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New Orleans

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NOLA and
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Blast
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Back to School

A Lesson for Success



Photo Credit: nolapublicschools.com

For students to succeed it will take all stakeholders to make an investment in the young people of New Orleans. This quest to achieve excellence goes beyond the classroom and into communities where all are responsible for making sure young people have all they need to thrive in life.

Edwin Buggage
Editor-in-Chief Data News Weekly

Bridging the Divide: Where are we in Public Education?

In the years following Hurricane Katrina, the New Orleans Public Schools have seen a system drastically changed and become ground zero for the school choice debate and experiments in K-12 education. Af-

ter nearly two decades questions arise such as does it work better for children, particularly, those who are most at risk? As we are beginning the new school year, we are examining the New Orleans Public Schools almost 20 years after Hurricane Katrina and its impact on student outcomes and overall impact on the city.

Separate and Unequal

According to its website, nolapublicschools.com it states that “We are a community of public schools de-

voted to educating and preparing all our students to thrive in life. For 180 years, public education in New Orleans has been a part of this vibrant and multicultural city’s complicated history.”

This complicated history is true, given the historical inequalities between Black people and Whites in opportunities that have existed in a system that was separate and unequal. In a city that after Brown v. Board of Education made separate but equal unlawful, but after nearly 70 years New Orleans and cities

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across America there still continues to have a divide, where in high poverty schools students are being taught by less experienced teachers, suspensions and expulsions of Black students are at a high rate, and school pushout is contributing to the negative life outcomes for many of our young people that include the school to prison pipeline.

A Passing Grade?

In New Orleans, the Public Schools admittedly have made progress in improving test scores, graduation rates, college attendance and other statistical data inside schools have shown marked improvement since Hurricane Katrina. But unfortunately, these measures have not impacted better outcomes for far too many young people who are either victims or perpetrators where gun violence, or breaking in cars, breaking out of juvenile jails and overall crime is on the rise. This wave has many people feeling unsafe in New Orleans.

Access to Success?

Furthermore, it is time to re-evaluate schools and how success is measured, for quantitative data alone on standardized test does not alone measure the success of a community. It is essential to begin to consider more holistic solutions to the problems that plague our young people and our community across our city and state. Where Louisiana leads the world in incarceration per capita, with Black people being overrepresented.

A Bold New Vision: Leadership Matters

Today the city continues on a historic trek in leadership by selecting as Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Avis Williams to serve as the first woman to permanently be ap-



Charles Vaughn, Jr., is a veteran art teacher in New Orleans who connects with students giving them a bridge to success.

pointed to this crucial and vital role. She comes with the goals of helping to create an environment where excellence and equity are paramount in the New Orleans Public Schools. This change of leadership is a major step forward, in a city that finds itself in a crisis relating to its most vulnerable young people. While this is a laudable goal, we as a community must ask ourselves, how do we achieve equity and excellence in education for all? The answer to this

question extends way beyond the school building and whatever curriculum standards are put in place.

Working Toward Holistic Solutions

Indeed, education is one of the keys to success for our young people and their future, but more importantly, the education of the entire community is essential if New Orleans is to thrive as a city. Further, more routes to success must



Dr. Avis Williams, the newly appointed Superintendent of New Orleans Public Schools.

become available for our young people. For without economic opportunities, many will turn to illegal activities. Additionally, parents must become more involved in their children's education, making sure they understand the importance of education. In the faith community, more of our leaders must again assist in becoming the examples of the moral North Star that guides our community to better behavior.

All Lives Matter

Moreover, it is important to note, that what will make education and our community better is the collective investment of all the citizens to see themselves as stakeholders in the future of our city. For us to make a priority all our people especially our young, regardless of race, income, and zip code. We are all in this together, and we will make New Orleans a Greater City for all.

STEM NOLA in Partnership with the Department of Defense and Boeing Blast Off with Rocket Day at UNO Lakefront Arena

STEM NOLA in partnership DoD STEM and The Boeing Company hosted its highly anticipated STEM Saturday Rocket Day at the North Lot of the UNO Lakefront Arena located at 6801 Franklin Ave, New Orleans LA. During the free three-hour event, registered K-12 students were able to build and launch solid fuel rockets, stomp rockets and compression rockets. Students also made things like pop rockets, straw rockets, paper cup rockets and rolled rockets as they also learned about rocket proposition, trajectory and thrust from college interns and more than 150 professional volunteers from Boeing, Lockheed Martin and NASA.

