

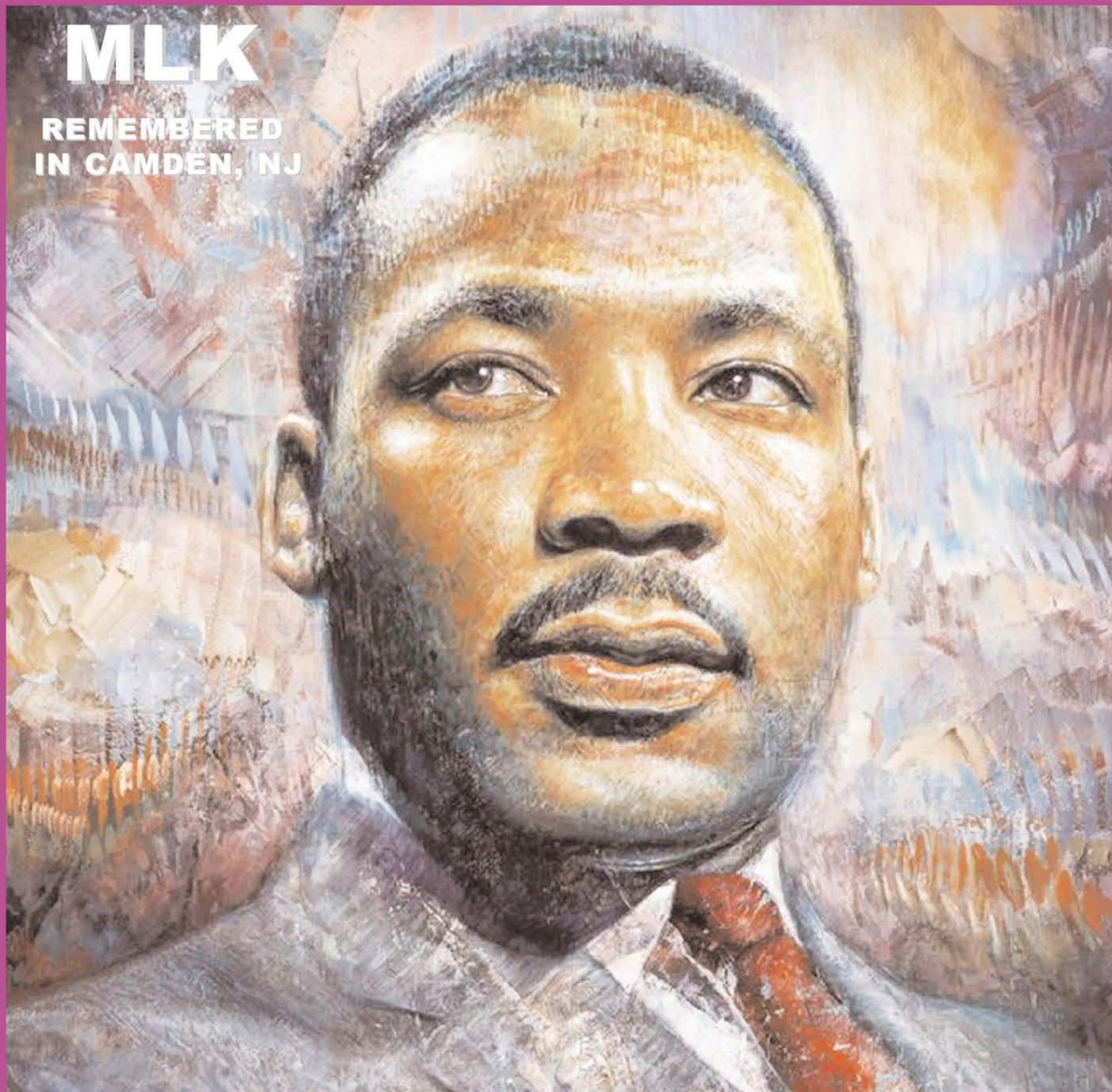
# ANOINTED

NEWS JOURNAL

The Nation's Premier **WEEKLY** Faith-Based and Professional Publication For Winners  
Volume 32      Issue 2      February 1 - 14, 2025      **FREE** [SEE INSIDE](#)

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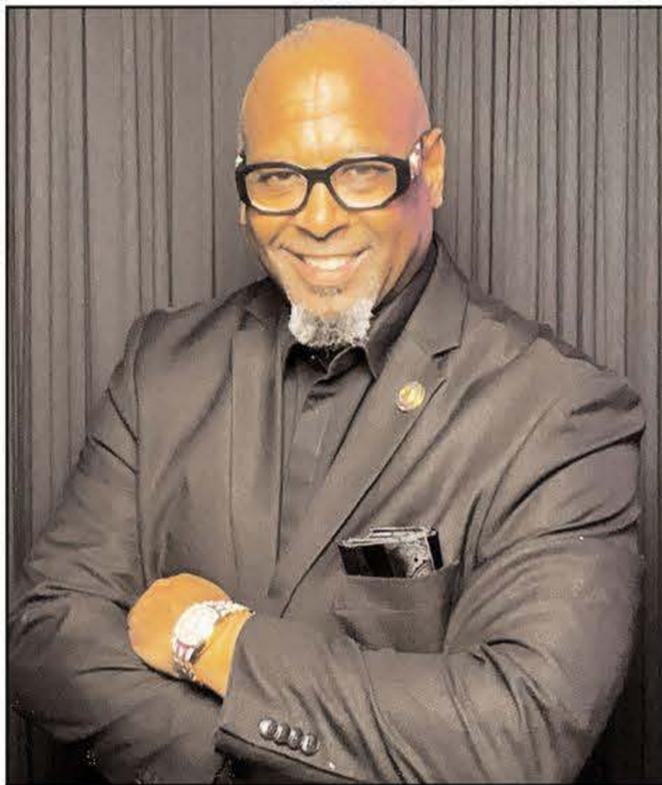
**Call to Salvation**

*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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**A Word from the Editor**

**Celebrating 32 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, 32 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



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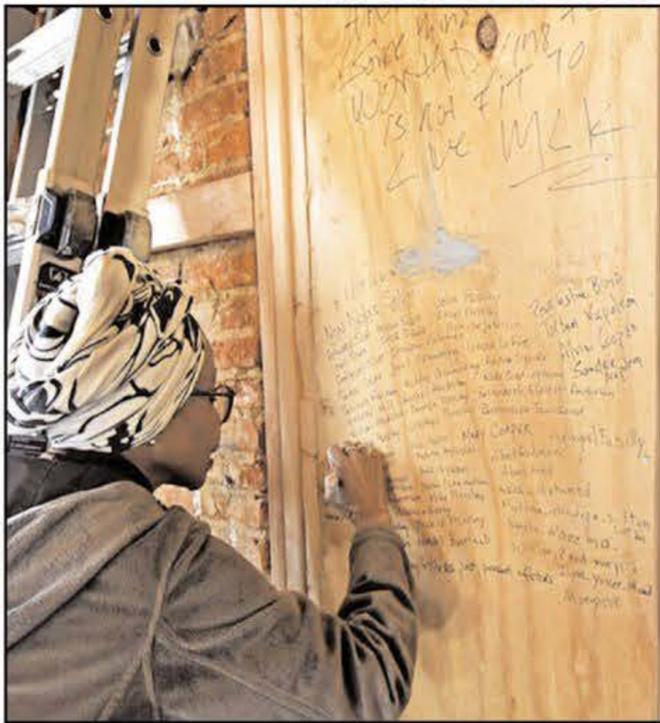


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## Camden Community Gathers at the Former Home of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. for a Ceremonial Beam Signing on MLK Day

**CAMDEN, NJ** – On Monday, January 19, 2026 Pastor Amir Khan, along with many volunteers hosted a “Beam Signing Ceremony” at 753 Walnut Street, the place where Dr. Martin Luther King lived in Camden, NJ while attending seminary school at Crozier Chester Seminary.

From 1950-1952 then Michael King lived there on weekends and during the summer.

During that time, King's first act of civil rights was during a racial dispute at a diner in Maple Shade, NJ where he along with his friends were asked to leave the diner at gunpoint. He had been warned that Black people would not be welcome at Mary's Café in Maple Shade. After the bartender refused to serve King and his friends and fired a gun into the air, King filed a police report, and the bartender was later convicted on a gun charge. King called the experience a transformational one.

King refused to leave because he knew a federal law was passed in 1949 prohibiting anyone to refuse service in a public place. King won his case in court.

The police report then has the name Michael King, 753 Walnut Street, Camden, NJ.

Later, after returning from Germany and being an admirer of Martin Luther, a German theologian, priest, and Augustinian friar, King changed his name from Michael to Martin Luther King, Jr.

The house is currently under renovations due to aging and a fire in 2023.

Before the property was purchased by Pastor Khan, it was maintained and under the care of the Hunt Family.

Members of the Community at large were able to join in with the Hunt Family, volunteers and Medical Students from Rutgers University Camden, for a tour and were given a sharpie pen to sign their names on beams throughout the house.

For seven months under the supervision of Pastor Amir Khan, justice-impacted staffers at Khan's New Beginnings nonprofit began renovating the building.

In November of last year, Wayne Dobson, who painted a mural of King and his wife, Coretta Scott King, on the side of the house, said, “Everything I knew about him was from textbooks, and now I'm a part of history.”

Pastor Khan plans to name the newly renovated house, South Jersey Center for Social Justice.

As a recording of a King speech played over a loudspeaker, Ada Banfill admitted to wiping away tears while sanding and painting a charred doorway to the bedroom where King slept.

“Think of all the people who are going to walk through it,” she said.

Khan purchased the building in 2021 on behalf of New Beginnings from Jeanette Lily Hunt, the daughter-in-law of



original owner Benjamin Hunt, and said he received crucial support from Gov. Phil Murphy and the state Assembly. Darleene Hunt-Johnson, Benjamin Hunt's granddaughter, said she'd been here so many times, she “could walk through here with my eyes closed” and brought a snapshot of her grandfather to hang on the wall. Great-granddaughter Miesha Johnson said she was “so proud” of Pastor Khan and others “for helping to preserve this” and couldn't wait to see it restored completely.

South Jersey architect Jefferson Moon, whose thorough measuring of the house at no charge before the fire became invaluable, also took a tour. “All our work came to fruition,” he said, “so it's great.”

Activist Keith Benson Sr. was one of the guides, reminding visitors that in the 18 years between the time King spent in the Walnut Street house and the time he was assassinated, “he changed the world... and it started in Camden.”

