

Life!

THURSDAY, JULY 1, 2021 SECTION B



CHARLOTTE BLACK TENNIS CLUB

Kenyata Thomas is founder of Charlotte Black Tennis Club.

Tennis, anyone? In this club, it's for everyone

By Ashley Mahoney
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Kenyata Thomas uses tennis to foster connection. She created the Charlotte Black Tennis Club five weeks ago on Meetup to provide a space for Black professionals to come together. They meet every Tuesday and Saturday at Freedom Park for up to two hours. Thomas was shocked and thrilled to the point of tears when 27 people came out to the first meetup.

On The Net
www.meetup.com/charlotte-black-tennis-club

The group has grown to over 95 members and attendees must now reserve a spot, as sessions are capped at 16 people for everyone to have enough court time.

"The first day I remember driving home and I just started crying because I just wanted a few friends to play tennis, and the first day about 27 people showed up, and it was just awesome because I did not expect that," Thomas said. "The relationships everyone is building and learning tennis have just been phenomenal."

Thomas, a project engineer at Consolidated Metco and two-year Charlotte resident, picked up the game during the pandemic.

"When people visit, I'll play with them, but I want to meet people like me to play tennis with and build a circle here of Black professionals who like to play tennis," she said.

Charlotte Black Tennis Club includes beginners and more experienced players, and Thomas wanted the group to feel approachable and engaging. She drew inspiration from the Algonquin Tennis Club, which was established in 1922 in Durham and was a social gathering for Black professionals.

"The RSVPs fill up very fast just because we have a good time and it's all natural," Thomas said. "It is about having fun, staying fit being healthy and making it more about building those relationships through the game of tennis."

Thomas said people often ask how long she has been playing tennis, since she is the group founder. She shares that like some of them, she is new to the sport. Althea Gibson, Arthur Ashe, Serena and Venus Williams propelled the game forward for Black people and more recently Naomi Osaka, Cori "Coco" Gauff and Sloane Stephens continue to excel at the

Please see TENNIS | 2B



ASHLEY MAHONEY | THE CHARLOTTE POST

Jayla's Heirlooms founder Nicole Hawthorne earned a \$10,000 grant from NC IDEA to increase production scale of the branded doll company.

Handmade dolls build upon heirloom legacy

By Ashley Mahoney
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Jayla's Heirlooms is more than dolls for children.

Nicole Hawthorne launched the heirloom doll business along with her four-year-old daughter Jayla to provide high-quality dolls color. While Hawthorne was pregnant in 2016, she contemplated what she wanted Jayla to see and what she could add to her world.

"There is a lot that I try to practice and preach," Hawthorne said. "Minimalism is one of them and having handmade and hand-crafted things that resemble us in real life. I started searching, and I could not find a brown [doll] that I felt really truly captured the essence of what I thought my beautiful baby would want to play with."

Hawthorne began by curating dolls with designers to assemble a small collection for Jayla. When people began inquiring where she found the dolls, Hawthorne began researching women-owned companies that stress sustainability. They co-branded dolls with other artisans across the globe, including Paris, Russia, South Africa, Ukraine, Belgium and Belarus. Jayla's Heirlooms launched in November and has sold over 40 dolls thus far.

In May Jayla's Heirlooms received a \$10,000 grant from Durham-based NC IDEA to fund increased scale and determine the prototype of a branded doll to be launched on Black Friday as an Amazon exclusive.

Jayla's Heirlooms is among the businesses selected for Amazon's Black Business Accelerator, which will provide access to mentorship, financial assistance, marketing and promotional support. Hawthorne will work with a strategist provided by Amazon over the next year.

As an Afro-Latina woman, Hawthorne wanted to support women in Latin countries as well. She is working with a woman-owned workshop in Peru on the Amazon exclusive.

"Peru has a long history of making dolls, which people don't know," Hawthorne said.

Jayla is heavily involved in the decision-making process, Hawthorne says, as the quality assurance expert who tests dolls.

"She says, 'Mommy, this one is the best,'" Hawthorne said. "We are trying to start with what children would like to see and play with, but also what their parents desire them to have as well, because we know some of the parents are going to be the buyer

initially and the child will be the users."

While the Amazon exclusive doll will not be available until later this year, Jayla's Heirlooms is taking presales for other dolls on their website. A custom doll and can take up to eight weeks to arrive. Hawthorne hopes to cut down on that time through the Amazon collaboration.

Overall, Hawthorne's vision is to create a legacy with her daughter. She also makes sure Jayla knows it is OK to ask for help and take part in building a supportive community through the family business, where Hawthorne's husband, Jiles, a graphic designer, created the company logo.

"That is why that heirloom piece is so important," said Hawthorne, who is a project manager for Have Her Back, a Chicago-based startup. "I have a loving husband who supports me, and he knows when it is time to take the lead and Mommy needs some quiet time. I ask for help. I have been making sure I am proactive about I can only handle so much and I am only great at so many things."

