

Lighting The Road To The Future

New Orleans

Data

News Weekly

"The People's Paper"

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Former Mayor Marc Morial
and Honoree Dr. Norman C. Francis

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A Data News Weekly Exclusive

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Tchoupitoulas Art Corridor Wall Project

Remembering the Past to Create a Bright Future



Artist and founder Jamar Pierre and board chair Jeffrey Paul May stand proudly in front of the Tchoupitoulas Flood Wall Mural, a landmark project celebrating New Orleans' rich cultural legacy. Together, they lead a movement using public art to inspire, educate, and uplift the community.



Jeffrey Paul May, board chair of the Tchoupitoulas Art Corridor Project, stands at the site of the nation's longest mural. Under his leadership, the project is driving community revitalization through art, history, and empowerment.

Edwin Buggage
Editor-in-Chief Data News Weekly

A Mural with a Mission

If you've traveled down Tchoupitoulas Street near Walmart, you've likely noticed the vibrant mural

sprawling across the flood wall. More than just a striking work of art, it is a bold visual statement of culture, memory, and purpose. This massive piece spearheaded by celebrated Artist Jamar Pierre anchors the mission of the newly formed Tchoupitoulas Art Corridor Project, a nonprofit dedicated to transforming public spaces through inclusive,

socially conscious community art and development.

From Vision to Reality

What began as a bold dream in the mind of Artist Jamar Pierre in 2017 has become a groundbreaking cultural landmark. He imagined more than just beautifying a floodwall—he envisioned telling the soul-stir-

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Photo: Shannon Fields

Artist Jamar Pierre and board chair Jeffrey Paul May stand before a section of the Tchoupitoulas Art Corridor Project, the longest mural in the United States. His vision brings 300 years of New Orleans history to life through vibrant, community-driven art. The project serves as both a cultural tribute and a tool for neighborhood transformation.

ring story of New Orleans through art. Stretching from Felicity Street to Ninth Street along Tchoupitoulas, his vision has evolved into a \$2 million initiative backed by the Flood Protection Authority, covering over 75,000 square feet and 5,200 linear feet of concrete canvas, earning the distinction of being the longest mural in the United States. It captures the heartbeat of the city, flowing through the many eras of

New Orleans' storied history. One that is a gumbo and cultural mosaic that gave the world jazz, Creole cuisine, and generations of resilience. Each brushstroke is a tribute to the beauty, struggle, and triumph of New Orleans and its people.

Art as Empowerment

"This is about truth-telling and celebration," said Jamar Pierre. "Our mural reclaims and elevates

the stories too often left out, while providing a pathway for healing, education, and empowerment through art."

He continues, "This mural is a testament to New Orleans as a global cultural beacon. Our city has long been a melting pot, shaping music, cuisine, and art worldwide. Once completed, this will not only be the longest mural in the country but a powerful symbol of unity and

celebration of our shared heritage."

A Call to Action

At the helm of the Tchoupitoulas Art Corridor Project is Jeffrey Paul May, the Founding Board President and Principal of International Development and Planning. With a strong background in urban planning and community revitalization, May brings visionary leadership and strategic insight to the initia-

tive. He works alongside a dedicated board of professionals with expertise in nonprofit governance, public art, and civic engagement, each committed to uplifting New Orleans through equity-centered development. Together, they have played a critical role in raising the project's visibility, building cross-sector partnerships, and ensuring that the mural's impact extends far beyond the wall itself.

"Jamar Pierre is a world-class visual artist who is sharing his talent to exalt the St. Thomas Community with this beautification project," said May. "All persons who love New Orleans across the city, country, and world should support this project and the lives it touches. Please visit the wall and our website <https://tchoupitoulasartcorridor.org> or email to info@tchoupart.cpm and donate today."