Activist Patrick Duff uncovered the history and began trying to save the house in 2015, and the following year the late civil-rights icon U.S. Rep. John Lewis came to Camden to endorse the effort. But Duff, who Pastor Khan thanked profusely at the beam-signing, had gotten bogged down in securing grant money and historical designations because, he said, he “didn't realize that the tentacles of our local politics reach into even preservation.”

Some brought their children and grandchildren to experience the house.

“It's just crazy to be in here,” said 10-year-old Josh Perez, as he stood in the upstairs bedroom where King slept. Downstairs, Sharon Abdul-Robinson, whose family donated some vintage artifacts to the house, was writing the names of three dozen of her family members on a wall.

“We're not by ourselves,” she said. “It's a collective effort. Family is the inspiration and the foundation.”

Khan was especially touched “to see seniors with canes struggling to get up the steps, but they wanted to sign the beams, and to see them explain it to their grandkids... We want to make sure the message doesn't die.”

“We're trying to tell this story at a time when the country is so divided,” he said. “When you have people in Washington trying to take away Black history, we're trying to restore it.”



STUDENTS FROM RUTGERS UNIVERSITY CAMDEN



THE HUNT FAMILY



## Martin Luther King, Jr & Coretta Scott-King: Leaders of Civil & Human Rights

As we celebrate the MLK national holiday, let us remember the father of the Civil Rights Movement and the mother of Human Rights, Martin Luther King, Jr. and his wife, Coretta Scott-King.

**CAMDEN, NJ** - Several years ago, on October 16, 2011, during the dedication of the MLK Monument on the National Mall in Washington, DC, I had an opportunity to meet and speak with Dr. Bernice King, the daughter of Martin and Coretta. During our conversation she said, "My mother always told us that if you go through this life without doing something to make an impact to society, shame on you." These words were so profound. I was amazed even more, because she didn't say those words came from her father, who gave so many famous quotes, but they came from her mother, who was known as a leader in fighting for human rights. Today as we celebrate the birthday of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., let me reintroduce you to Martin and Coretta, two of Americas most influential leaders of all time.

### About Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

During the less than 13 years of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s leadership of the modern American Civil Rights Movement, from December 1955 until April 4, 1968, African Americans achieved more genuine progress toward racial equality in America than the previous 350 years had produced. Dr. King is widely regarded as America's pre-eminent advocate of nonviolence and one of the greatest nonviolent leaders in world history.

Drawing inspiration from both his Christian faith and the peaceful teachings of Mahatma Gandhi, Dr. King led a non-violent movement in the late 1950's and '60s to achieve legal equality for African Americans in the United States. While others were advocating for freedom by "any means necessary," including violence, Martin Luther King, Jr. used the power of words and acts of nonviolent resistance, such as protests, grassroots organizing, and civil disobedience to achieve seemingly impossible goals. He went on to lead similar campaigns against poverty and international conflict, always maintaining fidelity to his principles that men and women everywhere, regardless of color or creed, are equal members of the human family.

Some of Dr. King's most important achievements include:

In 1955, he was recruited to serve as spokesman for the Montgomery Bus Boycott, which was a campaign by the African American population of Montgomery, Alabama to force integration of the city's bus lines. After 381 days of nearly universal participation by citizens of the black community, many of whom had to walk miles to work each day as a result, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that racial segregation in transportation was unconstitutional.

In 1957, Dr. King was elected president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), an organization designed to provide new leadership for the now burgeoning civil rights movement. He would serve as head of the SCLC until his assassination in 1968, a period during which he would emerge as the most important social leader of the modern American civil rights movement.

In 1963, he led a coalition of numerous civil rights groups in a nonviolent campaign aimed at Birmingham, Alabama, which at the time was described as the "most segregated city in America." The subsequent brutality of the city's police, illustrated most vividly by television images of young blacks being assaulted by dogs and water hoses, led to a national outrage resulting in a push for unprecedented civil rights legislation. It was during this campaign that Dr. King drafted the "Letter from a Birmingham Jail," the manifesto of Dr. King's philosophy and tactics, which is today required-reading in universities worldwide.

Later in 1963, Dr. King was one of the driving forces behind the March for Jobs and Freedom, more commonly known as the "March on Washington," which drew over a quarter-million people to the national mall. It was at this march that Dr. King delivered his famous "I Have a Dream" speech, which cemented his status as a social change leader and helped inspire the nation to act on civil rights. Dr. King was later named Time magazine's "Man of the Year."

In 1964, at 35 years old, Martin Luther King, Jr. became the youngest person to win the Nobel Peace Prize. His acceptance speech in Oslo is thought by many to be among the most powerful remarks ever delivered at the event, climaxing at one point with the oft-quoted phrase "I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word in reality. This is why right temporarily defeated is stronger than evil triumphant."

Also in 1964, partly due to the March on Washington, Congress passed the landmark Civil Rights Act, essentially eliminating legalized racial segregation in the United States. The legislation made it illegal to discriminate against blacks or other minorities in hiring, public accommodation, education or transportation, areas which at the time were still very segregated in many places.

The next year, 1965, Congress went on to pass the Voting Rights Act, which was an equally important set of laws that eliminated the remaining barriers to voting for African Americans, who in some locales had been almost completely disenfranchised. This legislation resulted directly from the Selma to Montgomery, AL March for Voting Rights led by Dr. King.

Between 1965 and 1968, Dr. King shifted his focus toward economic justice – which he highlighted by leading several campaigns in Chicago, Illinois – and international peace – which he championed by speaking out strongly against the Vietnam War. His work in these years culminated in the "Poor Peoples Campaign," which was a broad effort to assemble a multiracial coalition of impoverished Americans who would advocate for economic change.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s less than thirteen years of non-violent leadership ended abruptly and tragically on April 4th, 1968, when he was assassinated at the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, Tennessee. Dr. King's body was returned to his hometown of Atlanta, Georgia, where his funeral ceremony was attended by high-level leaders of all races and political stripes.

Later in 1968, Dr. King's wife, Mrs. Coretta Scott King, officially founded the Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Non-violent Social Change, which she dedicated to being a "living memorial" aimed at continuing Dr. King's work on important social ills around the world.

### About Coretta Scott-King

Coretta Scott King was one of the most influential women leaders in our world. Prepared by her family, education, and personality for a life committed to social justice and peace, she entered the world stage in 1955 as wife of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and as a leading participant in the American Civil Rights Movement. Her remarkable partnership with Dr. King resulted not only in four children, who became dedicated to carrying forward their parents' work, but also in a life devoted to the highest values of human dignity in service to social change. Mrs. King traveled throughout the world speaking out on behalf of racial and economic justice, women's and children's rights, gay and lesbian dignity, religious freedom, the needs of the poor and homeless, full-employment, health care, educational opportunities, nuclear disarmament and environmental justice. She lent her support to pro-democracy movements world-wide and consulted with many world leaders, including Corazon Aquino, Kenneth Kaunda, and Nelson Mandela.

Born and raised in Marion, Alabama, Coretta Scott graduated as a valedictorian from Lincoln High School. She received a B.A. in music and education from Antioch College in Yellow Springs, Ohio, and then went on to study concert singing at Boston's New England Conservatory of Music, where she earned a degree in voice and violin. While in Boston she met Martin Luther King, Jr. who was then studying for his doctorate in systematic theology at Boston University. They were married on June 18, 1953, and in September 1954 took up residence in Montgomery, Alabama, with Coretta Scott King assuming the many responsibilities of pastor's wife at Dexter Avenue Baptist Church.

During Dr. King's career, Mrs. King devoted most of her time to raising their four children: Yolanda Denise (1955), Martin Luther, III (1957), Dexter Scott (1961), and Bernice Albro (1963). From the earliest days, however, she balanced civic, college, fraternal and peace groups. She conceived and formed a series of favorably reviewed Freedom Concerts which combined prose and poetry narration with musical selections and functioned as significant fundraisers for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, the direct-action organization of which Dr. King served as first president. In 1957, she and Dr. King journeyed to Ghana to mark that country's independence. In 1958, they spent a belated honeymoon in Mexico, where they observed first-hand the immense gulf between extreme wealth and extreme poverty. In 1959, Dr. and Mrs. King spent nearly a month in India on a pilgrimage to disciples and sites associated with Mahatma Gandhi. In 1964, she accompanied him to Oslo, Norway, where he received the Nobel Peace Prize. Even prior to her husband's public stand against the Vietnam War in 1967, Mrs. King functioned as liaison to peace and justice organizations, and as mediator to public officials on behalf of the unheard.

After her husband's assassination in 1968, Mrs. King founded and devoted great energy and commitment to building and developing programs for the Atlanta-based Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change as a living memorial to her husband's life and dream. Situated in the Freedom Hall complex encircling Dr. King's tomb, The King Center is today located inside of a 23-acre national historic park which includes his birth home, and which hosts over one million visitors a year.

As founding President, Chair, and Chief Executive Officer, she dedicated herself to providing local, national and international programs that have trained tens of thousands of people in Dr. King's philosophy and methods; she guided the creation and housing of the largest archives of documents from the Civil Rights Movement; and, perhaps her greatest legacy after establishing The King Center itself, Mrs. King spearheaded the massive educational and lobbying campaign to establish Dr. King's birthday as a national holiday. In 1983, an act of Congress instituted the Martin Luther King, Jr. Federal Holiday Commission, which she chaired for its duration. And in January 1986, Mrs. King oversaw the first legal holiday in honor of her husband—a holiday which has come to be celebrated by millions of people world-wide and, in some form, in over 100 countries.

Continued from page 5

Coretta Scott King tirelessly carried the message of nonviolence and the dream of the beloved community to almost every corner of our nation and globe. She led goodwill missions to many countries in Africa, Latin America, Europe and Asia. She spoke at many of history's most massive peace and justice rallies. She served as a Women's Strike for Peace delegate to the seventeen-nation Disarmament Conference in Geneva, Switzerland in 1962. She was the first woman to deliver the class day address at Harvard, and the first woman to preach at a statutory service at St. Paul's Cathedral in London.

