



COULD NORTHWEST POMPANO BE THE NEXT WAKANDA?

Round Table Discussions for New Downtown and E. Pat Larkins Community Center

By Kristen Hernandez and Attiyya Atkins

Pompano Beach, FL – The vision for revitalizing Northwest Pompano is bold — cinematic even.

IMAGINE Northwest Pompano akin to Wakanda, the high-tech, self-sustaining African kingdom from the movie Black Panther. While ambitious in concept, residents of the Northwest feel that the big, bold plans of developers will eradicate the community’s history and leave residents struggling like a Raisin in the Sun.

At the heart of the matter is the future of the E. Pat Larkins Center, named after Pompano’s first and only Black mayor. After years of planning and months of discussion with City of Pompano Beach officials, consultants and developers, the Northwest



community still doesn’t know what will happen to the beloved community center.

According to consultant David Washington, the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) is exploring the option of upgrading the center and surrounding areas into a functional and futuristic hub.

Washington likened the potential transformation to Wakanda.

While the comparison paints a picture of promise, many residents are still waiting for clarity on what that future means for the E. Pat Larkins Center and the community they call home.

■ *Wakanda?, see page 11*



Controversial Rapper Kodak Black Honored with the Key to His Hometown, City of Pompano Beach

From Struggle Comes Redemption

By Kristen Hernandez

Pompano Beach, FL - Grammy-nominated rapper and philanthropist Kodak Black was honored on July 8, 2025, with the “Key to the City” of his hometown Pompano Beach by Mayor Rex Hardin and City Manager Greg Harrison. The well-deserved recognition was notably for his “outstanding generosity and community impact” in the Northwest section of the city.

But about an hour after the symbolic gesture, when the media cameras were packed away and city officials returned to city business, after Kodak Black greeted a gathered crowd of waiting fans with pictures and autographs, he quietly climbed into the back of his custom Tesla Cyber Truck. He wore dark sunglasses and sat there with his head down as if the burden of it all was a heavy weight, and the golden Key by his feet.

His is a true rags to riches story, despite the troubling legal issues that have plagued his career. His rise to stardom hasn’t come

■ *Rapper Kodak, see page 11*

One Year Later, Northwest Proposal to Preserve Black History in New Downtown Falls on Deaf Ears

By Kristen Hernandez

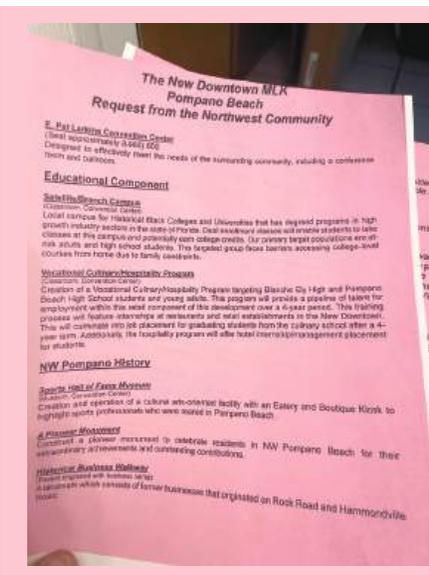
Pompano Beach, FL – One year ago, city commissioner Beverly Perkins, demanded the Northwest community have a say in the city’s \$2 billion downtown development. Her asks were: job training programs, tenant relocation, hiring local consultants, and honoring the

area’s rich Black history.

Three-hundred and sixty-five days later, not one ask has been honored – not one ask has been acknowledged.

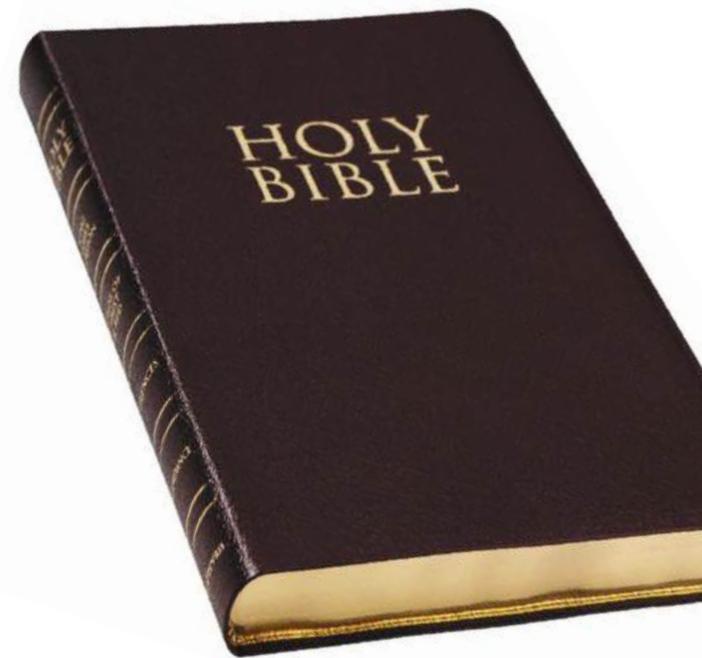
Perkins struggled to keep her frustration in check during a recent special joint session between city commissioners and the CRA on

■ *One Year Later, see page 9*





ONE MINUTE IN THE WORD



“Truly I tell you, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you.”

Matthew 17:20 (NIV)

OBSTACLES. Roadblocks. Setbacks. Pitfalls. Disappointments. Heartaches. Pain. They will all show up in life—not as random inconveniences, but often as disruptors sent to knock you off your path.

Disruptors have a job: to interrupt your plans, disturb your peace, and distract you from climbing the mountain God has placed before you. But here’s the truth—your mountain isn’t there to stop you; it’s there to be scaled. Brother, Sister—whatever challenge

stands in your way, remember: you are equipped to climb. You are built to endure. You are called to overcome. I’m pulling for you, and I’m praying for you. Keep moving upward. The view from the top is worth every step.

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Driver Survives Brightline Collision, Calls Recovery a Miracle

POMPANO BEACH – The 81-year-old driver who was seriously injured after his car collided with a Brightline train on June 17 in Pompano Beach. The crash occurred near West Atlantic Boulevard and North Dixie Highway.

VIDEO from the scene shows the vehicle flipped, with its engine block and tire ripped free from the impact—debris striking the City Commission building and shattering a window, a few minutes after staff left.

Broward Health officials confirm that the driver, identified only as Julio, was discharged a few days later from Broward Health North “in great spirits.” The Chilean res-

ident said he is grateful to be alive and considers himself “a miracle.”

Julio credits the quick response of Pompano Beach Fire Rescue paramedics and the skilled care of Broward Health North’s medical team for saving his life. He now faces several weeks of physical therapy as part of his recovery.

