

the **Stand** south side news

www.mysouthsidestand.com

Syracuse, NY

SUMMER 2012 **issue 19** **FREE**

SECOND CHANCE

Omanii's owner helps
struggling individuals
find themselves again

tee time

Youths pick up
life lessons while
playing summer golf

Community Mentor

Barbara Yancey finds passion
in educating, helping others

Kidz Café Offers Skills
Jobless teens volunteer behind the counter

HONORING MOTHERLY LOVE



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THE PUBLICATION'S EDITORIAL PURPOSE AND
IN KEEPING WITH COMMUNITY STANDARDS.**4 FEATURES** | Read how South Side native Barbara Yancey is following her passion and making patients' lives better as a registered nurse at St. Joseph's Hospital Health Center.**6 SCHOOL AND YOUTH** | Find out why some parents are anticipating the end of the school year, when they'll learn if their children can attend the highly regarded Syracuse Southside Academy.**8 COMMUNITY** | Many South Side residents are calling for cameras to be installed to deter violence. Read about whether or not that will happen, and how they would be used.**10 YOUTH** | Check out how more than 200 young members of the South Side will be hitting the golf course this summer to learn the game as members of The First Tee program.**12 YOUTH** | See how young South Side residents will spend their summer Sundays learning business skills at Tucker Missionary Baptist Church as volunteers at Kidz Café.**16 COMMUNITY** | Read about how more than 1,000 South Side properties will be placed in flood zones under FEMA's flood map recalculations, and what the financial effects will be.**19 COMMUNITY** | Check out how South Side residents will mark a special anniversary of a momentous day in America's history at Syracuse's annual Juneteenth Celebration.**20 FEATURES** | Former convicts are earning themselves a second chance and supporting their families while working at Omanii's Lemonade Heaven.**22 ENTERTAINMENT** | See how the local musical group, UAD, is putting together a show in May at the Palace Theatre, where more than 20 local musical talents will perform.**24 COMMUNITY** | Learn how you can participate in several The Stand Workshops being held on the South Side, taking part in community events or even picking up some new skills.

■ Cover photography of Omanii Abdullah by Hannah L. Cordell

CALENDAR | SUMMER

What: Public Meeting for The I-81 Challenge**When:** 2 to 8 p.m. Wednesday, May 9**Where:** Oncenter Ballroom (lower level) 800 S. State St.**More details:** Interested residents may drop in at any time and take part in the process for determining the future of I-81. This session will review materials from the May 2011 workshop, ask for feedback on the initial strategies before the New York State Department of Transportation begins further analysis, and be a forum for sharing additional potential plans.**More Info.:** Free parking will be provided in the Oncenter garage and parking lot. For special accommodations, call (315) 422-5716 or email contactus@thei81challenge.org. Learn more online at thei81challenge.org**What:** Night Out with The Coalition Fundraiser**When:** 6 to 8 p.m. Saturday, May 19**Where:** South Side Communication Center, 2331 S. Salina St.**More details:** Night Out benefits the South Side Communication Center, which provides residents with free public access to computers with Internet connectivity and to on-site printing, faxing, scanning and copying. During the event, the community may take tours of the center, listen to The Donna Alford JaSSBand and enjoy food. Sponsorship opportunities include: Platinum Level (\$2,500), Gold (\$1,000), Silver (\$500) and Bronze (\$250). Donations and Sponsorships accepted by mail or online at www.syrsouthside.org via PAYPAL. **More Info.:** To RSVP, call (315) 391-8231 or email contactsc@syrsouthside.org

While you enjoy this summer issue — available through August — staff members of The Stand are still busy at work covering local events and sharing community news online. Check the website at mysouthsidestand.com for continuing coverage that will keep you up to date.

In this issue, you'll find a collection of human-interest stories and community updates. Find out how youth are learning business skills by running a snack shop in their church. Read a follow-up story on surveillance cameras, and check out our update about the South Side Food Cooperative, expected to open in 2013. And learn how to load up on fresh produce and healthy foods this summer during the new South Side Grows Healthy Festival, which is set for June 23.

In June, new community correspondents will provide extensive coverage of Syracuse's Juneteenth celebration (read a preview about this event on Page 19). Syracuse's celebration is one of the largest Juneteenth celebrations in the country. It is held in recognition of the sacrifices and challenges African-Americans endured to achieve freedom. Our community correspondents will first meet at the end of May to refresh their skills on covering local events and devise a strategy to cover the June 16 celebration. Then on the day of the celebration, The Stand will go out in force to cover the annual event. Coverage will be featured online. Any residents or local students interested in participating should contact me to learn how to be involved; also, see Page 24 for a schedule of The Stand's summer workshops.

In July, we will hold our third Photo Walk and again feature photos from the day's events in our next print issue, scheduled to come out in September. Our Photo Walks have been our most popular workshops and have been daylong adventures on foot to document life on the South Side. Don't have a camera? Don't let that stop you. We'll have a limited number of cameras available to loan out, so RSVP early to reserve one.

In addition to training community correspondents, the staff at The Stand will work over the summer to gain support through advertising to help sustain the project. Our printing costs and freelance payments to community correspondents for their articles are partly offset by money earned from ad sales. Contact me to learn about opportunities to buy ads in the print issue and online, and also to place ad inserts.

As always, turn the page to learn more about your local community. To reach me, email me at ashley@mysouthsidestand.com or call (315) 882-1054.

Ashley Kang



UPCOMING EVENTS

May

Journalism Workshop
May 19

June

Juneteenth Coverage
June 16

South Side Grows Healthy Festival
June 23

July

Third Annual Photo Walk
July 21

WORKSHOP DETAILS

For full details about The Stand Workshops scheduled this summer, turn to Page 24.

CONNECT WITH US ONLINE

Facebook: [TheStandNewspaper](https://www.facebook.com/TheStandNewspaper)

Twitter: [MySouthSide](https://twitter.com/MySouthSide)

Flickr: [MySouthSideStand](https://www.flickr.com/photos/MySouthSideStand/)



MEET A COMMUNITY CORRESPONDENT

Keith Muhammad is from a family of activists. His father, Laymon Herring, was the self-educated publisher of the Syracuse Banner and Syracuse Crusader newspapers. He desires to walk in his father's shoes by writing articles that speak truth to power, that address the needs of the people and that are thought-provoking and entertaining. Recently he has contributed stories to The Stand online, including local coverage of the "One Million Hoodie March for Trayvon Martin." In this issue, read his preview of this summer's Juneteenth celebration on Page 19.

CORRECTION

The April issue of The Stand incorrectly identified Kahari Thomas in a photo cutline. Thomas does not own Omanii's Lemonade Heaven. Omanii Abdullah owns the restaurant on South Avenue, and Thomas is one of his employees.

LOCAL ACHIEVERS

The South Side Achiever is a new feature in The Stand that highlights an accomplished person in the community.

ORGANIZATION

St. Joseph's Hospital Health Center

REGISTERED NURSE

Barbara Yancey

ENCOURAGEMENT

Barbara Yancey went back to school at 48 and graduated at 50 as a registered nurse, proving that you're never too old to learn, she says. She encourages women who are interested in nursing to get informed and go to open houses to see what is available to them.

NOMINATE SOMEONE

Do you know a South Side Achiever? Nominate that person by contacting Ashley@mysouthsidestand.com or (315) 882-1054

GET INVOLVED

**New Direction
Community Network**

- <http://www.newdirectioninc.org/>
- [Twitter.com/Newdirection1](https://twitter.com/Newdirection1)



Barbara Yancey

*Helps dialysis patients,
mentors young women*

By | Sistina Giordano
Staff reporter

*Nurse educates about kidney disease,
serves as advocate in the community*

It's all in the smile for Barbara Yancey, a registered nurse at St. Joseph's Hospital Health Center.

"A lot of people say that when I smile it gives them hope," she said. "And I think that my smile is the beacon of hope that lets people know everything will be all right."

Yancey works as a clinical coordinator in one of St. Joseph's regional dialysis centers, working with patients and managing the unit. But her career as a registered nurse came later on in life.