Also were business and civic leaders from across the city, in addition to representatives from Blue Origin's Club for the Future were also on site to help kids write or draw on a postcard their vision of what the future of life in space will look like. After the event, the postcards were launched into space on a rocket and returned back to their front door to keep! This was an opportunity for students to innovate, create and make with STEM professionals. Since its founding in 2013, STEM NOLA, led by its Founder and CEO, Dr. Calvin Mackie, has impacted more than 100,000 students, 20,000 families and 5,000 schools.



Dr. Calvin Mackie, CEO of STEM NOLA pictured with Jennifer Boland-Masterson - Director, Operations Boeing Company, the kids and other team members.



Visit www.ladatanews.com for more photos from these events.

The Legacy Project

Data News Weekly Staff Edited Report

It may be the biggest family portrait ever. Businessman and former mayoral candidate Troy Henry commissioned a mural that stretches almost the length of a football field, from Religious Street to Tchoupitoulas Street. The two-story-tall painting, by artist Kentrice Schexnayder, pays homage to Henry's forebears, friends and personal heroes. Every detail ties into his family's multigenerational New Orleans experience.

The enormous artwork took almost two years to complete, it was finally unveiled on Tuesday July 19th from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.

The mural can be found in a truck fueling depot behind one of Henry's many businesses, the Sterling Xpress Gas Station,



Businessman Troy Henry stands in front of a mural on a brick wall Monday at the Sterling Xpress Gas Station on Tchoupitoulas Street.

1667 Tchoupitoulas St., which adjoins the H&W Drug Store medical marijuana dispensary owned by Henry's brother Ruston Henry.

The mural's location, near the busy Port of New Orleans, is the perfect place for Troy Henry to honor his grandfather Clarence "Chink" Henry, a Civil Rights Activist and longtime leader of New Orleans' Black longshoremen's union (which merged with the White union in 1980). Grandpa Clarence's portrait lies closest to the river in the painting.

Troy Henry's father, the late Sterling Henry Sr., the first Black Pharmacist at the Circle Food Store, appears with his wife, Elvira Day Henry, near the center of the painting. Rus-

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Mayor Cantrell joins Community Partners to Celebrate Completion of Affordable Housing Development in New Orleans East

City of New Orleans

NEW ORLEANS – Mayor LaToya Cantrell was joined by New Orleans City Councilmember for District E Oliver M. Thomas, Jr., Louisiana Housing Corporation (LHC) Chief Operating and Legal Officer Marjorianna Willman, Executive Director of the Housing Authority of New Orleans (HANO) Evette Hester, President and Chief Executive Officer for Finance New Orleans Damon Burns and community members to commemorate the completion of The Reveal Housing Community in New Orleans East.

“Affordable Housing has been a focus of mine since working in Broadmoor to serving on the City Council, and of course the fire and the fight is still alive as Mayor,” said Mayor Cantrell. “The most exciting thing about this project is not just the delivery of 150 affordable units, but through the spirit of partner-



Mayor LaToya Cantrell

ship we now have an inclusive and diversified community that will ensure our families are able to rent homes with multiple bedrooms and have immediate access to supportive services here in New Orleans East. We are continuing to meet people where they are.”

The Reveal was constructed by the Commonwealth Development Corporation and is a service-intensive housing community targeting special needs households, including disabled and single-parent families. The City of New Orleans invested \$1.4 million using HOME Program Funding to support the project, in partnership with the LHC utilizing Low Income Housing Tax Credits and Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Recovery dollars to build the \$43.3 million community. More than 20 percent of the units are accessible to those with disabilities and 60 percent of the units are available for large families (three and four-bedroom units).

“In these times of hardship for our citizens, Affordable Housing is necessary and a must,” said Councilmember Thomas. “Thank you to the developer, HANO and the City of New Orleans for creating an op-

portunity for this development for the current and future citizens of District E.”

“As the ninth largest Affordable Housing developer in the United States, The Commonwealth Companies are thrilled to be growing our portfolio in New Orleans,” said Kristi Morgan, Principal, The Commonwealth Companies. “The Reveal is a service-intensive housing community targeting special needs households, including the disabled and single parent families, and delivers flexible responsive and individualized services that meet the needs and choices of the residents.”

