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NEWS JOURNAL

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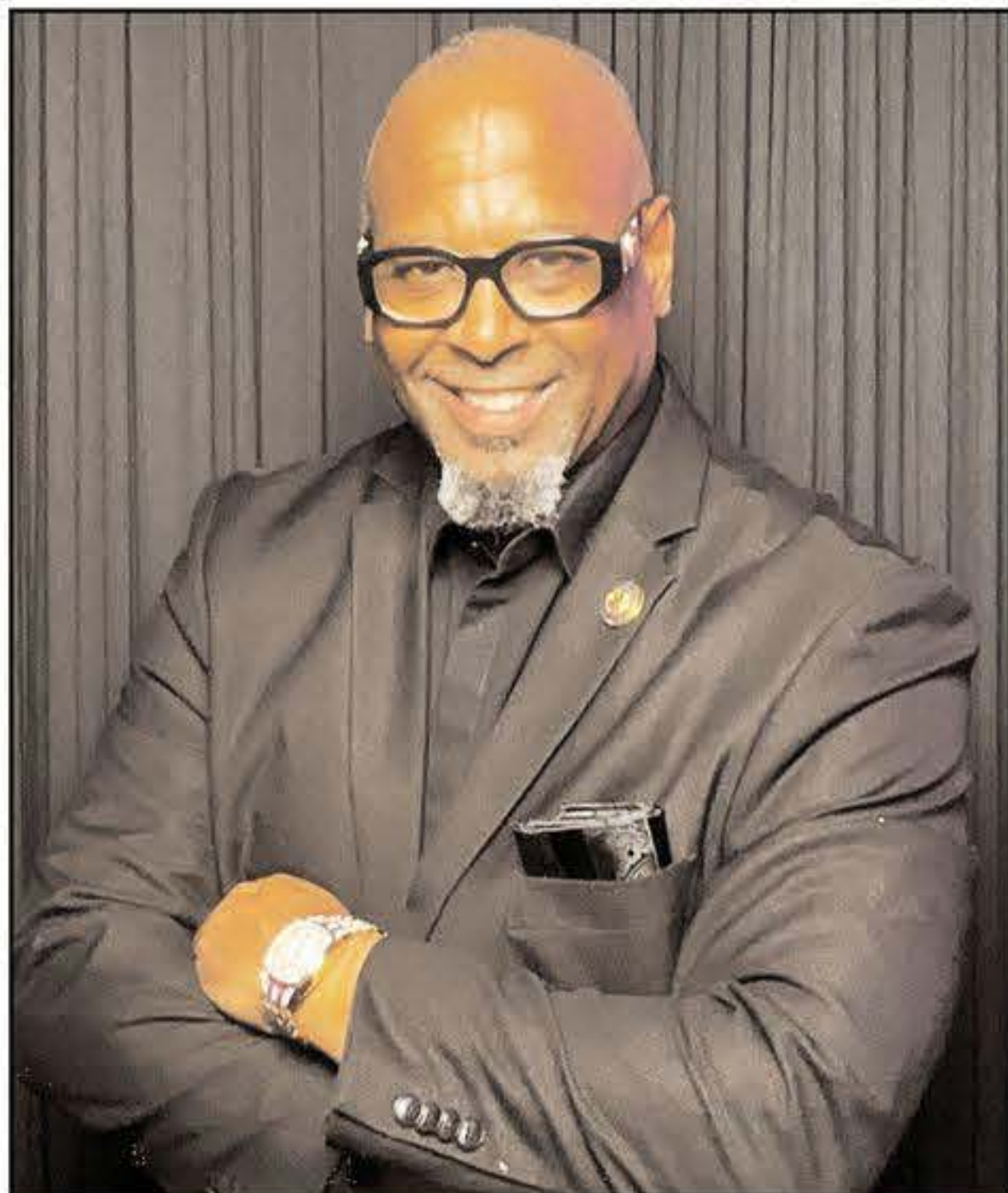
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A Word from the Editor

Celebrating 31 years of providing quality news to our readers

Dear Readers of the nation's premier faith-based and professional newspaper for winners, Anointed News Journal (ANJ). I am taking this time personally to thank each and every individual that has read the Anointed News Journal. I hope you have been inspired by the many positive people interest stories, and stories that have uplifted and empowered our communities.

I am also taking this time to thank our many advertisers that saw the value in utilizing ANJ to accomplish your marketing goals for your companies and/or purpose. ANJ remains the VOICE of Camden city and the SOURCE for connecting people together. If you are in business and need to advertise, we can help. Based in Camden, NJ, the Anointed News Journal has distribution locally in CAMDEN, BURLINGTON, GLOUCESTER, SALEM, CUMBERLAND, DELAWARE, NEW CASTLE, KENT, and PHILADELPHIA COUNTIES. Since 1995 ANJ has provided stories and distribution to 28 states across the country and 11 nations around the world.

Getting your message in front of more than 180,000 readers weekly in print and much more via the world-wide web is a great way to reach the market you are looking for.

I am also thanking those individuals that have given resources to support our mission of publishing positive press. Your contributions are paramount and my heart continues to be filled with joy from the smallest contribution to the largest, every time I receive a contribution I cannot hold my smile in. I am forever grateful. For those that have been reading ANJ for many years and have never given a contribution, now is a great time to do so.

ANJ is a free publication that is supported by its advertisers. We offer cost effective advertising giving advertisers the opportunity to get quality exposure at a comfortable price point. We offer RISK-FREE Advertising, which simply means if you are not satisfied, you will receive a complementary ad in an upcoming edition.

About Anointed News Journal

In May 1994 the CEO/Editor-in-Chief, Chris Collins received a vision from the Creator to write a business plan to seek funding for a grass-roots newspaper. For eight months and through Divine intervention, the business plan was rewritten for the ministry of the Anointed News Journal. The Holy Scripture given divinely to Collins was Habakkuk 2:2 (Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it. For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry). As a result and with prayer and seeking God's direction, the name "Anointed" was given.

Knowing that English was not his favorite subject while attending school, and that his career goal had nothing to do with journalism, Collins completely trusted in the Creator while developing this business.

The name "Anointed" comes from the hands that God has anointed to master this work and profession. Collins left a career in law enforcement to pursue the vision he received from the Creator.

Using his hands cutting and pasting stories and artwork is how it all began. Typing, proofreading, and making sure things were camera-ready before the layout was the process before technology was included.

Today, 31 years later, ANJ is recognized as a leader in the newspaper industry. ANJ was awarded Best100 Small Businesses consecutively since 2017. In 2021 Chris Collins was recognized by CIO Magazine as a Top 50 Innovators of the Year.

Although it may seem as if newspapers are becoming obsolete, ANJ continues to thrive. As the daily press struggles due to increase rates that have simply priced them out of the market. Weekly newspapers continue to make their mark serving the community and its advertisers. Although many have embraced the digital divide, people still want their physical newspapers. Because of the types of "Peoples Interest Stories" found in ANJ, most readers save their copies for years. Although mainstream media focus on negative press, ANJ has built its legacy on positive stories. "We have written a lot of stories in the past 30 years, and in 30 years we still have not run out of great stories to write about the great people of Camden and surrounding areas," said Collins. "As we look at the rise of Camden, NJ and the great positive image it has today, I believe we helped to increase that image by sharing the positive stories Camden has to offer, and we've been doing that for 30 years now," said Collins.

My Ask!

This is what I am asking from you today. I am asking every reader of ANJ, those of you who believe in positive press and grass-roots press to make a financial contribution to support our mission. Many have been reading ANJ for 30 years and have never made a contribution but would like to. Now is the perfect time as we have entered into our 31st season. For those who are unable to financially contribute, we are thankful for your continued prayers.

The Holy Scriptures in Matthew 7:7-8 (KJV) states, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened."

Luke 6:38 (KJV) states, "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again."

I'm believing in the POWER of God. I'm believing in the POWER of God's People coming together. Yes, I'm believing in YOU.

1 John 5:14-15 (KJV) states, "And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask any thing according to His will, He heareth us: And if we know that He heareth us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him."

Please make all contributions payable to: Anointed News Journal, P.O. Box 309, Camden, NJ 08101. You can also visit: www.anointedonline.net click on Donation button. You can also Cash App to SANJEDITOR.

May God continue to bless you! May God continue to bless this world! May god continue to bless ANJ!

Yours truly,
Chris Collins, CEO/Editor-in-Chief

ANointed News Journal

PO Box 309
Camden, NJ 08101
anjeditor@verizon.net
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Have you received your salvation? If not just say, "Father, forgive me of my sins. I believe that Jesus Christ died on the cross for my sins and that He arose again from the grave." If you believe this prayer, you are now saved by God's grace. I encourage you to get into a Bible teaching church to learn more about our wonderful Savior Jesus Christ.

Note: Opinions by columnists do not reflect those of the editor or staff. Feel free to respond.

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Protecting and Providing: Steeley's Dual Focus on Safety and Opportunity in Camden

CAMDEN, NJ - Joshua Steeley, a Camden, New Jersey native, transformed a life-threatening experience into a powerful mission to serve, protect, and uplift his community. As the founder and president of Aziel Protection LLC, Steeley leads a growing security firm that spans New Jersey and Pennsylvania, offering top-tier services backed by military, law enforcement, and private investigation experience & training. Aziel Protection represents a commitment to community empowerment—particularly for young men and women in Camden—through job creation, mentorship, and second-chance opportunities. With a deep foundation in faith and an entrepreneurial spirit, Steeley has also launched a nonprofit initiative to help young people discover purpose and stability through career development and business ownership.

In an exclusive interview with the nation's premier faith-based and professional newspaper for winners, Anointed News Journal, Joshua Steeley shares how surviving violence ignited his mission to build safer communities, empower youth, and lead with purpose through faith and entrepreneurship.

Collins:
Who is Josh Steeley?

Steeley:
Joshua Steeley is an African American male born and raised in Camden, New Jersey. I'm 40 years old. I've been doing security for a little over a decade. I'm done private investigating in Philadelphia for about eight years. I also had a security company in Philadelphia. I'm a father—a father of six. I'm a God-fearing man. Serving is my passion. I serve others. That's how you become a leader: by serving first. I'm trying to impact my community more, particularly by helping youth get jobs in the security and law enforcement fields.

Collins:
Josh, you are also the founder and president of your own security firm. Tell us about the name of the security firm and what your mission is.