Born and raised on the South Side, Yancey started working in the hospital at 14 years old. In her early years, she realized her passion for nursing.

"I always had the heart and passion to be in the hospital," she said.

She was a licensed practical nurse for 26 years before going back to school in 2005 to receive an associate degree as a registered nurse.

Today, Yancey works with patients of all ages living with dialysis. In her own quiet way, she says she advocates for the prevention of kidney disease.

"I really try to encourage people and talk to them about getting their blood pressure checked," she said. "Getting that baseline and knowing where you stand is the best prevention."

Last year, Yancey said she spoke to local parishioners at Open Arms International Ministries to educate them about kidney disease.

She continues to educate people in the community and those she sees at St. Joseph's.

"Your whole lifestyle changes when you are on dialysis," she said. "So I think it's important to let patients know that they may be down today but soon they'll start feeling better. My main thing is encouraging people and bringing encouragement."

Yancey's volunteer work doesn't stop when she leaves the hospital. She is an active member of Abundant Life Christian Center and sings in the choir each week. She is also an advocate for young women.



> Barbara Yancey relies on her personal experiences when mentoring young women. | Sistina Giordano, Staff Photo

In November 2010, Yancey was asked to join New Direction Community Network, a group dedicated to empowering young women through mentorship.

Understanding the difficult situations that many young women face was something that tugged on Yancey's heartstrings, she said.

In 2005 while studying to become an RN, Yancey went through a divorce after 21 years of marriage. The marriage and divorce taught her strength, patience and endurance — all of which she draws from when working with young women, she said.

"When I first started with New Direction, I had a mentee I was working with," she said. "I would work with her and help her, and by me advising and encouraging her I was able to see her get out of her situation and move on."

For Yancey, it all amounts to making people feel like they matter and have purpose in everything, she said.

"People need joy, they need peace and they need to know that they can be happy," she said. "What makes me happy is when I see them come in with a smile."

Yancey, a mother of three who is also a grandmother, said her work is about cultivating great relationships and educating people about important issues.

"I do my own advocating and it's more about me getting the word out," she said.

"I'm an observer, and I don't say much but I like to make things happen."

Bennie's business dream is reality.

Yours can be, too.

Bennie McDonald's dream of owning his own company needed a jump start, and that's just what he got from the **South Side Innovation Center (SSIC)**. "They were the mentors I needed to get my business off to a successful start," says McDonald, a disabled veteran who is now president of BMD Snow Removal & Grass Cutting. "What I learned helped me exceed all my goals."

If you want to start a business, or you already have one and want to make it better, the SSIC has a full range of services and facilities, including:

- > Office space and equipment
- > Hands-on training
- > Counseling
- > Classroom courses
- > Business plans
- > Access to loans

The SSIC is a program of SU's Martin J. Whitman School of Management, a national leader in entrepreneurship. To find out how the SSIC can give you the tools you need to succeed in business, visit southsideinnovation.org or call **315.443.8600**.

SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY: Scholarship in Action



PUBLIC VS. CHARTER

Charter Schools are operated nationally by two kinds of organizations:

- CMOs: Charter Management Organizations (non-profit)
- EMOs: Educational Management Organizations (for-profit)

Charter schools differ from regular public schools. By law a charter school must:

- Follow all state licensing of teachers protocols
- Hold proper open meetings and keep public records
- Adhere to all health and safety, immunization and civil rights standards

Charter schools do not have to follow local board of education policies. They must follow their CMO or EMO policies.

Source: the National Charter School Resource Center
<http://www.charterschoolcenter.org/>

THE ACADEMIES

Syracuse Southside Academy Charter School
 2200 Onondaga Creek Blvd.
 Syracuse, NY 13207
 (315) 476-3019

Syracuse Academy of Science
 1001 Park Ave.
 Syracuse, NY, 13204
 (315) 428-8997

LUCK OF THE DRAW

Parents hope to enroll their children in popular local charter school

By | Richie Calabro
Urban Affairs reporter

Syracuse Southside Academy sees increasing number of applications in annual lottery

The chances of winning are slim, but the payoff is handsome.

With the end of the academic school year upon them, parents of hope-to-be students at the Syracuse Southside Academy wait to see if their child will be selected to attend the school next year.

"I'm crossing my fingers and hopefully my son gets a spot," said Rayna Shepherd, who is trying to get her fourth-grade son into the Academy.

The Syracuse Southside Academy is one of two Syracuse charter schools, and is located on Onondaga Creek Boulevard. Currently, 650 students in kindergarten through eighth grade are enrolled here. Syracuse's other charter school, Syracuse Academy of Science, covers grades 7-12.

Charter schools are tuition-free, privately run public schools that don't have to follow all of the same rules and restrictions as city public schools. Syracuse Southside Academy is run by a for-profit organization called National Heritage Academies that operates more than 75 schools all over the country, including six in New York.

The popularity of these schools is rising quickly. There are more than 4,900 charter schools nationwide, serving nearly 2 million children, according to the U.S. Department of Education.

"I think charter schools are becoming so popular because it gives parents an alternative in-between the public school system, which sometimes isn't great, and expensive private schools," said Nicole Gill, who has a 10-year-old and an 8-year-old at Southside.

Gill, who was able to get one of her daughters into the Academy from the city schools, said Southside is really the only option besides Catholic school.

"The city schools just aren't getting it done. You go in there and there's kids running everywhere. A reason why this [Southside] school is so popular is because there's nowhere else to go," she said.

For Deohna Evans, the Syracuse Southside Academy was the best thing that could have happened to her sons. "It's great. They have a good structured system and it's really like a community here," she said.

Donna Cooper, a South Side resident, said that after she did some research, she realized a charter school would be the best fit for her 11-year-old daughter.

"I knew that this school would be right for her. It has

all the things my daughter needs to succeed, like a lot of support," Cooper said.

Cooper's daughter, Natally, said she loves being at Southside Academy. "I really like it here because I get to learn a lot but also dressing up every day in uniform is kind of fun," she said.

The Syracuse Southside Academy has a waitlist of more than 100 students, parents have been told. The Academy referred all questions to its national media office, National Heritage Academies, which did not respond to requests for information.

The waitlist process is a tedious one.

First, a parent or guardian must go into the office and fill out an application, which is usually available in January. After their application is submitted, they wait until the lottery. This year, the lottery was held April 24.

Once the applications are submitted, administrators at the school sort them into three categories. One category is for students who already have siblings in the school, the second is for students who live in the city and the third is for students from other districts.

The number of students picked depends on the space for each grade level, said Stephanie Irving, a grandmother and recently retired Syracuse police officer who has been through the process before.

Once the application process is complete, parents or guardians are notified if their child has been chosen. If they are not selected, they must reapply the following January and go through the whole process again. Applications do not carry over to the next lottery.

"It really is a pain. The process is very odd and it can get confusing at times," Irving said.

Although charter schools are gaining increasing popularity, Irving said there are some negative repercussions to the schools.

"The Say Yes program and the tutoring programs aren't available to use because we aren't enrolled in city schools," she said.

Any student that isn't enrolled in a city public school has to pay for most things that usually come free to city residents, Evans said.

"I couldn't send either of my sons to the summer enrichment camps through the city because if you aren't enrolled in a city school, you can't use most of the city's resources," she said.

The Syracuse Southside Academy was granted permission to continue operating by the New York State Department of Education at the end of 2009. The school had its charter approved through the 2014-2015 school year.



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BY THE NUMBERS

Percentage change for some of the leading types of crime on the South Side from April through June 2011 and July through September 2011:

Larceny: 9% increase

Burglary: 1% increase

Aggravated Assault: 1.3% increase

Motor Vehicle Theft: 36.7% decrease

Robbery: 106.7% increase

Source: <http://www.syracusepolice.org/document/399.pdf>



Find these words in this story

Unanimous

Unanimous describes a situation where all parties involved are fully in agreement and there is no dissent

Canvass

Canvass means to carefully examine or discuss something or to go through an area to get votes, orders or survey answers

How would you use these words in a sentence?

