

# San Diego Association of Black Social Workers

## Quarterly Newsletter

September 2018 Vol. 1, Issue 3



### MISSION STATEMENT

San Diego Association of Black Social Workers is comprised of people of African Ancestry who are committed to enhancing the quality of life, promoting social justice, and empowering people of African Ancestry through advocacy, human services and outreach.

### CODE OF ETHICS

In America today, no Black person, except the selfish or irrational, can claim neutrality in the quest for Black liberation nor fail to consider the implications of the events taking place in our society. Given the necessity for committing ourselves to the struggle for freedom, we as Black Americans practicing in the field of social welfare, set forth this statement of ideals and guiding principles.

If a sense of community awareness is a precondition to humanitarian acts, then we as Black social workers must use our knowledge of the Black community, our commitments to its self-determination, and our helping skills for the benefit of Black people as we marshal our expertise to improve the quality of life of Black people. Our activities will be guided by our Black consciousness, our determination to protect the security of the Black community, and to serve as advocates to relieve suffering of Black people by any means necessary. (View the full Code of Ethics on our website: [www.sdabsw.org](http://www.sdabsw.org))

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### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Carlotta Wright-Fleener, Interim President

Greetings! This has been a very busy year. We continue our mission of providing services to the African American community by the following:

**Spring:** SDABSW hosted the very successful 50th Anniversary of the National Association of Black Social Workers at the Sheraton Hotel on Harbor Island. The conference theme was "Celebrating Our Legacy-Fulfilling the Dream." Over 600 people attended. The workshops were very informative and addressed issues impacting African Americans (e.g. mental illness and homelessness).

**Summer:** 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Old School Fun in the Sun Day in the Park (co-hosted with the Black Infant Health Program). It was a fun-filled day that educated children and their parents about developing healthy lifestyles. The event was developed in response to Michelle Obama's "Let's Move" initiative that addressed obesity in children. There were "old school" games such as double-dutch jump rope, musical chairs, and exercise instructors engaging the group in various types of exercises and line dancing. Vendors provided educational and resource materials, while the San Diego Black Nurses Association provided health screenings. Lunch catered by Herm & Herm.

**Fall:** 6th Annual Jazz on the Patio, a fundraiser for the Al Davis Scholarship Fund. Al Davis was a long time member of SDABSW. He was an outstanding social worker and a strong advocate. The scholarships are given to students in need or foster youth who are pursuing a career in the human services. The event will be held at a private residence located at 954 Harlan Circle San Diego, CA 92114 on September 8, 2018 at 6:00 pm. The music will be provided by the Fleener/Howard group. Tickets are \$25 per person and include food and non-alcoholic beverages. Our very first scholarship recipient graduated this year from San Diego State University.



**Winter:** Each year, SDABSW host a canned food drive and Adopt-a-Family for Christmas giving. Last year, we provided food, clothes and toys to selected families at Encanto Elementary School and the Black Infant Health Program. We will continue to donate water to the Western Service Workers and school supplies and canned food to Encanto and other schools.

I would like to thank all the members of SDABSW for their commitment to our mission. We need everyone's support in recruiting new members.



### ALL VOTES MATTER!

By Carlotta Wright-Fleener, Interim President

In this political climate, it is important that we continue to embrace our mission. REMEMBER TO VOTE on November 6th! We must express our concerns to our elected officials about their dysfunctional governing and that we want change, SDABSW plans to continue its involvement in voter registration. Take all of your friends and relatives to the polls!!

### THE IMPORTANCE OF THE VOTE

By Yvonne Murrell-Powell, Ed.D, MSW

What does it mean to vote? This nation began with the battle cry of "taxation without representation." Under the British rule the leaders of this nation proclaimed that Americans were not getting a say on the things that shaped their lives because they had no elected representatives. As the nation grew the issue of representation continued in importance.

Despite the national fight for equal representation at its inception, there was not equality for all. The vote was given only to white male property owners. Other groups, including women and persons of Black African descent, had limited or no rights to vote and thus had no say in the laws that controlled their lives.

