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The Untold Stories

Destination Congress Heights Businesses Bring Holiday Cheer to Commercial Corridor

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MOBILE CONCERT FEATURING
BACKYARDBAND, MS. KIM AND SCOOPY
HOLIDAY LIGHTS ON MLK AND
GIVEAWAYS FROM THE MUSEUM

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Despite the challenges experienced in 2020 as a result of COVID 19 impacts, racial unrest, development pressures, and political unrest, Destination Congress Heights, the nationally accredited Main Street in ward 8 looks to spread a little cheer to the community. The group of mostly small, mostly minority business owners along with the development team for St. Elizabeths Parcel 15 (the Blue Lot area near the Entertainment and Sports Arena slated for a town center development) have joined to celebrate the holidays in typical Soul of the City fashion- music, lights, food, friends, and of course, gifts. Councilmember Trayon White noted, “The struggle for equity is real. Those families who struggled before COVID-19 are struggling even more. This is not life changing, but we simply want to put a smile on the hearts of those feeling left out and hopeless, because somewhere along the way someone did the same for us.”

The celebration begins with the Congress Heights Community Association’s annual Christmas Tree lighting on Friday, December 18, 2020 at 6:00pm. More than 30 businesses along the corridor will decorate and light their storefronts for the community to enjoy in a social distant holiday experience that fami-

COVID-SAFE EVENT WILL CELEBRATE COMMUNITY AND HOLIDAY SEASON

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THE CAPITAL NEWS

THE UNTOLD STORIES

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The Ongoing Saga of Reopening Schools in the District of Columbia

By: Sherice A. Muhammad
Special to The Capital News

On Wednesday, November 18th, over four hundred students returned to twenty-five (25) elementary school campuses, throughout the District of Columbia, for the Canvas Academics and Real Engagement Program, known as CARES Classrooms, or in-person learning, serving students from Pre-K to 5th grade. Mayor Muriel E. Bowser's quest to accelerate reopening the schools, to provide in-person learning, has been a long and tumultuous eight (8) months where the Washington Teachers Union (WTU), representing over 5,000 teachers and the District of Columbia Public School (DCPS) Central Administration have been in a deadlock over its memorandum of agreement, which outlines the conditions and protocols for teachers to return to the classroom, when schools reopen, to accommodate the city's most vulnerable children. The primary issue at the heart of the lengthy negotiations is— safety.

A week prior to the first day of the CARES program, negotiations between WTU and DCPS seemed hopeful, where a tentative agreement was met. According to Elizabeth Davis, President of the WTU, "We didn't get everything we wanted. But I'm okay with it. And we'll wait to see how our members feel." However, the WTU didn't sign the agreement and released a full statement detailing reasons for not doing so, citing rising COVID-19 rates and constantly shifting DCPS plans. Here is an excerpt of the statement:

"DCPS has failed to share with us or the broader community a full list of schools that are reopening. Verification tours occurred prior to all work having been completed. Additionally, the lack of clear and transparent standards for air circulation gives us pause as we ask our members – or anyone – to reenter our school buildings. We believe our city's first priority must be safety. And the only way to build safety is through communication and trust. DCPS has fallen short on these measures.

Second, the MOA also laid out provisions for teachers to return to school for in-person instruction. While we had a tentative agreement to allow teachers to 'opt-out' for the 2nd term, these protections would have ended on February 1 with the beginning of the 3rd term. With cases of COVID rising across the region and without clear guidance from the Mayor as to what level of spread would cause our schools to close, we cannot move forward with an agreement that could force anyone, regardless of pre-existing conditions or their living situations, back into an in-person classroom."

When DCPS schools were closed in March due to the coronavirus pandemic, several schools had inoperable HVAC systems, sealed windows that did not open, inoperable bathroom sinks and sinks without access to hot water. Such conditions are prime for coronavirus spreading. The Facilities Readiness Checklist is an essential component of the safety protocols to ensure proper ventilation, access to hot water for required handwashing and adequate administering of COVID-19 testing and protocols. DCPS claims the facilities are ready for occupancy and has proceeded to reopen twenty-five elementary school campuses. WTU continues its objection to DCPS pulling non-instructional staff from middle and high schools to monitor the CARES Classrooms, which is highly disruptive for school communities who are losing essential staff.

DC Health, the city's primary medical authority, created the Coronavirus Dashboard metrics (coronavirus.dc.gov) to render real-time data on the spread of the coronavirus, areas of spikes, current phase operating status, COVID-19 testing sites, surveillance and alert notices. The dashboard also imparts the criteria metrics by which Mayor Bowser authorizes advancement of its reopening efforts. According to the city's reopening metrics, if cases spike >1.2% transmission pushes the city back to Phase 1, where schools cannot reopen. As of the Nov. 18, the transmission rate

Ethiopia slides towards civil war as Tigray conflict escalates

Special to The Capital News

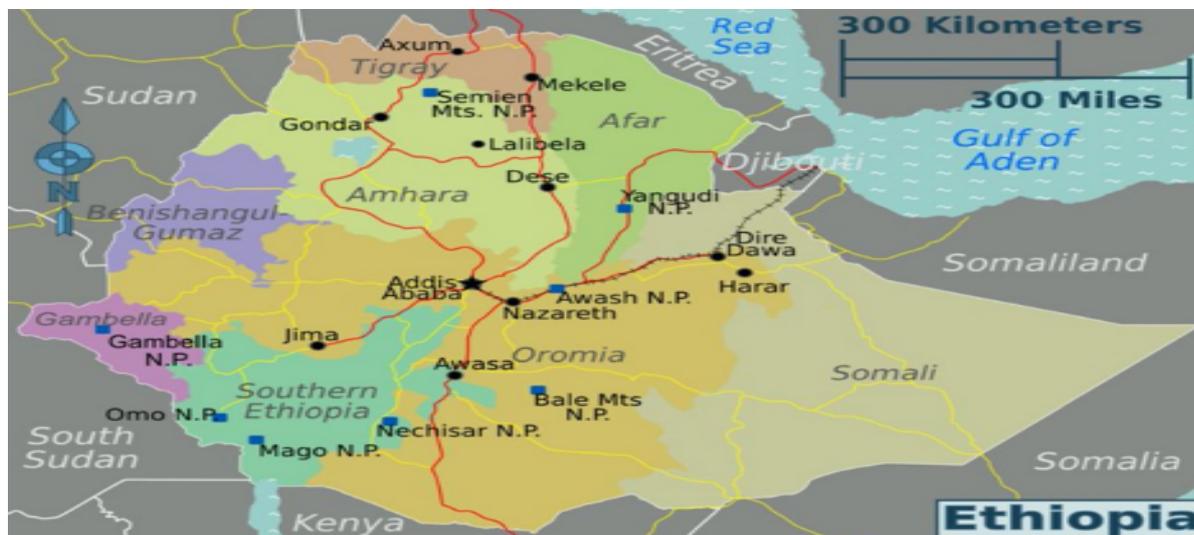
The escalating military conflict in Tigray, home to six million people, in northern Ethiopia is creating a horrific humanitarian crisis that is spilling out across the country's borders. It threatens to spiral out into a broader civil war across the 110 million-strong country and to engulf the Horn of Africa.

