

TLN Weekend



Lancaster NAACP raising visibility in community

For the past three months, the Lancaster Branch NAACP has been visible in the community. Visibility has been an emphasis of our newly elected President Melissa Jones-Horton, who wants to see all committees of the branch active in their respective roles.



Tommicha Walker

The charge is to actively implement strategies to combat issues recognized by the national NAACP as it relates to civil rights and social justice. Those issues include, but aren't limited to, democracy and voting, race and justice, education, health and wellness, next generation leadership and Black history. Regarding Black history, national NAACP President and CEO Derrick Johnson is quoted as saying "Our children deserve nothing less than truth, justice and the equity our ancestors shed blood, sweat and tears for."

JUNETEENTH CELEBRATION

These sentiments aren't far from the heart of our president, Jones-Horton. When she was an active member in the NAACP in 1999, she brought the idea to then-president Tommy Walker to have a Juneteenth Celebration and use it as an opportunity to learn about this aspect of Black history and use it as a working tool to provide workshops about the importance of education, health and economic development, as well as provide entertainment.

Walker thought it was a great idea, had her present it to the executive board, it was voted upon and accepted. Jones-Horton coordinated the first Juneteenth Celebration for the Lancaster Branch NAACP, held June 19, 1999, at New

Hope Missionary Baptist Church. The celebration was extremely successful and was scheduled to continue annually. Unfortunately, for reasons unknown, the branch did not continue the event.

However, upon election this year as president of the Lancaster Branch NAACP, Jones-Horton thought it prudent to reinstate the Juneteenth Celebration as she deems it important to Black history. The Lancaster Branch NAACP sponsored its second Juneteenth Celebration on Saturday, June 17, at what I have dubbed, the New Hope Missionary Baptist Church Fairgrounds.

The emphasis of the celebration was on Black history, health and wellness, entrepreneurship and youth empowerment, as well as entertainment. The day included children's story time, performances by the Genesis Mass Choir, Kathy Wade McIlwain aka The Preaching Poet and 14-year-old Isabella Pierre, the author of two books of poetry.

There was a health and wellness presentation by local Health and Wellness Committee Chair Saa'Shalom Bey, owner of Rawtopian Bliss.

Small businesses and vendors were given the opportunity to promote their products. They included Light My Life Soy Candles; Glitz, Glam & Glory Boutique; The Glam Villa; Royalty Brows & Wax ; G&D Sweets; Supreme Love & Lights; Unique — The School; Savoury Creations; Lucid Foodz; and Rawtopian Bliss. Also present were Robert Snipes from the S.C. Human Affairs Commission and Brother Sean Muhammad of Mosque No. 36 of the Nation of Islam.

The first hour of the



Local NAACP Health and Wellness Committee Chair Saa'Shalom Bey, left, with Dr. Zora Denson at the plant-based food tasting July 22.

Juneteenth Celebration was captured live by Sky G Radio, owned by Willip Gaither, on Mildred Kirkland's segment, "Noon Day Praise With Ms. Mildred." During this hour, youth members participated with a speech from Kamarion Harris and a powerful message from 15-year-old Tabria Barnes, Youth Council president of the Lancaster Branch NAACP. She challenged adults to make room for a new generation of leaders who are poised not only to lead the NAACP, but in all areas that can positively impact the community.

PLANT-BASED FOOD-TASTING

On July 22, the branch continued its focus on health and wellness by sponsoring a plant-based food tasting event that raised money for the branch's scholarship and freedom funds. The event was coordinated by Bey. The vegan delicacies were catered by Lucid Foodz chef Naji Evans and Bey, Rawtopian Bliss chef. The food was absolutely delicious!

Presenters for the health and wellness educational portion were Bey, who is also a

health coach, and Nicole Ventour, a licensed social worker and certified clinical trauma specialist. They shared the benefits and healing powers of a plant-based diet on physical, mental, emotional and spiritual health. Healthy eating can prevent frequent visits to medical facilities, where there are documented health disparities of African-Americans and members of other marginalized communities.

The event was held at the Native American Studies Center with permission from its director, Stephen Criswell. Operator Katie Shull and assistant Crystal Melton were very welcoming. Guests were allowed to tour the facility and experience Native American history.

PRAYER VIGIL

A quality education has always been a cornerstone issue of the NAACP's agenda. With controversy surrounding various aspects of the local school district and student/faculty conflicts, the Religious Affairs Committee of the Lancaster Branch NAACP, chaired by Rev. Eddie Moore, thought



Mildred Kirkland and Willip Gaither with Sky G Radio broadcast Kirkland's program from the local NAACP's Juneteenth Celebration on June 17.



A group of students from the Fellowship of Christian Athletes greeted attendees at the door and distributed programs for the prayer vigil Aug. 13 at Lancaster High School.

it fitting to start the beginning of this school year with prayer.

Moore reached out to Rev. Sh'kur Francis, director of Lancaster Promise Neighborhood and their meeting resulted in the Lancaster Branch NAACP and the Promise Neighborhood collaborating to sponsor a prayer vigil targeting all areas of Lancaster County School District. The event was held Aug. 13 at the Lancaster High School auditorium.

