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**New Orleans**

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A Data News Weekly Exclusive

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# Breaking the Silence

## *Addressing Black Mental Health During Mental Health Awareness Month*



As mental health challenges continue to disproportionately affect Black communities, advocates stress the urgent need for culturally informed care, open dialogue, and collective healing.

**Glenda Bell**  
Data News Weekly Contributor

**Understanding the Crisis**

As May marks Mental Health Awareness Month, it’s crucial to spotlight the unique mental health challenges faced by the Black community. Despite experiencing mental health conditions at rates comparable to other groups, Black Americans often encounter systemic barriers that hinder access to appropriate care.

According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), Black adults living below the poverty line are

more than twice as likely to report serious psychological distress compared to those with higher incomes. Yet only one in three Black adults with mental illness receives treatment. Contributing factors include limited access to culturally competent care, stigma surrounding mental health, and a historical mistrust of the medical system.

**A Youth Mental Health Emergency**

The Mental Health Crisis is especially alarming among Black youth. Between 2007 and 2020, suicide rates among Black youth rose by 144%, with Black children aged 5–12 nearly twice as likely to die by suicide

compared to their White peers. These figures highlight the urgent need for early intervention, school-based support, and safe spaces for youth of color to seek help.

**Organizations Leading the Way**

Several organizations are actively addressing these disparities. Therapy for Black Girls, founded by Dr. Joy Harden Bradford offers culturally competent care and an online directory of therapists who understand the unique experiences of Black women and girls. The Boris Lawrence Henson Foundation, created by Actress Taraji P. Henson, provides scholarships for

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### DATA NEWS WEEKLY

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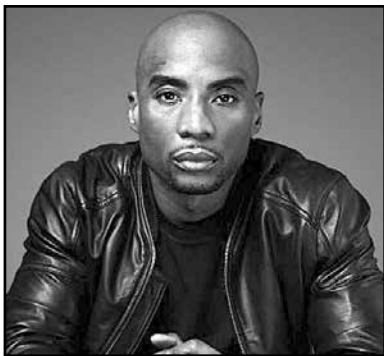
## Cover Story, Continued from page 2.

Black therapists and free services for those in need. In 2024, Henson partnered with Kate Spade to launch wellness pods across the country, expanding access to care in underserved areas.

### Celebrity Advocacy and Destigmatization

Public figures are also playing a vital role in shifting the conversation around Black Mental Health. Radio Personality and Author Charlamagne tha God (Lenard McKelvey) launched the Mental Wealth Alliance in 2020 to fund therapy, support mental health education, and grow the number of Black professionals in the field. Through his platform on The Breakfast Club, he continues to normalize mental health discussions, especially among Black men.

Other celebrities, such as Rapper Big Sean, Actress Gabrielle Union, and NBA Star DeMar DeRozan, have also spoken out about their personal struggles with mental health. Their transparency encourages others to seek help and challenges outdated stigmas around vulnerability and emotional well-



Charlamagne tha God and other Black celebrities are shedding light on the importance of mental health in the Black community, encouraging individuals to seek help and break the stigma surrounding emotional well-being.

being in the Black community.

### The Need for Cultural Competency

Dr. Francesca K. Owoo underscores that cultural context is essential for effective treatment. Therapists must not only be clinically qualified but also culturally responsive, understanding the social, historical, and familial dynamics that influence Black patients' experiences. Despite this need, only 5% of psychologists in the U.S. are Black, illustrating a critical gap in

representation and care.

### Grassroots and Community Efforts

Beyond national movements, grassroots initiatives are helping bridge the gap in care. The AA-KOMA Project, led by Dr. Alfiee Breland-Noble, focuses on Mental Health Education and Services for marginalized youth. Meanwhile, The Sad Girls Club, founded by Elyse Fox, creates digital and in-person support networks for young women of color struggling with anxiety, depression, and trauma.

