

the **Stand** south side news

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Syracuse, NY

MARCH 2017

Issue 57 FREE

‘FIRST ROLE MODEL’

Father looks to lessons from his upbringing to set example for sons

‘I think they learn a lot’

Interactive storyteller uses quilts to convey a message

unsung hero

Local student awarded for work with Food Recovery Network

Rebranded South Side

SU students, TNT members design new look for area

NEW FOOD PANTRY OPENS



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the
Stand

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SPECIAL THANKS THIS MONTH

DEAN LORRAINE BRANHAM,
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FATHERHOOD | Meet Ed Perry, father of two, whose role on the job is teaching students how to cut hair and whose role at home is “making sure I’m in my children’s lives.”



FEATURES | Find out how storyteller Vanessa Johnson uses quilts to share her story of the “South Side Angel” with young children in the community.



ENTERTAINMENT | Check out why musician Melissa Gardiner started Unity Street Band and how community members can play alongside professional musicians.



COMMUNITY | Read about Shewa Shwani, a SUNY-ESF student who started a local chapter of the Food Recovery Network, which distributes leftover food to the hungry.



COMMUNITY | A new food pantry has opened in the Emma L. Johnston Southside Family Resource Center, featuring healthy foods and hours that cater to the “working poor.”



COMMUNITY | Syracuse University students recently accepted Tomorrow’s Neighborhoods Today as a client and rebranded the South Side during a weekend workshop.

■ Cover photography by Marianne Barthelemy of Ed Perry teaching his two sons how to cut hair

CALENDAR | MARCH

What: Nutrition & Health Expo for Seniors

When: 10 a.m. to noon Saturday, March 18

Where: CNY Regional Market “F” Shed, 2100 Park St.

Details: Includes a light and healthy breakfast, massages, health screenings, resource tables and healthy cooking demos with samples. Also, for those who pre-registered, there will be two exercise classes.

Cost: Free to attend

More info.: Call Allison Lawson at (315) 435-2362 ext. 4987

What: 2017 Health and Wellness Lecture Series

When: 7 to 8:30 p.m. Monday, March 27

Where: South Side Innovation Center, 2610 S. Salina St.

Details: 100 Black Men of Syracuse, Inc., in collaboration with Black Nurses Rock of Syracuse, will host a monthly series on health and wellness. The March speaker will be Dr. David Albala, AMP Urology, on the topic of “Prostate Cancer.”

Cost: Free to attend; no advance registration required

More info.: Call (315) 443-8749

CLARIFICATION

In the February issue of The Stand, a story titled “Bridge for Life” included this statement: On any given day, there are more than 800 homeless people like Turner living in Onondaga, Oswego and Cayuga Counties, according to the Housing & Homeless Coalition of Central New York.

The HHC provides this clarification: The number included 563 people in emergency shelters, which is any facility whose primary purpose is to provide temporary or transitional shelter for the homeless in general or for specific populations

of the homeless for a period of 90 days or less and 277 people in transitional housing, which is a project that is designed to provide housing and appropriate supportive services to homeless persons to facilitate movement to independent living within 24 months. Between the three counties, 27 people were found unsheltered, which means living on the streets or in places not meant for human habitation. These numbers come from the 2016 Point in Time Count, which the HHC conducts annually in January per a requirement from the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).



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Ed Perry

Nominated by David L. Chaplin II

By | Ashley Kang
The Stand director

Q: What did it feel like when you became a father?

A: It was a mix of emotions. Happy, excited, enthused, nervous, scared, unsure, doubtful. We knew it was going to be a boy. With the first, we wanted to know. I was there for the birth, and I was strong. It was amazing to witness that moment. To see a woman go through that for me. It was exciting, and I was blown away by it.

Q: What can you share about your two boys?

A: My oldest is Prince, 11, and Christian will be 10 this month. Prince is the philosopher, very analytical. Thinks a lot. Analyzes. Then once he comes up with the answer, he analyzes that. Christian is the doer. He does before he thinks. I see myself and my wife in both of them. Neither is more like me or her. They are both outgoing and outspoken like me, but they get the thinking and processing from their mom. And they get their good looks from their mom.

Q: What was your relationship like with your father?

