

# HAPPY NEW YEAR

www.newpittsburghcourier.com

## Pittsburgh Courier

VOL. 102, NO. 52 Three Sections

DECEMBER 28, 2011-JANUARY 3, 2012

Published Weekly \$1.00

### Westinghouse parents reflect on pros, cons

by Rebecca Nuttall

Courier Staff Writer

When the Academy at Westinghouse opened its doors in August, morale was high. Parent volunteers joined teachers and Pittsburgh Public School District administrators in welcoming the uniform clad students to a new school year at a new kind of school.

While Westinghouse's single-gender focus was met with contempt from the start, many parents actually welcomed the change and the promise it had for improving achievement at one of the district's worst performing schools. Now as the dust settles, after four months of administrative disorganization and frequent student upheaval, they are hopeful the school's newest principal, Shameca Crenshaw, can right the once sinking school.

"I see a lot of improvements since they got Mrs. Crenshaw there. I'm comfortable with what's going on now. In terms of the violence, the fights and disruptions, my kids

SEE WESTINGHOUSE A3

### 13 percent decrease in bullying

by Rebecca Nuttall

Courier Staff Writer

In a 2001 study of 15,000 students across the United States, 17 percent of students in grades six to ten reported having been bullied "sometimes" or more, with 8 percent being bullied once a week. In the 10 years since the study, bullying incidents have continued to rise.

"Bullying is the most prevalent kind of violence in our schools," said Matthew Masiello, chief medical officer and director of the Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention. "We are living in a more violent society than 10 or 20 years ago."

SEE BULLYING A3

### \$20M Braddock development for hospital site

by Christian Morrow

Courier Staff Writer

Revitalization efforts for Braddock took a blow in 2009 when UPMC announced it was closing Braddock Hospital. But those efforts are back on track with the announcement of a \$20.3 million redevelopment project for the old hospital site.

"Since late 2009, Allegheny County has been closely collaborating with the Braddock Working Group to identify redevelopment opportunities for the hospital site that would maximize job creation and benefit the community," Allegheny County Executive Dan Onorato said during a Dec. 21 press conference. "Today, we unveil a \$20.3 million plan that addresses a number of Braddock's needs and continues our eight-year effort to transform and revitalize this great community."

SEE BRADDOCK A4



**A WONDERFUL CHRISTMAS**—Champion Enterprises presented its 36th annual "Toys For Champions Christmas Party and Toy Giveaway" recently at the Wilkinsburg McDonald's. Above Joshua Simpkins Jr., left, and LaRon Myles are all smiles after selecting their gifts. See more on People B3. (Photos by Erin Perry)

### Fighting to increase Black doctors

#### Gateway Medical Society works to improve representation

by Ashley Johnson

Courier Staff Writer

While the number of diseases disproportionately affecting African-Americans continues to increase, the number of African-Americans providing treatment for them is far lower compared to their White counterparts.

In an effort to address the disproportionate representation of African-Americans in the medical profession, Gateway Medical Society, which is comprised of African-American physicians from the southwestern Pennsylvania region, is giving young people experience and an in-depth look into the various medical professions.

"We need African-American doctors just like we need African-American lawyers, business owners, researchers, nurses, MBAs, etc.," said Dr. William Simmons, president elect of GMS and anesthesiologist at Shadyside Hospital. "We need African-American doctors because they are most likely to work in minority and socioeconomically challenged communities where these disparities can be addressed."

