

the **Stand** south side news

www.mysouthsidestand.com

Syracuse, NY

OCTOBER 2014 Issue 37 FREE

HER SELF PORTRAIT

From Corcoran to art college: Alexis Belt credits Talent Agency

Meet popular drum line
Elks Pride 315 performs at many community events

book scout

Jon Speed's new shop is his way to preserve 'the printed word'

**HIV/AIDS
education**
MENS Project motivates
people to stay safe, healthy

MUSIC: USING IT AS THERAPY



FOUNDERPROFESSOR
STEVE DAVIS**DIRECTOR**

ASHLEY KANG

**BOARD OF
DIRECTORS**CHARLES
PIERCE-ELSHANTEASHIA
HARRIS ELREGINALD
A. SEIGLER

NATHANIEL BROWN

TAJUANA CERUTTI

**REPORTERS, EDITORS AND
PHOTOGRAPHERS**STUDENTS AT THE
S.I. NEWHOUSE SCHOOL OF
PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS**SPECIAL THANKS**DEAN LORRAINE BRANHAM,
STEPHEN MAHAN, ABBY LEGGE**CONTACT US**SOUTH SIDE NEWSPAPER PROJECT
(315) 882-1054
ASHLEY@MYSOUTHSIDESTAND.COMTHE STAND IS BASED OUT OF THE
SOUTH SIDE COMMUNICATION CENTER
2331 SOUTH SALINA STREET
SYRACUSE, NY 13205**DISCLAIMER**THE VIEWS EXPRESSED IN THE STAND ARE NOT
NECESSARILY THOSE OF THE ENTIRE STAFF.
THE STAND WELCOMES SUBMISSIONS FROM
ALL MEMBERS OF SYRACUSE'S SOUTH SIDE
BUT RETAINS THE RIGHT TO PUBLISH ONLY
MATERIAL THE STAND DEEMS ACCEPTABLE TO
THE PUBLICATION'S EDITORIAL PURPOSE AND
IN KEEPING WITH COMMUNITY STANDARDS.

- 4 HEALTH** | *Through special events, education, interventions and case management, MENS Project strives to curb HIV/AIDS cases, especially among minority men.*
- 6 COMMUNITY** | *The Elks Pride 315 drum line has a rich history — and, now, a new drum. Find out what makes these drum line members so special to the community.*
- 8 SCHOOL AND YOUTH** | *Meet Alexis Belt, who has chosen art as a career and has a good start as a freshman at SUNY Purchase. She credits Talent Agency for her drawing skills.*
- 10 COMMUNITY** | *While South Side residents wait for the Eat 2 Live Food Co-op to reopen, they are finding fresh produce from other places and from other people willing to help.*
- 12 FEATURES** | *Jon Speed has opened a bookstore on South Salina Street that has it all — used books, rare books and a comfortable place to put up your feet and enjoy the space.*
- 14 ENTERTAINMENT** | *Jeff Houston, of the Jeffrey Houston Experience, is battling cancer a second time. He turns to his music to help him cope. There are ways you can help, too.*

■ Cover image of a self-portrait of Alexis Belt provided by Dorene Quinn, Talent Agency

MYAH BAKER AND BABY AMARI

Our cover story last month featured Myah Lynell Baker, an expectant teen living at the Salvation Army's Transitional Apartments and Parenting Center.

We are happy to share that Baker gave birth to a healthy baby girl at 4:54 p.m. Friday, Sept. 5, at Crouse Hospital. Amarianna Lynell Baker weighed 7 pounds, 5 ounces and was 20 inches long.

Baker is calling her Amari.

While Baker's mother was not able to make it to the hospital, she stayed on speakerphone the entire time Baker was in labor, talking her through the process. Baker's mother continues to call her daughter daily.

Ashley Kang, director of The Stand, and photographer Jessica Suarez caught up with Baker when Amari was only 4 days old.

Baker recalls that on the morning of Sept. 5, she began to have slight labor pains and opted to walk the hallways of the Parenting Center for relief. By 1 p.m., labor was in full force, and an ambulance was called to take her to the hospital. Not long after Baker got settled in at the hospital, Amari was born. The pair stayed at the hospital two days and returned home Sunday, Sept. 7.

The biggest surprise, Baker says, is what she calls her baby's mean streak. "She has a good mean face," Baker joked.

It was obvious baby Amari was in charge. For example, as Baker attempted to wake her daughter for a final photo, Amari snapped back at her mom's touch and then gave a little hiss of displeasure. But, we mainly witnessed peaceful baby snores and happy sleep smiles.



CALENDAR | OCTOBER

What: Jazzuits at Jazz Central

When: 1:30 to 4:30 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 26

Where: CNY Jazz Central, 441 E. Washington St.

Cost: \$15 general public, \$10 seniors, \$5 students

Details: The Le Moyne College Jazzuits joins forces with Ronnie Leigh to perform the hits of Johnny Mercer, including "That Old Black Magic," "Autumn Leaves" and "Tangerine"

More Info.: Call (315) 445-4200

What: 7th annual Halloween Spooktacular

When: 4:30 to 7 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 30

Where: Beauchamp Library, 2111 S. Salina St.

Cost: Free

Details: Join the Spooktacular event for games, crafts, food and activities for the entire family. Come in costume if you'd like.

More Info.: Call the library at (315) 435-3395, and ask for Christine

Last month, The Stand put together its first photo exhibit for our summer storytelling series, From Where We Stand.

What a great and rewarding experience.

It was the perfect way to display the project's photo focus and celebrate the work of our eight participants and their mentors.