DETERRING CRIME

Businesses could benefit from potential installation of security cameras



> Anna Boris cuts customer Bertha Bradford's hair. Boris hopes the installed cameras will deter crime from her shop, Anna's Beauty Salon, at 430 W. Colvin St. | Steve Davis, Staff Photo

By | Christina Levin
Urban Affairs reporter

Community members support security camera installation on South Side to improve safety

Corcoran High School senior Delores Woody, who lives near the intersection of Midland Avenue and West Colvin Street, lost three family members to violent crime: two shootings and one stabbing. She's heard that surveillance cameras were installed on the West Side, and thinks it could help deter crime on the South Side, too.

"That would work. I would support it, because I recently lost my own cousin to it, and my other one, here. Right there, at that pole, and the other one down here," said Woody, pointing to the intersection, and then pointing a few hundred feet away. Woody said she also lost her uncle to a shooting in the neighborhood.

Rich Puchalski, executive director of the community organization Syracuse United Neighbors, also supports

installing surveillance cameras on utility poles on the South Side to reduce crime rates.

"A day doesn't go by without people seeing something like that in the media," said Puchalski. Before a Common Council vote in November of 2011, Puchalski collected more than 350 signatures in favor of installing surveillance cameras on the Near Westside. "People are concerned, and rightly so."

Puchalski has recently met with Syracuse Police Chief Frank Fowler and other law enforcement officials to discuss installing cameras on the South Side. The cameras have helped lower gun violence and other types of crime on the Near Westside, he said, because authorities can monitor multiple locations on computer screens and dispatch police officials more quickly.

Woody, who has heard of a recent shooting on the East Side of Syracuse, said cameras should be installed there, too.

On Nov. 2, the Common Council unanimously approved spending \$125,000 in federal stimulus money



> Richard Puchalski, the executive director of Syracuse United Neighbors, supports the installation of surveillance cameras in the Syracuse area. | Cheryl Mowczan, Staff Photo

to install nine cameras at intersections between South Geddes and Oswego streets, an area on the Near West-side that accounts for nearly one-quarter of the city's gunshot incidents, according to Syracuse police. Police used an \$84,400 state grant to purchase five cameras for the Pioneer Homes housing project on the South Side. They should be installed sometime in May, Puchalski said.

"With the amount of gun violence, shots fired — our government needs to provide a sense of safety," Puchalski said. "In some cities, their cameras are much more up there in terms of technology than we're getting." He cited cameras that can pinpoint the direction from which a shot is fired in cities like Rochester and Buffalo.

Sgt. Tom Connellan of the Syracuse police said South Side camera locations haven't been determined, adding that too many streets in the area have high crime rates. Police are cavvassing the area and seeking community input, noting specific streets with frequent gunfire reports.

Philip Prehn, a senior staff organizer at Syracuse United Neighbors, met with Fowler last November and they came up with a list of about 20 intersections with especially high crime rates.

"The ones we have been focusing most recently on in the South Side, we're concerned about Midland and Colvin. And Midland and Ostrander," Prehn said.

Anna Boris, owner of Anna's Beauty Salon at 430 W. Colvin St., said the Midland and Colvin intersection has been a high-risk area over the years. She does not see a disadvantage in installing cameras in the neighborhood where she has lived since 1982. If you're not doing anything illegal, having cameras around should not make a difference to you, she said.

"One thing about cameras, they're not prejudiced. If it's good things going on, you're gonna see that. If there's something bad going on, you're gonna see that, too," Boris said. "I think it would be of help."

Response to installing surveillance cameras as a

crime-prevention tool has been positive, according to an informal police survey of more than 200 residents on the Near Westside conducted before November's Common Council vote. More than 90 percent approved of the cameras as a crime-prevention tool, and more than 80 percent said they would feel safer, according to a write-up submitted to Syracuse.com by Mayor Stephanie Miner and Fowler.

Larceny is the most prominent crime on the South Side, with 169 incidents reported between July and September of 2011. The most larcenies, 13, occurred on South Salina Street. The street also accounts for the highest number of burglaries — seven — compared to other streets on the South Side. Midland Avenue — one of the streets in the high-risk area where Woody lost her cousins and uncle — reported nine incidents of aggravated assault, the third most common type of crime in the South Side.

Cameras are becoming a norm across the country, said Boris, citing banks and grocery stores as examples of places where they are commonly installed to prevent crimes such as theft.

"In the society that we're in today, it works as a form of information," she said. "If something goes on, the most important thing is that you are watched and you can, you know, get caught. At this point, I see the advantage of it."



> Community members support the installation of security cameras at the intersection of Midland Avenue and West Colvin Street, a high-risk area. | Cheryl Mowczan, Staff Photo

HUDSON'S TAKE

Helen Hudson, a well-known activist on the South Side and the Councilor-at-Large, co-founded the nonprofit **Mothers Against Gun Violence** after her own son survived a stabbing and a shooting. The organization **stands vigil** for city residents at the location they were slain and morally **supports grieving families**, from conversations to hospital visits.

Still, Hudson — who helps organize **educational programs** at local high schools and works with **local churches** and the **police department** to increase awareness about gun violence — stresses that gun violence does not define, nor is it exclusive, to the South Side.

"I live on the South Side, but I'm an **advocate for young people** — which are alike on all sides," she said, adding that violence can be found in every part of Syracuse, not just the South Side.

ON THE SIDE

NINE CORE VALUES

HONESTY

The quality or state of being truthful; not deceptive

INTEGRITY

Strict adherence to a standard of value or conduct; personal honesty and independence

SPORTSMANSHIP

Observing the rules of play and winning or losing with grace

RESPECT

To feel or show deferential regard for; esteem

CONFIDENCE

Reliance or trust, a feeling of self-assurance

RESPONSIBILITY

Accounting for one's actions; dependable

PERSEVERANCE

To persist in an idea, purpose or task despite obstacles

COURTESY

Considerate behavior toward others; a polite remark or gesture

JUDGMENT

The ability to make a decision or form an opinion; a decision reached after consideration

Source:

www.thefirsttee.org

ANGLE OF APPROACH

Golf program involves inner-city youth in sport, teaches life values



> Alanna Jones is a ninth-grader at Jamesville-DeWitt High School and a First Tee participant. | Josh Wetmore, Staff Photo

By | Josh Wetmore

Urban Affairs reporter

The First Tee provides local youth with an opportunity to learn to play golf this summer

G

olfing opportunities for young African-Americans in Syracuse have shrunk in high schools, but the game is still within reach when school's out — and at a higher rate than a lot of other places.

Around 100 will be participating this summer locally in The First Tee of Syracuse program, designed to diversify golf and introduce the game to inner-city youth ages 6 to 17.

The First Tee also teaches social skills, said Tim

Mascari, the supervising coach for the program.

By the second day, he said, he sees results — and not just in the golf swing.

“You see them taking their hat off and shaking their hands with the other participants and getting to know each other,” Mascari said.

The First Tee program started nationally in 1997 with the goal of getting more youths, particularly underprivileged youths, involved in the game while teaching them nine core values for life. The program now has 197 chapters in six countries. In the United States, the program charges \$100 to join but will waive the fee if applicants aren't able to pay.

The Syracuse chapter started in 2007 and had

258 participants in the summer program last year. The chapter is thriving, particularly in the area of expanding diversity. In 2011, African-Americans made up 34 percent of the Syracuse chapter participants, twice the international First Tee average of 18 percent.

Golf has never been a diverse sport. At the college level, the NCAA's 2010 tally of teams showed that only 2.2 percent of golfers were African-American. Corcoran High School — with an enrollment of more than 70 percent African-American students — combined its golf program with the other city high schools.

James Wiggins, the program director for the Syracuse First Tee chapter, said teaching the core values on and off the golf course is what the program is all about.

"Those life skills are very central to the purposes of The First Tee," Wiggins said.

The First Tee program is spread over six weeks, meeting twice a week. Program participants rotate between lessons on putting, pitching and chipping, driving, and social exercises.

"We try to teach these life lessons and these nine core values into the game of golf, and also bridge it into life as well," Mascari said.