The community will feature a meditation area with walking paths that connect on-site amenities including an accessible playground, gazebo, and picnic area. Community-wide events and trainings that focus on independence, self-sufficiency skills and financial management will also be available onsite.

To accommodate residents who require further assistance, an on-staff Care Coordinator will be available to assist with transportation scheduling, community events, after-school care, and supportive service appointments. In addition to the resident services, an extensive fitness center with an attached physical therapy room, as well as a health consultation space will be available for visiting medical professionals. Residents will also have access to the on-site business incubator, a space where targeted financial trainings will be hosted and entrepreneurs can work with attorneys, business organizations, and other legal entities in a shared conference room and office space.

Since 2018, the Cantrell Administration and its partners have built approximately 2,000 Affordable Housing units across the city with a total investment of more than \$54 million.

Commentary

Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Business Graduates Demand Federal Contracting Opportunities for Women and Minority-Owned Small Businesses



Brandon Armant
President and CEO of BAMB,
a Communications Company

Black entrepreneurs are starting businesses at higher rates than other groups. In the face of systemic barriers, we’ve built businesses from the ground up, transformed our communities and contributed meaningfully to the economy. In the words of physician Sydney Labat, “We are truly our ancestors’ wildest dreams.”

There are countless stories of Black businesses who found ways to pivot in the worst of circumstances—and it appears we have more hills to climb. Headlines are filled with economic challenges facing

small businesses: inflation, workforce shortages and disrupted supply chains. A new survey of graduates of Goldman Sachs’ business education program, 10,000 Small Businesses, recently found that 78% of small business owners say the economy has gotten worse in the past three months. It also found that 93% are worried about the US economy experiencing a recession in the next 12 months.

But there is some good news. Sixty-five percent say they are optimistic about the financial trajectory of their business this year.

Although the economic forecast may not be bright, I know Black-owned small businesses are a collective sign of hope for the economy.

Entrepreneurs are the first to face economic headwinds and the first to creatively maneuver around them, signaling to the rest of the country what’s to come. Often Black businesses are disproportionately affected, and at times we

must think on our feet and adapt faster than our counterparts.

I am living proof of what it means to be battle-tested. My perseverance has paid off, and I’ve seen my impact resonate within New Orleans and beyond.

Although the path to success for many Black-owned small businesses is not smooth, outside intervention and investments in our businesses have proven to be profound. One of the resources that allowed me to future-proof my company, BAMB Communications, was Goldman Sachs’ 10,000 Small Businesses program.

This program was demanding, and it was causing me to take time away from working in my business. I would often wonder why I was taking time away from my deteriorating business to sit in a class and plan for greater success when, at that time, the business wasn’t showing signs of success at all. What I would eventually realize was that my growth opportunity was what

would allow my business to overcome the challenges it was facing.

In December 2016, I graduated from the Goldman Sachs 10KSB program, and my business was still alive and running. I’d come out of the program with a growth opportunity and a plan to effectively implement it, as well as a greater skill set for how to run my business.

While programs like 10,000 Small Businesses are helping small business owners, there is still more work to be done. We must make our voices heard because our businesses are key to economic recovery locally and nationwide.

This week, I joined 2,500 other small business owners at Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Business Summit. The event will be the largest gathering of small businesses in the U.S., celebrating hometown innovators like me. We are also calling on lawmakers for better public policies. Top on our agenda is a call to modernize the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), which has

not been reauthorized since 2000.

Doing business in the U.S. changes every day, and the SBA mission and policies need to reflect today’s market, not that of 22 years ago.

As we met with policymakers, we voiced our concerns and hope they hear our call to further assist our employees in obtaining safe and affordable childcare, and to make sure the government is living up to its promises of opening its federal contracting opportunities to more women- and minority-owned small businesses.

When we ensure the prosperity of Black businesses, we can ensure the health and wealth of the country, as well as local communities. And while we often hear about the plight of Black businesses, let’s tell a different story moving forward. A story which reclaims what our ancestors knew to be true: with great trials comes the chance to be triumphant. A story that believes our best is yet to come.