### A Call to Action

As the nation observes Mental Health Awareness Month, it's imperative to center the experiences of Black individuals. Addressing mental health inequities requires not only reform in care delivery but also community-driven solutions, inclusive education, and the continued dismantling of stigma. By promoting culturally competent care and increasing access to Mental Health Resources, we move closer to building a system that supports, affirms, and uplifts Black lives.

### Local Mental Health Resources in New Orleans

If you or someone you know is in need of Mental Health Support in the New Orleans area, the following organizations offer services with a focus on accessibility and cultural sensitivity:

#### The New Orleans Black Mental Health Matters Initiative

A coalition of local therapists and advocates working to expand Mental Health Awareness and access in the Black community. Website: [www.blackmentalhealth-mattersnola.org](http://www.blackmentalhealth-mattersnola.org)

#### CrescentCare Behavioral Health Services

Offers counseling, psychiatric care, and substance use support with culturally competent staff and a focus on LGBTQ+ and communities of color. Location: 3308 Tulane Ave, New Orleans, LA  
Phone: (504) 821-2601

#### The Institute of Women and Ethnic Studies (IWES)

A nonprofit addressing health disparities through trauma-informed care and community wellness programs, especially for women and youth of color. Website: [www.iwesnola.org](http://www.iwesnola.org)

#### Metropolitan Human Services District (MHSD)

Provides a range of mental health and addiction recovery services, including crisis support. Crisis Line: (504) 826-2675  
Website: [www.mhsdla.org](http://www.mhsdla.org)

#### Tulane University Psychological Services Center (TUPSC)

Offers sliding-scale therapy and psychological assessments by trained doctoral students under supervision. Location: 1430 Tulane Ave., New Orleans, LA  
Phone: (504) 988-5395

Help is available. Reaching out is a sign of strength, not weakness. Mental wellness is for everyone.

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# Seal's Birthday Bash 2025

Photos by Glenn Summers  
Data News Weekly Contributor

Ms. Seal, (Cecile Dalton) proprietor of a popular 7th Ward nightspot and widely known for her community advocacy and commitment to giving back, recently celebrated her birthday with a lively and heartfelt Birthday Bash. The event brought together family, friends, and supporters, and featured live performances by Roi "Chip" Anthony, surprise guests Lysa and Hot Boy Ronald, along with music by DJ Rabbit and DJ Skool. The celebration was filled with love, laughter, and joy, all had a great time.



Visit [www.ladatanews.com](http://www.ladatanews.com) for more photos from these events.

# St. Augustine High School Hosts Annual Crawfish Boil and Fundraiser in Support of Student Programs

Photos by Terry B. Jones  
Data News Weekly Publisher

St. Augustine High School, a pillar of academic excellence and tradition in New Orleans, hosted its annual Crawfish Boil and Fundraiser, drawing alumni, families, and community supporters to campus for an afternoon of food, fellowship, and purpose.

The highly anticipated event, held on the school grounds, featured delicious Louisiana crawfish, live music, games, and a festive atmosphere, all in support of student enrichment programs, scholarships, and extracurricular initiatives at the historic all-boys Catholic school.

Funds raised from the crawfish boil directly benefit educational resources, leadership development, and college readiness efforts that prepare St. Augustine students for success in and beyond the classroom.

St. Augustine High School extends its heartfelt thanks to all sponsors, volunteers, and attendees who made the event a resounding success.



Visit [www.ladatanews.com](http://www.ladatanews.com) for more photos from these events.

# Three More Escaped New Orleans Inmates Captured as Manhunt Intensifies for Final Two Fugitives

**Benjamin Bates**  
Data News Weekly  
Contributor

Three more inmates who escaped from the Orleans Parish Justice Center earlier this week have been captured, authorities confirmed Monday, as the manhunt continues for the last two fugitives still on the run.

The inmates were apprehended separately over the weekend in coordinated efforts involving the New Orleans Police Department, U.S. Marshals, and State Law Enforcement. Officials have not disclosed the exact locations of the captures but said tips from the public played a critical role in tracking down the escapees.

