

ALC Daily

FRIDAY

Official Daily Newspaper of the CBCF Annual Legislative Conference



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 **Congressional Black Caucus FOUNDATION**



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Black Lives Matter: A Movement Finds its Voice

By SHRITA STERLIN-
HERNANDEZ

The title of Thursday's standing-room-only National Town Hall was "Black Lives Matter: Ending Racial Profiling, Police Brutality and Mass Incarceration." The panel discussion, which was both impassioned and thoughtful, was moderated by Roland Martin, host of NewsOne Now; panelists were Rep. Elijah Cummings (MD); Rep. G.K. Butterfield (NC), chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC); Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee (TX); Judge Greg Mathis; Val Demings, former Orlando police chief; Alicia Garza, co-founder of the #BlackLivesMatter movement; and Alphonso Mayfield, a member of the International Executive Board of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), a co-host of the event. After a brief opening ceremony,

introductory remarks were given by CBCF board chair R. Donahue Peebles; Butterfield; the co-chairs of the 45th Annual Legislative Conference (ALC), Rep. Hakeem Jeffries (NY) and Rep. Terri Sewell (AL); and Dr. Menna Demessie of the CBCF, standing in for chief executive officer A. Shuanise Washington.

Jeffries set the tone of the morning: "We are in a battle for the well-being of our community. At this National Town Hall meeting, and as we

move forward, we are here to devise, perfect and amplify a plan of action." His comment was echoed by Sewell: "The question we have to ask ourselves is, 'Are we ready for a program that really will give us substantive change?'"

With that, the panelists came on and, under Martin's

firm and candid guidance, set itself the task of articulating what exactly the #BlackLivesMatter movement is.

"It's not just a hashtag," Garza said. The organization, she said, was founded in 2013 in response to the Trayvon Martin case in Florida. It now has 26 local chapters, which are working in their communities around issues of education, employment, police brutality and violence. "We are advancing policy at the local and

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Community Breakfast and Health Fair Feeds Body, Spirit, Calls Attention to Homelessness

By TIM PULLIAM



Former Washington Redskins' Clinton Portis (left), Tonya Veasey, chair of CBC Spouses, and Vivian Creighton serve food at the Community Breakfast and Health Fair on Thursday morning.

Whether it's a hot cup of coffee, the peace of mind that comes from preventative health care or the soul-stirring sounds of a gospel choir, the Community Breakfast and Health Fair helps fulfill the work of the Central Union Mission: to serve the hungry, hurting and homeless.

The mission, nestled in the shadow of the U.S. Capitol building, was the site of the annual event, hosted by the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) Spouses.

"This is a privilege for us," said David Treadwell, the mission's executive director. "It's a special privilege when you get to do it the second time. It means folks must have had a good time the first time. This room was

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Brother to Brother: Helping Young Black Men

By MICHAEL DUNCAN

Thursday's General Session Luncheon was devoted to a panel discussion on young black men, the pitfalls they encounter, and how to help them. Moderated by Judge Greg Mathis, the panel included Wesley Lowery of the *Washington Post*, who reported on and was briefly arrested during the recent unrest in Ferguson, Missouri, following the fatal police shooting of Michael Brown; New York Assemblyman Michael Blake of the Bronx; the Rev. Michael Watley, executive minister, Reid Temple A.M.E. Church; Damian "Chip" Dizard, a teacher at Baltimore's Digital Harbor High School; and ESPN announcer and former Baltimore Raven Ray Lewis.

Rep. Hakeem Jeffries (NY), co-chair of the 45th Annual Legislative Conference (ALC), gave brief introductory remarks during which he laid out the scope of the issue facing the panel. He told the story of a conversation he'd had with one of his constituents, a young man who had done something wrong and been sentenced to a stretch in a prison in upstate New York. During the time he was incarcerated, he had made friends with one of the guards, a young white man from the area. On his last day in prison, as he was saying goodbye to his friend, the guard said, "I want to thank you."

"Thank me?" said the soon-to-be-freed prisoner. "For what?"

"For helping me buy my boat."



Assemblyman Michael Blake, second from left, makes a point during the general session lunch, "Brother2Brother - A Conversation Among Black Men," as Wesley Lowery, far left, Damian "Chip" Dizard, and Rev. Michael Watley look on.

And I'm sure someday my son will be thanking your son for helping him buy his boat."

Noting that black men are six times as likely to be incarcerated as white men, said Jeffries, "That's the expectation."

The question before the panel, of course, was how to confound that expectation. "I want to start with some good news," said Mathis. "Going all the way back to emancipation, every effort we've undertaken and struggled with, we've won. Emancipation? We won. The Voting Rights Act and the Civil Rights Act? We won. We'll win this, too. The question is, 'How do we win?'"

Turning to specifics, Mathis asked members of the panel for their views on the ways the K-12 system affects young black men. One prob-

lem for the community, said Lewis, is getting young black men to stay in the educational system long enough for it to have an effect on them. "If you want to defeat the system," he said, "you have to educate your mind. Kids drop out of school before they understand what school is." Preventing that, he said, is the role of the family.

This was echoed by Watley, who said, "It starts with the church. The church is the foundation of the family, and the family is the foundation of the school system."

One thing that's sorely needed, the panel seemed to agree, is mutual accountability. If young men do wrong, fine, punish them. If policemen do wrong, they, too, should be punished. "There need to be consequences on both sides," said Watley.