This project's goal was to put real families behind the camera to tell their own stories. Under the direction and guidance of professional mentors, the participants' photography skills rapidly improved, their confidence grew and, for many, a new hobby developed.

South Side resident Dale Harp worked with mentor Bob Gates. Both spoke at the opening reception Sept. 11 at the Link Gallery and shared what they got out of the experience. Before this project, Harp said, the only camera he ever used was a disposable one. "Every step of the way, Bob has been with me to teach me how to use the camera, upload photos and answer my questions," Harp told an audience of about 50 attendees. Gates, a professional photographer and retired professor at Syracuse University, shared how refreshing it was to work with Harp. He described how excited, eager and passionate Harp was to learn. "In all my years of teaching, I have never had a better student," Gates said.

A theme that emerged from participants' final photos is that black fathers do play a role in their sons' lives. In several images on display, a father playfully chases bubbles with his young son, a father supports his son's dream of becoming a boxing champion and a grandfather teaches his grandson how to ride a bike. Brenda Muhammad, a participant in From Where We Stand, said it best when she shared remarks at the opening reception: "This project is important because it shows there are strong men supporting and raising their sons in this community."

Participants' final photos can be seen at the Link Gallery through mid-October, and you can also view the projects, including short films and slideshows, online at FromWhereWeStand.net.

Ashley Kang



> Dale Harp, center, poses in front of his images with the directors of the Faith Hope Community Center, Ed Beauford, left, and Bob Harrison. | Bob Gates, From Where We Stand mentor

EXHIBIT STILL OPEN

From Where We Stand Gallery Exhibit

When: Open through mid-October — weekdays during business hours

Where: The Link Gallery at Syracuse University's Cantor Warehouse, 350 W. Fayette St., downtown

Details: The gallery is located on the ground floor. When you enter the building from the main entrance off Washington Street, take the elevator to the ground floor. You will exit the elevator into the gallery.

Cost: Free and open to the public

More Info: Call (315) 882-1054, email ashley@mysouthsidestand.com or visit FromWhereWeStand.net

PARTICIPANTS AND THEIR FOCUS

DALE HARP

Documented the youth at the Faith Hope Community Center

TAMARA REESE

Documented the love experienced within her family

CEIKAIYA CHEEKS

Corcoran High School senior worked to hone her video skills

EURAIN SCOTT

Over the summer, documented moving with his grandmother and preparing for college

MARTHA CHAVIS-BONNER

Captured her family's annual Fourth of July celebration

BRENDA MUHAMMAD

Documented quiet, joyous and contemplative moments

THE ROTHWELLS

Karaline and Isaac documented their community involvement on the Near Westside and captured moments with their son

ARDENA HARVEY

Documented her experience of being a single mother and recorded her son's transition from high school to college

ACR HEALTH LOCATIONS

ACR Health is a legacy of AIDS Community Resources and has six offices providing services in nine counties: Cayuga, Herkimer, Jefferson, Lewis, Madison, Oneida, Onondaga, Oswego and St. Lawrence

SYRACUSE OFFICE

Location:

627 W. Genesee St.

Phone:

(315) 475-2430

Online:

www.ACRHealth.org

Testing available

from 10 a.m. through 2:30 p.m., by appointment or walk-in

FREE VISION SCREENING

When: 11 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 9

Where: Beauchamp Branch Library, 2111 S Salina St.

Details: In observance of World Sight Day, an annual day that helps raise awareness about blindness and visual impairments globally, AURORA of CNY will offer a free vision screening for residents 50 and older. Light refreshments will be provided.

More Info.: Call Donna Reese at (315) 422-7263 ext. 253

HIV/AIDS EDUCATION

MENS Project puts its focus on keeping people safe and healthy



> A local dance crew performs at the Red Carpet Extravaganza held Sept. 11 at Landmark Theatre. The event was a way to raise awareness about HIV / AIDS in efforts to prevent its spread, especially among minority men. | Ricardo Imbert, Staff Photo

By | Ricardo Imbert
Urban Affairs reporter

Testing, interventions, case management are ways the group supports quality-of-life choices

A not-for-profit community health organization — whose mission, in part, is to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS among minority men — has been working to raise its local profile through events such as a recent entertainment extravaganza at the Landmark Theatre.

The MENS Project, which focuses on educating African-American and Latino men against risky sexual behavior, brought nearly a dozen performers to entertain more than 100 people who turned out for the Red Carpet Extravaganza at the theater Sept. 11. MENS, an acronym for Men Empowering and Nurturing Self, is a program within ACR Health, a nonprofit service provider with offices in Syracuse as well as in Utica and Watertown.

“Our purpose is community mobilization, to take communities of color and Latino communities and light a fire up under them,” said Daniel Reed, who works as an intervention specialist for the project. “We want to address how HIV/AIDS has disproportionately affected a small percentage of the population and try to change that.”

While these two groups make up a small percentage of the population, they account for more than half of new HIV infections in the area, Reed said.

Dance crews and performers, such as rapper Good Guap and singer Martino Storm, entertained the crowd, seated around a runway in the theater’s second floor. Models paraded down the runway, showing off creations by local designers. Downstairs, vendors such as Villa and Suit U Now sold clothing and jewelry. Members of ACR Health distributed literature and punctuated performances with snippets of information to educate the crowd.

Risky sexual behavior, as defined by Reed, includes practices such as multiple sex partners, partners who inject substances, sex while intoxicated and/or high, sex with anonymous partners, and sex with an HIV positive partner or partners of unknown HIV status.