On The Net
www.jaylasheirlooms.com

«RIDES

Buick Envision a good entry point in the small SUV market

By Winfred Cross
SPECIAL TO THE POST

Finding the perfect small SUV can be a daunting task considering how many there are to choose.

Buick didn't make things any easier last year by redesigning its entry level Envision. It's now more stylish, roomier and fairly affordable.

The Envision got new clothes last year so there are no changes this year. The vehicle has a more aggressive, wider stance which makes it a bit more appealing. Every little bit helps. The vehicle has to

compete with the likes of Mercedes, Acura and Volvo for small, luxury SUVs.

The Buick falls short in the luxury department if you are expecting the same as those aforementioned brands. The materials are so-so and the fit and finish is not quite that high. Still, on an entry level note, things aren't bad. I like the interior design. My test car had black interior to match the exterior. Go for beige and you get a two-toned dash that looks a bit richer. Still, in black the interior did have an upscale look. The dash has a configu-

rable gauge cluster that gives a host of info at the click of a button. A head-up display offers info on the windshield. To the right is a 10.2-inch HD display with navigation, Apple CarPlay and Google Auto. Alexa is available as well as controls for climate and infotainment.

The seats are comfortable as well as heated. You get power adjustable features as well as memory. The rear seats can be folded for more than 57 cubic feet of storage. With the seats up you get 25 cubic feet.

Safety equipment is plentiful. Lane keeping assist, automatic emergency braking, forward collision alert, rear cross traffic alert and blind side monitoring are all standard.

The Envision is powered by a 2.0-liter four-cylinder turbo mated to a nine-speed automatic transmission. There is no shift lever. Gears are selected by levers and push buttons.

The engine makes 230 horsepower which can get the Envision to 60 miles per hour in 7.7 seconds. The engine spins up quickly so passing and lane



BUICK

The 2021 Buick Envision is a good starting point in the small SUV category.

changes are easy and wheel drive keeps the vehicle drama free. planted and on Handling is competent. Ll

Please see BUICK | 2B

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Tennis, anyone? In this club, it's for everyone

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highest levels.

"Tennis was one thing I just never really did, and you never see a lot of people of color playing tennis," Thomas said. "You have now started to see the Naomis. We had Serena, back in the day, the Arthur Ashe, but you don't really see as many [Black] people."

Thomas hopes to inspire kids to play - not to be the next Williams or Osaka, but to enjoy the game.

"Maybe this is something people need to get into or just thinking about what can come of kids at the park, especially kids of color, seeing groups of people of color playing tennis and get inspired by that," she said. "That was my original intent - just doing something I never did, before something out of the norm. I'm not going say it came easy, because I'm still a beginner, but it just felt good to play."

Many of the club members wanted lessons to help improve their skills, so

Thomas reached out to Johnson C. Smith tennis coach Ramona Stratton about hosting a workshop. It will take place on July 24 from 9 a.m. until 1 p.m. on the JCSU campus. The cost of the event is to be determined, with proceeds benefitting the university. An attendance cap has not been set.

"[Stratton] was super excited about it, which just melted my heart," Thomas said. "Being able to construct and talk through what would benefit every type of player during the workshop was very inspirational. Everyone is super excited about it. People already started RSVPing for that event. I'm super excited. We have the opportunity to contribute to the endowment fund for the student athletes at Johnson C. Smith, and the dynamic of the group, you have a lot of players in our group who went to historically black colleges and universities. To be able to [contribute to an HBCU] is even more motivating."



Last month's Juneteenth celebration in the Smallwood neighborhood was the first in a series of community events planned by entrepreneurs Tylan Weatherspoon and Michael Calloway.

Juneteenth kicks off series of community events

By Ken Koontz
SPECIAL TO THE POST

The organizers of a west-side Juneteenth celebration never envisioned it as a one-and-done event.

Tylan Weatherspoon, owner of In Your Face Advertising and event partner Michael Calloway, owner of Create Amazing Events, said their objective was to join forces for a series of collaborative events that engender community unity in and around the Smallwood neighborhood. Their inaugural flagship event was last month's Juneteenth celebration at the athletic field of Fran's Kids Boys and Girls Center, the former Boys and Girls Club site on West Trade Street. There were scores of Juneteenth events across Mecklenburg where celebrations will stand idle until next year. But, Weatherspoon and Calloway have plans for at least 11

more events over the summer.

Witherspoon notes that the primary focus of the Smallwood Juneteenth celebration was family, especially lauding Black fathers. Witherspoon was elated over the presence of so many young families and the prominence of fathers among them.

"Their dominant presence today goes a long way to dispel many of the prevailing myths of absentee, uninvolved black fathers," he said.

While the prominence of Black father imagery dominated the Juneteenth landscape, it also evoked a sense of pride among eventgoers. And beyond that image was the extension of diversity which has become more prevalent in Smallwood, where gentrification is rapidly spreading. Witherspoon also recognized the festive tone was

heightened by families and neighbors had been, like everywhere else across the city, on significant lockdown due to the pandemic.

The diverse and targeted crowd attending had a "safe, family-oriented fun at the neighborhood spot where they can come and have enjoyable time with each other," Witherspoon said. He estimates that more than 3,500 people strolled through and enjoyed the variety of vendor booths and food samples.