Hundreds of people have died since the fighting began earlier this month after Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed ordered airstrikes in response to what he claimed was an attack by Tigray's ruling party, the Tigrayan People's Liberation Front (TPLF), on a military compound and deployed troops to the province. The airstrikes' targets included TPLF positions around the Tigrayan capital of Mekelle, with Ethiopian troops seizing the airbase in Humera in a bid to secure the border with Sudan and prevent TPLF forces from escaping. Sudan has responded by deploying its forces to the border, potentially blockading Tigray which already had 600,000 people in need of aid.

Fighting has been reported in several locations, but details are sketchy as the federal government in Addis Ababa has cut the telephone and internet lines, arrested journalists, and prevented people reaching the province.

Abiy's government has declared a six-month state of emergency in the province, while Ethiopia's federal parliament has declared Tigray's regional government illegal and voted to dissolve it. It said that the Tigray leadership had "violated the constitution and endangered the constitutional system" by holding regional elections in September after Abiy postponed this year's promised elections, ostensibly due to the pandemic, as anti-government protests and opposition mounted.

Parliament said a new caretaker administration would hold elections and "implement decisions passed on by the federal government." It declared that the TPLF should be branded a terrorist group after blaming it for



Ethiopia regions (credit: map for use on Wikivoyage, English version)

a massacre of ethnic Amhara in Oromia on November 2, further escalating tensions.

Abiy's reformist pretensions essentially mean loosening the country's ties with China and adopting neo-liberal economic policies that open up Ethiopia's largely state-run economy to the transnational corporations and financial institutions to the acclaim of the imperialist powers. He is a former military intelligence officer and minister of defense in the previous TPLF-led government. Abiy hopes that the military assault on Tigray will secure the removal of the TPLF leadership and establish a new leadership subservient to the federal government.

Abiy has rejected calls by the United Nations and the African Union for talks and reiterated his intention to prevail by force. But his aggressive response may backfire and prompt the TPLF and its supporters to dig in. More than half of Ethiopia's army is based in Tigray, a legacy of its war with Eritrea, and its support is not assured, prompting Abiy to sack his army chief, head of intelligence and foreign minister.

The conflict may inspire Ethiopia's other semi-autonomous, ethnically based states, including Abiy's own Oromia where an armed rebellion is already underway, to secede. Politicians of all stripes have whipped up ethnic tensions to prevent a unified struggle by the impoverished masses against the Ethiopian elites. Killings and intimidation are a daily

occurrence. Unrest is mounting in the Somali region, with at least 27 people killed in clashes on the border between the Afar and Somali regional states in the last few weeks. The Ethiopian Human Rights Commission said gunmen had killed at least 34 people on a passenger bus on Saturday night in the western region of Benishangul-Gumuz that borders Sudan.

Ethiopian officials said that Tigrayan forces had fired rockets towards Amhara state that is adjacent to Tigray, with one rocket hitting the airport in Gondar and another the airport in Bahir Dar, near lake Tana, on Friday. While the number of casualties is unknown, both airports are used by military and civilian aircraft as the country's road infrastructure is poor.

The TPLF said that the rocket attacks were in response to the air strikes and attacks carried out by Abiy's forces that have included both federal troops and Amhara's regional forces as well as units from Eritrea, on Tigray's northern border. It appears that armed Amhara factions are seeking to regain territory in west Tigray they claim the TPLF annexed when the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) set up the federal structure in 1995.

A Tigrayan spokesperson warned of further

Holiday Cheer from pg. 1

lies are able to view from their cars. Along the corridor, visitors will find larger holiday installations, each led by a creative host and business host. This partnership of business and artist is one that should bring some joy to our community.

Additionally, the Congress Heights Main Street organization and Congress Heights Community Association have invited Community-Based organizations from all over Ward 8 to come together to create a driving route to view themed decorated Christmas Trees across the St. Elizabeth's campus. Themes will include an Angel Tree to memorialize our loved ones lost to violence, The Cat in the Hat, Healthy Food, Harley Davidson, Women Who Lead and many more. Residents and visitors, alike are invited to drive through the Winter Wonderland, between 4th Street, SE and Sycamore Streets, specially curated to bring some socially distanced joy during a tough season.

On the afternoon of Saturday, December 19, holiday cheer continues with a special visit from the Go-GO Santa Express who will travel through the streets of Congress Heights with gifts for community members from the Museum. Celebration Partners include: Mayor's Office of Community Relations and Services, Deputy Mayor's Office on Planning and Economic Development, Councilmember Trayon White, STE Development Associates (Redbrick LMD and Gragg Cardona Partners), Emerson Collective, Don't Mute DC LLC, The Museum, Far Southeast Family Strengthening Collaborative and the Congress Heights Main

Street - Destination Congress Heights.

At 2:00PM, two Go-Go Santa Express caravans will depart the Parcel 15 parking lot on St. Elizabeth's and travel throughout the neighborhood to bring music and holiday gifts to Congress Heights residents. Santa and the other celebration hosts will make a special drop-off of care packages at 801 East Men's Shelter & Housing before the event ends at 5:00PM.

Produced and staffed by local residents to honor the spirit of the St. Elizabeths development, the activation captures the overarching goal of the future space, designed by David Adjaye, who also served as lead architect of the National Museum of African American History. The planned mixed-use development built around a town square will have roughly 600,000 square feet of retail, residential, office and a hotel. Affordable and workforce housing will be combined with neighborhood serving and incubated businesses to meet the needs and provide opportunities for the residents of Congress Heights. "We are so happy to finally see the vision of a redeveloped St. Elizabeths coming to fruition. After such a tough year for so many in our community, we are excited to be a part of bringing a little cheer to the Soul of the City. The Go-Go Santa Express is sure to brighten the spirits of our residents," said Monica Ray, President of Congress Heights Community Training & Development Corporation. "We hope this will become an annual celebration in Congress Heights while we move forward our larger community vision to preserve and expand opportunity for all families in Ward 8."