ALC Daily

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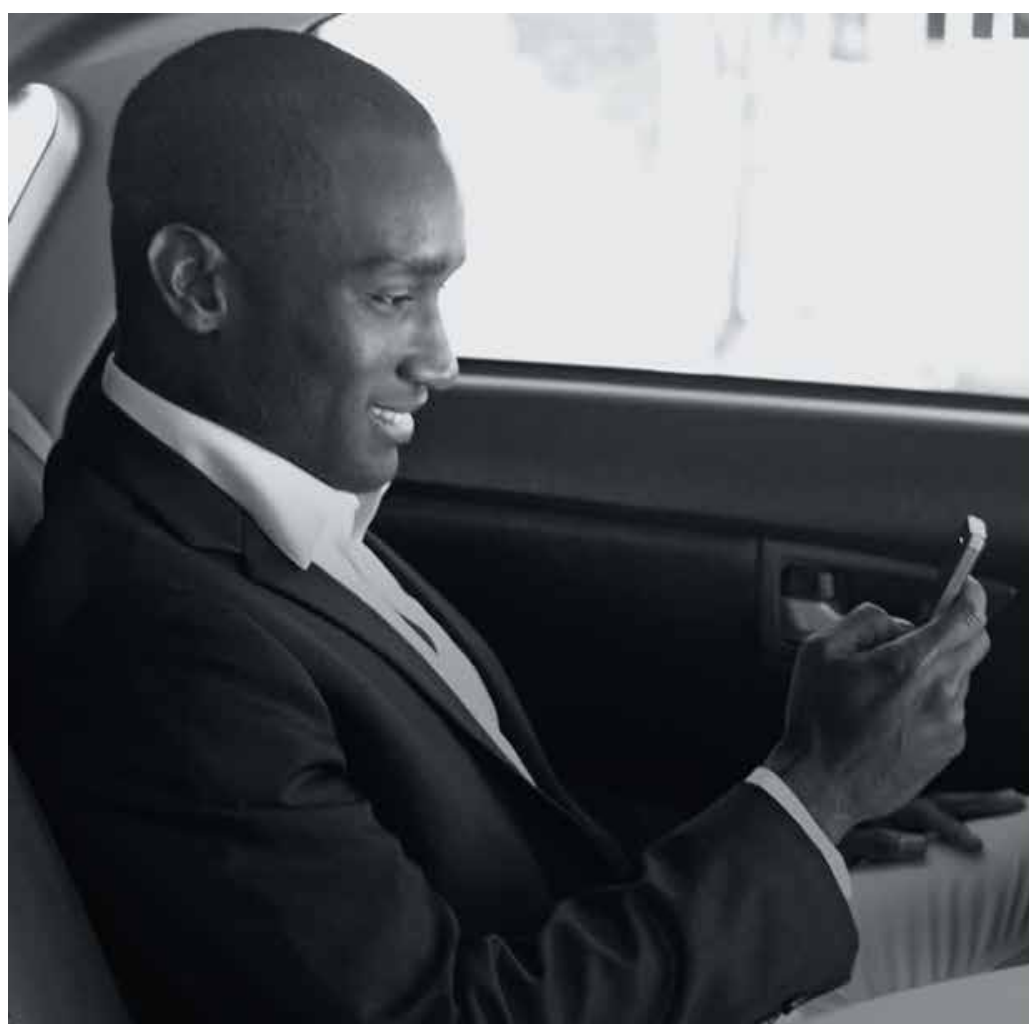
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Entrepreneurship the Answer to Unemployment?

By SHRITA STERLIN-HERNANDEZ

If there is a bright spot to be found in African-American business development, it shines most brilliantly with women entrepreneurs.

Between 1997 and 2015, ac-

cording to the 2015 State of Women-Owned Businesses Report, commissioned by American Express OPEN, the number of African-American woman-owned businesses grew by 322 percent. Businesses owned by other women of color also grew exponentially, but none to that degree.

These women have overcome challenges such as limited access to mentors, exclusion from elite networks and a gender wage gap. Starting their own businesses, however, has allowed them to establish their own rules—and open doors for others. The 1.3 million businesses owned by African-American women as of 2015 employ 297,500 workers in addition to the owners, and generate an estimated \$52.6 billion in revenue.

Overcoming Obstacles, Achieving Success

In order to help African Americans of both genders succeed, the CBCF's Center for Policy Analysis and Research (CPAR) has named the advancement of minority business development and entrepreneurship one of its 2015 New Horizons Initiatives. The goal is to identify factors that inhibit equal access to start-up capital, as well as to support community-based solutions that help minority business owners achieve economic parity.

It is an important—and timely—endeavor. Crowdfunding is changing the way many raise capital in today's marketplace, but strong networks are essential for success.

This summer, the *Wall Street Journal* reported that the national unemployment rate for African Americans fell below 10 percent in the second quarter of 2015 for the first time since 2007—but it still is more than double the rate for whites and almost twice the national average overall. Work experience and education are significant factors. Even those with

education, however, endure challenges. According to the Economic Policy Institute, African-American graduates still face significantly higher rates of unemployment than their white counterparts. Training, mentoring, encouragement and opportunities for capital may help these graduates discover success in working for themselves instead.

Don't Miss...

Friday, September 18

**Financial Services
Braintrust: Closing the
Wealth Gap: Solutions for
Increasing Access to
Capital for Black
Entrepreneurs**
9:00 - 11:50 AM
Room: 144A

**Cultivating the Next
Generation of Entrepreneurs**
1:00 - 2:00 PM
Room: 143C

**The State of African-
American Small Businesses:
Tackling Barriers to Achieve
Economic
Prosperity**
2:00 - 4:00 PM
Room: 140A

**Wealth Building in the
African-American
Community**
2:00 - 4:00 PM
Room: 144C

Town Hall

Continued from page 1

state level," she said, "and we are also trying to change the conditions and the culture in our communities."

Cummings commented, "They took a moment in our history and turned it into a movement. And the thing that I am so grateful for is that they have taken our pain and turned it into a passion." With, he noted, some help from 21st century technology. "If it weren't for the iPhone," he said, "we'd still only be having one side of a conversation."

Garza was equally clear about what #BlackLivesMatter is not. "We are not—as Fox News says—a hate group or a band of terrorists. We do not advocate, nor do we call for, the murder of law enforcement personnel. We want to be clear that the conversation that Fox News and other conservative pundits are trying to advance is intentional. It's designed to distract and to remove credibility from a movement that is having an impact not just nationally but internationally."

One of the biggest problems, Butterfield said, both at the state and the federal level, is that when young offenders are arrested and charged with a crime, there's a tendency to pile on charges. "A 16-year-old may have been arrested for simple possession of marijuana," he said. "But by the time it gets to court it's possession of marijuana, felony possession of marijuana, possession with intent to sell and deliver marijuana, conspiracy to sell marijuana, and on and on. This poor kid stays in jail for a year with a court-appointed lawyer who walks in and says, 'I've got a plea bargain for you. You plead to eight charges, and the other ten charges will be dismissed.' The young fellow says, 'Yes, I'll take it,' and signs on the dotted line and does his time. Then he goes out into the world of work and is doomed for life."