A life-long advocate of interracial coalitions, in 1974 Mrs. King formed a broad coalition of over 100 religious, labor, business, civil and women's rights organizations dedicated to a national policy of full employment and equal economic opportunity, as Co-Chair of both the National Committee for Full Employment and the Full Employment Action Council. In 1983, she brought together more than 800 human rights organizations to form the Coalition of Conscience, sponsors of the 20th Anniversary March on Washington, until then the largest demonstration ever held in our nation's capital. In 1987, she helped lead a national Mobilization Against Fear and Intimidation in Forsyth County, Georgia. In 1988, she re-convened the Coalition of Conscience for the 25th anniversary of the March on Washington. In preparation for the Reagan-Gorbachev talks, in 1988 she served as head of the U.S. delegation of Women for a Meaningful Summit in Athens, Greece; and in 1990, as the USSR was redefining itself, Mrs. King was co-convenor of the Soviet American Women's Summit in Washington, DC.

In 1985 Mrs. King and three of her children, Yolanda, Martin III and Bernice were arrested at the South African embassy in Washington, DC, for protesting against apartheid.

One of the most influential African American leaders of her time, Mrs. King received honorary doctorates from over 60 colleges and universities; authored three books and a nationally-syndicated newspaper column; and served on and helped found dozens of organizations, including the Black Leadership Forum, the National Black Coalition for Voter Participation, and the Black Leadership Roundtable.

During her lifetime, Mrs. King dialogued with heads of state, including prime ministers and presidents, as well as participating in protests alongside rank-and-file working people of all races. She met with many great spiritual leaders, including Pope John Paul, the Dalai Lama, Dorothy Day, and Bishop Desmond Tutu. She witnessed the historic handshake between Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Chairman Yassir Arafat at the signing of the Middle East Peace Accords. She stood with Nelson Mandela in Johannesburg when he became South Africa's first democratically elected president. A woman of wisdom, compassion and vision, Coretta Scott King tried to make ours a better world and, in the process, made history.

Mrs. King died in 2006. A few days after her death, thousands of Atlantans stood in line in the pouring sleet to pay their respects to her at a viewing in Ebenezer Baptist Church. She is today interred alongside her husband in a memorial crypt in the reflecting pool of The King Center's Freedom Hall Complex, visited by hundreds of thousands of people from all over the world year-round. The inscription on the crypt memorializing her life of service is from I Corinthians 13:13 – "And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love."

## The King Philosophy

- Triple Evils
- Six Principles of Nonviolence
- Six Steps of Nonviolent Social Change
- The Beloved Community

## TRIPLE EVILS

The Triple Evils of POVERTY, RACISM and MILITARISM are forms of violence that exist in a vicious cycle. They are interrelated, all-inclusive, and stand as barriers to our living in the Beloved Community. When we work to remedy one evil, we affect all evils. To work against the Triple Evils, you must develop a nonviolent frame of mind as described in the "Six Principles of Nonviolence" and use the "Kingian Model" for social action outlined in the "Six Steps for Nonviolent Social Change."

Some contemporary examples of the Triple Evils are listed next to each item:

**Poverty** – unemployment, homelessness, hunger, malnutrition, illiteracy, infant mortality, slums...

"There is nothing new about poverty. What is new, however, is that we now have the resources to get rid of it. The time has come for an all-out world war against poverty ... The well-off and the secure have too often become indifferent and oblivious to the poverty and deprivation in their midst. Ultimately a great nation is a compassionate nation. No individual or nation can be great if it does not have a concern for 'the least of these.'"

**Racism** – prejudice, apartheid, ethnic conflict, anti-Semitism, sexism, colonialism, homophobia, ageism, discrimination against disabled groups, stereotypes...

"Racism is a philosophy based on a contempt for life. It is the arrogant assertion that one race is the center of value and object of devotion, before which other races must kneel in submission. It is the absurd dogma that one race is responsible for all the progress of history and alone can assure the progress of the future. Racism is total estrangement. It separates not only bodies, but minds and spirits. Inevitably it descends to inflicting spiritual and physical homicide upon the out-group."

**Militarism** – war, imperialism, domestic violence, rape, terrorism, human trafficking, media violence, drugs, child abuse, violent crime...

"A true revolution of values will lay hands on the world order and say of war- 'This way of settling differences is not just.' This way of burning human beings with napalm, of filling our nation's homes with orphans and widows, of injecting poisonous drugs of hate into the veins of peoples normally humane, of sending men home from dark and bloody battlefields physically handicapped psychologically deranged, cannot be reconciled with wisdom, justice and love. A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death."

**Source:** "Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community?" by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.; Boston: Beacon Press, 1967.

## SIX PRINCIPLES OF NONVIOLENCE

Fundamental tenets of Dr. King's philosophy of nonviolence described in his first book, *Stride Toward Freedom*. The six principles include:

**PRINCIPLE ONE:** Nonviolence is a way of life for courageous people.

It is active nonviolent resistance to evil. It is aggressive spiritually, mentally and emotionally.

**PRINCIPLE TWO:** Nonviolence seeks to win friendship and understanding.

The end result of nonviolence is redemption and reconciliation.

The purpose of nonviolence is the creation of the Beloved Community.

**PRINCIPLE THREE:** Nonviolence seeks to defeat injustice not people.

Nonviolence recognizes that evildoers are also victims and are not evil people.

The nonviolent resister seeks to defeat evil not people.

**PRINCIPLE FOUR:** Nonviolence holds that suffering can educate and transform.

Nonviolence accepts suffering without retaliation. Unearned suffering is redemptive and has tremendous educational and transforming possibilities.

**PRINCIPLE FIVE:** Nonviolence chooses love instead of hate.

Nonviolence resists violence of the spirit as well as the body. Nonviolent love is spontaneous, unmotivated, unselfish and creative.

**PRINCIPLE SIX:** Nonviolence believes that the universe is on the side of justice.

The nonviolent resister has deep faith that justice will eventually win.

Nonviolence believes that God is a God of justice.

## SIX STEPS OF NONVIOLENT SOCIAL CHANGE

The Six Steps for Nonviolent Social Change are based on Dr. King's nonviolent campaigns and teachings that emphasize love in action. Dr. King's philosophy of nonviolence, as

reviewed in the Six Principles of Nonviolence, guides these steps for social and interpersonal change.

### INFORMATION GATHERING:

To understand and articulate an issue, problem or injustice facing a person, community, or institution you must do research. You must investigate and gather all vital information from all sides of the argument or issue so as to increase your understanding of the problem. You must become an expert on your opponent's position.

### EDUCATION:

It is essential to inform others, including your opposition, about your issue. This minimizes misunderstandings and gains your support and sympathy.

### PERSONAL COMMITMENT:

Daily check and affirm your faith in philosophy and methods of nonviolence. Eliminate hidden motives and prepare yourself to accept suffering, if necessary, in your work for justice.

### DISCUSSION/NEGOTIATION:

Using grace, humor and intelligence, confront the other party with a list of injustices and a plan for addressing and resolving these injustices. Look for what is positive in every action and statement the opposition makes. Do not seek to humiliate the opponent but to call forth the good in the opponent.

### DIRECT ACTION:

These are actions taken when the opponent is unwilling to enter into, or remain in, discussion/negotiation. These actions impose a "creative tension" into the conflict, supplying moral pressure on your opponent to work with you in resolving the injustice.

### RECONCILIATION:

Nonviolence seeks friendship and understanding with the opponent. Nonviolence does not seek to defeat the opponent. Nonviolence is directed against evil systems, forces, oppressive policies, unjust acts, but not against persons. Through reasoned compromise, both sides resolve the injustice with a plan of action. Each act of reconciliation is one step close to the 'Beloved Community.'

Based on Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "Letter from Birmingham Jail" in *Why We Can't Wait*, Penguin Books, 1963.

We often view the Six Steps as phases or cycles of a campaign rather than steps because each of them embodies a cluster or series of activities related to each of the other five elements.

## THE BELOVED COMMUNITY

"The Beloved Community" is a term that was first coined in the early days of the 20th Century by the philosopher-theologian Josiah Royce, who founded the Fellowship of Reconciliation. However, it was Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., also a member of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, who popularized the term and invested it with a deeper meaning which captured the imagination of people of goodwill all over the world.

For Dr. King, The Beloved Community was not a lofty utopian goal to be confused with the rapturous image of the Peaceable Kingdom, in which lions and lambs coexist in idyllic harmony. Rather, The Beloved Community was for him a realistic, achievable goal that could be attained by a critical mass of people committed to and trained in philosophy and methods of nonviolence.

Dr. King's Beloved Community is a global vision, in which all people can share in the wealth of the earth. In the Beloved Community, poverty, hunger and homelessness will not be tolerated because international standards of human decency will not allow it. Racism and all forms of discrimination, bigotry and prejudice will be replaced by an all-inclusive spirit of sisterhood and brotherhood. In the Beloved Community, international disputes will be resolved by peaceful conflict-resolution and reconciliation of adversaries, instead of military power. Love and trust will triumph over fear and hatred. Peace with justice will prevail over war and military conflict.

By Chris Collins

# SICKLE CELL DISEASE



## Facts and Stats

### WHAT?

Sickle Cell Disease (SCD) is a rare, inherited blood disorder in which red blood cells may become sickle-shaped and harden. For a baby to be born with Sickle Cell Disease, both parents must have the sickle cell trait, or one parent has the sickle trait and the other parent has another abnormal hemoglobin trait. Sickle Cell Disease is not contagious, and there is no universal cure.



### The Facts



- Sickle Cell is a **rare disease**
- An estimated over **100,000** people in the U.S. have **SCD**
- **2,000** babies are born with **SCD** annually in the U.S.
- Average age of diagnosis: **under 5 months**
- Sickle cell impacts people of **many races and ethnicities**



**53** years  
life expectancy of those suffering from chronic sickle disease complications in U.S.

### The blockage of blood flow caused by sickled cells leads to complications including:

- Chronic severe and unpredictable pain
- Anemia
- Frequent infections
- Fatigue
- Delayed growth
- Vision problems/blindness
- Lung tissue damage
- Kidney disease
- Stroke
- Shortened life expectancy
- Blood clots
- Hip and shoulder joint damage
- Skin ulcers
- Difficult pregnancy

### Where?

**Sickle Cell Disease** is a global health problem



### Staying healthy with Sickle Cell Disease involves:

- Pain management
- Blood transfusions
- Self-care, including eating well, exercising, and drinking water
- Preventive antibiotics (when prescribed)
- Prescription treatments such as hydroxyurea, glutamine, and crizanlizumab to reduce the severity of SCD
- Screening tests for early detection of some sickle cell complications

### Curative and Potentially Curative Therapies

No universal cure exists for **Sickle Cell Disease**; however, the following treatment options are considered curative and potentially curative.

