

Black Veterans for Social Justice, Inc.



Newsletter

Volume 2, Issue 3

665 Willoughby Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11206 (718) 852-6004, (718) 852-4805 Fax, www.bvsj.org

CEO - INFO

HAPPY BIRTHDAY BVSJ

While we worked on April 18th, BVSJ became 26 years in existence. Happy Birthday founders, Board of Directors, V.P.'s, managers and our diligent workers. We have become one of the leading agencies in our community. We have operated Pamoja House for ten years, Uzima for three years, 119th SRO for soon to be one year and 665 Willoughby Avenue for four years this May. We have some dynamic departments and programs which are unique, efficient and envied by others.

Ninety eight of our staffing comes from the community. There are many things we can be proud of:

1. We work hard for our money
2. We contribute tremendously to our community.
3. Our knowledge, skills, insight and spirit is acknowledged on regional and national levels.
4. We know how to produce something with nothing. We know how to make fine wine out of sour grapes.

Thank you for your dedicated service. It has been my pleasure to serve you and the community for the past 26 years. There were and still are some nay-sayers who obstructed us and thought we could not function efficiently. I say to them, are you still around? Don't you know – the best is yet to come?

“The True Believer”

This is the vernacular for persons who have visions and are unwilling to compromise, sell-out, tire, retire or cease to be misdirected or obstructed from their goal or truth that they undauntedly work towards achieving. Pope John Paul II was one of these “true believers”; Nelson Mandela and Harriet Tubman are the other “true believers”. Although I am sure people will find issues to be critical of Pope John Paul II, particularly here in America, as a distant observer, I found him to be of interest and exceptional.

First and foremost, he worked diligently, traveled and spoke on behalf of building or rebuilding the Catholic Church. It is said he traveled to Africa over 40 times. How many times have you been home? Secondly, he spoke and continuously admonished the elite in society about not caring for the poor and downtrodden. Thirdly, he opposed imperialist intervention in wars. He spoke against the US invasion of Iraq. Lastly, he gave his heart and finally his life for his organization. He didn't sit on his laurels and take; he gave so others could live. This was witnessed in his galvanizing the youth worldwide, and giving them something to believe in, instead of them cannibalizing each other. Boy, I wish there were more persons like Pope John Paul II in New York City.

EVENTS & UPDATES

In House:

Educational Seminar, May 6, 2005 @ 9:30 am, 665 Willoughby Avenue

New Staff & Sexual Harassment Orientation, May 27, 2005 @ 9:30 am, 665 Willoughby Avenue

Educational Seminar, May 20, 2005 @ 9:30 am, 665 Willoughby Avenue

New Staff & Sexual Harassment Orientation, June 30, 2005 @ 9:30 am, 665 Willoughby Ave

Educational Seminar, June 3, 2005 @ 9:30 am, 665 Willoughby Avenue

Educational Seminar, June 17, 2005 @ 9:30 am, 665 Willoughby Avenue

BVSJ's Annual Father & Son Breakfast, Saturday, June 18, 2005 @ 8:30 am, 665 Willoughby Ave

Skeleton Crew: Malcolm X Birthday, May 19, 2005
Office Closed: Memorial Day, May 30, 2005

ATTENTION BVSJ EMPLOYEES

The changes in the HIP policy are now in effect:

The new Co pays for HIP will be:

- ✓ \$15.00 Co pay for each Primary Care Visits
- ✓ \$15.00 Co pay for each Specialist Visit.

Prescription Drugs will be:

- ✓ \$7.00 Co pay for Generics
- ✓ \$30.00 Co pay for Brand Name
- ✓ \$50.00 Co pay for Non-Formulary drugs

For more information call 1-800-HIP-TALK or log on to www.hipusa.com.

External:

Brooklyn Community Board 3 Meeting
Monday, May 2, 2005 @ 6:30 pm
Monday, June 6, 2005 @ 6:30 pm
1360 Fulton Street, (718) 622-6601

The Future of Homelessness

~ Robert Hoey

The United States has over 150,000 troops in Iraq, 16,000 troops in Afghanistan; 130,000 troops who have returned home, and a homeless crisis about to give birth in our nation. Black Veterans for Social Justice (BVSJ), along with about 250 other nonprofit veteran's services, are going to have their “full hands” even fuller.

Out of 100 Iraqi war veterans, 15 to 17 have serious, war-induced, mental health problems such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) once known as “combat fatigue”, major depression, or Generalized Anxiety Order (GAD). Sadly, according to the New England Journal of Medicine, only 23 to 40 percent of this population is seeking help because of the stigma that the mental illness label places on them.