Getting people tested is a priority for the MENS Project, and it does this in its offices and through its outreach van, where people can receive free and confidential testing. Group interventions are designed as empowerment groups, in which six to eight men get together over a five-day session and undertake an educational curriculum. A case management service is geared toward support and prevention. Health advocates work with individuals one-on-one to address

cofactors that increase the likelihood of contraction, such as housing issues, unemployment, medical care, stigma and drug addiction.

“It all points back to the idea that working to improve quality of life will hopefully reduce risky sexual behavior,” Reed said.

The Syringe Exchange Program seeks to curb HIV infection by directly targeting people who inject substances. Hepatitis C is a major concern for the exchange program, said Erin Bortel, the director of prevention services for ACR Health. Hepatitis C is a major threat as it can linger on surfaces for up to six weeks — unlike HIV, which can be transmitted only through bodily fluids.

For this reason, the program distributes free sterile syringes, as well as coupons to purchase syringes at specific locations. In addition, the program collects syringes and disposes of them properly. The program also provides access to testing and support through its own van. It trains the public to administer Narcan, a brand of Naloxone, which reverses the effects of drugs and is a leading overdose prevention drug. Narcan kits are distributed — under strict monitoring.

“Our approach is based on harm reduction, which recognizes that people will engage in risky behaviors despite the consequences,” Bortel said. “Our goal is to make these behaviors safer while we educate people to stop the behavior, then help them when they do.”

The efforts of the Syringe Exchange Program, in conjunction with other groups, has helped reduce disease contraction through syringes from 47 percent of all new infections to 3 percent, according to Bortel.

Steven Lowe has been involved with MENS Project in the past and attended the Red Carpet Extravaganza to show support for the group.

“They are very productive. They are constantly growing and very motivated and have a huge impact on the community,” Lowe said. “I took their classes and it was very educational, their outreach is very important to young teens and gay men.”

Representatives from other groups that frequently work with the MENS Project were there as well, such as Lewis Watts, who works as a peer organizer and systems support for the FACES program. FACES, which stands for Fighting HIV/AIDS through Case management, Education and Support, is an HIV prevention program of Syracuse Model Neighborhood Facility, Inc. serving the community for more than 15 years.

“We are here supporting because the message is to encourage people to love themselves and educate themselves,” Watts said. “Through collaboration and learning to face adversity in the community, we can get to where we should be, as substantial members of society.”



> Daniel Reed



Make college dreams real.

Just Say Yes...!

Through Say Yes to Education, Syracuse University is joining with the Syracuse City School District and others to:

- > Put Syracuse City School District students on the road to success
- > Give city students a college tuition guarantee
- > Build an educated workforce, so local companies can grow and prosper
- > Create a stronger Central New York economy

Syracuse is taking the lead in urban education. As one of the first communities in the United States committed to making sure all public school students can afford to attend college, Syracuse is making college dreams a reality for thousands of students.

Learn more.

To find out what Say Yes to Education means for you and your family, go to sayyessyracuse.org or call **315.443.4260**.

SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY

Looking for that dream home?

Let us help you find it.

The Welcome Home Team



Brenda Muhammad
Licensed Real Estate Salesperson
(315) 278-4572 Cell
brenda.muhammad@aol.com



FM REALTY GROUP

6838 E. Genesee St.
Fayetteville, NY 13066
(315) 637-5195 office (315) 637-5198 fax



Fatimah Salaam
Licensed Real Estate Salesperson
(315) 575-9039 Cell
fatimahsalaam@gmail.com



FAVORITE MOMENTS

“The band has a couple of signature beats, but my favorite is the wobble. While they play it, they do this dance and that’s something new and distinct to our drum line.”

Wilton George, records secretary for the Elks

“My favorite song to play is ‘El Bongos’ because it’s really fast.”

Keith White, 15, Elks Pride 315 member

“All of the songs are fun to play for me.”

D’Asjia Harris, 12, Elks Pride 315 member

DRUM LINE LEADERS

Elks Pride 315 members perform at parades, weddings, church events



> Elks Marching Band members hold hands during a prayer led by the Rev. Patricia Bufford before the start of the Back to School Gospel Jam at People’s A.M.E. Zion Church. | Jessica Suarez, Staff Photo

By | Rahimon Nasa
Urban Affairs reporter

Group gets a new drum thanks to donations accepted at Mary Nelson’s annual barbecue

The sound of drums pulsates through the walls of the Elks Lodge as members of the Elks Pride 315 drum line practice for their next show.

The drum line has been a part of the tradition of the Elks dating as far back as 1909. After a hiatus, the drum line started back up seven years ago when the Elks moved to a new location, at 3815 S. Salina St. Now, according to Anthony Emery, the director of Elks Lodge No. 1104, it’s the only Elks band in New York state.

The band is composed of 23 members whose ages range from 5 to 20. The drum line has played at the St. Patrick’s Day parade, the Great New York State Fair and the Boxing Hall of Fame in Canastota, as well as at events in the community such as weddings and church functions.

“With everything going on nowadays, if we can take some money and pool it together to buy some drums, we can take a kid off the street and keep them out of trouble,” Emery said. “That’s more important to us than anything.”

At the Mary Nelson Youth Day Barbecue held in August, guests were asked to donate \$1 to the event, which had been free in the past. The money raised was given to the Elks Pride 315 drum line.

The donation is enough to cover the price of one more drum, Emery said.

“People don’t realize how much a single drum costs,” said Emery, adding that the average drum can cost \$450.

Lee Glover, youth president for the Elks, is working to raise more money to buy more drums for the band through a grant from the Syracuse Common Council and other fundraising.

Glover revived the drum line after the previous leader died a few years ago. He was faced with the task of recruiting new members and acquiring more drums, and he accomplished his goal.