Dan Bronchetti, the former golf coach at Corcoran, has coached two high school players who have gone through The First Tee program. He said that above all, those two athletes stood out in their personal character.

"The two kids that I had were outstanding. They weren't the greatest golfers in the world but everyone loved them," Bronchetti said.

Bronchetti said programs like The First Tee are particularly necessary right now. Bronchetti said that because money is short, Corcoran and the other city schools have combined for a single district team that runs through Henninger High School. He added that this season's district team has only one African-American player participating out of 27 golfers.

Bronchetti said the two major obstacles keeping inner-city youth from involvement in golf are money and exposure to the game.

"They got their own set of clubs free from the program," Bronchetti said. "They used those all the way through high school."

In terms of exposure, The First Tee reaches out beyond its summer session. The program has been working with the Say Yes to Education program in the Syracuse area to bus interested kids to The First Tee. They also are working with local schools to train physical education teachers how to properly teach their students to play golf.

Mascari said that in the end it's all about giving every kid an equal opportunity to play and learn from the game of golf.

Said Mascari: "Yes, it's a great golf program, but that's not what it's all about."



> The First Tee program's Syracuse chapter began in 2007. It lasts six weeks in the summer. | Josh Wetmore, Staff Photo

*"Golf is a
vehicle for youth
development."
— James Wiggins*



> First Tee participants Alanna Jones and Meghan Byrnes stand with supervising coach Tim Mascari outside of Jamesville-DeWitt High School. | Josh Wetmore, Staff Photo

MOVING UP THE RANKS

The First Tee program advances its members through a series of classifications based on both their golf skills and their maturity.

PLAYER

Required minimum age: 7

All new participants start here and learn the basics of the game of golf and the core values.

PAR

Recommended minimum age: 9

Participants worry a little more about their scores and focus on self-management skills.

BIRDIE

Recommended minimum age: 11

Participants are taught how to set goals for themselves in golf and life.

EAGLE

Recommended minimum age: 13

Participants focus on overcoming challenges on the course and how to plan for the future.

ACE

Required minimum age: 14

At the final stage, participants focus on setting goals for their careers, education and community service.

CAFÉ
FIXES

RENOVATIONS

A large bookshelf in the café room is one of several remnants of its former use as a library. As funds from a Say Yes to Education grant to the church become available, parishioner Serena Jackson plans to remodel the room to look more like a café. She hopes the new look will be complete by September.

PLANNED
IMPROVEMENTS

- Counters
- Cabinets
- Beverage fridge
- New paint

Serena Jackson thinks the improvements will make the volunteers feel more like they're in a professional environment.

"We can change the mindset of the people coming in to purchase things and also the kids that are working in there because they'll say, 'Wow, this really looks like a store now.'"

Jackson has added to the professional setting by creating applications for the volunteers, who use them to tell her what weeks and shifts they will work.

KIDZ CAFÉ WORKERS

Young volunteers learn about business at Tucker Church on Sundays



> Kidz Café volunteers, from left: Kenari Curry, 11; Melanie Martin, 18; Ilean Curry, 14. | Marina Zarya, Staff Photo

By | Aaron Pelc
Urban Affairs reporter

Eight young adults master customer service while working at Kidz Café each Sunday

Good manners is good business. It starts with a smile at Tucker Missionary Baptist Church, where parishioners entering the Kidz Café any Sunday are greeted by young volunteers with an enthusiasm that rivals the voice of the pastor booming on the loudspeaker.

Friendliness is one of the main qualities required of the volunteers at the café, which was opened in 2009 to give children, teenagers and young adults at the church a chance to learn business skills in a work setting.

"The church has to be more than just a place to sit and get a message," said Wayne Sistrunk, a parishioner who helped start the café. "You have to learn life skills and things that you can take out to the community."

It may prove especially useful for young parishioners who may not be able to find jobs or job training elsewhere in the current economy. One quarter of Americans ages 16 to 19 were unemployed in March, the second worst March for teen employment since the start of the Bureau of Labor Statistics record in 1948. Teen unemployment rates have remained at unprecedented

levels since the recession.

The young people at the church can learn similar skills that they would get at a part-time job — customer service, inventory, stock, time management, and more — by simply volunteering half an hour or so of their time at the Kidz Café each Sunday.

The café is situated in a small room just inside the church's main entrance. The refreshments for sale — chips, cookies, mints, candy, soda, juice, coffee, and more — are placed on tables against the wall. Profits from sales, along with some donations from church members, keep the café running. Extra profits go toward other activities for children at the church, such as this year's trip to Hersheypark, a theme park in Pennsylvania.

Serena Jackson, director of children and youth development at the church, oversees the program. She grew up on the South Side as a member of the church, and started working in a grocery store when she was just 16 years old. She learned quickly that the good manners she was raised to have are an asset in the business world, but are often lacking in retail employees.

"If you go to a store and you see somebody that looks like they don't want to be there, then you know you don't want this person helping you," she said.

So she makes sure the eight volunteers at the café are both professional and welcoming to customers.



> Top: Serena Jackson, director of children and youth development at Tucker Missionary Baptist Church, oversees Kidz Café. | Marina Zarya, Staff Photo

> Upper left: Snacks of all kinds are available for parishioners to purchase at Kidz Café. | Marina Zarya, Staff Photo

> Left: Aisha Williams, manager of Kidz Café, talks with 10-year-old Caitlynne Tape. | Marina Zarya, Staff Photo

Melanie Martin, 18, was one of the first people to volunteer when the program started. Recounting her first day working at the café, she said, “I was kind of nervous because I didn’t know what to expect.”

Aisha Williams, 25, acts as a manager of the café and noticed this nervousness, but said it didn’t take long for the younger volunteers to start mastering customer service. “About a month after they were doing it every week, they were able to take charge and make it their own,” she said.

Taking charge is important in business, according to Eternity Berrios, store manager at Citi Trends clothing store on South Salina Street. She started at the store as a sales associate when it opened last October, but has already been promoted. “I’m good with customers, I knew what needed to be done, I took charge, I listened, and I learned,” she said.

She thinks training programs like the Kidz Café teach the skills that stores like Citi Trends look for in potential employees.

“Especially in retail, companies are looking for people who can basically make the consumer spend their money comfortably, and they want to know if they’re easy-going, happy-go-lucky, energetic, and willing to learn,” she said. “If you just come off the street and you want a job, you’ll notice that you don’t fit in this type of

atmosphere.”

Working at the café is valuable for the volunteers even if they don’t want to get a job in retail.

Martin was able to put the experience on her application to Onondaga Community College, where she will attend in the fall for nursing. She’s also volunteered at two nursing homes and works at McDonald’s.

“I’m just doing it for the good of it,” she said. “I love helping people and making people happy.”

Drawing on her experience at nursing homes, she particularly likes serving the older members of the church.

“When I help them it just puts a smile on their face, and then they would kiss me on my cheek,” she said. “So it just really made me happy, and they were happy.”

Volunteer Ilean Curry, 14, wants to go to school for engineering. Her brother Kenari, 11, wants to design sneakers.

Williams works as a library clerk during the week and has already been able to make use of what she’s learned.

“Being in charge, it helps with management skills, time management, and gets me used to getting up early,” she laughed. “I’ve grown, met new people, going into church there’s so many people that go in and out. It’s good to be that first face that they see, with a nice smile.”

Quick Tips HOW TO BE A GOOD WORKER

“Treat customers how you want to be treated.”

— Aisha Williams, 25

“Be friendly, take your time, and be patient.”

— Melanie Martin, 18

“Get the prices right.”

— Kenari Curry, 11

“Smile a lot, and be efficient.”

— Ilean Curry, 14

IF YOU GO

What: South Side Grows Healthy Festival

When: 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, June 23

Where: Dunk & Bright and South Side Innovation Center, 2648 S. Salina St.

More details: Inspired by Syracuse Grows/ Newell Street Community Garden’s Learning to Learn series, this festival supports an empowered community growing healthier and stronger every day.