In black community relations with the police, Martin turned to former police chief Demings. Isn't it imperative, he asked her, for good cops to open their mouths and not stay silent when bad cops do bad things?

"I've been in law enforcement for 27 years," she said. "I took two oaths: one as a police officer and

one as chief of police. In both cases I took an oath that I would serve and protect my community and preserve life. I spent every day on the job trying to do that. I believe that evil only happens in the world when good people sit back and are silent. Every good police officer—this isn't just something I'm saying today; it's something I've said many times before—every good police officer should speak out against those who are doing wrong, because they are making it bad for everybody. And let me just say this: the police are just as much a part of your community as your neighbors are. This isn't just a police problem. It's a community problem."

Which brought the conversation around to solutions. Yes, it's a prob-

"The question we have to ask ourselves is, 'Are we ready for a program that really will give us substantive change?'"
— Rep. Terri Sewell

lem—or more accurately, a set of problems. What do you do? Butterfield commented that the problems the National Town Hall addressed are not entirely susceptible to the kind of solutions that were found by the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s. "There is," he said, "a principle called federalism. We here in Congress cannot tell the states how to construct their criminal justice systems. The #BlackLivesMatter movement must put pressure on state legislatures and state government."

Nonetheless, as Garza pointed out, the U.S. Department of Justice has said that there is room for the federal government to assume greater oversight of state and local law enforcement. And, said Cummings, there actually is bipartisan support for criminal justice reform. There's a lot of work to do, but there's hope.

"If we do the policy," said Lee, "I believe that #BlackLivesMatter can be the same provocateurs that schooled a president named Lyndon Baines Johnson on the Civil Rights Act and the Voting Rights Act. And I want to encourage them. As Rep. John Lewis said, never give up, never give in and never give out."

Congressional Black Caucus FOUNDATION ALC '15
SEPTEMBER 16-20

Prayer Breakfast

Saturday, September 19, 2015
Walter E. Washington Convention Center
801 Mt Vernon Pl NW, Washington, DC 20001
7:30 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.
Hall D

Faith is the foundation of the African American community. For nearly three decades, The prayer breakfast has been the inspirational high note of CBCF's Annual Legislative Conference. This year's message of inspiration will be delivered by Reverend. Dr. Otis Moss, III, Senior Pastor of Trinity United Church of Christ in Chicago, Illinois.

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Liberty and Justice for all



New Attendee Session Forges Quick Community, Fresh Opportunity

By TATIANA NOBOA

Staci Adams, who recently returned to the U.S. after four years of teaching in the United Arab Emirates, has been keeping a close eye on her home country's changing racial climate. In the time she was gone, issues of justice, equity and youth advocacy have all come to the forefront in challenging ways.

"Other than donate to causes, there was little I could do from my computer in the middle of the desert," she said. "I did the best I could to stay abreast of information and try to understand the plight from afar. But it is a very different country coming back than it was when I left in 2011."

Now armed with teaching experience in Georgia and abroad as well as a fresh master's degree in public administration from Villanova University, Adams is ready to hit the ground running—and she had a feeling the 45th Annual Legislative Conference (ALC) would be a great place to start.

"I'm here to learn," she said. "To observe, to talk, to meet. I read a lot while I was away, but I wasn't here. So I haven't been able to be an active community member myself."

One of her first stops, then, was the informal New Attendee Wel-

come session Thursday morning. In addition to providing networking opportunities, the event included a few words from Rep. Hakeem Jeffries (NY); Christina Sullivan-Mutia, manager of Leadership Education and Scholarship Programs at the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation, Incorporated (CBCF); and Keith Benjamin, a member of the class of 2009 CBCF Emerging Leaders Internship Program.

"It's a privilege to be able to stand here and talk about what is like family to me," Benjamin said in greeting the crowd. "It's not just professional." Now working to ensure equitable transportation, his resume includes interning several times on the Hill and serving as a lobbyist—a living example of the way the CBCF can impact young people's horizons. The ALC helps support internships, scholarships and other opportunities for people like Benjamin, Sullivan-Mutia said, and she wanted new attendees to see the benefits first-hand.

Benjamin offered the crowd three "rules" for attending the ALC: recognizing that it is the place to find competitive advantage through information and connections; ensuring your primary question, no matter what the issue, is answered; and re-



Thursday's New Attendee Welcome session draws a packed house, a great kickoff to the ALC experience.

membering that what occurs during the weeklong event is not all there is.

"Take what you learn here, take what you exchange here, and bring it back to your community," he said. "I encourage you to take full advantage of all the opportunities. The truth of the matter is, talk is cheap. We have a lot of things going on today, a lot of problems to be solved.... I'm encouraged that you decided to take four or five days out of your schedule to be here in Washington, D.C., to make these exchanges, and

to grow in this particular way. I'm looking forward to the solutions that are going to come out of this room, the change that's going to come out of this room, because we're going to be the better for it."

Jeffries, co-chair of ALC '15, also encouraged attendees to fully dive in. He compared the crowd's first day at the ALC to his first day on the House floor in 2013.

"I was so excited to have the opportunity to represent some com-

Please see "NEW ATTENDEES" on page 10

From Selma to Baltimore: Civil Rights Movements Continue

By ANNE B. WILLIAMS

The images on the screen set the stage, juxtaposing the Selma to Montgomery March with today's #BlackLivesMatter movement.

And then, the warning from Dr. Frank Smith, one of the founders of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee: "Black Lives Matter is out doing today what we had to do in 1963," he said. "And we were doing it in 1963 for what had been given in 1863. You can win these rights, lose them and have to win them all over again."

In many ways, the Thursday afternoon session, "From Selma Champions to Baltimore Leaders: Sharing the Principles of Effective Movements," focused on the constant fight for civil rights. In addition to Smith, #BlackLivesMatter co-founder Alicia Garza and Carmen Perez, co-founder of Justice League NYC, addressed the panel. Rep. John Lewis (GA) joined late in the program, delayed by important votes on the House floor. Melissa Harris-Perry, MSNBC host, moderated.

Whether today or 50 years ago, activists face daunting challenges, including daily fears for their own safety and the paranoia that comes

from constant surveillance.