Authorities have not released additional details on the cause of the collision.



Hage Jonathan



Shane Strum



Stacy Angier



Tanner Paul

North Broward Hospital District Board Elects New Leadership

FORT LAUDERDALE – The North Broward Hospital District Board of Commissioners, the governing body of Broward Health, has elected its new slate of officers, continuing its mission to provide leadership and oversight for one of the county’s most important healthcare systems.

At the July 30 board meeting, commissioners unanimously voted businessman Paul Tanner as chair, education consultant and former principal of Christian Life Academy, Stacy Angier as vice chair, and Jonathan Hage, founder of Charter Schools USA as secretary/treasurer.

“These elections ensure continuity of leadership,” said Shane Strum, Broward Health President and CEO. “We are deeply grateful to our commissioners for their unwavering commitment to serving our community, and we look forward to their ongoing leadership as we continue shaping the future of our healthcare system.”

Meet the Officers

- Paul Tanner – A Fort Lauderdale resident, Tanner has served on the board since 2022 and was vice chair since 2023. He is the founder of Las Olas Capital Advisors, with a track record of sourcing and raising

more than \$2.5 billion in capital over the past decade.

- Stacy Angier – A Margate resident, Angier joined the board in 2018 and served as chair from 2021–2023. The former principal of Christian Life Academy now works as an education consultant.

- Jonathan Hage – A Fort Lauderdale resident, Hage has been a commissioner since 2021 and secretary/treasurer since 2023. He is the founder and CEO of Charter Schools USA, serving 80,000 students across 100 schools in five states.

Other Commissioners

The board also includes Im-

mediate Past Chair Christopher Pernicano, Nancy Stamper, Ray Berry, and newly appointed Jennifer Nicole.

- Christopher Pernicano – Chief Technology Officer of Synergist Technology, specializing in AI governance and compliance; on the board since 2021.

- Nancy Stamper – Coral Springs resident, partner at Birnbaum, Lippman & Gregoire, PLLC, board-certified appellate attorney; commissioner since 2017.

- Ray Berry – Davie resident and founder/CEO of Health Business Solutions, LLC, with more than 30 years in

healthcare management; commissioner since 2018.

- Jennifer Nicole – Appointed by Gov. Ron DeSantis in June 2025. A Fort Lauderdale attorney and shareholder at Gunster, she has also chaired the Broward County Housing Authority and served on multiple nonprofit boards.

The North Broward Hospital District Board of Commissioners meets regularly to oversee Broward Health’s operations, finances, and strategic planning, ensuring that the public healthcare system remains accessible, accountable, and effective for residents across the region.

Sanders Park Elementary Welcomes New Principal for 2025–26 School Year

By Villij News Staff

Sanders Park Elementary is entering a new chapter of leadership as Ms. Kizzy Dailey stepped into the role of principal on July 1, 2025.

DAILEY is no stranger to the Sanders Park community. Having served as assistant principal for the past several years, she has built strong relationships with students, families, and staff — and she's ready to lead the school into its next era. With 21 years of experience in Broward County Public Schools, including eight years in assistant principal roles, Dailey has earned a reputation for academic leadership, community engagement, and a steady, approachable style.

Her appointment was formally recommended by Superintendent Dr. Howard Hepburn during the June 17, 2025, Regular School Board Meeting. “Ms. Dailey’s dedication to the Sanders Park community and her commitment to academic excellence make her the ideal choice to lead the school forward,” the superintendent said.

Dailey succeeds Ms. Karen-Daunn Nesbeth-Bennett, who is being recommended for a new leadership opportunity within the district. During her tenure, Nesbeth-Bennett championed initiatives quality education and community involvement through such as Black History Month celebrations, “Dads Take Your Kids to School Day,” and “Walk Your Kids to School Day,” while fostering a warm, welcoming at-



Sanders Park Principal Kizzy Dailey

mosphere for families.

As Sanders Park turns the page, the community looks forward to building on that legacy under Dailey’s leadership — with a continued focus on student success, parent involvement, and school pride.



As I See It: Florida’s Moral Math Under Ron DeSantis Doesn’t Add Up

Florida is running a stress test on democracy, and under Gov. Ron DeSantis, the results are not inspiring. From classroom censorship to policing culture wars and bending the rules around public money, the throughline is power over people. And yes, that includes the First Lady, Casey DeSantis, and the now-infamous “missing” \$10 million that still hasn’t been credibly explained to the public’s satisfaction.

Let’s start with the \$10 million. In 2024, money from a \$67 million Medicaid settlement with Centene was routed by the DeSantis administration to the Hope Florida Foundation, a charity aligned with Casey DeSantis. Soon after, Hope Florida issued two \$5 million grants to

nonprofits that, in turn, sent large sums to a political committee tied to the governor’s orbit. That chain set off alarms about whether charitable funds were being used to advance political aims. Prosecutors opened an investigation; reporters and watchdogs are still digging. The governor says there’s “no basis” for a probe. I say if there’s nothing to hide, show every receipt—now. (Miami Herald, The Washington Post, AP News, WUSF)

Meanwhile, this administration keeps pushing a culture-war agenda that stifles learning. Florida has led the nation in book bans, pulling thousands of titles—disproportionately by Black, brown, and LGBTQ+ authors—off

classroom shelves. That’s not “parental rights,” that’s political censorship in the stacks. (PEN America)

It doesn’t stop there. The state’s African American history standards remain stained by language suggesting enslaved people “benefited” from slavery—an insult to history and to Black Floridians whose ancestors survived a crime against humanity. Educators and historians have condemned these standards for good reason. (Education Week)

Courts keep flagging Tallahassee’s overreach, too. A federal appeals court ruled the governor’s so-called Stop WOKE Act unconstitutional as applied to workplace training, calling it a First Amendment violation.

When your big “free speech” crusade gets tossed for violating free speech, maybe the problem isn’t the professors and HR trainers—it’s the policy. (AP News)

On bodily autonomy, the state slammed the door with a six-week abortion ban that took effect May 1, 2024—before many know they’re pregnant, and far from the “freedom” Florida’s tourism slogans love to sell. Doctors warned it would cost lives and push care out of reach for millions. (AP News)

And this week, the governor doubled down on hardline immigration theatrics, announcing a second state-run migrant detention center at the shuttered Baker prison—after the first “Alligator Alcatraz”

site in the Everglades triggered lawsuits and environmental outrage. The state is plowing ahead even as the first facility faces legal scrutiny. If the policy goal is deterrence, the human cost is the point; if the goal is good governance, this is a very expensive press release. (The Washington Post, Politico)

Here’s the bigger picture as I see it: when public money can boomerang through a First Lady’s signature charity and wind up fueling politics; when books are yanked instead of read; when courts keep blocking your “freedom” laws for trampling actual freedoms; when women lose healthcare and migrants get cages—Florida’s brand of “freedom” looks a lot like control.

