

BALLGAME Continued from Front Page



PHOTO CREDIT: Semetra Samuel, Artistik Rebel

area.

Historically, the game of baseball has always been considered “America’s Pastime.” From the onset, African Americans were not allowed to play the game of baseball on a professional level, which prompted the creation of Negro League Baseball.

The Negro Leagues served as a catalyst to expose Black men and women to the beloved game, whether as fans, managers, sponsors, advertisers, owners, and especially players. The game of baseball also helped address racism, and the hot-button issue of racial integration in this country.

As part of the “Take Me Out to the Ballgame” initiative, the group has a mission to take up to 2,000 Black youth to Minute Maid Park to watch several Houston Astros home games throughout their summer vacation months, from mid-June to the end of August.

“Providing this firsthand exposure is pivotal,” said Briscoe. “If today’s youth can see it, they can achieve it. This event can create the next round of African American managers, statisticians, general managers, and possibly MLB owners.”

The organization knows how expensive going to a baseball game can be for some families, especially those from underserved communities, which is why all of the selected children are provided game tickets, food, and transportation—all for FREE.

“We have a love for helping the community,” said Cooper. “We both are mothers, and we know that REPRESENTATION MATTERS and if a child sees it, they can achieve it. We saw little to no African American presence comparatively to others when we went to just a few games and thought something must be done. Baseball was once a staple in the African American household, but we were not seeing that in the Houston community. Our babies deserve to experience the wonder of Minute Maid Park. But it is expensive and children and parents from underserved communities cannot afford it, so we took on the total costs for food, transportation, and tickets ourselves and sought help from the community.”

The “Take Me Out to the Ballgame” initiative was two years in the making. The ladies were able to contact legendary baseball player and Houston Astros manager Dusty Baker, who graciously agreed to support the initiative. After getting past the COVID-19 pandemic

and the Astros’ historic World Series championship run last year, things were finally able to get underway this year, with the official “Dusty and the Kids” kickoff that took place on June 14th.

On June 14th, approximately 100 youth from various underserved communities in the Greater Houston area were given the “All-Star” experience at Minute Maid Park for the official kickoff. Children and their families were taken to the official team press room, thanks to the Astros Foundation, for a “Conversation with Dusty Baker,” that was moderated by KRIV Fox 26’s Nate Griffin and emceed by “Uncle Funky” Larry Jones of Radio One’s Majic 102 FM. In honor of Dusty Baker’s birthday, all attendees of the game were given a signature, replica Dusty Baker ring for “Ring Day” at the ballpark. Attendees that day represented Kashmere High School, the Lincoln City Rays, and the Black Sox little league teams. Harris County Precinct One Commissioner Rodney Ellis’ Office provided bus transportation to the ballpark.

On June 19th, Sister 2 Sistah arranged for 50 children and their families to watch the Astros game on Juneteenth, which featured Houston’s legendary Buffalo Soldiers in the opening ceremony.

On July 6th, another 50 kids were treated to a game to watch the Astros take on the Mariners.

On July 30th, about 60 kids and 20 adults attended. For this game, they brought the Little Leaguers from Sunnyside called the “Sunnyside Grays,” along with some children and families who applied online to attend or who reached out via social media. The ladies paid for their charter bus, which picked them all up at Sunnyside Community Center on Bellfort and brought them to Minute Maid Park. That day at Minute Maid, the Astros held a pre-game festival at Union Station where all the children were allowed to go into a kid’s zone with music, bounce houses, balloons, free ice cream, slides, and other attractions. Afterward, the kids went to their seats at their section, where they had pre-boxed meals that the ladies purchased from Aramark and had delivered to their section. The boxed meals consisted of chicken tenders, tater tots, popcorn, and sodas.

In addition, the ladies personally stuffed goodie bags with Planters peanuts and Cracker Jacks and other small baseball-themed prizes.

Up next, the ladies will be taking another group of kids, including little leaguers from Fifth Ward to the Astros game on August 23rd. After that, the group’s funds will be depleted if they do not raise any more funds, and the program will end early this season.

“We started this initiative as an immediate need and did not envision anything for the future,” said Cooper. “We just said ‘let’s do it,’ but each game, you can see from the photos and the videos of the children experiencing Minute Maid Park, how the experience inspired them. Getting to meet Mr. Dusty Baker, who spoke to them, gave advice to them, and laughed with them was amazing. [Dusty] could barely get out of the room at the first event when they were swarming him, hugging, and high fiving him. I knew then we could not stop. I knew when they were watching the game and cheering, we could not quit. I knew we had to continue. We also want to take the children to the Dynamo games, the Texans, the Rockets, the XFL games, the Skeeters games, you name it, we want them there. Now comes the hard part, we just need to cover the finances.”

