, this is dumb, why am I even here. I took it as I'm not learning here, so I was done with school.

YOUTH & YOUNG ADULTS

THE TRUTH WILL SET YOU FREE

By Jaeylin Snyder

Secrets, lies, and abuse. By the age of 12, I was a professional. This was in no way a choice that I made for myself, but a choice that was made for me. Made for me by one of the two most important people in my life, my dad. Not even my biological father, but the man who chose to raise me.



He was supposed to love me unconditionally, protect me, and teach me the ways of life. Instead, he taught me all wrong. He taught me how to lie, how to keep secrets, and how to love in all the wrong ways.

August 28th marks the two year anniversary of me taking control of my life, and letting the truth set me free. I was 12 years old at the time and I was old enough to know that I had had enough of the secrets, lies, and abuse. I knew that what my dad was doing to me was wrong. I knew that our relationship was not "normal" and everything he was teaching me about love was not right. Lying to my mom and keeping secrets like this from her was not right.

For a long time I had wanted to tell my mom, I wanted to be saved from what was being done to me, and I knew that she would be the one to save me. At the same time, I was also scared that if my dad wasn't abusing me anymore that he would start abusing my little sister, his only biological daughter. I often laid in bed at night and cried myself to sleep longing for a "normal" childhood.

My dad was so good at what he did (manipulation), that for a while I really started to believe that our relationship was normal. My mom and dad were not together as a couple, but they were definitely best friends.

Maybe my mom did know, and that's why she hadn't stopped it, because this is normal. Parents often say that raising a child does not come with a handbook, well, knowing how to be a child and how parents should act does not come with a handbook either. Deep down inside, I knew that what was going on was NOT normal, if it was, why was everything such a secret? Why did my dad tell me that if I ever told anyone our secrets, what he was "teaching" me, especially my mom, that he would kill himself?

I was confused. I knew I wanted him to stop. I knew I needed to tell my mom. But, what if she didn't believe me? What if she got mad at me? What if my dad really did kill himself? It would be my fault. My dad told me that if I really loved him, I would keep our secret. If I wanted to make daddy happy, I would keep his secret. In April of 2013, I decided that I had enough. I didn't want to live my life of secrets, lies, and abuse anymore, but since I really did love my dad I couldn't betray him and tell. The only way out for me was to end my own life. Thankfully, my mom walked in my room just as I was wrapping the

belt that was already cinched around my neck, to my bunk bed. She saved me. Thankfully the day that I finally exploded, and completely blindsided my mom with the first little bit of the truth, she did believe me. She believed every single word without any question. My dad never touched me again, she saved me.

My dad also followed through with his promise, and killed himself less than 24 hours after I told my mom and the authorities. We soon learned that when I told the truth, not only did I set myself free, but I saved my little sister and set her free too. He had been abusing her for at least two years prior as well.

The best decision I ever made was telling the truth. I was a victim of sexual abuse, I am now a survivor. Being a victim of sexual abuse does not define who I am, but it most certainly is a part of who I am today. My mom, sister, and I always hope that by sharing our story we may encourage someone in our situation to tell, set yourself free.

Our biggest goal when sharing our story is to raise awareness for sexual abuse. Educate yourselves as parents, know the signs, and DO NOT be afraid to question someone's behavior towards your child, or your child's behavior towards a certain individual.

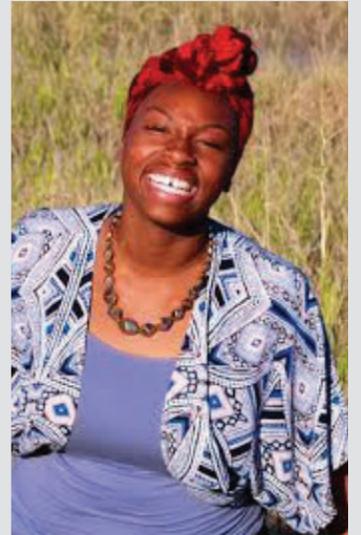
1 out of every 3 girls, and 1 out of every 5 boys are a victim of sexual abuse. Most child predators are someone within the home-immediate family or close friend.

Please e-mail me if you have questions, comments or concerns.

Jaeylin Snyder
jaeylinsblacklens@gmail.com

BETTER DAYS

By Sharron A. Davis



When faith is necessary to see better days
I believe until my doubts lose faith
Unable to redefine My perspective of the future
I believe for possibilities that slipped away and hope that's drowned by the rain

Before then
Sunny days swept clouds away
I skipped down easy street like a road made of yellow bricks,
knowing God would grant my wish
I would ask Him for anything
Expect Him to give me everything
I knew For Him Nothing is too hard

Then expectations turned into empty spaces
Voids opened up
planting bitterness in the field of my heart
The days I knew became long
cold nights
it was dark
Pitch black
I was broken
Arms wide open
Without anyone willing to receive my pain
Except the one I blamed

Letting Him in was hard for me,
yet his love made him easily Acceptable
Jesus
Saw me full of shame
And when I disguise the hurt, hide the pain and even feel afraid
To push past the limits of my past
He still loves me

His love reminds me
Of sunny days sweeping clouds away and skipping down easy street
like a road made of yellow bricks,
knowing God will grant my wish
Asking Him for anything,
expecting Him to give me everything and I know
For Him nothing is too hard
I still believe

Even in the midst of doubt,
I'm still believing for better days to come
Mounting up like wings of eagles I rise
As long as I'm breathing
my dreams will never die
Unanswered prayers don't have an expiration date,
I will wait On God
To see the dawn
Of a brand new day

ENTREPRENEURS IN THE MAKING



Wee Plant-It entrepreneurs Tylynn Tate (13), LaVae Tate (11), Isiah Tate (8) have set up a kids market on Fifth Avenue to sell fresh vegetables, baked good, drinks, and even homemade soaps and lip balm. The program, which is a part of the Spokane Eastside Reunion Association, helps children learn about having their own business. www.spokaneeastsidereunion.com

PRIDE PREP CHARTER SCHOOL

Looking At Education A Little Differently

Charter Schools are independently-managed public schools that are run by approved non-profit organizations. Like public schools, charter schools are free to attend and funded by local, federal and state tax dollars based on enrollment.

After rejecting several previous charter school initiatives on the ballot, Washington voters in 2012, approved Initiative 1240 by a slim margin, 50.69% to 49.31%. The measure allowed for the creation of 40 public charter schools in Washington over the next five years.

One of two charter schools set to open in Spokane this fall is Pride Prep.

Brenda McDonald is Principal of Pride Prep. She was born and raised in Spokane, graduating from Shadle Park High School, where she says she thinks "there was one Black person in the whole school." She was a public school teacher for twenty years and Principal at Gary Middle school for eight years. It was during her time as Principal at Gary that she struggled to find proactive solutions to "kids being completely disengaged from



school," and after years of having parents in her office advocating for their kids but being able to offer them "no possible solutions", McDonald came to the realization that the existing system "is really difficult to move." When the opportunity to open a charter school came up through a fellowship with the state charter association, McDonald welcomed it, and with support and an offer of collaboration from the Spokane School District, McDonald set out to create a different

kind of school. "I knew if I was leaving the traditional system, the school we built had to be crazy different because although we have tons of kids that are successful or who are moderately successful in the traditional system, to go out and just recreate it didn't make any sense to me at all, because it's not working for a large population of our kids."

McDonald spent an entire year researching schools and meeting with charter leaders across the country, talking with them about what was working and what they would do differently. Ultimately, she says, they sort of landed on a couple of school models that they put together. "In my mind I came up with what I wanted. If I could design my perfect school this is what would be happening."

Pride Prep is an open concept school, housed in a large warehouse, with modular spaces that can be divided to make it flexible. If there is a need for the space to be tiny to do a small group, that is possible, and so is putting forty kids in a room to have them do a

collaborative activity. The space is designed to be highly personalized, to fit the differing needs of each student, and "wildly kinesthetic" according to McDonald, so students are able to "get up and move around, do things, build things, and to really think about how different disciplines of learning connect together"

"The other frustration that I had at the secondary level, in particular middle and high school," says McDonald, "was that our kids who probably most needed hands-on experiences were being removed from hands on experiences because their math and reading levels were so low. So they already hated those subjects and now they are sitting in another class period supposedly learning the skills which they typically don't acquire during that time, and then they also miss out on engineering and they miss out on PE, so we wanted to make sure that all of our kids got the same access to different experiences."

Experiences like the "Maker Space", which McDonald says

is unique to Pride Prep, and is a new generation of the shop class that has been removed from most traditional schools. Ours is like "a shop class on steroids." The Maker Space houses everything from a hammer and nails, to a 3D printer, and students are able to build their ideas. "So if they think they have a great solution to the energy crisis in Spokane, or in the world, then they can design it on the computer, go build it, it's gonna fail, they're gonna revise it with their peers, rebuild it gain, until it probably works or until they realize information from the failure that is really critical for the next phase of design."

Pride Prep is not a typical school and so there are no typical days for students. A day at Pride Prep starts early, at 7:45am. The morning begins with a group of nine students and a coach, who can be any staff member. The group meets to talk about the agenda for the day, have breakfast if kids need to eat, and talk about what the day's goals are. Students then break into groups of 25 or so and go through four seventy-five minute learning experiences. One learning experience is projects that are focused on social issues, another is focused on mathematical problems, and the third experience is largely focused around scientific problems.

Continued on Page 18




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BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

MUCH MO' THAN JUST CHICKEN

Chkn-N-Mo Owner Bob Hemphill A Conversation About Business and Success

You could say it was an accident that Bob Hemphill ended up running a successful southern style restaurant in downtown Spokane. Always an entrepreneur at heart, he owned both a cab company and a used car lot before working as a contractor, but a work accident left him with a broken back, effectively putting him out of business.