After the Civil War and Emancipation new laws were developed in the South that expanded the rights to include Blacks. The Freedman Bureau was formed which helped the former slaves financially and they had access to education. Blacks identified the importance of the vote as soon as they were freed from slavery and during the Reconstruction Era many Blacks from the South were elected to offices despite many obstacles. This era only lasted fourteen years, from 1863 to 1877.

The obstacles to the vote as well as other advances were blocked. The Klu Klux Klan was established in 1865 which began a new era in the nation. One state, Mississippi, the Blacks paid taxes and supported one state agency, the Mississippi Sovereignty Council which maintained the laws of discrimination of the state, especially against Blacks. This agency continued openly through most of the 1960s. Many other states had laws that also limited access to voting by Blacks. (Cont. on pg. 4)

## Event Calendar

- ◆ Jazz on the Patio Fundraising Event **Sept. 9, 2018**
- ◆ CABSW “Homeless Epidemic Symposium” to be held in Oakland, CA Oct. 19, 2018 (see pg. 3 for more information)
- ◆ SDABSW 2018 Holiday Party and Food Drive Collection **Dec. 7 or 8, 2018**
- ◆ ADOPT-A-FAMILY Gift Distribution **Dec. 15, 2018.**



### The SDABSW adopts Encanto Elementary School

By Patricia Kelly, MSW

After learning about the number of homeless children attending Encanto Elementary School, SDABSW adopted the school and donated school supplies, clothes, food, toys and toiletries (incl. donations from Black Infant Health).

This year, at our upcoming holiday events, we will be collecting canned goods to donate to the school's pantry, in addition to collecting toys and clothes for the neediest families.



### RIP Aretha Franklin.

While she may be gone, she will never be forgotten.

Can you name at least 5 of her greatest hits?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_



### My experience as a Black Male Social Worker

By O. Shah Bey, Social Worker

When asked how I got into the field of social work, I laugh because it happened serendipitously. I actually applied for a correctional officer position. While applying for that position, I also erratically applied for a number of positions across multiple agencies. Ultimately, I was contacted by a child protective services agency that I do not recall applying to.

Social Work has been a blessing to my family and me. Besides putting food on our table, clothes on our backs, etc., I have been afforded the opportunity to work for some very dynamic people and programs across state lines. I get the opportunity to gain hands on experience in the court system, which I really enjoy. I conduct monthly assessments and home inspections both locally and nationally. I currently travel to several states throughout the United States performing a plethora of functions to assist my clients.

I effectively oversee all my clients' cases by maintaining contact with their service providers to ensure that their needs are being met in the most efficient manner. I also allocate resources for clients and expedite paperwork to ensure service providers are paid for current and future services rendered. That's what I do in a nutshell and why I love this field.

While opportunities are vast, I must be very cognizant of who I am. In this field, if you're Black and a male, one must be prepared to endure a certain level of bias (whether it's conscious or unconscious). Many see Black men as threatening already. So, it is important that one maneuvers skillfully when working in an environment where many of one's counterparts may not have much interaction with Black people outside of their clients. Also, this field is dominated by women. So there are times that my approach as a male does not necessarily fall in line with my counterparts and/or supervisors though we share the same goal. I also understand that my experiences as a Black man who grew up in the 80's that overcame many obstacles to get to where I am today shape my approach.

This approach and perspective also sets me apart. It's funny, there are times I walk in meetings and my counterparts and clients think I'm everything under the sun but the social worker. There are politics in the office and given the fact that I am Black, male, and Muslim, I feel left out at times because I do not partake in many of the activities and antics that permeate the office. (cont'd on pg. 4)



### CURVES...in All the Wrong Places

By Jalen Swank, Student

On a beautiful summer morning in August 1996, a beautiful Black baby was born. She was 6lb 8oz, with beautiful black curly hair and a bright smile. It would be one- and one-half years until her parents discover one of the biggest challenges of her life...Scoliosis.