A: It wasn't the best. He was in and out of my and my siblings' lives. He was into a lot of negative things, which kind of helped me as a dad because then I had something to say that I did not want to be like. I don't fault my father, but his actions when I was younger greatly impacted me on the type of father I am today. I want to make a difference in my kids' life. Although it was a negative for me, I turned it around and said, 'I can use that for good.' We have a work in progress relationship now, and I love him dearly.

Q: Why are fathers important?

A: A father is the first role model in a child's life. The one to teach them about things that some other people can't. A mother can teach but so much. A grandfather can teach but so much. And I had the privilege of having different male role models be a positive force in my life, but it's still not the same as the dad. So I think the role of a father is to serve as that first role model.

Q: As a father, is there anything you do that would surprise people?

A: I play doctor dad. They'll get a little splinter and go crazy, and I'll say 'Here comes doctor dad' and go in and doctor it up and make them all better.

Q: What is your opinion of commonly held stereotypes about black fathers?

A: There are many that say there aren't any good dads out there in the African-American community. However, that's a perspective from the outside looking in. But me, being an African-American on the inside looking out, I see a number of African-American fathers that are in their children's lives.



MEET FATHER ED: Perry, 37, who works for the school district teaching students how to cut hair, shows his two sons how to properly use a clipper at E-Clipz Barbershop, which he owns. It is located at 4714 S. Salina St. Perry has been married to his wife, Juanita, for 11 years. | Marianne Barthelemy, Staff Photo

Q: Any advice for first-time dads?

A: Stay faithful. It's like anything. It's going to have its good and its bad. You just have to let the good outweigh the bad. And seek advice. There's nothing wrong with seeking advice from other people that have been where you are at. Seek out wisdom and seek out help. I think there's a saying, 'Iron sharpens iron,' meaning if I've been somewhere and I can give advice, then I should share ... people did it for me so I feel I should do the same. Pay it forward.

Q: What has been a favorite moment as a father?

A: We still sit down together and have dinner. We do it at least three to four times a week. That's our come together as a family, let our hair down. That quality time, making sure I'm in my children's lives — those are the things that build their character. They may not understand it now while they are young, but when they get older, the values that dad taught, that mom taught, they'll be able to use. Those are the good things from my perspective.

“A father is the first role model in a child's life”

BY DESIGN

Michael Jones creates art in the form of fashion

By | Tammy Reese
Community correspondent

Q: What is the name of your fashion line?

A: Michael L. Jones

Q: When did you begin fashion design and why?

A: More than 30 years ago. I always had an interest in the art world. Theater, cartooning, architecture, painting and all facets of fashion and design. After I had first designed a dress for my niece, I knew this is where I would be in the world of arts.

Q: Who inspires you?

A: My main inspiration for designing is the woman. That woman who evolves along with fashion and doesn't stick with only one constant look that works for them. One who changes up and isn't afraid to try new things in fashion.

Q: Have your designs been featured at any events?

A: I've done fashion charity events for my church, my job. And a local group of artists once had an organization named THiNC that I worked with. Most recently, I've had the pleasure of working with La Shaun (Jones) and LaKisa (Renee) of LSK (Modeling &) Events Company. I've done about four shows with them. I owe a lot of my recent exposure to these beautiful ladies.

Q: Who do your designs appeal to?

A: I have done some men's sportswear, I'm mainly a women's wear designer.

Q: Is there a message you try to send through your creativity?

A: Not really. I let my designs speak for themselves.

Q: What are your other skills, talents and expertise?

A: I'm also a pretty good cook. Ask my dad!

Q: What is your motto?

A: No motto here. I just make beautiful clothes to enhance and complement the beauty I see in all women.

Q: What goals do you have for your line?

A: In addition to designing original pieces for individual clientele, I'd like to sell limited small collections to area clothing boutiques.

Q: How can you be contacted?

A: Facebook - Michael Jones or at (315) 472-3859.

Q: Do you have advice for others interested in fashion design?

A: Well today, literally everyone is a designer. However, please take the time to find your voice, learn the craft and make your clothes from design to conception to finished garment. This is most rewarding and will pay off.



> Michael Jones | Photo Provided

*Tammy Reese is a CNY award-winning writer and actress.
She can be reached at tammyreese7@gmail.com*



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Political Science major,
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MORE SHOWS

What: Unwrapping
Vanessa: Fiber Memory
Art by Vanessa Johnson

When: Through March 25

Where: ArtRage Gallery,
505 Hawley Ave.