Laid up for over a year, and unsure what direction to take, Bob's friend Katy asked a question one day that would turn things around for him. "What are you going to do now," she asked, "you've been out of work for a long time." He answered that he didn't know, so Katy asked what he thought we had a need for in Spokane, and Bob answered, "well, we need a Southern Restaurant in the downtown area." Katy's reply was, "well that's it. Do it." And he did.

It was July of 1992. Bob got the paperwork to start his business, sent it in, and started looking for property. The first property that he found was on Howard, and the owner was going to rent it to him, but before he could raise the money to cover the rent, she had already rented it to somebody else. He was understandably disappointed, but the owner told him that she owned the entire block and to walk around the block and "whatever property you want I'll give it to you." So, he went around the block and saw a place that was vacant on the corner of Sprague and Stevens and he called her up. "She said you've got it."

The rent that she offered him was unheard of, Bob said, so he got the money together and opened his restaurant, with no idea of what he was doing, and no one to help him. Twenty-three years and few ups and downs later, Chkn-N-Mo is still going strong.

So, what is Bob Hemphill's recipe for success? "I wake up every day knowing that I am going to be successful,"

he said, "knowing that I am going to put out a better product today than I put out last year, last week or yesterday, and I lean on that. I don't lean on what other people say about me, or what other people do to me."

Bob also shared the affirmation that he used daily. "I had an affirmation that every day I would get up and unlock the door, every day I would come in here and I was going to be a success. I just believed that opening that door would open a way for me to succeed in anything that I did in here. I grew every day. I gained and I moved forward." He added that the only way to succeed in life is "by waking up every day knowing that everything is going to go your way, learning from your experiences, learning from the fact that you are alive and that you are doing something, and that you've got your hands in to something." Bob says, "the more you rest in the idea that you are going to be a success, it will happen. I don't care who you are."

Bob believes strongly in the principle of duplication and points out that the principle can be found in the bible. "One of the greatest stories that Jesus ever told was in the book of Matthew, the parable of the three servants." A man had three servants and he gave them each a gift, he entrusted them with his money while he was going on a trip. The first servant he gave five talents, the second two talents, and the third he gave one talent. The servant with the one talent hid his gift out of fear of losing it. The other two went out and duplicated their gifts, so when the man came back, they had doubled what they had been given. The two were considered good servants because they increased



what they had been given, but the one who had buried his gift was considered a no good servant because he didn't do anything with his gift. "I think this is what happens with most people," says Bob, "They have all of these gifts, all of these talents, and they bury them, they don't do anything with them, and that's what hurts them. There's nothing under God's Earth that you can't do. God has given you the ability to do anything you want to. Now it's your job to wake up in the morning, hitch the horses to the wagon and drive the wagon down the road to your destination. Find out where you want to go in life, because if you don't do it, nobody is going to do it for you."

Bob's goal, he says, is to follow his own advice and duplicate what he has. "This time next year, I hope to have another one of these, and after that to have another one. The most challenging thing is going to be my health. If I can stay healthy, I'll be able to do anything that I want."

STILL CUTTING ON FIFTH AVENUE

A Little Barbershop History With Larry Roseman

Situated on Fifth Avenue in Spokane's East Central neighborhood, everybody has heard of Larry's Barbershop, and it has been a staple in the African American community since 1980, something that owner, Larry Roseman, would like to thank the Spokane community for, for patronizing him all of these years and keeping his business thriving.

Cutting hair was nothing new to Larry Roseman when he opened Larry's, he had been doing it since he was a child in Arkansas. "I've always barbered," he recounted, "when I was a kid, that's the way I made money, because I was too small to do anything else. All there was to do was picking cotton, so most people that grew up there learned the art of cutting hair."

It was the Air Force that would bring Larry to Spokane in 1968, during what he says was "the worst snow that Spokane has ever had." The military also took him away, but after a tour in Viet Nam, and four years of military service, Larry returned to Spokane to be close to his daughter, but also because, he says, "there was too much cotton to pick in Arkansas, and I didn't want to do that."

"Once you're in the military," Larry added, "most military folks never go back home, because there wasn't anything in those places for us, which is why we left

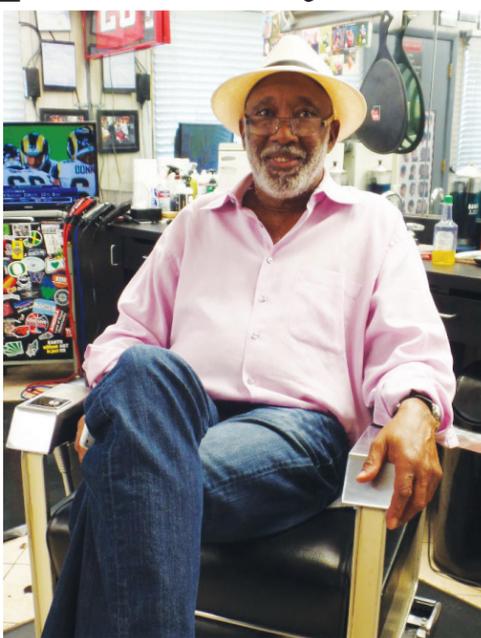
in the first place, only cotton fields and folks that had their foot on your neck, which was no good."

Jobs in Spokane were pretty hard to come by in those days, according to Larry, especially if you were a young Black man. "If you weren't working for Kaiser or the phone company it was pretty bleak."

Larry worked at Lakeland Village, a local mental health facility, for about six months, but other than that, never really had any jobs. "I was just kind of running in place."

Larry was about 24 or 25 years old, and had been on an "unassisted vacation," so to speak. His grandmother was growing impatient.

"My grandmother wanted to know when I was going to get a job, and she said in no uncertain terms, 'you don't now noth-



ing but how to cut hair, so why don't you do that?" That was the lightbulb for me."

Larry went to barber college to learn the trade, but when he finished school, he couldn't get hired in any shops, anywhere. "Folks made a lot of promises, but they didn't materialize because people were afraid of having an African American

barber in their shop.

One man told Larry that he was a great barber and that he would love to have him, but, the man said, "if I bring you in, I'm going to lose all of my customers." Larry says, he understood that.

A man named Elmer Bogel owned a barbershop on Fifth Avenue and after a good deal of "talking and persuading" he allowed Larry come in and do the eighteen

month apprenticeship that was required in those days before you could become a master barber. "I started here about 1979, did the eighteen months, and then he sold the business to me in 1980." The two men forged a friendship that lasted until Elmer Bogel passed away. "Bless his soul," says Larry, "he gave me the opportunity to come into his shop and he shared it with me."

Owning the barbershop though has also come with its share of challenges. "Some people are not comfortable with too many Blacks in one place. Anywhere that there's too many Blacks standing or too many Blacks gathering, they feel there has got to be something wrong going on." More than once, he had to fight with the city about making those kinds of assumptions, especially when the Cop Shop moved in down the street.

But despite dealing with situations like that, Larry says the best thing about owning the barbershop has been working with young African Americans, and in some cases being able to help people that want to go into the profession. He also enjoys being in the shop "when Black folks come in here and talk, because they don't have to guard what they say, they can feel free." He laughs, "my language is a little antiquated though, so they come in to talk to these young guys now, but they still feel free."

IN THE SPIRIT

PASTOR SHON DAVIS

Jesus Is The Answer Pastor Travels To DC With Mayor and Police Chief

When the city of Spokane took a delegation to Washington DC to discuss police reform and efforts to improve the relationship between community members and the police department, it made sense that Pastor Shon Davis would join Mayor David Condon, Spokane Police Chief Frank Straub and Lieutenant Tracie Meidl at the White House. It would seem that much of his life had been pointing him in that direction.



Pastor Davis was born and raised in Los Angeles. His father, who served 21 years in the navy, was from Wilson, OK, and his mother, a native of Hawaii. The family transferred between Hawaii and Oklahoma, before settling in San Diego by the time Pastor Davis was born.

“My father was very strong and active in the NAACP. He was the first one to educate us about Black Wall Street and the things that he had experienced in Oklahoma,” Pastor Davis shared, but at the same time, he says, his father and others of that generation were “passive” and “they took a lot.” Which is why Pastor Davis says as a young kid he was inspired by his brother, “the leadership role that he had and the respect that he was given.”

Pastor Davis’ brother, William (Smiley), was an activist in the community, who he says became rebellious during the time of

the Watts riot. “He was leading a group that in so many ways was echoing the message of the Black Panthers in Oakland, saying to their respective police departments, we are no longer going to take this from you, we are going to take control of our own communities.”

The rebellion that was inspiring young Blacks to fight back against racial injustice and oppression in the late 60s, much of it inflicted by Chief Darrel Gates and the LAPD, “or what we called our own Jim Crow,” was also a catalyst for their induction in to gang culture, according to Pastor Davis. For him, and for so many other young people, the gang was family. Power. Respect. “For me at 12 years old, and even for kids today, it is hard to walk away from the respect that people would give you

when they knew what you were a part of. A lot of people look at the negative side of it, but what they don’t see is that gangs are giving them protection, giving them family, giving them what they are not getting at home, a father figure, and male mentorship. We can say it’s dysfunctional, we can say it’s negative, but at the same time, it is replacing what they are not getting, and that’s what I had.”

When Pastor Davis’ brother Smiley went to prison, the gang embraced him, took care of him, and became his community. “You’ve got people picking you up in elementary school in a Cadillac, giving you money in front of all of your friends, buying you tennis shoes. That was a big deal back then, so it easily made me embrace the lifestyle.”

And embrace the gang lifestyle is exactly what Pastor Davis did. Because of that, at the age of 12, his father put him out of the house. “My father was a man of integrity. His focus was on trying to get Black men out of that lifestyle and into the workforce, and here his own sons were drug dealers and gang members, and pretty much bringing the opposite message to the community. He wasn’t going to have that in his own house.”

Pastor Davis says there were several times when he thought about going back home.