Prayers were offered by pastors from all areas of the county, as follows:

- Prayer for students — Rev. Christopher Giradeau
- Prayer for principals — Rev. Anthony Pelham
- Prayer for safety and transportation personnel — Rev. Rayford Waiters
- Prayer for the school board — Rev. Carson Montgomery
- Prayer for teachers — City Councilwoman Jackie Harris
- Prayer for school improvement councils — Rev. Otis Lathan
- Prayer for families — Rev. Randy Mellichamp
- Prayer for LPN —

Rev. Kenneth Cauthen

- Prayer for school support staff — Rev. Silberio Francis and

- Prayer by Minister Richard Pringle, Lancaster High lead assistant principal

The spirit that encapsulated the atmosphere in the auditorium was palpable. I was visibly moved, as were others. It is also worth noting that students with the Fellowship of Christian Athletes greeted attendees at the door and distributed programs.

To Jones-Horton's credit, the Lancaster Branch NAACP is becoming a visible part of the community that creatively addresses the issues of civil rights and social justice. The next event planned is the 43rd annual Freedom Fund Banquet, scheduled for Saturday, Nov. 11, at the USCL Bradley Building. The theme is "Fighting Forward: Breaking Down Barriers."

Lancaster resident Tommicha Walker chairs the History Committee of the Lancaster Branch NAACP.

Lancaster Lions sponsors Indian Land club

BY DAN STUART
LANCASTER LIONS CLUB

Now that the Centers for Disease Control has declared the COVID pandemic officially over, there is no more social distancing, wearing of masks, one-way shopping aisles or shortage of bath tissue.

Hurrah! It's time to get out and make new friends, help those in need and make Indian Land a better community.

All of this can be had through participation in a Lions Club. And it just so happens the Lancaster Lions are forming a new club in Indian Land.

Lions International is a service organization of 46,000

clubs, which continually seeks community-minded men and women who desire to help others. Club projects can be under Lions International's global service initiatives of vision, hunger, childhood cancer, diabetes and environment, or clubs can identify and meet local needs.

If you are 18 or older, have a servant's heart and a desire to get involved, please contact Lion Dan Stuart, danstuart@gmail.com, 803-431-7204; or Lion Louise Carlson Louise via text to 757-784-1566 for more information.

Former Lions are especially welcome!

COMING EVENTS

Free farm tours: Craig Farm, which is celebrating its 250th anniversary this year, is offering free guided tours of the farm 2-3:30 p.m. Aug. 27 and Sept. 24. Park in the field to the left of the house at 1859 Craig Farm Road, Lancaster, across the street from Kilburnie, the Inn at Craig Farm. Tours suitable for ages 6 and older.

OneBlood drives:
• Aug. 27, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., Ansley Park, 1068 Ansley Park Drive, Indian Land
• Aug. 27, 3-5 p.m., Starbucks, 7716 Charlotte Highway, Suite 100, Indian Land
• Aug. 29, 1:30-3:30 p.m., Walmart, 805 S.C. 9 Bypass West, Lancaster
To make an appointment, visit www.oneblood.org or call 888-9-DONATE (936-6283).
American Red Cross blood drives:

• Aug. 30, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Indian Land Recreation Center, 8286 Charlotte Highway, Indian Land
• Sept. 8, 10 a.m.-2:30 p.m., Buford Recreation Center, 4073 Hurley Walters Road, Lancaster
To make an appointment, visit redcrossblood.org or call 800-733-2767.

Overdose Awareness Day: 5:30-7:30 p.m. Aug. 31 at the Lancaster County Historical Courthouse, 104 N. Main St., Lancaster, Counseling Services of Lancaster will display 55 pairs of shoes on the lawn as a tribute to those who lost their lives to overdoses, while acknowledging the grief of those left behind, and reducing the stigma associated with substance misuse. For details, visit www.coalitionforhealthyouth.

org or the coalition's Facebook page.

Watermedia Exhibition: Featuring local artists Gina Noelle Ash and Marcia Pynner on display through the end of August at the Historic Springs House, 201 W. Gay St., Lancaster.

USCL auditions: The USC Lancaster Players will hold open auditions for the community for the fall 2023 productions of "The Outsiders" and "Silent Night" at 6:30 p.m. Aug. 31 in the newly renovated Stevens Theatre. The Players are seeking on-stage and off-stage talent.

NASC exhibit: USC Lancaster's Native American Studies Center, 119 S. Main St., Lancaster, is hosting "The Crediford Collection: Photography of South Carolina's Native Peoples," featuring images of South Carolina's tribal communities by

photographer Gene Crediford, through Sept. 1 in the North Gallery.

Bryan Bielanski Live: Acoustic rock singer/songwriter Bryan Bielanski will perform at 7 p.m. Sept. 6 at The Goat Bar and Grill, 1821 Sandal Brook Road, Suite 101, Indian Land.

Historic Lancaster Music Festival 2023: Sept. 7-10 festival featuring multiple artists at 1859 Craig Farm Road, Lancaster. Sponsored by the Lancaster County Society for Historical Preservation. Artists include string quartets, opera, classical, jazz pops, piano and singing. There will also be a festival reception benefit for the Cultural Arts Center on Sept. 10. Buy tickets online at lcsph.org — festival packages are \$125, individual concerts are \$15, CAC reception benefit tickets are \$84.