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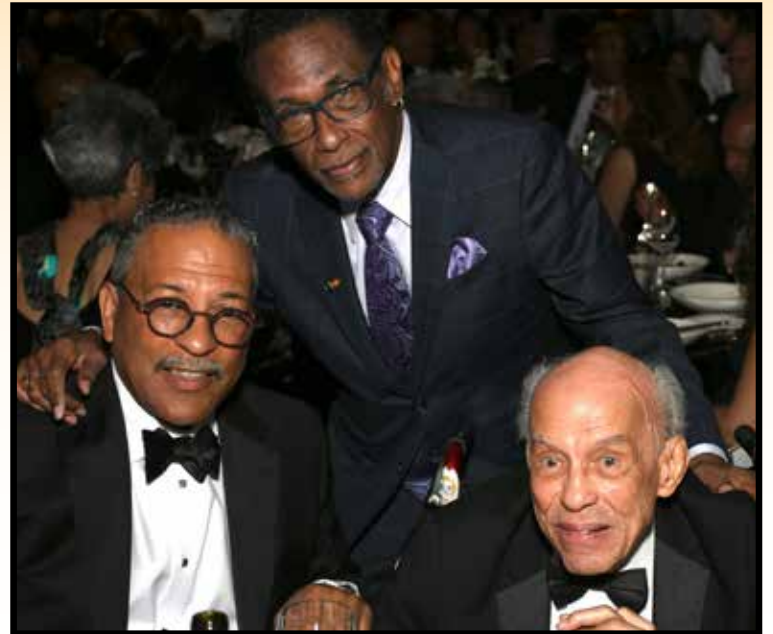
Photos by Glenn Summers
Data News Weekly Contributor

Xavier University of Louisiana celebrated its 100th Anniversary with a Centennial Gala on May 8th, raising over \$2 million for student scholarships. The event honored the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament and President Emeritus Dr. Norman C. Francis, whose legacy as a transformative leader continues to shape the university.

NBA Legend Earvin "Magic" Johnson surprised guests with a \$500,000 pledge in tribute to Dr. Francis, recognizing his leadership and lifelong commitment to education and equity. Hosted by Bill Bellamy, with a performance by Jeffrey Osborne and remarks from Bryant Gumbel, the gala spotlighted Xavier's historic role in producing Black doctors, pharmacists, and STEM leaders. Founded in 1925, Xavier continues to build a just and humane society through its graduates and national impact.



Sister Stephanie, President of the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament and a XU board member.



Dr. Norman C. Francis (right) pictured with his son David Francis (left) and Data News Weekly Publisher Terry Jones (center).



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Data Zone, Continued from page 4.



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Youth Sports Programming Expands to Hardin Playground Through NORD, DA's Office, and The 18th Ward Partnership

Data News Staff Edited Report

The New Orleans Recreation Development (NORD) Commission, in partnership with the Orleans Parish District Attorney's Office and The 18th Ward, is expanding its youth sports programming to Hardin Playground in the historic 7th Ward.

The 18th Ward, an existing NORD partner, currently provides youth programming at both Easton and Norman Playgrounds. As part of this expansion, The 18th Ward will transition its programming from Easton to Hardin this spring, while continuing to offer sports and activities at the Norman Playground in Algiers.

"Hardin Playground is a vital community space in the 7th Ward,



New Orleans District Attorney Jason Williams and NORDC CEO Larry Barabino, Jr.

and we're committed to ensuring it serves the children and families who live nearby," said NORD Commission CEO Larry Barabino, Jr.



"Thanks to our ongoing partnership with The 18th Ward, funding from Councilman JP Morrell, and the continued support of the Dis-

trict Attorney's Office, we're turning this vision into reality."

Over the past several months, NORD, the District Attorney's Office, community members, and the office of Councilman Eugene Green have worked together to revitalize Hardin Playground, preparing the site for regular community use. Earlier efforts to launch programming were challenged by a shortage of volunteer coaches. With support from The 18th Ward, NORD is moving forward with structured programming and renewed energy.

Youth baseball will kick off at Hardin in May. In the fall, NORD and The 18th Ward will relocate their existing youth soccer program to Hardin, establishing a strong presence in the 7th Ward. Flag football and other seasonal activities are also in development. Program-

ming at Norman Playground will continue as usual.

"This partnership is a powerful testament to what can be achieved when we come together as a community," said JP Morrell, New Orleans City Councilman. "Expanding youth programming at Hardin Playground not only revitalizes a cherished neighborhood space but also highlights the incredible impact of the Council's Recreation & Culture Fund. As a recipient of this fund, The 18th Ward is bringing new, structured opportunities to our youth. This collaboration with the District Attorney's Office and NORD underscores our shared commitment to providing safe, accessible spaces for young people to grow and thrive. I'm proud to see

Newsmaker, Continued on page 7.