- Bone marrow transplant (curative)
- Gene therapy (potentially curative)

## Promises Made and Kept as Community Advisory Board Established

### Mayor & City Council Move Forward with EMR Agreement

**CAMDEN, NJ** – On Tuesday, January 27, 2026, the members of the Community Advisory Board convened their first meeting to discuss the financial oversight of community investments being made by EMR within Camden's Waterfront South neighborhood. The board was established as a part of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Agreement announced in April 2025 by the City of Camden with Camden based EMR Metal Recycling. The MOU stemmed from a February 21, 2025, fire which began at the EMR facility, located at 1400 block of South Front Street.

Through the work of Mayor Victor Carstarphen and his administration, EMR will be allocating \$6.7 million to benefit the residents who live in the Waterfront South neighborhood and the surrounding community. Based on the \$6.7 million pledge, \$4.5 million was committed in 2025 and \$450,000 will be paid annually over next five years. In addition, funds are being applied to improve and enhance the fire suppression system at EMR facility and reimbursing the city fire department from damages in battling the previous blaze.

At the December 2025 City Council meeting, Council members approved the appointment of the City of Camden's Community Advisory Board Members as outlined in the terms of the MOU Agreement. The four City of Camden appointees to the seven-member board include: resident and City of Camden OEM/DPW Director Keith Walker (Mayor's Designee), resident and City Council Vice President/Ward 1 Councilman Arthur Barclay, community members Derrick Gallashaw and Father Vincent Guest from Sacred Heart Parish located in the Waterfront South neighborhood. EMR has also identified its four board members: Tony Crilly, Stacey Pierce, Joe Balzano, & Bishop Girard Peterson.

In addition to the establishment of the Community Advisory Committee, other actions that are being taken by EMR and mutually agreed upon commitments are being met. EMR has filed its site plan with the City's Planning board to implement fire suppression improvements and the consolidation of its facility. These are two critical action steps which are aimed at mitigating future fires. The City of Camden has also recovered costs associated with damages from the February 21st fire including the replacement of fire department equipment.

"I am confident the members of the advisory board will act in the best interest of the community," said Camden Mayor Victor Carstarphen. "The Community Advisory Board Members are just as concerned as I am about improving the quality of life for residents living in the Waterfront South neighborhood. City Council and I recognize the importance of implementing the terms outlined in the MOU Agreement with EMR. The agreement aims to increase engagement between EMR and the community while improving communication, collaboration, transparency and strengthening trust."

"The Mayor and City Council were deeply troubled by the impact the February fire would have on our community," said Camden City Council President Angel Fuentes. "Since the incident, we are pleased to see that EMR are cooperating and being a good neighbor. The safety of our residents must always be our top priority for the city and a concern to EMR."

"I commend the Mayor, City Council, and EMR for taking the necessary steps to ensure the safety of our community members, said City Camden Council Vice President Arthur Barclay. "The fire was unacceptable, and we took immediate action to address residents' concerns by implementing the MOU Agreement. The Community Advisory Board is a big step and will help to ensure this critical funding makes a positive and lasting impact to improve conditions in Waterfront South."

"I am encouraged by the fire prevention improvements that have been taken thus far," said Camden Fire Department Chief Jesse Flax. "I feel these improvements and those yet to come will only enhance fire safety measures at the facility. These mandated operational changes will help to make our residents and neighboring structures even safer."

## City Of Camden Department of Public Works Clears Miles of Roadways Citywide

### DPW continues difficult job of removing tons of snow and ice from neighborhoods

**CAMDEN, NJ** – The City of Camden Department of Public Works continues with the excavation, and removal of snow along the 182 miles of City roadways across Camden. The Department of Public Works (DPW) removal effort remains a coordinated operation with Camden County DPW and involved dozens of vehicles, excavators, loaders, and equipment needed to move tons of snow and ice from this past weekend's winter storm. The crews and vehicles involved in this operation have been working day and night over the past five days, treating streets and then lifting snow since Sunday evening. These operations have been underway in every neighborhood and along commercial corridors across the city.

The removal operations thus far have deployed over two dozen pieces of equipment, organized 130 employees spread out across the city. This work involved plowing and excavating snow from narrow roadways, secondary and primary streets. This included clearing around critical infrastructure, including hospitals, firehouses, ambulance headquarters, schools, and water pump stations. Following the initial storm, DPW was able to address additional priorities including clearing sidewalks on bridges, ADA-accessible sidewalks along corridors, and at Community Centers, removal of large snow piles from metered parking spaces, and addressing neighborhood snow-related concerns. In total, the Department of Public Works staff utilized approximately 300 tons of salt and worked 60 consecutive hours to complete snow removal operations. These operations, as well as plowing and salting, will continue until all critical infrastructure roadways are clear and treated.

"We thank our dedicated Department of Public Works employees for putting in a tremendous effort over the past week as they battled Winter Storm Fern," said Camden Mayor Victor Carstarphen. "We are also grateful to our partners at Camden County DPW for a well-coordinated removal operation. Although these efforts are not always an easy task, nor are they completed, crews have done an outstanding job. Regardless of the situation or the weather conditions, our DPW remain prepared and ready to support the needs of our community."

The City of Camden asks residents to continue avoiding unnecessary travel. If you must travel, give yourself extra time, slow down, and help keep our crews safe by giving them plenty of space to do their work. We ask our residents, businesses, schools, houses of worship, and community stakeholders to support our removal efforts by shoveling their sidewalks and parking lots. Help our Camden DPW when clearing sidewalks and driveways by not pushing snow into roadways. This will not only allow plows to keep Camden streets clear of snow but safe when driving. In addition, drive slow & give DPW space so they can work safely. Icy conditions & storm info can be reported by calling the City of Camden Office of Emergency Management: 856-757-7132/856-757-7139 or email: [publicworks@camdennj.gov](mailto:publicworks@camdennj.gov).

We thank everyone for doing their part to ensure our sidewalks and roadways are safe.

## New Jersey American Water Readies for Winter Storm

State's largest water and wastewater utility prepares for snowstorm and shares safety tips for customers

**CAMDEN, N.J.** – JAN. 23, 2026 – New Jersey American Water is preparing for forecasted snowstorm and freezing wintery mix this weekend. The company has initiated readiness efforts to mitigate potential impacts to its water and wastewater plants and distribution systems.

"We are committed to providing safe and reliable water service to our customers, even through extreme weather conditions," said Benjamin Morris, vice president of operations for New Jersey American Water. "Our team of experts is highly trained on emergency preparedness, response and management and is ready to handle any service disruptions that may come our way."

As part of the company's readiness efforts, operations personnel have tested and fueled generators, vehicles and fuel storage tanks, secured additional water treatment chemicals, prepared wastewater treatment plants for increased flows, and updated staffing plans to help with response efforts.

"Customers should also prepare for extreme conditions this weekend by taking the following precautions before, during, and after the snowstorm to stay informed, stay safe and protect vulnerable areas of their homes," said Morris.

Before the storm:

- Update your emergency contact information and preferences in your MyWater account. The company uses this information to contact customers about any service impacts.
- Locate your main water shut-off valve. If a pipe freezes or bursts, shut the water off immediately.
- Protect your pipes and water meter. Wrap exposed pipes with insulation or use electrical heat tracing wire; newspaper or fabric might also work. For outside meters, keep the lid to the meter pit closed tightly and let any snow that falls cover it. Snow acts as insulation, so don't disturb it.
- Make an emergency plan. Visit [www.ready.gov/plan](http://www.ready.gov/plan) to get started. Gather supplies, including non-perishable foods, cleaning supplies, and water, in case services are cut off in your area.

During the storm:

- Stay home and off the roads during times of high winds and heavy snowfall.
- If you have pipes that are vulnerable to freezing, allow a small trickle of water to run overnight to keep pipes from freezing. The cost of the extra water is low compared to the cost to repair a broken pipe.
- Open cabinet doors to expose pipes to warmer room temperatures to help keep them from freezing.

If your pipes freeze:

- Shut off the water immediately. Don't attempt to thaw frozen pipes unless the water is shut off. Freezing can often cause unseen cracks in pipes or joints.
- Apply heat to the frozen pipe by warming the air around it, or by applying heat directly to a pipe. You can use a hairdryer, space heater or hot water. Be sure not to leave space heaters unattended.
- Do not use kerosene heaters or open flames to thaw pipes inside your home.
- Once the pipes have thawed, turn the water back on slowly and check for cracks and leaks.

After the storm:

- Clear snow and ice from fire hydrants and clear a path from the hydrant to the street so firefighters can connect their equipment without delays in case of emergency.
- Shovel snow from driveways and sidewalks before it turns to ice and use road salt only in areas needed for safety after snow has been cleared.
- If temperatures fall below 15 degrees Fahrenheit, road salt becomes less effective. Consider using alternatives like sand or native birdseed to build traction.

New Jersey American Water also advises that sub-freezing temperatures can hasten aging water mains to break and cause unsafe driving conditions. If you see a leak or your water service is disrupted, please report an emergency online at [emergency.amwater.com](http://emergency.amwater.com). Additionally, please continue to check the company's alerts page and Customer Advisory Map for any disruptions that could be impacting your area.

For more winter weather tips and road salt tips, visit [www.newjerseyamwater.com](http://www.newjerseyamwater.com).

## 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](http://www.newjerseyamwater.com) and follow New Jersey American Water on LinkedIn, Facebook, X, and Instagram.

# WATER MAIN FLUSHING PLANNED IN CAMDEN

Each year, the City of Camden flushes its water distribution (pipeline) system to help ensure that our customers continue to receive high-quality water service.



## FLUSHING SCHEDULE

American Water, the City's contracted water service provider, will be conducting fire hydrant flushing for 10 weeks beginning Sept. 15, 2025, during the hours of 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

## WHY WE FLUSH

Flushing helps us to clean out any build up of mineral deposits and sediment inside the pipes. These harmless deposits can occur when water service demands are reduced during the winter months. It also allows us to use the hydrants to make sure they are operational and to check fire flows.

## WHAT TO EXPECT

When crews are in the area, you may experience a drop in water pressure or discolored water. If discolored water occurs, let the **cold water** run until it is clear.

## HOW TO PREPARE

- Draw water for cooking ahead of time.
- Store a large bottle of water in the refrigerator for drinking.
- Check for discolored water before using the washing machine or dishwasher.