Hours: 2 to 7 p.m.
Wednesday, Thursday and
Friday; noon to 4 p.m.
Saturday

More info.: Wheelchair
accessible; off-street
parking at 408 & 414
Lodi St.

Phone: (315) 218-5711

Online: artragegallery.org

ADDITIONAL EVENTS

All of these events will be
held at ArtRage Gallery:

- 7 p.m. March 8, **Artist Talk** with Vanessa Johnson
- 3 p.m. March 12, **"Sistah Words"** — readings from Vanessa Johnson, Georgia Popoff and Mary Slechta
- 7 p.m. March 16, **"Bar Codes"** — The Gage Foundation Girl Ambassadors for Human Rights uses its voices to tell stories of human trafficking in this dramatic reading written by Vanessa Johnson
- 7 p.m. March 25, **"I'm Sick and Tired of Being Sick and Tired: A Tribute to Fannie Lou Hamer"** — an encore performance by Vanessa Johnson

STITCHING MEANING

Local storyteller shares messages of activism through her quilts

By | Siddarth Senthilkumaran
Urban Affairs reporter

The Beauchamp Branch Library invites artist to display her culturally distinctive art pieces

To help her tell a story, Vanessa Johnson holds up a hand-stitched quilt, showing it off before her audience of young children and their parents gathered in Beauchamp Branch Library one afternoon last month. Through its different colors and fabrics, she said, the quilt would help her with the story of the "South Side Angel," a warm, protective spirit that watches out for little girls and boys.

The angel protects children from bullies and gangs, Johnson said, reassuringly, as she displayed a fabric adorned with little rags and small pieces of cloth.

Later on, in an interview, Johnson mentioned that the rags were picked up from scenes of gun violence on the South Side. The story she tells the children doesn't explicitly include this element of violence. She added that the angel wants to return to the skies to get away from the dangers of the neighborhood.

"I've been a storyteller since 2000," she said, "but I grew up in a family that always told stories." She has performed at The Great New York State Fair, at libraries and in cafes. Johnson also performs custom-made tales for special events, such as birthdays. She talks to family members, picks up details and puts together an act.

Johnson designs her quilts to honor the memories of women who have inspired a sense of social justice in her. Among the 22 quilts Johnson has designed, some of the women featured on them are Holocaust victim Anne Frank and civil rights leader Fannie Lou Hamer.

Her experience with fabric and quilts goes a long way back; her father was an upholsterer who recovered furniture for a living, and her mother helped him.

"I was around fabric all the time," Johnson said.

In her presentation at the library, sometimes she used a quilt to introduce a story; other times she simply spoke, with prose and poetry. Her repertoire also included singing. She had a commanding presence next to tables of several quilts overlapping one another, as she presented to an audience sitting in a semicircle.

Johnson's act entailed either the enactment of a story from a children's book or a demonstration of a story through a quilt that displayed detailed artwork.

Her performance blended compelling narratives and messages directed toward the audience. The stories of the underground railroad, Rosa Parks' defiance, and the slave trade were told in honor of Black History Month.



> Vanessa Johnson holds up one of the hand-stitched quilts she showcased. | Siddarth Senthilkumaran, Staff Photo

Johnson performs for audiences of all ages, although children are her favorite. She said she loves it when children are engaged in her performance and actively participate. She explained that children realize storytelling is more than someone recounting events to them.

Johnson enjoys an interactive show. When she requested a volunteer to help showcase a blanket, almost every hand went up. Four-year-old Everett, who attended with his mother, Lisa GreenMills, was called to the center of the circle. GreenMills decided to bring her son to the show after browsing through the library catalog for something to do. She recognized Johnson from a previous art fair and had liked her work.

"I like how she was singing and telling the story together," GreenMills said. She added that her son liked looking at the fabric as it was being passed around.

Anne Gregory, the children's librarian at Beauchamp, said Johnson had performed at the library a few years ago, and she was glad to have her back.

"I think they learn a lot from the stories," Gregory said, adding that Johnson's message about civil rights and standing up for others was important in the current political climate.

MILESTONE YEAR

Local band Brownskin excited to celebrate 10th anniversary



> Nate Brown, left, bandleader of Brownskin, and a drummer with the group, poses with some of his fellow band members: vocalist Jamel Lorick (red jacket); vocalist Tamar Smithers; and keyboardist Ekwon Brooks. | Photo Provided

By | Reggie Seigler
A Friendly Five columnist

Bandleader Nate Brown says the group hopes to record some originals as it looks to future

The SAMMY Award-winning band Brownskin is celebrating its 10th anniversary in 2017, and bandleader Nathaniel “Nate” Brown is excited about the future.