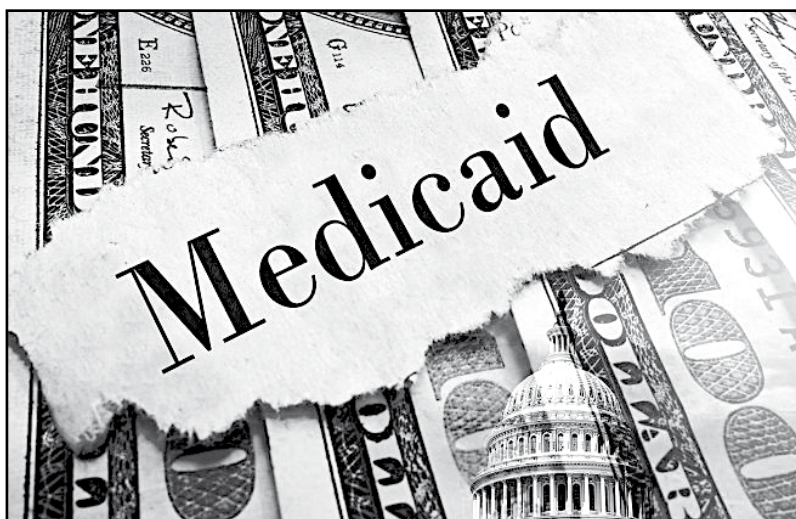
State & Local News

GOP Medicaid Plans Would Slash Health Coverage for Millions, CBO Confirms

Eric Connerly Data News Weekly Contributor

A recent analysis by the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office (CBO) indicates that proposed changes to Medicaid backed by Congressional Republicans could lead to widespread loss of health coverage across the United States. These proposals include capping federal contributions to Medicaid, reducing federal matching rates for states that expanded Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act, and repealing streamlined enrollment policies for Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP).

In Louisiana, where more than 2 million residents rely on Medicaid for healthcare—including low-income families, children, seniors, and individuals with disabilities—these proposed federal policy changes could have severe consequences. The state, which ex-



panded Medicaid in 2016, could be forced to reduce benefits, cut provider payments, or limit enrollment if federal funding is significantly curtailed. Such actions may leave hundreds of thousands of Louisianians at risk of losing coverage.

The CBO estimates that up to 8.6 million Americans could lose Medicaid under the proposed policies, with as many as 3.9 million becoming uninsured. In Louisiana,

this could result in increased strain on the state's healthcare infrastructure, higher uncompensated care costs for hospitals, and reduced access to preventive and essential medical services for vulnerable populations. Additionally, the state may be forced to make tough budget decisions—such as cutting education funding or raising taxes—to absorb the financial burden left by reduced federal support.



In Memoriam

Seafood Pioneer Al Scramuzza Passes Away at 97

Fleur De Lis
Data News Weekly
Contributor

Al Scramuzza, the beloved New Orleans Seafood Entrepreneur and self-made TV personality known as the "Crawfish King," passed away on Sunday, May 11, at his home in Metairie after a brief illness. He was 97.

Born on September 19, 1927, Scramuzza launched Seafood City in 1951, transforming it into one of the Gulf South's largest seafood retailers. At its peak, the Mid-City Market on North Broad Street sold over 20,000 pounds of crawfish in a single day.

Louisiana Farm Bureau News

Scramuzza became a local icon through his eccentric, self-produced TV commercials and the catchy jingle: "Stay with Al Scramuzza, and you'll never be a looza." His efforts



Al Scramuzza

helped popularize crawfish in Louisiana, turning the once-overlooked crustacean into a regional staple.

After Seafood City closed in 1993, Scramuzza remained active in the community, coaching and mentoring youth at Johnny Bright Playground in Metairie. In recognition of his contributions, Jefferson Parish renamed the street along the playground "Al Scramuzza Way" on his 97th birthday last September.

Louisiana Farm Bureau News

Scramuzza is survived by two daughters, five grandchildren, and six great-grandchildren. Funeral arrangements are pending.

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the 7th Ward leading the way, and I look forward to seeing the positive impact these programs will have on our youth—both on the field and beyond."

"When we invest in our children, we invest in the future of public safety and community strength," said New Orleans District Attorney Jason Williams. "This partnership at Hardin Playground is about more than sports—it's about creating safe, supportive spaces where young people can grow, thrive, and be seen. It's an honor to stand alongside NORD, The 18th Ward, Councilman Green, Councilman Morrell, and all of our community partners to make this kind of long-term impact in the 7th Ward. With

this kind of collaboration, the future in the 7th Ward isn't just hopeful—it's brighter than ever."