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Pompano Beach Celebrates Six “A” Rated Public Schools: Academic and Creative Excellence Shine Across the City

Pompano Beach is proud to host six A-rated public schools in the 2024–25 school year, reflecting outstanding achievements in academics, arts, and leadership.

High Schools

• Blanche Ely High School – Under the leadership of principal Tavares Williams, a proud alum and FAMU graduate, the school has not only maintained strong academic performance but also developed incredible educational programs and community spirit. Ely’s acclaimed band program has thrived, earning recognition for performance excellence, and Williams continues to inspire greatness by having the school represent educational excellence in Pompano Beach.

Blanche Ely High School



• Pompano Beach High School – Known for its rigorous coursework, dual-enroll-

ment opportunities, and perfect graduation rate, this school also earned national distinction

from U.S. News & World Report—ranking as one of Florida’s top high schools.

Elementary Schools

• Cypress Elementary – A consistent “A” school, it’s recognized district-wide for strong academic performance and a supportive environment.

• McNab Elementary – Celebrated for cultivating curiosity, creativity, and a love of learning to build lifelong academic success.

• Palmview Elementary – A long-standing “A” school and consistently ranked among the top 10 elementary schools in Broward County, thanks to sustained academic excellence and student achievement.

• Sanders Park Elementary – A community cornerstone, known for its dedicated and talented teachers and school-wide performances honoring Black History Month—continuing a long legacy of excellence in academics and cultural celebration.

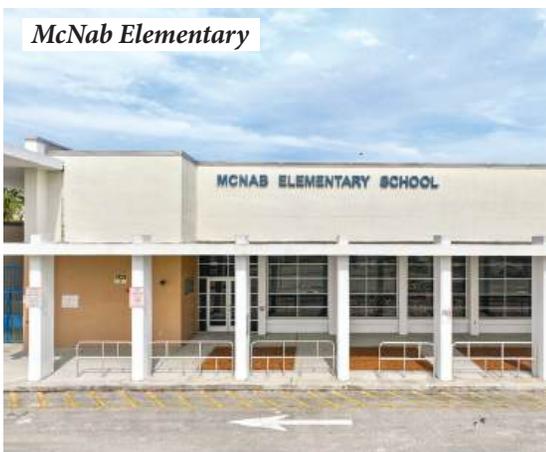
Sanders Park Elementary



Palmview Elementary



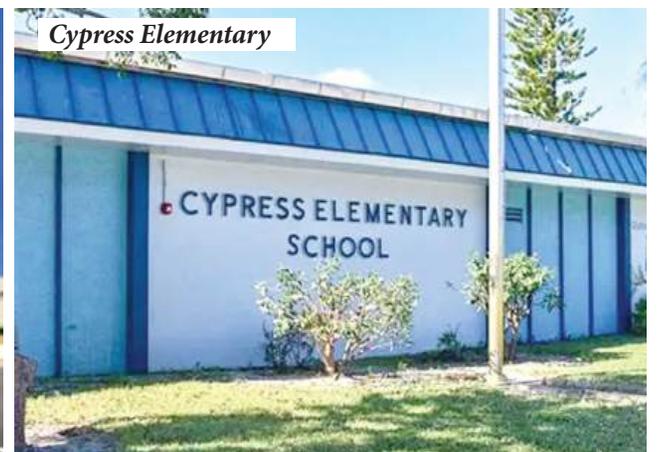
McNab Elementary



Pompano Beach High School



Cypress Elementary



Hurricane Season Alert

Hurricane Season is from June 1 to November 30. Pompano Beach has one evacuation shelter at Pompano Beach High School,

Protect Yourself from the T.R.A.P

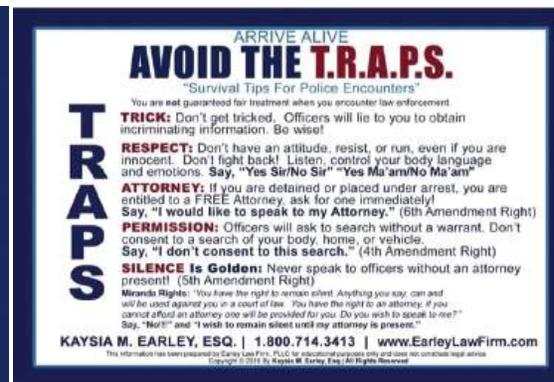
Kaysia Earley, Esq., has earned the title of South Florida's most influential Criminal Defense and Personal Injury attorneys, in Florida, based on her legal expertise in the law. She is also known as the "TRAPS Attorney", the creator of T.R.A.P.S.: Arrive Alive

During a Police Encounter®. Since that time, Kaysia have given away over 35,000 free T.R.A.P.S. cards across the United States. "My goal is to equal the scales of justice.

Parents should teach their children and themselves the law, considering officers are knowledgeable of the law, which gives them the upper hand when they encounter individuals.

I want to give that power back to the people, especially minorities, who are disproportionately pulled over, arrested, and ultimately convicted", she said. T.R.A.P.S. is an acronym for the Constitutional rights of individuals when they encounter law enforcement. "T" stands for Trickery, "R" stands for Respect, "A" stands for Attorney, "P" stands for Permission, and "S" stands for Silence.

"T": Don't get TRICKED. During an encounter or interrogation, officers can legally lie and make false claims to induce confessions. These legal and psychological tactics can



pressure and terrorize innocent people, especially juveniles, into falsely confessing to crimes they didn't commit, which ultimately leads to wrongful arrests and convictions.

"R": Be RESPECTFUL to law enforcement during a police encounter. Officer involved shootings, violence, and tensions are at an all-time high between civilians and officers. Unfortunately, this in turn has bred a culture of people who fear and even despise law enforcement, leading to further instances of violence. Mutual respect goes a long way, however, don't wait for an officer to be respectful during an encounter. Remain calm and respectful, no matter how the officer interacts with you. Officers are public servants and are obligated to treat every individual with respect. After the encounter, if you feel the officer was disrespectful, go to the district police station and file an Internal Affairs ("I.A.") complaint to initiate an investigation.

"A": You have the right to a free ATTORNEY (Public Defender), ask for one immediate-

ly upon an arrest. Say, "I would like to speak to my attorney." The Sixth Amendment guarantees the right to a lawyer; however, you must verbally request an attorney to end the interrogation.