## WATER SERVICE IN THE CITY OF CAMDEN



**QUALITY. ONE MORE WAY WE KEEP LIFE FLOWING.**



## Camden Contemporary Dance Theatre Elevates the Arts with Passion, Purpose, and Culture

**Camden, NJ** - Rooted in Camden and fueled by purpose, Camden Contemporary Dance Theatre has emerged as a powerful artistic force dedicated to excellence, faith, and cultural storytelling. Led by co-founders Omar-Frederick Pratt and Takreeya Hawkins, the company is redefining what professional dance looks like in South Jersey by creating bold productions that blend technical mastery with spiritual depth and social relevance. From cultivating young talent to presenting impactful works such as *Uncomfortable Conversations* and the annual Easter production *The Resurrection*, the company is committed to using movement as a vehicle for unity, reflection, and transformation within the community and beyond.

In an exclusive interview with the nation's premier faith-based and professional newspaper for winners, *Anointed News Journal*, Omar-Frederick Pratt and Takreeya Hawkins share their journey, vision, and unwavering commitment to use dance as a platform for change.

### Collins:

Now, you two are no strangers to the *Anointed News Journal*. But for our readers, tell us: who is Omar-Frederick Pratt, and who is Takreeya Hawkins?

### Pratt:

Well, I am a native of Camden, New Jersey, born and raised here. I went to high school at Creative and Performing Arts High School, and from there I earned my bachelor's degree at the University of the Arts. I've had the opportunity to travel and dance with Philadanco, Eleone Dance Theatre, Grace Dance Theatre, and Dance Fusion. Afterward, I moved to Washington, D.C., for a little while and danced with Dissonance Dance Theatre.

Then I moved back home and became a teacher at Creative Arts High School, where I worked with both the dance department and the music department. Now, one of the things I'm most excited about is being a co-founder and co-director of Camden Contemporary Dance Theatre.

### Collins:

And what you didn't mention is that you're also a gospel recording artist and composer.

### Pratt:

Yes. As I said, I grew up in Camden, and my home church is Parkside United Methodist Church. That's where I was introduced to gospel music. When I was 15, I became the director of the youth choir, and that experience really shaped me into becoming a director for my own music ministry, Omar Frederick and Devotion.

I started writing music for them at a very early age, and later on we recorded our first studio album, *The Awakening*. We've had the opportunity to work with artists such as Anthony Brown and Group Therapy, J.J. Hairston and Youthful Praise, and Bryan Popin.

### Collins:

Takreeya?

### Hawkins:

Yes. I am also a Camden native, born and raised. I attended Creative Arts High School in Camden, New Jersey. Prior to that, I attended Halliday Dance in Pennsauken, starting at the age of five.

After Creative Arts High School, I went to Camden County College to study psychology and earned my associate's degree. However, I still wanted to study dance, so I decided to audition for the University of the Arts in Philadelphia. I attended there for about two years, and then I began dancing with Grace Dance Theatre in Philadelphia.

There was a lot of conversation about dancers from Camden always having to go to Philadelphia to dance professionally. We began asking, how could we bring that opportunity to Camden? While teaching dance in Camden, as well as in Pennsauken at Halliday Dance and other dance programs, it eventually came together. Freddy said he would be on board, and I just needed a partner. And that's how Camden Contemporary Dance Theatre was born.

It has been an amazing journey over the past six years, six seasons, and I'm really looking forward to getting better each and every year moving forward. I am also a licensed minister of the gospel at Kaighn Avenue Baptist Church under Reverend William N. Heard. Between church and serving as an associate leader for the praise dance ministry at Kaighn Avenue Baptist Church, dance has truly been with me every step of the way.

### Collins:

And you have also taught and co-directed some things on stage.

### Hawkins:

Yes, For Colored Girls with Camden Repertory Theater. That was a great experience. I choreographed the entire production back in 2017, so that was a major learning experience. It combined my love of theater and dance, and all of it really helped me grow as a choreographer. Putting on that director's hat, along with being a dance director, helped prepare me as I now continue stepping into that role.

### Collins:

Tell us about Camden Contemporary Dance Theatre and why that's so important for people in the city of Camden.

### Pratt:

There are so many extremely talented dancers and artists here in the city of Camden, and unfortunately, we don't have the same opportunities or outlets that Philadelphia has. We do a lot of training here, but when it's time to pursue careers professionally, it seems that if you're in South Jersey, you tend to go toward Philadelphia, and if you're in North Jersey, you tend to go toward New York City.

Because of that, a lot of people don't take the chance on themselves to cross the bridge and truly pursue their craft full time or on a more professional stage. We felt it was highly important to bring the professional experiences we've had through the different companies we've been part of—back to our own city.

There have been incredible performances and opportunities we've been involved in elsewhere, and we felt it was long overdue to bring that same level of artistry back home. So many people from Camden are creating amazing experiences for others in different places, and we wanted to bring that energy and excellence back to where we are.

### Collins:

Throughout the year, Camden Contemporary Dance Theatre puts on several productions. There are some that people look forward to every year, and then you also introduce new works. Coming up February 6th and 7th at Camden High School Auditorium, you have a piece called *Uncomfortable Conversations*. Tell us about *Uncomfortable Conversations* and what the public can expect.

### Pratt:

For a lot of people, Black history programs focus on our history and lineage, which is very important, especially at a time when it feels like that history is being erased. Keeping that at the forefront is necessary. However, going from one Black history show to another can sometimes feel repetitive. We often talk about the past, slavery, and how we got here.

This year, we wanted to do something different. Especially with the economic climate we're in right now, it's a time when the Black community really needs to come together. There are many things within our community that divide us, and a lot of those things are conversations we don't like to have.

This show shines a light on those uncomfortable topics—whether it's religion, politics, sexual orientation, or anything else that keeps us from standing up for one another. The goal is to bring those issues to the surface so people can leave feeling more enlightened and more willing to have difficult conversations with family members or others they may have distanced themselves from because of differences.

At the end of the day, it's about coming together around what truly matters. In this time, when there's such a large target on our backs, we really can't afford to be divided over smaller differences, like faith or personal beliefs. As a culture, we should be standing together, and that's what this show seeks to highlight.

### Collins:

How can people get tickets to this show?

### Pratt:

There is a QR code on the flyer that you can scan, or you can go directly to [www.ticketlocity.com](http://www.ticketlocity.com) and type in Camden Contemporary Dance Theatre: *Uncomfortable Conversations*, and it will come up that way (<https://ccdt.ticketlocity.com/events/145750>). You can purchase tickets online, in person from any member of the company, through our website, or on our Instagram. You can also buy tickets at the door.

### Collins:

Give us the website.

### Pratt:

[CamdenContemporaryDanceTheatre.com](http://CamdenContemporaryDanceTheatre.com).

### Collins:

Takreeya, each year during the Easter season, you present a powerful production called, "The Resurrection". It's absolutely amazing. What was the mindset behind creating *The Resurrection* on stage and adding all of those components? You also partner with Bonita Farmer on this, along with some local vocal talent. Tell us a little bit about the devotion behind it.

### Hawkins:

Yes. Of course, Omar Frederick Pratt—the genius that he is, when we started our second season, we focused specifically on *The Resurrection*. That process was really meaningful because it allowed us to take our time, read the story, and go deeply into the biblical foundation of what we were preparing to portray on stage.

I think that because we have dancers who are believers, it's important to continually remind them Who they're dancing for and what they're dancing about. That understanding has to come first before we even introduce the movement. The collaboration with Devotion, along with the addition of live narration to tell the story, really made the production stand out.

Seeing everyone come together to portray Jesus being baptized by John the Baptist, then moving through His ministry, crucifixion, and ultimately His resurrection, was powerful. Finding ways to relate to and understand the different characters we each had to embody was truly a joy. It was like Bible study, but at the same time, as artists, we were able to emotionally connect to the story.

For example, performing *Alabaster Box* versus portraying one of the Mary's at the tomb required completely different emotional shifts. Being able to step into those roles and feel those moments was incredibly meaningful.

As Freddie brought the idea to us, we often talked about how Christmas is widely celebrated, and there are so many holiday productions during that season. But when Easter comes around, we don't hear as much about God or the sacrifice Christ made for us. We asked ourselves how powerful it would be to create a production centered on the resurrection and share that story not just locally, but more broadly.

We see Christmas shows all the time, but creating a one-of-a-kind production focused on the resurrection felt like a no-brainer. Diving into that story was something we knew we were called to do.

### Collins:

And *The Resurrection*—you already have the dates set?

### Pratt:

Yes. March 27th and 28th. Yes, Friday and Saturday.

### Collins:

And people can get tickets the same way?

### Pratt:

Yes. Tickets are available online. March 27th and 28th, they're available through [www.ticketlocity.com](http://www.ticketlocity.com) and type in Camden Contemporary Dance Theatre: *The Resurrection*. You can scan the QR code on the flyers, purchase tickets in advance from any member of the company, or buy them at the door.

### Collins:

So let me say this—for 32 years I've been covering the arts. I've covered dance companies from around the world, from Philadanco to MOMIX, Alvin Ailey, Disney, Rockettes, Paul Taylor Dance Theatre, and Chicago's River North.

Continued from page 10

I've covered them all, and I can clearly say that when I have the opportunity to see Camden Contemporary Dance Theatre, I would classify you among the top five. No doubt.

The choreography, the energy, the leaps, the twists—everything. Some companies, I feel have played it safe in recent years. But Camden Contemporary Dance Theatre gives the public what they want. What makes your company different from the others?

**Pratt:**

For me, it's that when you have to work for something, when things don't come easily or conveniently, it means so much more. In places like Philadelphia or New York, especially in the arts and dance, it's right in your backyard. You can see so many companies on a whim. There are multiple theaters within just a few blocks, so access is everywhere.

Over here, we don't really have that. Everything is harder, and we have to work much more intensely than others who may have more opportunities for training and exposure. Because of that, our love and passion for what we do runs deeper.

It means more to us, and it shows in the dancers, the singers, and everyone involved in the production. People are proud of the work they're doing and the role they play in bringing each performance to life. For me, that's one of the biggest differences.

**Hawkins:**

Yeah, I was going to say the passion and the joy. Like it's not something that people take lightly over here. I used to hear a lot of Camden choreographers saying when they travel all over that people love working with Camden artists because the heart was there more, rather than just throwing up a leg or just whatever it was, they could tell that artists here really enjoy and really want to put out good work.

**Collins:**

I'm happy to hear that because I know from my personal experiences, I can say names of Camden people who have been at the top of Philadanco, Alvin Ailey, Eleone, Walt Disney Productions with The Lion King, and have soared around the world in this profession. I'm glad that we now have Camden Contemporary Dance Theater. We know it takes resources; for those that may want to contribute, how can they do so?

