

MACON COUNTY COMMUNITY PARTNERS NEWSPAPER



A MONTHLY PUBLICATION

JANUARY 2023

VOLUME 2

ISSUE 1

"A Real, Relevant Resource!"



FREE



TU Students Shine in the National Association of Black Journalists Grant Submission

Get **FREE**
Help Enrolling
in Health
Insurance!

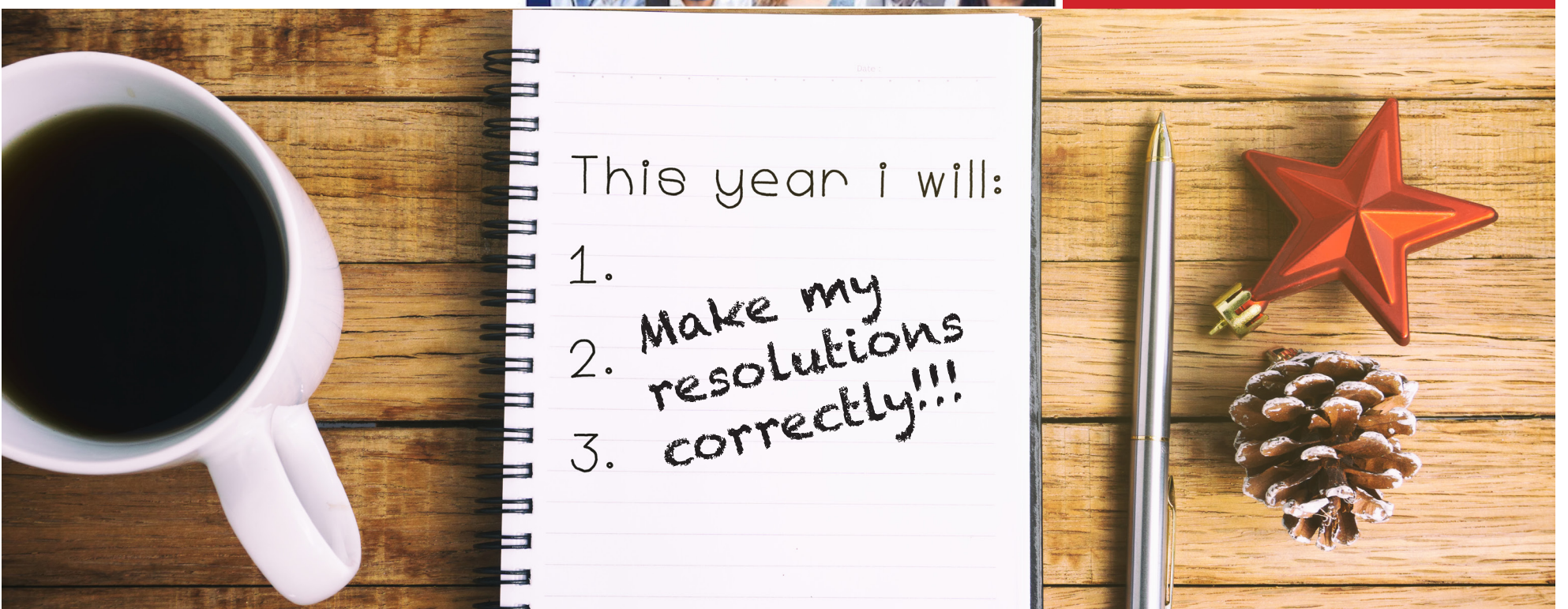
Open Enrollment Ends
January 15, 2023!



The Wellness Coalition



Executive Director, Angel Walker,
Named to NSBA Leadership Council



Help Our Girls.



BRIDGES Girls Group Home in Tuskegee, Alabama is a basic living residential facility that provides a safe living environment for teenage girls. While at BRIDGES, girls are provided opportunities to replace negative behaviors with appropriate self-discipline behaviors that will allow them to make sound healthy life choices. BRIDGES is an invaluable asset that assists our local community in the fight against poverty and homelessness by helping young women develop competency and resilience.

According to Ms. Angelia Walton, Executive Director of BRIDGES, the group home operations were “abruptly disrupted on Tuesday, December 6, 2022 following a call from caseworkers, stating they received a directive from the state of Alabama to have their children ready for immediate removal.” Subsequently, Ms. Walton contacted the DHR licensure reviewer, Jason Gibson, who informed her the move was made due to the group home facility having a safety issue. Ms. Walton said she was “in shock” because the facility was signed off by the local Fire Marshall,

Ms. Walton went on to explain the “Fire Marshall visited the facility in May 2022 where BRIDGES was granted a fire permit. The Fire Marshall also coordinated with Furlong’s Fire Alarm to ensure all fire systems were working properly. The State of Alabama DHR completed a facility review on November 22, 2022 and pointed out two changes needed for compliance. After receiving clearance from the Building Inspector, Mr. Charlie Bowne, BRIDGES began the required renovations. During that time, Mr. Bowen spoke extensively with the hired contractor perform the work. After all work was completed, the girls were permitted to occupy the facility.”



Now a new set of unexpected violations / renovations have been issued by the Fire Marshall to the State of Alabama causing the BRIDGES Girls Group Home to be shut down. Renovations include a new sprinkler system to be installed in the residential home setting, building plans to include a design with sprinklers, and new certified architect designs. For the facility to be reopened, BRIDGES will incur costs between \$10,000 and \$25,000. The girls who depended on the facility will be displaced until either the Tuskegee City Council intervenes, or the funds are raised and new renovations are completed.

At this time, Ms. Walton is appealing to our community to assist in helping BRIDGES overcome this challenge and continue their work to care for the six young ladies who have already suffered ordeals caused by adults charged to care for and love them. To support BRIDGES, visit <http://tearsinc.org/bridges> and click on the donate button. You can also send your tax-exempt contributions to:

TEARS/BRIDGES Girls Home
206 East Oak Street
Tuskegee, Alabama 36083

UNSUNG HEROES

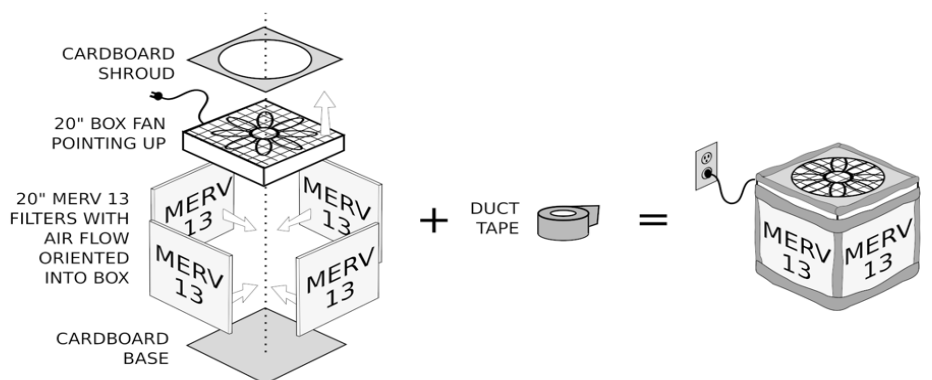
“The happiest people are those who do the most for others”.
-President Booker T. Washington

Each month, we will highlight the members of our community who live by these simple, but powerful words of Dr. Washington, working every day to improve the quality of life for each and every citizen in Macon County. You may or may not know their names, but we owe them a debt of profound gratitude for their service! - Ms. Diane Kenney

It’s probably a safe bet to assume that every adult reading this article has asked at one time or another: “What’s going on with kids these days? Why don’t they listen to what we say? All they want to do is play video games and spend hours on their cell phones!” Something like that! Well, it gives me the greatest pleasure to let you know that there are many kids in our community who are giving their time and talent to help make our lives better in countless ways.