“We went from the bottom right up to the top,” Glover said. “Everybody wants them to play for them. Sometimes we have to tell people they aren’t available. We have a good thing going right now.”

Glover attributed the success of drum line to Tyehimea Reese, the director of the band.

Reese grew up playing the drums in church and started playing for the drum line when she was 17. She played the drums for 10 years before she began to take

WANT TO SEE MORE PHOTOS?



Go online and visit

mysouthsidestand.com for even more images of the Back to School Gospel Jam and past performances of Elks Pride 315



> Youth in the Elks Marching Band perform during the Back to School Gospel Jam at People's A.M.E. Zion Church on Sept. 13. | Alexandra Hootnick, Staff Photo

over as an instructor last January.

“Music is the voice of the world,” Reese said. “I think it’s important because it gives young people an outlet and something to do in a positive light, other than sports.”

Reese learned how to teach the drummers by mimicking her former teachers, she said.

Students are enjoying the experience.

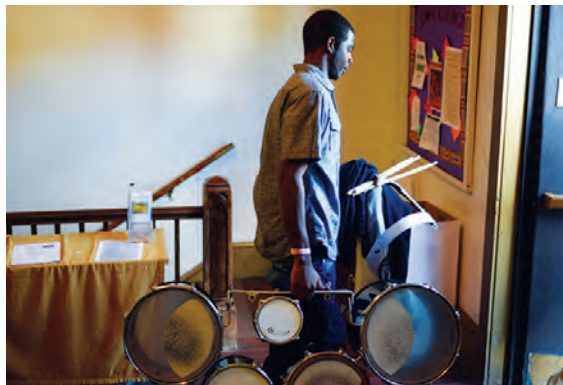
“My favorite part is having a great time and learning new steps and beats for the drum line,” said De’Asjia Harris, 12, who plays the tenor for the drum line. “My best memory of the drum line was just starting. When people teach me something, I catch on very quickly.”

Harris started playing for the drum line last year after Reese approached her. She is now the only female member of the drum line, but that doesn’t faze her.

“It’s easy for me to be the only girl on the drum line since I’m basically a tomboy, and I have two brothers,” Harris said.

Keith White, 15, enjoys being a member of the drum line because it allows him to express himself and deepen his understanding of music.

“It’s a fun time, and there’s a lot of laughter on stage when people mess up, but we get back together,” White said. “The drum line is like your own little family.”



> Clockwise from top: Members of the drum line look to co-director Charles Rice for instruction while they perform; drums line the stage as members get ready for their performance; after a successful event, Brian McElroy, helps carry drums to be packed away. | Jessica Suarez, Staff Photo

TALENT AGENCY

This project offers instruction in basic drawing, painting, illustration, sculpture and other media for students who qualify.

Classes are free, with art materials and equipment included.

FOR MORE DETAILS

Contact the instructors by email at talentagency.syr@gmail.com

(315) 749-3741

LOCATION

Talent Agency
831 W. Fayette St.

ART PORTFOLIO

Corcoran High School alum credits Talent Agency for her drawing skills



> Alexis Belt, a freshman at SUNY Purchase, takes a selfie. Art materials are in the background. | Photo provided, Alexis Belt

By | Brooke Lewis
Staff reporter

College brings new adventures to student whose dream career is to be an artist

Alexis Belt, SUNY Purchase freshman, sat in her drawing class as her professor walked around and looked over other students' work. He seemed to find something wrong with every single one of them but when he made it to hers, something changed.

"He said he can't be too easy on me. He has to find something wrong, but he couldn't find anything wrong," Belt said.

Belt, who is finishing up her first month at SUNY Purchase, wasn't always the star student. Her preparation to get into SUNY Purchase began two years ago at an art nonprofit called Talent Agency. The organization serves students who are low-income and helps them prepare art portfolios for college programs. Co-founders and Syracuse University art professors Yvonne Buchanan and Dorene Quinn noticed the lack of diversity in their classrooms and wanted to change it. Since Talent Agency's opening in 2011, the program has sent about 12 students into four-year colleges, Quinn said.

"There's a certain kind of student that I see, which is

for the most part affluent, can pick up the phone and call a parent who will financially support them," Buchanan said. "If they need an extra \$500 for something, they can call home and get it immediately."

Belt is the only student from Central New York to get accepted into SUNY Purchase's Educational Opportunity Program, which according to Quinn is one of the best art programs in the state. The program serves students who need substantial financial help and are also struggling academically. The director of Special Programs at SUNY Purchase, Paul Nicholson, said 40 new students were admitted into the Educational Opportunity Program this year, and Belt is one of the five admits into the Art & Design program. In total, the program has 161 students. According to Nicholson, Belt is a rare admit because more people outside of Central New York apply for admission.

"We get more from downstate, because our school is situated downstate. It's not the fact that they're not getting in, it's just that they're not applying in the sheer numbers as people are from down this way," Nicholson said.

As a student at Corcoran High School, Belt said the artwork she drew before Talent Agency was not good enough to get her into an art college.

“Before I went to an art program, all I did was draw anime characters, which is a bad thing if you want to be in art school because they want you to be original and have your own work,” Belt said.

She was trained early on for college classes, drawing still lifes, which she said is an essential skill needed for art college.

“Anime, you’re basically just re-drawing somebody else’s work. At the art program, they had me draw still lifes and everything, which is using your own eyes, so it really is original work,” Belt said.

Belt originally did not believe she could even have a career as an artist, after other people in her life told her that becoming one would not make for a financially stable career. She wanted to be a registered nurse before Talent Agency.