The first time was when he was shot in the back at the age of 14. He heard his father tell him “I love you” for the first time, and his mother pleaded with him to come home, but “there was just a hardness in my heart,” he says, and getting shot and surviving gave him status and a higher rank, which he wasn’t ready to give up. So, he got out of the hospital and went right back to the gang.

By the age of 18, Pastor Davis had his own empire, wealth, cars, houses, respect, people under him, “things that my parents had worked years to attain.” He was very proud of himself, and arrogant, he says, “I felt untouchable.” But, Pastor Davis says, “it took God to break me.” Even though he didn’t know it was God at the time.

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TO SERVE LIKE JESUS SERVED

7TH-DAY ADVENTISTS BRING FREE HEALTH CLINIC TO SPOKANE

“To serve like Jesus served and to love like Jesus loved. Period.” The goal behind the free two day mega health and dental clinic that served over 3,100 people at the Spokane County Fair and Expo Center on August 3 and 4th, “that’s why we do this,” said Costin Jordache, Director of Communications.

Your Best Pathway to Health, which was the name of the event, and is also the name of the organization behind it, began in 2013 and is a service of Adventist-Laymen’s Services & Industries (ASI), supported by the Seventh-Day Adventist Church and many other entities, according to Pathway President Lela Lewis.

The Spokane clinic is the group’s third. “Our first event was in San Francisco and Oakland in 2014,” said Lewis. “We were very surprised and ecstatic about the opportunity of servicing the community and how many people showed up.” Pathway served 3,000 in the San Francisco/Oakland area, then moved on to San Antonio, TX in April of 2014, servicing over 6,000 uninsured and underinsured in three days.

The idea of mega of clinics offering comprehensive medical and dental services, which Jordache said, “is a little unheard of in the United States” started as a way of “giving back to the communities in which the Seventh-Day Adventist Church lives and works.” Adventist-Laymen’s Services & Industries (ASI) held

its 2015 International Convention in Spokane from August 5-8. The Spokane clinic, which was co-sponsored by the Mayor’s Office and the Spokane County Commissioners, was a “perfect chance to give back to the city for hosting our convention,” said Jordache.

Your Best Pathway to Health utilized over 1,600 medical and non-medical volunteers, including doctors, dentists, nurses, and physical therapists, who traveled to Spokane from across North America, and some from other countries, to provide on-site services on a first come first serve basis, including primary care visits, women’s health services, general and orthopedic surgery, pediatrics, immunizations, dental procedures, eye examinations, physical therapy, x-rays, and laboratory services.

Participants were also able to receive haircuts, nutrition and lifestyle coaching, massages, chaplaincy services, clothing, and a free meal. “All of it one hundred percent free of charge,” said Jordache, who has been to all three events, adding that it was “prayer, a lot of recruitment, word of mouth, websites, e-mail campaigns, and people reaching out into their own networks” that brought in twice as many volunteers as expected for Spokane, and has grown the number of volunteers from the 600 that were at the first event.

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New Hope Baptist Church
 Pastor Happy Watkins
 409 S. Greene Street, Spokane WA 509-535-1336
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FOLLOWING UP ON JEREMIAH

ST. ALOYSIUS HAS A NEW PRINCIPAL, JEREMIAH HAS A NEW SCHOOL

In the February 2015 issue, The Black Lens covered the story of Jeremiah, a five year old, whose mother, Melissa Commodore, moved to Spokane to attend graduate school at Gonzaga University.

Extremely popular in his previous school, according to Melissa, things seemed to change for Jeremiah when he started attending St. Aloysius Catholic School in Spokane, a K-8 Jesuit school located on Mission Avenue.

From his very first day at the school, Melissa said, Jeremiah began reporting instances of bullying to his family members, including kids saying “nasty things”, pushing him to the ground, and Melissa said Jeremiah told her that a couple of “older boys” had made comments about his private parts in the bathroom. As things “went downhill”, Melissa said she gave Jeremiah permission to defend himself and he began doing that. A short time later, he came home complaining of a headache, but would not say why it hurt. Jeremiah later confided to his aunt, while Melissa was out of town, that some older boys at the school had thrown him in the dumpster and he had hit his head.

When Melissa returned, she and her parents met with Principal Kellie Rowland to “get to the bottom of things.” In the Black Lens interview, Principal Rowland and Angie Krauss, who was the the Advancement Director at the time, said they were “blindsided by Melissa, and had no idea of the complaint until Melissa walked in.” Krauss added, “We did not know that she was unhappy, we thought that she loved it here.”

Principal Rowland said she did an investigation and “there was no evidence that anything like that happened,” so Jeremiah’s story, Rowland said, “didn’t have any sensibility in my head.” Melissa disputed the conclusion reached by Principal Rowland and approached the St. Aloysius Superintendent, but was told “there was nothing that could be done.” At the time of the story’s printing, Melissa had removed Jeremiah from St. Aloysius and was homeschooling him. She also had approached the NAACP and The Center for Justice asking them both to look into the matter.

Update

After her experience with St. Aloysius, Melissa says she got counseling. “Because I am a student at Gonzaga, I was



able to get free counseling. I was going for me at first, but realized that Jeremiah needed it way more than I did.” Melissa noticed that Jeremiah had regressed in his behavior. He had been cheerful and outgoing, but started wanting to sleep with her and be close to her and was talking about the “dumpster incident” all of the time, “every time we would go to the dumpster to take the garbage out.”

So she started Jeremiah in counseling as well. He went almost every week for several months, and the counselor worked through the process with him, talking about the incident, talking about how he felt, and what he could do to make it better. Melissa says, Jeremiah eventually stopped wanting to sleep with her every night and to be beside her all of the time. He also has stopped talking about the dumpster so much. Melissa has also transitioned Jeremiah into public school. “I was home schooling him through the process of him getting counseling, and then in April I checked out a school that I had seen previously.” She was nervous about trying another school, but “I just put my prayer and faith together, crossed my fingers and hoped everything would work out. It did. They received him well.”

Melissa says that the school, which is in the Cheney School District, is more diverse, both racially and socio-econom-

ically and Jeremiah loves it so much that he doesn’t want to come home. In fact, Jeremiah was disappointed that he only got to attend kindergarten from April to June, and told his mom, “I want to go back to kindergarten because I didn’t get to go for an entire year.” He will be starting the first grade in September.

As for getting some sort of resolution, Melissa says, The Center for Justice sent a letter to the state, “but months have passed and so far nothing has happened,” and with the recent change in leadership at the NAACP, Melissa’s complaint seems to have fallen through the cracks, and she says, “she has not heard anything from St. Aloysius.”

In following up with St. Aloysius, there have been many changes since Jeremiah left the school. Angie Krauss, the former Advancement Director, became the new Principal on July 1, and she says there have been a lot of physical improvements at the school, “new paint, remodeling the reception area, they’ve hired new staff, enrollment is looking good,” and she says, “they have a \$5 million campaign to build a new building.”

When asked about the incident with Jeremiah, Krauss responded, “It wasn’t my situation, so I can’t really comment on that. I wasn’t in charge. I was an Advancement Director raising money, not handling any of that.” Referring to the previous principal, she added, “they did follow policy and procedure. They did an investigation, they researched all of the people involved, they looked at all of the evidence, and that’s what you do in every investigation.”

When prodded further about whether or not there had been any reflection done by the school based on what Jeremiah said happened to him or any changes as a result, Krauss replied, “I do sense that there is obviously a divide here. You feel the incident happened and we say there’s no evidence to substantiate that, so you’re asking a change to take place because you believe something happened, but we did a thorough investigation and feel there was no evidence to prove that, so I think those are two opposing opinions.”

Krauss said that St. Aloysius is “very proactive in discipline and my teachers always go over the responsibilities and how we treat each other and how we engage with one another.”

Continued on Page 18

WASHINGTON STATE OPPORTUNITY SCHOLARSHIP AVAILABLE FOR EASTERN WASHINGTON STUDENTS

Students from low to middle-income families eligible to receive up to \$22,500 in funding if pursuing STEM or Health Care degrees

One of the fastest-growing state economies, Washington State, continues to add more jobs than we can fill. Workforce demand is skyrocketing in the fields of science, technology, engineering and math (STEM), as well as health care, making the market seemingly prime for state residents. However, tuition rates make college prohibitively expensive, particularly for students from low- and middle-income families.

The result is costly for both our students and our economy. Talented scholars all across Washington struggle to pursue their dreams of an engineering, technology or health science career due to the staggering costs of a college education. A lack of a degree can often prevent these young people from acquiring employment in their chosen fields, forcing companies to hire from elsewhere.

Enter the Washington State Opportunity Scholarship (WSOS). An unparalleled public-private venture, the



WASHINGTON STATE OPPORTUNITY SCHOLARSHIP

Supporting the next generation of STEM & health care leaders

Opportunity Scholarship helps students in families who earn up to 125% of the median family income attain bachelor’s degrees in high-employer demand STEM and health care fields. This expands college financial aid to a greater group of young people beyond the current state need grant which only reaches families with 70% of the median family income.

It is the first statewide scholarship fund in the nation focused on making STEM degrees accessible for low and middle-income students. During its first year, WSOS received cornerstone funding from the state of Washington, Boeing and Microsoft. In the 2015-16 school year alone, over 1200 new scholars will be selected for the Opportunity Scholarship and receive

up to \$22,500 in financial and student support for the duration of five years. The recipients come from a diverse background, with half being students of color.

Eligible Eastern Washington students are highly encouraged to apply! (** Note: eligibility criteria is listed on the website). Go to www.waopportunity-scholarship.org to learn more, and consider an academic career at any one of Washington’s 68 colleges and universities, including Washington State University, Gonzaga and Spokane Falls Community College.

If you are interested in learning more about the Washington State Opportunity Scholarship, be sure to visit the website or attend upcoming events in your area.

Contact WSOS at 1-877-899-5002 to speak with a scholarship services staff member.

Your future starts here!