More Info.: Contact Mable Wilson at mwilson62@twcny.rr.com or (315) 471-7063 or Victoria Coit at evokechange@gmail.com or (315) 706-9548

COOK-OFF COMPETITION

- Churches are encouraged to submit a healthier version of their congregation’s favorite traditional recipe.
- The top three recipes, which will be judged at the South Side Grows Healthy Festival, will win \$1,000, \$500 and \$250 from Nojaim Brothers Super Market.
- Free to enter
- Sign up before May 31

For more information about the cook-off, contact:

Mable Wilson
mwilson62@twcny.rr.com
(315) 471-7063.

EATING GREEN

Summertime festival to encourage healthy cooking, fresh ingredients

By | Durrie Bouscaren
Staff reporter

South Side residents plan to boost healthy eating despite the area’s lack of supermarkets

A South Side festival in late June will highlight local farms, community gardens and the importance of healthy eating habits. For organizer Mable Wilson, it’s the first time she has organized an event on a scale like this.

Surveying the future site of the festival in the Dunk & Bright Green Space on South Salina Street, she says she hopes the event can outgrow the space in the coming years. Wilson says she hopes the festival carries more meaning than a summertime festival.

“It’s to show the warmth and beauty of the South Side, and that the South Side is progressive, where families live and enjoy each other,” she said.

When P&C Foods in the Valley Plaza closed in 2009, the neighborhood was left without a large supermarket. Victoria Coit, another festival organizer, says corner stores tried to fill the void by selling fresh produce, but the eating habits of South Side residents still suffered.

“Once you get used to eating certain things, it’s tough to break that habit,” Coit said. She says that healthy eating is one of the bigger factors in physical and mental health for a person’s well-being.

The South Side Grows Healthy Festival will kick off at 10 a.m. Saturday, June 23.

The festival will feature a farmers market to showcase locally grown foods. Electronic Benefit Transfer — EBT — will be accepted.

Organizers say it will be a time to learn, too. Workshops will teach participants how to can their own foods, and healthy cooking demonstrations will go on throughout the day. Bikes4Peace will offer bicycle repairs.

Activities for children and health screenings will also be available. At 12:30 p.m., a community awards ceremony will recognize South Side leaders.

Coit says another highlight of the festival will be a

“It’s to show the warmth and beauty of the South Side”

— Mable Wilson



> Organizers Mable Wilson and Victoria Coit stand at the future site of the South Side Grows Healthy Festival. | Durrie Bouscaren, Staff Photo

Community Cook-Off. Churches will have the opportunity to re-create a favorite dish in a healthy way to compete for a \$1,000 first prize. Second- and third-place winners will receive \$500 and \$250, respectively. Participants will have until May 31 to enter.

Growing up, Coit lived on the South Side for many years. She says that her grandparents taught her to keep her diet full of fresh fruits and vegetables. A cooking hobby from childhood led to a brief stint as a chef in Washington, D.C. Ensuring access to healthy food has been a passion of hers ever since.

“Social conditions directly impact your mental health as well as your diet,” said Coit, referring to herself as an example. “I’m not as impactful as I can be when I’m not healthy.”

In Onondaga County, there are seven food desert areas: low-income communities where fresh, affordable produce is outside of accessible walking distance. Three of them are on the South Side.

FRESH FOOD NEARBY

Food cooperative set to break ground May 4, open early next year



> Illustration of the planned food cooperative | Provided by the Southside Community Coalition

By | Candace J. Dunkley
Staff reporter

Residents expect co-op to bring fresh produce, business opportunities to the South Side.

After about five years of planning, the South Side Food Cooperative, a division of the Southside Community Coalition, and the South Side Initiative are gearing up to build a food co-op in the neighborhood. A groundbreaking ceremony is scheduled May 4 at 2327 S. Salina St., to initiate the construction process.

According to the Southside Community Coalition, the food co-op will help counteract a problem with food insecurity. The South Side of Syracuse is a “food desert,” which is an area without access to fresh fruits and vegetables within a mile radius.

Joseph Bryant, board president and spokesman for the Southside Community Coalition, said the predicament is harmful to residents because many people in the community do not have access to a car to travel to grocery stores.

“Taking the bus to a grocery store is difficult,” said Bryant, who estimated the co-op will open in January 2013. “Having access to fresh food is necessary to the neighborhood.”

According to Howie Hawkins, president of the food cooperative board, construction is expected to be completed at the end of the year. By then, purchasing healthy food should become a little easier for South Side

residents, he said.

The Eat to Live Food Cooperative plans to make fresh produce a high priority. Hawkins said the co-op will purchase food from local farmers and the Central New York Regional Market. People will be able to shop from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Friday, and from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, he said.

Community members also can get involved in the business end of the store, Bryant said.

“Because it is a cooperative store,” he said, “residents will also have the opportunity to buy shares.”

Customers will be given the opportunity to purchase membership certificates, Hawkins said. For a flat \$100 fee or 10 payments of \$10 each — with a \$15 initiation fee — customers can become members and invest in the cooperative. At the end of the year, the store’s leftover earnings will be returned to members in proportion to the amount of purchases they made.

“The way to think of it is like getting your change back at the end of the year,” Hawkins said.

Members will also have an opportunity to participate in governing the cooperative. They will be able to vote on members of the board, make suggestions at board meetings and post comments on the store’s website.

The cooperative will employ three full-time employees and one general manager, Hawkins said.

For more information or to purchase shares in the food co-op, contact Margie Gantt at magantt@syr.edu or (315) 443-1979

COMING UP JUNE

What: Syracuse Jazz Fest

When: Friday and Saturday, June 22 and 23

Where: Jamesville Beach Park, 4110 West Shore Manor

More details: Admission is free; bring a lawn chair. Friday night headliner is Kenny G; Saturday night is Donovan-Troubadour.

More Info.: Visit SyracuseJazzFest.com

AUGUST

What: 11th annual Youth Day Barbecue

When: 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 18

Where: South Salina Street and Wood Avenue

More details: Backpacks filled with school supplies to each registered child. Food and entertainment also provided. New this year, essay/picture contest. Each child may enter by drawing a picture if in grades Pre-K to third or by writing a one-page essay if in fourth grade or higher. The topic is: “Why I will be safe from violence if I stay in school and graduate.” Prizes: sneakers donated by Nike.

More Info.: To register, download the form at <http://youthdaybarbecue.com/events.html> or visit Mary Nelson’s Youth Center, 2849 S. Salina St.

ARE YOU AT RISK?

FEMA'S DEFINITIONS

High-risk areas:

In high-risk areas, there is about a 1 in 4 chance of flooding during a 30-year mortgage. All home and business owners in these areas with mortgages from federally regulated or insured lenders are required to buy flood insurance.

Moderate-risk to low-risk areas:

The risk of being flooded is reduced but not completely removed. Flood insurance isn't federally required in moderate-risk to low-risk areas, but it is recommended for all property owners and renters.

Undetermined risk areas:

No flood-hazard analysis has been conducted in these areas, but a flood risk still exists. Flood insurance requirements are measured by the uncertainty of the risk.

FLOOD INSURANCE

South Side homeowners might be asked to purchase costly protection



> Aggie Lane is one of 1,099 South Side homeowners who may be forced to buy flood insurance. | Lena Budd, Staff Photo

By | Alexandra Hitzler
Urban Affairs reporter

South Side homeowners say flood insurance is costly and unnecessary, despite FEMA report

Aggie Lane has lived along Onondaga Creek for 20 years and has never experienced a single flood. “I’ve never had waters from the creek come anywhere near my house,” Lane said.

Lane’s property is on Midland Avenue on the South Side along Onondaga Creek, an area that has recently been defined as a high-risk flood area for the first time by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, as a part of the agency’s new national flood map recalculations.

FEMA’s flood map recalculations could put 1,099 South Side properties into zones considered to be at high risk for flooding, said Riccardo Lopez-Torrijos, FEMA state flood mapping coordinator.

The recalculations began in 2010, and Syracuse city officials have been working since then to reduce the

number of properties affected by the new mapping as much as possible, said Tim Carroll, director of Syracuse mayoral initiatives.