Scoliosis first appeared to be a bone condition, a curve in the spine that can range anywhere from approximately 15 to 50 degrees. We now know that is the symptom of scoliosis, which is progressive in most cases. Scoliosis is a neuromuscular condition caused by a miscommunication between the motor-sensory neurons in the upper and lower trunk. There are four types of scoliosis: idiopathic, congenital, neuromuscular, and degenerative. Congenital scoliosis is rare, affecting one in ten thousand babies in utero. Neuromuscular scoliosis develops in children with preexisting neuromuscular disorders such as muscular dystrophy or cerebral palsy. Degenerative scoliosis is the adult form which typically occurs after the age of 65. Idiopathic scoliosis is the most common form and has an unknown origin (hence the name). It can be infantile (birth to three years), juvenile (three to nine), adolescent (10 to 18), or adult (after age 18).

I have infantile idiopathic scoliosis. At one and a half years old I had my first surgery. I remember having to wear a brace at least up to kindergarten, and when I grew out of it my parents were gracious enough to accept my petition to never wear a brace again. February 7, 2008, I had my second surgery, a spinal fusion. I am now an android with rods and screws and I am invincible! Not really. Sometimes I wonder if the surgery was as necessary as they made it seem.

According to ScoliSmart Clinics, bracing may cause respiratory issues leading to headaches, anxiety, interrupted sleep patterns, and cognitive dysfunction, it weakens the muscles, it stresses the rib cage and may create a rib hump, and it does not stop progression or the need for surgery. Surgery is also risky and is typically a cosmetic surgery and is rarely necessary. The risks of spinal surgery include paraplegia, quadriplegia, peripheral nerve deficit, and implant failure. Within implant failure the implants can break, pierce the spinal canal, or compress nerve roots. In an article written by Kristin Della Volpe, it is revealed in a study, where Black patients were the second largest population, **“Black patients had a significantly greater mean curve magnitude and** (cont'd on pg. 4)

## California Assoc. of Black Social Workers Symposium

By Deborah Fitch, MSW

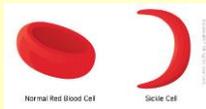
The 2018 CABSWS symposium is being held in Oakland, CA, October 19, 2018. This year's theme is *The Homeless Epidemic: impact on the African American Families and Communities*. The event is being held at the Center for Healthy Communities in Oakland California.

The goals of the symposium are: to understand the key historical implications of how the crisis affects communities of color, to strengthen practice skills, to strengthen cultural competence skills for working with Black families and to identify practice and public policy strategies that promote change. This symposium is open to everyone and for further information contact the Bay Area Assoc. of Black Social Workers (BAABSWS) at (510) 629-1790 or email to [baabsw@gmail.com](mailto:baabsw@gmail.com).

## September Newborn Screening and Sickle Cell Disease Awareness Month

By Charlotte Pannell-Taylor, BA Program Specialist  
CA Newborn Screening Program Rady CHSD

**Newborn Screening (NBS):** is a public health program that screens all babies for many serious but treatable genetic disorders. All babies born in **California** are required to get **screened 12 hours or greater after birth**. Newborn screening began in **California** in 1966 with **screening** for one disorder, phenylketonuria (PKU). The Program has expanded and now includes 80 different genetic and congenital disorders. The goal of the program is to identify and treat babies with these disorders, early.



**Sickle Cell Disease:** In 1990, Sickle Cell Disease was added to the California Newborn Screening Panel. In California, 1 in 4,400 babies (about 100-125 babies a year) are born with disease. Sickle cell disease is more often found in people whose families come from Africa, Mexico, Central America, India, Middle East and parts of Europe and Asia. However, anyone can have sickle cell disease. A baby with Sickle cell disease inherits a gene from each parent. Both parents must carry the gene for a baby to inherit this disease.

Sickle cell disease affects the special protein called hemoglobin which is inside our blood cells. The hemoglobin in red blood cells pick up and carry oxygen from the lungs and take it to every part of the body.

A person with sickle cell disease makes a different kind of hemoglobin. This causes the red blood cells to change their shape. Instead of being smooth and round the cells become sickle shaped (like a banana), hard and sticky. The hard, sticky red blood cells have trouble moving through small blood vessels and that blood can't bring oxygen to the tissues. This causes pain or damage to these areas. Those with Sickle cell disease are followed by a Hematologist for care and treatment.