"P": Never give PERMISSION for officers to search your house, car, or belongings. Say, "I do not consent to this search." The Fourth Amendment protects individuals from unreasonable searches and seizures. It limits the power of law enforcement to search an individual or their property without permission or a warrant. You may believe consenting to a search is harmless, especially if you have nothing to hide. Unfortunately, it may lead to an arrest due to unethical officers illegally placing contraband in your vehicle or mistakenly believing medication or items in your vehicle are illegal.

"S": SILENCE is Golden. Do not speak to law enforcement without an attorney present. Say, "I wish to remain silent." Do not sign anything without an attorney present. You do not need to give your side

of the 'story' to officers, you'll only talk yourself into an arrest. Your silence will be beneficial for your attorney, if charges are formally filed, to zealously represent you during trial.

Kaysia created physical T.R.A.P.S. cards in 2015 while working as an Assistant Public Defender in Broward County's Juvenile division. She quickly realized out of the 800 juveniles she represented, only a handful were white. The rest of her clients were minorities from underrepresented communities. As she began to investigate her clients' cases, she discovered, most of the time law enforcement abused their powers and most of her clients were racially profiled. Kaysia also realized her clients failed to exercise their Constitutional rights during their police encounter which ultimately led to their arrest or conviction.

Kaysia was arrested in 2003 during her senior year, while attending Howard University, and has a unique perspective from both sides of the criminal justice system. She was arrested at a shoe store, due to allegations of embezzlement. She

admitted to law enforcement, when authorities were called to her job, that she discounted shoes for family members and friends while employed. Her statement was utilized to prosecute her, and she was later sentenced to county jail and probation. Kaysia admits, "I didn't know my Constitutional rights until I went to law school, and sadly, many people don't know it either. Invoking your right to remain silent is not about getting away with a crime, it's about protecting your Civil Rights until you have an attorney knowledgeable of the law to advocate on your behalf."

Kaysia is a community advocate who educates students at universities, schools, detention centers and community events of the T.R.A.P.S. of the criminal justice system and empowers them to utilize their legal rights. "Unless we exercise our power, there will continue to be an increase in arrests, convictions, and casualties within the minority community. We must be proactive and educate ourselves and others about the law, rather than reacting every time there is a police encounter gone array" she said.

Kaysia is the founding attorney and owner of Earley Law Firm. She has tried over 100 trials to verdict and has secured over 300 dismissals in less than 10 years. If you would like to receive your FREE T.R.A.P.S. Cards or to learn more visit www.EarleyLawFirm.com, Instagram and Facebook: @EarleyLawFirm | @KaysiaEarley or call 1-800-714-3413.

DECEIVED & DRAINED:

BSO WARNS RESIDENTS OF BANK PHONE SCAMS

POMPANO BEACH – Detectives with the Broward Sheriff's Office (BSO) are warning residents to stay alert as bank phone scams are on the rise in Pompano Beach and surrounding communities.

Over the past few months, BSO's Pompano Beach District has received more than a dozen reports of victims losing thousands of dollars to scammers posing as bank employees.

In one case, a victim was convinced to withdraw \$15,000 in cash and hand it to someone they believed worked for their bank. In another, a couple was told to place their debit cards in an envelope and give them to a man impersonating a bank fraud investigator. The scammers later charged over \$9,000 to the couple's cards.

HOW THE SCAM WORKS

- Scammers call pretending

to be from your bank's fraud department.

- They warn of "suspicious activity" or possible fraud on your account.
- They instruct victims to withdraw cash or hand over their debit card and PIN.
- Victims are told to place the cash or card in an envelope and give it to an Uber driver arranged by the scammer—without speaking to the driver.

Once the exchange is made, the money is gone.

BSO SAFETY TIPS

- Hang up immediately if someone claiming to be from your bank asks for money, your PIN, or personal details.
- Call your bank directly using the number on your statement or official website.
- No bank will ever ask you to withdraw funds and hand them to a stranger, or place

your debit card in a ride-share vehicle.

"If it sounds suspicious, it probably is," BSO warns. "Scammers are always looking for new ways to separate you from your money—don't give them the chance."

Residents in BSO jurisdictions who believe they've been targeted should call the non-emergency number 954-764-HELP (4357).

Pedestrian Dies After Collision in Pompano Beach; BSO Investigating

POMPANO BEACH — A woman was fatally injured after being struck by a vehicle while crossing West Atlantic Boulevard on the night of July 13, according to the Broward Sheriff's Office.

THE crash occurred at approximately 9:20 p.m. in the 2600 block of West Atlantic Boulevard. BSO's Traffic Homicide Unit said the adult female pedestrian, whose identity is being withheld pending notification of next of kin, ran into the side of a 2024 Volkswagen Taos traveling eastbound.

BSO deputies and Pompano

Beach Fire Rescue responded to the scene. The woman was transported to Broward Health North with life-threatening injuries and was pronounced dead early the following morning.

The driver, 59-year-old Matthew Dahmer of Lauderdale-By-The-Sea, and his two passengers were not injured and remained at the scene.

The investigation is ongoing.



Man Killed in Hit-and-Run Crash in Pompano Beach

POMPANO BEACH — A man was killed in a hit-and-run crash early on July 8 in Pompano Beach, according to the Broward Sheriff's Office.

The incident occurred at approximately 12:53 a.m. in the 600 block of North Powerline Road. BSO deputies and Pompano Beach Fire Rescue responded after receiving a report of a traffic crash with injuries.

Detectives said the adult male pedestrian, whose identity is being withheld pending notification of next of kin, was struck by an unknown vehicle traveling southbound near Northwest Sixth Street. The driver fled the scene, and paramedics pronounced the pedestrian dead at the location.

BSO's Traffic Homicide Unit is leading the investigation, which remains ongoing.

Two Teens Die After Multi-Vehicle Crash in Pompano Beach

POMPANO BEACH — Two teenagers were killed following a multi-vehicle crash that occurred on June 20 in Pompano Beach, according to the Broward Sheriff's Office.

The crash happened at approximately 7:50 p.m. in the 200 block of East Copans Road. Investigators said a 2019 Mercedes Benz CLA 250, driven by 16-year-old Jayden Vico, was traveling westbound when it

collided with a 2021 Toyota Sienna that was turning left from Leisure Boulevard. The impact caused the Mercedes to overturn and slide into eastbound traffic, where it struck a 2015 Lexus RX 350. A 2021 Toyota RAV4 was also hit by debris.

Vico was pronounced dead at the hospital. On June 23, the Broward County Medical Examiner confirmed that 17-year-old Richard Joseph Gable, a

passenger in the Mercedes, also died from his injuries. Three other teenage passengers were hospitalized.

The drivers of the Toyota Sienna and Toyota RAV4 were not injured and remained on scene, cooperating with investigators.