Let’s take six high school students at BTW who have worked hard under the guidance of our local historian/activist Guy Trammell to learn how to improve the air quality in our homes, businesses, and churches to mitigate the threat of the COVID virus that is spread through the air we breathe. They have become experts in assembling the Corsi-Rosenthal boxes that are constructed with cardboard, air filters, and duct tape, providing an excellent air filtration system that cleans the air and reduces the spread of the virus. This is what they look like:



So far, the kids have made more than 22 boxes that are in use all over our town! Guy refers to them as our Junior Partners and they are! They have also been seen assisting in our community at the Story Telling Festival, making Easter baskets for local children, ushering at church celebrations, assisting a local chef in providing hot meals on the Square, and helping to distribute food boxes near Tuskegee Public School.

Our young citizens are an invaluable asset in our community and are learning at an early age how important it is to give back and do whatever they can to be of service. Be sure to think of our students and other young members in our County for your next event. They are just waiting to be asked!

WEEE Have A Problem!

Article By: Roosevelt Robinson-Alabama Cooperative Extension System
Submitted By: Macon County Environmental Justice League

Every week between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day, more than 1 million additional tons of garbage is introduced into the waste stream, with a good amount of it being electronics. The popularity of new flat-panel TVs, tablet computers, laptops, and other digital devices brings an inevitable end to the old TVs and computer-related products they replace. With the passing of the holidays, this is a crucial time to raise awareness of the escalating issues of WEEE. Waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE), often called e-waste, describes discarded electrical or electronic devices. Examples of "electronic waste" are discarded computers, office electronic equipment, entertainment device electronics, mobile phones, and television sets. Electronic scrap components, such as cathode-ray tubes (CRTs), contain contaminants, such as beryllium, brominated flame retardants cadmium, and lead, all environmentally threatening. The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) includes discarded CRT monitors in its category of hazardous household waste.

As the second-largest producing of WEEE, the United States tosses more than 9 million tons each year. Rapid changes in technology, changes in media, falling prices, and planned obsolescence results in fast-growing surplus of electronic waste globally. Discharged cell phones and other electronic devices contain high amounts of precious metals like gold and silver, equating to more than \$60 million every year. The EPA estimates that only 12.5 percent of WEEE is recycled, the rest goes directly into landfills. It is important to note that the amount of WEEE being produced, including mobile phones and computers, could rise by as much as 500 percent over the next decade.



The most effective solution to the growing WEEE problem is recycling raw materials from end-of-life electronics. Most electronic devices contain a variety of materials that can be recovered for future uses. Dismantling and providing reuse possibilities, intact natural resources are conserved and air and water pollution caused by hazardous disposal is avoided. Additionally, recycling reduces greenhouse

gas emissions caused by the manufacturing of new products.

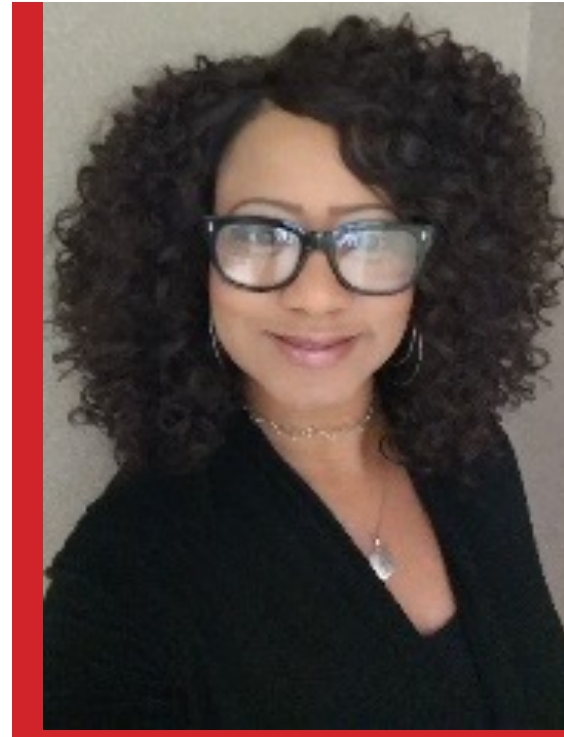
Whilst it is desirable to have the latest and greatest technology, let's all commit to recycling or disposing of your old gadgets and equipment in the right way. If your product can be reused, try donating it to a reputable reuse organization, that won't export it unless it's fully functional. Maybe your product is too old or too broken to donate, you should recycle it. At BestBuy, you can recycle up to three items per household per day. Contact your local store for state-specific info and different limitations on TVs, computer monitors, and laptops. If not BestBuy, contact United Cerebral Palsy about its recycle-electronics recycling program. Let's protect our planet by keeping harmful materials out of the environment. For more information, please contact the Elmore County Extension Office.

Executive Director, Angel Walker, Named to NSBA Leadership Council

Press Release
December 21, 2022

Tuskegee, Alabama – Angel Walker, Macon-Russell Community Action Agency, Inc. was recently named to the National Small Business Association (NSBA) Leadership Council. NSBA is the nation's oldest small-business advocacy organization and operates on a staunchly nonpartisan basis. Walker, a recognized leader in the community, joins the NSBA Leadership Council alongside other small-business advocates from across the country as they work to promote the interests of small business to policymakers in Washington, D.C.

"As an Executive Director, I see daily the importance of being involved and active when it comes to laws and regulation," stated Walker. "Joining



NSBA's Leadership Council will enable me to take our collective small-business message to the people that need to hear it most: Congress."

Walker joined the NSBA Leadership Council as part of her efforts to tackle the many critical issues facing small business, including tax reform, regulatory restraint, health care costs and how access to capital will impact small business. The NSBA Leadership Council is focused on providing valuable networking between small-business

advocates from across the country while ensuring small business a seat at the table as Congress and regulators take up key small-business proposals.