The band has been around since 2007. “Since then, like a lot of things, we have evolved,” Nate said. “Back then, an early working version of the band consisted of Joe Cummings, Jonathan Dale, Gary Carter and me.”

Brownskin has grown into an eight-piece band. Members include vocalists Tamar Smithers and Jamel Lorick; keyboardists Sam Wynn and Ekwon Brooks; guitarist Richie Melito; bassist Don Martin; saxophonist Sam Kininger; and Nate Brown on drums.

Nate said the band’s name, Brownskin, just came to him. “I had been trying to think of a creative way to use my name in the band’s name. Then I thought, ‘Hmm,

my last name is Brown and I play the drums, which are sometimes called skins, so why not put them together — Brownskin.’ That’s how the name was born.”

Many people who knew them back then may have thought that the name was created because all of the players were African-Americans. But, as Nate explained, that wasn’t the case.

The band’s current lineup is racially diverse. It is something that appeals widely in today’s society. Nate and his bandmates are very in tune with that. Their diversity has also brought a new element to the band’s sound.

Nate wants to preserve that sound, so they are working on some originals with hopes to record soon.

Brownskin has a few gigs booked over the next couple of months. If you want to catch them this month, they are performing at Al’s Wine & Whiskey Lounge on March 26. Local organization JAMS (Joined Artists Musicians & Singers, Inc.) is hosting them. The JAMS organization strives to provide platforms for local artists to showcase themselves.

FREE GIG IN MARCH

What: Brownskin performance

When: 9 p.m. Sunday, March 26

Where: Al’s Wine & Whiskey Lounge, 321 S. Clinton St.

Cost: Free and open to the public, but you must be 21 or older to enter

BOOK AN EVENT

Besides club performances, Brownskin also performs at weddings, parties and other private events.

If you’re interested in booking the band, contact bandleader Nate Brown.

Phone: (315) 876-4907

Email:
brownskinband315@gmail.com

HAVE A FRIENDLY FIVE SUGGESTION?

Contact Reggie at reggie@softspokenband.com or (315) 479-9620

FOLLOWING THE BAND

Unity Street Band was busy in February. Here are highlights from some events last month.

The band's **first performance** took place Saturday, Feb. 18, when the band led a crowd on a "Pre-Mardi Gras Parade Crawl" as part of Syracuse's Winterfest, complete with New Orleans-style tunes and beads thrown to participants and passers-by.

The band **marched and played**, leading participants from Otro Cinco to Liehs & Steigerwald Downtown, Maxwells, Clark's Ale House, The Evergreen and The Sweet Praxis for a culinary cruise and a hurricane mix-off before heading back to Otro Cinco for a final performance.

Unity Street Band held another **Mardi Gras celebration**, Sunday, Feb. 26, called "Mardi Gras Syracuse with Los Blancos." Los Blancos performed at the Empire Brewery, and then the Unity Street Band led parade participants from Empire Brewery around the block in Armory Square to the Jazz Jam at Funk 'N Waffles. All proceeds went to the Food Bank of Central New York and to the Housing & Homeless Coalition of Central New York.

RETURN OF THE JAZZ

Local resident uses music to unite professional and novice musicians



> Members of the Unity Street Band perform in downtown Syracuse on Feb. 18 during a "Pre-Mardi Gras Parade Crawl" as part of Syracuse's Winterfest. | Amelia Beamer, Staff Photo

By | Amelia Beamer
Staff reporter

Melissa Gardiner establishes jazz groups for interested South Side residents to join

If you close your eyes on any lazy Sunday afternoon while taking in the live performances of local and guest jazz musicians at Funk 'N Waffles downtown, it's not difficult to imagine yourself in New Orleans — even if only until a door opens and the bitter cold wind whips through your daydream of soulful melodies.

Local Syracuse trombonist, bandleader, composer/arranger and Syracuse University instructor of jazz trombone Melissa Gardiner created these weekly Jazz Jam events in May 2015, and they've been drawing jazz fans on Sundays since. She has been busy creating other opportunities to bring live jazz music back to where she believes it belongs: the community.