Don't Mute DC, joined by NAARC Cure Violence and Far SE Family Strengthening Collaborative will escort Santa and his team around the Congress Heights community distributing more than 7500 gift bags with Museum branded items along with PPE to residents. As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact Congress Heights residents at a disproportionate rate of DC residents, proper safety measures will guide the activation, including strict social distancing practices and required mask policy to receive a gift.

"The development team of Parcel 15 has really stepped up to anchor this celebration and we welcome them in this community and look forward to working with them as the St. Elizabeths campus is redeveloped", said Mike Austin, Chair ANC 8C. This parcel represents the first new retail proposed on the campus and each business will join the ranks of long-term businesses within the Congress Heights Main Street. "The Redbrick team is excited to celebrate alongside the Congress Heights community this holiday season as we gear up for our future collaboration on St. Elizabeth's creating new opportunities for the community through a new Town Square," said Louis Dubin, Managing Partner, Redbrick LMD. "Our commitment to preserving opportunities for the Congress Heights community is stronger than ever, and this celebration captures our commitment to a Congress Heights families-first approach as the St. Elizabeth's development comes to life," said Juan Cardona, Gragg Cardona Partners.

For more information, please visit www.chct-dc.org/HolidaySoul

COVID-19 and the Holidays

By: Lewis Mcilwain

It has been more than eight months since COVID-19 drastically changed the way we all live our lives. After the initial shock of the pandemic this spring, people slowly began trying to get back to some semblance of their normal lives as COVID-19 cases began to stabilize over the summer. However, cases have begun to flare back up as temperatures have dropped. With the second wave of COVID-19 being more deadly than the first, it is considered to be more dangerous to socialize now

than it was when the pandemic first shocked us in March. And now that we are entering the holiday season, what does that mean for people?

The holidays are a period when people tend to gather with loved ones to spend quality time with one another. Late November kicks off a string of major holidays including Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's. For many, this is a time where families reconnect after having been separated during much of the year. For those who don't live near family, this is a time

where more travel arrangements are made to visit with parents and siblings. So now that the Center for Disease Control (CDC) has expressed it is not safe to travel this year, what is everyone supposed to do?

2020 has already been a trying year for many. We have seen mass unemployment in the food service industry, airlines, hospitality, and many other industries. People's mental and emotional health have been tested as the CDC has encouraged us all to social distance. And with the COVID-19 death toll climbing over a quarter million as of this month, people are anxious to be with their loved ones more than

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Ahmaud Arbery's killer sent racist messages: Prosecutor

TRAVIS AND GREGORY MCMICHAEL FACE MURDER CHARGES FOR THE KILLING OF ARBERY, 25 IN FEBRUARY.

Special to The Capital News

The man who fatally shot Ahmaud Arbery had previously used racial slurs in a text message and on social media, a prosecutor said Thursday as a judge weighed whether to grant bond for the defendant and his father.

Travis McMichael and his father, Gregory McMichael, have been jailed since their arrests in May, more than two months after Arbery was killed.

The McMichaels, who are white, chased and fatally shot the 25-year-old Black man after they spotted him running in their neighborhood just outside the port city of Brunswick. Questions about whether racism played a role in the killing sharpened during a previous hearing when an investigator testified that a third defendant, who took mobile phone video of the shooting, told authorities he heard Travis McMichael, 34, utter a racial slur after he blasted Arbery three times with a shotgun. In the courtroom on Thursday, Zachary Langford – a friend of Travis McMichael's since boyhood – testified his friend was a joker who got along with everyone and had at least one Black friend.

Then, prosecutor Jesse Evans asked Langford about a text message Travis McMichael had sent him last year that used a slur for Black people when referring to a “crackhead ... with gold teeth.”

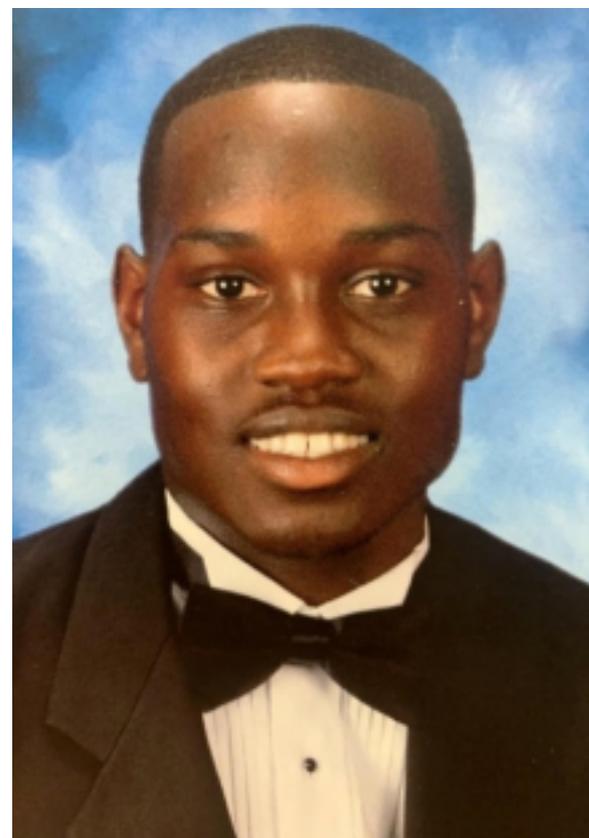
Langford at first said he did not recall receiving the message. Then, after reviewing a transcript of the exchange, he answered, “He was referring to a raccoon, I believe.”

Evans also cited a photo Langford posted to Facebook last year to which Travis McMichael replied, “Sayonara,” along with an offensive term for Asians followed by an expletive.

Langford said he did not recall that, either.

Defense lawyers for both McMichael's have denied any racist motives in the shooting. Right after the February 23 shooting, Gregory McMichael told police that he and his son armed themselves and got in a pick-up truck to pursue Arbery because they suspected he was a burglar.

Prosecutors said Arbery was merely jogging when the McMichaels pursued him. Their defense lawyers insisted in court Thursday that is not true.