"I am proud to have Angel Walker as part of our Leadership Council," stated NSBA President and CEO Todd McCracken. "She came to us highly recommended and I look forward to our coordinated efforts for years to come." For more on the NSBA Leadership Council, please visit www.nsba.biz

Macon-Russell Community Action Agency, Inc. Receives Award From ABC Trust Fund

Macon-Russell Community Action Agency, Inc. is the recipient of the 2022 Dorothy Crosby Legacy Award which was presented on November 17, 2022 at the 30th Anniversary of the Alabama Business Charitable Trust Fund (ABC Trust) banquet.

This award is in honor of the legacy of Ms. Dorothy Crosby, former president of the ABC Trust Board and recognized the agency for providing exemplary service. For more than 25 years, the ABC Trust, established by Alabama Power, has partnered with Community Action Agencies and other organizations, and the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA) to help pay energy bills, conduct weatherization projects and support basic human needs.



Angel Walker, Executive Director (center) accepted the award on behalf of the agency. The award also came with a \$10,000 grant that will allow the agency to further its efforts to provide exemplary services to the community.

Get **FREE** Help Enrolling in Health Insurance!

Open Enrollment Ends
January 15, 2023!



The Wellness Coalition



Join Us for an Enrollment Assistance Event

The deadline to enroll in health insurance coverage in 2023 is **Sunday, January 15**. Now is the time to get free assistance from our certified application counselors to make sure you are covered next year. We assist individuals and families with online applications for health insurance on the Federally-facilitated Marketplace (aka the Affordable Care Act or Obamacare), Medicaid, or any other insurance you are eligible for.

Here Are 3 Ways to Get Free Assistance:

Join us for a 30-minute virtual info session.

- Thursday, December 15, 22, and 29, and January 5 and 12 at 6pm
- Register at: bit.ly/OEINFO23

Attend an in-person event.

- **Thursday, December 15** | 9am–3:30pm at Selma Dallas County YMCA, 1 YMCA Dr, Selma, AL 36701
- **Wednesday, December 21** | 9am–3:30 at Family Guidance of Lowndes County, 22 Washington Street North, Hayneville, AL 36040

Call (334) 293-6502 to speak with a certified counselor.

- Monday – Thursday | 8am–6pm
- Friday | 8am–3pm

To make the process as smooth as possible, we'll need information on each person applying for coverage. **Required information may include:**

- Social Security numbers
- Immigration documentation
- Most recent income tax information
- Information about your employer
- Check stubs, wages, tips
- Net income if self-employed
- Alimony, retirement, or pension income
- Social Security payments
- Investment income (like dividends or interest)
- Rental income
- Other taxable income
- Current healthcare information
- Similar information as above regarding other individuals in your household

Learn more at thewellnesscoalition.org/insurance

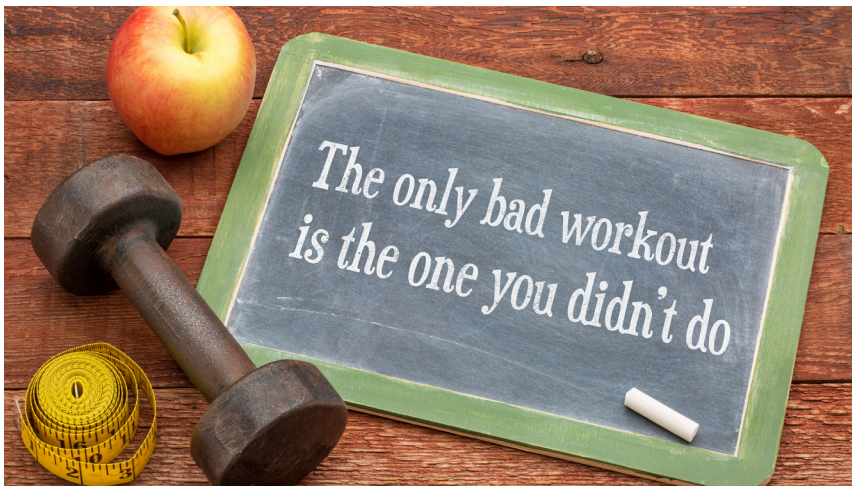
Making New Year Resolutions Correctly

by David Henderson

Happy New Year, Macon County! I wish you the best, most blessed 2023 possible! Well, it's the time of year for New Years resolutions, the time where everybody thinks about what they want to do better in 2023. Many times it's losing weight, stopping smoking, stopping drinking as much, spending less money, saving more, spending more time with loved ones and friends or at least talking to them more, etc. I wish you the best on whatever your goals are, but I'm going to talk about New Years Resolutions centered around your health, and how to make them properly.



1. **BE REALISTIC & PATIENT** - Never set ridiculous goals like losing trying to lose 20 lbs in a week, or 50 lbs in a month. That's both unrealistic and also very unhealthy. Remember that every year has 52 weeks, so just losing 1-2 lbs/week is 52-104 lbs per year! Therefore, all you need is consistency, and by the end of the year, you can be at your target weight goal, and it's simple as that. So give yourself **THE WHOLE ENTIRE YEAR** to accomplish your weight goal, not just January and February.
2. **MAKE A PLAN** - If you are a member of a fitness center or planning to join one, make sure you get a workout plan from a personal trainer there, so you'll have an actual plan of approach. If you fail to plan, you plan to fail. If you aren't a member of a fitness center, find a personal trainer like me who can help you make an at home personal workout plan. You can reach me at (334) 226-0627 or through www.americanhealthfit.com



3. **GRADUAL DIET CHANGES** - Small changes make big differences over time. The best way to adjust your diet is by first cutting out the worst foods. Statistically, more diseases are linked to sugar than anything else, so start by avoiding sugary foods and drinks as much as possible. Then after sugar, carbs are the next food component that is most responsible for obesity. Therefore bread, rice, pasta, chips, cookies, etc are only okay if you're exercising for an hour a day to burn them all off and you don't have much weight to lose. But if that's not the case, then try to avoid them. Lastly, fried foods and fast foods are collectively responsible for killing more people from heart attacks and strokes than anything else, so do yourself a favor and avoid them as much as possible.

4. **BE CONSISTENT** - Don't say that you want results if you're not actually willing to be consistent. Now of course, everyday won't be perfect with your

diet and exercise plan, but by the end of the week, just try to have more good days than bad ones.

5. **WEIGH MORE** (literally) - The only way to ever find out how your body weight fluctuates based on your activity, food and liquid intake, etc. is to actually weigh every day! So, first thing every morning, step on your scale, and that number will explain whether what you did the day before made a difference or not. Over time, you will learn your body, all about your personal metabolism, water retention, results from eating certain ways, exercising, etc.