**Pratt:**

If you're interested in making a donation, we accept every kind that there is. Our Cash app is \$CCDT856. For Zelle it's our company email which is CamdenContemporary-DanceTheater@gmail.com.

**Collins:**

And the physical address if someone wants to mail a check?

**Pratt:**

For anyone mailing a donation, it can be sent to 3024 Waldorf Avenue Camden, New Jersey 08105: Payable to Camden Contemporary Dance Theatre.

**Collins:**

And as you talked about the history of Camden dancers; you mentioned teaching at Creative arts and teaching at Halliday. For those that may want to get their young people involved in dance, how can they do so?

**Pratt:**

There are many different programs in the city. Creative Arts is a high school, so for anyone entering or currently in high school, that is a great program. It is run by Ms. LaCeda Nelson, who is the Director of Dance at Creative Arts. They have an excellent program there.

Halliday Dance in Pennsauken, directed by Ms. Halliday, is another great program. Also, Nyemah Gillespie is the director of Creative Connections, which is another dance program in Camden, New Jersey.

**Collins:**

So what's next for Camden Contemporary Dance Theatre?

**Pratt:**

This past season, we had the privilege of working with Christopher Huggins, which was huge for us. He is one of the original members of Alvin Ailey Dance Theater, and having him come in and work with us really opened my eyes to what we are capable of and how far we can go.

Sometimes you can't be afraid to ask and see what people are willing to do. When he agreed to come in and work with us, it made me realize that we can start reaching out to other world-renowned choreographers as well. There are a few artists we are already in the process of connecting with for next season, and we're excited to see how many different choreographers and perspectives will be part of the upcoming season.

**Collins:**

The Anointed News Journal has over 180,000 readers bi-weekly. In conclusion, what would you like to say to the readers?

**Hawkins:**

I want to thank everyone for their continued support. No form of support is too small—whether it's encouragement, donations, sharing our work with others, purchasing group tickets, or attending our shows. We truly appreciate each and every person who helps keep our name alive and spreads it as far and wide as possible.

Our hope is to one day have Camden Contemporary Dance Theatre traveling around the world so others can experience our work. The more people who hear about us, the better, and we thank you for supporting us and sharing us with everyone you come in contact with.

**Pratt:**

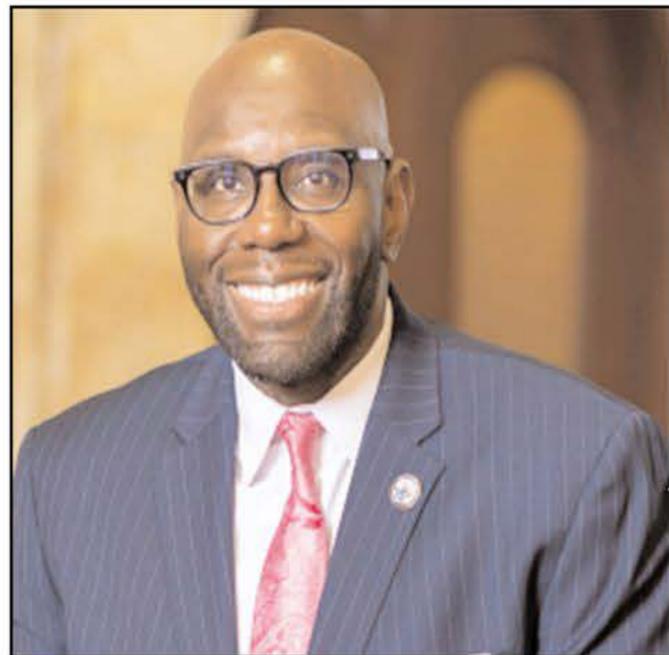
I completely agree. A huge thank you to everyone who has supported us over the years. We wouldn't be the organization we are today without that support. Whether it's purchasing a ticket, buying a snack at concessions, or simply showing up, every dollar and every cent directly support our dance artists.

Thank you for taking the time to pour into us. We truly hope that what we're doing is pouring back into you as well.

**Conclusion:**

Through intentional artistry, unwavering faith, and a deep commitment to community, Camden Contemporary Dance Theatre continues to prove that excellence can be cultivated at home and shared with the world. By creating space for difficult conversations, sacred storytelling and professional opportunity, the company is not only elevating the arts in Camden but also inspiring unity, healing, and purpose through movement. As their vision expands and their influence grows, Camden Contemporary Dance Theatre stands as a testament to what is possible when passion and purpose come together.

By Chris Collins



**Minnesota Is Hurting**

By NJ Senator Troy Singleton

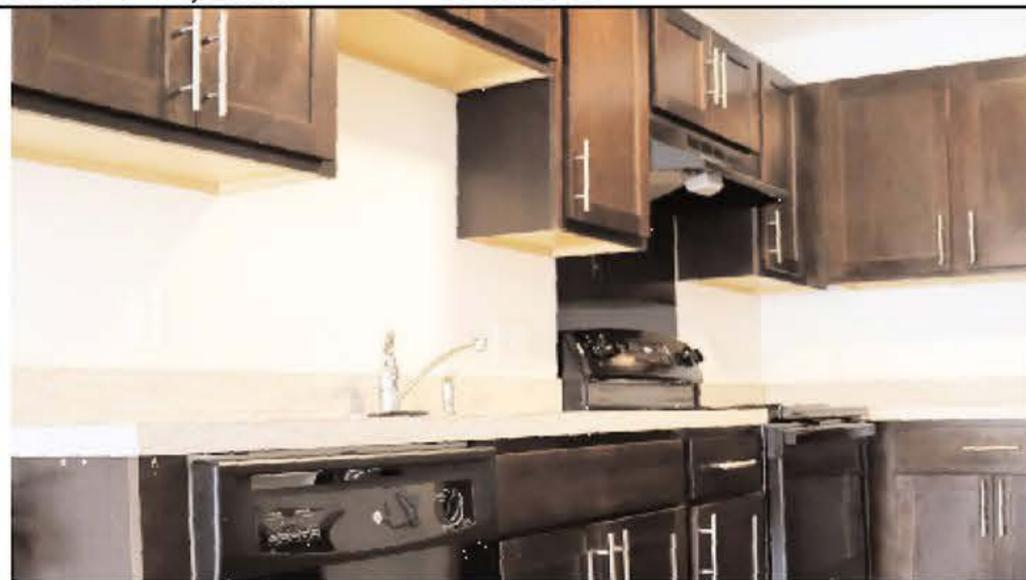
Minnesota is hurting. And when Minnesota hurts, America must listen. In just a few short weeks, families have buried loved ones, communities have been shaken, and trust has been strained by a series of deeply troubling events. These moments demand more than talking points. They demand leadership rooted in empathy, accountability, and an unwavering commitment to justice.

We can hold two truths at once: that public safety matters, and that constitutional rights matter just as deeply. One does not cancel out the other. Our democracy depends on both. When force is used, it must be lawful, proportionate, and transparent. When lives are lost, the response must be truth, accountability, and reform, not defensiveness or division.

Minnesota's story is not just about enforcement or protest. It is about the dignity of human life. It is about the right to assemble. It is about whether government power is exercised with restraint, wisdom, and humanity. These are not partisan values. They are American values.

At moments like this, we must resist the temptation to retreat into our political corners. We must reject the voices that profit from anger and fear. And instead, we must choose courage to confront hard truths, to demand better systems, and to rebuild trust where it has been broken.

The people of Minnesota deserve healing, not escalation. They deserve answers, not silence. And they deserve leadership that sees their pain, honors their humanity, and commits to building a safer, fairer future for everyone. That is the work before us. And we cannot turn away.



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HOUSING**

**EMERGENCY  
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# TRANSITIONAL HOUSING



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DELAWARE VALLEY



# The Comeback Continues in Camden

Updated data shows Camden students continue to narrow the gap with statewide peers post-pandemic

**Background:** Since the Spring of 2024, Camden Education Fund has compiled citywide student learning data to provide an overview of the progress or challenges Camden students are facing academically.

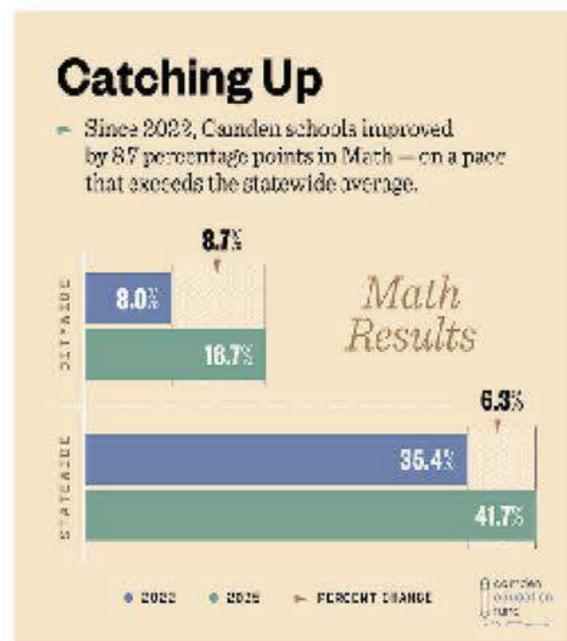
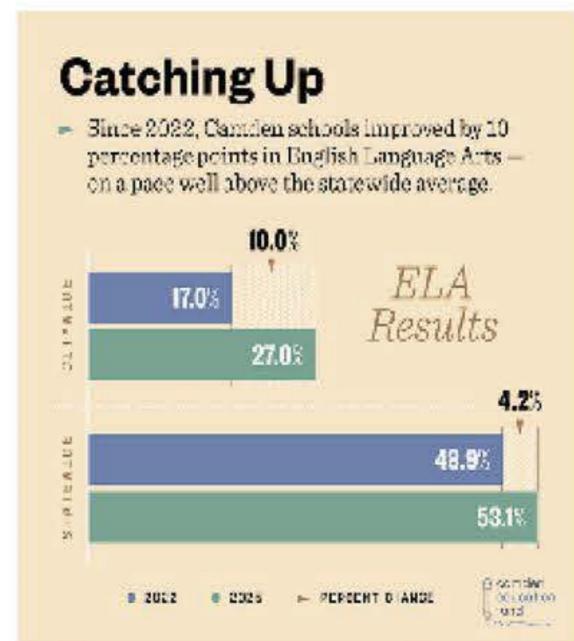
Over the last three years (combining results from all Camden public schools, inclusive of traditional district, renaissance, and charter schools), we have seen consistent progress for students. Every sector has seen improvement each year, and a citywide average of schools shows students have now rebounded from pandemic learning loss back to pre-pandemic levels — and in doing so, are starting to narrow long-standing achievement gaps with the state average in both ELA and math.