The "2021 Summer Festival Series" will be held the last three Saturdays in July at the same spot with vendors, music, spoken word, dance performances, kids' games, face painting, bounce houses and other amusements. For questions, call (980) 800-5110 or online at www.iyf-ads.com.

There's kindness in every bag

By Ashley Mahoney
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Mecklenburg County youth are providing essentials for neighbors in need.

Fourteen-year-old ZaNia Stinson's nonprofit Z Feeds Go-Go Bags won Riley's Way Foundation's Call for Kindness competition. The annual competition, which also includes a \$3,000 grant, recognizes teen-led projects inspiring kindness and fostering community strength.

Stinson was a 9-year-old when she founded Z Feeds Go-Go Bags to address food insecurity in the area. She has provided over 800 zip-top bags filled with nonperishable food, drinks, toiletries and reading materials to the homeless.

"I saw this lady and her children outside of Food Lion," Stinson said. "They didn't have enough food. I wanted to give them something, so I gave them \$5. They were really happy."

Stinson knows what these families are going through after living in a shelter with her grandmother. She transitioned out at age 5 when she moved in with foster parents.

There were 6,558 children and youth who were currently or formerly homeless and/or housing



COURTESY ZANIA STINSON

ZaNia Stinson is founder of the nonprofit Z Feeds, which provides Go-Go Bags for the homeless.

unstable in 2016-17, per the Child & Youth Homeless in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Integrated Data Report, which was released in June 2020.

"I just wanted to continue to give back to the community and give back to homeless people, because when I was little, I lived with my biological grandmother and we lived in a shelter," Stinson said. "We didn't have any food and we couldn't just run out and get food, because we lived in a shelter. So I created my Go-Go Bags."

The funding will allow Stinson to provide more Go-Go Bags to shelters throughout and around Charlotte.

"I also give them out to

this hotel by my church, because they have brought in some homeless people, and they have needed some food," Stinson said. "My family, my school, my church, my dance team and my community have all helped me pack my Go-Go Bags. It makes me really happy to see other people help me with my projects, and it makes me even more excited to see other children help me with my project help pack the bag to donate because my school and my dancing [team], they brought me a lot of items to put a lot of different items in the bag, and it just makes me really happy to see that I have all this support, and I can keep going."

Buick Envision a good entry point in the small SUV market

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course. I find the steering to be a bit over-boosted, but you can adjust quickly to the feeling. There is not a lot of communication with what's going on the road, but braking, steering and accelerating are all on the good side of things.

The ride is quiet and smooth. Buick uses noise cancelling tech to keep engine, road and wind noise to acceptable levels. Bumps don't upset the suspension unless they are large.

The Buick Envision fits

the brand's look. It's an entry level offering, so to expect it to be dripping with luxury like other Buicks may be too much to ask. The vehicle isn't a Volvo or Mercedes but can offer a bit of that look for a much smaller price.

The Envision Essence starts at \$37,600 and is well equipped. Ebony Twilight metallic paint is \$495.

A \$2,500 option package added premium Bose stereo, navigation, head-up display, HD radio, Buick infotainment system, front

park assist and Bluetooth streaming. Add destination and the as-tested price comes to \$41,790.

Pros:
· Handsome styling
· Abundant safety equipment

· Spunky turbo engine
· Attractive interior
· Quiet ride

Cons:
· So-so handling
· Cramped storage

Email Winfred Cross at cross@alldaytech.com



GETTY IMAGES

Parents can teach their children important lessons for handling finances, such as budgeting and spending, at almost any age.

Financial tips for parents to share with their children

FAMILY FEATURES

Children often dream of the day they can call themselves grown-ups, but few look forward to - let alone think about - the financial realities of independence.

"As parents, our job is to set our children up for success," Bank of America's Head of Deposit Products Erin McCullen said. "Giving our kids a strong foundation of financial skills like budgeting and saving is a key part in ensuring they thrive as adults and can concentrate on the things they love."

Consider these financial tips from McCullen:

Establish a budget. Budgeting is a lifelong skill. Teaching young adults how to budget can help them plan spending, save money, create goals and address financial anxiety. According to a Bank of America survey, 52% of Americans said they didn't start budgeting until they began their first full-time job.

If your kids are on the younger side, they likely don't have a steady income, but you can still help them practice budgeting with allowances or gifts from relatives or friends. Keep it simple: teach them to track the money they receive and separate it into spend-now and spend-later categories.

Later, when you're helping your kids create an adult budget, you'll need to expand those categories to track expenses like housing costs and groceries. From there, measure these categories against their total monthly income. Ideally, they should have more money coming in than going out. This process can help identify must-have vs. want-to-have purchases while highlighting areas to cut back on spending or finding room to save.

Save regularly and consistently. Making consistent, automatic contributions to a savings account can create a mindset that will be valuable as your children get older.