"Providing opportunities for our kids and families requires more collaboration across the city," said Lowrey Crews, Founder and CEO of The 18th Ward. "We are excited to work with various Hardin Park stakeholders—NORD, the DA's office, City Council, the neighborhood, and surrounding schools—to bring high-quality programming to the area."

This effort reflects a shared vision: that every child in New Orleans, no matter their ZIP code, should have access to safe parks, recreation opportunities, and the chance to grow



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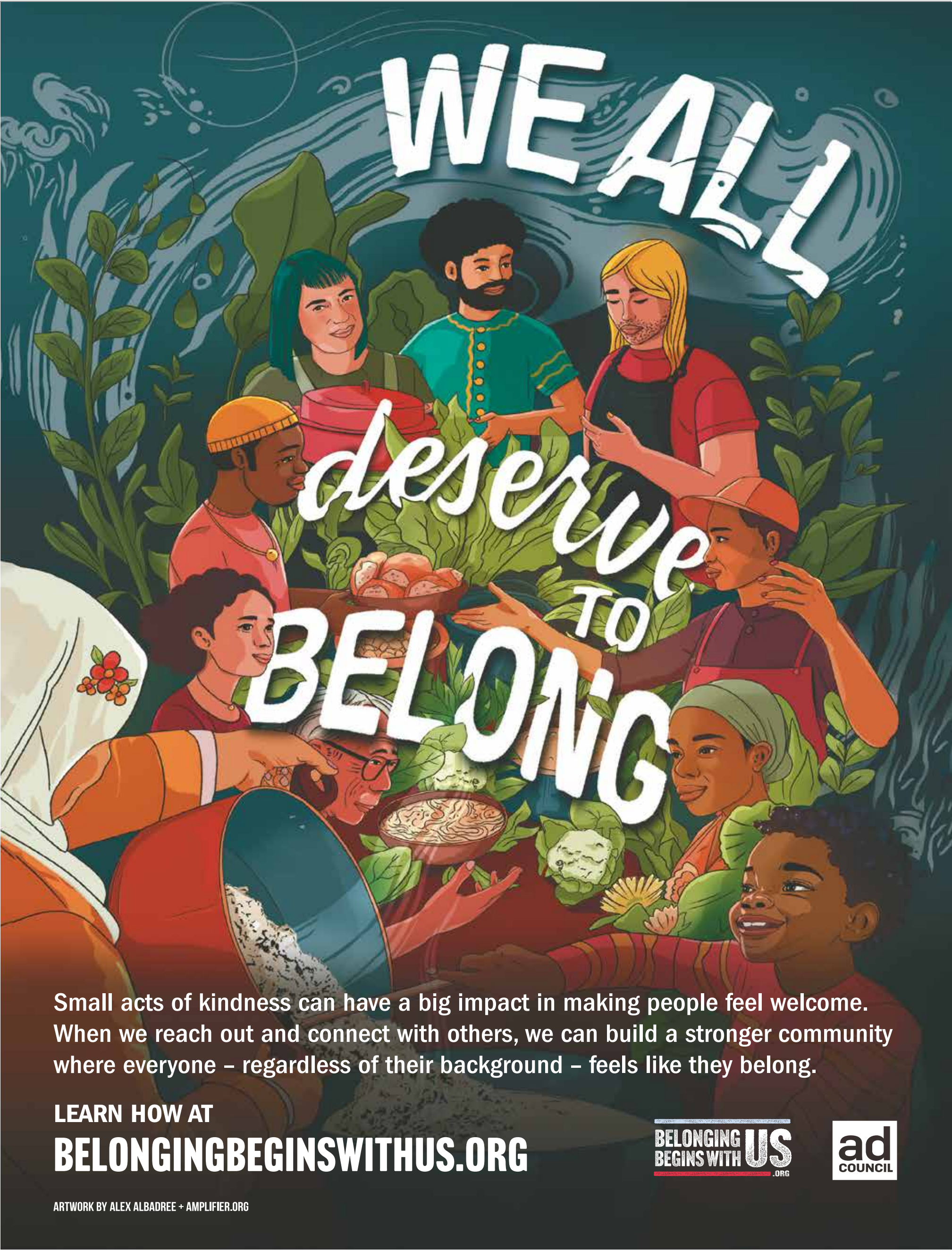
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