Although the two resilient ladies have reached out to corporations and elected officials to assist with their efforts, they have been turned down. The ladies have personally funded the effort with their own money, and have committed to that, but believe with more support from the community, they can help take more Black youth to the ballpark. They have since set up a GoFundMe page but have stayed focused on their goal not to turn any Black families away.

“We need community and business leaders to step up,” said Cooper. “We have had EVERY potential corporate sponsor that we approached slam the door in our faces, giving every excuse from ‘it doesn’t fit our mission’ to one of the biggest philanthropists this city has ever seen telling us ‘Sorry, inflation.’ We went to the banks and credit unions, even the ones we hold accounts with, and they said ‘No.’ One even suggested that we remove the word ‘Black’ from our mission and we refused. The mission is not to keep others out - look at our photos, you see other races and ethnicities joining us. The mission is to let US IN! We went to the major grocers in our city and nothing but more door slams. We are ok with that. We even went to various city council members and other political leaders who have also swept us off the front porch. We are good with that, and we shall remember when we are casting our votes. The only political leader who has supported us so far is Commissioner Rodney Ellis, who provided bus transportation for our first group of children. That helped us tremendously. He will forever be a champion in our eyes. So how do we continue? We lean on the community. We are grassroots campaigning through GoFundMe and passing the hat to our friends and family, and we are utilizing the media to help us spread the word. We have been blown away by the calls we receive daily and those wanting to learn more about us and our ‘why.’ We thank you in advance for ever thinking of us. We love our children.”

To find out more about the Sister to Sistah organization, please visit: <https://sister2sistah.com/>.

The link to the “Take Me Out to the Ballgame” fundraiser can be found at: https://www.gofundme.com/f/help-send-thousands-of-black-youth-to-see-astros?member=26776769&utm_campaign=p_cp+share-sheet&utm_content=undefined&utm_medium=copy_link_all&utm_source=customer&utm_term=undefined.

CLASSIFIEDS

HOUSTON-GALVESTON AREA COUNCIL

Request for Proposal – Houston-Galveston Area Council – Public Services – Fire Apparatus and Related Vehicles – FS12-23

The Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GAC) is soliciting responses for selecting qualified manufacturers, distributors, installers, and service providers of Fire Apparatus and Related Vehicles to make these types of products and services available to Customers of the HGACBuy Cooperative Purchasing Program under blanket type contracts.

To view the solicitation documents, visit <https://www.hgacbuy.org/bid-notices> or [ESBD \(txsmartbuy.com/esbd/\)](https://txsmartbuy.com/esbd/).

Response Deadline: September 7, 2023 @ 12:00 P.M. CST

NOTICE TO PROPOSERS

The Houston Independent School District is soliciting Request for Proposals (RFP) via the District's electronic bidding portal. Proposers may login to view specifications and submit their responses at the following link <https://houstonisd.ionwave.net/Login.aspx> until 2:00 p.m. (CST) Friday, December 15, 2023, for the following solicitation for the following project:

RFP 24-07-11 - DYAD Specialty Offerings (Small Contractor Services)

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

CITY OF HOUSTON

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING BEFORE THE BUILDING AND STANDARDS COMMISSION

HYBRID HEARING (VIRTUAL AND IN-PERSON)

To view the docket for this meeting, please visit:

<http://www.houstontx.gov/ips/bsc.html>

The public meeting location will be City Hall Annex Chambers, 900 Bagby, Council Chambers, Houston, Texas 77002, and the chair of the Commission of the Building and Standards Commission Panel will be present at the physical location. Other members of the public may be participating by videoconference in accordance with the provisions of Section 551.127 of the Texas Government Code applicable to a governmental body that extends into three or more counties.

Members of the public may call in to listen to the meeting, and public comment will be allowed via teleconference at +1 936-755-1521; Conference ID# 333 130 084# or via Teams link: <http://bit.ly/bsc081623>

TO THE UNKNOWN OWNER(S) OF THE FOLLOWING PROPERTIES:

Anyone having an interest therein: heir(s), unknown heir(s) and legal representatives of each of the named and mentioned persons who may be deceased; corporate officers, trustees, receivers and stockholders or any of the named or mentioned parties which may be corporations, defunct officers, trustees, receivers and stockholders; and any and all persons, including adverse claimants, owning or having or claiming any legal or equitable interest in these properties:

4917 SOUTHWIND ST (MAIN STRUCTURE), 77033; Legally described as LT 16 BLK 1 SOUTH PARK SEC 3; Last known owner: GOODE ELMER L.