Steeley:
Azziel Protection LLC. The security firm was founded in 2014. We service New Jersey and Pennsylvania—those are the two states I'm concentrating on. The name is backed by a Hebrew meaning: "God is our underlying strength." I named it that because I'm a Christian and I believe in a higher power. I got that name from praying, asking God what I should call my company. So it has religious values. We view ourselves as soldiers—to help preserve life and property, and to assist any individuals who are victimized.

Collins:
All right, so Josh, let me ask: what motivated you to start your own security firm?



Steeley:
What motivated me to start my own security firm was an incident in 2012. I was the victim of a potential homicide. I was sitting on my father's steps at 813 Newton Avenue—that's where I'm from in Camden, downtown. I was on the phone talking to my children, about to take my father to work. A car pulled up in the middle of the street. Two guys hopped out of the back seat and started approaching me, asking if I was selling drugs. I said, "No, man, I don't sell drugs. You have to go around the corner." Then those two guys opened fire on me—about 11 shots. I hit the ground and went into fight-or-flight mode. I didn't have a firearm on me at the time. It was in the house because I didn't have a license to carry it outside the house back then. So I fled the other way. Cars were following me, circling the block. So I hid until the police were called.

I remember that feeling—being helpless. Hopeless. By the grace of God, He preserved me for a reason. At that moment, I said, "God, I can either take this down a negative path and go on a hunt, or I can serve—serve those who were in my situation, who felt helpless and hopeless, who didn't have anyone to back them up, and who were victims." There are programs—if you're a victim, you can go to Camden County and get psychological therapy and support. I did that. But the experience encouraged me. I said, "I never want to be caught without a firearm again, and I want to help others who've been through what I went through." Not everyone makes it out—but I had the opportunity to. So I want to give back to my community. And I'm servicing the downtown area where I almost lost my life.

Collins:
So how large is your security firm at this time, and what services do you provide?

Steeley:
The security firm currently operates in Pennsylvania and New Jersey—that's where my main focus is right now. I do have concealed carry permits that allow me to operate across the United States, but I'm concentrating on the tri-state area. I have about 18 employees, and we're growing. My goal is to reinvest in my community. I can take contracts in Delaware or Florida, and I get offers regularly, but I often turn them down because I want to stay focused here in Camden, where I was born and raised, and also in Philadelphia.

We have a lot of family in Philadelphia and a strong client base there as well. I actually started out as a fugitive recovery agent, which is a bounty hunter. That was my first license in the state of Pennsylvania. At the time, New Jersey didn't allow private individuals to do that unless you were a police officer or a retired police officer. So I went out of state, got all my licenses, and then transferred them over to New Jersey. That was my strategy, because I had declined becoming a police officer. It wasn't financially viable for me at the time, and I couldn't hire the people I wanted to hire. I've always had an entrepreneurial mindset and wanted to build a team.

So I began as a bounty hunter, then became a private investigator in Philadelphia. I worked on a few homicide cases, and also handled many infidelity investigations.

That eventually led me to managing a large club—Haason Reddick's club. We had about 30 employees. I did the club scenes, personal protection for mayors and high-end clients, and I traveled from Florida to California providing body-guard services.

The travel part was difficult because I was a single father at the time, raising my three kids by myself. I couldn't travel as much, so I started subcontracting those services to others. I shifted my focus to creating more consistent, passive income through scheduled site security, which allowed me to be more present as a father.

Now, I service various sites including supermarkets, car lots, and Camden County OEO buildings—providing overnight protection to prevent break-ins and safeguard employees. We also cover events, hotels in Atlantic City, and more. I'm still growing, still hiring good people, and staying focused on the mission.

Collins:
Now, Josh, you're 40 years old. A lot of young people might have taken the safer route and entered into law enforcement as a police officer, correctional officer, or similar. You chose the path of entrepreneurship. When you look at where you are today, what are your thoughts? Are you happy that you chose the entrepreneurship route?

Steeley:
Yes, I'm happy that I chose the entrepreneurship route. I did train with SWAT in Chester, PA, alongside a lot of police officers. That's where I received my training. My instructor was Tom Dickson, a former Chester police officer who later became a firearms dealer. He owns about 31 acres of land where we conduct our firearms training.

So I do train with law enforcement. I like the path I chose because I'm able to provide jobs and salaries. I've always wanted to help the community, especially by giving people the financial means to provide for their families. I also have many connections in law enforcement, and for individuals who want to work in security, build their resume, and later transition into law enforcement, I strongly encourage it.

I'm one of the few who skipped the route of becoming a police officer but still earned the credentials similar to those of a retired officer. Most retired officers start a security company after their service. Somehow, I was able to train with law enforcement and work under private investigators and police officers, which allowed me to become a private investigator myself. That's how I earned the credentials to own a security company. In New Jersey, you can't just open one; you need five years of experience as a private investigator or be retired law enforcement. I met the requirement by working under police officers as a private investigator.

Collins:
What words of encouragement would you give to a young man or woman who wants to pursue entrepreneurship or a career in law enforcement?

Continued from page 4

Steeley:

I'd say go for your goals. Pursue whatever you feel God has called you to do. Think about it, write it down, and weigh the pros and cons—the positives and negatives—and then go for it.

We have a lot of older individuals in the community who want to help younger folks before they get into trouble. I tell them, "Hey, you got your concealed carry yet? No? Then get it. You have your SORA card? No? You should get that too." You can build your resume in law enforcement before making choices that could disqualify you from getting those credentials. The law has opened up opportunities in that area.

So I encourage everyone to exercise their Second Amendment rights—to protect themselves and others. The world is not getting any safer. We need people who are willing to step up, help keep the world safe, and preserve life and property for those working to build better lives for others.

Collins:

So, Aziel is a full-service security firm. I believe you offer both armed and unarmed services. How can people acquire your services?

Steeley:

Yes, that's correct. They can email me at info@azielprotection.com. Let me give you the contact numbers too. I have two lines: one for Camden, New Jersey—(856) 383-0383, and one for Philadelphia—(215) 403-6770.

Our Instagram is [@azielprotection](https://www.instagram.com/azielprotection), and the email is info@azielprotection.com.

Collins:

And what can someone expect when they acquire your services?

Steeley:

You can expect the highest level of security service. We have retired police officers, martial arts instructors, firearm instructors, and retired military personnel. I do my best to hire top-tier individuals.

Our services are affordable, but not cheap—in terms of quality. We provide the highest level of professionalism and skill in the private security field.

Collins:

What's next for Joshua Steeley?

Steeley:

I'm currently forming a nonprofit called Camden Rising Entrepreneurs And Mentors, or C.R.E.A.M.; The mission is to give back to the youth—something I'm very passionate about.

I played football for Camden High, and I've seen a lot of talented athletes who go to college but don't make it out. Still, they have heart, drive, and discipline—qualities that can translate well into security and protection work.

So, I'm working with high school students who may not be sure what's next after graduation, especially with the rising cost of college. Each year, I plan to sponsor around five graduates to go through security clearance training. I'll give them internships with my firm, then offer them full-time employment. Once they turn 21, I'll help them get their armed license, starting them at a salary of \$40,000 and up.

I also mentor both young men and women, helping them figure out their path—not just in security, but in business in general. I'm a serial entrepreneur, and I help others start LLCs, get formation documents, obtain EINs, build credit, and launch their own businesses.

We have a network of entrepreneurs working with us who guide others into entrepreneurship. Some people bounce from job to job because they were meant to be their own boss. Once they realize that, everything starts to click. They just need help tapping into what they believe God called them to do.

Collins:

The Anointed News Journal has over 180,000 readers weekly. In conclusion, what do you want to say to the readers of The Anointed?

Steeley:

First of all, I'd like to thank you, Mr. Chris Collins, for allowing me to be part of your news journal—and for allowing me to serve you when you attend various government meetings and events. It's truly a pleasure to serve you.

To anyone in need of our services—we're available. We also offer referrals. If you know anyone in need of security services, we provide a referral incentive, which could be a cash deposit or a percentage of the contract value, depending on the terms. It's a finder's fee—something that helps us grow. And when we grow, our community grows.

I'm also working closely with James Stewart—he's the person I send male and female applicants to for their security clearance training. I'm hiring directly from my city. I have a deep desire to see Camden residents working with us, not to be biased, but because we serve Camden—and I want Camden residents to benefit economically. When we hire from our own community, we help bring income and opportunity back into the city. It's all about building Camden up from within.

Conclusion:

Joshua Steeley's story is one of resilience, faith, and purpose-driven leadership. Through Aziel Protection LLC and his nonprofit efforts, he continues to uplift his community by creating opportunities, mentoring youth, and promoting safety across Camden, Philadelphia, and beyond. His commitment to service and entrepreneurship serves as a powerful example of how one life transformed can lead to the transformation of many.

By Chris Collins

Senator Andy Kim Holds Statewide Town Hall Focused on Impact GOP Budget Bill Would Have on Disability Community in NJ

JERSEY CITY, N.J. – This evening, Senator Andy Kim (D-NJ) held a statewide telephone town hall focused on the disability community and what the upcoming reconciliation bill will mean for their lives. More than 5,400 New Jersey residents from across the state dialed into this virtual event.

During the town hall, Senator Kim discussed how changes to Medicaid and other programs under the Republican-lead reconciliation bill would reduce access to healthcare coverage for the disability community.

Senator Kim was joined by Tom Spadaro, a Toms River based disability advocate who was instrumental in helping Ocean County's disability community receive PPE during the pandemic. He was also joined by Peg Kinsell, Policy Director for SPAN Parent Advocacy Network, and Director of the Military Family Support 360 Project at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst.

Each guest speaker recounted their personal experiences using Medicaid and provided details on how families and caregivers will be harmed by additional barriers for needed treatment. They emphasized how these proposed cuts and barriers would radically damage the quality of life of the roughly 200,000 New Jerseyans who rely on Medicaid for help with their disabilities.

During the town hall, Senator Kim heard from constituents regarding their fears about what will happen if Medicaid is cut, and what cuts would mean overall for their access to necessary treatments, equipment, aides, and appointments. He also answered questions about ways he is supporting Federal workers during this time, the current situation in the Middle East, and how he and other Democratic Senators are working to oppose the current Republican budget bill, which threatens to cut Medicaid, SNAP, Pell Grants, and other critical funding for working New Jerseyans.



Highlights of the town hall include:

On the Future of Patient Care if These Cuts Pass:

Senator Kim – "Major changes in budget cuts could very well impact [a public hospitals] ability to continue to provide care. I wish I could tell you something otherwise, but I want to make sure I'm telling you the truth. This legislation, as it stands coming out of a House of Representatives, is the single largest healthcare cut in our country's history. So this is really severe in terms of what we're facing."