The addition of South Side properties along Onondaga Creek to the new flood maps has alarmed residents and city officials because the owners of these properties would be required by their mortgage holders to purchase flood insurance that could cost \$240 to \$1,260 each year, Torrijos said.

Lane said she thinks the cost of flood insurance is unnecessary, and she feels it is an unfair burden to place on South Side residents.

“This is an area where people have trouble with expenses like just paying their taxes,” Lane said. “I think if homeowners here are hit with these insurance costs, people will lose their homes.”

Mercedes Bloodworth, a homeowner of a duplex along Onondaga Creek and Syracuse United Neighbors community organizer, said the additional cost of flood insurance could be detrimental to the growth in the

number of homeowners on Syracuse's South Side.

"Homeownership is pretty rare for a lot of residents on the South Side, and we really don't need any more obstacles in our way," Bloodworth said.

Approximately 47 percent of homes on the South Side are owner-occupied, Bloodworth said, and she fears that the additional cost of flood insurance could cause homeowners to move elsewhere.

"In so many ways, our community has been improving," Bloodworth said. "We have new homeowners coming in, new houses being built, urban renewal projects. We don't need the government setting back our progress."

Bloodworth said in the last two years, the Syracuse Housing Authority has built 50 new homes on the South Side in order to promote homeownership. Of those 50 homes, 20 of them would be included in FEMA's new flood maps.

"A lot of the homeowners have really had to work to be able to buy a home, and they've needed help from organizations like the SHA (Syracuse Housing Authority) along the way," Bloodworth said. "Most of them are still struggling with their finances. We want to promote homeownership and help it grow, not make it harder."

Bloodworth, a working single mother, said the proposed insurance requirement could jeopardize her ability to maintain homeownership as well. Bloodworth said she purchased her home for approximately \$50,000, which is a price that she said is typical for homes on the South Side.

Lopez-Torrijos, the FEMA state flood mapping coordinator, said that the agency estimates that houses valued at \$50,000 would have an annual flood insurance rate of \$236 for the first two years and \$535 for each year after that.

Bloodworth said she is worried about the additional cost of insurance that she could soon face.

"I think if homeowners here are hit with these insurance costs, people will lose their homes."

— Aggie Lane



> Aggie Lane and her neighbors worry about the potential costs of flood insurance. | Lena Budd, Staff Photo

"I'm in a better position than a lot of people around here because I have a steady job that makes me able to pay my expenses," Bloodworth said. "But I still have a mortgage and bills to worry about, and I really don't have another couple of hundred dollars to spend away."

Bloodworth said as of right now, she is not aware of grants or loans available to help residents pay for insurance, but it is something that she and other community advocates and members will look into as the flood maps become finalized.

Eddie Brown, a Syracuse United Neighbors board member, has been advocating for the property owners along Onondaga Creek, in hopes of shrinking FEMA's map.

Brown said Syracuse United Neighbors has been working with city officials since the start of FEMA's flood map proposal in 2010.

"The old maps had it right," Brown said. "Even with all the snow and rain we got last year, we didn't have any flooding around here. We're trying to get FEMA to consider that."

Brown said he thinks the maps should be constructed based on the historical evidence of flooding and not through computer calculations.

"Paying for flood insurance in this area is just not necessary," Brown said. "I know people who have lived here for over 50 years, and they can't remember any flooding problems."

AT WHAT COST?

How much will flood insurance cost South Side residents? These estimates were released by FEMA, based on property value:

\$50,000: \$236 for the first two years, \$535 each year after that.

\$100,000: \$304 for the first two years, \$765 each year after that.

\$150,000: \$343 for the first two years, \$930 each year after that.

\$200,000: \$378 for the first two years, \$1,095 each year after that.

\$250,000: \$405 for the first two years, \$1,259 each year after that.

SCHUMER SUPPORT

"We're going to ask FEMA to wait several months before they finalize anything. I thought what they did to Syracuse was an injustice."

— U.S. Sen. Charles Schumer, as told to The Post-Standard in April



Find these words in this story

Detrimental

Describes something that is harmful

Contour

The outline of something, such as of a social or geographic boundary

Jeopardize

To jeopardize is to put someone or something in a dangerous situation or in peril

How would you use these words in a sentence?

Continued from Page 17

Lane, the Midland Avenue homeowner, said even during Syracuse's worst storms, she and her neighbors have never experienced flooding problems.

"Even in the big Labor Day storm of 1998, one of the biggest storms that ever hit Syracuse, we didn't have any flood damage," Lane said. "I remember the waters from the creek hitting the streets, but the water was nowhere near the houses."

Carroll, the director of Syracuse mayoral initiatives, said during the past two years, city engineers have partnered with C&S Companies, a private engineering firm, to recalculate any data about the creek banks that could lower the flood levels estimated by FEMA.

"We have been looking into things like calculating the effects of trees, bushes and low bridges on the creek to prove that they don't create as much back-up as FEMA estimates," Carroll said.

Carroll said the city has been relatively successful in its efforts to reduce flood zoning in the area. The city was able to take about 105 properties out of the original flood zones proposed by FEMA, and the city plans to continue its efforts.

"FEMA has accepted some of our data that shows that Onondaga Creek can hold more water than expected, but we're still trying to reduce the zones as much as we can," Carroll said.

Lopez-Torrijos, the state flood mapping coordinator,

said the new flood maps have little to do with changes that they have detected in the area. Instead, Lopez-Torrijos said the new maps were proposed because more advanced technology has been made available to measure flood risks since the maps were last updated in 1986.

Lopez-Torrijos said FEMA used light detection and ranging technology that is able to determine the contours of land by using laser pulses directed from a plane flying over a patch of land. FEMA also used updated engineering technology to measure the flow and depth of Onondaga Creek.

Lopez-Torrijos said city officials have been given until the beginning of May to make their case against the new mapping, and then the city's responses will be considered. Torrijos said the mapping will be finalized by the end of this year.

The city will have six months to include the new flood zoning into the law, Lopez-Torrijos said, and after that homeowners within the flood zones will receive letters from their mortgage lenders informing them of their insurance requirements.

Bloodworth said Syracuse United Neighbors will continue to fight the changes to the flood maps, but she has little hope that they will be able to repeal the maps completely.

"We're not going to be able to get those changes to disappear, but we're going to help the community as best we can," Bloodworth said.

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2012



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June 4, 5, 6, 11, 12, 13
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For more info, email kirkparkcoltsfamily@gmail.com
www.kirkparkcolts.org



> A map of FEMA's recalculated high-risk flooding areas includes the South Side, where residents say there's never been any flooding. | Lena Budd, Staff Photo

JUNETEENTH EVENTS

City's celebration evokes memories of race and culture near and far

By | Keith Muhammad
Community Correspondent

Citizens of Syracuse participate in an annual parade to remember, identify with their past

Valerie Hill is the organizer of the “Vision of Victory” parade for Syracuse’s annual Juneteenth celebration. This is something she has done for the past three years. She and the Juneteenth organizers have been working diligently to create this year’s commemoration. They believe success is defined by the participation of a wide spectrum of the Syracuse community — people of all races, creeds and colors.

“Everyone should acknowledge slavery,” Hill said. “We want them to know that the slaves in Texas were the last ones to know (that they had been freed).”

Juneteenth commemorates the date — June 19, 1865 — when slaves in Galveston, Texas, received word that they had been freed with the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation by President Abraham Lincoln on Jan. 1, 1863. Unlike the slaves who received late word of their freedom, organizers hope to get the message out early to the community that all are free to participate in the Syracuse Juneteenth 2012 Celebration.

“I am soliciting for the city of Syracuse to come out and support, to fight for diversity and to fight against gun violence,” Hill said. Unity is the theme for the International Juneteenth celebration.

Diversity and gun-violence prevention are sub-themes for this year’s Syracuse event.

“We want people to know that it is a time for us to come together to deal with things that are depleting the world,” Hill said. “Things like violence, lack of education ... and (in)equality.”