EDUCATION STORIES: EDUCATORS

DR. JEANNE ASTON-BAYNES:

“As Educators it is Hard for Us to Observe the Way That Some of Our Kids Are Treated”

Dr. Jeanne Aston-Baynes earned a Bachelor of Science Degree in Elementary Education from Youngstown State University, Youngstown, OH; a Master's Degree in Secondary Education, with an emphasis in literacy, from Atlanta University in Atlanta, GA, and a Doctorate in Education, Curriculum, with an emphasis in literacy, from Washington State University. She came to the Spokane School District in 1982 as a Reading specialist, Title I, worked as both a teacher and an administrator, before retiring as an English Teacher in 2013. Dr. Baynes is currently a lecturer in the African Studies Program at Eastern Washington University.



When I think in terms of my experience in District 81, I think our students have struggled for a number of reasons.

When I first came into District 81, you had more African American teachers and I think we had more support. I think things have gotten worse because we don't have the number of professionals and staff representing the diversity of the students in the schools.

The recruitment and retention of teachers of color seems to not be as strong or not a central point for District 81 now the way it was in the earlier days and the students are struggling because of a lack of role models.

They are also being disproportionately represented in discipline programs. They are disciplined twice as hard as any other group. I saw that throughout my years in the district. Our kids are disciplined for menial behaviors, for example, if they touch someone, instead of being talked to, they are given detention, or they are suspended for three, five, ten days, and when they come back, they are lost.

I also noticed that a lot of the teachers that came to our schools were not trained. They came into the classroom with

stereotypes about Black people and were not culturally responsive or competent to teach our kids.

Teachers have to understand different cultures, not just their own, but a lot of the teachers are educated and trained in schools in the Spokane area, so their experiences are limited. They teach the curriculum, but they do not teach the child.

The district needs to be proactive in recruiting and retaining teachers of color. There used to be a Future Teachers of Color Program and we would identify kids in high school that we would monitor and encourage. Now, if Eastern has one African American in their education program, I would be surprised. If the district has a desire to have more teachers of color, then we need to make sure that there are people of color in the local education programs so that when they graduate they can come and teach in district 81.

But the district also needs to look at hiring. I have heard people say there are no teachers of color because “we don't have qualified people,” but we do have them.

There was a young lady working on her Master's Degree at Eastern Washington University. She was a para-professional in a school, but they would not give her a position as a teacher, so she left the area and got a teaching position somewhere else.

You also have people who have subbed here for years waiting to get a position, people who have been subbing for 4-5 years, so why can't they get hired as a certified teacher?

We are losing our teachers of color because they can get a better position elsewhere. They leave Spokane and go to the west side, or they go to another state, where they can get the certified teaching position or the administrative position that they can't get it here in Spokane.

What needs to be done in order for African American kids to be successful?

Our kids need to see us as administrators, as secretaries, as teachers, as custodians, and in the district office. They need to see themselves at all levels. And another thing, I wish we could redo the history books. Learning about Dr. Martin Lu-

ther King Jr. and Rosa Parks is great, but there are African American people that came before them and after them. Children need to know that.

I also think we are overtesting our children. We have test scores that stay in their files, but what is missing is authentic forms of assessment. There is talk about the rate of kids graduating, but do the students that graduate have the skills that they need to enter college or the workforce.

I think we are focusing on academics and scores, and not the whole child. That has changed from when I started. When I was coming up, you had discipline in the school, but the people that disciplined you cared for you. Now I just see people disciplining and writing kids up because they can do it, not because they have thought it through. It's like a black or white thing, you broke the rule, so I'm writing you up or sending you to the office. It lacks empathy.

Finally, training is important. The district starts out with Diversity training, but I think they need to do it more often. Employees take a class, and it's a shot in the arm, but it's not consistent. That is something that has not changed over the years.

When you say that you “believe in diversity”, I ask what is your perception of diversity? You have to have a clear picture of what diversity means and it starts at the stop. I think some superintendents have it, and some do not.

As educators, it is hard for us to observe the way that some of our kids are treated. Administrators and teachers should not only be qualified to work with our kids, but they should WANT to work with them, and they should care for them before they discipline them, not fear them.

MADELINE'S STORY

“The African American children have learned to go to the counselor's office and hang out and some counselors enable them, so they aren't getting the education that they need”

Madeline has been working in the Spokane School District since 1998 and has also worked in the East Valley and West Valley School Districts. She has worked as a substitute teacher at the elementary, middle and high school grade levels.

I've been all over the Spokane School District, and in East Valley and West Valley. I haven't worked in East Valley and West Valley in a long time, but those districts always made me feel welcome. I can't say that Spokane made me feel unwelcome, but...

I don't see people of color being hired that much. It seems that they have a hard time getting hired as teachers. For example, there was a lady that worked as an aide in one of the schools, but when she got her degree, they couldn't find a teaching job for her. I think she's working up north somewhere now. Another lady just got hired recently, but she said she had a hard time getting on.

I've been an African American substitute teacher for a long time, and don't see too many African American subs either. They don't make it very easy for people to apply for the jobs. One lady told me they wanted her to get the recommendations that she had when she first came out of college. Well, that was impossible because most of the those people are dead. She used to work in California and she would be a good teacher because she has a lot of experience, but that's what they told her she had to do before she could get a job, so she just said forget it.

As for working in the schools, I love what I do and I love subbing. I do things for the children that others don't do. At one of the schools there were four or five children that needed tennis shoes, and I didn't feel good about marking them down for not having shoes for gym class when that was all their mother could afford, so I went and got them some shoes. At another school a little girl needed a dress for singing and didn't have one, so I got a couple of dresses.

I could tell you a lot of stories about how the children cut up, how the parents cut up, and how the district handles that. One thing I've noticed is the African American children have learned go to the counselor's office and hang out, and some of the counselors enable them, so they are not getting the education that they need.

PASTOR SHON DAVIS *Continued From Page 12*

Looking back, Pastor Davis says, he can see that things were crumbling around him, but it took the death of one of his closest friends and losing everything that he had, to finally compel him to accept an invitation to attend church. He went on Easter Sunday.

“When I went that morning, I was so broken until I realized that change just had to happen. I had hit rock bottom. I had lost everything. It was like God stripped me, the cars, the friends, the guns, the drug houses. It was like he was stripping me of everything to say to me, ‘it's me that you

need’. That was the turning point. God saved me on that day, April 3, 1988. I will never forget it, and I never turned back.”

Pastor Davis' first stop after church, to everyone's surprise, was the barbershop. He cut off his hair. “I just wanted a new look.” His second stop was to his condo, where he put everybody out. They all thought he had gone crazy or that he had “smoked something,” but he told them, “I met Jesus today, and ya'll gotta go.” He says people were surprised by what was happening with him because it wasn't a transition process for him, “it was an overnight 360 degrees, that

didn't take weeks or months,” he says, “on that Easter morning, I was a new person.”

Eventually, Pastor Davis became a minister under Elder Ernest Johnson, and then, he says God transitioned him to a different church under a different pastor, which was District Elder Ernest Alexander, and he became an Associate Pastor of Bethesda Temple Apostolic Church. He was there for another three years before moving to Spokane in July of 1994.

Jesus is the Answer began in January 1995 in the basement of Pastor Davis' home. In 1996, Pastor Davis partnered with Pastor

Alvin Moreno, Pastor Kevin Chen and Pastor Jeff Doud, to open God's Gym, Spokane's first gang prevention and intervention program, continuing the work that he was doing in L.A. with at-risk youth.

At their current location since 1999, Pastor Davis is currently focusing on enhancing what Jesus is the Answer is currently doing. “Our prayer is that our community will have our own, so we are not dependent on others who want to control our programs or our resources. That's our conversation.”

For more information about Jesus is the Answer visit: <http://kfcministries.com> or call 509-868-0070

EDUCATION STORIES: ADMINISTRATION

JAMES WILBURN:

“A lot of our Students Throw Up Their Hands and Say I’m Not Going to School, You Don’t Want Me Here Anyway”

When I got started in 2009, I was doing an internship for my Masters Degree at Whitworth University. I mentioned to a group of principals that I wanted to work on closing the achievement gap, and all of the principals said they would love for me to come to their school, but none of them had any funds to pay me. Two of the schools said they had LAP (Learning Assistance Program) funds and could pay for me to come to their schools part time, Ferris and Lewis and Clark, so I worked part time at each of the schools.

Later, I went full time to Lewis and Clark, working specifically with African American students, and more directly with African American males, because that’s where the biggest problem with the achievement gap is. I did a study and presented the results of the study to the schools, then began working to address the issue. The Achievement Gap Intervention Specialist was created out of that initiative.

When I started at Lewis and Clark in 2009, there was a 52% on time graduation rate for African American students. When I left in 2012, there was an 84% on time graduation rate for African Americans. I won’t take the credit for all of it, but I will say that I think addressing the issues of African American students, being there for them, and them being comfortable with someone who looks like them and has a history that is relatively close to theirs, helped in improving the on time

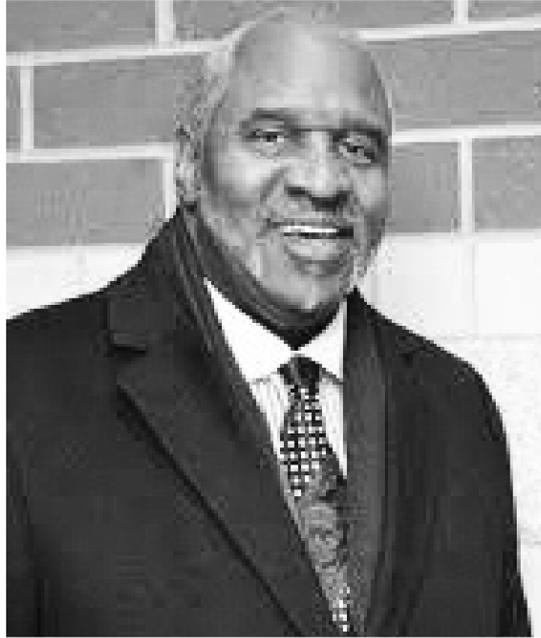
graduation rate.