On the Realities for Tom Spadaro and Others in the Disability Community if Medicaid is Cut:

Tom Spadaro – "I have been a total quadriplegic since I was 11 and was involved in a gun accident. I am dependent upon a ventilator, and have truly depended upon others, all of my life, 24 hours a day for 46 years. Over the years, [Medicaid] evolved with all these different changes to make it better for the disabled community...it came with the ability to go to school, to go to college...it's given me dignity, and it's taken a burden off of my family and my partner. If I lose Medicaid, I feel like I'm getting shot in the head again. This time, it's not a bullet. It's legislation."

Senator Kim – "[Medicaid recipients] aren't asking for the moon, but are just looking for some support; they are struggling from food insecurity, struggling when it comes to keeping the heat on, and are, again, people with disabilities, people that have challenges when it comes to be able to afford this moment right now in terms of just how many different costs they are facing. And this is just about trying to help them through these difficult times."

On Supporting the People, not the Bottom Line:

Senator Kim – "When we are talking about people on Medicaid, the vast majority of [Medicaid recipients] are employed themselves or in a household with at least one worker...this pushes back upon the idea that there's widespread fraud or 'lazy people who don't want to work'. That is not what we're talking about here. We're talking about one in every three kids in New Jersey gets healthcare through Medicaid...two million out of nine million in New Jersey are on Medicaid. So this could be really devastating to so many people."

On What the These Billion of Cuts in Medicaid Will go Towards:

Senator Kim – "This is something that could very well get 16 million people in this country to lose their healthcare, something that would have a lot of impact when it comes to food assistance, benefits, and many other aspects of people's lives."

And for what purpose? It's not about bringing the deficit down. It's not about being fiscally responsible that way, or efficiency. It's really just a transfer from those that need care the most to tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans."

Senator Kim works to expand access to opportunity through education as a member of the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP). Kim also sits on the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation; Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs; Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs; and the Special Committee on Aging.



Leslie Morris Receives Lifetime Achievement Award at Simmons University's 125th Anniversary Reunion

BOSTON, MA - Leslie Morris, Founder and CEO of Women of the Dream, was recently honored with the prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award during Simmons University's 125th Anniversary Reunion Celebration. A proud member of the Class of 1975, Morris returned to her alma mater to celebrate her 50th class reunion — and was met with one of the most meaningful honors of her career.

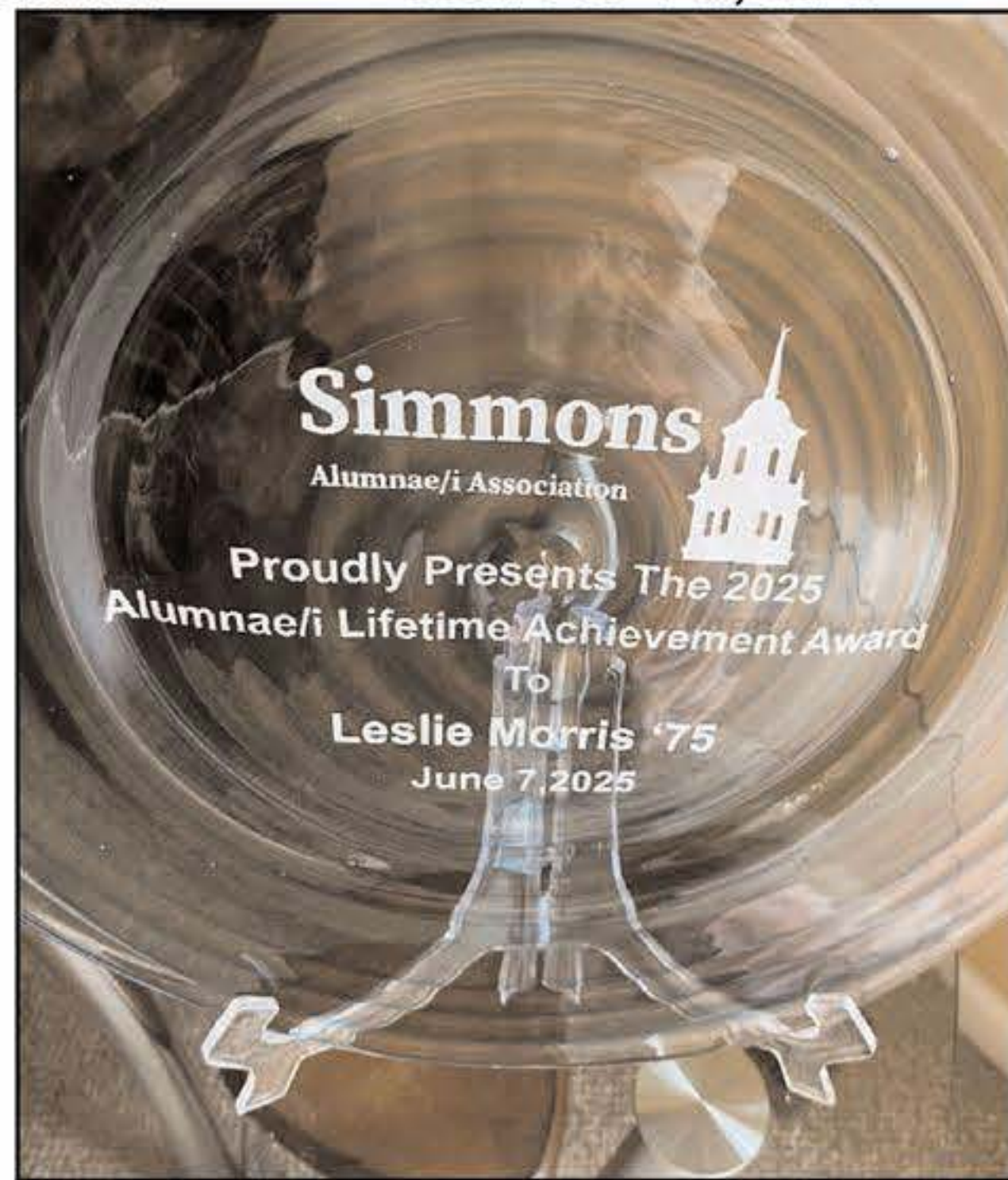
"The Lifetime Achievement Award was presented in recognition of her extraordinary leadership, lifelong community impact, and unwavering dedication to improving the lives of girls and young women in underserved communities," said Karen Thomas '77, President of the Simmons University Alumnae Association. Morris's acceptance speech, in which she recounted her journey from public housing in New Jersey to the halls of Simmons, moved audience members to tears. Many described it as one of the most powerful and resonant moments of the weekend.

Classmates and attendees praised Morris not only for sharing her deeply personal story but for giving voice to a collective experience. As one alumna remarked, "It wasn't just Leslie's story — it was our story. But only she had the courage to stand in it and speak it."

In addition to being an honoree, Morris played a key role in organizing the reunion weekend — including a Boston Harbor cruise that brought together more than 30 classmates, family members, and faculty, along with a slate of memorable Class of '75 events. Her leadership and presence were felt throughout the celebration.

Simmons University's recognition of Morris reflects a broader acknowledgment of her life's mission: empowering girls not only to dream, but to believe their dreams can come true. Her impact continues to ripple across generations — from Camden, NJ, to Boston and beyond. "I was one of the girls Ms. Morris helped when I was a teen mother in Baltimore in 1983," said Lisa, now in her 50s. "Ms. Morris was a social worker in a teen pregnancy and parenting program, and I was fortunate to have her as my counselor. It was a rough time in my life, and she helped me through it. Forty-two years later, I still keep in touch with her — and I credit her with where I am today."

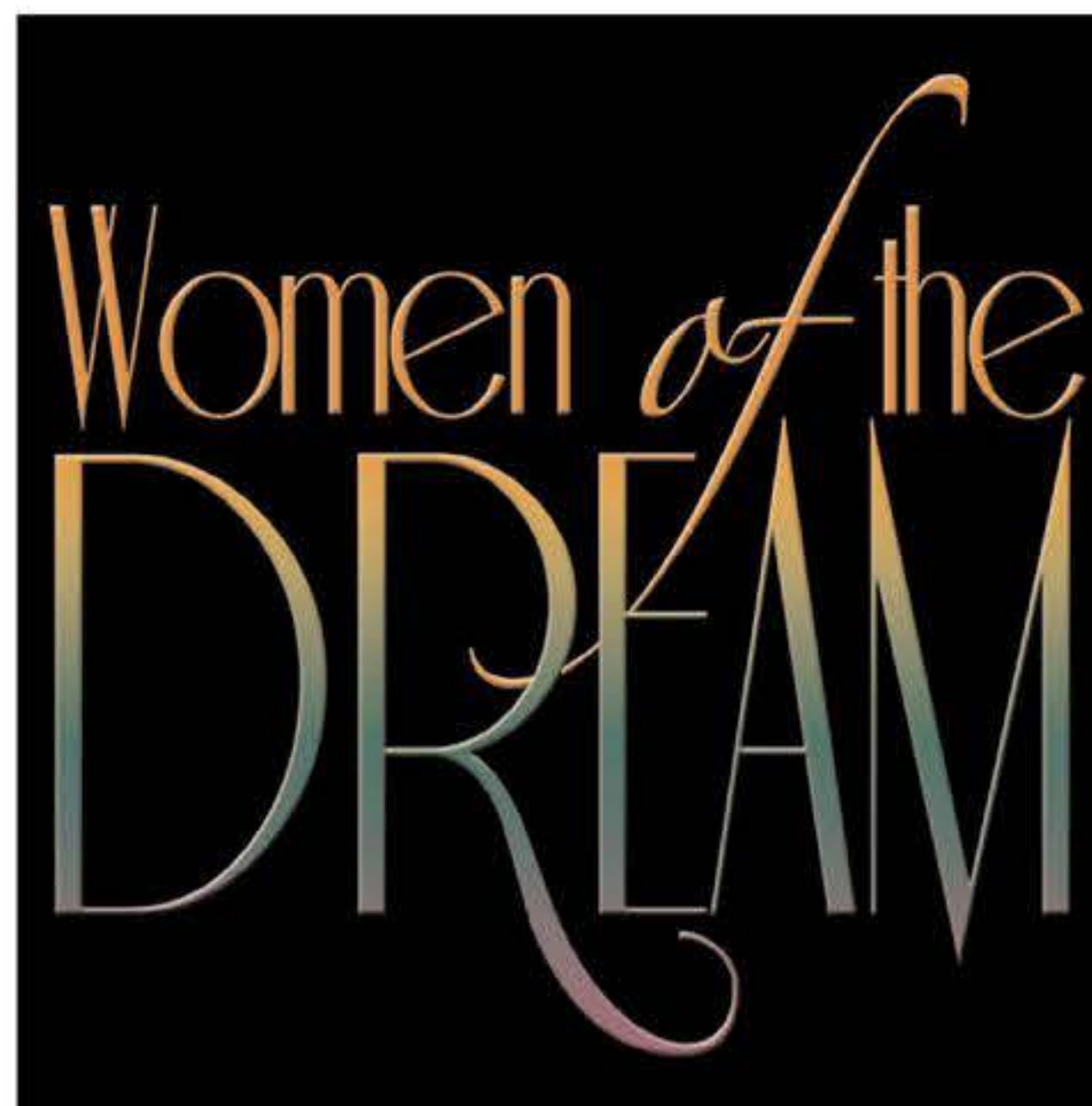
Morris has never been content to function solely as a CEO. She remains hands-on and deeply involved in the daily work of Women of the Dream, often transporting girls herself to teen workshops, college visits, and leadership conferences where they meet and network with successful women of color.