Garza made an impassioned plea for participants to remember that "this is our lives. This is not happening in a Petri dish." As the list of those killed at the hands of police increases, Garza has had to stop running through the names. "The list keeps growing and I don't want to do the list anymore, because I don't want to leave anybody out. There is a danger in becoming desensitized because we're human, but there's only so much human beings can take."

Then there are the pressures of the work itself. Perez, who became an activist after the death of her sister and the incarceration of her brother, said she was warned by Harry Belafonte, founder of The Gathering for Justice. "He said, 'Know that you will be surveilled.' I really didn't understand the caliber of what he was talking about." As Justice League NYC led a march from New York to Washington, D.C., an overnight stay in a mosque was met with drone surveillance and black cars pulling into the parking lot. "Initially I felt I must be doing something important for them to follow me," Perez said. "But it gets old.... What gives us hope is that we know that we're fighting for something larger than us."

Harris-Perry noted the irony that

surveillance likely is done by the FBI, under the auspices of U.S. Attorney General Loretta Lynch, or the National Security Agency under Susan Rice, or the U.S. Department of Homeland Security under Jeh Johnson—all of whom are African-Americans.

Garza and Perez both detailed specific policies and bills they'd like to see enacted. Perez noted a move to end racial profiling and another to stop the militarization of police. Garza wanted to see an adaptation of the standards under which police are prosecuted for brutality and an investment in jobs. "I don't think that employment fixes all ills, but it is not lost on me that black folks have by

and large been dislocated from the economy," Garza said.

Smith urged both organizations to continue to show up at the side of grieving families when a son or father has been killed at the hands of police. "It's important they know they're not alone."

When Lewis arrived, he spoke directly to the younger activists. "I love you for what you're doing," he said. "We're just too darn quiet. We have to make some noise and push and pull. Sometimes you have to go with your heart, go with your gut. Be brave, courageous and be bold. You have to disturb the order of things."



#CBCFALC15

@dberrygannett

Tammy Brown on her 17-member choir performing at #CBCFALC15: We are just a little church from Yazoo City. This is a chance of a lifetime

@KembaSmith

We need to hold attorneys legislators and whomever comes after @POTUS accountable for our criminal justice system. #CBCFALC15

@Jopwell

"We must stimulate the demand side of the equation [in companies' willingness to hire diverse young people]" #CBCFALC15



Celebration of Leadership Connects Arts, Civic Engagement

By KERLINE JULES

With the sole purpose of recognizing African-American accomplishments in the arts, the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation, Incorporated (CBCF) hosted the 19th Annual Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) Spouses Celebration of Leadership in the Fine Arts Wednesday night. Held at Sidney Harman Hall in Washington, D.C., this year's esteemed honorees include poet Haki Madhubuti, artist Clarence Major, activist Peggy Cooper Cafritz and musician Frédéric Yonnet.

"The cultural achievements and contributions of African-American artists are an inextricable part of the American story," said A. Shuanise Washington, CBCF president and chief executive officer, in a prepared statement. "Through the Celebration of Leadership in the Fine Arts, the CBCF and the CBC Spouses recognize artists whose creativity and ingenuity reflect the African-American experience while contributing to our nation's wider culture."

Staying true to the arts, attendees were treated to heartfelt performances by cellist Lindsey Sharpe, vocalist Olusola Fadiran and—by audience request—a spur-of-the-moment harmonica presentation by Yonnet.

Hosted by WUSA anchor Andrea Roane, the evening also included a passionate panel discussion with the honorees on the importance of art in our culture, the art community's connection to civic engagement, and current affairs such as #BlackLivesMatter.

During the discussion, Madhubuti expressed that the conditions



Congressional Black Caucus Foundation, Incorporated (CBCF) board members, CBC Spouses, honorees, and scholarship recipients gather at the 19th Annual CBC Spouses Celebration of Leadership in the Fine Arts.

of the African diaspora are no different from where they were 40 to 50 years ago. Madhubuti continued to expound that the biggest challenges to the black community are wealth, access to wealth and how we lack the institutions to support wealth creation in our community.

Cooper Cafritz connected the arts to advocacy.

"As artists, it is important for us to engage our people to vote," she said. "We as a people must vote. We must get people to run for office who are sensitive to our people's issues." She went on to speak about the #BlackLivesMatter movement, expounding on how the movement's aggression keeps it visible and in the news.

"We each have an obligation to be and remain angry," Cooper Cafritz

said. "Anger, more than hope, drives us to action... purposeful anger."

The panel discussion culminated with a dialogue on the importance of advocating for arts in our schools. The honorees expressed how the

push for science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) education is important, but we cannot move forward without our humanities subjects. Culture is the sum total of what and who we are. We cannot depend on the schools as it relates to the arts.

Following the panel discussion, attendees enjoyed a vibrant band performance while enjoying refreshments and networking with lawmakers, business and civic leaders, and concerned citizens.

Celebrating with a purpose, the proceeds from this ALC signature event will go towards providing scholarships to students pursuing visual and performing arts.

"The CBC Spouses are proud that the proceeds from this event will go toward providing scholarships for young, emerging talent," said event chair Dr. Maya Rockey Moore Cummings. "They need our support to move the legacy of African-American art forward for generations to come."

The evening was sponsored by The Walt Disney Company, in addition to BET Networks, Viacom and Heineken.



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@LottieJoiner

Washington, DC

"The War on Drugs is not working," notes Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee. "Mass incarceration must end and overcriminalization." #CBCFALC15

@Kattorney

@JudgeGregMathis is schooling the #CBCFALC15 on the prison-industrial complex today! #LJFA #blacklivesmatter

@_TylerTheTyle

Washington, DC

"We have not gotten to where we want to be, but we have made progress" @JacksonLeeTX18 #CBCFALC15

Community

Continued from page 1

designed for occasions like this."

And it was a full room as those served by the mission's numerous programs packed in for a breakfast served by the CBC Spouses. On its face, it is something the mission does frequently—in 2014 they provided more than 1.15 million meals—but this event stands out.

"The CBCF and the CBC members know and understand the importance of giving back to the community," said Tonya Veasey, chairperson of the CBC Spouses. "I love to walk in here and see the faces of the people who then see that we care. They see that we haven't forgotten about them."