"It has always been my goal to bring people together through music," she said. "Music is a universal language, and represents a powerful and effective way to include people from all walks of life and incite positive change within any community."

These opportunities include Jazz Jams; Second Line Syracuse Brass Band, an eight-person brass band composed of professional musicians; Latin Drum Circle,

a weekly gathering during the summer months held from 12:30 to 2:30 p.m. at Skiddy Park; and most recently — and perhaps most notable in light of Gardiner's goal — an expansion project of the Second Line Syracuse band called the Unity Street Band.

"As the Second Line Syracuse Brass Band is a professional-level group, I wanted to create an extension ... to the program to allow for anyone to join at any level, with a focus on performances for good causes," Gardiner said.

The Unity Street Band has been active for a little more than a month and has grown with each weekly practice, held 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturdays in the music room at Corcoran High School. The band consists of 15 members and welcomes anyone interested in joining — from professional musicians to beginners.

"New Orleans brass band music is the perfect place to start, as the music is fun but simple," Gardiner said. "Our approach is to have four main sections: rhythm and percussion, bass (tuba, baritone sax, bass trombone), middle (trombone, tenor and alto sax) and high (trumpet, clarinet, flute and piccolo).

"Many people know the parts and can hold it down, so anyone can join in and play along or just improvise throughout. It is very open and a ton of fun."

According to a press release on the group's Facebook

page, "The Unity Street Band is modeled after activist street bands around the country. All performances will support our community in some way. Anyone can join in on any 'mobile' instrument, all levels."

One of Gardiner's goals is to provide support systems for younger or less-experienced musicians to blossom alongside community members who are professionals. For example, members of her Second Line Syracuse Brass Band play with and mentor community members taking part in the Unity Street Band.

Gardiner recognizes that the support and opportunities she had as a younger musician were in large part responsible for some part of her experiences and successes. These include a master's degree from The Juilliard School, a position as the first female jazz instructor at Syracuse University, a teaching position at Cornell University, giving private lessons, performing with her own band MG3 and playing alongside world renowned musicians such as Aretha Franklin, drummer Bernard Purdie and American funk group Vulfpeck.

The band will start with some New Orleans classics, like "When the Saints Go Marching In," "Second Line," "Joe Avery's Blues," "Do Whatcha Wanna," "You Move Ya Lose" and "We Got That Fire," Gardiner said.

If you're interested in participating, it's not too late. "We are actively recruiting new members, and enrollment is open," Gardiner said. "It is flexible and people can join in at any time."



> Melissa Gardiner performs at Otro Cinco as part of the "Pre-Mardi Gras Parade Crawl." | Amelia Beamer, Staff Photo

JOIN THE UNITY BAND

The Unity Street Band is a volunteer-based activist musical group open to all levels.

No auditions are necessary.

Weekly rehearsals are held from **11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturdays** at Corcoran High School in the music room (enter by theater entrance near the gymnasium), 919 Glenwood Ave.

To learn more, contact Donna Vallese at drdonnamv@gmail.com or (315) 303-2078 or Melissa Gardiner at info@melissamaymusic.com

ON THE SIDE

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> Food Recovery Network President Shewa Shwani, center, and friends Luella Bond, left, and Haley Gladitsch, right, grab meals to deliver to the Food Services Center for the poor. | Delaney Van Wey, Staff Photo

By | Delaney Van Wey
Urban Affairs reporter

College students ensure others are fed as they recover leftover food from campus, restaurants

At a time when some of the highest authorities in the United States are raising suspicions about Islam, one young, devout Syracuse Muslim woman has just received one of the city's highest humanitarian honors — named as an “unsung hero,” whose volunteer work recalls the spirit of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Shewa Shwani, a junior at the State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry, has devoted the past three years to growing the local chapter of a national organization, the Food

Recovery Network. The group delivers food left over from meals in dining halls, restaurants and cafes to charities that distribute it directly to the hungry. In January, Shwani received an Unsung Hero Award at the 32nd annual Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration at Syracuse University.

“This community means a lot to me,” said Shwani, an immigrant from Iraq, whose parents brought her to the United States when she was a year old. “Although I don’t know the specific names of the people, I still feel part of the larger community,” she said. “We are all doing the same thing, pursuing the American dream.”