In April 2023, five girls traveled with Morris to a Black Symposium at Simmons University. There, they met Dr. Lynn Perry Wooten, Simmons' first Black president, along with other accomplished women of color graduates. One student, Sasha Oglesby, was particularly inspired. "I thought it was really cool to meet a Black woman from Philadelphia in the role of President, since Philly is so close to Camden," Sasha said. "I fell in love with Boston and Simmons and knew I wanted to go there."

Sasha, now a senior at Creative Arts High School in Camden, applied to and received her acceptance letter to Simmons in February 2025. Morris has always believed in the power of exposure and opportunity. "We can't expect young people to make good choices if they don't know what choices they have," she often says. Without that pivotal trip to Boston, Sasha may never have discovered Simmons, just as Morris herself might never have known about Simmons had her guidance counselor not arranged for her to meet Brenda Franklin, a Simmons recruiter who had visited her high school decades earlier.

As Sasha prepares to begin her Simmons journey this fall, Morris reflects with pride and humility. "The dream lives on," she says.



Delaware State University, EHRI to host Inaugural GWEP Symposium Focused on Aging Care

DOVER, Del. — Delaware State University, in partnership with Education Health and Research International (EHRI), will host the inaugural Delaware Geriatric Workforce Enhancement Program (GWEP) Symposium on Wednesday, June 18, at the Milford Wellness Village.

The symposium agenda can be found here: https://www.desu.edu/sites/flagship/files/delaware_gwep_symposium_agenda_060525_002.pdf.

Funded by a five-year, \$5 million federal grant through the Health Resources and Services Administration, the Delaware GWEP is part of a national initiative to improve care for older Americans through education, workforce development and community collaboration. Delaware State University is one of 42 academic institutions selected nationwide to lead these efforts.

The symposium will focus on creating age-friendly health systems through academic and community collaboration. It will bring together health professionals, educators, community leaders and state officials to advance age and dementia friendly practices across Delaware.

Scheduled speakers include:

- Dr. Patrice Gilliam Johnson, Interim Provost and Chief Academic Officer at Delaware State University
- Delaware Lt. Gov. Kyle Evans Gay
- Dava Newnam, Deputy Cabinet Secretary of the Delaware Department of Health and Social Services
- Dr. Karen Panunto, MSN Program Director at Delaware State University and GWEP Principal Investigator
- Rabbi Halberstam, Chief Strategy Officer at EHRI

The symposium will include plenary and panel sessions, workshops and networking opportunities. Sessions will explore geriatric curriculum development, dementia education, medication management, and career ladders for CNAs and other direct care workers. Participating organizations include Accent Care, La Red Health Center, Pace Your Life, Polaris Healthcare and Rehab Center, Village Primary Care and We-Care.

The event will also mark the launch of an interprofessional learning community to support long-term academic and community collaboration.

The symposium is supported by the Health Resources and Services Administration of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services as part of an annual award totaling \$1 million, along with non-governmental contributions. The contents do not necessarily represent the official views of the agency or the U.S. government.

More information is available at <https://bhw.hrsa.gov/funding/apply-grant/gwep-awardees>.



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Rep. Norcross Fights to Increase Funding for Faith-Based Security Amid Antisemitic Violence

June 4, 2025

WASHINGTON, DC — Last week, Congressman Donald Norcross (NJ-01) joined 45 of his congressional colleagues in sending a letter to President Trump urging him to increase funding for faith-based security measures. Congressman Norcross has long been a supporter of this increase, and the recent violent attacks on our Jewish community have made this even more urgent. The letter was a response to the recent shooting of two Israeli Embassy staff members, Sarah Milgrim and Yaron Lischinsky, who were murdered outside the Capital Jewish Museum in Washington, D.C. last month. A few weeks after the two were murdered, another horrific attack fueled by antisemitism occurred, this time in Boulder, Colorado. Twelve people were injured.

In the letter to President Trump, the lawmakers request \$500 million for the Non-Profit Security Grant Program (NSGP), one of the most effective programs for protecting faith-based communities from attack. They also request increased funding for the FBI to investigate acts of domestic terrorism and for programs that support state and local efforts to combat hate crimes.

The full text of the letter sent to President Trump can be found here and below:

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Trump,

We are writing to express our concern regarding the sharp rise in threats to the Jewish community as evidenced by and following the recent murder of two Israeli Embassy staff members, Sarah Milgrim and Yaron Lischinsky, here in Washington, D.C. In 2023, there were 2,699 reported religious-motivated hate crimes, of which sixty-three percent were driven by antisemitism — the highest number ever recorded by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) since it began collecting data in 1991. At a time when hate and violence against the Jewish community is at historic levels, it is imperative that the federal government take the necessary steps to increase funding for enhanced security measures. From bollards to prevent vehicular attacks, reinforced doors to keep intruders out, to the hiring of additional security personnel, the federal government must increase funding to ensure that the Jewish community is equipped with the necessary tools to prevent loss of life in the case of an attack. We ask that you include these necessary funding increases in your Administration's FY2026 Discretionary Budget Request.

The Non-Profit Security Grant Program (NSGP) is one of the most effective and critical programs for protecting the Jewish community and all faith-based communities from attack. There are many examples available that demonstrate the direct return on investment for communities under threat. For example, in July 2023, when an armed gunman attempted to breach the Margolin Hebrew Academy in Memphis, NSGP-funded access control doors prevented the shooter from entering the school. In 2021, when gunfire struck the Jewish Family Service building in Denver, impact-resistant window filming, purchased with NSGP funds, stopped the bullets from penetrating into the facility, protecting those inside. It is no wonder that in FY2023, for the first time in the history of the program, all 55 eligible states and territories applied. Nevertheless, only forty-three percent of applicants received funding. Therefore, we ask that you request \$500 million for the NSGP in FY2026.

As you know, the FBI has lead responsibility for federal domestic terrorism investigations and domestic intelligence efforts. Domestic terrorism investigations have more than doubled since 2020, according to the FBI. Pursuant to the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2020, the FBI and DHS, in consultation with the Director of National Intelligence, are required to report on the domestic terrorism threat in the U.S. and actions taken to combat this threat. Given the significant increase in the number of domestic terrorism investigations, we urge you to increase funding for the FBI, especially its intelligence capabilities.

Although the role of federal law enforcement agencies is critical with regards to responding to antisemitic hate crimes, local law enforcement are on the front lines when these attacks occur. It is local police departments that build relationships and trust with Jewish communities. These relationships are imperative to ensure that hate crimes do not go unreported. Nevertheless, year after year, multiple law enforcement agencies serving populations greater than 100,000, in addition to many other jurisdictions, fail to share hate crimes data with the FBI. It is impossible to address hate crimes when the FBI does not understand their extent. We urge you to increase funding for local law enforcement, including for grant programs that support state and local efforts to combat hate crimes such as the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Program, Jabara-Heyer NO HATE Act, and the Community-based Approaches to Prevent and Address Hate Crimes Program, to ensure that antisemitic hate crimes are addressed and prosecuted in a timely manner.

Finally, although Jewish institutions can use the NSGP to hire additional security personnel, the majority of Jewish institutions have either not been recipients of these grants or cannot afford the additional costs incurred. Given that your Administration has made clear its goal to respond to the rise in hate crimes, we urge you to explore opportunities, in cooperation with the House Appropriations Committee, to include dedicated assistance in FY2026 for faith-based organizations to hire additional security personnel. In light of recent events, it is more clear than ever that Jewish institutions are in desperate need of additional personnel support.

Thank you for your time and attention to these urgent requests as you finish drafting your FY2026 Discretionary Budget Request.

Rep. Norcross Announces National Science Foundation Grant for Rowan University

WASHINGTON, DC — Today, Representative Donald Norcross announced that Rowan University was awarded a \$650,000 grant from the National Science Foundation (NSF).

"This is an exciting investment to expand cutting-edge research in South Jersey," said Congressman Don Norcross. "Supporting research in our community creates opportunities, spurs economic growth, and drives innovation that benefits our communities. I'm dedicated to continuing to fund and medical research."

transform South Jersey into a leading hub for higher education. The funding that was granted through the NSF CAREER award will support research on how oxygen levels and inflammation affect the development and spread of diseases in the body. The NSF CAREER award is one of the top honors for early-career faculty and supports a highly skilled workforce.

The NSF supports innovative scientific research to strengthen our nation's economy and skilled workforce.

Collingswood's Historic Homes: A Glimpse into Centuries Past

In the tri-state area—Collingswood, New Jersey has as rich a history as any in the region—an equally as important. Like most of the land surrounding Collingswood—long before European colonization—the area was occupied by the Lenni Lenape Indians.

When Irish and English Quakers inhabited the land in the 1600s around the Cooper River—combined with the Collings family who owned parts of the region one hundred years later—Collingswood was born. In the spring of 1888—it was the New Jersey State Legislature which would make Collingswood official. Nearly 137 years later—Collingswood contains three fascinating historic homes in our area.

Even though we do know that Isaac Hollingham bought the land around what would eventually become the Stokes-Lee House in 1693—accounts vary when Isaac Hollingham II would build the house. He began that project between 1700–1717 with the construction of what would become the houses' northern end. Jacob Stokes—who was a relative of Joseph Ellis by marriage—would develop the southern end of the house in 1761. Having been sold again in 1828—the home is currently not open to the public.