There were plenty of opportunities to make memories over breakfast, which stretched over multiple courses. In between dishing out

eggs, legendary Washington Redskins running back Clinton Portis took photos and talked football with attendees. The Sears Holdings Associate Gospel Choir provided an inspirational backdrop, with a number of rousing gospel songs.

The music is what has kept Willie Leake coming back to the Community Breakfast and Health Fair for several years. A regular at the Central Union Mission, Leake said the mission has "been helping me for a long time. I enjoy coming to the meals."

She also intended to take advantage of the health fair, which provided flu shots and basic preventative care. She planned to have her blood pressure checked again. Though she has high blood pressure typically, last year's event showed that it was well managed. She hoped for the same good results again.

Her friend Clara Exum also is a repeat attendee at the mission and

the CBCF breakfast. "I see people I haven't seen in a while," she said. Having the CBC Spouses there to serve her makes her feel good. "Some people just want to run in and then run out. They're here to work and they seem happy about it."

The mission is equally happy to receive the efforts of the CBC Spouses. The location on Massachusetts Avenue is relatively new for the 131-year-old organization. Since it moved two years ago, "the dynamics of the population changed considerably," said Wanda Spence, the mission's director of administration. "We're near Union Station and there seems to be a lot of homelessness in this area."

She's seen the Hispanic and senior populations increase as demographics have changed. She points to a young mother cradling her infant and several seasoned citizens. But it is the veteran population that has

been the most pronounced—and disappointing—increase. "Many groups that are in the district that are wanting to do more for them," Spence said. "They know veterans shouldn't be homeless, not a one."

R. Donahue Peebles, chairman of the CBCF Board of Directors, noted the irony that anyone is homeless in the world's most prosperous country. He noted his work with the CBC founders while an intern on Capitol Hill, and remarked that events like the Community Breakfast and Health Fair would meet their goals in founding the organization. "Here we are, 50 years after the Civil Rights Act passage and we're in the nation's capital of the greatest country in the world. And we're in a mission where men and women are homeless. I'm proud to be involved with the spouses, who remind us of the great debt that our country owes to every one of its citizens."



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CBCF Alumni Profile

CBCF Fellowship Offers Important Skills, Key Relationships

By TIM PULLIAM

Clarissa Shah learned a key lesson during her Congressional Black Caucus, Incorporated (CBCF) fellowship in then Sen. Barack Obama's office.

"Congressional offices employ and work with people from all walks of life who are passionate about an issue of concern to them," she said. "You must learn to interact with all these people and convey that your member cares about them."

The CBCF fellowship has prepared her well to translate that education to the corporate world. A lawyer and Chinese linguist, Shah is a supply chain staff counsel for global manufacturer Emerson. It puts her in touch with a variety of cultures and global law. "Being able to visit these places to work on projects, especially given my interest and background in Chinese-language history and



Clarissa Shah

culture, has been fantastic."

It's a fast-paced environment, much as she found during her time with the CBCF. "It was 2007 and im-

migration reform was a hot topic," she said. "Because it was such a broad topic, you didn't know which direction the debate would venture. You had to be prepared and be able to think on your feet—another skill that's valued in the workplace."

The sheer number of issues that a senator had to be versed on at once was eye-opening. "It never really occurred to me as a freshman in college that all these issues had to be addressed simultaneously," she said. "It's not like they addressed immigration and that's all they focused on at one time. Often they would have a debate on one topic during the morning and another in the afternoon. It was fascinating to watch."

Though Shah works in the private sector, she remains equally focused on giving back to the local community, particularly in her native St. Louis. She's currently developing a program to pair college students who know Chinese with elementary school students who may not oth-

erwise have an opportunity to learn a second language. "There are needs on both ends. College students are passionate about the language, but also need to boost their credibility. Students at the school would not have the resources to have an extensive language programs. These two needs are complementary."

Her fellowship led to "lifelong friendships" with her cohort, all of whom attended her wedding last year. "I couldn't have imagined it any other way," Shah said. "We have a great support system and we cheer each other on as we experience personal and professional success. The CBCF gave us such an important network and connections that will last a lifetime."

Look for additional CBCF alumni profiles in the onsite issues of *ALC Daily* during ALC '15.

A Match Made in ALC Heaven: Ayisha Dabre and Siraj Mumin

By TATIANA NOBOA

When most people speak of strategic partnerships formed at the Annual Legislative Conference (ALC), they can't touch the scope of Ayisha Dabre and Siraj Mumin. The pair, who met at the event in 2013, return this year as a newly married couple.

Their eyes locked as Dabre was leaving the Walter E. Washington Convention Center; Mumin was headed inside, attending the ALC for the first time. Now supervisor of Detroit-based DTE Energy's Belle River Mills and Columbus Compressor

Station, he was in town that September to take part in the American Association of Blacks in Energy board meeting, and a mentor suggested he add the ALC to his itinerary. Dabre, meanwhile, had been to the ALC several times before as a longtime resident of Washington, D.C., with interests in legislation and policy. That day, she had just attended the Saving Our Sons issue forum, hosted by her fellow Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority member, Congresswoman Frederica Wilson. Mumin and Dabre saw each other again in passing that evening, but it wasn't until the next day, when they saw one another a

third time, that Mumin approached and struck up a conversation.

"And from that conversation," he said, "the rest is history."

Meeting on such grounds, he said, showed upfront that they had "similar goals and interests."

"We were there for the same purpose," Mumin said. "The event brings like-minded people together, and you can connect not only on a professional level, but also on a social level, or spiritual level, or different means."

And his new wife hasn't been the only benefit of attending. Mumin credits the ALC with helping him advance himself, build a stronger network—and shake hands with President Barack Obama, an experience he won't soon forget.

Dabre, meanwhile, said that attending various sessions and forums over the years has given her confidence in networking elsewhere, as well as helped her professionally. In addition to being a devoted mentor, Dabre, who has an MBA, is director of the Federal Aviation Administration's Workforce of the Future Strategic Initiative.

"It's now easier for me to find common ground when meeting others for the first time, based on the experiences I've had," she said. "It's been really positive, in addition to, of course, meeting my wonderful



"The event brings like-minded people together, and you can connect not only on a professional level, but also on a social level, or spiritual level, or different means." — Siraj Mumin

husband."