Last semester, under her leadership, the network distributed 15,000 pounds of recovered food — twice as much as the previous year, Shwani said. The organization works with eight nonprofit agencies that feed the

poor, including the Rescue Mission on the Near West Side and The Determination Center of CNY, an after-school program. Previously located at 1654 W. Onondaga St., the program moved to 1640 South Ave. on the South Side during the week of Feb. 13.

Bettie Graham, founder and director of The Determination Center, said it is difficult to put into words how much Shwani and the network have helped her organization. She and Shwani met about a year ago at an award ceremony and exchanged phone numbers after talking about Shwani's work. Graham said when the two met, she had been paying food costs for the center out of her own pocket. The Determination Center works with local at-risk youth, Graham said, explaining that what they eat there can sometimes be their last meal for the day.

"We really, really — from the depth of our souls — are grateful," Graham said. "I will be forever grateful."

"We are all doing the same thing, pursuing the American dream."

— Shewa Shwani

Shwani, who is from Liverpool, said she had worked with the hungry before, at the Samaritan Center located in downtown Syracuse during high school. She had felt compassion for the poor then, but was really inspired after completing her first delivery with the Food Recovery Network. She said she thought she had found her calling, or her higher purpose.

It wasn't always easy, though, Shwani said. After she was elected president, the three founders graduated and she initially struggled to build on their work. "I was alone, I didn't have anyone to help me," she said.

Those close to Shwani said they knew she was struggling, but she never gave up. Mark Tewksbury, assistant director of food services at SU and adviser to the Food Recovery Network, said Shwani worked tirelessly to find more agencies that would accept donations, which was difficult because the agencies must be open when dining halls close at night. He said Shwani has always gone "above and beyond" what the average volunteer does.

Eileen Baldassarre, coordinator for the Collegiate Science and Technology Entry Program (CSTEP) at SUNY-ESF, has worked closely with Shwani since freshman year. She said Shwani had problems at first relin-



> Shewa Shwani, left, and Haley Gladitsch prepare a delivery of fresh food for community members. | Delaney Van Wey, Staff Photo

quishing control over the details. The organization was just so important to Shwani that it was difficult for her to find a balance, Baldassarre said.

Eventually, Shwani said, she found people who were dedicated to helping the cause. Then it was a matter of her learning how to be a good leader, she said. Shwani credits the national leaders of Food Recovery Network, which has chapters all over the country, with teaching her how to delegate and manage a team.

"Food Recovery Network has really opened my eyes to what leadership really is," Shwani said. "It's not about one person doing everything. It's about the group doing it as a team, a unit."

Baldassarre, one of the people who nominated Shwani for the Unsung Hero Award, said she took into consideration how Shwani affected the community and also how she dealt with race and faith — two important aspects of King's legacy.

While the pressures of being a Muslim in the United States right now could easily make someone cynical, Baldassarre said, Shwani has instead grown closer to her faith and her desire to serve others.

As Shwani put it, "I was very humbled to hear from people that my work is like what MLK did in his lifetime."



> The Food Services Center is one of several local food banks that accepts donated meals to give to lower-income members of the community. | Delaney Van Wey, Staff Photo

FOOD FACTS

- An estimated 25 percent to 40 percent of food grown, processed and transported in the United States each year will never be consumed.

— Source: *Feeding America*

- Each year, 33 million tons of food is wasted in the United States.

— Source: *National Public Radio, 2012 report*

- In 2015, 42.2 million Americans lived in food insecure households, including 29.1 million adults and 13.1 million children.

— Source: *Feeding America*

- Food insecurity is improving, with a 1.3 percent decrease in food insecure households in the United States between 2014 and 2015.

— Source: *World Hunger Education Service*

ON THE SIDE

RESOURCE CENTER

The Emma L. Johnston Family Resource Center

Address: 136 Dr. Martin Luther King West

Center hours: 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday

Food pantry hours: 2:30 to 6 p.m. Thursdays

Phone: (315) 470-3342

Other resources offered:

- Activities for youth and seniors
- Advocacy and support
- Community outreach and partnerships
- Crisis intervention
- Job readiness
- Information and referrals
- Parent support and education
- Volunteer opportunities
- Seasonal events

FOOD FOR FAMILIES

New food pantry offers healthy options every Thursday



> Cheryl Stevens removes a box of cereal from one of the many pantry shelves in the Emma L. Johnston Southside Family Resource Center. She is filling a grocery order for a client. | Perry Aston, Staff Photo

By | Nate Band
Urban Affairs reporter

New food pantry in South Side resource center sets its hours to meet needs of ‘working poor’

When the Emma L. Johnston Southside Family Resource Center opened its new food pantry a month ago, emphasizing nutritious food, the longtime South Side institution drew one of its biggest crowds ever.