The celebration will kick off with the traditional flag-raising ceremony at Syracuse City Hall, where Mayor Stephanie Miner, accompanied by a host of dignitaries, will read a Juneteenth proclamation from the city of Syracuse. Later that evening, Jubilee Park will be the site of the Gospel Celebration, where attendees can sing along or just sit back and enjoy the music that is sure to lift their spirits.

The “Vision of Victory” parade will kick off Saturday’s festivities. The parade includes walkers of all ages, steppers, dance teams, car and motorcycle clubs, fraternal organizations, and drum line and marching bands.

The marching band lineup features Lee Glover and the “Mr. and Mrs. Willie Waller” Youth Marching Band, a local band, and “Approaching Storm,” a guest band from New York City. The two grand marshals — Mary



> Members of Pretty Girls Rock, a mentoring group, march in last year’s parade. | Ruthnie Angrand, Staff Photo

Alice Smothers and the Honorable Judge Langston McKinney (retired) — will take their first steps at noon. They will lead the procession from Dr. King School to Clinton Square in Downtown Syracuse.

As the marchers arrive downtown, they will see the vision of the crowning event of the Juneteenth celebration: Saturday’s festival in Clinton Square. Saturday is a family-friendly event — a day of fun, food and entertainment. The square will be full of laughter, the aroma of food and the sound of music. There will be educational exhibits, tables displaying the crafts of local artisans and wares by area proprietors. There also will be food from local restaurants, vendors and sponsors.

Current sponsors include Labor Union 1199, Jubilee Homes, Victory Temple Church of Christ, Syracuse Elks Lodge No. 1104 and Cayadetta Temple No. 113 to name a few. The Black Nurses Association will sponsor a health and wellness pavilion where they will provide free blood pressure testing and diabetes screening.

“We are soliciting for additional sponsors,” Hill said. You can visit the Juneteenth website — syracusejuneteenth.org — for a sponsorship application as well as updates on event activities.

WHAT'S HAPPENING

2012 JUNETEENTH ANCESTRAL DINNER

• 6 p.m. Friday, May 18
The Atrium, 201 E. Washington St.

• Doors open at 5:30 p.m. Program begins at 6 p.m. Keynote Speaker is Julius Edwards with entertainment by DJ Showcase

SYRACUSE'S 2012 JUNETEENTH LINEUP

• **Flag Raising Ceremony** at Syracuse City Hall, 233 E. Washington St., 10 a.m. Friday, June 15

• **Gospel Celebration:** 3 to 8 p.m. Friday, June 15 at Spirit of Jubilee Park, 100 Block of South Avenue

• **Visions of Victory Parade:** Starts at Dr. King School (416 E. Raynor Ave.) at noon and arrives in Clinton Square at 1 p.m. Saturday, June 16

• **Celebration:** 1 p.m. Saturday, June 16, in Clinton Square

FOR MORE DETAILS
syracusejuneteenth.org

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ON THE SIDE

HOPE AND SECURITY

Kahari Thomas, 29, has worked at Omanii's Lemonade Heaven on-and-off for the past 10 years. He was sentenced to five years in prison after two bank robberies in 2005.

"Mr. Omanii is like the Dalai Lama," Thomas said. "He gives people multiple chances to better themselves and he gives us a sense of hope and security, and it's something that we need, especially since most doors seem closed to us who are coming out of prison."

Owner Omanii Abdullah has been an African American Studies professor at Syracuse University since 1990. He teaches a "Writing about Black Culture" class, a film course and a basic acting class. He also works part time at Onondaga Community College.

PEOPLE, NOT FELONS

South Avenue restaurant offers employees stability, a second chance



> Chef Westcoe Williams said his job at Omanii's Lemonade Heaven stabilized his life. | Hannah L. Cordell, Staff Photo

By | Laura Liera
Urban Affairs reporter

Owner helps employees with felony convictions transition from surviving to living

Omanii’s Lemonade Heaven restaurant doesn’t just serve the best lemonade in town. It has helped resurrect the lives of a dozen South Side felons over the last 18 years by giving them a place to work.

“Before I was surviving, now I am living,” said Westcoe Williams, 54, the head chef at the restaurant.

Omanii Abdullah, 62, owner and founder of the restaurant, says he has a mission to help those like Williams.

“I want to give them a second chance to prove to themselves that they can get off the streets, and stop committing crimes or selling drugs.”

The need to help is substantial: Over the last five years, local courts handling serious offenses — such as murders, sex crimes and DWIs — have sentenced hundreds of people per year, 850 to jail and around 640 to state prison annually, according to James E. Makowiec, deputy chief clerk for Onondaga County Court and for the Supreme Court in the Fifth Judicial District.

Williams is one of 12 to get such a chance from Abdullah.

“When I came out of jail in 2006 I knew I needed a job to support myself and also get my three children back,” Williams said. “So after asking around in many places, Omanii agreed to sit down with me and one of the first things he asked was if I had ever been in trouble with the law, and I said ‘yes’.”

Williams said he was kicked out of a training program at LeMoyne Manor in Liverpool — where he earned a culinary and hospitality certificate — after he’d spent 18 months in prison. He was sent back to Jamesville Prison for three more weeks, and he headed to the South Side to live and work when he got out.

It was a struggle. His parole officer was pushing him to find work.

“I’m not prejudiced but I went and talked to more than 20 people for a job and as soon as I told them I was a felon, but that I did my time, they rejected me,” he said.

But not Abdullah.

“This job saved my life,” Williams said. “That day that I came in to meet with Omanii, he told me he would give me two days to see what I had and (I) came back here to the kitchen and started cooking. And the third day I got a phone call and came to meet him and he handed me an envelope with a bonus.

“After being rejected so many times at different

places because I was an ex-felon, to find a man that saw something in me, and wanted to help, was such a feeling of relief that changed me,” said Williams.

Williams was imprisoned for selling drugs and charged with criminal possession of a controlled substance with intent to sell. He was on parole for five years.

Williams’ wife, Yolanda Williams, 50, met Williams at the LeMoyne Manor training program and remembers when he came home with the news of his new job.

“He came in and told me he had found a job and

***“This job saved
my life.”***

— Westcoe Williams

I felt so happy,” she said. “Right away, I was thinking to myself, ‘Oh, now we can slowly get this, we can buy that,’” Yolanda said.

Yolanda is unemployed, and Williams’ paycheck is their only income. Although Yolanda does not know Abdullah personally, she’s seen the results of his employment policy.

“Mr. Omanii gave my husband a second chance to get his life together, and he now has more self-esteem and is more confident in himself,” she said. “Omanii gives guys a second chance, something that not many people are willing to give because they see a felon first, before a person.”

Abdullah started Omanii’s Lemonade Heaven 18 years ago by putting a hot dog stand on the corner of

South Crouse and East Fayette streets. “People who bought hot dogs every day would tell me that I should open up a restaurant, and I told them I would when I retired,” Abdullah said. There are two hot dog stand locations in the city; the restaurant is on South Avenue.

Williams said he had to learn to adapt to cooking at a fast pace because the restaurant is busy seven days a week. He learned all the recipes and picked up his speed from Leon Bellamy, 29, the manager of the restaurant and Abdullah’s godson. “Leon taught me and guided me the way he learned when he was younger and now I am probably a little faster than he is in the kitchen,” Williams said, smiling.

The kitchen is no bigger than a standard living room and has one stove, a sink, a refrigerator, and shelves holding spices and hot dog bread.

Most days, Bellamy — who has been involved with the restaurant since he was 10 — has to go grocery shopping to re-stock, leaving the work in the hands of Williams and others.

“I’m in charge of everything and I am never at one location because food might finish at one place and so I have to run to stock them up or go grocery shopping because food and products run out,” he said.

“Having Williams in the kitchen at the restaurant is great because I don’t have to do all the cooking by myself, and he has adapted and learned very quickly,” Bellamy said.

In the kitchen, Williams stirs the cheese for the chili cheese fries in a pot and has a smile on his face when he says that this job has helped him reclaim his life.

“When you are in the streets, you have no respect for anyone and you definitely have no respect for yourself,” he said. “But this job, this family that I have gained here, has helped me regain my life back and I like to say that I am stable now in my life.”