San Diego has a Sickle Cell Disease Support Group that meets the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of the month, 6:00 pm at Malcolm X Library, 5148 Market Street San Diego CA 92114. For more information, please contact: Brittany D. Echols, MPH at [bdechols.cayennewellness@gmail.com](mailto:bdechols.cayennewellness@gmail.com). To learn more about California Newborn Screening visit [www.cdph.ca.gov/nbs](http://www.cdph.ca.gov/nbs)

Clipart taken from: <https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/sickle-cell-anemia.html>

## National Association of Black Social Workers

By Deborah Fitch, MSW

The National Association of Black Social Workers NABSW came to San Diego April 3-7 2018 for their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary conference. By all accounts the conference was a complete success. It raised the most money for the last few years of conferences, over 600 people attended, the hotel sold out before Christmas. The weather in April cooperated and everyone stated how pretty San Diego was and they had a great time.

A small dedicated group from the San Diego chapter managed along with help from the National conference planning committee to pull off this event. Pulling off a conference this size entails lots of meetings and phone calls but we managed to pull it off and remain friends and an intact chapter.

I want to say "Thank You" again to the San Diego chapter and all of the willing and helping hands. Thank you for a job well done!



### From Our Hearts to Theirs

The San Diego Chapter is very proud and grateful to the following who helped made the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the National Association of Black Social Workers Conference a huge success:

#### Speakers:

**Karen Bass (CA Congressmember), Dr. Willie Blair (State President of BAPAC), Myrtle Cole (San Diego Council President), Minister Hugh Mohammad (Mosque 8), Racquel Vasquez (Mayor of Lemon Grove CA), and Dr. Shirley Weber (CA Assemblymember)**

#### Harambee Celebration Donors

**Michael Allan, Isaac Ford, Barbara Greer, Tony Jones, Karen Primus, and Shelia Willis; Alpha Kappa Alpha (AKA) Sorority and San Diego County Black Infant Health Program; California Association of Black Social Workers Chapters; Bay Area, Fresno, Los Angeles, Sacramento and San Diego**



### Harambee! The Original "Wakanda Experience"

By Barbara Greer, BSW

After the viewing of the 2018 blockbuster Black Panther movie, many African Americans across the nation started having Wakanda inspired experiences (aka parties) in which everyone dresses in their best African garb (or all black clothing to represent the Black Panthers of the 1960's). While the concept of the Wakanda experience may be new to some, it is not new to the National Association of Black Social Workers (NABSW). Although, it is called by a different name, NABSW has been celebrating Harambee (aka Wakanda Experience) for 37 years. According to the NABSW website, in 1981, Dr. Morris Jeff, Jr., developed the Harambee celebration as part of the annual conferences closing ceremony in honor of our African culture and our brothers and sisters throughout the African Diaspora. Harambee is a Kiswahili word meaning "pulling together" or "we all pull together." In addition to the culture dress, the celebration also includes honoring our ancestors (alive and transitioned) by libation, African drumming and dancing, to socializing with old friends and meeting new ones.



SDABSW MEMBERS

**President:** Carlotta Wright-Fleener

**Vice President:**

**Treasurer:** Loretta Swanegan

**Secretary:** Denaya Kelly-Darby

**National Steering Committee Reps:**

Dr. Yvonne Murrell-Powell

Deborah Fitch

**Website Host:** Ronda Felder

**Technology Specialists:**

Leona Ekanem and, Myron Mason

**Newsletter Layout:** Barbara Greer

## BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP

Not only will your membership entitle you to be a part of the San Diego Association of Black Social Workers, but it also includes the benefit of being a member of the National Association of Black Social Workers, Inc.

Like the SDABSW, NABSW works to create a world in which people of Black African ancestry will live free from racial domination, economic exploitation, and cultural oppression.

NABSW's vision is guided by the Principles of the Nguzo Saba, which are Unity, Self-determination, Collective Work and Responsibility, Cooperative Economics, Purpose, Creativity, and Faith, and the Seven Cardinal Virtues of Ma'at, which are Righteousness, Truth, Justice, Order, Reciprocity, Balance, and Harmony.