For more contact David Henderson at American Health & Fitness Services
(334) 226-0627 www.americanhealthfit.com



Vitamin D3 = Strong Immune System

Submitted by Guy Trammell

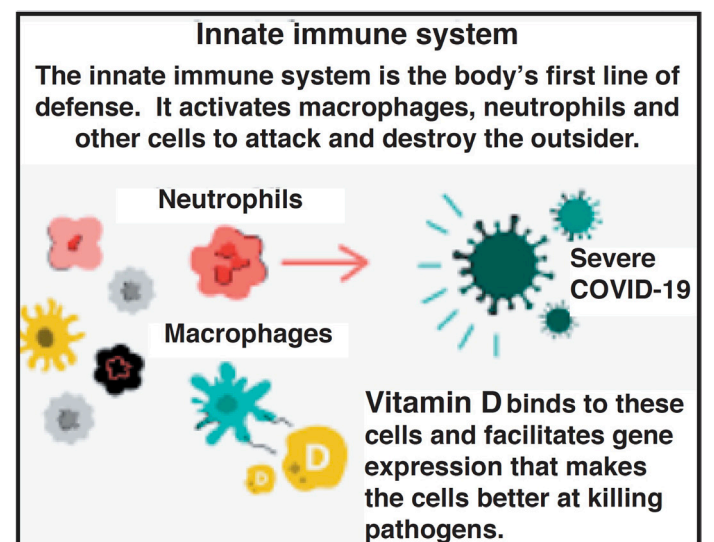
Vitamin D boosts our immune system and helps support systemic health. Vitamin D is not just a nutrient; it's a hormone with receptors in nearly every cell and tissue of the body. Without enough vitamin D, we lose our ability to fight over 53 different diseases including Alzheimer's, cancer, MS, osteoporosis, diabetes, depression, and COVID-19.

Many diseases including influenza show winter seasonality, due to decreased sun exposure in northern climates, and sun is a vitamin D source. Countries with higher rates of vitamin D deficiency, such as Italy, Spain, and Switzerland, are experiencing more COVID-19 cases and COVID-19 deaths. Patients over 40, taking Vitamin D3 daily were 51.5 percent less likely to die from COVID-19. Patients

with low levels of Vitamin D3 have higher hospitalization rates and require more intensive oxygen therapy and invasive mechanical ventilation. They are 6 times more likely to have a severe course of disease and 15 times more likely to die.

90% of those who die from COVID-19 have low Vitamin D levels.

Many of those who die from coronavirus have shortness of breath, a deep cough, difficulties breathing, and chest tightness because of over active inflammation, or mucus, in the lungs and trachea. Vitamin D helps regulate inflammation and stops it from getting out of control. Vitamin D's widespread impact on different systems in the body offers a multi-pronged approach for maintaining health. Many scientific studies demonstrate that Vitamin D has been effective in the prevention and treatment of COVID-19. Vitamin D3, taken daily with a meal, is both safe and inexpensive.



National Association of Black Journalists Grant Award

In late November, 2022 our website, www.maconcares.org was awarded a \$5,000.00 grant from the National Association of Black Journalists. The topic of focus for our grant submission was the COVID-19 pandemic and its intersections within the rural Macon County, Alabama K-12 education system. Our goal was to reveal the challenges, effects, and mitigation efforts of the Macon County Schools and surrounding community as it relates to the pandemic. The grant required our website to produce 4 video pieces and 3 written articles to share our findings with the community.

The Macon County Community Partners Task Force, Communications Committee worked with Dr. Chastity Bradford of Tuskegee University to write the grant proposal. One stipulation of our grant was to include college students who would gain valuable experience and increase community engagement for the university. Dr. Bradford also help the committee to select 3 Tuskegee University students who worked tirelessly to interview school leaders, students, and community advocates. The students were compensated from the grant for their hard work.

Of course, none of this would've been possible without the generous support of Dr. Melissa Williams, Superintendent of Macon County Schools. Dr. Williams helped to connect our grant team with school system staff who shared the stories of resilience that helped safeguard the lives of students in the midst of the pandemic. The stories covered key issues such as food insecurity, broadband access, student management, and safety protocols. Through the video interviews we were able to showcase the relationship between the schools and community as they faced unprecedented challenges together.

The end results were beyond expectation! Our Tuskegee University students produced 6 video interviews along with the required articles. We are including the articles in this edition of our newspaper. We invite you to visit our website www.maconcares.org to watch the NABJ videos. When you watch the videos, please consider leaving a comment and celebrating our Macon County Schools staff and Tuskegee University students.



by Caris Jones

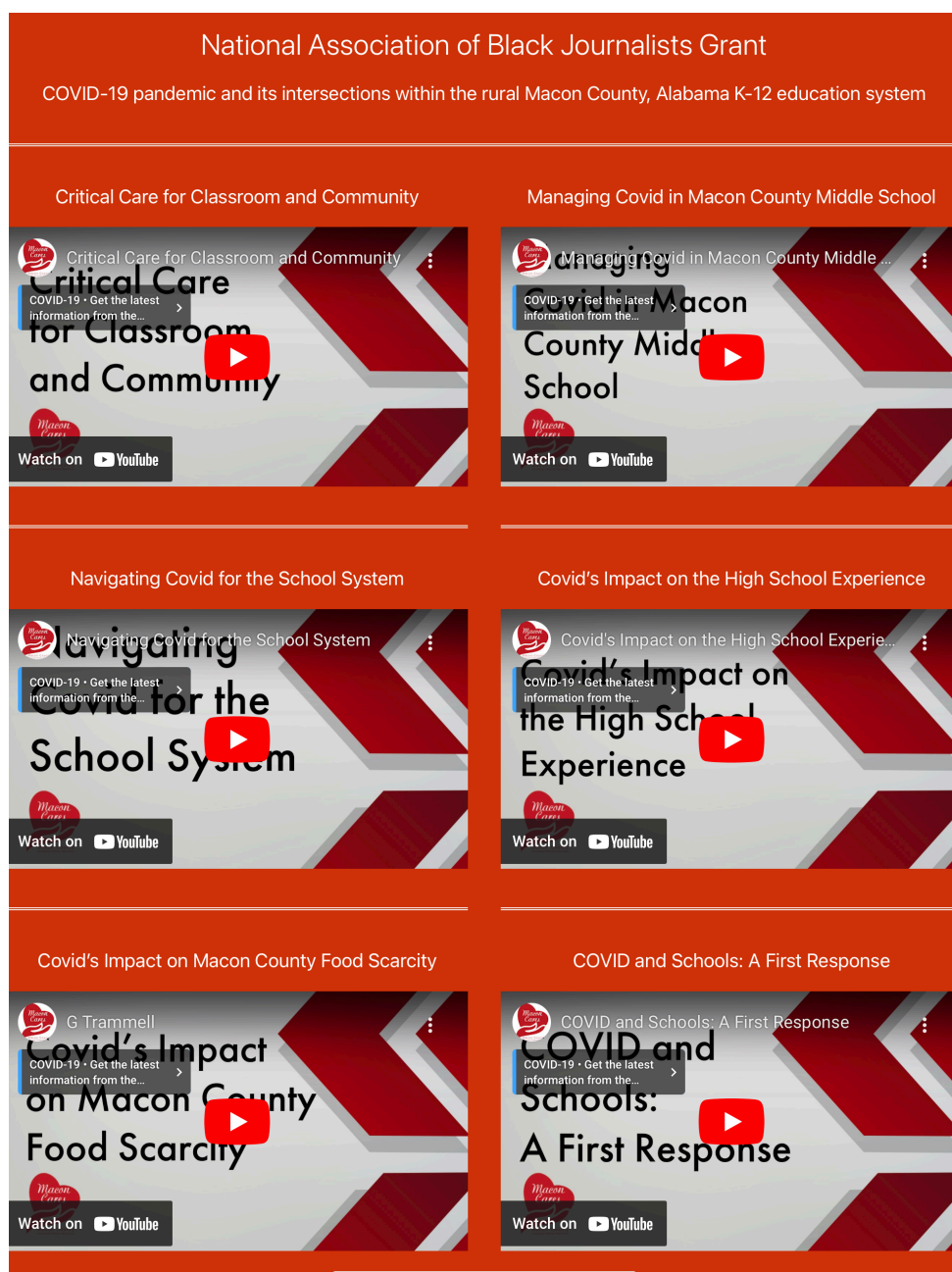
In Macon County, there have been several impacts in the community in relation to COVID-19. Dr. Jacqueline Brooks, a former school superintendent and part-time employee for School Superintendents of Alabama, shares the struggles and overall process of the Macon County school system in reaction to Covid-19. In response to being asked what the school system's initial response to Covid was, Dr. Brooke states, "It was something I had never seen before. We had no plans on how to deal with such an impactful, communicable disease. My initial thoughts were to put my head together with the county sheriff, Sheriff Bronson." She then goes on to say, "Pre-planning was key, but we didn't know how and what to plan for really, because there was no published guidance." Macon County's school systems were able to implement their masked mandates and sanitizing protocols with the help of their partnership with the Local Roses and the manager at Dollar General. She claims, "Before we kind of hit that supply chain shortage of PPE material we already had some on hand, so I think that was one of the best planning moves we made." However, there were more issues stemming from remote learning that took place at the height of the pandemic.