BSO's Traffic Homicide Unit said excessive speed may have contributed to the crash. The investigation remains ongoing.

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(PHOTO OF THE VICTIM)



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BSO Investigates Human Remains Found in Pompano Beach

Detectives with the Broward Sheriff's Office Homicide Unit are investigating after human remains were discovered to in the backyard of an abandoned home in Pompano Beach. The victim has been identified as Adler Corvil, who investigators believe was killed in early 2024.

The discovery was made around 3:30 p.m. on Thursday, June 5, at a property in the 1900 block of Northwest First Avenue. Authorities are asking anyone with information to come forward as they

work to piece together the circumstances surrounding Corvil's death.

A reward of up to \$10,000 is being offered for tips that lead to an arrest. Anyone with information is urged to contact BSO Detective Steve Novak at 954-321-4325 or submit a tip through the SaferWatch app. Anonymous tips can also be shared with Broward Crime Stoppers at 954-493-TIPS (8477), broward-crimestoppers.org, or by dialing **TIPS (8477) from any cellphone in the U.S.

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Attiyya Atkins

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Summer to Remember

This year was a summer to remember. Villij News was at the hottest events providing coverage to some of the most important festivals and happenings for the culture. The Best of the Best Fest was a music event like no other. The Food and Wine Fete highlighted Caribbean cuisine, and the African American Black Film Festival provide an insight into so much culture and creativity.



Best of the Best Miami 2025: A Triumphant Return of Caribbean Sound

By Attiyya Atkins

After a two-year hiatus, Miami's Best of the Best music festival made its long-awaited return to Bayfront Park on May 25, 2025 — and it came back bigger than ever. More than 12,000 fans from across the Caribbean diaspora packed the park for a day of music, culture, and unity.

The lineup was nothing short of legendary, featuring icons like Beres Hammond, Wayne Wonder, Buju Banton, Marcia Griffiths, Romain Virgo, Nadine Sutherland, Chronic Law, and Soca star Skinny Fabulous. From lover's rock ballads to high-energy dancehall anthems, the performances spanned generations and left fans swaying, dancing, and jumping in unison.

Beyond the music, the festival spotlighted the richness of the wider Caribbean — with shout-outs to Saint Lucia, the Virgin Islands, Haiti, the Bahamas, and more. "It's so important that we bring the youth in and spread the culture," said Buju Banton, reflecting the night's spirit of togetherness.

While long food lines and crowd congestion drew some criticism, the energy, production, and nostalgia won the night. Legendary mash-ups, from Wayne Wonder and Buju teaming up on Forever Young to Beres Hammond and Marcia Griffiths' timeless vibes, made the festival unforgettable.

After years away, Best of the Best proved it's still the crown jewel of Caribbean music festivals — a true celebration of culture, pride, and sound.

ABFF 2025: Three Days of Black Creativity in Miami Beach

Miami Beach, FL – The 29th American Black Film Festival (ABFF) lit up South Beach June 11–13, bringing together Hollywood icons, fresh talent, and audiences celebrating Black storytelling.

DAY 1 opened with the HBO® Short Film Award Showcase, one of the most prestigious short film platforms. Five finalists competed for prizes, as festival ambassador Larenz Tate joined founders Jeff & Nicole Friday in welcoming guests.

Day 2 featured Chris Paul on his transition into production, Walmart's Black & Unlimited Fatherhood Project, and a candid talk with Gabrielle Union on sisterhood and money. Later, Bravo's Kings

Court stars Tyson Beckford and Titus O'Neil hit the stage, followed by premieres with Michael Jai White, Method Man, and a moving one-man show by Dondré Whitfield. The night closed with DC Young Fly's comedy showcase.

Day 3 kept the momentum with Ashanti debuting her Peacock docuseries with Nelly, a longevity chat with Blair Underwood, and a STARZ double feature of Magic City and BMF featuring Jermaine Dupri and Da'Vinchi. Mara Brock Akil shared insights on her hit Netflix series FOREVER, and the festival closed with *Courtney Glaude's moving film Old Gray Mare.

Since 1997, ABFF has been the leading platform for Black creativity on screen — and 2025 proved once again why it remains the culture's biggest stage.



ABFF
Singer Ashanti at American Black Film Festival in Miami

Food, Wine & Fête: A Caribbean Celebration at Virginia Key Beach

Miami's historic Virginia Key Beach came alive on May 17 with Food, Wine & Fête, a vibrant culinary and cultural festival created by Vanessa James and Marco Rodriguez. Once a "Blacks Only" beach during segregation, the shoreline became the backdrop for a powerful celebration of resilience, heritage, and joy. "This is more than just a party—it's about legacy," Rodriguez said. "It's a love letter to our people, our flavors, and our rhythm."

The festival blended food, music, and community in a way only the Caribbean can. Chefs like Irie, Troy Tingling, and Kimesha Chong showcased dishes from Trinidad to Jamaica to the Bahamas, proving Caribbean cuisine is as diverse as it is soulful. Paired with creative cocktails and wines, each plate told a story of memory and migration. Friends and family reunited on the



beach, dancing to Soca, Reggae, Kompa, and Afrobeats. Legendary emcee Giselle "The Wassi One" and carnival star Farmer Nappy kept the energy electric.

More than entertainment, the event launched the VJMedia x FWF Culture and Caribbean Leadership Fund, supporting Caribbean cre-

atives and businesses. By centering culture at every turn, Food, Wine & Fête sent a clear message: Caribbean excellence deserves recognition, investment, and celebration. In a world often divided, the festival stood as a joyful reminder that community, culture, and love are the strongest bonds of all.

Trump Targets Harvard in Anti-DEI Push

By Akayliah Simpson and Attiyya Atkins

MIAMI — President Donald Trump's administration is escalating its crackdown on diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) programs, with Harvard University now at the center of the storm. On May 22, federal officials barred Harvard from enrolling international students — who make up more than 27% of its undergraduates — and threatened to strip the school of its tax-exempt status. The move could cost Harvard billions in lost research funding and force students to transfer or lose their visas.

THE administration has also frozen federal research grants and demanded sweeping changes to admissions and hiring practices, part of a wider Department

of Education review targeting more than 50 universities, including Columbia, Penn, Brown, Cornell and Princeton. Legal scholars and civil rights groups argue the measures are

unconstitutional, while a federal judge has temporarily blocked the international student ban.

Harvard's Black community and faculty of color say the public fight does not reflect the reality inside the institution, which has faced internal criticism for its limited progress on equity. In its nearly 400-year history, Harvard has had only one Black president, Claudine Gay, who remains a professor after resigning amid political pressure. Several Black female professors researching race have also faced plagiarism allegations, deepening concerns about institutional bias.