Ahmaud Arbery, who was shot and killed in Brunswick, Georgia, on February 23, 2020, is seen in an undated photo [Marcus Arbery/Handout via Reuters]

“We have substantial evidence that, on the day in question, Mr. Arbery was not a jogger,” said Robert Rubin, one of Travis McMichael's lawyers. “He was there for nefarious purposes.” Rubin gave no evidence in court that Arbery was doing anything wrong the day he was shot. Langford's wife, Ashley Langford, testified that Travis McMichael expressed remorse about shooting Arbery.

“He told me he wished it never happened like that,” she said. “He prayed for Ahmaud's mother and his family daily.”

Superior Court Judge Timothy Walmsley made no decision on bond for either of the McMichaels. He was still hearing testimony Thursday afternoon.

Arbery's mother, Wanda Cooper-Jones, said outside the Glynn County court that the McMichaels should remain jailed pending trial because “those guys are dangerous.” She also said she doubted they had regrets.

“I live right there in the community,” Cooper-Jones said. “Nobody reached out to say, ‘I'm sorry for your loss.’ I don't think they are



A cross with flowers and a letter 'A' sits at the entrance to Satilla Shores neighborhood in May 2020 in Brunswick, Georgia, where Ahmaud Arbery was shot dead [Sean Rayford/Getty Images/AFP]

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Ahmaud Arbery's killers from pg. 6
remorseful at all.”

The McMichael's were not arrested until the mobile phone video of the shooting leaked online and the Georgia Bureau of Investigation took over the case. In June, a grand jury indicted both McMichael's and a neighbor, William “Roddie” Bryan, on charges.

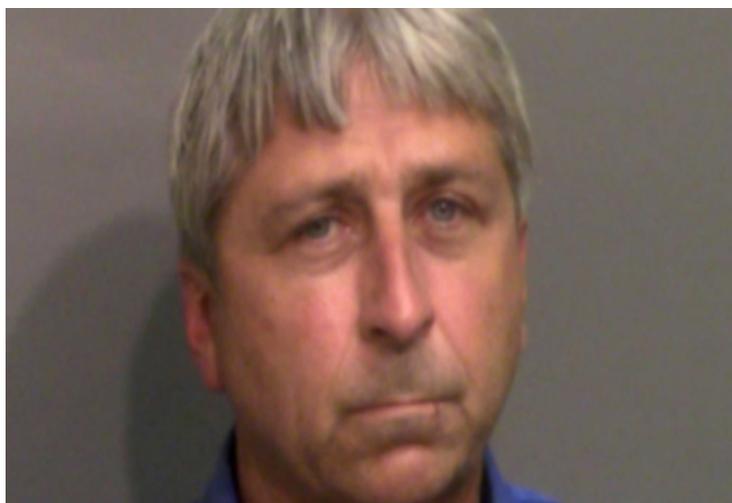
Each is charged with malice murder, felony murder, aggravated assault, false imprisonment and criminal attempt to commit false imprisonment.

Travis McMichael's mother, Lee McMichael, testified that he lived with her and his father, has a four-year-old son and does not have a passport. His lawyers cited his past service as a US Coast Guard mechanic as proof of his character.

“In no way, shape or form is Travis hateful towards any group of people, nor does he look down on anyone based on race, religion or beliefs,” Curt Hall, a former Coast Guard roommate of Travis McMichael who described himself as “multiracial”, wrote in a letter supporting bond for his friend.

Gregory McMichael, 64, is a retired investigator for the Brunswick Judicial Circuit district attorney's office and a former Glynn County police officer.

The McMichaels' lawyers are also asking the judge to reject the indictment's malice murder charge, saying it was written in a way that improperly “charges two crimes in one count”. They made a similar argument for tossing out a charge of criminal attempt to commit false imprisonment.



William R Bryan posing for a booking photo after he was arrested by the Georgia Bureau of Investigation and charged with felony murder and attempt to commit false imprisonment in Arbery's death [Glynn County Sheriff's Office/Handout via Reuters]



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A Bison in the White House

By: Courtney Williams

November third kicked off the 2020 presidential election. Though it was anticipated that Covid-19 would delay the election results, people all across America and across the world watched their televisions, anxiously waiting as votes began to trickle in. On November seventh, it was formally announced that former Vice President, Joe Biden and Vice President nominee Kamala Harris were the winners of the 2020 presidential election.

The moment was historic. Joe Biden received over 79 million votes according to the Associated Press; the most votes in election history. As for his running mate, Kamala Harris, she became the first female Vice President, the first Black Vice President, and the first Indian-American in high command. The Biden-Harris victory was also significant to historically Black colleges/universities (HBCUs), especially Harris' alma mater, Howard University.

As an HBCU, Howard is notable for its academic excellence and famous alumni. Well-known graduates to come out of the university include Chadwick Boseman, Toni Morrison, Taraji P. Henson, Thurgood Marshall and many others. Kamala Harris has now made her mark as a historic alumnus and the first HBCU graduate in the White House.

On the night of the announcement, Howard University President, Wayne A.I. Frederick congratulated Harris in an Instagram post. "Senator Kamala Harris has swung her Howard hammer and shattered a proverbial glass ceiling into pieces that will not be put back together. In an election that saw more Americans cast a ballot than ever before... At a time when the Black community is coping with the disproportionate social and economic impacts of Covid-19, a global reckoning with systematic racism, and the loss of some of our cultural and social icons, we are proud to call Howard University alumna Kamala Harris a monumental catalyst for collective joy and positive changes," said Frederick.



(Photo credit: Howard University Twitter)

For the students of Howard University, Harris' win not only validates their school spirit but provides a sense of hope that our country is changing for the better. Sophomore, Summer Brown of Grand Rapids, Michigan says "Kamala Harris gives women, particularly women of color the opportunity to see a representation of themselves in a position of power."

"My initial reaction was of pure excitement and pride," said Brown, "I think that it's going to have a giant impact for literally the rest of history to come. She is the first Black woman vice president and the first HBCU graduate vice-presidential elect. So, I think literally for the rest of time people are going to know her name and look up to her as someone who made history."

Other students, like junior Brandon Abraham of Maryland, say that the impact of Kamala Harris' win will be beneficial to the Black community and HBCUs. "A lot of people think that HBCUs aren't a place to get a good education and prepare you for life." "It's nice that this validates it and I'm glad she's the first," says Abraham. "I think her position is going to inspire a lot of young people." Not just girls but boys too because we're not used to seeing black women especially in positions of power like that. Hopefully this normalizes that."