"It is never too early to open a savings account," McCullen said. "Even if your children don't yet have any bills or financial obligations, teach them to set aside some of the money from their allowance or even gifts from family or friends. Helping children learn to save early-on, even for a small purchase, can help them develop a consistent savings habit over time."

Young adults should also consider programs like

Keep the Change, which helps build savings automatically by rounding up debit card purchases to the nearest dollar amount and transferring the change from a checking account to a savings account.

Make a finance checklist. Young adults have a lot on their minds at the end of their final semester at school. As they begin to transition from student life

to the working world, one way to help them stay on track is to prepare a checklist of things to do before they graduate and start their jobs.

This list can include creating a budgeting and tracking strategy, opening a savings account to begin setting aside money from future paychecks or checking in with a financial

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GETTY IMAGES

Snoring, electronics and room temperature are among the most common barriers to healthy sleep for couples.

Don't sleep on disruptions to couples' bedtime routine

By Jason Wooden and Kristal McKinney

SPECIAL TO THE POST

She likes it warm; he likes it cold.

He can't fall asleep without the TV on; she needs it dark and quiet.

She's an early morning riser, he's a night owl that likes to sleep in undisturbed.

And then there's snoring, the scourge of sleep for millions of couples. It's a frequent issue within marriages and, in some cases, may lead to divorce. What's one going to do?

In a Better Sleep Council survey of 542 adults in committed relationships, 26% of respondents reported sleeping better alone. The truth is the cost of poor sleep is just too high. Sleep-deprived people don't think as clearly, have a harder time coping, and don't perform as well on the job. They're also irritable and moody.

Intimacy can suffer due to suppressed sex hormones, erectile dysfunction, and low energy. It's no wonder poor sleep is tough on relationships.

It also puts you at risk for a myriad of issues, including diabetes, high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease, obesity, anxiety, depression, and dementia. You can try a sleep divorce, a remedy growing in popularity where couples spend time together during the evening and then sleep separately during the night. It allows sleep-deprived couples to get the rest they desperately need and can help reinvigorate a relationship.

If you still want the connection of sharing the bed throughout the night, you need a bedroom environment that supports the sleep of both of you. Sleep experts recommend that you keep your bedroom dark, quiet, and cool for optimal sleep. This can be challenging for couples since everyone's body is a little bit different and often one person can be ready for sleep before the other. The good news is that they're practical remedies worth a try for some of the more common sleep issues for couples.

TV light and noise

Many people use TV to unwind at night. Unfortunately, whether it's a TV, tablet, smartphone or bedside lamp, the light and noise can be a real pain, especially for light sleepers.

Intruding sounds can keep someone from falling asleep and out of deep restful sleep even if they're not awake. Bright light affects the body's natural sleep-wake cycle and keeps you from feeling sleepy. Even small amounts of ambient light can cause trouble.

Your options include ear plugs and a sleep mask, earphones for the TV watcher, setting the TV to turn off after a certain time and substituting the TV with white noise. As a compromise, you can agree to a lights-out time after which the TV watching will happen in a different room.

Bedroom temperature

Colder room temperatures help your body's natural sleep process. Studies suggest that a room temperature between 60 degrees and 67 degrees

Fahrenheit is optimal for sleeping with 65 degrees being the sweet spot. As mentioned earlier, everyone's body is different, so you may have to experiment to find a temperature that's workable for both of you. Also, you can make a cold or warm bedroom more comfortable for you with various remedies.

For the person who likes it warmer, extra blankets, a heated blanket or mattress pad or warmer pajamas may do the trick. If you're a cold sleeper, your options include cooling sheets, a cooling mattress pad or a small fan.

Scourge of snoring

OK, this one is a biggie and will likely take some work. Fortunately, they're things you can try before sending the snorer off to exile: ear plugs, white noise, sleeping on the side, sleeping at a slight incline, losing weight and avoiding alcohol and sedatives before bed.

It's also worth seeing a doctor to check for obstructive sleep apnea, a common sleep disorder that's one of the biggest causes of snoring. It's a real sleep killer that can put people at risk for other serious, life-threatening health issues.

Build a solid foundation
Sleeping as a couple may not be the only issue you're up against. There's a long list of issues that can affect sleep and many of them arise from your everyday habits. Also, why make things harder than they must?

This makes it important to practice good sleep hygiene, the foundation of quality sleep. It's what you do during the day and evening that can set the stage. For better sleep, you

should keep regular wake-up and sleep times; avoid naps; exercise during the day; avoid large meals, alcohol, or stimulants such as caffeine before bedtime; maintain a bedtime routine that prepares you for sleep; keep your bedroom quiet, dark, and cool; and avoid electronics use in the bedroom.

Overlooked issues

Unfortunately, other things besides poor sleep hygiene could be disturbing your slumber. Asthma, allergies, acid reflux, kidney disease, cardiovascular disease, chronic pain, and diabetes can keep you up at night. Prescription drugs, anxiety, and depression can also cause or worsen sleep issues. And some of these issues can cause problems for intimacy. A doctor can help you identify and work through any of these underlying issues.