When asked about some of the challenges the school system faced with remote learning, Dr. Brooks responded, "We were fortunate because, in 2015 and in 2019, we were recipients of the Apple Connect Ed grant, which had been a white house initiative under President Obama for connectivity and devices in school systems. So, we had enough iPads for all of our students, and we already had a virtual platform called ACELLUS, so that part was pretty great." An issue Dr. Brooks said they did have was "connectivity throughout the county," including connections to wi-fi and connections to the internet. There were also problems getting the county's school buses all wired. However, with grants and a partnership with Inside, the county was able to install tracking software in the buses and wire them very quickly with signals.

Though this issue of connectivity has been lessened, she claims that "She doesn't think we really made great improvements even since the beginning of the pandemic in our state and our community with connectivity," with everyone still not having access to the internet. When asked about students' learning capabilities during remote learning versus in person, she claims students had different levels of concentrations. "If the parents are at work, you have kids supervising kids, and some kids are serious about their work even during normal school and some aren't. So, some are goofing off, some were playing, some wouldn't log on. So, you had a myriad of things going on and the key thing is you had no home supervision in a lot of households... That was not ideal for anyone...It was better than not having any learning."

Concerning Macon County's ability to keep up with changes in the CDC and State of Alabama polices, the county certainly has a unique perspective. When directly asked, "How did the school system keep up with changes in the CDC and the State of Alabama policies?" Dr. Brooks responded, "We are so fortunate. We had a doctor in our community to volunteer to be our doctor consult and that is Dr. Dina Maxwell Stafford. She did webinars with our entire staff, she did webinars with our parents, our lead nurse; to go to Dr. Maxwell with any questions we may have. She was our advisor council through this whole process.

We also had a direct link to Dr. Scott Harris in the Alabama Department of Public Health. We had probably weekly, initially, then maybe bi-weekly webinars with him and our state department. So we had direct links with the CDC at all times." When asked her last question,



how has the school's response changed now versus when it was at the height of Covid, Dr. Brooks stated, "We don't identify close contact... We still have a masking mandate in our schools. The community is better regarding those things... We really enhanced our virtual platform. Every teacher was set up with a G- suite Google account... When a kid is out now, they just log on to Google classroom, get their work, and keep it moving."



by Maya Ginyard

Introduction: This interview took place between myself and Ms. Emma Wilson James, Director of School Nutrition for Macon County Public School System. We discussed the details of how her department navigated and adjusted to the challenges that came with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Maya Ginyard: "What was the response from your staff when you heard about COVID-19?"

Ms. James: "Well the staff was concerned about feeding the children. They were concerned about how we were going to feed the children and of course their health as well and their protection and the students' protection. We were being told that it was effecting the kids so their thing was safety for themselves, the children, and how they were going to go about preparing the meals and taking care of the kids."

Maya Ginyard: "How many students require nutrition assistance from Macon County schools?"

Ms. James: "Our total enrollment at the time... because we are a CEP school, community eligibility program which is a program we qualify for through the state department and USDA if we have 60% or more of her students directly certified that they're receiving assistance through the state. So we have applied for that and we have been on that program for several years and all of our kids are able to eat through that program. So at the time our enrollment was like 1900 kids. We had a little over 1900 kids in 2019 at the end of that school."

Maya Ginyard: "When the school system went remote and started virtual learning, what challenges did your department face in feeding students? And were you guys able to navigate these challenges?"

Ms. James: "We shut down the buildings in March of 2020 and our main thing then was how were we going to get the food to the kids. What were we going to do about feeding the children and continuing to feed the children? So we met with the superintendent and meetings back and forth with the staff and that was the main challenge, getting the food to the children because the buildings were going to be shut down. So we came up with the bus delivery and we also moved all the staff to one central kitchen, and we were going to prepare meals out of there. So we started with the bus and got with our transportation department to start the bus deliveries and the bus drivers came up with the number of students that were in their routes and we took care of organizing the bus routes. So pulled together and all of my workers ended up in one cafeteria, which is Booker T. Washington High School, which is our largest cafeteria.

We prepared the bagged meals there and sent them out on the buses to the children. But we had some students that were car riders and didn't ride the bus during the regular school so of course they weren't on the schedule. We had to make sure that we accommodate them so we did pick up from the location that we prepared the food, they were able to come to the back and we allowed them to pick up

the food from there. So that was one of our main challenges, getting the food out. Of course our participation dropped because we still didn't get to all the children because we had children whose parents were working and were told not to go in and out for their safety. So we still missed some children but we were able to get this program called Meals to you from Baynard University, out of Texas. We worked with them in partner shape with USDA so they delivered the boxed meals every two weeks to the students' homes and we had the food bank. They had different locations where the parents could drive through and pick up boxed meals to carry them through the weekend or holidays when we were closed.