Despite the success of famous alumni, Howard has had its fair share of problems with infrastructure and administration. In March 2018, frustrated students took over the administration building following a housing crisis. Though the university is still making

improvements, donations and increasing national attention could benefit Howard and the legacy of other HBCUs. A recent donation of 1 million dollars from Trustee Jim Murren and his wife Heather Murren will allow Howard University to launch a Center for Women, Gender, and Global Leadership.

Though improvements will not be made overnight, Brandon Abraham believes Vice President Elect Harris' position may encourage positive changes and secure the future of the university. "Some of our peers don't believe in the university [with what students have been through]. Hopefully this triggers a change in all of us, from the administration to the student body as well. Hopefully this makes us want better for ourselves and raise the bar," says Abraham.

At this moment, there is no way of knowing exactly what a Biden-Harris presidency will look like. At the end of day, politicians are just people and like everyone else, they are not perfect. There are still a lot of unknowns regarding what the state of the US will be in the next four years; however, one thing that is for certain, is that women and people of color once again have the chance to see an image of themselves, in a position that is white male dominated. Of course, Harris' position will not fix all of the country's issues but it is largely seen as a step in the right direction.

Whether Democrat or Republican, Kamala Harris broke an important glass ceiling and has opened opportunities for many others like herself. It is a sentiment that does not appear to be lost on Harris. In a Tweet she wrote, "While I may be the first woman in this office, I will not be the last-because every little girl watching tonight sees that this is a country of possibilities."



Courtney Williams

Journalism Program, Howard University

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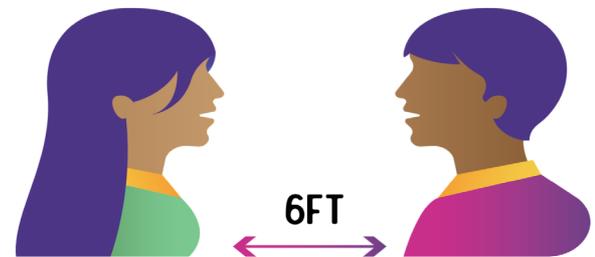
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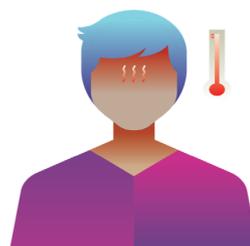
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Ethiopia conflict escalates from pg. 3

strikes not only against Ethiopian targets but also Eritrea, sparking fears of the fighting spreading beyond Ethiopia's borders. Debret-sion Gebremichael, Tigray Regional President, told Reuters that Eritrea had deployed 16 divisions to Ethiopia, without specifying the number of troops involved. On Sunday, the BBC reported that Tigrayan forces had fired rockets into Eritrea, after claiming Ethiopian soldiers were using an Eritrean airport to attack Tigray.

For nearly two decades, Ethiopia and Eritrea fought a brutal war over disputed borders that spilled over into Somalia, cost the lives of up to 100,000 people and led to massive internal displacement on both sides. It ended in 2018, with Ethiopia agreeing to cede Badme, the disputed territory at the heart of the conflict, to Eritrea, as per a UN ruling, for which Abiy but not his counterpart Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2019. This was little more than a PR stunt aimed at boosting his credibility as he seeks to link Ethiopia more closely to the imperialist powers.

This was met with fury by the TPLF, which claims Badme as its own. It refused to join Abiy's new Prosperity Party coalition that replaced the EPRDF, a coalition of several militia groups and parties, in which the TPLF had been the dominant partner that governed the country since 1991. The TPLF viewed the peace treaty as "selling out" Tigray and set up regular border posts around Badme, preventing the full implementation of the 2018 peace deal.

This set the TPLF on a collision course with

the Abiy government that had sought to marginalize it by dismissing senior Tigrayans from federal institutions, issuing an arrest warrant for a former spy chief and member of the TPLF's leadership body, and blaming the TPLF for hiring proxies to incite violence.

In the last few days, reports have emerged of a civilian massacre, with human rights organization Amnesty International saying it had confirmed that "scores, and likely hundreds, of people were stabbed or hacked to death" in the town of Mai-Kadra (May Cadera) near the Sudanese border on November 9. Abiy accused forces loyal to the TPLF of carrying out the killings, a claim the TPLF denied. Tigrayan refugees in Sudan have blamed the massacre on unknown perpetrators from the neighboring Amhara state.

Michelle Bachelet, the UN human rights chief said, "There is a risk this situation will spiral totally out of control," and warned the massacre, if confirmed, would amount to war crimes if committed by one of the belligerent forces.

The fighting has forced at least 20,000 civilians to cross the border into Sudan, according to the UN, which has warned nine million people could be displaced by the fighting, adding



Ethiopian refugees line up for water in Qadarif region, eastern Sudan, Sunday, November 15, 2020. Thousands of Ethiopians fled the war in Tigray region into Sudan. (AP Photo/Marwan Ali) to the already massive 1.8 million people internally displaced within the country.

On November 11, the Sudanese government warned that 200,000 Ethiopians might soon flee Tigray into Sudan, leaving the country unable to cope amid rising discontent with the military's stooge civilian government's inability to address the terrible social and econom-

ic conditions. In April last year, the Sudanese military, backed by the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia, mounted a pre-emptive coup against the long-running regime of President Omar al-Bashir as mass anti-government protests threatened to get out of control.

The TPLF has also accused Abiy of using drones from the United Arab Emirates' military base in Assab, Eritrea, to attack the region.

COVID-19 Holidays from pg. 4

ever.

I spoke with David M. Wilson, 33, of Washington, D.C. to hear his take.

"Normally, I would make an effort to go see family. I'm not planning to do that this year."

David, originally from Detroit, Michigan is an avid traveler and has ventured out to a few places since the pandemic hit.

"I'm not traveling like I normally would.

I'm taking more precautions. I get tested for COVID frequently and don't engage with people until I have confirmed negative results.

The times this year that I have traveled, it was just me and my dog. I needed a change of scenery."

Wilson, like many others, has been on extended teleworking his home until this pandemic is under control.

One of the major reasons COVID-19 has been so deadly is because many people who have contracted it are asymptomatic. This means that even though they aren't experiencing any of the major symptoms, they may still test positive for the virus and can spread it to unsuspecting coworkers, friends, and family. And while the virus can affect anyone, there are people who are more at risk; including the elderly, people with weakened immune systems, people with serious lung and heart conditions, and people with other underlying health conditions.