Located on Dr. Martin Luther King West, the resource center has been a safe haven for many local residents by providing small donations of food and clothing. However, when Charles Rivers took over as the center’s coordinator last year, he realized that the resource center could be more ambitious and do more to help the community. Rivers made it a goal to reach out to local residents in need.

“I had lived in the South Side of Syracuse my whole life, and I realized one of the things we didn’t have in this community was just the basic needs like food, clothing and such,” Rivers said.

“That’s why we’ve been spending time here giving away clothing and food that has been donated. And then I noticed that we have working people who still cannot

make ends meet and have to make the decision to either pay their National Grid bill or (buy) something to eat,” he added. “And I realized this person works, but they still have to struggle with that.”

Rivers said he was referring to the “working poor” — people who have a job and a family to take care of, but still lack basic resources, such as food and clothing. This was the primary reason he set regular hours for the food pantry from 2:30 to 6 p.m. every Thursday.

“The reason we chose our hours is to address the working poor. So, because they maybe get out of work at 3 or 4 o’clock, they would not go to your traditional pantry because they’re closed,” Rivers said. “So we had the option to do it on a Saturday or on a weekday, and after sitting down and really thinking about it, we came to the conclusion that it would be best if we serve it one day, but with inclusive hours.”

The pantry, he said, emphasizes serving healthy, nutritious foods.

Darlene Jones, a South Side resident, has been a volunteer at the center since last April, and she works with two other volunteers whose responsibilities include taking people’s orders, organizing food items and restocking shelves. She said she believes that the healthy food options will benefit the community most.



> The new food pantry in the Emma L. Johnston Southside Family Resource Center offers a variety of healthy options. | Nate Band, Staff Photo

“I think the way we do it here is food for the right diet. Here we have tuna, noodles, vegetables versus giving our children snacks and stuff like that,” Jones said. “If a person isn’t eating right, they’re not thinking right.”

Ladeena Curry, who is another coordinator of the resource center, has lived on the South Side her whole life. She said she has seen the communal need for basic resources as an issue that has not been attended to, and she attributes that to a lack of members in the community who can offer help.

“The other important part of serving healthy food is having people that actually care behind it,” Curry said. “As long as you have the right people behind what we’re doing, it’s going to continue to benefit the community.”

Local community members found out about the pantry opening by word of mouth or the internet, and that led to an unexpected rush of about 20 families within the first hour the pantry opened.

Renee Moore, a Syracuse resident with several grandchildren, recently moved out of the neighborhood but was still able to make her way to the center for the opening of the food pantry. Moore said she regarded the food pantry as the best place to receive enough food to sustain a family for a few



> Ladeena Curry carries a grocery bag of food items, which were selected for a client of the new food pantry. | Perry Aston, Staff Photo

days and establish a healthy, nutritious lifestyle for young children.

“You know here you got choices. They ask you what you want and you can take enough to feed your family for a certain number of days,” Moore said. “This is helpful especially for older people and children.”

Since becoming the coordinator of the center, Rivers’ mission remains the same. As a South Side resident his entire life, Rivers said he sees helping the community as his duty, regardless of his occupation. Help can mean serving food, handing out clothing or even assisting community members with finding a job, he said.

“Since I got here, we’ve been offering daily nutritious things like fresh produce or bread that has been donated to us from grocery stores or other donors. So it’s very important that you have nutritious eating versus just eating,” Rivers said.

“Eating nutritiously lowers the chances of obesity, diabetes and things like that, which are big issues in the community,” he added. “Those are some of the things we’re actually looking to address as well. Ensuring that community members have healthy food options on a daily basis.”



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ON THE SIDE

PIXELS & PRINT

Workshop details:

- Held Feb. 9-11
- 40 students
- 6 coaches
- pixelsvsprint.syr.edu

SOUTH SIDE BOROUGHES

Members of the Pixels & Print workshop focused on the six neighborhoods that make up the South Side:

- Brighton
- Elmwood
- South Side
- Southwest
- Strathmore
- Winkworth

SOUTH SIDE REVAMP

Participants worked to create a new logo, website template and more



> TNT delegate Camille Coakley, center, watches as the new South Side logo is unveiled. | Dominique Hildebrand, Staff Photo

By | Nate Band and Ashley Kang
The Stand

Local residents, Syracuse University students, professional coaches rebrand the South Side

South Side residents partnered with a Syracuse University design workshop last month to complete a rebrand of the neighborhood in 48 hours.