While the representation of African-Americans in the medical profession is low compared to its counterparts, it's even lower among African-American males. Through its Journey to Medicine initiative, GMS, a Pittsburgh affiliate of the National Medical Association, is introducing African-American males to the medical field at an early age in an



**PROMOTED**—7th grade Journey to Medicine program participants show off their new scrubs as a display of their promotion to the next level of the program at their promotion ceremony, Dec. 17 at the Allegheny County Medical Society in the North Side. (Photo by Gail Manker)



**YOUNG MOTHER AND CHILDREN LAYED TO REST**—On Dec. 22, family and friends gathered at Baptist Temple Church to remember a mother and her three children who died in a house fire on Dec. 15. Indera Couverson, 23, 7-year-old My Zhirk, 6-year-old Ky Yrik McCullough, and NiMya Crawford, 3, died in their Homewood home after a fire broke out on the second floor. Couverson's boyfriend and her other 3-year-old daughter escaped the townhouse unharmed. The fire has been ruled accidental by investigators. Coston Funeral home and PNC Bank have set up the Indera Couverson Memorial Fund to help pay funeral expenses. (Photo by J.L. Martello)

### Broadus to head Human Relations Commission

by Christian Morrow

Courier Staff Writer

Stephan Broadus has only served on the Allegheny County Human Relations Commission for two and a half years—but then again, that's the longest any members have served because the commission only started in July, 2009.

Still, Broadus, assistant to the publisher of the New Pittsburgh Courier, was surprised to be elected as the commission's second chair.



**STEPHAN BROADUS**

SEE BROADUS A4

Marc Morial says  
Broadband access for all

Forum A9



Pittsburgh Courier

To subscribe, call  
412-481-8302 ext. 134  
or FAX 412-481-1360

## Broadus to head Human Relations Commission

CONTINUED FROM A1

"It's a tremendous honor, and a tremendous challenge to be following the great work Hugh McGough did getting the commission up and running," said Broadus. "We have a dedicated group of volunteers, and great support from the county."

The commission was created to expand the protections against discrimination offered by the City of Pittsburgh commission to residents outside of the city. Until its formation, county residents outside Pittsburgh with complaints involving race, age or gender discrimination had to appeal to the state commission.

But, as outgoing chair McGough notes, lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgender complaints are not covered by the state commission, which is why the county commission has seen those as the bulk of its cases, though some involve racial and religious discrimination.

"We seek to offer the protections the city has offered for 50 years. The state doesn't cover LGBT complaints," he said. "Stephan served on the city commission for many years and that experience is an enormous asset, especially to a young commission such as ours."

The commission's newest member, Senior Common Pleas Judge Justin Johnson agreed.

"I'm delighted that Stephan's going to be the chair. He's exactly the right person for the job," said Johnson. "He's already

demonstrated his ability and I'm confident with Stephan as chair, we'll be moving forward in a consistent and strong way."

In addition to Broadus, McGough and Johnson, the commission includes attorney Mark Nowak, Giant Eagle Corporate Counsel Mary Gibson, District 11 County Councilwoman Barbara Daly Danko, and New Voices Pittsburgh Executive Director Latasha Mayes.

Currently, the commission has no budget, but receives technical and material support from the county Law Department and the Department of Human Services. Ideally, Broadus said he would like to see that change.

"Looking forward, hopefully, we can get a small operating budget that will allow us to create marketing materials, improve the website and make the community more aware that we are here and we are ready to help," he said. "As more people know we're here, I expect we'll see more complaints and more of a broader range of issues. I plan to work closely with Charles Morrison who chairs the city commission."

The commission meets on the first Thursday of the month. The first meeting with new officers will be Jan. 5. Meetings are held on the first floor of the County Office Building. For more information, or to file a complaint call 412-350-6945.

(Send comments to [cmor-rout@newpittsburghcourier.com](mailto:cmor-rout@newpittsburghcourier.com).)



**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**—Members of the Gateway Medical Society executive committee, back row from left: Dr. William Simmons, president elect; Dr. Anita Edwards, GMSI; Dr. Jan Madison, Dr. Morris Turner Jr. Front row, from left: Dr. Barbara Barnes and Dr. Rhonda Johnson-Moore.

## Fighting to increase Black doctors

CONTINUED FROM A1

effort to educate and mentor them in medicine and help guide and inspire them through their secondary and in most cases, their post-secondary educations.