This year, everyone is faced with making some very difficult choices. Is a slice of your mom's famous apple pie worth exposing yourself to COVID-19? Is congregating with your favorite cousins over turkey worth exposing your at-risk grandparents to a virus you may have picked up at the gym? For many, the rational answer is no. But the desire to band together

continued on P15



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Civilians reel as violence spins out of control in Mozambique

SOLUTION IN CABO DELGADO CONFLICT SEEMS FURTHER AWAY THAN EVER AS GRUESOME ATTACKS AGGRAVATE AN ALREADY DIRE HUMANITARIAN CRISIS.

By: Tom Bowker

Special to *The Capital News*

Maputo, Mozambique – When Mozambican President Filipe Nyusi last month visited some of the areas in the gas-rich northern province of Cabo Delgado that have been hit by an escalating conflict, he was accosted by a man who had an urgent demand.

“We’re not asking for support,” the man said, after Nyusi pointed to humanitarian assistance being provided to the hundreds of thousands of people forced to leave their homes due to the deadly fighting between an armed group linked to ISIL (ISIS) and government forces.

“We want the war to stop.”

The war, however, has not stopped. Instead, it seems to be entering a particularly gruesome new phase, if reports of dozens of recent beheadings in Cabo Delgado’s Muidumbe district turn out to be true.

Less than two weeks ago, just as Muidumbe was getting back on its feet after its main villages were overrun in April, ISIL-linked fighters launched another assault on the district. The attackers reportedly faced stiff resistance in some quarters from a local militia led by veterans of Mozambique’s war of independence in the 1960s-70s – but have taken revenge by conducting mass beheadings in a football stadium in Muatide village, according to Pinnacle News, an outlet based in northern Mozambique with a network of correspondents across Cabo Delgado.

The United Nations chief expressed shock at “the reports of massacres ... including the reported beheading and kidnapping of women and children” and called Mozambique’s authorities to investigate the incidents.



The conflict has displaced more than 350,000 people [File: Ricardo Franco/EPA]

Muidumbe is further inland than the locations that have mostly been affected by the surging violence, which began in October 2017 when members of a shadowy armed group, which later pledged allegiance to ISIL, attacked police stations in the key port town of Mocimboa da Praia. It is also uncomfortably close to the town of Mueda, home to the Mozambican military’s most important base in Cabo Delgado.

Mueda itself has yet to come under attack, but nor has the military stationed there managed to retake Mocimboa da Praia, which remains out of the government’s control four months after it was seized by the fighters following fierce battles with Mozambican marines aided by South African mercenaries.

Mocimboa da Praia’s port is strategically important for liquefied natural gas projects led by Total and ExxonMobil that are being developed on a fortified peninsula a short way up the coast, close to the town of Palma.

Those gas projects should transform Mozambique’s economy and help bring Cabo Delgado – a province where development, and pov-

erty reduction, has fallen dramatically short of that seen in the south of the country – out of poverty.

But that dream seems further away than ever since news broke in early November that a flagship project to use some of the gas in the country has been cancelled. Norwegian fertiliser giant Yara informed the government last month that it would not go ahead with a planned plant that would have used gas from the projects in Cabo Delgado to make fertiliser, local business news website Zitamar News reported – as the government was unable to guarantee gas to Yara at a low enough price. The failure of the Yara project is “a classic of what has caused the insurgency”, according to Joseph Hanlon, a veteran journalist who has been writing about Mozambique since the 1970s.

“In five years, the government have done nothing to use the gas for domestic development. Nothing,” he said. “If they’d got Yara on board they’d have transformed Mozambique’s agriculture. But they just didn’t care.”

Mozambique violence from pg. 14

Meanwhile, the failure to take back control of Mocimboa da Praia may prove to be a big strategic mistake, according to Jasmine Opperman of the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED).

“We have seen new recruits going and joining them freely and willingly” in the town, Opperman warned during an Institute for Security Studies webinar on November 4.

The fighting in Cabo Delgado has killed 2,283 people since it started more than three years ago, according to ACLED, and 355,000 have been forced to leave their homes, the United Nations’ Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said at the end of last month.

Rights groups say the fighters in Cabo Delgado have carried out summary executions, beheadings, raids on villages, looting, and destruction of infrastructure, including schools and medical facilities. Government forces have also been implicated in grave human rights abuses during operations in the province including arbitrary arrests, torture, wrongful use of force against civilians and extrajudicial executions.

Last month, the fighters apparently cleared an area of coastal Cabo Delgado known as Mucojo. Young people were abducted, men were killed, and survivors fled to nearby islands and ultimately to the provincial capital of Pemba, according to reports.

The beach at Paquitequete, Pemba’s most densely-populated neighborhoods, received well above 10,000 internally displaced people



The beach at Paquitequete has become one of the main arrival points for people fleeing the violence in Cabo Delgado [File: Ricardo Franco/EPA]

arriving by dhow in the second half of October – the majority of them children.

One such boat capsized on October 29, and 54 people drowned.

Emboldened, the fighters have also expanded their sphere of operation north into Tanzania, crossing the Rovuma River that marks the border between the two countries to carry out raids on villages in Tanzania’s Mtwara region. The first such raid came two weeks before Tanzania’s presidential election last month when 200 fighters attacked the town of Kitaya, according to the Tanzanian police chief. Since then, more attacks have been reported – despite a robust response from the Tanzanian security forces, who have also deported some 1,000 refugees back into Cabo Delgado in recent weeks.

Mozambique’s Prime Minister Carlos Agostinho do Rosário travelled to the Tanzanian capital of Dodoma on November 5 for President John Magufuli’s inauguration and had a private meeting with him to discuss the situation on the border.

Aware that the conflict will not only have a military solution, Mozambique’s government has created a new economic development agency for the north of the country, focusing on Cabo Delgado.

The first task of the Northern Integrated Development Agency is to help deal with the humanitarian catastrophe – but in the long term, it aims to promote development that will create much-needed employment in the region.

As the fighting spins out of control and investors leave, however, a solution seems further away than ever.

COVID-19 Holidays from pg. 11

is particularly strong this year because what everyone has endured.

People have been attempting to socially distance for months and everyone is emotionally exhausted. Trying to explore ways to stay connected without endangering loved ones is something everyone will have to navigate as the holiday season approaches. This may mean deciding to connect with loved ones virtually. Another option is to limit the number of family members invited to gatherings to lower the chances of being in contact with someone who is exposed to the virus. Though testing for COVID-19 looks uncomfortable, knowing your status before deciding to gather this holiday season may help ease some tension and anxiety for you and your loved ones. And while none of these options are ideal, remember that keeping you and your family safe is a top priority.