Also, we ran into supply chain challenges where we were running into a lot of substitutions, shortages, vendor issues where they were no longer supplying the things we were getting. We then of course had to change our menu to be able to accommodate individually packed items because we were sending things out on the bus so we had to make sure they weren't spilling or that kind of thing."

Maya Ginyard: "That definitely makes sense because a lot of people and industries were affected by supply chain issues and not getting the things that they needed during the pandemic...so did you get any community assistance with feeding the students? Like Parents? Or any other community service organizations?"

Ms. James: "Well like I said the food bank was local, they worked with us in making sure that like during the christmas break they set up at certain schools and made sure that the kids had extra food items during that time. That mostly was the main thing going on as far as supplemental food for the students." **

Maya Ginyard: "Okay Were there any policies on the state and federal level that limited your ability to acquire food or distribute food to the students"

Ms. James: "No, on the state level we received many waivers. They cooperated with us to make sure that we fed our children. They relieved us of the different paperwork. We were able to change our food service agreement where some schools were doing free and reduced applications but that didn't matter any more. Everybody went to a new program where all children 1-18 ate for no charge. They limited documentation of who was eating, we didn't have to keep up with the names, just the count. With delivery meals we could feed children ages 1-18 therefore you know kids ages 1-4 were not in school but it didn't matter if they were in that household, they were able to get a meal. So the state worked with us very well with us with that and on the waivers on several different occasions so we were able to accommodate our students."



Maya Ginyard: "That's great because otherwise kids that are in preschool or who haven't started school yet would slip through the cracks."

Ms. James: "Yes but if they lived in that household that had students who were in our school system then their siblings were able to get a meal."

Maya Ginyard: "Once students returned, what challenges did you face in providing meals for students in person?"

Ms. James: "Once they started back to school...we opened our doors back in April of 2021, they had an option they could go to school or do virtual. We stopped the buses but still allowed parents to come and pick up.

Continued on page 8.

Continued from page 7.

We allowed students to come back to school but we wouldn't allow them to come through the lines in the cafeterias because we do self service so that was something we had to put a halt on because of covid. They had to keep six feet apart and we didn't want them touching the same spoon handles to serve themselves. It did put a little bit more demand on the workers because they had to be there to serve but when we first allowed the students to come back, we still did bags. Some schools allowed the students to come in the cafeteria but only a certain amount at a time. We were still experiencing substitutions and shortages but we were always able to make up a meal with all the items that were required. We were able to make sure they got what they needed for breakfast and lunch."

Maya Ginyard: "What did the meals consist of when you all were feeding the children via buses? Was it like sandwiches? Hot food?"

Ms. James: "We still made sure that they got all of the components that were required. So we did do a lot of sandwiches but it wasn't always cold cut sandwiches, we did hamburgers, chicken patties, pizza, and we did use 4 oz cups to do salad, corn...we used foil wrap to do hotdogs, french fries... We did a lot of fresh fruit: oranges, apples, pears, plums, peaches, cup fruits. So we made sure that they got all of the required components."

*** In reference to the question concerning community support received from local organizations, Ms. James later wanted to add that her department received assistance from the Helpings Hands Food ministry and Macon MEANS organization.*



Many former and current students will forever remember March 13, 2020. The arrival of the Covid 19 pandemic was unexpected and undeniably changed the way in which education functions today. However, the full image of how Covid 19 impacted many aspects of the education system is not always held in high regard. Mr. Jackson, Assistant Principal of Tuskegee Institute Middle School, tells the way in which this school rose to the occasion and grappled with the unforeseeable pandemic.

Mr. Jackson goes into great detail of how the pandemic impacted Tuskegee Institute Middle School. He maintains that absences were the greatest impact as students, teachers, and staff were unable to attend if they contacted the virus. Additionally, many parents chose the virtual schooling option for their children as they saw it to be the safer choice. As a result, a normal school day completely changed. Instead of being a harmonious and stable place for students to learn, teachers had to quickly adjust to the hybrid school setting. During the height of the pandemic, traditional learning was greatly disrupted. Teachers quickly had to adjust and learn new methods of reaching the students. Specifically, Tuskegee Institute Middle transitioned to Google Classroom and different virtual meeting services to ensure that learning could continue at home. In addition, Mr. Jackson claims that the students began to feel uncomfortable due to the unfamiliarity of being at school during a pandemic. As Mr. Jackson puts it, "there is nothing like in person school learning." Thus, the early days of the Covid-19 pandemic proved to be a difficult adjustment to both the students as well as staff and faculty.

The greatest challenge that the school faced, according to Mr. Jackson, was the disruption to in person learning. However, he claims that "technology blessed [them]" and allowed flexibility during the pandemic. Due to having the necessary funding, Tuskegee Institute

Middle had the means to give extra help to the students and bridge the learning gap. Many people, however, may not know the specifics of how these resources helped the students. Mr. Jackson spoke about the newly integrated "MiFi" systems, which are transportable wireless connection devices. These devices were then put onto buses that traveled around the Tuskegee area to help students connect to the internet and continue their education. As Tuskegee is a rural city, having a strong and stable internet connection is vital for K-12 students. It is evident, then, that Tuskegee Institute Middle would not allow the students to suffer from both the pandemic's educational shift and lack of adequate resources.

As the world moves to live with the pandemic, schools are attempting to resume in-person learning. The transition has not been difficult, Mr. Jackson says. The teachers were "elated" to be back in the classroom and to interact with the students face to face. The students also appear to be happier back at school. Many of them missed their friends, having access to warm meals in the cafeteria, and learning without internet connection issues. The school continues to encourage wearing masks, remaining updated on their vaccines, and ensuring that hand sanitizer is readily available. Mr. Jackson's testament to the manner in which Tuskegee Institute Middle handled challenges thrown by the pandemic display how a strong community is essential to prosperity.



One of the most essential yet least discussed COVID-19 mitigation efforts is improving air quality. In Macon County, Alabama the existence of older buildings with dated heating and air conditioning presented significant resource challenges related to this issue. Fortunately, Mr. Guy Trammell and Macon County Schools students stepped up to teach the community how to make an inexpensive air purification unit called a Corsi-Rosenthal Box.