“My grandfather’s girlfriend told my brother that he shouldn’t be an artist because they don’t make a lot of money,” Belt said. “People don’t believe that artists are worthwhile, like they don’t have a good career.”

Belt’s opinion changed as she began taking classes. She learned new drawing techniques, how to weld, and honed her skills.

She began to realize that becoming an artist could be a career, through watching her professors. Buchanan and Quinn provided the skills she needed to excel in college, she said.

“They gave me more confidence in my drawings because I didn’t think I was a good drawer before I came there,” Belt said.

A favorite project was welding an elephant during a summer at Talent Agency. The elephant sold for \$100 during the art exhibition that summer.

Talent Agency provides free classes, which allows students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds to participate. Quinn said they’ve seen a total of 25 students since the program began. Buchanan thinks art classrooms need students from all different backgrounds.

“I think [in] the coming world, you’re going to have to be knowledgeable about all different kinds of people,” Buchanan said. “It just makes you a better citizen. You just become open.”

Belt heard about Talent Agency through CNY Works, a nonprofit that places students at different sites across Central New York and pays them minimum wage. Students within the program fall 30 percent to 40 percent below the poverty line, Quinn said.

Belt selected Talent Agency as a place to work because she was interested in art. About half the students who participate in Talent Agency during the summer are a part of CNY Works, Quinn said.

Last November, Belt and some other senior students in Talent Agency were taken on a trip to New York City to tour colleges with program directors Quinn and Buchanan.

SUNY Purchase was the last stop on the tour.

“I fell in love with it because I like small schools,” Belt said. “I just instantly knew SUNY Purchase was the best for me.”

The Educational Opportunity Program at SUNY Purchase is a highly competitive program, admitting only a select few students, according to the office manager for the program, Amanda Diaz.

Students are interviewed before getting admitted, and Diaz said the counselors look for a capable student they feel will do well in college.

“It’s someone that they find will excel and have the potential to excel in the college experience,” Diaz said.

Buchanan said Belt is a talented artist and student.

“She’s an extraordinarily gifted person. She’s someone who draws well, paints well, and has a really strong ability in 3D. She’s super smart,” Buchanan said.

“They gave me more confidence in my drawings because I didn’t think I was a good drawer.”

— Alexis Belt

Talent Agency is pleased with the number of students they’ve gotten into college, but hope to broaden the program to include other aspects, such as writing or performance, Buchanan said.

Belt is in her third week of class as a freshman at SUNY Purchase and just started working at the gift shop in the Neuberger Museum of Art on campus. She is currently taking classes in the painting and drawing department, and also taking a sculpture class.

“I have an interest in painting, drawing and sculpture, so I’m not really sure what I’m going to overall decide on. I might dual major. I might do an interdisciplinary [major],” Belt said.

She added that Buchanan and Quinn helped her realize her own potential while she was at Talent Agency.

“I saw how successful Mrs. Dorene and Ms. Yvonne were and I wanted to be like them.”

FINDING PRODUCE

Syracuse Real Food Co-op

The co-op in the Syracuse University neighborhood specializes in organic food and is staffed by Syracuse natives. They regularly communicate with local farms, and they know the area's demographics, allowing them to serve Syracuse families through personal interaction.

Main Street Farms

This farm, based in Homer, N.Y., promotes community-supported agriculture and works to ship crates to lower-income families every other week. The farm also organizes cooking classes to enhance the benefits of the food people receive.

South Side Food Co-op

The project on Salina Street has been closed since December, when grant deadlines and managerial issues forced employees to close indefinitely. Board members are working to reopen the co-op.

TEMPORARY MARKET

South Side residents find fresh produce under a tent at Store for a Day



> Howie Hawkins, Eat 2 Live board member, oversees Store for a Day on a recent Saturday morning. He hopes to be able to keep the temporary market open into the colder months. | Mike Mahardy, Staff Photo

By | Mike Mahardy
Urban Affairs reporter

Many hands are working together to provide South Side residents with fresh produce

A chill hung in the air as a light rain fell on the South Side one recent Saturday morning. With his back to a white tent and several crates of fruit, Howie Hawkins fretted that the damp weather would scare off potential customers of Store for a Day.

"There are a lot of factors playing into what we're doing," said Hawkins, a board member of the now-shuttered Eat 2 Live Food Co-op on the South Side. "I would like to think the weather won't do any harm, but I'm really not sure at this point."

Hawkins and others organized Store for a Day to bring fresh produce to Syracuse's South Side in the absence of Eat 2 Live, which opened last October at 2323 S. Salina St. and closed at the end of the year. Since it began, Eat 2 Live was fraught with funding issues, managerial problems and tight grant deadlines. The re-opening date has been pushed several times, and a new date has not been set.

Store for a Day sales take place on the sidewalk outside of the locked co-op doors on the first two Saturdays of each month. Products include produce such as bananas, lettuce and Concord grapes, along with a variety of beverages.

Several organizations also aim to bring food to the South Side. A farm in Homer, N.Y., for example, is shipping produce to the Southwest Community Center. Another food co-op, on Syracuse's East Side, is considering a move downtown.

Store for a Day has been running since June, and Hawkins hopes it will extend into the fall.

"We know we're going to continue through September," he said. "October is a maybe right now, and as for after that, we have a lot of logistics to figure out. The colder weather, combined with attempts to open the co-op again, are making us have to be flexible."

No date has been set for the co-op's reopening, Hawkins said. The board made the mistake of announcing a date before, Hawkins said, and they don't want to do that again.

Main Street Farms in Homer has organized a system for customers to pick up pre-ordered produce crates.

In Syracuse, residents can pick up their crates at the Southwest Community Center. Customers who order at least five crates at once can have them delivered right to their doors.