"This is a significant step forward in what remains an active and urgent investigation," said NOPD Superintendent Anne Kirkpatrick during a press briefing. "We will not



Ten inmates escaped from a New Orleans jail; eight have been captured, while two remain at large as of press time. Authorities continue an intensive manhunt and urge the public to report any information.

rest until all five escapees are back in custody."

The escape occurred late Friday

night when a group of six inmates reportedly exploited a security lapse in a shared recreational area.

One of the inmates was quickly recaptured hours later, but the remaining five sparked a citywide

search. Authorities have increased patrols, established checkpoints, and are working with federal agencies to locate the final two fugitives, who are considered dangerous. Residents are urged to remain vigilant and report any suspicious activity.

"This is a matter of public safety," said Orleans Parish Sheriff Susan Hutson. "We appreciate the community's support and ask for continued cooperation as we pursue every lead to bring these individuals back into custody."

The Sheriff's Office has launched an internal investigation into the escape, and questions remain about how such a breach could occur in a secure facility. Additional security measures have since been implemented at the jail.

Anyone with information about the two remaining escapees is asked to contact CrimeStoppers or the NOPD tip line immediately.

## State & Local News

# Rep. Troy Carter Statement on Passing of Former Congressman Charlie Rangel

**Data News Staff Edited Report**

This week Congressman Troy A. Carter, Sr. (D-LA) issued the following statement:

"From the battlefields of Korea to the Halls of Congress, Charlie never stopped fighting — for justice, for fairness, for the people of Harlem, and for the Heart of This Nation. He was a giant, a trailblazer, a lion whose voice roared for the voiceless.

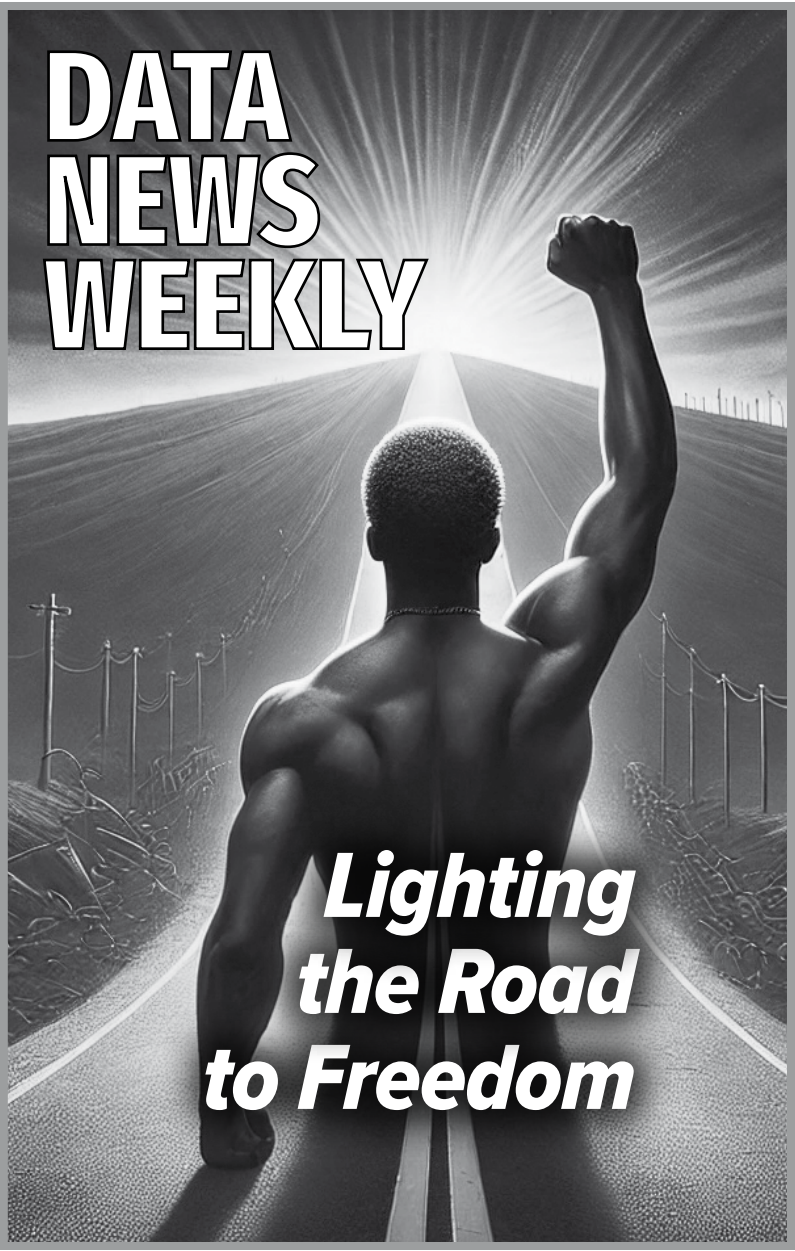
"We have lost a legend, but his spirit lives on in every fight for equity and every young leader he inspired.