The logo and rebrand unveiling served as the culmination of Pixels & Print, an annual design workshop coordinated by the graphic design department of the S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications. The mission of the workshop is to create design with social impact.

Graphic design students, under the direction of various design and art coaches — some alumni and all professionals in their field — created a logo, website template, a six-part promotional poster series and swag, a redesign for a community paper website and eNewsletter, a zine idea, interactive maps and social media resources. This was all done in an effort to cultivate a culture change for the city’s South Side Tomorrow’s Neighborhoods Today.

Students considered accessibility in their designs as well by suggesting TNT use free programs and software. Moving forward, the various TNT task forces could edit joint documents using Google Docs and share upcoming community events on a Google Calendar online.

A re-envisioned community newspaper could be printed on standard 8- by 11-inch paper at the library like a zine and then shared with friends.

Kuan Luo, a Newhouse alumna and publication coach for the redesign, said the limited time the students got to work on the rebrand actually helped in providing a sense of urgency, comparable to the atmosphere at a design company.

“Limitation is a great thing for design,” said Luo, who served as The Stand’s first graphic design assistant in 2010 when she was a senior at the Newhouse School.

“The students knew what the real-world situations would be like where you need to make things work with limited time and without all the necessary resources, so I was very impressed,” she said.

Rachel Schwartz, a Newhouse sophomore majoring in graphic design who worked on the publication team for the redesign, attributed the efficient work done by her

peers to the support and determination shown by South Side community members.

"The coaches were so helpful with anything we needed, but in all honesty, the driving factor behind the students doing such great work so fast was the overwhelming support from TNT and South Side community members," Schwartz said.

"You could really tell how excited and moved they were when they saw the new logo for the first time, and that ultimately gave me the most gratification of being a part of this," she said.

The redesign was significantly special for Geneva Hayden, a South Side community member who has run several summer and after-school programs for community members over the years.

"You're truly amazing," Hayden proclaimed in reference to the various teams that constructed the redesign.

"This is a culture change," she said, "because I've been working with this community for 30 years, and the incredible work done by these students is the step in the right direction that we've been needing."

Camille Coakley, a TNT delegate and a board member of The Stand, played a major role in connecting the South Side to this design workshop by applying to be a client.

"Ours was unanimously selected," she said.

But Coakley is just one of many South Side residents

trying to improve her neighborhood.

She views the rebrand as a stepping stone for a struggling community, as it provides people in need with a true identity.

"I think we have so many boroughs in the South Side that some people don't even know what neighborhood they live in," Coakley said. "So I think that we're trying to establish that and really promote the assets of each neighborhood."

Coakley also commended the work of the students and coaches, stating that the end result embodied exactly the idea that TNT had in mind. The logo chosen featured a heart at its center with six color blocks surrounding it, appearing almost as beams of light. The surrounding blocks represented the South Side's six neighborhoods, and the heart stood for the love TNT members hold for their area.

Neighborhood signage, including a welcome sign to be placed on the edge of downtown leading into the South Side at Billings Park, was also part of the collaborative project.

Students incorporated iron work into the railing along with the slogan TNT members proposed, which is "South Side: Soul of Syracuse."

Coakley said of the students involved: "They really wanted to know what we wanted. We gave them notes, and a day later, they just nailed it."

CREATE A ZINE

What: Cut and Paste Zines

When: 2 to 4 p.m.
Friday, March 24

Where: Central Library,
447 S. Salina St.

Details: Create a community zine, a unique publication addressing a variety of themes, including music, feminism, politics, art, design, activism and poetry. Bring your own images, poetry, art, etc. Workshop runs in collaboration with Syracuse in Print, and is open to ages 12 and up.

Cost: Free; no registration required

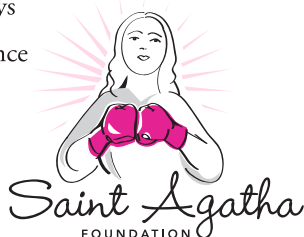
More info.: Visit onlib.org

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