“These crates change every time, so residents are not only getting healthy, fresh food, but they’re also getting variety,” said Allan Gandelman, owner of Main Street Farms.

The farm currently supplies food to 18 families. The community-supported agriculture season began in June and runs until November. Gandelman hopes more South Side residents will take advantage of the \$9 crates every other week. These packages come with a variety of different foods, such as turnips and beets.

“A lot of the foods we provide are vegetables that people don’t always use,” Gandelman said. “For that reason, we’re hosting cooking classes at the Southwest Community Center when the customers come to pick up their food.

“This way, we not only provide them with food, we also show them how to make the best of it.”

Syracuse Real Food Co-op, resting quietly at 618 Kensington Road, in the Syracuse University neighborhood, is staffed by people with similar intentions as Gandelman.

Reina Apraez, produce lead at the East Side co-op, said she has been a supporter of local agriculture since attending William J. Nottingham High School.

The co-op is in the planning stages of moving to downtown Syracuse, something that comes with challenges, Apraez said.

“We’re not a huge store, like Tops or Wegmans,” she said. “So we have to pay more for produce. I think that



> The Syracuse Real Food Co-Op, located at 618 Kensington Road, sells a wide selection of organic foods. | Mike Mahardy, Staff Photo

the organic sections in Tops and Wegmans are pathetic, honestly, but people still go there. And to top it all off, we have to deal with zoning issues in the city if we want to move.”

Employees said the move not only would expand the co-op’s market, but also would provide a place for lower-income families to buy food.

Most of Syracuse Real Food’s customers come from a one-mile radius around the store, which includes families in the SU neighborhood, around Westcott Street and farther up Meadowbrook Road.

“We have much more competition these days, and now more people have started coming into the store,” Apraez said. This competition is good for us, and good for Syracuse in general. We’re eating local foods. And we’re sharing them, too.”

FOOD DESERTS

Syracuse’s South Side was once considered a food desert — an urban area in which residents only have access to produce through corner stores and gas station mini-marts. Because of the monopoly these shops have over the area, prices are usually above average.

But now, with a Tops on the South Side, the food desert is somewhat evaporating. But the local co-ops and markets are trying to make produce cheaper. And they’re also trying to make produce more accessible, with crate deliveries and cooking classes alike.

NOMINATIONS SOUGHT FOR UNSUNG HEROES AWARDS

The Syracuse University Martin Luther King Jr. 2015 Celebration committee is seeking nominations for the Unsung Heroes Awards, which will be presented during the evening celebration in the Carrier Dome on Jan. 18, 2015.

The awards are presented annually to people who, in the spirit of King’s “beloved community,” have made a positive difference in the lives of others, but who are not widely recognized for their efforts. Past recipients have been recognized for their work to advance human rights, nonviolence and diversity, advocate for peace and justice, build bridges between diverse communities and provide opportunities for people living on the margins of society.

The deadline for submitting nominations is Friday, Oct. 10. Information and nomination forms are available online at <http://hendricks.syr.edu> (click on the MLK button).

Nominations may be made in any of the following categories:

- Youth / Teen from Onondaga, Madison, Oswego, Cayuga or Cortland counties
- Adult from Onondaga, Madison, Oswego, Cayuga or Cortland counties
- Student at Syracuse University or SUNY-ESF
- Faculty or Staff from Syracuse University or SUNY-ESF

For more information, contact Michelle Singletary, chair of the Unsung Heroes Awards Committee, at (315) 443-5029 or msinglet@syr.edu, or Ginny Yerdon at Hendricks Chapel at (315) 443-5044 or gyerdon@syr.edu.



Always Searching

> Jon Speed, owner of Jon Speed: The Book Scout, stands at the entrance of his bookstore, which just opened on South Salina Street. | Jennifer Swanson, Staff Photo

By | Seamus Kirst
Staff reporter

Recently opened space sells used, rare books; offers a comfortable place to read them

As a child, Jon Speed was in awe of his uncle’s book collection. “There were bookshelves everywhere, in places you could not imagine,” Speed said. “There were books in every corner of the house. It was like a museum.”

His uncle was an antiquarian book dealer near Buffalo. “He was old school. He did his business right out of his house,” Speed said.

As Speed grew older, his love for books and admiration of his uncle’s passion did not fade. And, so, 20 years ago, when Speed bought his first rare book, David Livingstone’s “Missionary Travels and Researches in South Africa,” he showed it to his uncle to confirm

its value and authenticity. From there, Speed began operating his business, Jon Speed: The Book Scout.

“Book scouts were people who would go to garage sales and other used book stores and cherry-pick,” Speed explained. “I named the business that because it’s how I got started.”

Speed entered the industry just as the Internet began to transform the rare book trade, which previously operated using physical catalog systems. His collection progressively grew. Speed ran a shop in Narrowsburg, a small town in southern New York, but the market was not big enough to support the business, he said.

Speed took a few years off from the antiquarian book trade and ultimately moved to Texas with his family. Speed, who is a pastor, moved to Syracuse to start Christ is King Baptist Church on the South Side.

On Sept. 9, Jon Speed: The Book Scout got a new permanent space when Speed and his family moved more than 15,000 books into their new shop. Speed had



> Some rare books sell for more than \$4,000. But you'll also find books priced at three for \$1. | Jennifer Swanson, Staff Photo



noticed the space when it was a thrift shop. When the thrift shop was gone, he approached the landlord, who was supportive and enthusiastic about Speed's vision.

Speed, who lives on Valley Drive, was passionate about opening a rare bookstore on the South Side.

"People coming in from the local neighborhood are excited," he said. "I'm enjoying getting to know them."