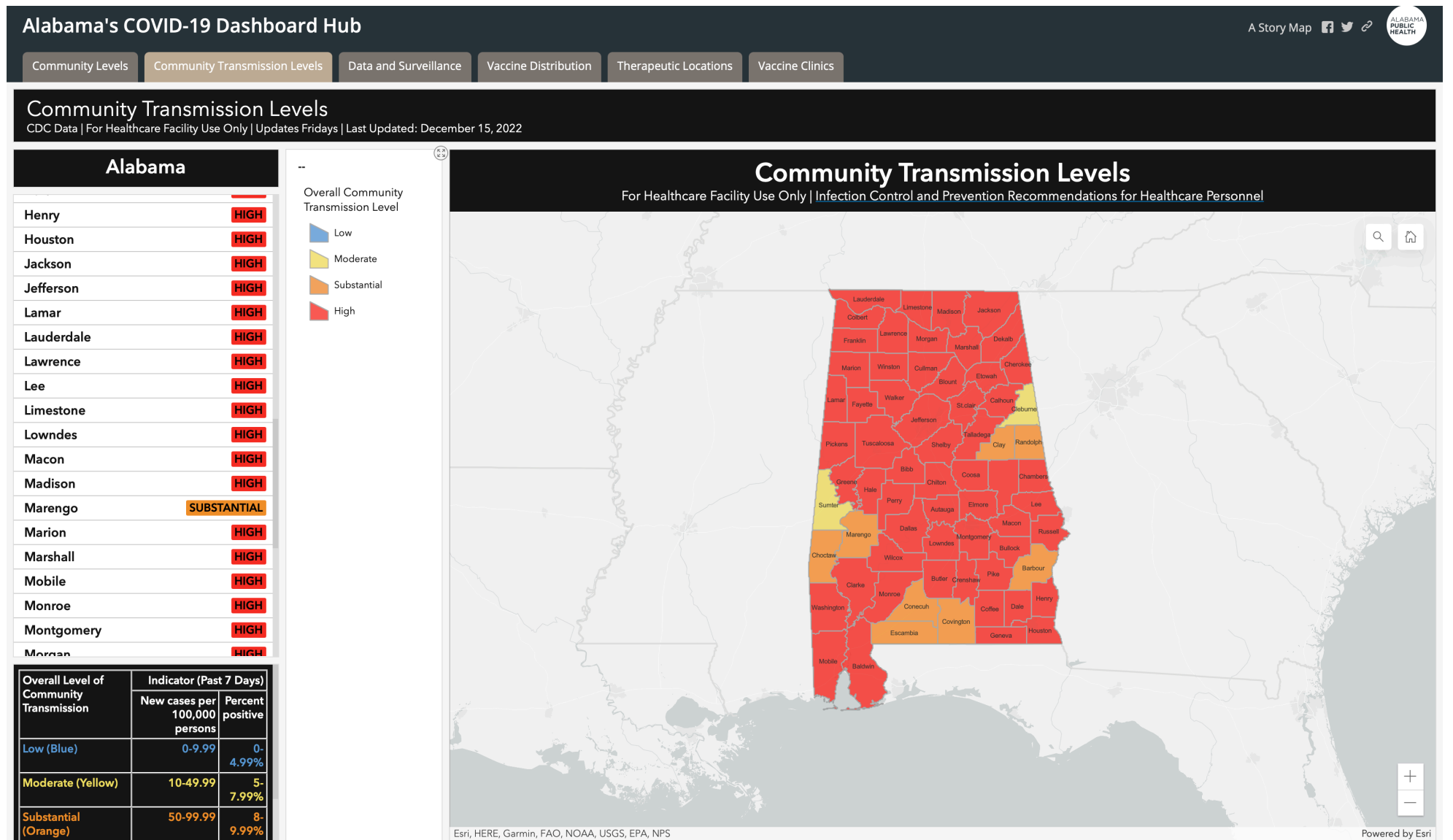
The Corsi-Rosenthal Box is constructed using a box fan, cardboard, duck tape, and 4 MERV-13 air filters. According to the demonstration video produced by Macon County Students through the Tuskegee Youth Safe Haven, (<https://youtu.be/vXtN32xW8hM>) the box works to remove the flu virus and SARS-2 virus from indoor spaces at 700 cubic feet per unit. The video description says box can be constructed in about 25 minutes.



Over the course of the pandemic, the students provided in-person demonstrations on how to construct the Corsi-Rosenthal Box at local businesses, municipalities, and churches. In some cases, the local entities contributed the resources for the purifier materials and the units were left in place to purify their facilities. In other cases, organizations placed orders for a number of the boxes to be produced by the students as part of service projects.

Through their service, the students of Macon County have worked to safeguard the health of their neighbors and friends. They have found a way to inspire, inform, and help the community through Corsi-Rosenthal Boxes.

COVID-19 Update



In December 2022, Macon County still reported a high transmission level for COVID-19 cases. The State of Alabama also reported an increase in the number of COVID hospitalizations. Medical professionals believe we will see an increase in COVID cases through the holidays and just beyond the New Year as a result of holiday gatherings.

Consider vaccination as an option to safeguard your family against COVID-19. With the prevalence of vaccines, the State of Alabama has seen a significant reduction in COVID related deaths in spite of a higher number of COVID cases. For complete vaccination details visit the Alabama Department of Public Health's "Alabama Unites Against COVID" website: <https://www.alabamaunites.com>.



Reprinted from the ADPH website: <https://www.alabamapublichealth.gov/std/home-testing.html>

The Alabama Department of Public Health Division of Sexually Transmitted Disease Prevention and Control has collaborated with Binx Health to implement home delivery STD/HIV specimen collection and laboratory test kits by mail. The purpose of the initiative is to promote STD/HIV testing among individuals at home in an effort to strengthen the STD/HIV prevention and control program in Alabama. The second phase of the project focuses on offering STD/HIV home specimen collection and laboratory test kits for all Alabama residents including college/university students, and to selected individuals who are on PrEP therapy. Alabama residents will be able to request one STD/HIV home specimen collection and laboratory test kit per quarter.

STD/HIV Home Testing

STD/HIV home specimen collection and laboratory testing kits are now available by mail for all Alabama residents, and to selected individuals who are on PrEP therapy. Persons may request one test every three months.

The following home test combinations are available:

- Chlamydia/Gonorrhea (single-site), Syphilis, and HIV
- Chlamydia/Gonorrhea (triple-site), Syphilis, and HIV
- Chlamydia/Gonorrhea (triple-site), Syphilis, HIV, and Creatinine*

*The third home-test kit combination will be for designated individuals enrolled in PrEP.

Ordering the Kit

- Go to <https://adph.mybinxhealth.com> to create an account.
- Complete the risk assessment using the website.
- Order a home test kit by choosing from the test boxes or building your own box.
- Binx Health providers will review and approve the order for each eligible client.
- Binx Health will mail a discrete home test kit to the client.

After You Receive Your Kit Log in to your account at <https://adph.mybinxhealth.com> and activate your home test kit. Following the instructions, collect specimens and mail samples in pre-paid package. Note: Sexual health counselors with Binx Health are available for support if you have questions about specimen collection. For more details visit the Alabama Department of Public Health website.