More perfect union

There's too much at stake to accept the status quo. When you're sleep deprived, that makes everything else in life harder, including maintaining relationships. So, have an earnest conversation sooner rather than later about how you can help each other sleep better.

Honestly share where you're at and what you need. Be willing to compromise and try out different things.

Couples should also commit to supporting each other's basic need for sleep hygiene. If both of you are sleep deprived and strung out emotionally, you've really got a problem. To keep from getting overwhelmed, be realistic about your situation, keep things simple, and take it one day at a time.

Teach children finances

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planner to discuss transitions and what's to come.

Taking time now to teach your children strong financial habits can help them develop lifelong financial skills and prepare them for their next adventure. The healthy habits they build today can help carry them to tomorrow and beyond.

Emphasize the importance of safe credit. Young adulthood is the right time to begin building credit because establishing good credit takes time. Building credit from a young age can help pave the way for major purchases and life moments, since credit impacts future living arrangements, the ability to purchase a car and even employment opportunities.

Teach your children about the steps they can take to start building credit like planning their credit card usage, never spending outside their means and paying off their credit card bills on-time and in-full. They can also earn rewards while spending by ensuring their credit card rewards their spending. An option like the Bank of

America Customized Cash Rewards card offers flexibility to earn rewards in the category of your choice and can help maximize rewards while building credit.

Find more tips for teaching children financial skills at [BetterMoneyHabits.BankofAmerica.com](https://www.bettermoneyhabits.com).

Financial lessons

From preschool through college, every stage of school is designed to prepare kids for life-long success, but learning about finances is one area that can be especially impactful for children in the long term.

Consider these ways kids can learn about money throughout childhood as recommended by the experts at Bank of America:

Elementary school - Focus on basics like saving small change and planning how to spend it. As kids begin to learn fundamental math, you can introduce them to the concept of making a spending plan.

Middle school - Those early mathematical lessons around spending can be expanded to include real-life decision making and budget creation, including

what should be accounted for and considered before making a purchase. Before children go to the mall with their friends, highlight the thought process involved in spending before they make impulse purchases.

High school - As adulthood begins to draw nearer, it's worth exploring the fundamentals of credit scores, credit cards, investing, saving for retirement, homeownership and more so that, upon graduation, teens can start putting those lessons into practice. High school seniors should also educate themselves on student loans, as debt often becomes a reality for those who attend college, and understanding the facts can help them make more informed choices.

College - Build credit by opening a credit card account to help achieve goals later in life, such as purchasing a home.

With a career just a few years away (or less), college is also a smart time to begin reading into the basics of 401(k)s, starting an emergency fund or even learning the basics of investing.

The perfect summertime pie

BRANDPOINT

Summer is the time to relax, refresh and indulge in sweet and heavenly treats. While you're lounging poolside and watching the kids play, enjoy a cool, creamy and absolutely divine dessert that's perfect on a hot day.

This luscious Coconut Key Lime Cream Pie has a smooth texture with toasted shredded coconut on top. It's sweet, but not too sweet, and will leave your taste buds wanting more as soon as you take your first bite.

Fresh out of the refrigerator, it's ideal for everyone to share on those days when it's just too warm outside to not have a chilled snack.

Also topped with lime zest and maraschino cherries, visually this pie is a winner with fun pops of color that will leave your mouth watering.

To make this cool, creamy creation, add vanilla wafers to a blender to make crumbs. Add melted butter and blend. Add crumb mixture to the bottom of a pie pan and press against the sides. Refrigerate to make crust.

In another large bowl, beat cream cheese, condensed milk and coconut extract.

In a different large bowl, beat whipping cream until it starts to thicken. Add powdered sugar and lime juice. Reserve 1 cup of the whipped topping.

Add lime juice, coconut flakes and the reserved whipped topping to the cream cheese mixture then stir to combine.

Add cream cheese mixture to the pie crust and smooth it out. Top with whipped topping then garnish with toasted coconut, lime zest and maraschino cherries.

It's the perfect pie to enjoy whether you're outside enjoying some sunshine or inside, taking a break from the

summer fun. After being chilled, all of the flavors combine to leave you with a delicious, one-of-a-kind treat.

Find more summer recipes at [Culinary.net](https://www.culinary.net).

If you made this recipe at home, use [#MyCulinaryConnection](https://www.culinaryconnection.com) on your favorite social network to share your work.

Coconut Key Lime Cream Pie

Servings: 6-8

1 package (11 ounces) vanilla wafers
1/3 cup butter, melted
2 cups heavy whipping cream
1/4 cup confectioners' sugar
1/2 cup Key lime juice, divided
1 package (8 ounces) cream cheese, softened

1 can (14 ounces) sweetened condensed milk

1 teaspoon coconut extract
1 cup shredded coconut
1/4 cup toasted shredded coconut
lime zest
maraschino cherries

In blender, pulse vanilla wafers into crumbs. Add melted butter and pulse until combined. Press crumbs into bottom and up sides of greased 9 1/2-inch deep-dish pie plate. Refrigerate 30 minutes.