Eventually there were fifteen Achievement Gap Intervention Specialists in all of the high schools, extending from that original initiative.

The original idea was to have Native American Achievement Gap specialists work with Native American students, Hispanic specialists work with Hispanic students, like that, so that there would be a cultural relationship and the students could identify with the person. Unfortunately it is not currently happening the way that it was originally envisioned and many of the positions are filled by European Americans which has perpetuated the situation that already existed.

After that, my focus shifted to cutting off the school to prison pipeline, and I was moved to Rogers High School, which had the highest suspension rate amongst all of the area high schools. My job was to intervene, and to work on cutting down the suspension rate, which is one of the drivers behind the school to prison pipeline, and to come up with alternatives to suspension.

I would intervene whenever an African American student was facing suspension, and that created some conflict. Even though there was improvement, there was resistance from some ad-



ministration and some teachers to doing things that were viewed as contrary to what was set in place in terms of policy and procedures.

What I tried to explain is that the policies and procedures were designed by Europeans for Europeans, with a European perspective, so there was no cultural sensitivity in them. However, some still didn’t want to deal with it that way or make any adjustments.

I have received support from the Superintendent for the work that I am doing to intervene and create alternatives to suspension, and I have been told that anytime a parent calls about a problem with their child at any school in the district, I am welcome to go and offer assistance. Even now, if a parent is having problems with a suspension, I am the person that

they can talk to. District wide.

After a year at Rogers, I am now working out of the district office downtown as the Supervisor of Youth Initiatives and Community Parent Involvement.

Part of what we are faced with is parents not being involved in the child’s education until the child is in trouble, which then leads to a lack of understanding of the school’s policies and procedures. In other words, parents don’t feel any cultural capital when they have a child that is facing suspension or expulsion and

they come to the school to see the principal, but instead are told, “just go down the hall, third door to the left, and see that person in there,” if you want to talk about Jamaal or Shequita, but when Miss McGillicuddy, who has bought pom poms for the cheerleaders, comes in and says, I want to see the principal, they just walk her right on in. That’s a part of the problem.

So what I am trying to do is connect with the parents before the child gets in trouble. A lot of our students end up in juvenile courts because they get to the point where they throw up both hands and say I’m not going to school, I mean you don’t want me here anyway, you’re going to suspend me for every little thing that comes up, so, I’m quitting.

Last year I spent Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays in juvenile court every week, helping the courts and helping the parents come up with alternatives to detention, like community service or electronic monitoring, so that the students could stay in school.

This year I’m going to be working more in middle schools, because I think that if I can catch the students before they decide that they are not going to school, I will probably be of more assistance to the parents and their children. I am also going to try something that I am calling *One Church One School*, to hold forums for the community and the churches to talk about the policies and procedures of the schools that the children go to, and then identify people in that church who a parent can call to go with them when going to the school for whatever reason. Someone they feel comfortable with. I’m hoping to get that off the ground this year.

When I think about what could help African American students to be successful, Miami-Dade County Public Schools is implementing a model that I like. They are saying absolutely no out-of-school suspensions, none, preferring instead to keep kids in class and address the root causes of behavior problems. If we could get to that point, then it would force us to have to do whatever it takes to work with these children, even the ones that are difficult.

To reach James Wilburn call 509-354-4644 or e-mail jameswi@spokaneschools.org.

VOICES FROM SPOKANE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Dr. Shelley Redinger and Dr. Wendy Bleeker

“I feel that there’s really a lot going on and everyone is really wanting to change”

Dr. Shelley Redinger, the Superintendent of Spokane Public Schools since July 2012, has strong ties to Spokane, she was born here, went to Trent Elementary School until fifth grade when her family moved to Chewelah for work, and graduated from Washington State University with a degree in Education. So taking the position with District 81 allowed her to come back home and spend “seven very special months” with her mother, who passed away from cancer. She says, it has also “allowed her to give back to the community that she calls home.”

Dr. Wendy Bleeker is a jill-of-all-trades when it comes to Student Services, overseeing “all of those support programs for kids that need a little something extra,” including the mental health counseling program, which makes Spokane Public Schools one of the few districts in the country that has a licensed mental health facility as a part of the district.

These days though, both women have their attention focused on the direction that the district is headed. “From the very first day that I came to Spokane, having been in many other districts and having lived in many other states, I saw that we really needed to be more proactive,” Superintendent Redinger offered.

“We started looking at the data,” she contin-

ued, “which really is looking at the disproportionality, and at suspensions and expulsions, and at why students are getting suspended and expelled. What our data showed us is that even one long term suspension almost doubled a student’s chances of dropping out and they can’t get caught up. That was a wakeup call for our entire system.”

One of the district’s proactive measures, spearheaded by Dr. Wendy Bleeker, has been CAT or The Community Action Team, which is “a diverse group of community members and school staff that have a passion around the topic of reducing out of school and in school discipline.”

CAT’s first goal, Bleeker says, is reducing the disproportionality that exists in discipline rates, or eliminating it, and then reducing out of school suspensions.

Working with community partners, including the Juvenile Court, and The Burns Institute, who conducted a qualitative and quantitative



Dr. Shelley Redinger



Dr. Wendy Bleeker

study of Spokane School District data, the CAT team produced three primary recommendations, which were in alignment with recommendations that came from the Burns Institute: (1)

Complete a comprehensive data analysis to determine the effect of school and community variables contributing to the disproportionality of school discipline; (2) Implement needed professional development; (3) Develop policies and procedures to include positive alternatives to exclusionary discipline that will support the elimination of disproportionality and exclusionary discipline. CAT is now in the process of working with the district to implement their recommendations.

“We are in the process of re-writing our discipline policy,” Bleeker said. “It’s much more restorative. It is much more geared to keeping kids in school, and there are pieces that are looking at the disproportionality in the policy.

Once that is completed, the recommendation was that we really need to look at our student codes, because the more subjective they are, the more chance there will be disproportionality, so we will also be looking at our discipline codes.”

The District is also focusing on how to change thinking “so that staff will understand the impact that disproportionality has on our students, families and communities, and on kids graduating.” In the coming year, administrators will be participating in the IDI (Intercultural Developmental Inventory) Training, which focuses on the assessment and development of intercultural competence. The training will eventually be rolled out to staff members as well.

“Continuing to diversify our workforce so that it truly represents what our students look like is also a very big goal,” added Redinger, and she says that she is participating in second interviews as they are hiring staff, “to make sure that we have people that really want to be here, because I don’t want to be fighting my own staff because they don’t want to change or people that feel we are just fine the way we are, because we don’t agree with that. I feel that there is a lot going on right now and there is really good momentum. I think we are making progress, but we still have a long way to go.”

OUR VOICES

CLOSING THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP ONE CHILD AT A TIME

By Julianne Malveaux

(TriceEdneyWire.com) - Thousands of pages have been written about the achievement gap; the fact that White kids score higher than either Black or Latino kids who sometimes sit right next to them in classrooms. And despite hundreds of millions of dollars spent to close the achievement gap, the National Assessment of Educational Progress reported last year that the gap was unchanged in both reading and math between 2009 and 2013.

Why? African-American students are as capable of learning as Caucasian students are, if they have the same quality of teachers, schools, and learning material. But many researchers have documented the differences in school quality between inner cities and elsewhere. Some researchers will explain the achievement gap by focusing on poverty, challenging family backgrounds, or other factors. Anecdotal evidence suggests that often, teacher attitudes determine the ways some students are treated, and some of the ways that they learn. Often large classroom sizes and, yes, unruly students, contribute to teacher burnout for which there is little relief.

Multiple and complex factors go into explaining the achievement gap. But in the

very shortest of runs, while we wait for public policy to shift and for legislators to put more money in our schools, some of us can decide to close the achievement gap.

Too many of us seem too challenged to help our own kids, yet parental involvement is needed to keep close touch with teacher and administrators and to provide our children with challenging educational experiences. Some of us, retired and with adult children, could make a difference by giving a few hours a week to a child who needs supplementary education.

I'm all for a shift in public policy. K-12 education has been neglected, from a policy perspective, by too many cities and states. Too often when there are budget cuts, education takes a big hit. Schools are closed, classrooms are overcrowded, and necessary classes in the sciences, in civics or physical education, are eliminated. In most schools across the country, the arts (mu-



sic, theater etc.) have been removed entirely.

Reading facility may be the foundation of the achievement gap.

Some researchers say that African American children enter high school with a word gap as high as 30 million (which means they have heard 30 million fewer words than their Caucasian counterparts).

Some allege that children are not the only ones to have a word gap—Valerie Strauss, writing in the Washington Post of February 16 of this year, wrote that as many as a million “state licensed and nationally credentialed” early childhood educators are at risk for functional illiteracy. Many of these workers earn such low wages the best educated and qualified teachers are not interested in early child education. Thus, while President Obama has called for universal kindergarten, where are the teachers who will take kindergarten to the next level?

Until policy is changed and we put our money where our mouths are, closing the achievement gap is a short run parental and community challenge.

I know some parents who start reading to their child in the womb, who allow toddlers to turn pages and look at pictures (and words) to get them ready for reading, who talk to their children even when they know their offspring can't understand a word they are saying. Other parents may sing and occasionally sit toddlers at the dinner table, even though they know a child might holler or make a mess.

Children are headed to school this month and next, and many of them need parents, or involved community contributors, to help them get there without being burdened by the achievement gap. The gap that starts early—in preschool or kindergarten—grows over time. Caucasians graduate from high school at a rate of 86 percent, compared to 73 percent for Hispanics and 69 percent for African Americans.

Yet we say that a well-educated workforce is a key to our nation's future prosperity. We need to change the spending policy that supports the achievement gap, and until that happens, we need to reach out, a child at a time, to make a difference.