This year, the couple, who have made their home in West Bloomfield, Michigan, expect to attend many of the ALC events together, rather than taking a divide-and-conquer approach. Of particular interest will be

Please see "MATCH" on page 12



Ayisha Dabre (left) and Siraj Mumin, who met at ALC '13, were married this past July.



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African-American Inclusion in Technology Jobs: A Goal for 2020

By MICHAEL DUNCAN

The alarm on the smartphone provided a gentle reminder to wake. The activity monitor offered insight into health. An app located the nearest coffee shop. And the internet provided a glimpse at the day's headlines—or funny cat videos.

Chances are, that's how most of us spent the first hour or so of our day and it is how the day will continue, with technology woven into practically every aspect.

And yet, those who create the apps, the hardware and software

that power our lives are missing a key element: the inclusion of African-Americans. The Washington Post looked at the issue this summer and found tech giants sorely lacking. Yahoo's African-American workforce is about 2 percent while Google has 81 blacks among 5,500 U.S.-based workers, the newspaper reported.

This, at a time when the technology industry faces a looming worker shortage. It is anticipated by 2020, there will be 1.4 million new tech jobs in the United States. "And if we keep training people at the rate we're training them, 70 percent will go unfilled," said Troy Clair, chief of staff for Rep. G.K. Butterfield (NC).

Problem, meet solution. "Obviously there's a huge opportunity there, where we think that African-Americans can help fill the gap," Clair said.

The Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) and the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation, Incorporated (CBCF) are both at work on the issue, as are other organizations like Rainbow/PUSH. While each organization may have a different approach, all focus on improving inclusion of African-Americans in technology jobs by 2020.

"One of the key parts of the initiatives is focusing on the terminology of African-American inclusion," Clair said. "We almost never use the word diversity. Technologies companies are diverse, in terms of countries represented and languages spoken. Much of the diversity conversation has focused on including women. That's important, but we need to specifically broaden that. That's why

we call it an African-American inclusion plan."

Gary May, dean of the College of Engineering at Georgia Tech and an outspoken advocate of improving those underrepresented in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) fields, points to the mutual benefits that come when everyone has a seat at the technology table.

To be sure, STEM jobs tend to be high-paying; the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce's 2015 report found that nine of the top 10 highest-paying jobs were for engineers.

Beyond that, though, May sees the benefits to companies that seek to expand their typical workforce.

"Engineering designs and outcomes are better when the teams that do those designs are representative," he said. "It results in better, more marketable products, products that speak to the various sensibilities and backgrounds."

To prove the point, May details that the first voice-activated devices did not work if a woman was speaking—an oversight caused simply because there were no women on the design team.

A Deep Issue

The CBC Tech 2020 initiative works closely with companies, urging them to develop their own plans to improve African-American inclusion. That approach was by design, Clair said.

"We could have been very prescriptive: 'Do A, B and C.' But we're not in the industry," Clair said. "Apple

Please see "TECHNOLOGY" on page 12

CBCF Joins Work on Tech Inclusion

By MICHAEL DUNCAN

When the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) introduced its Tech 2020 initiative, the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation, Incorporated (CBCF) saw a natural intersection with its own work and quickly aligned.

The CBCF's Leadership Institute offers a number of programs designed to enhance STEM career opportunities, including fellowships, internships and a China study abroad program. Fellowships place emerging leaders in Capitol Hill offices, working on key issues like energy, health and technology among others.

In addition, the Foundation's Center for Policy Analysis and Research (CPAR) has stepped up to research issues that will provide insight into issues affecting African-American participation in STEM jobs.

One report will explore the systemic causes and identify strategies to improve African-American representation. Another CPAR report will investigate the readiness of historically black college and university STEM programs, including operations, growth and funding.

Working along with the National Society of Black Engineers, CPAR will look at creating an employment training toolkit to organize and implement community engagement opportunities.

Don't Miss...

Friday, September 18

**Science And Technology
Braintrust – The Future of
Consumer Electronics &
The Journey to Mars and
Beyond**

9:00 - 11:50 AM
Room: 146B

**Overcoming the Odds:
STEM Education and Col-
lege Completion for African
Americans**

11:00 AM - 1:00 PM
Room: 140A

**Policy Now Leveraging
Models and Technology:
Transforming Education in
Urban America**

1:00 - 2:30 PM
Room: West Overlook

New Attendees

Continued from page 5

munities in central Brooklyn that I had come from," he said. "I was really tempted to go to the House floor that first day, stand in front of the microphone and simply say, 'Holla!' But I thought if I did, I might just hear the voice of Shirley Chisholm calling down from heaven saying, 'Young man, we sent you to the Congress to stand up, so don't go down there and act up.' At the end of the day, what we in the Congressional Black Caucus have been charged to do on behalf of black America is to stand up for our interests, be they economic, be they with respect to the justice system, be they with respect to achieving the full promise that is America. That, essentially, is what this conference is about, and your robust engagement will help make it what it needs to be.... We want to make this a working conference that produces tangible results and

**"I like learning what
other people are doing."**

changes that benefit black America and people all throughout this country."

Adams, at her table, was already on it. As the event wound down, she was finding common ground with Dr. Ellana Stinson, an emergency room physician from Boston. Stinson, who holds a master's degree in health policy and management, is attending the ALC to go beyond what's being talked about concerning health disparities and learn what's actually being done.

Adams thought Stinson seemed familiar, and it wasn't long before they learned they attended Spellman College at the same time, likely introduced by a mutual friend.

Networking is always a benefit of a conference like the ALC, Stinson said. "And I like learning what other people are doing."



CBC spouses pose with the winners of their annual essay contest at Thursday's "CBC Spouses Essay Contest and Issue Forum – The Most Pressing Issue" from the POV of Generation X. The first place winner is Brayden Stokes, Vicksburg, MS; the second place winner is Chandon Floyd, Baltimore, MD; and the third place winner is Andre Fernando Jenkins, Walterboro, SC



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**Let's
Go
Places**



Following their July wedding in the States, Ayisha Dabre and Siraj Mumin traveled to Ghana for three days of nuptial ceremonies.

Match

Continued from page 8

sessions and braintrusts surrounding the advancement of the African-American community; exploring the potential impact of the 2016 election; media portrayals of recent events in the African-American community; and global economic advancement.