In large bowl, beat whipping cream until it thickens. Add confectioners' sugar and 1 tablespoon lime juice; beat until stiff peaks form. Remove 1 cup; set aside.

In separate large bowl, beat cream cheese until smooth. Add sweetened condensed milk and coconut extract; beat until blended. Add remaining lime juice and shredded coconut; stir until combined. Add reserved whipped cream. Stir until combined. Pour into crust.

Refrigerate 4 hours.

Before serving, garnish with toasted coconut, lime zest and maraschino cherries.

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Written comments will be accepted at the above address for 45 days from the date of this notice. TBB, a manufacturer of commercial passenger buses, and school buses is actively seeking vendors who qualify as DBE's and WBE's to supply goods. TBB will be expanding its business opportunities for those who qualify to provide quality goods at a fair market price. Interested parties should contact james.routh@daimler.com or by mail at the above address.

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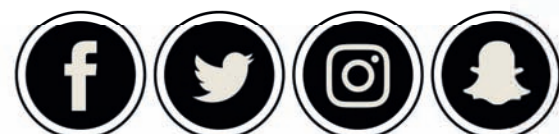
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COURTESY NADIA MEADOWS

Nadia Meadows is on a three-week residency at Goodyear Arts.

Art gets to the roots of oppression

By Ashley Mahoney

ashley.mahoney@thecharlottepost.com

Nadia Meadows uses art to address her frustration with how society treats Black hair.

The 2020 UNC Charlotte graduate who earned a bachelor's in fine arts in sculpture is amid a three-week residency at Goodyear Arts for "Subtle Oppression," which began as Meadows' thesis at UNCC. The residency is a collaboration between the university's department of Art & Art History and Goodyear Arts, and designed to give recent graduates an opportunity to network while providing studio space to take a deep dive into their craft.

Meadows is one of two UNCC alumni participating in the summer residency and was selected through a competitive process.

"Subtle Oppression" features a series of natural braiding hair and twists, which are mounted on felt 2-foot-by-3-foot panels and bonded with black glue. Panels consist of symbols representing Black culture and history. Historical elements include Underground Railroad patterns such as the "Shoofly" and "Crossroad," which were styled into women's hair and offered messages of safety. Meadows also created her own symbols to illustrate contemporary struggles faced by the Black community.

A house represents gentrification in Black neighborhoods and the socioeconomic disadvantages these communities face. A work jacket reflects the pressure Black women feel to conform their hair to the Eurocentric style to feel work appropriate.

"The project started because I was frustrated with people talking about my hair and/or commenting on it, touching it and just feeling like it wasn't as important as other things," Meadows said.

Meadows placed the panels at the front of the gallery to force the visitor to subtly, or directly, face the conversations. She wants viewers to have an opinion about the symbols, while also forcing them to walk on them, thus participating in subtle oppression.

"When you walk in, you can't avoid it," Meadows said. "You have to confront it, which in many Black issues, people try to divert or try to go around the topic. This puts it in a place where you cannot avoid it."

Walking on art may make people uncomfortable. Walking on art made from hair may increase the discomfort and forces the viewer to partake in symbolic oppression may be very disconcerting for some. Meadows said the goal is to create what she described as "in your face" art.

"Walking on art in an art space is not the typical thing," Meadows said.

"Subtle Oppression" confuses some people who don't realize they are walking on human hair, yet it is the only way to enter or exit the gallery space. Upon entry, viewers see the artist statement. It provides two experiences for some, the entry and the exit.

"You have another experience if you didn't realize it is hair, if you did not realize at first, and/or, the textures and the meanings, because it has some underlying meanings," Meadows said. "The second look is a longer, more studied look for the viewer."

Meadows' work will be included in "Break the Mold: New Takes on Traditional Art Making" at the Mint Museum Randolph, which opens Dec. 23. The group show will be curated by chief curator Jennifer Sudul Edwards.

Meadows hopes to create as many panels as possible during her residency. The original project consists of 13 panels of hair she bought from a beauty supply store, using five bags per panel. Her goal is to create 50 to 80 panels in time for the show.

"Subtle Oppression" is the third part in a series about hair. The first, "Lines of Control," includes a 14-foot hot comb. It reflects her frustration with the discussion on what is an acceptable hair texture or curl pattern as well as a hot comb burning the scalp and damaging hair.

"Split Ends" is the second part in the series, featuring a giant strand of hair and the aftermath of hot comb usage.



ASHLEY MAHONEY | THE CHARLOTTE POST

Ricky Singh is one of five artists to collaborate on a series of murals throughout Historic West End as part of Beatties Ford Strong.

West End walls tell story of resilience

By Ashley Mahoney

ashley.mahoney@thecharlottepost.com

Art encourages healing and connection on Beatties Ford Road.

Historic West End residents launched the Beatties Ford Strong movement in June 2020 in response to a mass shooting that killed Jamaa Cassell, Christopher Gleaton, Kelly Miller and Dairyon Stevenson. They created a series of art activations, specifically murals, which have received just under \$10,000 in funding over the last year.