WHERE COTTON WAS KING RACISM IS STILL KING

By Susan Hagen

Special to the Trice Edney News Wire from NorthStarNewsToday.com

(TriceEdneyWire.com) - White Southerners who live today in former slavery strongholds, a region known as the Cotton Belt, are more likely to express negative attitudes toward blacks than their fellow Southerners.

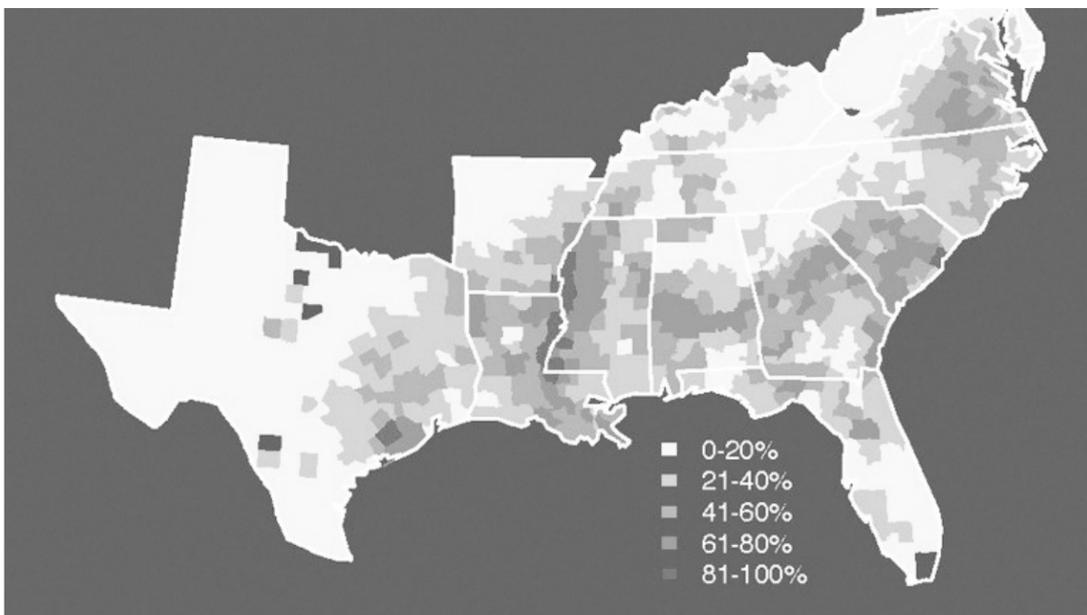
The findings are based on county-by-county analysis of census data and opinion polls of more than 39,000 southern whites.

Residents of these areas where slavery and the plantation economy dominated are also more likely to identify as Republican and to express opposition to race-related policies such as affirmative action.

“The legacy of the plantation economy and its reliance on the forced labor of African Americans continues to exacerbate racial bias in the Deep South.”

Conducted by Avidit Acharya, Matthew Blackwell, and Maya Sen from the University of Rochester, the research is believed to be the first to demonstrate quantitatively the lasting effects of slavery on contemporary political attitudes in the American South.

The findings hold even when other dynamics often associated with racial animosity are factored in, such as present day concentrations of African Americans in an area, or whether an area is urban or rural.



“Slavery does not explain all forms of current day racism,” says Acharya. “But the data clearly demonstrates that the legacy of the plantation economy and its reliance on the forced labor of African Americans continues to exacerbate racial bias in the Deep South.”

The findings are reported in a working paper that will be presented for the first time at the Politics of Race, Immigration, and Ethnicity Consortium at the University of California at Riverside on Sept. 27.

‘The South is not monolithic’

The study looked at data from 93 percent of the 1,344 Southern counties in the Cotton Belt—the crescent-shaped band where

plantations flourished from the late 18th century into the 20th century.

The researchers found that a 20 percent increase in the percentage of slaves in a county's pre-Civil War population is associated with a 3 percent decrease in whites who identify as Democrats today and a 2.4 percent decrease in the number of whites who support affirmative action.

According to the authors, the “slavery effect” accounts for an up to 15 percentage point difference in party affiliation today; about 30 percent of whites in former slave plantation regions report being Democrats, compared to 40 to 45 percent white Democrats in counties that had less than 3 percent slaves, according to the

authors. Despite the region's similarity in culture and its shared history of legalized slavery and Jim Crow laws, “the South is not monolithic,” says Blackwell.

Politics: North and South

Their analysis shows that without slavery, the South today might look fairly similar politically to the North. The authors compared counties in the South in which slaves were rare—less than 3 percent of the population—with counties in the North that were matched by geography, farm value per capita, and total county population. The result? There is little difference in political views today among residents in the two regions.

“In political circles, the South's political conservatism is often

credited to ‘Southern exceptionalism,’” says Blackwell. “But the data shows that such modern-day political differences primarily rise from the historical presence of many slaves.”

But how is it possible that an institution so long outlawed continues to influence views in the 21st century?

The authors point to both economic and cultural explanations. Although slavery was banned, the economic incentives to exploit former slaves persisted well into the 20th century.

“Before mechanization, cotton was not really economically viable without massive amounts of cheap labor,” explains Sen.

Lynching rates

After the Civil War, southern landowners resorted to racial violence and Jim Crow laws to coerce black field hands, depress wages, and tie tenant farmers to plantations.

“Whereas slavery only required a majority of (powerful) whites in the state to support it, widespread repression and political violence required the support and involvement of entire communities,” the authors write.

Again comparing the county-by-county data, the researchers found evidence of the relationship between racial violence and economics in the historical record of lynchings. Between 1882 and 1930, lynching rates were not

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OUR VOICES

WHY JULIAN BOND MATTERED TO THE MOVEMENT

By David A. Love, JD

(Reprinted with permission from Blackcommentator.com)

The civil rights community has lost one of its greatest champions and elder statesmen with the passing of Julian Bond.

Bond, 75, who passed on August 15, after a brief illness, left an indelible mark on the nation's landscape through his bold activism and advocacy, his struggle against injustice and his critique of white supremacy.

What was most impressive about Mr. Bond was his role as a pioneer, a man of many firsts. A student at Morehouse College, Bond helped found the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), where he served as its communications director for a number of years and provided leadership in a movement that successfully pushed for landmark legislation. Bond also led protests and sit-ins against Jim Crow segregation policies and led campaigns to register black voters, and was involved in the 1963 March on Washington. He and others such as current U.S. Congressman John Lewis left SNCC in the wake of the Black Power movement, when whites were ejected from the organization.

In 1965, following the passage of the Voting Rights Act, Bond was one of eleven blacks elected to the Georgia House of Representatives, but was barred from taking his seat by white lawmakers due to his anti-Vietnam War stance. After winning a Supreme Court victory, he took his seat in 1967. After serving in the Georgia state House, he later served six terms in the state Senate, from 1975 to 1986. In 1968, Bond became the first black nominated for vice president by a major party, though he had to decline because he did not meet the constitutional age requirement.

Bond also helped found the Southern Poverty Law Center in 1971, an organization which fights hate and bigotry and seeks justice for the vulnerable in society. He served as the president of SPLC, and as a board member. "With Julian's passing, the country has lost one of its most passionate and eloquent voices for the cause of justice. He advocated not just for African Americans, but for every group, indeed every person subject to oppression and discrimination, because he recognized the common humanity in us all," SPLC's Morris Dees said in a statement. "Not only has the country lost a hero today, we've lost a great friend."

Moreover, Bond established his leadership at the NAACP, where he was charwoman from 1998 until Rosalyn Brock succeeded him in 2010. Also a professor, Bond taught at



American University, Drexel University, Williams College, the University of Pennsylvania, Harvard University and the University of Virginia.

A champion of gay rights and marriage equality, Bond said in a 2005 speech that "African Americans ... were the only Americans who were enslaved for two centuries, but we were far from the only Americans suffering discrimination then and now.... Sexual disposition parallels race. I was born this way. I have no choice. I wouldn't change it if I could. Sexuality is unchangeable."

Further, Julian Bond was an effective communicator, not only through his role at SNCC, but as host of the public affairs television program, America's Black Forum, Eyes on the Prize, and commentator for various news programs. "If this was another movement, they would call him the PR man, because he was the one who wrote the best, who framed the issues the best. He was called upon time and again to write it, to express it," said Eleanor Holmes Norton, who worked with Bond at SNCC, told the Washington Post.

"Julian Bond was courageous and had an uncompromising sense of justice," Peter Gamble—publisher of BlackCommentator.com, where Bond was an editorial board member—told theGrio. Gamble, a veteran journalist, also co-founded America's Black Forum. "We first met when

Julian was in Washington DC and I was a radio news reporter there, covering various aspects of the civil rights and anti-war movements in the late 60s and early 70s. Over the years, he gave me several interviews, during which time we came to realize our common ground in the struggle for social justice, economic justice and peace. He could be counted on to provide a strong quote about whatever issue was in the news," Gamble said.

Gamble also noted that Bond was known for his wit. He recalled a 2003 cartoon that BlackCommentator.com published about Janice Rogers Brown, who was nominated by then-President Bush to be a federal judge on the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit. "Senator Orin Hatch, who was then the Chair of the Senate Judiciary committee, became very upset during Brown's appointment hearing. We had called Ms. Brown a female Clarence Thomas, and had requested our cartoonist, Khalil Bendib, illustrate Brown as Thomas in a dress and fright wig," Gamble added.

"During the hearing, Hatch repeated the name of our website very slowly, several times and displayed a huge blowup of the cartoon, cautioning, 'Don't go to BlackCommentator.com!' Julian was watching the hearing on CSPAN and dashed off a note to me saying, 'I don't know how much you're paying Orin Hatch for PR, but it's worth every nickel,'" Gamble noted.