Simmons said that the Journey to Medicine program is primarily focused on African-American males because, "we are looking at dyer statistics. If you look at a lot of college classes, African-American females are the vast majority of the African-Americans in the classes." He added that in a city the size of Pittsburgh, where there is a large number of African-American residents, the percentage of African-American physicians should reflect that.

The Journey to Medicine program, created in 2009, starts with up to 15 high grade boys and as they get older and move up in grades, increases their level and phases within the program. Throughout the program, students participate in tours of medical facilities, field trip, tutoring sessions, presentations and mentoring by physicians and simulations at the West Penn Hospital STAR (Simulation, Teaching and Academic Research) Center, which offers simulations of real-life situations and offers guided hands-on learning opportunities. Currently there are four phases, but in 2012 GMS plans to add two more phases to their program, which will offer an extensive mentorship in math and science, which are the courses Williams stresses are important for the medical field. Each quarter, students with success in their studies receive rewards for their efforts. Last Saturday, GMS promoted another set of students from their Journey to Medicine program.

Dr. Jan Madison, chairperson for fundraising of GMS and a pulmonary critical care physician with Pittsburgh Pulmonary Associates, said that diversity in health care is important and by starting young the hope is that they can get the

males through high school and help them to gain a competitive edge on their counterparts when they enter college. Also, when they become doctors, they will join GMS and "that they'll always reach back to the other students like our doctors do," she said.

Madison said that recruiting more African-Americans into the medical field is important because health disparities among African-Americans are huge and that patients are more likely to trust and open up to doctors who are like them, because patients want someone who understands them and what they're going through.

She said that African-Americans make up approximately 6 percent of the physician workforce in Pittsburgh. According to the US Census Bureau website, in 2010 African-Americans accounted for approximately 26 percent of the city of Pittsburgh's population.

"While recruiting is stage one, retention (keeping them in the region) is the next step and the hardest, so we (GMS) try to reach out to them and show them support," Madison said.

Also, by capturing their interests when they're young, Simmons says students who grow up in Pittsburgh and go away to train, are more likely to come back close to their family and add to the region's medical workforce.

"It would be a tragedy to lose another generation. If we sit by and do not help to redirect the education of young African-American males and females we're going to lose very bright minds," he said. "I can't be here forever. I want to have a pipeline of people behind me, so that they can take my place to support the African-American community."

(For more information on Gateway Medical Society's Journey to Medicine program, call 412-281-4086.)



**NAACP OPPOSES VOTER ID BILL**—The NAACP, Pittsburgh Unit, gathered at Freedom Unimiled on Dec. 21 to oppose House Bill 934, an amendment of the Pennsylvania Election Code requiring individuals to provide state-issued identification when voting. From left: Cécile Springer, Bishop Michael Golpin, Deliverance Church; Rev. Randy Bush, East Liberty Presbyterian Church; Charles Powell, former NAACP board member; Gayle Moss, NAACP president; and Constance Parker, first vice president NAACP. (Photo by Gail Manker)

NEW

# Pittsburgh Courier

FAB 40

## 2012

NEW PITTSBURGH COURIER FAB 40 NOMINATION FORM

NOMINATOR:

NAME:

CONTACT INFO:

NOMINEE

AGE

TITLE/POSITION

COMPANY/AFFILIATION

ADDRESS

CITY

STATE

ZIP

PHONE

E-MAIL

Describe the specific accomplishments that demonstrate the nominee's professional excellence:

Describe the nominee's community service activity or organizational involvement, if known:

Complete and return by December 28, 2011 to:  
Save The Date Creative Services, LLC  
P.O. Box 11346, Pittsburgh, PA 15238  
or e-mail to us at [savedthedata\\_pg@yahoo.com](mailto:savedthedata_pg@yahoo.com)

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION

## \$20M Braddock development for hospital site

CONTINUED FROM A1

The project calls for the construction of a \$26,000 square-foot office building, rental and for-sale housing, and a new community park. Braddock Mayor John Fetterman said the development will not only revitalize the city but also help in marketing.