Observers say the legal battle could set the tone for higher education nationwide, with Trump's policies threatening to roll back decades of affirmative action and DEI programs that began during the civil rights era. For now, Harvard stands as the most visible target in a fight many expect to end up in the courts — and possibly reshape academia for years to come.

Sidebar: Affirmative Action at a Glance

- 1961 — President John F. Kennedy signs Executive Order 10925, requiring federal contractors to "take affirmative action" to

ensure equal opportunity.

- 1978 — Supreme Court's Regents of the University of California v. Bakke allows race as one factor in admissions but bans quotas.

- 2003 — Grutter v. Bollinger upholds use of race in admissions at the University of Michigan Law School.

- 2023 — Supreme Court strikes down race-conscious admissions at Harvard and UNC.

- 2025 — Trump administration expands anti-DEI agenda, freezing grants, threatening Harvard's tax status, and banning international enrollment before a federal judge blocks the move.

One Year Later

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May 14, 2025. During that meeting, she requested a postponement to allow time for city staff to review the Northwest proposal presented last year; however, she didn't receive the necessary support.

In May 2024, Perkins called a community meeting to introduce CEO of RocaPoint Partners, Phil Mays, to residents of the primarily Black northwest neighborhood. RocaPoint is tasked with building the \$200 million, 75-acre, New Downtown Project, that is estimated to bring the city over \$2 billion in revenue when completed.

The purpose of last year's meeting was so Mays could hear directly from residents surrounding the project zone that will be affected the most by the massive-scale project, which will be located by the Dixie highway and Atlantic Boulevard corridors.

That meeting ended with a proposal of specific "asks" with the intent of reinvesting back into the very neighborhood where the project will be located.

"Back in the 1970's and 1980's, most of the land in the Northwest was taken by eminent domain," said Perkins, during the joint session. "These 75 acres of land were in the Black community. Most of the people lost their homes and their businesses at that time, and now we're putting up a \$2 billion project."

The tree lined, beautifully

manicured neighborhoods located east of Dixie Highway are in stark contrast to the historically neglected Northwest district.

"When it comes to our history, they'll move it in a heartbeat," Perkins said referring to moves of the McNab House and the Sample-McDougal House. "But when it comes to our [Black] history, you'll tear it down."

Residents living inside and outside the project zone continue to live in slum and blight, homelessness, drugs and gun violence. Yet, city officials targeted some of the valuable land and used eminent domain as a way to take businesses and homes from Black residents to acquire the 72-acres needed to build the new downtown and new city hall.

As city officials ignore the wishes of residents in the Northwest, the future of the E. Pat Larkins community center and legacy of Black residents and pioneers of the past hang in the balance.

When Perkins called the meeting last year, she knew it would be a long and tiring uphill battle to gain city and commission support for the Black community.

"All I'm trying to do is honor his widow's wishes, and preserve our history before it's completely wiped away," Perkins said last year. She was referring to Bettye Lamar-Larkins, the

Within that standalone building, offer a vocational culinary and hospitality program that targets Blanche Ely high school and Pompano Beach high school students and young adults. Considering that there will be hotels and restaurants within the project, initiate a job placement program for graduating students.

surviving widow of the first and only black mayor of Pompano Beach, and the namesake of the same building where Perkins stood, the Elijah Pat Larkins Community Center, located at 520 NW 3rd street.

When the meeting ended, Perkins drafted a proposal of "asks" aimed at preserving the rich cultural history of the northwest. The proposal was emailed to Mays, RocaPoint, members of the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA), Pompano Beach Mayor Rex Hardin, city manager Greg Harrison, and all sitting members of the commission and city staff. The proposal was never responded to.

Northwest Proposal

The ten points included in the Northwest Proposal as read by Beverly Perkins during Special Joint CRA/City Meeting in May 2024.

"Leave E. Pat Larkins Community Center where it stands, untouched. Create a

stand-alone building.

"Within that standalone building, create a satellite college branch from historically Black colleges and universities with degreed programs in high-growth industry sectors within the state of Florida.

"Within that standalone building, offer a vocational culinary and hospitality program that targets Blanche Ely high school and Pompano Beach high school students and young adults. Considering that there will be hotels and restaurants within the project, initiate a job placement program for graduating students."

"Within the standalone building create a sports Hall of fame Museum, that focuses on the professional athletes, including NFL player alumni that attended Pompano Beach's schools."

"Northwest residents want a pioneer monument to celebrate the extraordinary achievements and outstanding contributions

of black leaders from Pompano Beach."

"A landmark historical business walkway of remembrance to honor the legacy of former black-owned businesses that originated on Rock Road and Hammondville Road."

"An 'Incubator Program' to assist local minority contractors with obtaining licensing and other skills to partner with the city of Pompano Beach."

"Create a tenant relocation and transition center to assist residents who will likely be displaced during land acquirement. The relocation package should consist of down payments, rental assistance, moving expenses, and housing assistance for eight months. Residential housing for the workforce within the new residential development."

"Employment of two full-time consultants to assist with job placement, meet with community groups, and evaluations of developmental projects and programs."

"Community Trust Fund to be implemented specifically for the Northwest community to assist with homelessness concerns, empowering community schools, and investment back into the neighborhood where this project will be located. The Community Trust Fund should be used to beautify the area surrounding the project zone."