Oliver Brooks, who met Speed two years ago at an antique show, is enthusiastic about the shop opening up in the area. "It's an absolute asset to the community and the city," he said. "Jon has a rare collection of books that are not only hard to find in Syracuse, but hard to find in the world."

Speed said he hopes that Jon Speed: The Book Scout will be more than a bookshop. He wants it to serve as a resource for the community.

"We built the space with bookshelves lining the walls and kiosks on wheels in the middle so they can be rolled away to open up a community space," he said.

Speed also would like to see writing classes and

literary events happen in the shop.

He placed several armchairs around the space to encourage people who live in the neighborhood to stop by and read.

His shop has a diverse range of books, with an equally diverse price scale. There are racks of used books priced at three for \$1, and there are rare books that sell for more than \$4,000. Sections are divided into categories such as Children's Books, Theology, Signed Books, Science Books and Native American Literature.

Books on the higher end of the price scale include a copy of "The Big Game Fishes of the United States," which was owned by former U.S. President Grover Cleveland, a Bible from the 1730s, which contains copperplate engravings, and "The Pop-Up Minnie Mouse," a pop-up children's book published in 1933.

Other rare items for sale include a pre-Civil War tintype photograph of a free African-American family and a newspaper that was published in Georgia in 1784.

"Preserving the culture of the printed word is our mission," Speed said. "These days, with Kindles and other e-books, a lot is lost."

Book design is an art form, Speed says.

"The design gives you context to the times in which the author wrote, and the pictures do, as well," he said. "You don't get that with digital books. You lose a large part of the experience."

Speed, whose love of reading comes from his childhood instructors, said there is nothing better than seeing young people who share his passion for reading.

"There is one kid who comes in every few days and buys three books for a dollar, and he has great taste," he said. "Having that sale is just as exciting as selling a rare book — in fact, that's what this is really all about."

"Preserving the culture of the printed word is our mission."

— Jon Speed

JON SPEED LOCATION

JON SPEED:
THE BOOK SCOUT
6142 S. Salina St.
(315) 565-4003
jonspeedbooks.com

Hours: 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.,
Tuesday through Saturday

NEW SERIES AT LIBRARY

WHAT: Sensory Friendly Storytime

WHEN: 10:30 a.m.
Oct. 25 and Nov. 22

WHERE: Beauchamp Branch Library, 2111 S. Salina St.

COST: Free

DETAILS: Sensory Friendly Storytime is an inclusive, interactive program for children with sensory integration issues and for differently abled children at a preschool developmental level. Books, songs, movement and play tables promote learning and play.

MORE INFO.: Contact the library at (315) 435-3395

ON THE SIDE

A BENEFIT FOR JEFF

A masquerade ball was set to be held to help raise money for Jeff Houston's cause.

"It feels great that people are coming together to celebrate with me and to hear my story. I am usually the one donating my time and talent to someone else to express love and to give of my gifts to them. This will be an honor."

— Jeff Houston

WANT TO DONATE?

Checks can be made payable to: The Jeff Houston Benefit Committee and mailed to Jeff Houston, P.O. Box 882, Syracuse, NY 13203

PHOTOGRAPHY BY

Dale Harp, a participant in The Stand's *From Where We Stand* project, took photos for this column. He coordinated with Jeff to turn in this collection of portraits by deadline. Harp was one of eight participants in the summerlong project who received a Nikon 3200 DSLR camera. Learn more about the project at FromWhereWeStand.net.

MUSIC AS THERAPY

Jeff Houston plays, writes and hopes to record as he battles cancer



> Portraits of local musician Jeff Houston, who is battling cancer for a second time. | Dale Harp, Staff Photo

By | Reggie Seigler
A Friendly Five columnist

Local guitarist and bandleader also has a message for everyone: Go to the doctor

Some people say music is healing. Jeffrey Houston of the Jeff Houston Experience believes that wholeheartedly.

Jeff is a local guitarist and bandleader. He has been performing since his childhood in a number of local bands, including Strive, Fresh Air, Soft Spoken Band, Positive Attitude and the J Project Band.

Jeff was diagnosed with Stage IV lung cancer in 2013. Nearly his entire right lung is covered with cancer. Dealing with cancer, though, is not a new thing for Jeff. Back in 1991, he was diagnosed with Stage IIIB Hodgkin's lymphoma. At that time, Jeff and I were performing quite regularly together in Soft Spoken Band, often working four or five nights a week (ah, the good ol' days).

Being considerably younger then and not nearly as informed as he is now, Jeff didn't really know how to deal with it. We had engagements lined up for months ahead. On top of that, he was working and taking a few classes. He knew he'd have to let go of some things, but what?

"I knew that I would need to slow down, because I knew I would need the time and strength to get through my treatments," Jeff said. "My doctor gave me the choice of chemotherapy or radiation."

Jeff continued, as he chuckled out loud. "I thought to myself 'hmm, I'm only about a hundred and twenty pounds soaking wet,' and I'd heard about some of the side effects and the stuff people went through with chemo, so I decided to take the radiation."

The doctor accepted Jeff's choice and gave him some advice: Don't quit playing music.

"I remember the doctor actually coming out to one of our gigs at Top Cat Lounge," Jeff said. "He pulled the band together, told everybody how important it was



that I continue to play. The music was as much a part of my therapy as the radiation.”

The band members knew that music was medicine for the soul, but the doctor helped them understand what an important part it was for Jeff’s complete healing.

After his treatment, Jeff went into remission for 22 years. He continued to play his music and eventually formed his own bands.