"This is huge. I can't name another community that lost a community hospital and got even a warm handshake for it, let alone a \$20 million development," he said. "We've got an amazing, flexible, mixed-use redevelopment plan for our community. What mayor would want to tout that? Dan Onorato really delivered for Braddock."

The county approved South Side-based TREK Development as master developer for the project in August. The firm completed its environmental site assessment in October, and

has since applied for \$8 million in federal low-income housing credits to finance the rental development.

That portion of the project, slated for completion in spring 2013, will include eight one-bedroom apartments, eight two-bedroom townhouses and eight three-bedroom townhouses. In addition to the tax credits, another \$1.3 million in federal, local and equity funding will also go toward rental unit construction.

The for-sale housing will consist of 11 single-family homes bordering a 20,000 square-foot park. Both will be financed through a combination of federal state and local funding, with an additional \$2 million for infrastructure improvements.

Though Braddock's need for new housing is great, Fetterman said, the flex-office in complex fills a critical need for retail and office space—and with a \$3 million contri-

bution to the project from UPMC, the borough is receiving the equivalent of 15 years in wage taxes it lost when the hospital closed.

"One of our biggest challenges to bringing in new businesses is the lack of turnkey space. I get inquiries all the time. Moreover, the new senior housing on Braddock Avenue is 100 percent occupied, with a waiting list. So the need is there," he said.

"It's not the jobs (lost) per se, but the access to such a great level of healthcare. It was such a beautiful facility. I am hopeful with the new building we will get an urgent care center in town."

So is the county, which is engaged in ongoing discussions with both the Community College of Allegheny County and Primary Care Health Services to occupy the building.

(Send comments to [cmor-rout@newpittsburghcourier.com](mailto:cmor-rout@newpittsburghcourier.com).)

## New Media Academy reshaping future

by C. Denise Johnson

For New Pittsburgh Courier

Contrary to what you may have heard or read, there is hope among young Black males, and that hope was more than palpable last Thursday during the New Media Academy celebration at the August Wilson Center for African American Culture. The event was the culmination of six months of intense examination of the way media and culture impacts the lives of youth and how to become media savvy.

Jasiri X and Paradise Gray of 1Hood, founders of the academy, say that in addition to developing critical thinking skills, other goals include teaching the young men how to create, market, and shape world perception of themselves. The participating youth will be taken through the process of cultivating their voice via various forms of media. The academy was funded through a grant from the Heinz Endowment.

The specific focus, though not limited to, is to educate the participant in the nuances of the culture of today's media, as well as, to enhance their focus on education and personal accountability in today's world. "This alternative education program serves a dual purpose of equipping the communities youth with the proper tools for self-expression as well as occupying their time with positive influences with a specific goal ori-

ented agendas," Jasiri X said.

The young men met twice a week after school at the August Wilson Center where each student had access to laptop computers for research and editing their work. Their field work included observing professional Black journalists at work during the Frank Bolden Urban Journalism Workshop, a trip to the Andy Warhol Museum and the Occupy Pittsburgh encampment.

A number of current events during the course of the academy presented opportunities to students to discuss mainstream media coverage as well as have a hand in producing videos now available on YouTube including "I Am Troy Davis (T.R.O.Y.)," and video commentary on Jordan Miles.

The culminating event at the AWC was more commencement than graduation as the six young men (ranging from 14 to 18) who completed the program shared their thoughts on what they've learned. "We have to create new media to change the image," said Romie Yates of Wilkesburg. "We're not that stereotype. We have to stop feeding into that stereotype. We have to make music that is not disrespectful to women and to ourselves."

Hakim George, a student at Pittsburgh Science and Technology said, "We should not have to announce our movements in advance if we have an encounter with the police."