SAGITTARIUS

(November 22 to December 21)

Happy Birthday to visionary, fun loving Sags! Mix, mingle and inspire with your 'big picture' view of life. You desire to focus on your joint personal resources although questions could arise on moving too quickly. A friendly approach could iron out differences. Work opportunities present in a very vague way and may cause some agitation with your personal income and comforts that you enjoy. Awareness of your personal shortcomings at the work place will hit you. Hard work and learning will rebound in a very beneficial way.

CAPRICORN

(December 22 to January 19)

The spotlight surrounds a very private matter concerning roadblocks regarding children. Some dreams come true in regards to having children; there are many possibilities for some to be on the family way. You will have to make many adjustments in a very quick manner in this area. Many worries and concerns may bother you but this will be unfounded and will pass. You will also take an initiative in regards to letting go from your past and facing a much better future.

AQUARIUS

(January 20 to February 18)

New talents and interests are beginning to percolate now to be revealed in their fullness over time. Health, healing as well as job and life direction are highlighted. You might have to open your home to a friend from a far distance and make adjustments there. You could have much beneficial communication coming from this visit in regards to your work area. Changing your residence could be one of the things in a dream stage and this looks very tempting. Doubts and insecurities bother you but you will be keeping this to yourself. An older person could be of help to you in sorting things out.

PISCES

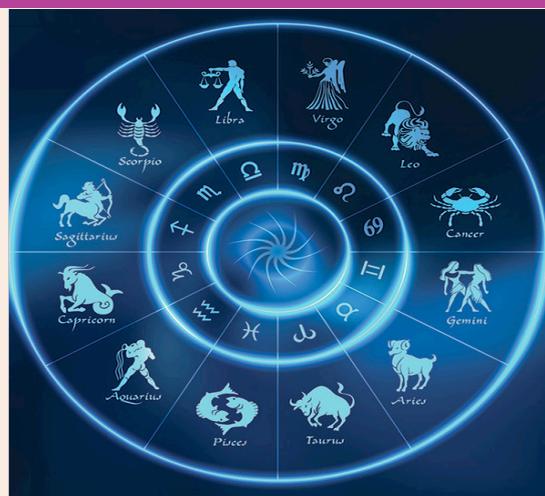
(February 19 to March 20)

You are focusing on your career and aims in life. A decision could bring gains toward future investment and speculation. Try to reconcile all this by taking into consideration shared resources. Past and future are on the balance and there could be some differences of opinion that will have to be worked out. Open communication with loved ones should take place in a harmonious way so you can clarify all your worries and concerns.

ARIES

(March 21 to April 19)

Plenty of raw energy is available, but it will be up to you to refine it and define how it affects you and those around you. You might not even believe how your philosophical outlook in life is changing in a much more effective and beneficial way for you; especially connected to your personal roots.

December HoroscopesSource: www.yearly-horoscope.org/

You are going through a period of learning experiences at a very fast pace. Personal income and values lessons continue and they seem to be getting better, but a misjudged approach for lack of seeing clearly causes some worries and concerns.

TAURUS

(April 20 to May 20)

Your areas of shared and outside sources of income are in the spotlight. Fortunate circumstances seem to be surrounding this and some gains could come for you and your partner or mate. Your work area seems to be intensifying as unexpected work could be falling into your lap. Approaching this as a good experience could be very enriching in the long run. Life continues to have an up-beat mode in spite of apparent setbacks that are only for the better and could work out in your favor.

GEMINI

(May 21 to June 20)

There could be some gains in your mutual relationship. Quick learning will be necessary in investments and speculation in order to reap some gain but watch out for obstacles that could come your way. There are many worries and concerns in regard to your shared resources of income as your sense of responsibility seems to be very much enhancing right now. Your sense of optimism accompanied by some daydreaming could be very helpful in balancing these feelings.

CANCER

(June 21 to July 22)

The next several months will involve personal inventory taking to decide which beliefs and patterns are 'keepers' and which are not. Don't hesitate to dream, but focus upon 'a day at a time'. Your houses of romance and relationship are highlighted this month. There is some uncertainty or confusion that needs to be sorted out. Is someone not being straightforward about their needs or acting 'needy?' There is passion there, but let it be used for blissful experiences rather than 'crabbiness.'

The 12th to 14th may be the toughest days in this regard. As Christmas approaches home life – your favorite area – and relationships are positively supported. You likely to meet interesting new friends or contacts before month's end.

LEO

(July 23 to August 22)

You may meet someone special at a social setting. This could be an individual that will come into your life in a very rapid fashion and could be a fast talker and communicator. Many differences could surface that could bring some tension but talking things out could smooth the way. Preoccupation concerning your work area could surface as you could be reliving some unpleasant past experience, but this time the table could be turning on your favor so be optimistic.

VIRGO

(August 23 to September 22)

Home life is very much in the spotlight this month. Aims toward your future seem to be bringing some advantage to your life. Unexpected developments connected to a friend in your work will be teaching you a thing or two, but good fortune should come from this experience that could bring you extra personal income. There are certain issues connecting the past and future that need to be negotiated in order to find a fair solution. A very rosy opportunity of an investment nature could come your way that could cause some concerns as you wish to look at this with a mature approach and understanding.

LIBRA

(September 23 to October 22)

There will be communication and many exchanges of ideas related to your future gains of monetary value and future endeavors. You could be having a very conservative approach to all this as there are certain worries and concerns at your home base that are keeping you on guard from changes especially when they are presented to you in a very grandiose manner. Quick adjustments concerning your future may be present so reorientation will be necessary. On or after the 15th you will be listening more to your feelings and making up your mind about all these issues.

SCORPIO

(October 23 to November 21)

You have some bottled up energy full of confusion by many changes but buck will be with you on an expenditure for your home base. Disagreement concerning this should be worked out in a very harmonious way. Dreaming a little will not hurt, so try to weigh practicality. You will learn a lot from communicating future hopes of shared and personal resources with your mate or partner could come in a very quick and friendly manner. Whether you celebrate Hanukkah, Christmas, or Kwanza with your tribe, it will be a very special time for you!