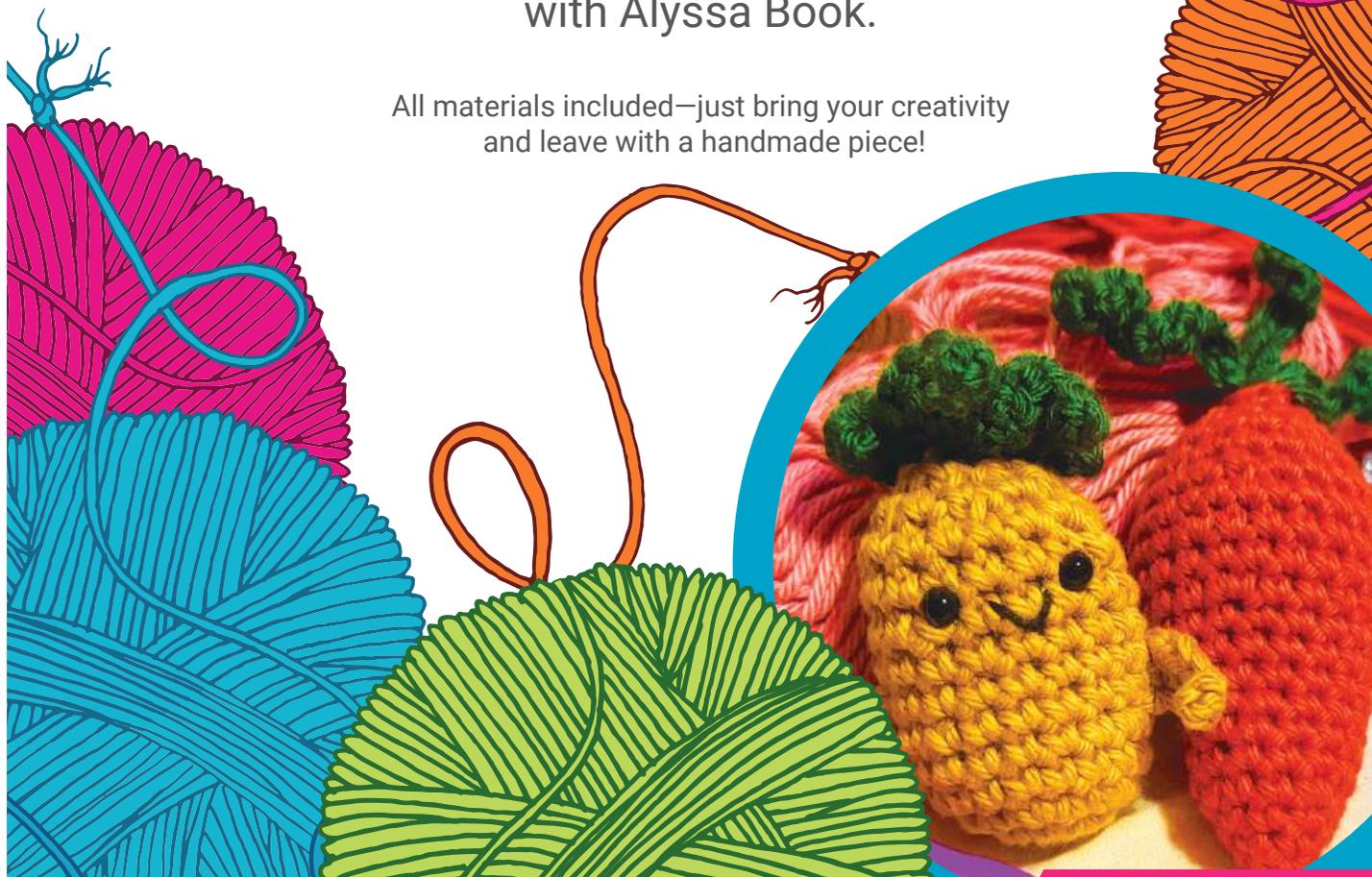


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SCAN FOR MORE INFO

Wakanda?

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“We do not want E. Pat Larkins to be destroyed, moved, or town down,” said Beverly Perkins, city commissioner for District 4.

Throughout March, the City of Pompano Beach, the CRA, and master developer RocaPoint Partners hosted a series of round table discussions in each of Pompano’s five districts to discuss conceptual plans and project opportunities for the \$200 million “New Downtown” project. The massive 72-acre landscape will feature residential and commercial buildings, small businesses and waterways and border along Atlantic Boulevard and Dr. Martin Luther King Boulevard, between I-95 and Dixie Highway.

The New Downtown promises to bring the city a \$2 billion return on investment and has been described as a pedestrian-friendly gateway to connect Pompano’s historically Black Northwest district to east Pompano’s beaches. Roundtables for District 4 were held at E. Pat Larkins Community Center, located at 520 NW 3rd street, in March.

The main room was set up with roundtable stations where residents could sit with the developer and CRA staff to discuss various aspects of the project. Topics included: meet the

developer, money and financing, new City Hall, economics, opportunity and participation, and downtown ambassadors.

Residents were first shown a 45-minute presentation that gave a glimpse into the massive scale of the project. But when the presentation suggested that E. Pat Larkins Community Center could be rebuilt into a “new and improved” technologically advanced building or even possibly moved elsewhere, tempers flared. Currently, the center doubles as a voting location, serves as a place for community events and celebrations and holds special meaning for the Black community. “My residents do not want it rebuilt and neither does his widow,” Commissioner Perkins said.

The beloved center is named after Pompano Beach’s first and only Black mayor, the honorable Elijah Pat Larkins, who served seven full terms as mayor, served 19 years as city commissioner, and who dedicated his life to serving the Black community.

Larkin’s presence in Northwest Pompano goes far beyond city politics. Larkins co-founded Broward County’s Minority Builders Coalition to help support minority-owned construction businesses. Larkins lived through

Pompano Beach’s segregation era and fought throughout his life to provide substantial economic opportunities for Black residents.

“This building we’re all sitting in was built on eminent domain,” Perkins said. “Someone lost their land for this building to exist. And even after the new downtown is built, the Northwest community outside the project zone will continue to live in slum and blight.”

Perkins also stated that after the first New Downtown meeting that served as an introduction between RocaPoint CEO Phil Mays and Black residents, they discussed components residents want implemented throughout the project. Perkins wrote a proposal detailing those requests and sent it to city officials, the CRA and the master developer. She did not receive a response.

Although Mays said that “no decision” regarding the future of E. Pat Larkins Community Center has been made, the meeting included an “options wall” lined with rendered drawings of conceptual plans for a brand-new building. Mays also said, “One building bearing E. Pat Larkins name will always be there.”

Consultants for the CRA, called “Downtown Ambassadors,”

mingled with residents to “talk-up” the projects’ potential. Consultant David Washington, spoke during the slideshow about how Northwest residents deserve a “west side that looks like the east side.” But residents said its simply gentrification wrapped in pretty pictures and slideshows.

East Pompano’s pier and beach area recently underwent a massive \$2 million overhaul that has attracted big name investors and million-dollar apartments like the W Pompano Beach and Ritz Carlon Residences. Yet over in the Northwest district, “west of the tracks” or west of Dixie Highway, the neighborhoods remain in slum and blight, contain hundreds of homeless residents, and is riddled with drug activity and gun violence.

“Imagine the dreams of our ancestors,” Washington said. “Imagine the dreams of Martin Luther King, Jr. You’ll have children in this room 20 to 30 years from now. There’s nothing wrong with wanting something old and wanting something new. You’re in a position to create a better future. Your own Wakanda.”

Carlene Duncan, known in the neighborhood as Ms. Smoke, responded, “That is straight up nonsense. Y’all gonna make money. We won’t.”

Assistant City Manager Suzette Sibble and CRA director Nguyen Tran assured Northwest residents that there will be plenty of economic opportunities, as well as training and business development intended to set residents and small businesses up for success. Tran mentioned that the project is estimated to take over a decade to complete.