Macon County Ministers' Council Officers Installation Service

Sunday, January 8, 2023
2:00pm CDT

Bethel Missionary Baptist Church
802 Bethel Street
Tuskegee, Alabama 36083

www.maconcouncil.org

Pastor Katrina Love, the youth pastor at Butler Chapel AME Zion Church, will be working with various organizations throughout Macon County to help our students of all ages to develop skills to equip the whole body. We desire to promote the visions of Mr. Lewis Adams, Dr. Booker T. Washington, and Dr. George Washington Carver. Mr. Adams believed that all people should have access to education. Dr. Washington believed that working with the Hands, Heart and Head were key for a striving community. Dr. Carver was the "Green Thumb" and original "Peanut Man" who proved that God gives wisdom and insight to improve our daily lives.

If you are interested in cooking, sewing, agriculture, arts, fishing, hiking, exploring nature, farm life, business development and protecting and preserving our history, please contact Pastor Katrina Love. We are also looking for volunteers to offer your expertise in these areas or others skills to empower our young people to take charge and lead. Classes will meet in person and via Zoom, beginning January 2023. Pastor Katrina Love can be reached at 334-744-2696 or via email at kloveunlimited3@gmail.com.

Butler Chapel AME Zion Church Weekly Virtual Prayer Meetings Every Friday night at 6:00pm
Zoom link 499 302 3209, access code 336152
Rev. James Taylor, Pastor, Rev. Katrina Love, Prayer Leader

Historic News



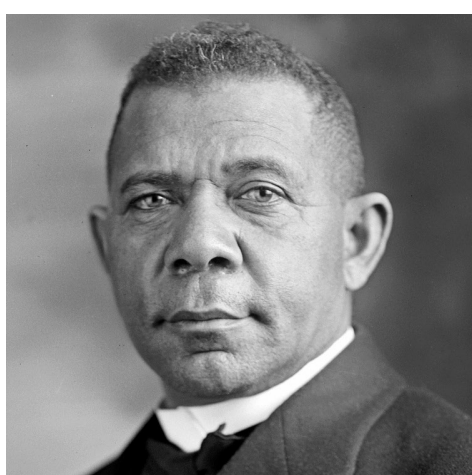
1898 Home Economics is created by Margaret Murray Washington. The class was taught by her student Anne Davis, in the Macon County, AL community of Hannon, south of Tuskegee.

In 1923 Sadie P. Delany created Bibliotherapy at the Tuskegee Veterans Administration Hospital. Patients were prescribed to read specific books as therapy to promote mental health.



In 1941 Bess Bolden Walcott set-up the Tuskegee Chapter of the Red Cross and became the first Black female Red Cross Field Director.

Elise Mildred Smith was the first Black to serve in the state office of the Alabama Association of University Women. She served for over 20 years, as Director of Tuskegee University's Special Programs, including Upward Bound.



Macon Means

Macon County Food Distributors Round Table



January 2023

Free Food

Distribution Schedule



S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
			10:30 Helping Hand Ministry District 4 Ctr 1200 CR 27 Tuskegee, AL Rev. A. Williams	10 Bowen UMC 2107 W Mtg Rd Senior's Food		
		8	9	10	11	12
			10:30 Helping Hand Ministry Tabernacle MBC 1431 Co Rd 9 Tuskegee, AL Rev. A. Williams			
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
		9 Macon Co Ministers Council Food Pantry 3103 Daly St Last A - G	9:30 AKN 4771 Hwy 199 Chisholm Ctr 3031 CR 69 Little Texas Rev. A. Williams	10 Bowen UMC 2107 W Mtg Rd Senior's Food	Children's Food Distr. Brownville, Notasulga, Shorter, Tuskegee, Warrior Stand/Cotton V	
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
	12 Macon Co Food Distributors Roundtable Zoom Meeting		10:30 Helping Hand Ministry Liberty City Methodist 5607 Tallapoosa St Notasulga, AL Rev. A. Williams			
29	30	31				



The Macon Food Hotline: (334) 724-2550

MACON COUNTY PUBLIC SERVICE DIRECTORY

Macon County Commission: 334-724-2606
 Louis Maxwell, Chairman, Miles Robinson, District 1,
 Edward "Coach" Huffman, District 2, Ernest Magruder,
 District 3, Jan Fountain, District 4

Macon County Sheriff's Office
 Jail Address: 246 County Road 10, Tuskegee, AL 36083
 Phone: 334-727-2500, Andre' Brunson, Sheriff

Emergency Management Agency
 334-724-2626, Frank Lee, Director

Revenue Commissioner
 334-724-2603, Iverson Gandy, III

Probate Judge
 334-724-2552, Judge James Cooper, II

Macon County Health Care Authority
 334-727-5900, Bernice L. Frazier, Chair

Ray D. Martin, Presiding Circuit Judge
 County Courthouse, Room 204 125 North Broadnax
 Dadeville, AL 36853 (256) 357-2066

Steven R. Perryman, Circuit Judge
 County Courthouse #2 Lafayette Street Lafayette, AL
 36862 (334) 864-4328

William Isaac Whorton, Circuit Judge
 County Courthouse #2 Lafayette Street Lafayette, AL
 35010 (334) 755-6080

Tuskegee District Court
 334-727-6110
 Judge Deborah H. Biggers, District Judge

Macon County Clerk of Courts
 334-724-2614, David R. Love, Jr.

Macon County Schools
 334-727-1600
 Dr. Melissa Williams, Superintendent

City of Tuskegee
 334-720-2514, Mayor Lawrence "Tony" Haygood, Chris
 Lee, Mayor Pro Tem, Norma McGowan Jackson, District 1,
 Johnny Ford, District 2, Orlando Whitehead, District 3

Tuskegee Municipal Court
 334-720-0581, Judge George Bulls, III
 Prosecutor, Katy Smith Campbell

Town of Shorter
 334-727-9109, Mayor Willie Mae Powell

Town of Notasulga
 334-257-1454, Mayor Tommy Miller

Town of Franklin
 334-727-2111, Mayor Henry Peavy

Macon County Health Department
 334-727-1800

Utility Board of Tuskegee
 334-720-0700, Gerald Long, General Manager

Tuskegee Medical and Surgical Center
 334-727-5900
 301 Wright Street, Tuskegee, AL



MACON - RUSSELL
 Community Action Agency

PROVIDES ASSISTANCE WITH:

- Rental Assistance
- Utility Assistance: Lights, Gas, and Water
- Emergency Assistance
- Transportation Assistance
- Prescription Assistance

Macon-Russell Community Action Agency
 501 S. School Street, Suite B
 Tuskegee, Alabama 36083
 Phone: 334-727-6100

www.mrcaa.org

Get Food

Get Help

Get Tested

Get Facts

Get Supplies

Get News

**GET COVID-19 INFORMATION AT
 WWW.MACONCARES.ORG**

MACON CARES