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2525 12th Place, SE,
Washington, DC 20020
11am Sunday Worship
Congress Heights Campus
421 Alabama Avenue, SE,
Washington, DC 20032
8:30am Sunday Worship
Office: 202/889-3660 • Fax: 202/678-5213
Email: churchoffice@bdmdc.org

Campbell A.M.E. Church
2568 Martin Luther King, Jr. Ave. SE, WDC 20032
(202) 678-2263
Sunday Worship 8:00am & 11:00am
Sunday School 9:30am
Prayer Service Wednesdays 6:30pm
Bible Study Wednesday 12noon
Bible Study Thursday 7:00pm

Christ Ministries
30 Atlantic Street, SE WDC 20032
Services: 11 am and 3pm

Covenant Baptist United Church of Christ
Dr. Dennis and Christine Wiley, Co-Pastors
3845 South Capitol St. SW WDC 20032
(202) 562-5576
“Ministries for the Mind, Body and Spirit”
Sunday Worship 10:00am
Wednesday Bible Study 12noon & 6:30pm
www.covenantbaptistucc.org

East Washington Heights Baptist Church
Rev. Kip Bernard Banks, Sr., Pastor
2220 Branch Ave. SE WDC 20020
(202) 582-4811– Office
(202) 58202400– Fax
Sunday Worship 11:10am
Sunday School 9:30am
Devotional Service 10:45 am
Bible Study Wednesday 6:30pm
Children’s Church 2nd & 4th Sunday 11:00am
www.ewhbc.org ewhbc@aol.com

Emmanuel Baptist Church
Christopher L. Nichols, Pastor
2409 Ainger Pl., SE WDC 20020
(202) 678-0884-Office • (202) 678-0885– Fax
“Moving Faith Forward”
Sunday Worship 8:00am & 10:45am
Family Bible Study Tuesdays 7:00pm
Prayer Service Tuesday 6:00pm
www.emmanuelbaptistchurchdc.org

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Evangelist Susie Owens, Co-Pastor
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(202) 529-4547
“It doesn’t matter how you feel,
God is still worthy to be praised”
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Super Sunday Service 3rd Sundays of month 6:00pm
Wednesday Night Prayer 6:30pm
Wednesday Bible Study 7:30pm
www.gmchc.org/

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1251 Saratoga Ave. NE WDC 20018
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Senior Bible Class Tuesday 10:30am
Wednesday Prayer Noon & 6:30pm
Bible Study Wednesday 7:00pm
Holy Communion First Sunday 10:45am
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(202) 678-3304 Fax
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Bible Study Saturday 11:00am
Holy Communion 1st Sunday 10:45am

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Young Adult Bible Study Tuesdays 7:00pm
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Reverend John A. Dillard III
2801 Stanton Rd. SE, Washington DC 20020
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Sunday School 9:00am
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WARD 7

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Hillcrest Recreation Center
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3923-A S Capitol St SW

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2844 Langston Pl SE

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1523 Alabama Ave. SE

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1800 Martin Luther King Jr Ave SE

Kingdom Care Senior Village
814 Alabama Ave SE

Marion Barry's Ward 8 Office
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Opportunities Industrialization Center
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3707 MLK Jr. Ave. SE

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SunTrust Bank
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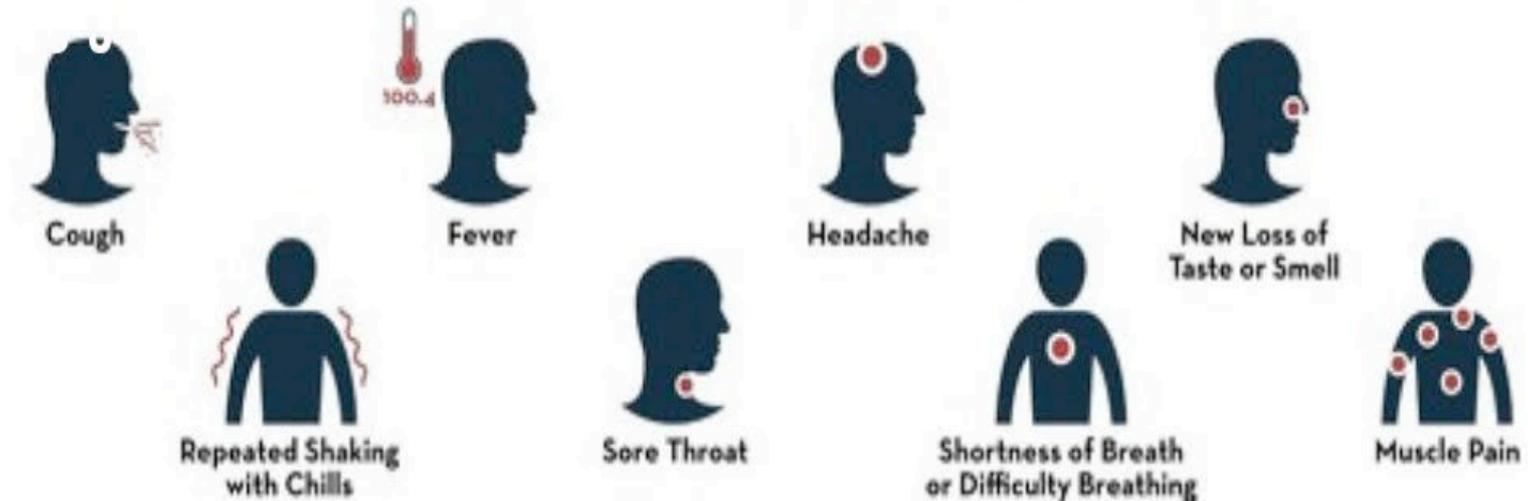
Secrets of Nature Health Food Centers
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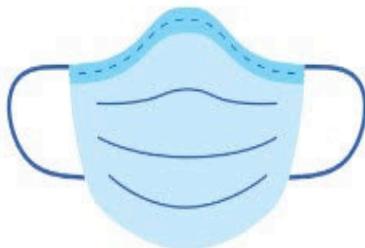
SYMPTOMS OF CORONA VIRUS (COVID - 19)

People with COVID - 19 have had a wide range of symptoms reported ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness. These symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus:



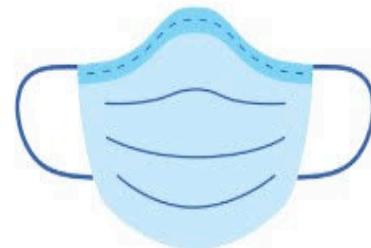
WE HAVE A SHARED RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT DC

MY MASK



**PROTECTS
YOU**

YOUR MASK



**PROTECTS
ME**

DISTRICT'S COVID - 19 HOTLINE



CALL : 1-888-349-8323

Residents that are homebound because of COVID-19 can request support from the District for food and other essential items.