"Justice and equality was the mission that spanned his life," President Obama said in a statement, calling the civil rights leader a hero. "Julian Bond helped change this country for the better."

Friends and family remember Bond as one of the people behind the Black Lives Matter movement long before the days of hashtags and social media. Although he is no longer with us in bodily form, his long legacy serves as a blueprint for us to follow, as we fight the civil rights battles of a new generation.

David A. Love, JD - Serves BlackCommentator.com as Executive Editor. He is journalist and human rights advocate based in Philadelphia, and a contributor to The Huffington Post, theGrio, The Progressive Media Project, McClatchy-Tribune News Service, In These Times and Philadelphia Independent Media Center. He also blogs at davidalove.com, NewsOne, Daily Kos, and Open Salon. He is the Immediate Past Executive Director of Witness to Innocence, a national nonprofit organization that empowers exonerated death row prisoners and their family members to become effective leaders in the movement to abolish the death penalty.

Distraction By Mark Hurwitt Brooklyn NY



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WHERE COTTON WAS KING

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uniform across the South, but instead were highest where cotton was king; a 10 percent increase in a county's slave population in 1860 was associated with a rise of 1.86 lynchings per 100,000 blacks.

"For the average Southern county, this would represent a 20 percent increase in the rate of lynchings during this time period," says Blackwell.

By the time economic incentives to coerce black labor subsided with the introduction of machinery to harvest cotton in the 1930s, anti-black sentiment was culturally entrenched among local whites, the authors write.

Passed down through the generations

Those views have simply been passed down, argue the authors, citing extensive research showing that children often inherit the political attitudes of their parents and peers.

The data, says Sen, points to the importance of institutional and historical legacy when understanding political views. Most quantitative studies of voters rely on contemporary influences, such as education, income, or the degree of urbanity. The findings are also in line with research on the lingering economic effects of slavery.

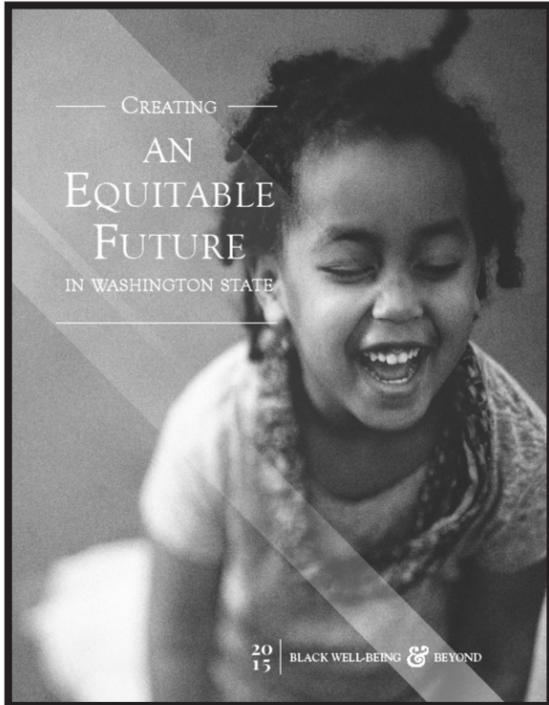
Studies have shown that former slave populations in Africa, South and Central America, and the United States continue to experience disparity in income, school enrollment, and vaccinations.

For the study, the authors drew on publicly available data, including the 1860 census and the Cooperative Congressional Election Study, a large representative survey of American adults. No external funding was required for the analysis.

THE STATE OF BLACK WASHINGTON (PT. 5)

Presented by the Washington State Commission on African American Affairs, African American Leadership Forum and Centerstone

HEALTH: GOOD HEALTH IS ESSENTIAL TO QUALITY OF LIFE



On March 30, 2015, the results were released from the study "Creating an Equitable Future for Black Washingtonians." Over the next several months, The Black Lens will address each one of the focus areas through highlights of the report. This month the focus is on: **HEALTH**

Our health is substantially affected by the environments in which we live. Living in a safe home, having enough food to eat, having stable employment, attending good schools, and living in neighborhoods where people trust one another and feel protected are all essential to a healthy life. Such social conditions play a significant role in the health of Black Washingtonians.

Improving the health and well-being of Black Washingtonians is largely dependent on how much progress we make on removing the social and economic barriers to opportunity they face.

Major Obstacles to Equity in Health:

Adverse experiences and toxic stress: Forty-two percent of Black children in Washington state have had two or more adverse experiences, compared to 24 percent of children overall. The more adversity a child experiences, the greater the risk for cardiovascular disease, lung and liver disease, depression, violence, smoking, drug and alcohol abuse, obesity, risky sexual behaviors, and early death. The most common adverse experience is economic hard-

ship. Sixty percent of Black children are living with families in economic hardship, which is one and a half times higher than the state average.

Access to Health Insurance: Nineteen percent of working-age adults in Washington state lacked health insurance in 2012, while the rate for working-age Blacks was 23 percent. For Blacks born outside the United States, the rate is even higher at 32 percent.

Environmental injustice. People of color and those with lower incomes have historically suffered from disproportionately high levels of exposure to pollution from toxic waste, landfills, sewage facilities, and industrial sites compared to the population as a whole. This has been linked to higher levels of lead poisoning, asthma, cancer, and other diseases in the Black community.

Compared to their peers in Washington state, Black people are: more likely to be born at low birth weight; have higher rates of childhood asthma and obesity; have higher rates of mortality and lower life expectancy. When children are healthy they do better in school, and when adults are healthy they are better workers and parents—all of which benefit communities and the economy.

The full report is available online at: http://center-stone.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/SOBW_report_r701_Final_032515_LowRes_spreads.pdf

TO SERVE LIKE JESUS SERVED

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In addition to the mega clinics, Your Best Pathway to Health also offers follow up services held at Health Information Centers located in local Seventh-Day Adventist churches, where patients can go after attending the big events to pick up their lab results, eyeglasses, and continue to learn ways that they can use diet and simple lifestyle changes to improve overall health.



Lela Lewis, also shared that the organization is launching a new addition in Spokane. "We have something called the 'Mini Clinic Model', which Spokane will be the first to launch. Two Board certified medical doctors will be continuing to provide weekly free clinics, if you will, at several Seventh-Day Adventist churches here in the Spokane Area. We are very excited."

The next mega clinic will be held in Los Angeles in March of 2016, with the expectation of serving over 10,000 uninsured and underinsured from the local community. After that? "I'm a Seventh-Day Adventist Christian, and this is a Seventh-Day Adventist organization," Lewis said, "so I believe in God, and I just say Lord where do you want us to go next, and he opens the doors. So we'll see what he has in store for us next. We as Seventh-Day Adventist Christians are honored to follow in the footsteps of Christ, and just as when He was on Earth and provided to the needs of the whole person, physically, mentally and spiritually, as Seventh-Day Adventists, we feel honored to be able to do that as well."

For more information about Your Best Pathway to Health visit the website at <http://www.pathwaytohealth.org> or call 1-888-44-PATHWAY (888-447-2849)



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PRIDE PREP

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The fourth experience is a personalized learning time where students are working on independent scope and sequence, for example, one student might be working on adding and subtracting, while another might be working on multiplying and dividing, because they are ready for that.

Students can be tutored during the personalized time, or receive small group instruction. It is also a time when they can study a language or other kinds of projects that are of interest to them, like learning computer programming.

Then at the end of the day, students focus on an exploration of their interests and passions for an hour. One group might be focusing on astronomy, while another group might be doing something with engineering, and another group might be starting cross country practice, because that's what they are engaged in. It is very much student driven.

While a student's progression through the day's activities might seem chaotic from the outside looking in, there is a good deal of structure to what the students are doing. "The personalized piece of the curriculum is pretty structured," according to McDonald, and Pride Prep is partnering with a school out of Redwood California, Summit Public School, and following their personalized learning curriculum, scope and sequence.

For the portion of the day when the students are doing inquiry and problem based instruction, McDonald is leaving that structure up to the teachers. "Teachers are allowed to be the designers of their own projects." McDonald is committed to letting teachers teach at Pride Prep. She says her motivation is coming from the struggles that her

teacher friends are having in the traditional system. "I think there is a constant internal battle that teachers are having around what the system is saying that they need to be teaching, and what they know that kids need." Many of her friends, she says, are becoming disheartened with teaching and contemplating leaving the profession. "So we wanted to create an adult environment here that is comparable to the kid's environment, one where people really loved coming to work and really felt like they were making a difference in the lives of kids, and where they were being treated like professionals."

McDonald's vision and enthusiasm are infectious, and that is reflected in her staff. Andre Dove is one of the student coaches whose role is to shepherd students through Pride Prep's educational process. He says he was sold on McDonald's vision as soon as he heard it. "It was like an ah ha moment for me," Dove said. "This is exactly what I was thinking about in 2008 when I was living in Kansas City, and understanding that the traditional system was not working and there had to be a better way." When he met McDonald through a mutual friend and listened to her presentation, "I was like, man this is it. This is it!" It wasn't long before he was on board.

One of the benefits that Dove, who is African American, sees for Black students in particular in attending Pride Prep is the personal relationships. Home visits are a part of his job description, and he sees establishing connections with his students and their families as a vital part of his work. Offering a quote from Dr. Howard G. Hendricks, professor at Dallas Theological Seminary, Dove remarked, "people don't care how much you know until they know how much

you care, and one of the things missing for our kids in school is caring."

Another benefit, McDonald added, is the diversity of the Pride Prep staff. "We created a structure where we hired both certificated staff and staff with bachelors and masters degrees to work with the students, knowing that all of those people together, with both their non-education experience and their education experience would create what we think is more authentic to what happens in the world, and we ended up with what I would say is a pretty diverse staff compared to Spokane's traditional system."

McDonald continued, "we are always talking about our kids of color really needing role models that look like them, but one thing that we rarely talk about in Spokane is the flip side, that our white kids need to see people of color in positions of intellect and high energy. If I'm being honest, that's where a lot of the problem exists, and greater social change may come as a result of that."