By joining, **YOU** can expect the following benefits:

- Networking opportunities
- Discounted full-time student membership
- Discounted pricing for State, Regional, National and International Conferences
- NABSW Members Rewards Program
- The opportunity to participate in quarterly National Steering Committee Meetings
- The ability to purchase Professional Liability Insurance
- Presenter opportunities at the NABSW Annual Conference

## Black Male Social Worker (cont'd from pg. 2)

But, I feel it is important, as a black man, that I break all generalities some may have about black people. I carry myself in a certain manner that commands respect, even when some of my counterparts attempt to do things to emasculate me.

As a professional Black male, I crush any form of disrespect and emasculation. It's also important that I maintain my professionalism by acting in a way with my female coworkers and peers that it does not appear I am flirting or womanizing. As a male in a predominate field of women, there are opportunities in which one could exploit this dynamic. I also refrain from too much horseplay with my male peers, as it too can lead down slippery slopes.

All in all, I truly enjoy what I do. I wish more brothers would embark on this career path. Many of our young people lack positive black male role models. Sometimes we're the only black male parental figure they know, especially, considering the disparity of black children and young adults in foster care.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF THE VOTE (cont'd from pg. 2)

The obstacles to their vote grew with the addition of poll taxes, literacy tests and other rules that applied to prospective Black voters only. In the next approximate century, many Blacks fought for and even died for the right to vote. Many Black organizations started working for the right to vote, including the NAACP, CORE, SCLC and others. In 1961, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee took the battle to Mississippi, the state that presented the biggest obstacles to the Black vote. As the fight revved up there and in other states, the violence against Blacks increased. In 1965 the Voter's Rights Act was passed to eliminate these barriers to vote.

The importance of the vote is seen in the history and efforts that Blacks went through to gain this right and privilege. Some, like Medgar Evers, who died for the right are well known. Others, not as well known, include Vernon Dahmer, Harry and Harriette Moore, Clyde Kennard and many others. Today we are seeing things going back to pre-voters rights law. One of the greatest changes is found in the attitudes of those who have the right to vote. Many of us have worked to register voters and have had Blacks say they don't vote. Those with felonies can't vote. They are unaware of the fact that once they are no longer in prison or on parole in most states they have the right to vote. Some states have some differences, so everyone must look at the rules of their states.

As we look at the importance of the vote today we have several examples of the Black vote. Alabama is one of those examples. In the recent Senate race the largest voting group that transformed the race was Black women. We have seen other races this year that have not gone the way they were expected because those who have been counted out, Blacks, are voting. Laws are being made that disproportionately affect people of color. It is important and time for us to vote at all opportunities, primaries and mid-term elections. Just like Black Lives Matter, Black Votes Matter too!

Fun Facts: #1 They are all fruits. #2 Its really a large vegetable eaten as a fruit. Watermelon.

## CURVES in All the Wrong Places (cont'd from pg. 2)

**were significantly more likely to have curves in the surgical range (>40°) and to receive surgery as their initial treatment.”**

If I may give some advice, parents, please pay close attention to your children. Early detection is imperative for the best treatment options. If you notice your child's eye line, shoulder level, or hips are uneven, or any other posture differences, please bring this to your pediatrician's attention so they can refer you to an orthopedic specialist if need be. Also, do your own research on nonoperative treatment. Make sure your child has support whether that is a formal support group, or a network of friends or family with scoliosis. All of this applies to adults as well. A great place to look for patient education would be a San Diego foundation called Setting Scoliosis Straight.

I thought I was alone for a long time because scoliosis does not always present in an obvious manner. The more people in my network who I discovered also shared this sensitive part of my life with me, the less afraid I was to be myself and the more confident I became. Even in my young adulthood I still struggle with my confidence from time to time and I've had this condition all my life. Having safe spaces to share my struggles in has been a true blessing. Remember, early detection, education, and community is imperative to a better quality of life for scoliosis survivors.

### Fun Facts:

1. What do the following have in common besides being edible? Apples, avocados, eggplants, mangoes, olives, okra, pea pods, peppers, squash and zucchini.  
They are \_\_\_\_\_
2. Message Scramble: tis lraeyl a glare getveabel eneat sa a tfru. What is it? \_\_\_\_\_