While Camden students still have a long way to go to reach their potential, the progress is real and sustained. We are encouraged by this third year of progress and are looking forward to further analyzing what is happening in our schools demonstrating growth to ensure that we can build on this momentum and help all schools continue to rise.

## Core Takeaways Include:

### 1. Camden Students are Continuing to Catch Up:

- Camden students improved from 17% proficient in reading in 2022 to 27% proficient in 2025, more than doubling the statewide pace of improvement.
- Similarly in math, Camden students improved from 8% proficient citywide in 2022, and improved to 17% in 2025.

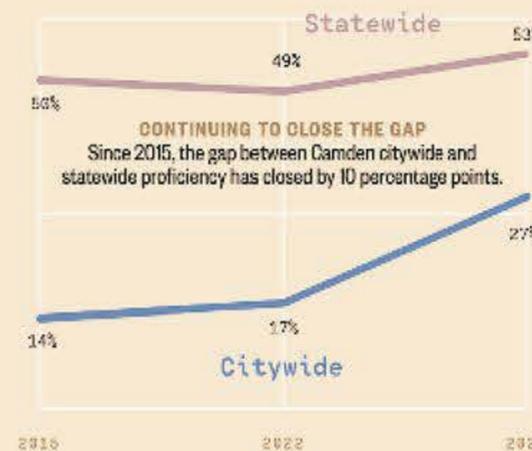


### 2. Camden Students are Narrowing Long-Standing Achievement Gaps:

- Over the last 10 years, Camden students have narrowed gaps with their statewide peers despite the pandemic.
- In ELA, Camden students not only outperform 2015 scores by 13 percentage points, but have closed the gap with their statewide peers by 10 percentage points over that time.
- In math, Camden students are also making progress, improving by 7 percentage points since 2015 and narrowing the proficiency gap with the state by 5 pts.

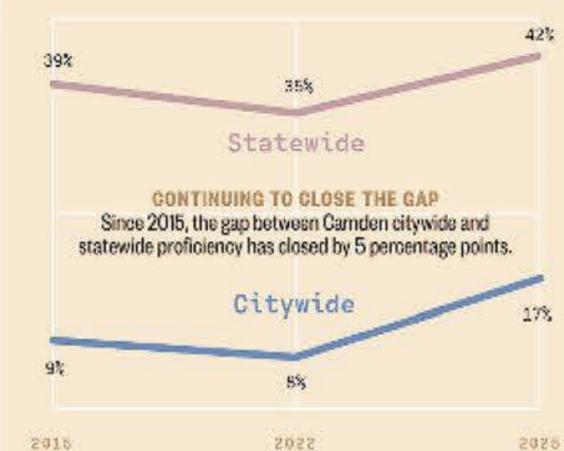
#### School Performance Over Time — English Language Arts

Percentage of Student Proficiency by Grade Level



#### School Performance Over Time — Math

Percentage of Student Proficiency by Grade Level

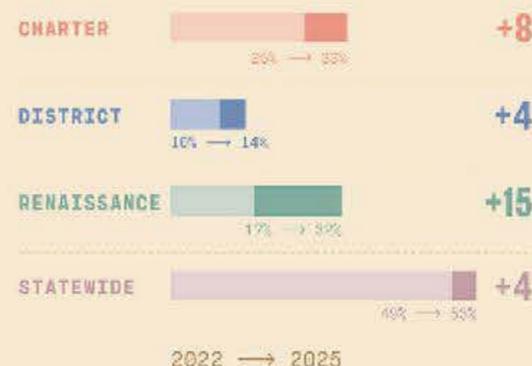


### 3. Renaissance Schools are Driving the Rebound:

- All Camden public schools are rebounding from pandemic learning loss at least as fast as statewide peers.
- Renaissance schools are driving the progress, bouncing back at three times the rate of the state average in ELA, and bouncing back at two times the rate of the state average in math.

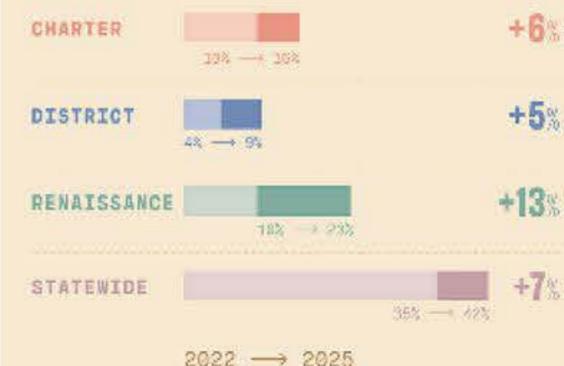
#### Schools Driving the Rebound — English Language Arts

All Camden public schools are rebounding from pandemic learning loss at least as fast as statewide peers — with Renaissance schools bouncing back at 3x the rate of the state average in ELA



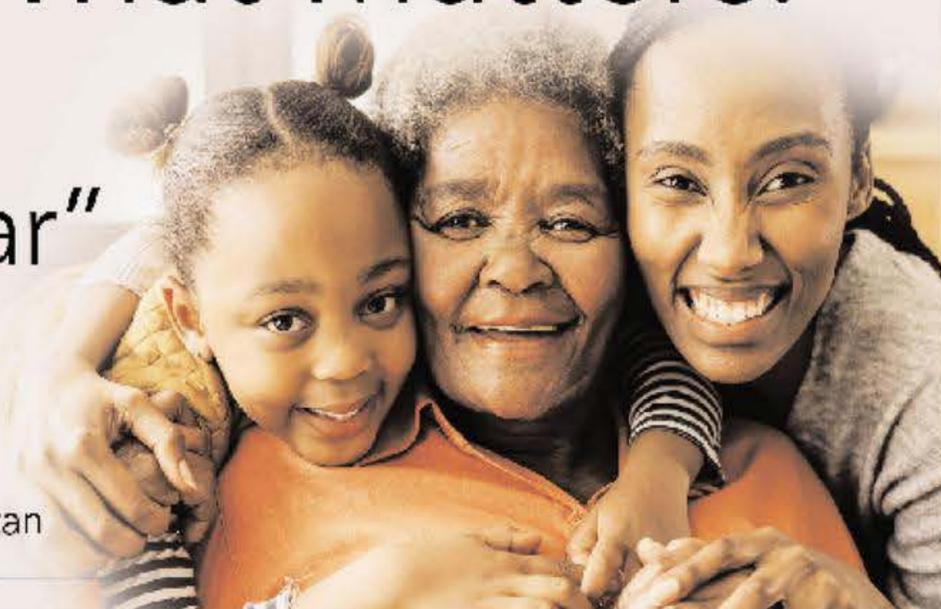
#### Schools Driving the Rebound — Math

All Camden public schools are rebounding from pandemic learning loss at least as fast as statewide peers — with Renaissance schools bouncing back at 2x the rate of the state average in Math



# Let's Talk About What Matters: Tips for Caregivers When "Happy New Year" Feels Complicated

By Kimberly Rumaker, MSS, LCSW  
Manager of Social Work and Counseling Services, Samaritan



As we turn our calendars to January and welcome the New Year, the world around us echoes with messages of resolutions, fresh starts and renewal.

For many, this season can be filled with hope and anticipation. However, for those caring for a loved one or friend with a serious or life-threatening illness, the phrase "Happy New Year" can take on a completely different meaning and spur emotions of conflict, alienation or even pain and heartache.

Caregivers may find themselves caught between celebration and positivity on one hand, and exhaustion and grief on the other. The simple phrase "Happy New Year" should evoke joy, but oftentimes can feel out of step with reality when a caregiver reflects on their situation and responsibilities to their loved one.

For many, being a "good caregiver" means sacrificing time, care, family, emotions, friendships, self-care... the list could go on and on. However, this is simply not true.

Caregivers lose sight of self-care. So then let's explore why caregivers are more apt to put their own needs aside to focus on others – Is it a fear of stepping away? Is it a feeling of guilt for prioritizing themselves? Or are they simply too tired to think about putting one more thing on their plate, even if it's to help themselves?

Chances are it's a combination of many of these things and more. However, sometimes all you need is a gentle reminder to STOP, BREATHE and REFOCUS on your own state of mind and emotional well-being before you continue to pour yourself into others.

If you are a caregiver, let me be that reminder today. Here are some tips for how you can better care for yourself as you continue to look after your loved one:

- Choose to believe that self-care is not selfish, it is essential for health in body, mind and spirit.
- Honor the moment over the calendar. You don't need to force celebration.
- Let go of expectations – resist pressures to make resolutions or match the energy of others if that is not what you are feeling in your heart.
- Take time to reflect. Journaling and quiet moments can help you process emotions.
- Consider turning to the help of a certified home health aide or specially trained volunteer to assist you with your loved one.
- Take care of yourself physically – get adequate sleep, eat nourishing food, and drink hydrating water.
- Add restorative exercises, like walking or gentle stretching, to offset the physicality of daily caregiving tasks and endless chores.
- Make and keep medical appointments for yourself. Take your medications with the same care and attention that you ensure your loved one does.
- Turn to others for support – Call a friend, join a support group, and/or lean on family, friends, or professional resources for support. Allow them to help.
- Ask for what you need and want but also be sure to say "No" without apologies.
- Turn to educational resources and guides, like Samaritan's complimentary Caregiver Support Guides.

Caregiving may feel isolating and lonely, but you never have to go through it on your own. There are many resources, such as Samaritan's Social Connections programs right in your own community that are able to provide support as you care for your loved one.

This year, my wish for you is that you know that you are seen, valued, and never alone in your caregiving experience. The care you provide matters profoundly.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to all caregivers in the community. As January unfolds, may you find encouragement in small victories and the courage to seek and receive the care and support you need and deserve. I wish each of you peace, comfort, renewal and joy in the coming year.

**Samaritan**  
LIFE-ENHANCING CARE

## Stamp Unveiling Ceremony – Muhammad Ali and Phillis Wheatley.

**Lawnside, NJ** - January 10, 2026– A celebration for stamps honoring Muhammad Ali and Phillis Wheatley will be held at the Wayne Bryant Community Center in historic Lawnside, New Jersey on Saturday, March 7, 2026, from 10:00 AM to 12:30 PM. The U.S. Postal Service is honoring Muhammad Ali, Boxer, Activist and Humanitarian known as the "Greatest" with two stamps and Phillis Wheatley, the first author of African descent in the American Colonies, with the 49th stamp in the Black Heritage Stamp series.