The Collins-Knight House isn't only significant as a house—but also having been built on the Newtown Colony tract—which dates from the time of William Penn. It was 1825 when Edward Collins engaged carpenter John Ireland to construct the house. Just 4 years after the Civil War was concluded—the house was sold to Edward C. Knight. In 1892—the house became a rental property. In 1952—a tenant placed the iconic date stone under a chimney in the west end. Since 1984—the house has been under the care of Friends of Collings-Knight House. Today—the house is a museum.

Perhaps the house that requires the most need is the Knight Park Farmhouse. Located in Knight Park which was also developed by landowner Edward C. Knight—the house was constructed in 1888. At the end of August of that same year—Knight Park would have its dedication with the aid of Methodist Episcopal Church Harvest Home. A baseball field was added in 1889. The house that was once reserved for the superintendent of the Park—is now under a preservation and restoration by current caretaker Sean O'Donnell.

It's not only about the history that Collingswood has. It's about three incredible examples of the history that Collingswood has left behind.

By Michael Thomas Leibrandt, lives and works in Abington Township, PA.

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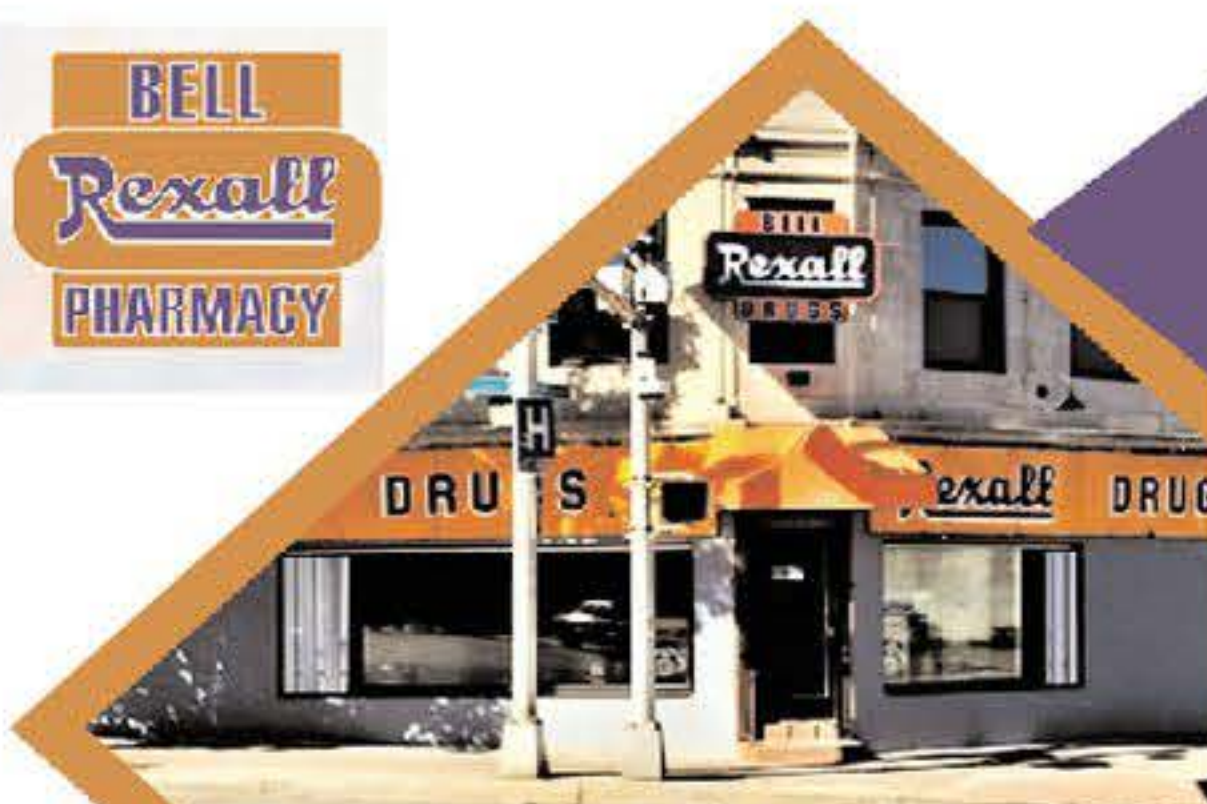
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NEW JERSEY AMERICAN WATER

American Water Charitable Foundation and New Jersey American Water Launch Second Annual Hydration Station Grant Program

Funding available for reusable water bottle filling stations in the company's service area

CAMDEN, N.J. – The American Water Charitable Foundation, a philanthropic non-profit organization established by American Water (NYSE: AWK), the largest regulated water and wastewater utility company in the U.S., along with New Jersey American Water, announced today it is now accepting applications for its second annual Hydration Station Grant Program from eligible organizations within its service area.

Formally known as the Reusable Water Bottle Filling Station Grant Program, this initiative is designed to encourage sustainable hydration and environmental responsibility. The grant program seeks to reduce single-use plastic bottle waste by funding touch-free water bottle filling stations in public spaces while building trust in tap water.

"The installation of the hydration station at Oak Glen Park has made a meaningful difference for the Orcas Baseball Club and the wider Howell community," said Sara Moran, trustee of Orca Youth Sports. "The station offers players, families and park visitors reliable access to clean drinking water, encourages healthier hydration habits and helps reduce single-use plastic waste. We're grateful to the American Water Charitable Foundation for the funding in 2024 to make this a reality and for our continued partnership with New Jersey American Water."

Eligible organizations must be a 501(c)(3) public charity, K-12 public school, college, or university located within New Jersey American Water's service territory and must be open to the public. Recipients will be responsible for the installation and any associated costs.

"We're thrilled to launch the second year of this impactful grant program in partnership with the American Water Charitable Foundation," stated Mark McDonough, president of New Jersey American Water and Member, Board of Trustees, American Water Charitable Foundation. "Last year's response made it clear that there is a strong demand for sustainable, accessible hydration stations in our communities. These stations help increase public trust in tap water by putting its quality and convenience front and center. It's a win for our customers, the environment and public health."

For more information and to apply, visit the Hydration Station Grant Program page on the New Jersey American Water website. Applications must be submitted by July 11, 2025. Recipients will be notified in August.

Funding for Hydration Station grants is provided by the American Water Charitable Foundation, as part of its State Strategic Impact Grant Program, focused on high-impact projects and initiatives throughout American Water's national footprint. State Strategic grants are part of the Foundation's Keep Communities Flowing Grant Program, focused on three pillars of giving: Water, People and Communities.

About American Water Charitable Foundation

The American Water Charitable Foundation, a philanthropic non-profit organization established by American Water (NYSE: AWK), focuses on three pillars of giving: Water,

People, and Communities. Since 2012, the Foundation has invested more than \$20 million in funding through grants and matching gifts to support eligible organizations in communities served by American Water. The Foundation is funded by American Water shareholders and has no impact on customer rates. For more information, visit amwater.com/awcf.

About New Jersey American Water

New Jersey American Water, a subsidiary of American Water (NYSE: AWK), is the largest regulated water utility in the state, providing safe, clean, reliable and affordable water and wastewater services to approximately 2.9 million people. For more information, visit www.newjerseyamwater.com and follow New Jersey American Water on LinkedIn, Facebook, X, and Instagram.

100,000 Rides and Counting: Camden Loop's Impact Continues to Grow in Just Two Years

Serving Thousands of Residents for Work, Medical Appointments, Food Shopping, and More, the Camden Loop Continues to Break Down Transportation Barriers and Expand Access Across the City.

CAMDEN, NJ — As it marks its second anniversary this month, the Camden Loop, an innovative, on-demand public transit service, continues to prove its value to the community with more than 100,000 rides completed since its launch. Introduced in July 2023 by Camden Community Partnership and TransitTech provider Via, the Camden Loop has become a cornerstone of local transportation, offering affordable, efficient, and equitable mobility across the city.

"The Camden Loop has done more than move people, it has connected communities, supported economic activity, and made daily life more convenient for thousands," said Mayor Victor Carstarphen. "We are proud of how far we have come and excited for what's next. I hear it directly from our residents and they constantly tell me that they love the 'Loop.' From the affordable fares to the exceptional customer service, it's clear that this initiative is making a real difference in people's lives."

From its \$2 shared rides to its flexible, app-based booking system, the Camden Loop was designed to expand access to reliable transportation for residents, workers, and visitors alike. Two years in, the data underscores its impact and ongoing success, with steady ridership growth and increasing use across Camden's neighborhoods.

"The Camden Loop was born out of a simple, but urgent need, to give Camden residents access to affordable, reliable transportation," said Mark McDonough, President of New Jersey American Water and Co-Chair of Camden Community Partnership. "Too many people in Camden were facing unnecessary barriers just getting to work, the doctor's office, or the grocery store. Now, two years in, we have heard the positive stories of grandparents making their appointments, students reaching internships, and parents running errands with ease. This is more than just a micro-transit service, it's a pathway to opportunity, and we are proud to be part of that journey."

The service's unique on-demand model, powered by Via's intelligent routing technology, enables multiple riders heading in the same direction to share a vehicle. This reduces wait times, lowers emissions, and keeps the service cost-effective for the city and riders. Trips can be booked through the Camden Loop mobile app (available in the App Store or Google Play) or by calling 856-408-1669.

Key highlights include:

- Nearly 27% of Camden Loop trips are to and from area grocery stores



- More than 100,000 rides have been served since launch, with a 52% increase in rides between 2024 and 2025
- Service efficiency is improving consistently over time
- Around 1 in 5 Camden residents now have a Camden Loop account
- Riders give the service an average trip rating of 4.9 out of 5

"At Camden Community Partnership, our mission is rooted in removing barriers and expanding opportunity," said Dana L. Redd, President & CEO of Camden Community Partnership. "Since its inception, the Camden Loop has been a powerful example of that vision in action. This service is about dignity, access, and inclusion, and it is helping to reshape and reimagine what equitable urban mobility can look like, not just in Camden, but across the state. As we look to the future, we remain committed to bold, innovative solutions that uplift our communities and improve quality of life for all Camden residents."

"This is another excellent example of innovative thinking and a cost-effective method to provide a transportation option for residents in the city that didn't exist two short years ago," Commissioner Director Louis Cappelli Jr. said. "The Camden Loop is providing a viable alternative to getting around the city and creating new jobs for drivers. Bottom line, this service has been a lifeline for folks in our community that are in need of new ways to get to work, the grocery store and all of the other critical places they need to go during their daily routine."

As it heads into its third year, the Camden Loop remains committed to providing inclusive, accessible transportation for all. Plans are underway to further enhance service quality and expand its reach, building on two years of proven success. To learn more about the Camden Loop, visit: <https://city.ridewithvia.com/camden-loop>.