The latest mural, located at Lulia Market (2425 Beatties Ford Road), was completed in three days and depicts Charlotte's past, present and future, as well as the Queen City crown. The art was created by Ricky Singh, Makayla Binter, Bunny Greg-

ory, Katrina Cherry and Tiffonye' Michelle in collaboration with Charlotte Black Owned, Charlotte is Creative, Community Dream Builders, Digital Charlotte, Hue House and The Block.

"Patience shows its value," Singh said. "I always say, 'if you want to go far, go together,' that African proverb. This is a perfect example. This is a combination of a variety of people who came together to make this happen."

The C in CLT focuses on where things started and where they grow from. Binter included "elevate and cultivate" in the C, as well as steps, which Singh said remind him of the steps to the historic Excelsior Club, which played a significant role in shaping West End. The L pays hom-

age to West Charlotte High School, the alma mater of Lulia Market's owner, who immigrated to Charlotte from Eritrea. The market is named for his daughter.

The mural explores technology through the T, and the role it plays particularly in communities of color. Singh said it is meant to show the future is within technology and bridging the digital divide. The crown calls to mind pride and royalty in the neighborhood.

"It serves a double purpose, because it is also the logo for Charlotte Black Owned," Singh said. "This has been a favorite spot of a lot of families to take family photos."

Said Charlotte Black Owned co-founder Ashley Creft, a pediatric so-

Please see WEST END | 6B

Raleigh beatsmith ISM on 'F9' soundtrack

By Jim Wiggins

SPECIAL TO THE POST

RALEIGH - Raleigh native Ishmael Sadiq Montague, professionally known as ISM, has risen from a set of toddler drums to self-taught musician and producer making a mark in the industry.

An early passion for beats born on a tin of Legos has landed Montague a spot as a featured producer and songwriter on the original motion picture soundtrack of "F9: The Fast Saga," set for release on June 25.

The Raleigh-born CEO of ISM Beats & SE7EN Intl LLC is credited for Track 3, "Hit 'Em Hard," featuring Offset, Kevin Gates, Lil Durk, Trippie Redd, and the late King Von. The 14-song compilation was released June 17 by Atlantic Records and has already made Billboard's Top 10. The film has grossed more than \$292 million since its May 19 international release, making it this year's fourth-highest grossing film.

"I can't remember a time when I didn't know how to play," Montague said of his first instrument. "It's kind of like knowing English or how to walk or how to breathe. It was always a thing in my life."

ISM, 24, is a self-taught beatsmith whose roots run deepest in Southeast Raleigh, where his parents, real estate development moguls James and Wonda Montague, were born and raised, and continue to impact the area's economic landscape with an expanding commercial real estate footprint. He is a 2015 graduate of Enloe High School.

At 15, with a following built playing drums in church and a high school band, The Program, ISM used money earned cutting grass to buy his first computer and began teaching himself



COURTESY PHOTO

Ishmael Sadiq Montague is a producer and songwriter on the "F9" soundtrack.

how to make beats - and how to get them in the hands of artists. He scored his first placement his senior year in high school on Chief Keef's "Michelin." ISM postponed plans for college and began working with his manager and Atlantic Record music executives. Within a year, he secured placement on his first major album with Ty Dolla Sign's "My Song." At 19, ISM produced "Party" by Chris Brown featuring Usher and Gucci Mane, landing his first Billboard Top 40 debut.

ISM also has songs with Wiz Khalifa, French Montana, T-Pain, Kid Ink, and Jason Derulo, including as producer of Derulo's "Colors - The Official Coca-Cola World Cup Anthem." Although F9

is his big-screen soundtrack debut, Washington, D.C.-area artists Thraxxx, Big Flock, Lizzle and Freak Show have for years relied on ISM Beats on their self-released mixtapes, which helped catapult one of his largest followings in the DC-Maryland-Virginia market.

ISM also is building a following beyond producing as an artist himself with tracks such as "Lately," featuring both his beats, songwriting and voice; evidence of his plan to pursue that avenue, as well.

ISM said his music is inspired by real life, his own and that around him. His process is to express himself honestly, hoping to connect with the audience

Please see RALEIGH | 6B



Ricky Singh, Makayla Binter, Bunny Gregory, Katrina Cherry and Tiffanye' Michelle are the creative team behind the Beatties Ford Strong mural series in conjunction with Charlotte Black Owned, Charlotte is Creative, Community Dream Builders, Digital Charlotte Hue House and The Block.

West End walls tell story of history and resilience

Continued from page 5B

cial worker at Atrium Health Levine Children's Hospital: "Even though it is our brand logo, it is so much bigger than just our brand, it is about what we represent."

Singh, a West End resident and Charlotte Lab Upper School head of school, helped lead creation of the Beatties Ford Strong movement. He has seen the way art has moved people in the neighborhood, and everyone is welcome to help paint.

Each mural serves to beautify and connect the community with the intention to tell a story. Mural concepts stem from the original community engagement session last summer where residents were asked what types of murals and messages they wanted to see in West End. A recurring theme was history and how it connects to today.

"This was not a random mural," Singh said.