The U.S. Postal Service; Ebony Society of Philatelic Events and Reflections (ESPER); the National Association of University Women, Southern New Jersey Branch (NAUW-SNJB); and the African American Inventors' Museum (AAIM) will host. ESPER is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to promoting the collecting of stamps and philatelic material depicting people and events related to the African Diaspora; NAUW-SNJB, a branch of the NAUW founded in 1910, serves women, youth and the disadvantaged in our community and in developing countries by addressing education issues, and strategically partnering with allied organizations; and the AAIM is committed to honoring and celebrating the ingenuity and creativity of African Americans throughout history.

The Lawnside Postmaster, along with the Glendora Postmaster will represent the U.S. Postal Service. They will be available to sell the stamps and other commemorative items. Linda Shockley, President of the Lawnside Historical Society states "How poignant to recognize these heroes here as Lawnside celebrates the 100th anniversary of incorporation. Phillis Wheatley and Muhammad Ali represent enduring Black excellence from the birth of the nation to the 21st century."

Additional supporters include: The Borough of Lawnside, the Lawnside Historical Society, The New Jersey Historical Commission, NAACP Camden East Branch, the Cherry Hill African American Civic Association (CHAACA); Peirians, Inc., Philadelphia Chapter; Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., New Jersey Garden City Alumnae Chapter; and Masjid Freehaven.



MRS. THELMA GILES

## “LOOK WHO’S TURNING 100 YEARS OLD”

“CELEBRATE GOOD TIMES, COME ON...!”

Mrs. Thelma Giles, a native of Camden, NJ, will be celebrating her centennial birthday on February 6, 2026. Thelma is the widow of the late Alfred Giles; she’s blessed to still have eight children living out of her eleven total. God has truly blessed her family abundantly because she’s the grandmother of twenty-five grandchildren; the great-grandmother of forty-six great grandchildren; the great-great grandmother of twenty-eight (2) great grandchildren; the great, great, great grandmother of two (3) great grandchildren. She’s currently the matriarch of six living generations. She was an avid bowler who played in several local bowling leagues for over fifty years. She worked diligently and retired from Campbell Soup back in 1988, since then she’s been living her best life amongst her dear family, church family and good friends.

God Bless Her Life!!!

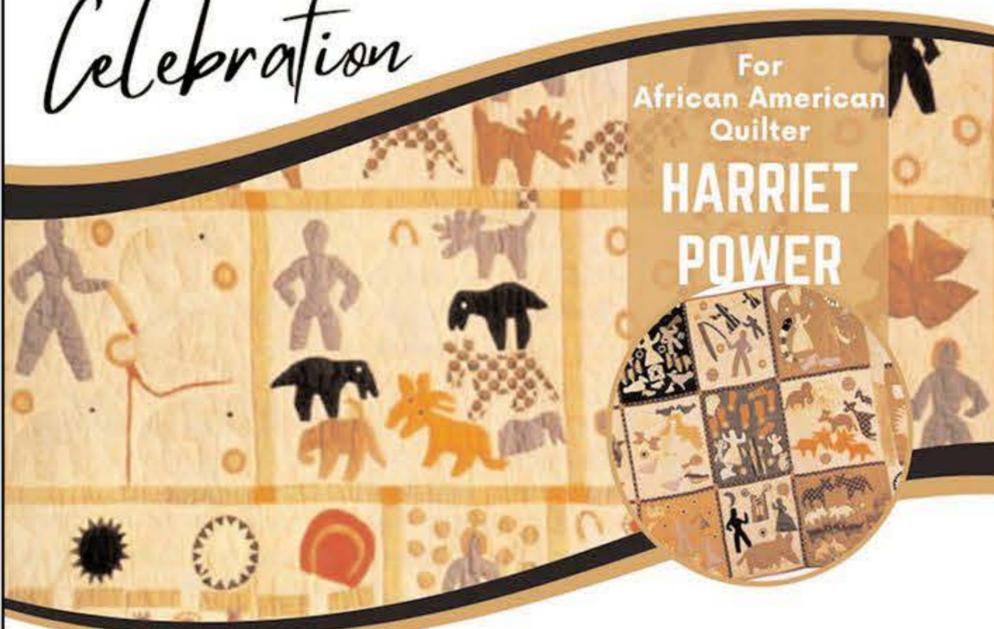


**UNITED STATES  
POSTAL SERVICE**  
The Postmaster will be available to sell the stamps and other commemorative items.

# U.S. POSTAL STAMP Celebration

For African American Quilter

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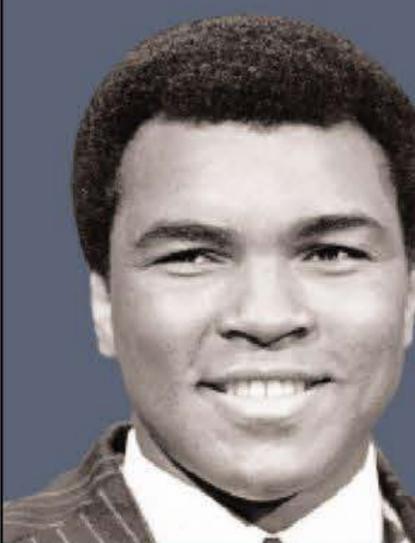
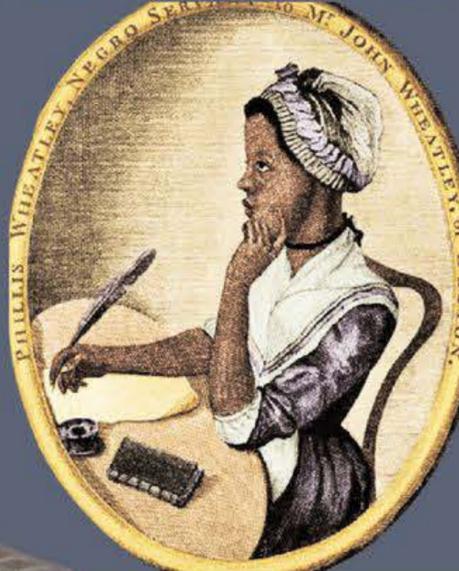
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**11:00AM**

Hosted by  
The Peaceful Stitchers Quilters  
Ebony Stamp Society (ESPER)

## U.S. POSTAL STAMP CELEBRATION FOR MUHAMMAD ALI & PHILLIS WHEATLEY

**Saturday, March 7, 2026**  
Wayne Bryant Community Center  
323 East Charleston Avenue Lawnside, NJ  
10:00 AM - 12:30 PM

The Postal Service will be available to sell the stamps and other commemorative items.

Please register for this FREE event.  
[https://bit.ly/Ali\\_Wheatley](https://bit.ly/Ali_Wheatley)



ESPER



UNITED STATES  
POSTAL SERVICE



AAIM

Southern New Jersey Branch

Supporters: The Borough of Lawnside; Lawnside Historical Society; The New Jersey Historical Commission; NAACP Camden East Branch; Cherry Hill African American Civic Association (CHAACA); Peirians, Inc.; Philadelphia Chapter; Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., New Jersey Garden City Alumnae Chapter and Masjid Freehaven



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For most of her life, Shannon lived with constant uncertainty. Ovarian cysts. Fibroids. Heavy, painful periods. Despite multiple surgeries, she never left home without a just in case bag, knowing that her body could interrupt her day at any moment.

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# NJDOC to Launch Groundbreaking Reentry Initiative for Incarcerated Veterans at Ceremonial Signing

Strategic partnership expands specialized reentry services to reduce barriers to employment and housing for justice-involved veterans.

**EWING, NJ** – On Wednesday, January 28, the New Jersey Department of Corrections (NJDOC) held a ceremonial signing to launch a vital new initiative designed to enhance and streamline reentry services for incarcerated veterans.

“This initiative honors our commitment to those who have served by ensuring they receive the community services necessary to reenter civilian life,” said Acting Commissioner Victoria L. Kuhn, Esq. “By partnering with NJRC and EHCA, we are providing veterans with a specialized pathway to success—combining legal advocacy, healthcare, and career support to break the cycle of recidivism and strengthen public safety.”

In a strategic partnership with the New Jersey Reentry Corporation (NJRC) and Education and Health Centers of America (EHCA), the NJDOC is establishing a "continuum of care" that begins during incarceration and follows veterans directly into the community. This collaborative framework is designed to bridge the often-difficult gap between release and stable reintegration by providing a comprehensive "wraparound" model. Key features of the program include immediate veteran status verification, direct enrollment in eligible state and federal benefits, and the seamless coordination of medical, mental health, and substance use treatment.

“Our commitment to supporting Garden State Veterans does not end at the courthouse steps,” said Vincent Solomano, Acting Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Veterans Affairs. “Working together, we can ensure that veterans reenter their communities with a clear path to accessing benefits, programs, and services. Through deliberate and coordinated action, we are collectively working to reduce recidivism and support rehabilitation.”

The initiative addresses the unique challenges faced by justice-involved veterans, offering individualized case management, legal aid to overcome employment barriers, and direct housing referrals to ensure stability post-release.

“I am grateful to Governor Mikie Sherrill for her strong commitment to New Jersey’s veterans, and to Acting Commissioner Victoria Kuhn for her leadership in making this partnership possible,” said James McGreevey

Executive Director and Chairman of the New Jersey Reentry Corporation. “This MOU ensures that veterans returning home, regardless of discharge status, are connected to the treatment, services, and opportunities they need to rebuild their lives with dignity and stability.”

“EHCA has proudly served more than 700 NJDOC incarcerated veterans over the past seven years and we look forward to continuing that work in all state institutions, halfway houses and in the community post-incarceration. EHCA offers services such as, documentation, veterans affairs referrals, housing assistance, transportation, food, clothing and other essentials, to every identified incarcerated and formerly incarcerated veteran throughout the State,” said Steve Johnson, CEO of EHCA.

## About New Jersey Department of Corrections (NJDOC)

The mission of NJDOC is to advance public safety and promote successful reintegration in a dignified, safe, secure, rehabilitative, and gender-informed environment, supported by a professional, trained, and diverse workforce, enhanced by community engagement. For more information, visit: NJDOC.gov.



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