About Camden Community Partnership:

Camden Community Partnership is facilitating the revival of the City of Camden by creating an environment where people choose to live, work, and invest. CCP develops visionary, long-range plans for the redevelopment of Camden's waterfront and neighborhoods and works with private sector, government, and community partners to make these plans a reality. For more information, please visit www.camdencommunitypartnership.com or follow CCP on Facebook, Instagram and X.

About Via:

Founded in 2012, Via pioneered the TransitTech category by using new technologies to develop public mobility systems – optimizing networks of buses, shuttles, wheelchair-accessible vehicles, school buses, autonomous vehicles, and electric vehicles around the globe. Building the world's most efficient, equitable, and sustainable transportation network for all passengers – including those with limited mobility, those without smartphones, and unbanked populations – Via works with its partners to lower the costs of public transit while providing transportation options that rival the convenience of a personal car while reducing environmental impact. At the intersection of transportation and technology, Via is a visionary market leader that combines software innovation with sophisticated service design and operational expertise to fundamentally improve the way the world moves, providing technology in 650 communities and more than 35 countries and counting.



COMMUNITY IMPACT 2024 CAMDEN INVESTMENT REPORT

AMERICAN WATER

American Water released its 2024 Camden Community Investment Report, reaffirming its commitment to being a responsible and impactful corporate citizen in the Camden community. American Water, New Jersey American Water, and the American Water Charitable Foundation have collectively awarded over \$8 million in charitable contributions to the Camden community since 2018.

COMMITTED TO CAMDEN



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2024 REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

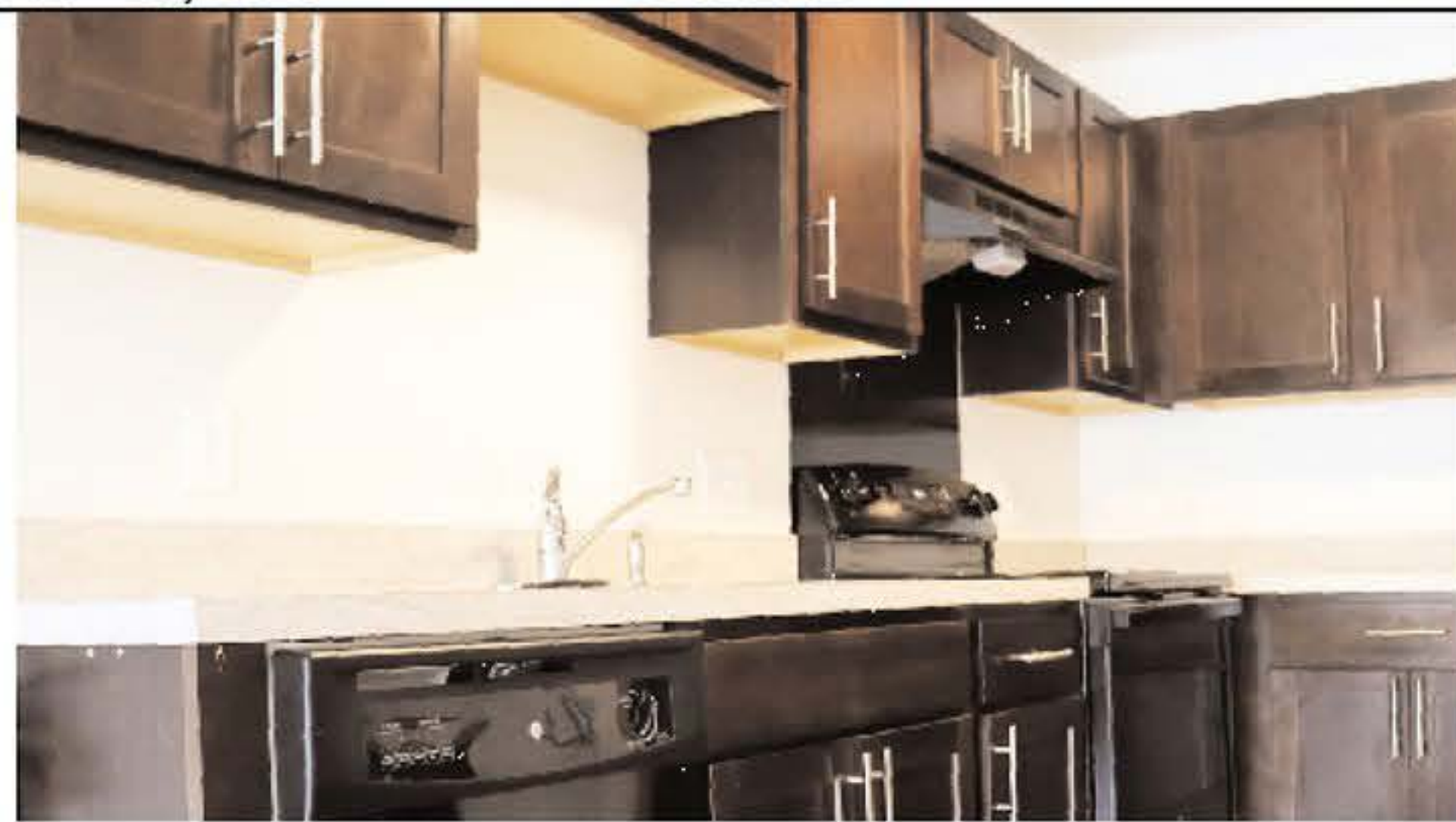
- Celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Safe Drinking Water Act
- New Jersey American Water's signature community event, WaterFest!
- A partnership between the American Water Charitable Foundation and the Malcom Jenkins Foundation to support the 2024 Get Ready Fest®

We invite you to explore the Camden Community Investment Report, available in English and Spanish. Scan the QR code for the full report!



"American Water is proud to continue supporting meaningful local initiatives, projects, and programs in Camden. Since moving to Camden, we have been intentional in building and fostering long-standing, impactful partnerships and working collaboratively with the people and organizations in this amazing community."

- John Griffith, President and CEO, American Water



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Gabily A. Gonzalez

ICYMI: The Voice for the Immigrant

Dear Community,

As I sit here reflecting, waiting for a bowl of pho, I find myself contemplating the significant changes that have taken place under the current administration. I am a Guatemalan immigrant, a former military spouse, and now a mother of two retired military children. Over the years, I've witnessed firsthand the profound impact of political decisions on immigrant and military families, and today, I feel compelled to share my thoughts on the developments we are seeing under President Trump's leadership.

Much has transpired in a relatively short amount of time, and for many of us—myself included—these changes have caused considerable disruption. The mass deportation policies enacted by this administration have torn families apart and are deeply affecting communities across the country.

I vividly remember Election Day and the shock I felt at the rhetoric being espoused by a leader whose actions and words seemed completely disconnected from the realities faced by immigrant and undocumented communities. The idea that such language could translate into policy was inconceivable at the time.

As we reflect on February 2, 2025, two weeks since Trump assumed office once again, the scope of these policies has already had a profound impact on Americans, even though many have yet to fully comprehend their significance. There is a misconception that only people of color or immigrants are affected by these policies, but I want to make it clear: regardless of your political stance, the policies being enacted by President Trump's administration will affect you as well.

Immigration and Its Importance to America's Success
Whether or not you approve of immigration, we cannot overlook the fact that America was built on immigration. Our nation's diversity is what makes it unique, rich in culture, and a leader in the global community.

I often reflect on what kind of world I want my children to experience. If I want them to appreciate the value of diversity, why wouldn't I also want them to experience different cultures firsthand? Travel fosters understanding, and that understanding drives both personal and societal success.

Studies show that travel plays a key role in the success of individuals and businesses. According to research:

88% of executives believe international travel is essential to business success, driving productivity, creativity, and networking.

80% of entrepreneurs report that travel helps them think more innovatively by encountering new perspectives and overcoming mental barriers.

These experiences are critical for thriving in today's interconnected global economy. America's strength has long been its ability to attract individuals from across the world—immigrants who bring with them fresh ideas, diverse perspectives, and solutions that fuel innovation.

However, the current mass deportation policies threaten this foundation, with potentially devastating effects across multiple sectors.

The Consequences of Mass Deportation

The implications of mass deportation extend far beyond immigration. Let's take a look at some of the most critical consequences:

Labor Force Impact Immigrants represent approximately 17% of the U.S. workforce, contributing significantly to essential industries such as agriculture, construction, healthcare, and food service. A large-scale deportation effort would create severe labor shortages in these sectors, impacting everything from food production to healthcare services.

Economic Costs According to the Cato Institute, deporting immigrants could reduce the U.S. GDP by an estimated \$1.6 trillion over the next decade. Immigrants not only contribute as workers but also as entrepreneurs, taxpayers, and consumers. They own businesses, employ millions of Americans, and contribute billions in taxes. Removing them from the workforce would harm both local economies and the national economy.

Social Impact Deportation policies disproportionately affect families, many of whom include U.S. citizens. Over 5 million U.S. citizen children have at least one undocumented parent. The trauma and long-term psychological effects of family separations cannot be overstated. Additionally, these policies breed fear, which undermines community trust and cooperation with law enforcement—potentially jeopardizing public safety.

Strain on Public Services Immigrants contribute to public services through taxes but generally use fewer services than native-born citizens. Deportation would result in a significant labor shortage, which could place increased demands on healthcare, education, and social services, putting additional pressure on local governments.

Cultural and Demographic Effects Immigrants are integral to the cultural landscape of the United States. From language and traditions to innovative ideas, immigrants have enriched American society. A mass deportation effort would significantly reduce this diversity, particularly in cities with large immigrant populations like New York, Los Angeles, and Miami.

Impact on Innovation Immigrants play a vital role in driving innovation, particularly in STEM fields. According to recent reports, 55% of U.S. startups valued at over \$1 billion were founded by immigrants. Deporting such talent would hinder creativity, stifle economic growth, and diminish America's competitiveness on the global stage.

Conclusion

The consequences of mass deportation would be far-reaching and lasting. Not only would it disrupt the U.S. economy—resulting in labor shortages, reduced GDP, and lost tax revenue—but it would also have serious social, cultural, and demographic repercussions. Families would be torn apart, communities destabilized, and public services strained. Over time, America risks losing the very qualities that have made it a global leader in innovation and cultural exchange.

It is essential to recognize that these policies affect all of us—not just immigrants or people of color. We must understand the interconnectedness of our society and work toward solutions that foster unity, compassion, and progress for everyone.