The last topic is personal as well as professional. Following their July wedding in the States, the couple traveled to Ghana for three days of nuptial ceremonies. Dabre's father, a retired Connecticut educator, recently relocated back to his homeland to assume the responsibility of Chief, a role previously held by his brother and their father before him. The couple plan to assist Chief Dabre in his educational advancement and

economic development efforts in Ghana in the future.

Though most attending the ALC this year won't come home with quite the experience of Dabre and Mumin, they do have words of advice for others seeking to get all they can out of the conference. First, Mumin said, he'd tell first-timers that they should consider their inaugural ALC simply a chance to get their feet wet, rather than trying to take it all in.

"Be patient, be prepared, and prepare yourself for the next year's conference, too," he said.

And be open to meeting new people, Dabre added. "Leverage those opportunities." After all, when you're at a session, she said, "You never know who you're sitting next to."

Technology

Continued from page 10

has been around for 20 years and Uber for two years; they're in different spaces. So we wanted to be more flexible."

Still, the approach calls for some best practices, including reaching out to historically black colleges and universities and making African-American inclusion part of the corporate value statement.

"We didn't want a bunch of plans that say, 'We love diversity and we want to increase it,'" Clair said. "These corporations look nimble and fast, but they're still corporations.

They have to do their own deliberations and clear things with legal and government affairs."

Clair said that a number of companies are in the process of producing plans, and he hopes to have some announcements during the ALC '15 Tech Summit.

But understand: This is just the beginning of a lengthy process. It's not just focused on getting companies to increase the number of African-American workers, but also inclusion on boards of directors and executive leadership teams, and among vendors and venture capital investors.

To fill the coming worker shortage,

though, means ensuring that students are ready. May points out that Georgia Tech produces more African-American engineers than any other university in the country. "There's just not enough to go around," he said. "There are endemic issues to get people into these programs. Successful retention and graduation requires a supportive environment."

He points to research that shows that a summer bridge program, peer mentoring and tutoring all can assist students. Then there's the need to pique student interest in STEM fields much earlier in the process. It becomes something of a cycle.

"There is plenty of literature that says that underserved communities have underserved schools and that limits preparation," May said. "There aren't role models and those careers aren't easily relatable. People know what a doctor does, but they don't know what an engineer does."

The same cannot be said for students at Thomas Johnson Middle School in Prince George's County,

Maryland. The school has its own STEM program and students attended the CBC Tech 2020 kick off.

"Historically the trend has been to focus on high school students and you end up minimizing the level of interest," said Rodney McBride, the school's principal. "Once we start exposing them to the industry itself and what it can do for their lives and what they can do for the world, it's amazing."

During Hispanic Heritage Month from mid-September to mid-October and again for Black History Month in February, McBride's school will feature information about Hispanics and blacks working in the STEM fields.

"That's very important," McBride said. "Oftentimes, we believe because we don't see it, it's impossible for us. I constantly encourage that my black and brown children see adults who are black and brown in industry."

And if the Tech 2020 initiative works as planned, there will be a lot more of those role models available to look to.

ALC '15: Volunteer Corner

'You Need My Help? I'm There:'

By TATIANA NOBOA

For the past nine years, Sheron Odom has offered an ever-present smile that greets attendees at registration, at the door of events and wherever else necessary.

"If there's a place where I'm needed, there's no argument," she said. "I'm there."

That same can-do attitude follows her back to Philadelphia, where her job is working with teen girls in group homes; her off-hours are spent volunteering at her church or helping the homeless.

"It's fun, volunteering," she said. "Sometimes it is hard labor. During the ALC, we do a lot of work on our feet for a long amount of time. But knowing that people appreciate you, I don't need anything else. I'm one of those people: 'You need my help? I'm there.'"

Even if it comes at great personal sacrifice. She often takes unpaid time from her job to volunteer during the ALC.

"It gives me an opportunity to get out of Philly," she said. "I also get to bring more people along if they need more volunteers. I'm not big into politics, but at the end of the day, you can learn more in one week than I can learn throughout the entire year."

She loves the family atmosphere that has developed among the volunteers and she usually leaves the ALC with a "see you next year." "I said always until they tell me not to come back, I'll be coming back."

The fast-paced environment is just what she's looking for. Though volunteers are often invited in to some of the events, she's more likely to continue working. "If they have a concert and I'm standing at the door, I still get to hear the concert. If it's in between my duties, I may step in to some of the issue forums. I'm usually at the door of the Black Party. I don't go in, even though we're invited sometimes. I'm just there to serve."

She finds satisfaction that attendees remember her from year to year. "We're here for them and they're grateful for our help," she said.

But what thrills her the most are the young people who volunteer. "Because I work with teen girls, I live in an environment where people don't get out of their neighborhoods. Reaching out to people at such a young age gives me comfort, knowing that kids are interested and doing this. They're not coming because someone made them come."

And neither is she.

"There is plenty of literature that says that underserved communities have underserved schools and that limits preparation," May said. "There aren't role models and those careers aren't easily relatable. People know what a doctor does, but they don't know what an engineer does."



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Friday, Sept. 18

9:00 AM - 11:00 AM —

- Conversations about Sickle Cell Disease
- Fatherhood in the African-American Community
- Reversing the School to Prison Pipeline for African Americans and Minorities

9:00 - 11:50 AM —

- CBCF Sojourner Truth Session: Black Women & The Criminal Justice System: We, Too, Sing America
- Financial Services Braintrust: Closing the Wealth Gap: Solutions for Increasing Access to Capital for Black Entrepreneurs
- From Ferguson to \$15: The Economic Path Forward
- 11th Annual African-American Prostate Cancer Disparity Summit: Black America's Prostate Cancer Burden – A National Review
- Science And Technology Braintrust: The Future of Consumer Electronics & the Journey to Mars and Beyond
- Veterans Braintrust: The President's Vow: Ending Homelessness Among Veterans by 2015

9:00 AM - 12:00 PM —

- Criminal Justice Braintrust: Strengthening Relationships and Bridging Gaps between Law Enforcement and minority Communities

9:00 AM - 1:00 PM —

- Child Welfare Braintrust: No Place Like Home: The Reunification of Families with Children of Incarcerated Parents

9:00 AM - 2:00 PM —

- Do Black Lives Matter in Congress? Activism and Action Restoring Trust Between Community