245 PALMYRA ST (MAIN STRUCTURE), 77022; Legally described as LTS 110 111 & 112 BLK 3 CARRINGTON PLACE; Last known owner: WOLFE WESLEY I.

5217 PICKFAIR ST (MAIN STRUCTURE), 77026; Legally described as LT 1600 BLK 70 KASHMERE GARDENS PARK; Last known owner: TRUE ASSET PROPERTIES LLC.

1808 DAVIS ST (MAIN STRUCTURE), 77026; Legally described as TR 2C BLK 9 PARKER SMITH; Last known owner: LUVIANO GALLEGOS ACSA ZURISADAI.

3111 EVELLA ST (MAIN STRUCTURE), 77026; Legally described as LT 6 BLK 4 EAGLE; Last known owner: THOMAS HAZEL MCGAR.

1809 WORMS ST (MAIN STRUCTURE), 77020; Legally described as LT 9 BLK 12 CHAPMANS SEC 3; Last known owner: BAINES JOHNNIE MAE.

5514 PICKFAIR ST (MAIN STRUCTURE), 77026; Legally described as LT 1689 BLK 72 KASHMERE GARDENS PARK ; Last known owner: LEWIS JULIA ESTATE OF.

7807 BELLERIVE DR (MAIN STRUCTURE), 77036; Legally described as LT 4 BLK 9 SHARPSTOWN COUNTRY CL EST 3 RP; Last known owner: THUY VU THANH.

6707 LEIGHTON ST (MAIN STRUCTURE, BUILDING NO. 1), 77016; Legally described as LT 18 BLK 1 BARCLAY PLACE SEC 1; Last known owner: ANDERSON JESSE.

3914 SAYERS ST (DETACHED GARAGE, BUILDING NO. 3), 77026; Legally described as LT 14 BLK 16 VALENCIA PARK; Last known owner: PARIKH MRUGESH.

The Commission will hear the following cases concerning alleged violations under Article XI of Chapter 10 of the Houston Code of Ordinances and may issue an order to vacate, relocate occupants, repair, demolish, or secure the premises; and may assess civil penalties. You are hereby notified that a public hearing will be held by the Building and Standards Commission Panel on Wednesday, August 16, 2023. The meeting will be held in a hybrid setting, in-person and/or via teleconference beginning at 9:00 a.m.

To request an appearance to speak at the Administrative Hearing, please register by visiting <http://www.houstontx.gov/ips/bsc.html> to complete the registration form at the bottom of the webpage, or by emailing at don.hearings@houstontx.gov. Please register to speak preferably no later than noon, the day before the hearing.

The City of Houston is committed to compliance with the American with Disabilities Act. Reasonable modifications and equal access to communications will be provided upon request. Meeting locations are planned with wheelchair access. If requiring Sign Language Interpreters or alternative formats, please provide notice at least 2 days (48 hours) before the Hearing. Please contact the Administrative Hearings Section at (832) 394-0499 for additional information; TTY users route through 311.

ELIMINATING LIBRARIANS Continued from Front Page

HISD superintendent Mike Miles talks with members of the Editorial Board inside a typical classroom during an NES school walkthrough for principals and administrative staff at Shadydale Elementary School in Houston, TX on July 18, 2023. (Photo by Sharon Steinmann)

Sherrie Curry, a former Shadydale Elementary school librarian, holds the first book she ever owned, “Cowboy Country” at Jesse H. Jones Park and Nature Center on July 20, 2023 in Humble. (Photo by Karen Warren)

-site contains a sobering statistic: “According to the Program for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIACC), 32% of Harris County adults are functionally illiterate, meaning they do not yet have the literacy skills they need to successfully perform their role on the job, in their family, or in society.” And according to the educational organization Reading With A Rapper, 56% of Americans read at a 6th-grade level. These organizations will have to stand in the gap if literacy declines any further.

Mayor Sylvester Turner blasted the move. “You cannot have a situation where you’re closing libraries for some schools in certain neighborhoods and there are other neighborhoods where there are libraries fully equipped,” Turner said during a City Council meeting. “What the hell are you doing?”