The artists kicked off the movement when they painted Beatties Ford Strong at Niki's Food Shop (2200 Beatties Ford Road) a year ago. The movement encompasses six murals across West End.

"I said something a year ago which I'll

say now — we're just getting started," Singh said.

However, one mural — the Sankofa on the corner of Catherine Simmons Avenue and Beatties Ford Road, the site of the June 22, 2020 shooting — was partially painted over last week. Historic West End Partners Program Director J'Tanya Adams posted on Facebook on June 24, "Heartbroken! No respect. New convenience store [operator] covered without a question. We paid for that. Owner just called and said he will pay to restore it."

Adams notified the store owner that the new operator had painted over the mural and has since received an invoice from Singh to restore it. Singh said he spent his Thanksgiving break painting the mural, a process that took several weeks. The mural wall was more of a foam structure. Singh started on Thanksgiving by priming the wall with his sons.

"Every project is difficult, but that one in particular was hard," said Singh, who painted the Sankofa along with Binter. "That's what hurt the most, thinking about, not the hours, but the experience is now sort of painted over."

«PRODUCER AND WRITER

Raleigh beatsmith ISM on 'F9' movie soundtrack

Continued from page 5B

and that "they genuinely harmonize with your frequency."

While he continues to learn how to navigate the industry of producing, songwriting and overall music artistry, ISM has made North Carolina home and will call on the lessons learned from his family legacy of entrepreneurship, realizing passions through hard work, and community service and development.

Specifically recalling his father's instructions to learn his craft, commit to it, and earn the money and do the legwork to get it recognized, ISM referred to biblical scripture that employs that to teach a man to fish is better than to give him fish.

"That principle molded me to be able to sit still, stick to it, and polish my craft," he said. "He was teaching me how to fish."

ISM hopes to do the same by teaching and nurturing

"home-grown" talent like himself that not only helps up and coming artists navigate the industry, avoiding some of the pitfalls he's endured, but also shines the international spotlight on local talent.

"That's what I'm here to teach and accomplish," he said, assuring an open

door for "home-grown producers" to seek him out for guidance, molding, shaping, and development.

"Raleigh will have to have its own moment; its own artists, sound and culture," he said. "I see Raleigh having its own powerhouse, its own industry."



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«MOVIE REVIEW



Sly Stone performs at the 1969 Harlem Cultural Festival in the documentary "Summer of Soul."

Long-lost concert video opens to 'Summer of Soul'

By Dwight Brown
NATIONAL NEWSPAPER
PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION

"Summer of Soul (...Or When the Revolution Could Not Be Televised)"

It was a volatile time. Malcom and Martin had been assassinated in recent years.

Civil uprisings and riots had just simmered down. The summer of 1969 was a chance for a much-needed cultural break and reawakening.

That happened in Harlem's Mt. Morris Park, when program director Tony Lawrence created the summer long Harlem Cultural Festival. Three-hundred thousand music lovers attended. Few to no cops in sight. The Black Panthers provided security. It was a mellow celebration.

"The Tonight Show" musical director Ahmir "Questlove" Thompson has flicked the moth balls off the never-before-seen, decades-old footage of the festival. The 2-inch video tapes were shot by producer/director Hal Tulchin for an unreleased 1969 doc called "Black Woodstock."

The tapes had languished in a basement for

50 years and Tulchin signed the rights to the masters over to Questlove just before he died in 2017. The bandleader's task of screening, editing and assembling clips couldn't have been an easy task. His efforts were augmented by music supervisor Randall Poster, editor Joshua Pearson and director of photography Shawn Peters.

Among the many stellar performances: R&B artists (B.B. King, Little Stevie Wonder, Sly and the Family Stone, Gladys Knight & The Pips); pop stars (The Fifth Dimension); jazz greats (Abbey Lincoln, Nina Simone); Latin legends (Mongo Santamaria) and gospel singers (The Staple Singers, The Edwin Hawkins Singers, Mahalia Jackson). Mayor John V. Lindsay makes a cameo and activists like Jesse Jackson and Al Sharpton share their opinions on music and the state of Black life.

Sharpton: "Gospel was more than religion. Gospel was the therapy for the stress and pressure of being Black in America."

The vintage performances are edited in with news footage and new in-

terviews from fest musicians recollecting their performances and attendees recalling their experiences. Of particular interest is the interview with Marilyn McCoo and Billy Davis Jr., who were determined to connect with a black audience who had been reluctant to embrace The Fifth Dimension, their pop group.

Together, these interviewees' perspectives add insight and footnotes to the social/political history surrounding these unforgettable outdoor concerts.

Before there was Prince there was Sly. Before Yolanda Adams, Mahalia. Before Bad Bunny, Mongo Santamaria. We know this because Questlove and his rousing, thoughtful documentary links us back to the past with this precious and rare archive.

There is something so spiritual, uplifting and motivating about watching 300,000 Black folks, over the course of a summer, gathered around a stage to vibe and rejoice. You need to watch this doc in a theater or on the streaming service Hulu. Why? Because the revolution will not be televised.

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