Schedule-at-a-Glance

and Police

9:00 AM - 3:00 PM —
Africa Braintrust

9:00 AM - 5:00 PM —

- Health Braintrust – The March Towards Health Equity
- Valuing Black Lives: The Global Emotional Emancipation Summit

9:00 AM - 6:00 PM —
Exhibit Showcase

10:00 AM - 12:00 PM —

- Environmental Braintrust: Shared Impacts of Climate Change and Environmental Justice
- Avoice: Keep the Faith in Education: Rep. Adam Clayton Powell and the Passage of ESEA
- Education Behind the Wall: Breaking the Cycle of Incarceration
- Race Solutions 2015
- Sex, Politics, and Black Women: The Intersections of Race, Class, Gender and Our Liberation
- The Men Speak on Unfailing Bridges

10:00 AM - 1:00 PM —

- Emerging Leaders – Power to the People: Preparing the Next Generation of Leaders

11:00 AM - 1:00 PM —

- Overcoming the Odds: STEM Education and College Completion for African Americans

11:00 AM - 5:00 PM —

- Judiciary Braintrust: In Pursuit of Policing and Criminal Justice Reform

11:30 AM - 1:30 PM —

- Power of the Black Millennial Presented by Walmart

12:00 - 2:00 PM —

- Emerging Leaders – Alumni Panel

12:00 - 2:00 PM —

- Teens4Pink – Breast Health

1:30 - 3:30 PM —

- Environmental Sustainability in Black Communities
- HBCU College and Career Fair
- The Youth PROMISE Act – A PROMISE to Dismantle the School to Prison Pipeline

1:30 - 6:30 PM —

- My Brother's Keeper Town Hall

2:00 - 4:00 PM —

- Economic Development Through Technology for the Afro Diaspora
- Black Faith and Civic Activism
- Emerging Leaders – Black Voices in Media
- The State of African-American Small Businesses: Tackling Barriers to Achieve Economic Prosperity
- Wealth Building in the African-American Community
- Young, Gifted And Black Braintrust

3:00 PM - 5:00 PM —

- Black Men & Women Speak: Where Do We Go From Here?
- Community Health Centers, Health Disparities and Addressing the Social Determinants of Health
- Ensuring Solar Access in Underserved Communities: Successful Models and National Opportunities
- Fixing the Crisis in African-American Economic Security: Attaining Opportunity and Prosperity for All African Americans
- Fostering Economic Opportunities

for the Caribbean Diaspora in the United States

- Hip Hop and Politics
- Meet and Match Procurement Fair: Minority Suppliers Doing Business with the Public and Private Sector

3:30 - 5:30 PM —

- Income, Poverty & Health Insurance: Newly Released Statistics from the Census Bureau
- Not All Degrees Are Created Equal: Race and Ethnicity in Choice of College Major

4:30 - 6:30 PM —

- Real Estate Recovery: Is It Real for Black Americans in 2015?

6:00 - 8:00 PM —

- CBCF Alumni Association Networking Reception (*Invitation Only*)

Saturday, Sept. 19

7:30 - 10:00 AM —
Prayer Breakfast

8:00 AM - 1:00 PM —
Exhibit Showcase

10:00 AM - 2:00 PM —

- Returning Citizens: What Really Works in Re-entry?

10:30 AM - 12:00 PM —

- Caregivers in the African-American Community
- Not For Sistah's Only

10:30 AM - 1:00 PM —

- Documentary Screening: "25 to Life"

10:30 AM - 2:00 PM —

- Faith Leaders Roundtable Removing the Confederate Flag is Simply Not Enough
- Veteran Roundtable: A Candid Discussion

6:00 PM - 9:30 PM —

- Phoenix Awards Dinner (*Ticketed event*)

ALC Daily welcomes submissions from a number of guest bloggers this week.

The New Energy Economy and the African-American Community

By JAY JACKSON

@MrJay_Jackson
www.mrjayjackson.com/the-transformation-hour/

Hello beautiful people, and welcome to the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation, Incorporated (CBCF) 45th Annual Legislative Conference (ALC). This week is loaded with spectacular events designed to educate, celebrate accomplishments, promote networking and much more. I have deep gratitude and an abundance of energy to share my perspectives while covering this week's festivities. The atmosphere is booming, and I'm excited to see what the next few days will bring.

I've also met some dynamic personalities. During today's as-

signment, "The New Energy Economy: The Value of the African-American Community," I had the pleasure of meeting Vincent Barnes of Gray Global Advisors who provoked thought regarding our multitude of energy sources and how they've evolved over the centuries. Throughout the early history of man, wood energy was a common source. It was used to cook food, warm houses, light our paths, and later power trains and steamboats. In the 1800s, scientists began to understand electrodes and researched ways to turn electricity into a usable energy source. Next came the discovery of the four laws of electrodynamics; this led to electric power, radios and television.

To keep the new Industrial Revolution energized, during the 20th century an abundance of new energy and fuel sources were introduced. Energy sources included oil, natural

gas, nuclear power, and the revival of renewable energy sources like solar and wind power. Solar and wind power actually date back to the Greeks using the sun to heat their homes and the Egyptians using wind to sail boats down the Nile.

Today, solar panels can be found on satellites in space, call boxes across highways, and even the homes of everyday families. And as our planet's population continues to grow, the demand for new energy sources will continue to rise. As a proponent of Global Social Responsibility (GSR), I support the developmental efforts of these new energy sources. I believe they will prove vital for our national security and the international economy.

However, as you read this and consider new energy sources for the future, I call your attention to a source some want you to forget. An

energy source like no other. The source that built this nation into the superpower it is today. This source is the African-American community.

We are an invaluable source of another kind of energy. The kind required for the continued growth and development of our nation. Those who strategically devalue this source do so because they understand its power when it's fully engaged. The ALC demonstrates that this community remains an empowered source of energy when it works collaboratively. As our community continues to share knowledge, skills and abilities, we reinforce our value as Americans. I encourage you to continue to increase your individual value and contributions, while promoting the well being of the African-American community.



Ava Duvernay
Arts & Entertainment
(not shown)

Jeff Johnson
Trailblazer

Marvin Sapp
Living Legend

Marc Morial
Humanitarian

Carolyn Hunter
Owner-Operator

Tori Turner
Community Choice
Youth Award Winner

Aaron Johnson
Community Choice
Youth Award Winner

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