ITEMS AND PRICES

Lemonade (regular, fruit punch and pink):

16 oz: \$1.75

20 oz: \$2.25

32 oz: \$2.75

Top-selling:

Beef Hot Dog: \$2

Turkey Dog: \$1.75

Beef Sausage: \$3.50

Turkey Sausage: \$4

Beef Chili Dog: \$3

Hot dog carts at:

• Burt and State streets

• South Crouse Avenue
and East Fayette Street

MORE DETAILS

Omanii’s Lemonade
Heaven

1206 South Ave.

(315) 475-0424

omaniislemonade.com



> Owner Omanii Abdullah, right, with manager Leon Bellamy in Abdullah’s restaurant. | Hannah L. Cordell, Staff Photo



> Waitress April Laftin assists patron Monique Orr and her sons Terrance and Tylique. Most customers return to the family-friendly restaurant several times a week. | Hannah L. Cordell, Staff Photo

EVENT DETAILS

What: Mother's Day show

When: Saturday, May 12.
Doors open at 6:30 p.m.
Show starts at 7:30 p.m.

Where: Palace Theatre,
2384 James St.

Cost: \$20 in advance,
\$25 at the door. To buy
advance-sale tickets, call
(315) 882-4888

More details: A portion
of the proceeds will be
donated to the Dunbar
Center, 1453 South State
St., and to Southwest
Showcase Sundays.



Find these words
in this story

Emcee

To act as master of
ceremonies

Diverse

Different

Choreograph

To design or plan
the movements of
something, or to plan
an event or complex
course of action in
detail

How would you use these
words in a sentence?

CELEBRATING MOM

Local band UAD will perform a special show for Mother's Day



> UAD entertains its audiences with choreographed dance steps and coordinated outfits. | Provided by Larry Mathis

By | Reggie Seigler
A Friendly Five columnist

Larry Mathis and Ike Wynn will bring together artists, musicians and singers for the event

Hollis “Larry” Mathis is a foreman for the city of Syracuse in the Department of Public Works. He has worked there for more than 35 years. Isaac “Ike” Wynn has driven for Centro for nearly as long. They are the founding members of the group UAD.

For Mother’s Day, the duo is going to produce a show, which will be held Saturday, May 12, at the Palace Theatre on James Street. It will feature more than 20 of the area’s favorite artists, musicians and singers.

Some of the talent includes Michael “Mike” Houston (of Michael & Anjela Lynn, with the Talented Ones), Rick Linzy (of the Soul Mine band) and longtime local favorite Donna Alford (of the Soft Spoken band). The show will be hosted by Julius Edwards, a talented emcee and the new executive director of the Dunbar Center.

Over the past 15 years or so, Ike and Larry have produced a great number of shows. Generally their shows have a purpose. “This show is to salute and give honor to mothers,” Larry said.

“It’s all about family, too,” he added. “Everybody in the show has a family-like tie with UAD.” They have sung in the group or “they’ve just been close to us.”

Larry and Ike’s relationship dates back to the 1970s, when they began singing together. Their name UAD stands for Uplites, Avatar and Destiny, which incorporates the initials from some of the groups in which one or both of them have sung.

Their first show under the UAD moniker was held in 1997. They performed in tradition, as a four-man singing group similar to the Temptations, the Manhattanans or the OJays. The group uses tight vocal harmonies and choreographed dance steps to entertain audiences. The performers are also known for wearing highly stylized and coordinated outfits.

Darryl Brooks has been living and performing in the Rochester area for more than 13 years, but has sung with Ike and Larry periodically since the 1970s. He acknowledges that being compared to the Temptations and other groups is fair, though he quickly points out that the uniqueness of UAD is that “each individual in the group is given the spotlight.”

Larry confirmed that. In fact what’s new and unique to the upcoming Mother’s Day show is that UAD has stepped entirely away from the traditional singing group’s format and will not perform as a group at all. “All of the performances in this show will be solo,” Larry said.

Ike still enjoys the traditional singing group approach but is welcoming the change. “You know the guys like Brooks, Rick and Mike (Young) and me are

“This show is to salute and give honor to mothers.”
— Larry Mathis

going to be old school anyway, but some of the younger guys like Seth (Marcel) and maybe XL are going to bring that new flavor,” he said. “It’s going to be a good show.”

Jonathan “Blaze” Dale, 34, is another of those younger guys that Ike mentions. He is the bass player for the Brownskin Band, Brownskin will perform and act as a backup band for all the artists in the show. John appreciates this opportunity to play behind some of the “more seasoned veterans,” he said.

“It’s a blessing,” he added. “Five years ago I wasn’t doing this. My goal is to keep the bass lines as close to the originals as possible. Back in the day, bass players were funky. I’m going to try to keep that.”

The following that he and his fellow band mates attract are generally a little younger than the typical UAD crowd, so the audience could be diverse in age.

With a focus on family, as Larry suggested, we might see some younger people bringing their mothers out for an enjoyable evening. That is what Greg Collins, the youth pastor from Tucker Missionary Baptist Church, wants.

“This is a Mother’s Day show but a lot of people don’t celebrate Mother’s Day,” Collins said. “In my heart I know who I’ll be singing to, and that’s mothers. I’m going to be singing songs that some of the mothers will appreciate.”



> Larry Mathis sings. | Provided by Larry Mathis

Collins, who will perform a tribute to artists, said he’d like to be introduced as “the pastor who sings love songs” because “that’s what God is all about, love. And that’s what I plan to sing about.”

A few others on the show’s bill are Paul Lee (of Bobby Green and A Cut Above), Busty Baker and James “Saul” Brown (of the After FX band).

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

LISTEN ONLINE

the STAND UAD’s medley of Temptations songs, “Don’t Look Back – Run Away Child – Cloud Nine” is available online. Click on the track at mysouthsidestand.com

FOR YOUR ENTERTAINMENT

Who: The Ebony Hillbillies

When: Saturday, May 19, at 2 p.m.

Where: Southwest Community Center, 401 South Ave.

More details: This national black string band will present a special family program that includes a talk about black string music and a performance. Community donations are appreciated.

More info.:
Call (315) 671-5834

SAFETY FIRST



(315)475-2430
ext. 509

SYRINGE EXCHANGE PROGRAM

THE DETAILS

To learn more about The Stand Workshops at the right, contact:

Ashley Kang
(315) 882-1054 or
Ashley@mysouthsides-
tand.com

SUMMER WORKSHOPS

MAY

JOURNALISM WORKSHOP

WHEN: 10 a.m. Saturday, May 19
WHERE: South Side Communication Center
2331 S. Salina St.

The Stand’s current community correspondents and anyone interested in writing or taking photos for the project will meet for a journalism lesson and strategize a plan for group coverage of this summer’s Juneteenth event. RSVP by May 16.

JUNE

THE STAND’S JUNETEENTH COVERAGE

WHEN: Saturday, June 16
WHERE: South Side Communication Center,
2331 S. Salina St.

The Stand’s community correspondents and new writers will meet at the South Side Communication Center before heading out to the Juneteenth celebration in Clinton Square. Stories and photos by each reporter will be featured online.

JULY

THIRD ANNUAL PHOTO WALK

WHEN: 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday July 21
WHERE: South Side Innovation Center
2610 S. Salina St.

Photo Walk participants will follow a map through the South Side. Event will open with a short lesson by professional photographers. After the walk, participants will share their photos with the group, and the day’s best shots will be published in the September print issue of The Stand. A limited number of digital cameras are available to loan. To reserve a camera and sign up for the Photo Walk, contact Ashley Kang by phone or email by July 18.



We can’t be a community project
without the community!
If you want to get your voice heard,
speak up and take a stand.



“It’s nice to hear about what’s going on outside, and it’s good to see familiar faces.”

- Katie Hayduke with Aerick Brooks, 11
The Stand reader and
Children’s Librarian at Beauchamp

How to purchase an ad
If interested in running an ad, contact Ashley Kang to request a rate card and discuss options by emailing Ashley@mysouthsidedstand.com or by calling (315) 882-1054. The Stand’s rate card can also be found online.

www.mysouthsidedstand.com