“The CRA has partnered with various community partners, including Habitat for Humanity, to build homes in the Northwest, plus plans to improve and beautify MLK Blvd, and possibly build a medical center,” Tran said.

A special joint city commission/CRA meeting was held on May 14 to vote on various project aspects, including the future of the E. Pat Larkins Community Center. However, Perkins requested a postponement until June 4 at 6 p.m. to have an opportunity to sit with city staff and figure out how some aspects of her proposal could be included and benefit the historically neglected Northwest neighborhood.

Considering the location of this massive-scale project, Northwest residents want assurances that Black culture and history will be prominently featured throughout the project, not just one building.

Rapper Kodak

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easy, but Kodak Black, whose legal name is Bill Kapri, has never forgotten the residents of the Green Acres Housing Projects, where he was born and raised.

“My first reaction was like, damn...me?” said Kodak Black, during a one-on-one interview with Villij News. “I’m lost for words, it’s so special and unexpected. I don’t have a speech. God gets all the glory.”

As a young Haitian-American kid, he was a dreamer. He’d often visit the well-manicured neighboring cities and dream big. But those surrounding him tried to keep him grounded regarding his future.

“When I was a kid, I’d sit by Lighthouse Point and think, ‘I could be a firefighter,’” said Kodak Black. “I was told ‘be realistic’, so I’m thinking

an architect, the CIA, but everybody said you gotta be realistic. So, I put the pain and struggle onto paper. I wanted to create music.”

Kodak Black turned his unapologetic storytelling, gritty voice and style, and his lyricism and spun it into gold. Although he was snubbed for a Grammy after receiving two nominations, he pushed forward to become one of the most influential voices in the hip hop world.

And no matter what recognitions Kodak Black received, he has not forgotten his people, or his roots in the city of Pompano Beach. His storytelling is often autobiographical, and reflects the true struggle, poverty, crime, perseverance and lifestyle Black residents in the Northwest

district face on a daily basis. He weaves tales of Haitian politics, his cultural roots and voodoo symbolism that encompasses Haitian American culture.

When asked how he felt about receiving the symbolic Key to the City, to his own city, Kodak Black took a moment and looked down at the Key that lay at his feet.

“I’m scared of this,” he said, pointing to the award. “But the devil has no power. It’s like I’ve been chosen.”

Despite all his past and recent legal troubles, Kodak Black stays close to his heritage. He was born in Broward County and raised in Northwest Pompano Beach, experienced the plaque of slum and blight throughout the neighborhood, and what life’s really like living just “over

the tracks”, mere blocks away from the glamour and wealth of the nearby recently beatified beach area.

It’s for that reason that Kodak Black played a monumental role in helping residents of the Northwest thrive with philanthropy and charitable giving. He’s the honored guest of Kodak Black Day that’s held at Pompano Beach Community Park where he provides scholarships for Black and Haitian American students from his alma matter, Blanche Ely High School.

“Kodak [Black] was chosen because of his many years of philanthropic efforts in Pompano Beach,” said Sandra King, Pompano Beach Strategic Communications Administrator. “Over the years, he’s donated air

conditioning units to families during Florida’s hottest months, handed out hundreds of turkeys during the holidays, made sure local kids receive bikes and gifts every Christmas. He’s also helped prevent homelessness by paying rent for more than 200 families – twice – during times of economic hardship.”

In fact, Kodak Black has also donated to Haitian relief efforts after natural disasters, funded scholarships, advocated for Haitian American representation in music and politics, and hosts numerous community events centering around District 4. And yet, Kodak Black did not want any recognition.

“I’ve been on the other side of things,” Kodak Black said. “I came from nothin’. I’m thankful for my past. It’s made me who I am.”

Letter From the Editor



OUR BLACK DOLLARS OUR POWER

Money makes the world go ‘round — and our Black dollars fuel the American economy. As we step into Black Business Month this August, let’s remember just how powerful we are when we plan, save, and spend with purpose. Look at the impact our Target boycott has had, their sales are at an all-time low, and executives will be fired. How nice. Economic warfare has been targeting our communities for far too long, and I’m happy we’re fighting back.

ANOTHER fight is to make as much money as you can. Black people need control of our own dollars, and we need to make a lot of it to care for those who will be impacted by the federal government and private industries moving away from DEI. I know,

money isn’t everything, but it sure does give you options. You can’t make change, live in peace, or build a legacy without it.

That’s why planning matters — financial planning, life planning, future planning. I recently read a great book called “Moving Beyond Broke” by Dasha Kennedy that gave actionable steps to keep you, me and us paid, from getting the most out of your job, investing and budgeting. You should read it. If we’re not controlling our dollars as a community, we can’t make big change. And that’s why the Target boycott proved something: when we direct our dollars, industries pay attention. Imagine what happens when we pour that diverted energy from Target into Black-owned businesses. Imagine collectively passing along billions of dollars to Black-owned designers, artisans, and vendors. That is life changing. That is generational wealth.

Attiyya “Show Me the Money” Atkins
Publisher



Q: My Babygirl just turned 17, she wants more independence, but I’m worried about safety with her friends, school and choices — how should I handle it?

Signed,
Scared Mommy

A: Babyyyy, welcome to the teenage years — where they swear they’re grown, but still can’t keep their room or their ass clean. Let me be real: independence is coming whether you like it or not. The question is, do you give it in doses, or do you let Tik-Tok, bad influences, and the streets raise your baby? You’re mom! You have been raising her for 17 years,

she will make mistakes, but your voice will ring in her ears when she needs it the most.

Yeah, she wants freedom, but you need peace. You can’t be worrying about no grown adult. You gotta loosen that leash slowly. Start small — let her go to the movies with friends but make sure you know who those friends are (and yes, check their parents too). Watch out for something called a two-man. They say it’s a double date, but these kids is slinging cat and stick like they ain’t scared of the Lord and HIV. Curfew? Non-negotiable. Location share? Absolutely. And don’t let anybody guilt you for keeping tabs on your baby.

The big thing with girls is that they don’t know their worth and the world likes it that way. There’s

more booty-shaking, hookup culture, and OnlyFans energy on TV and phones than ever before. What we used to sneak around to see on BET’s “Uncut” at midnight, they can see on their lunch break at school. If you’re not talking to your kid about sex, relationships, and respect — somebody else is, and trust me, it won’t be with love.

So be upfront. Tell her keep her private business a mystery... unprotected sex brings pregnancies, diseases, and heartbreak. Be blunt.

Bottom line? Independence doesn’t mean turning them loose. It means teaching them how to make grown decisions before they’re actually grown. You’re the parent — you’re not their little friend. You can be loving and still say, “No, baby, not yet.”

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