Thank you for taking the time to read this.

Warm regards,
Gabily A. Gonzalez
Parent, Student Advocate
Community Outreach Organizer
Founder of Cerrando La Brecha Non-Profit
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Our Vision

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Our Focus Areas



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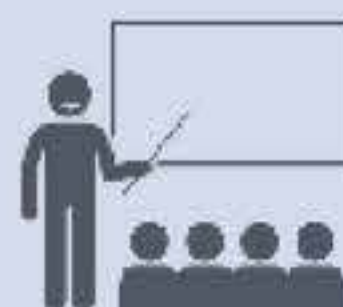
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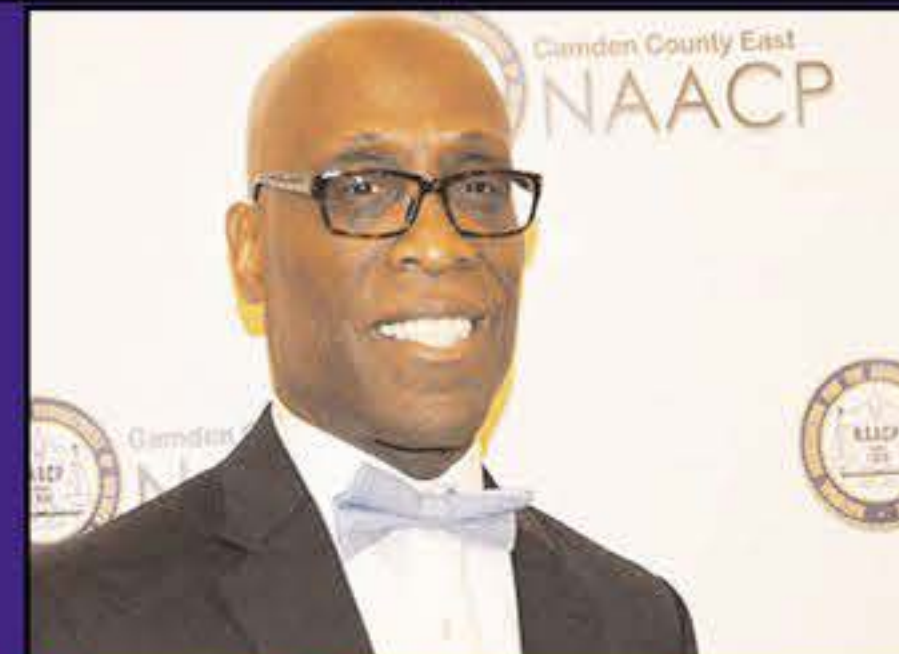
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Attorney-At-Law

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- Former Assistant City Attorney
- Former 1st Vice President New Jersey State NAACP
- Former Moorestown, Edgewood & Camden High School Mathematics Teacher
- Founder/Director – Camden County East Institute on Race, Religion & Public Policy
- Eagle Scout Special Areas of Concentration:
- Criminal Law – Includes Adult Charges, Juvenile Charges & Municipal Court
- Civil Rights – Includes Discrimination, Police Excessive Force
- Education Law – Includes Special Education, Suspensions, Expulsions, Bullying & Harassment
- Personal Injury – Includes Auto/Truck/Bike Accidents, Slip & Falls, Wrongful Death
- Legal Counseling – Other Areas

Law Office of

Lloyd D. Henderson & Associates
1209 Marlton Pike, Cherry Hill, NJ 08002
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The Philadelphia Convention and Visitors Bureau, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Philadelphia Phillies and Renowned Muralist Meg Saligman Announce Major Art Installations for 2026

CHICAGO, IL — Representing the Philadelphia Convention and Visitors Bureau (PHLCVB), President and CEO Gregg Caren addressed attendees of the U.S. Travel Association's IPW 2025 to spotlight Philadelphia as a top international destination, as the city prepares for the nation's 250th anniversary and full slate of special events in 2026. In advance of the Semiquincentennial in 2026, Philadelphia's arts community is announcing groundbreaking new art highlighting American creativity past and present.

Philadelphia Museum of Art, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, and the Middleton family will present the most expansive collection of American Art ever mounted in Philadelphia in celebration of America's 250th anniversary

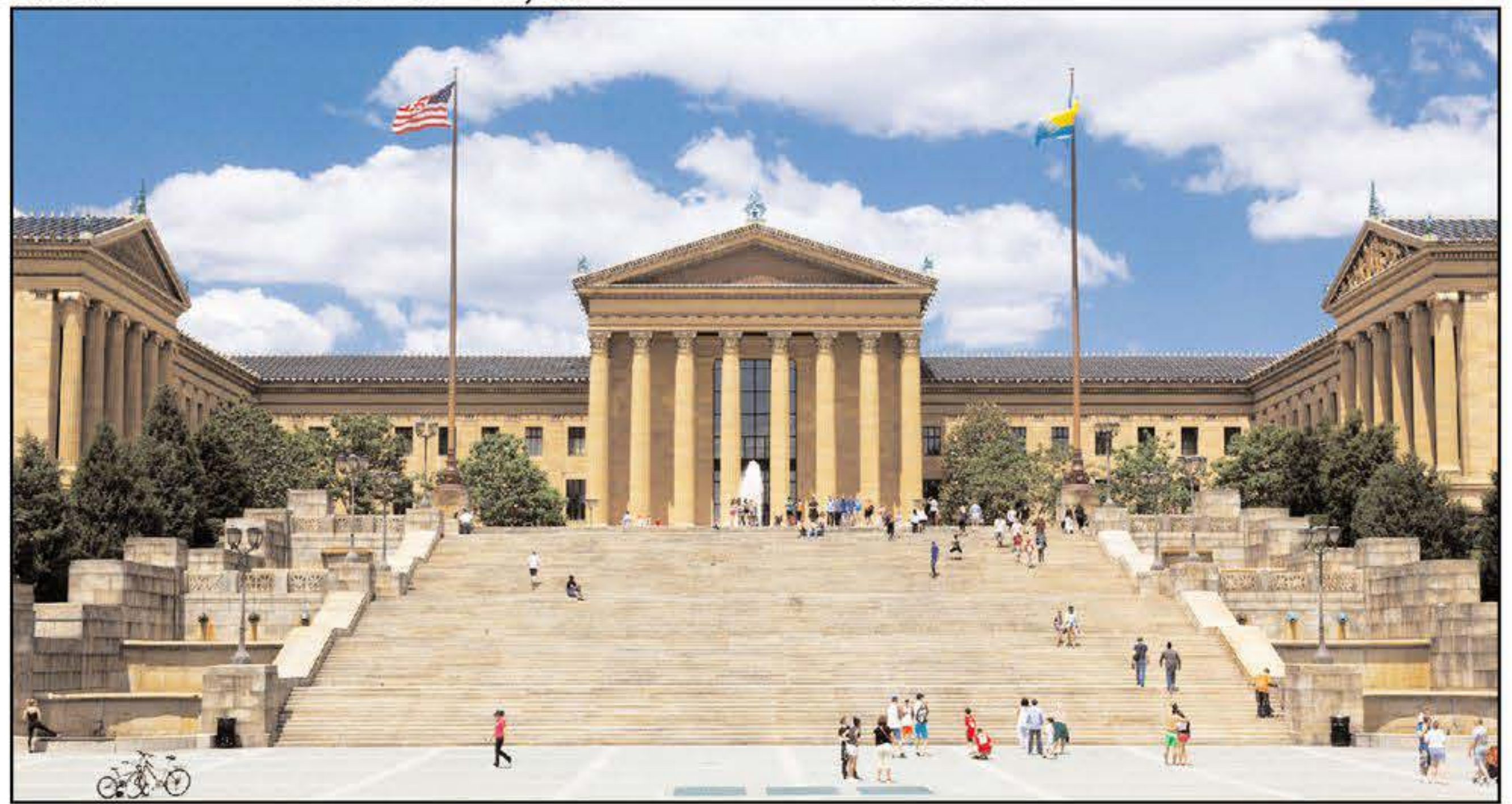
In the press conference held for global travel media at U.S. Travel's IPW 2025, Sasha Suda, the George D. Widener Director and CEO of the Philadelphia Museum of Art (PMA), announced A Nation of Artists opening in April 2026, a dual-venue exhibition that will unite three extraordinary collections of American art. This collection will feature more than 1,000 unique pieces on exhibit in the Philadelphia Museum of Art, one of the largest art museums in the country, and the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts (PAFA), the first art school and museum founded in the U.S.

The collection will be carefully divided across the two institutions for display. At PAFA, the exhibition will highlight how American artists learn and develop. At the PMA, the exhibition will highlight the evolution of American identity and visual culture through art.

"What makes American art so powerful is not only where it was made, but who made it—and why," said Sasha Suda, a native of Canada. "A Nation of Artists will highlight the creative contributions of women, immigrants, Indigenous makers, self-taught artists, and academic painters alike and present a broad and vibrant picture of artistic expression that was happening across the country through both familiar icons and voices that have historically been overlooked. We couldn't be happier to partner with PAFA and the Middleton family on this once-in-a-generation exhibition and we look forward to welcoming everyone—from neighbors down the street to visitors from across the region, the country, and around the world—to be part of this celebration."

To enrich the collection, the majority owner of Philadelphia's Major League baseball team, the Phillies, John S. Middleton and his family will contribute pieces from their private art collection that have never been seen by the public. The Middleton Family Collection, one of the most significant private holdings of American art, will be integrated across both venues, promoting deeper reflection through the collaborative process.

"This exhibition is for everyone—no prior knowledge of art or history required," said Middleton. "As someone who believes in the power of storytelling to connect people, I'm thrilled to partner with these two storied institutions to share the works that have brought our family so much joy and inspiration. Just like baseball, art has the power to bring people



PHILADELPHIA WILL UNVEIL ONCE-IN-A-GENERATION ART EXHIBITIONS AND EXPERIENCES IN HONOR OF AMERICA'S 250TH ANNIVERSARY.

together and surprise us when we least expect it. With every viewing, there's something new to discover. It's an honor to help bring American art to life in a new way during this very special commemoration of our country's 250th anniversary."

Muralist Meg Saligman to launch Ministry of Awe — a six-story immersive art experience housed within a 19th-century bank

Renowned muralist Meg Saligman has produced over 40 permanent public works worldwide, but her works in Philadelphia have been considered a catalyst for the contemporary mural movement. At IPW, Saligman revealed new details about her latest project, Ministry of Awe, opening in 2026. Housed in the former Manufacturer's National Bank in Philadelphia's Old City neighborhood, Ministry of Awe will be a traversable, living work of art, dedicated to inspiring awe. With six stories and over 8,500 square feet (nearly 750 square meters) of interactive space, including immersive exhibits, live performances, and soundscapes for visitors to explore, Ministry of Awe will be unlike any other arts destination in the region.