In summing things up, McDonald reflected, then shared, "if people ask us to boil down what we do at Pride Prep, we help kids learn how to learn. We are less consumed by marching to content and certain calendar points. For us it doesn't have to be World Civilizations in 6th grade and American History in 8th grade. It doesn't have to be that way."

Pride Prep is beginning this year with two grades, 6th and 7th, and a total of 150 students who were selected through a lottery that was held in March. The school will ultimately include grades 6-12 and there will be a new lottery for 6th grade students each year.

Parents are encouraged to find out more about Pride Prep Charter School, learn how to enroll, and visit an open house. For information visit <http://www.prideprepschool.org> or call 509-389-4848.

FOLLOWING UP ON JEREMIAH

Continued From Page 13

"I think the biggest part is being proactive," she continued, "and next year we have good supervision set up."

"The Vision for St. Aloysius," Krauss says, "is building Christ-like leadership in our students. We are not blind to the fact that we can improve," she added. "Any school, any organization, can get better at making, people, minorities, feel more comfortable, and I don't think any place can say we're per-

fect at it. When you start to do that, you're probably not. So, yes, we have room to grow and change, absolutely, but are we actively engaged in it and actually walking our talk, yes we are."

Melissa, however is not so sure. When asked what she would have liked St. Aloysius to have done, Melissa was clear, "I would like to have had them call me, immediately. I would have liked for them to say, we

have caught the two suspects that did this and this is the disciplinary action that we have taken to ensure they will never do this again, and to make sure that your son is protected, and to let you know that we are here to support you, and we don't stand for bullying."

Melissa added, "I would also have liked for them to let Jeremiah identify the two boys that did that to him, which they didn't allow him to do."

As for what she would like to see happen now, Melissa offered, "I would like for them to contact me and let me know what they have done, that they have done something, and come to me and give me an apology, face to face, and explain to my son how you messed up, and that you are sorry, and this is how you are trying to make sure this does not happen to any other child. That's what I would like to see happen."

SEPTEMBER EVENTS

SEPTEMBER 12

SIR MIX-A-LOT CONCERT



Sir Mix-A_Lot (“Baby Got Back”) is scheduled to headline the Perry Street Shakedown neighborhood music festival with a free, all-ages show. The Perry Street Shakedown runs from 9/11 - 9/13, but the concert is on Saturday.

Saturday, September 12

8:30pm

South Perry Pizza (Parking Lot)

1011 S Perry St, Spokane, WA 99202

SEPTEMBER 15

EOGOAC COMMUNITY FORUM

Join the Educational Opportunity Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee (EOGOAC) to engage with others about closing the educational opportunity gap for our Washington State students.

3pm-5pm

WSU Spokane (Riverpoint)

To RSVP or learn more about this event, please email: nickolaus.cox@k12.wa.us

SEPTEMBER 18-20

2015 NAACP ANNUAL CONVENTION - ALASKA, OREGON AND WASHINGTON STATE AREA CONFERENCE



WWW.NAACP.ORG

NAACP

Theme: “Pursuing Liberty in the Face of Injustice”

Friday-Sunday, September 18-20, 2015

Time: Friday: 6:00-9:00 pm, Saturday 8:00 am-

4:30, Banquet dinner 6:00-9:00 pm

Red Lion Inn at the Park

303 W North River Drive, Spokane

Cost: \$150.00 adult, \$100 Youth

For more information visit www.naacpaowsac.org

SEPTEMBER 21

NAACP MONTHLY MEETING

Join the NAACP for our monthly general membership meeting

7:00pm

Community Building - Lobby

35 W. Main Street, Spokane WA

For more information contact the NAACP at 509-209-2425 (ext 1141) or visit the website at <http://spokaneNAACP.com>

OCTOBER 4

ELLEN JOHNSON SIRLEAF, PRESIDENT OF LIBERIA



Gonzaga University’s Presidential Speaker Series will feature Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, President of Liberia and winner of the 2011 Nobel Peace Prize.

7 pm

Gonzaga University, McCarthy Athletic Center

Tickets will be available through TicketsWest and the McCarthy Athletic Center starting on Sept. 1 for \$12 or \$10

For more information, contact Angela Ruff at (509) 313-3572.

OCTOBER 6

MAYORAL CANDIDATE FORUM

The Political Action Committee of the Spokane NAACP will be hosting a non-partisan candidate forum featuring the two candidates for Spokane City Mayor, **David Condon** and **Shar Lichty**. There will be a question and answer session for community members. The public is invited to attend.

6:30-8:30pm

East Central Community Center

500 S. Stone Street

For more information contact the Spokane NAACP at 509-209-2425 (ext 11410) or visit <http://www.spokaneNAACP.com>

BLOOD DRIVE

and Mini-Health Check

Sponsored by Morningstar Missionary Baptist Church



September 19, 2015

10am - Noon

- *Free blood pressure checks
- *Determine your blood type

Morningstar wants to raise awareness about African American health issues and use this information to help our community learn how to take advantage of preventive care.

Knowing your blood type and donating blood can help save lives! Churches can lead the way in educating our community to live a better life.

Bring a friend, family member or your child over the age of 17 and EACH ONE TEACH ONE about giving back to our community

Morningstar Missionary Baptist Church
3909 W. Rowan Spokane, 509-534-4878

Please send information about upcoming community events to sandy@blacklensnews.com.



SAVE THE DATE SPOKANE NAACP

96TH ANNUAL NAACP FREEDOM FUND BANQUET

Featuring Speaker Hilary O. Shelton

NAACP Washington Bureau Director and Senior VP for Advocacy

November 7, 2015

7pm

Northern Quest Casino, Airway Heights, WA

For more information contact the Spokane NAACP at 509-209-2425 ext 1141 or spokaneNAACP@gmail.com or visit www.SpokaneNAACP.com

*NAACP
Alaska Oregon Washington State Area Conference
2015 Annual Convention*

*Spokane, Washington
September 18th-20th*

*Red Lion Hotel at the Park
303 W. North River Drive
Spokane, WA 99201*



As the nation's oldest civil rights organization, regional civil rights leaders from all corners of the Pacific Northwest will gather in Spokane to reflect on the Civil Rights movement for the 21st Century. The theme of this year's conference is *"Pursuing Liberty in the Face of Injustice."*

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2015

Reception: Friday evening from 6-9pm
Registration: Friday 4:00pm. Saturday 6:00am.
Pre-registration preferred: You will receive instructions on how to register online.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2015

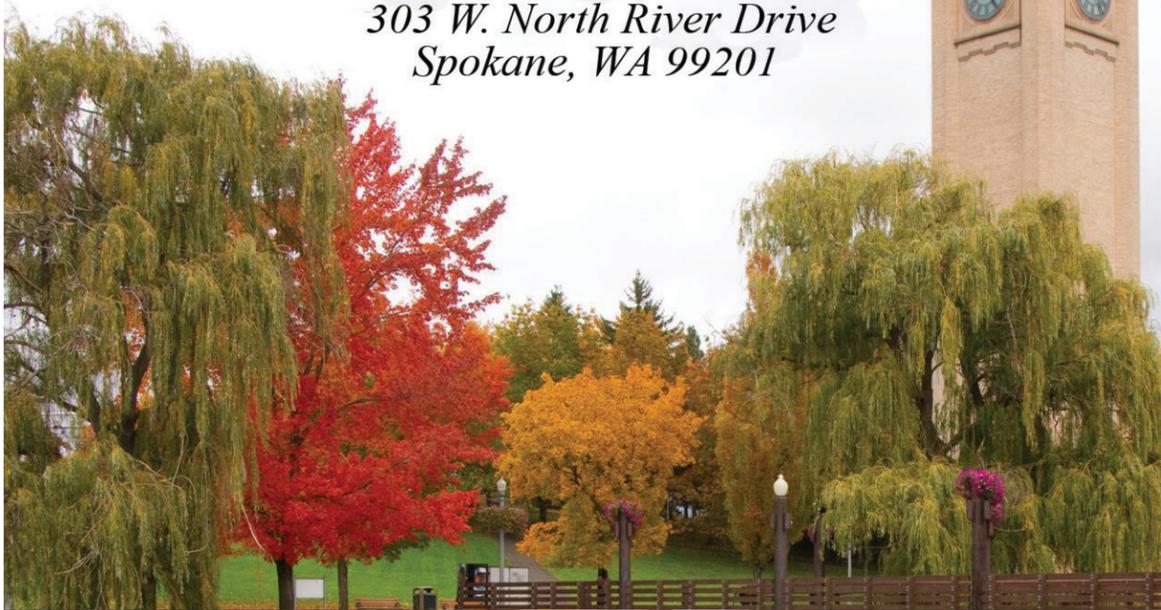
6:30 – 7:45am Breakfast
10am Business Meeting/ Assembly of Delegates
Call to Order: Gerald Hankerson, President AOWSAC
POLLS OPEN AT 11:00 AND WILL REMAIN OPEN UNTIL 3:00 P.M.

Plated Lunch : Noon - 1: 30pm
Workshops: 1:45 – 4:30pm
Banquet Dinner 6:00 – 9:00pm

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2015

7:30 – 8:30 a.m. Church Service (Optional)

*Information about Alaska Oregon Washington State Area Conference of the NAACP can be found at:
<http://www.naacpaowsac.org>.*



NAACP

Alaska Oregon Washington State Area Conference

MY CARE MY WAY IS experts who understand me

- » Birth Control
- » Emergency Contraception
- » STD Testing & Treatment
- » Pregnancy Testing
- » HPV Vaccines
- » Annual Check-Up
- » Pap Test
- » Breast Exam
- » UTI Diagnosis & Treatment
- » High School Sports Physicals

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Spokane:
123 E. Indiana Ave.
Spokane Valley:
12104 E. Main Ave.

1.800.230.PLAN
PPGWN.ORG