Rihanna Listed by Forbes as World's Youngest Self-Made Billionaire

The singer and entrepreneur, whose Fenty Beauty line counts among the most popular in the world, is the only billionaire under 40 on Forbes' list.

Stacy M. Brown NNPA
Newswire Senior National
Correspondent

In 2021, Rihanna achieved billionaire status.

In 2022, Forbes acknowledged that the Barbadian beauty now counts as the youngest self-made billionaire in America.

The 34-year-old, who recently gave birth to her first child, ranked 21st overall in the latest Forbes list of billionaires.

The singer and entrepreneur, whose Fenty Beauty line counts among the most popular in the world, is the only billionaire under 40 on Forbes' list.

Earlier this year, reports noted that Rihanna's Savage X Fenty lingerie planned an initial public offering valued at about \$3 billion.

The megastar owns 30 percent of Savage X Fenty and 50 percent of Fenty Beauty, reportedly generating \$550 million in revenue in 2020.

The nine-time Grammy Award winner has stated that she intends to increase her philanthropic efforts around the globe.

"My money is not for me; it's always the thought that I can help someone else," she told the New York Times in 2021. "The world can really make you believe that the wrong things are priority, and it makes you really miss the core of life, what it means to be alive."

In 2021, Forbes estimated Rihanna's net worth at \$1.7 billion, trailing only Oprah Winfrey as the world's richest entertainer.

"A lot of women felt there were no lines out there that catered to their skin tone. It was light, medium, medium-dark, dark,"



Shannon Coyne, co-founder of consumer products consultancy Bluestock Advisors, told Forbes about Rihanna's successful beauty products.

"We all know that's not reality. She was one of the first brands that came out and said, 'I want to speak to all of those different people.'"

Born Robyn Rihanna Fenty on February 20, 1988, in Saint Michael, Barbados, the tantalizing starlet delivered hit after hit with songs like "Umbrella," "Rude Boy," and "Diamonds."

With over 100 million social media followers, Rihanna's fans have pleaded with their idol to deliver new music.

But with her Fenty and Savage X Fenty business white-hot, Rihanna appears to have settled in as an entrepreneur and business magnate.

Cutting deals with Puma in 2014, Dior in 2016, Fenty Beauty in 2017, Savage X Fenty in 2018, and Fenty Skin in 2020, Rihanna kept her business focused.

Forbes writer Madeline Berg described Rihanna's rise this way:

"When Robyn Fenty, known to the world as Rihanna, launched Fenty Beauty in 2017, she sought to create a cosmetics company that made 'women everywhere (feel) included.' A perhaps unintended consequence: The beauty line has helped her enter one of the world's most exclusive ranks: Billionaire."

Berge concluded by providing commentary from Coyne, the consultant.

"She is creating a brand outside of herself. It's not just about Rihanna. Even if you don't like her music, she's created a real style in the fashion and beauty space."

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Compensation is competitive and great story ideas will be appreciated.

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Administrative Assistant Wanted

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Compensation is competitive and detail orientation will be appreciated.

If you are interested, please email your resume to: terrybjones@bellsouth.net

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ton Henry is portrayed on the far left of the mural. Troy Henry himself appears near the center of the long painting, near the charging horseback purple knight that symbolizes his beloved St. Augustine High School.

The mural is a block in length and is 20 feet tall. In addition to kin, the mural includes enormous individual portraits of well-known New Orleanians, including Mayor LaToya Cantrell, the late Chef Leah Chase and the late TV Anchor Nancy Parker, all of whom were important to Troy Henry and his family.

Renowned R&B Composer and Producer Dave Bartholomew, who died in 2019, was a next-door neighbor when he was a child, Troy Henry said. "His success was a tremendous influence on our family," he said. Actor Wendell Pierce has been a friend of Troy Henry's since they both lived in the Pontchartrain Park neighborhood and played Little League football together, Troy Henry said.

Schexnayder was the perfect choice to express his vision, because she spent part of her childhood in the lower 9th Ward, as did Troy Henry. In addition to her fine art career, Schexnayder is owner



L to R - Troy Henry, Artist Kentrice Schexnayder and Troy's brother Ruston Henry

of an indoor/outdoor commercial painting business. She was originally hired to do ordinary wall

painting in Troy Henry's office, before he discovered that she was also a muralist.

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