Ministry of Awe will also function as a hub for community participation and imagination, teeming with opportunities for visitors to engage with the space in a hands-on manner, which will evolve the artwork's look and feel over time. For Saligman, the Ministry of Awe's home in the former bank, which was built in 1870 and designed by Frank Furness, is a key part of the story—redefining the conventional cultural experience by bringing the unexpected and the sublime to a seemingly mundane space. "We're creating a living, walkable piece of art that's deeply rooted in Philly's rich history, right in the birthplace of American democracy and finance."

Like Philadelphia itself, both A Nation of Artists and the Ministry of Awe projects are grounded in history but reaching for higher levels of creativity and self-discovery.

Philadelphia is well-known to the world as the birthplace of American democracy, but audiences are now recognizing the city as a destination rich in history, culinary innovation, walkable outdoor spaces, and now especially, arts and culture. Philadelphia is home to some of the world's finest museum collections as well as the largest collection of public and street art. Mural Arts Philadelphia, which has helped created over 4,000 street murals in the city since 1984, and the city's 1 percent for public art law have helped make access to art in Philadelphia as democratic as the ideals laid down by the founders in the city in 1776.

"Art is absolutely part of who we are in Philadelphia. From the sculpture of William Penn by Alexander Milne Calder that sits atop Philadelphia City Hall, to the thousands of murals found through city neighborhoods, Philadelphia makes sure that experiencing art is part of our daily routine," said Caren. "And we're always looking for ways to bring new art into the public sphere: new museums, new murals, and new ways to experience it. Visitors are going to see that on another level in Philadelphia in 2026."

Art lovers visiting Philadelphia can also enjoy works throughout the city, both in museums and galleries and on public display in the neighborhoods. In addition to the PMA and PAFA, the Barnes Foundation, Rodin Museum, and Calder Gardens (opening September 2025) are located within steps of one another on Benjamin Franklin Parkway, ensuring that hundreds of works by Renoir, Van Gogh, Cezanne, Matisse, Picasso, and more are easily accessible.

Meanwhile, Philadelphia's Magic Gardens in South Philadelphia, the Ministry of Awe, the various walking and bus tours offered by Mural Arts Philadelphia, the hundreds of pieces of public art around the city, and the galleries dotting the neighborhoods allow visitors plenty of opportunities to connect with local and emerging artists and enjoy innovative forms of art, including immersive and interactive experiences.

Philadelphia is conveniently located between New York City and Washington, D.C., making it an essential stop for travelers to the East Coast of the U.S. Philadelphia International Airport (PHL) welcomes nonstop flights from over 120 cities worldwide and features a direct light rail link to the city center. Philadelphia's William H. Gray 30th Street Station is a key connection point on Amtrak's Northeast Corridor, with links to New York City, Washington, D.C., Boston and additional cities.

About the PHLCVB:

The Philadelphia Convention and Visitors Bureau (PHLCVB) creates positive economic impact across the Philadelphia region, driving job growth and promoting the health and vibrancy of our hospitality industry by marketing the destination, the Pennsylvania Convention Center, and attracting overnight visitors. The PHLCVB's work engages our partners, the local Philadelphia community as well as culturally and ethnically diverse regional, national and international convention, sporting event and tourism customers. The PHLCVB is also the official tourism promotion agency for the city of Philadelphia globally and is responsible for growing the number of international leisure visitors who come to the region each year. To learn more, visit www.discoverPHL.com. For high-resolution photo and video, story starters, press trip information and more, visit discoverPHL.com/press-room.



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35 Years in Power and a Lifetime in Fatherhood: My Journey to Reworld

Michael Acona, Facility Manager,
Reworld Camden

CAMDEN, NJ - This Father's Day, I've taken a moment to reflect not just on being a dad, but on the road that led me here, to Reworld Camden. It's been quite a journey, filled with challenges, learning, growth, and above all, love.

I've been in the power generation business for 35 years. Before that, I proudly served in the U.S. Navy as a nuclear Machinist's Mate aboard the USS Baltimore (SSN-704), a fast-attack submarine. That experience taught me discipline, technical skill, and a deep respect for teamwork lessons I've carried with me through every step of my career.

After the Navy, my first civilian job was at a 110 MW stoker coal-fired cogeneration plant in Portsmouth, Virginia. I spent 11 years there before moving on to an 800 MW combined cycle plant in Sterlington, Louisiana. From there, I managed a 285 MW pulverized coal-fired cogeneration plant in Carneys Point, New Jersey, and later a 163 MW combined cycle and district energy plant in Philadelphia.

Each plant brought new technologies and new teams and with them, new opportunities to grow as a leader. I even took a sabbatical for a year to work with my best friend in his business a decision that gave me a new perspective on life and priorities.

Now, I'm proud to say I'm with Reworld.

I was approached a few months ago by a recruiter about this opportunity. Right away, I felt that this was a place where I could contribute meaningfully and be part of something exciting. The Camden team welcomed me with open arms. They're not just professionals, they're genuinely good people. I'm especially looking forward to being part of the upcoming baghouse capital project. I love the challenge of new technology, and this is a great one.

But more than my career, the most defining role in my life is being a father.

My son Matthew is 27 years old and has special needs. Being his dad means doing everything I can to help him live a full and joyful life, despite his physical and mental limitations. He may not communicate like most people he uses sign language but the love he gives is pure and powerful.

Honestly, I can't even put it into words. He adores his Daddy. All he wants is to be near me to hold my hand, hug me, tell me he loves me. There's no pretending with Matthew. His love is unconditional, and it keeps me grounded.

Work-life balance, for me, is about simplicity. Aside from my church where I lead a men's Bible study and going to the



THE HUNT FAMILY

gym, my time outside of work belongs to Matthew. He isn't independent, so much of our family life revolves around him. And that's okay. That's life, and I'm grateful for it.

This new chapter in Camden excites me not just because of the technology or the team, but because I feel like I'm in a place where I can bring my full self as a leader, a father, and a person of faith.

To all the dads out there especially those navigating unique parenting journeys Happy Father's Day. Your quiet strength, patience, and love matter more than you know.

Living, Working, and Giving Back in Camden: My Journey with Reworld Waste

By Benjamin Hunt III

CAMDEN, NJ - My name is Benjamin Hunt III, and I'm proud to say I was born and raised right here in Camden, NJ. For the past 27 years, I've worked as a shift supervisor at Reworld Waste, formerly known as Covanta Energy. It's been an exciting and fulfilling journey—one that's not only shaped my career, but deeply enriched my personal life.

When I first started at Reworld, I had been married to my amazing wife, Tracee, for just four years. Our son, Benjamin Hunt IV, was only a year old. Fast-forward nearly three decades, and I can honestly say that this job has given me the chance to be there for what matters most—my family.

A lot of people see shift work as a challenge, but for me, it's been a blessing. The flexibility of the schedule, combined with the support of my coworkers who've always been willing to step in when needed, allowed me to be truly present. I only missed one of my son's football games during his entire four-year college career—even though his school was four hours away! I was also there for my daughter's Friday night games, cheer competitions, and endless rounds of gymnastics, dance, and social events.

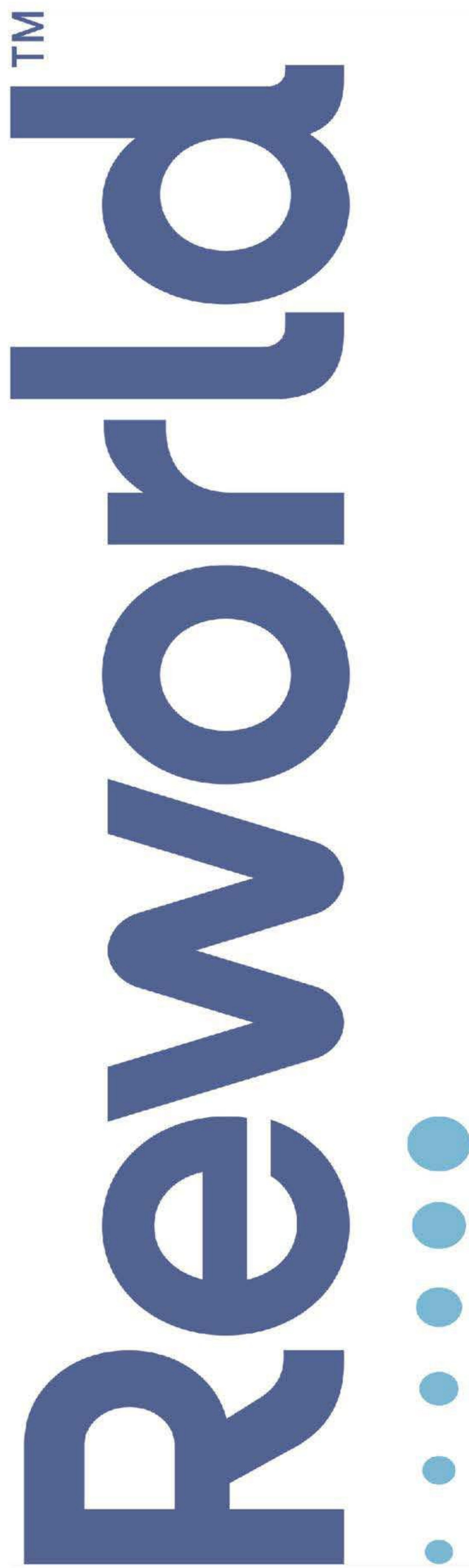
My commitment to my church is also a big part of who I am. Thanks to the way our shifts are structured, I usually only miss one Sunday service a month. Reworld has given me the space to grow both professionally and personally, offering opportunities for advancement that helped me and Tracee create the kind of life we envisioned for our family.

One thing I've always appreciated is Reworld's involvement in the community. I've had the joy of bringing my kids to events like "Bring Your Child to Work Day," Juneteenth celebrations, and other special occasions that gave them a real understanding of what I do each day.

This job has given me more than a paycheck—it's taught me a trade, helped me earn an honest living, and allowed me to provide not just the basics, but stability, comfort, and peace of mind for my loved ones. I'm grateful every day that I get to put food on the table, keep a roof over our heads, and be a present, guiding force in my children's lives.

At the end of the day, I'm just a Camden man, trying to give back to my family and my community—one shift at a time.

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