When he was diagnosed with lung cancer, Jeff had to battle the cancer demon again. This time, though, he knew immediately some of the steps he’d need to take. The first step was prayer because Jeff knows that fighting demons is a spiritual battle, and his faith in God has assured him the win. His next step was to request the doctor who took care of him more than 20 years ago. Then Jeff went to an old musical friend and said, “Man, this is what’s up” and began to immerse himself in his music. He has written music for a CD, which he hopes to record. He wants to call it “Feel Good Music.”

Jeff is in remission, but he had to quit work. “Sometimes I get a little short of breath, and I have to take a minute to relax,” he said. “The doctor gave me some exercises that are supposed to help my lungs become stronger but they haven’t really been working. I have been praying for the finances to bring my music

into the studio, but so far that hasn’t happened. I’m thankful, though, that I am able to create music. It makes me feel good, and I hope that it has the same effect on others.”

Having known Jeff and having been very close to him and his family for a number of years, I can vouch for the fact that he is very deserving of whatever gifts of time and love people may have for him. It is my hope for him that he will raise enough money to produce his “Feel Good Music” CD and that it will be used in the aid and therapy of others going through the same tribulations in life.

Jeff has an important piece of advice to share: Go to the doctor.

“Your body will give you little signs when something is wrong,” he said. “Don’t ignore them. I ignored them for a long time, especially back in 1991. My grandmother and other members of my family had noticed the small lump on the side of my neck. They kept telling me to get that checked out. But I didn’t have time for that, so I ignored it until I woke up one morning and it had blown up really big. That’s when I went to the doctor and found out that it was cancer.”

*Have a Friendly Five suggestion?
Contact Reggie at reggie@softspokenband.com
or (315) 479-9620*

SEND SOME GOOD VIBES

To send a note of encouragement or to hear the Jeff Houston Experience, visit his website at jeffhoustonmusic.com

Bookings for Jeff Houston Experience:
Call (315) 450-0361

ON THE SIDE

Mortgages are affordable in Green Flag Country.

If you’re looking to buy a home, M&T’s experienced mortgage consultants will work with you to make homebuying easy and affordable. We can help with any of these situations:

- Little money for a downpayment
- Little or “less-than-perfect” credit history
- A recent job change

So raise the green flag, and know M&T is here to help. To get started, call 315-424-4475 or visit mtb.com/mortgage.

M&T Bank
Understanding what’s important®



Certain restrictions apply. Subject to credit and property approval. NMLS# 381076 ©2014 M&T Bank. Member FDIC.



FREE UNIVERSAL PRE-K

Monday - Friday 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Program follows Syracuse City School District Curriculum & Calendar

Eligibility Requirements:

- City of Syracuse Resident
- Child must be 4 years old by December 1, 2014

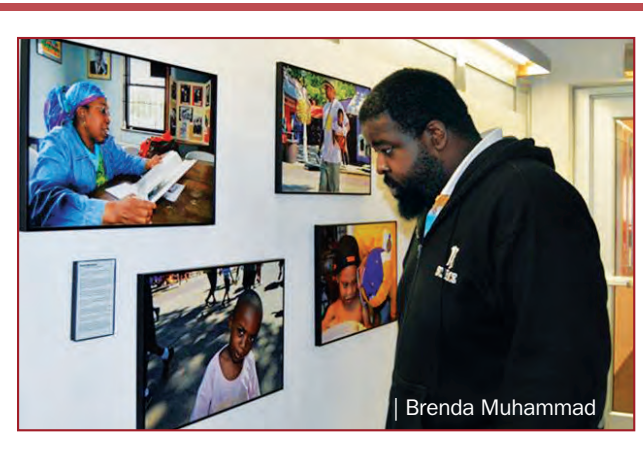
Information and Registration: 479-1113

*Quality Day Care and
Early Education Services
Making Every Day Count
for Your Child*



DOING THE MOST GOOD®

677 South Salina Street • Syracuse, NY 13202



View photo collections from participants in The Stand's summer storytelling project

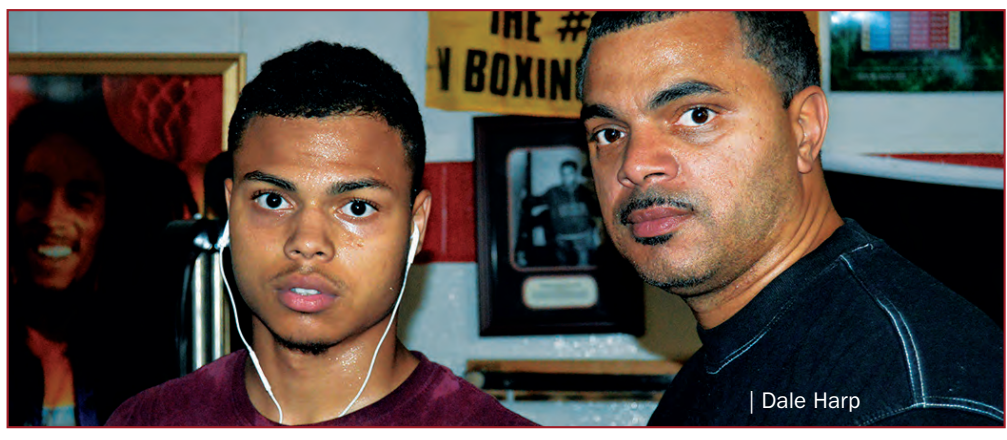
The project's goal was to put real families behind the camera and let them tell their story

ON DISPLAY »

Through mid-October

WHERE »

The Link Gallery on the ground floor of the Cantor Warehouse, 350 W. Fayette St.



SPONSORS/SUPPORTERS »