"Rest well, Congressman. You changed the world — and we will carry your torch forward.

"My deepest condolences to the Rangel family and all who loved him."



Representative Troy Carter (left) pictured with the late Charles Rangel (right), longtime New York Congressman, founding member of the Congressional Black Caucus, and former Chair of the House Ways and Means Committee, who recently passed away.



# Hate and Chaos Rise in Trump's America

Stacy M. Brown  
NNPA Newswire Senior  
National Correspondent

The Southern Poverty Law Center has identified 1,371 hate and antigovernment extremist groups operating across the United States in 2024. In its latest Year in Hate & Extremism Report, the SPLC reveals how these groups are embedding themselves in politics and policy-making while targeting marginalized communities through intimidation, disinformation, and violence. "Extremists at all levels of government are using cruelty, chaos, and constant attacks on communities and our democracy to make us feel powerless," said SPLC President Margaret Huang. The report outlines how hard-right groups aggressively targeted diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives throughout 2024. Figures on the far right falsely framed DEI as a threat to white Americans, with some branding it a form of "white genocide." After the collapse of Baltimore's Francis Scott Key Bridge, a former Utah legislator blamed the incident on DEI, posting "DEI = DIE."

Tactics ranged from local policy manipulation to threats of violence. The SPLC documented bomb threats at 60 polling places in Georgia, traced to Russian email domains. Similar threats hit Jewish institutions and Planet Fitness locations after far-right social media accounts attacked them for trans-inclusive policies. Telegram, which SPLC describes as a hub for hate groups, helped extremists cross-recruit between neo-Nazi, QAnon, and white nationalist spaces. The platform's lax moderation allowed groups like the Terrorgram Col-



lective—designated terrorists by the U.S. State Department—to thrive. Militia movements were also reorganized, with 50 groups documented in 2024. Many, calling themselves "minutemen," trained in paramilitary tactics while lobbying local governments for official recognition. These groups shared personnel and ideology with white nationalist organizations.

The manosphere continued to radicalize boys and young men. The Fresh & Fit podcast, now listed as a hate group, promoted misogyny while mocking and attacking Black women. Manosphere influencers used social media algorithms to drive youth toward male-supremacy content. Turning Point USA played a key role in pushing white nationalist rhetoric into mainstream politics. Its leader Charlie Kirk claimed native-born Americans are being replaced by immigrants, while the group advised on Project 2025 and organized Trump

campaign events. "We know that these groups build their power by threatening violence, capturing political parties and government, and infesting the mainstream discourse with conspiracy theories," said Ra-

chel Carroll Rivas, interim director of the SPLC's Intelligence Project. "By exposing the players, tactics, and code words of the hard right, we hope to dismantle their mythology and inspire people to fight back."



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### Job Opportunity

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Compensation is competitive and great story ideas will be appreciated.

If you are interested, please email your resume and 3 writing samples to: [terrybjones@bellsouth.net](mailto:terrybjones@bellsouth.net) and [datanewseditor@bellsouth.net](mailto:datanewseditor@bellsouth.net).

**We can't wait to hear from you!**

### Job Opportunity

#### Administrative Assistant Wanted

Data News Weekly, "The People's Paper," is looking for an administrative assistant.

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