In the Vietnam War, the homelessness trend became significantly devastating 9 to 12 years *after* the troops returned. The shelters began bulging at the walls. This was likely due to the delayed negative effects the war had on many of the troops. Our shelters continued to be filled by veterans from the Vietnam War and Persian Gulf War, and we will need to make room for the Iraqi War veterans very soon.

What can we do for this Crisis?

The government needs to fund projects that will provide jobs and trainings for veterans, and find a way to accelerate veteran pensions and other funding upon discharge from the service of our country. There will still be housing needs for many and perhaps we can find funding from the money we would have spent if the war continued.

For BVSJ, our personal war on homelessness continues...

Did You Know?

Malcolm X Remembered

Malcolm X was honored among his community for galvanizing movements for the advancement of black people.

On February 21, 1965 three gunmen rushed on stage at the Audubon Ballroom in New York City. They shot humanitarian Malcolm X 15 times at close range.

Forty years later on February 21, 2005, the Audubon Ballroom announced plans to building a tributary educational center in honor of Malcolm X, to be named the Malcolm X and Dr. Betty Shabazz Memorial and Educational Center.

The Malcolm X and Dr. Betty Shabazz Memorial and Education Center is slated to open on Malcolm X birthday May 19th, 2005

At BVSJ, we acknowledge Malcolm X's birthday as one of our holidays. Let's continue to be a part of history and be present at the opening.

“We Serve This Country too!”

VETERANS

~ Veronica Reid

On March 23, 2005, BVSJ's Veterans Action Group (VAG) hosted a luncheon and program: Part I, Honored Female Veterans while Part II, Commemorated Fallen Comrades.

Many of the VAG members honored their female counterparts by reading excerpts from several letters written by female veterans who served in recent wars. Elizabeth Jones, a member of the group honored female veterans with a poem:

Women of Honor

*They are women of courage strength and honor,
Granted the status of power this in our hearts let us ponder.*

*Living in a society rarely given a equal opportunity,
Faced with stereotypes and all kinds of negativity.*

*Unfair as it seemed they rose above and paved the way for you and me,
Honor is gained not handed or demanded.*

*They are women of honor let our hearts and minds with them bond,
From World War 1 & 2 and yes even Vietnam.*

Even the ones who served in Iraq don't ever let them tell you to get back.

Women of Honor you set the way for me.

Women of Honor all respect and my deepest dignity.

Ms. Jones saluted **all** female veterans, present and elsewhere.

Wendy McClinton, VP, Economic and External Development delivered a passionate and well received speech in the honor of female veterans.

Part II of the program commenced with a moving rendition of TAPS by Abraham Holmes (on trumpet). Herbert Sweat, VAG President and BVSJ Board Member then welcomed everyone warmly to the event. The following individuals were honored In Memoriam: Vanessa Brown, Edward Clark, Enrique Cuba, Gilberto De La Cruz, Shannequa Dick, David Dunbar, William Dunbar, Sallah El, Marsha Humphrey, Addoquaye Lewis, Alfred McCune, Leroy Reese, Belinda Reid, Peggy Roncoroni, Nathaniel Scott, Roslyn Staton, Eduardo Torres, and Harry Web.

Job Mashariki, President and CEO, addressed both sections of the program. Mr. Mashariki wished that Part I "Honoring Female Veterans" was on a larger scale because as he stated there are many female veterans (in various organizations) who work closely with BVSJ staff members and would have loved to share in the wonderful experience that was unfolding. Mr. Mashariki

then commemorated Michael Handy, who last worked as the Director in the Mayor's Office of Veterans Affairs and was an avid ally of BVSJ.

The program concluded with a second rendition of TAPS by Mr. Holmes, as participants viewed doves flying during the final slide of the PowerPoint Presentation. VAG members commented on the wonderful feeling they experienced at that moment.

Ayana Ajanaku, VP of Programs and Development, offered some closing remarks. Ms. Ajanaku blessed the food prepared for the Luncheon.

Thank you to each staff member who assisted with this event together---Mr. Ed Pointer, Ms. Lezama, Ms. Jones, Ms. Hattie, Ms. Hughes, Mr. Gholston, Ms. Morrell, Mr. Tucker, Mr. Singh, Ms. Thomas and Ms. Adekoje --- my sincere gratitude and thanks to each of you.



Andrew Walker	May 6
Floyd Ford	May 13
Shawn Williams	May 19
Jacqueline Soares	May 23
Samuel Pough	May 24
Ena Franklin	May 27
Rav Yisreal	May 28
Aracelis Morales	May 31

Charles Smith	June 4
Mohamed Shaaban	June 13
Nathaniel Hood	June 16
Tiffany Murphy	June 16
Donnell Williams	June 16
Victor Cotto	June 17
Makeba D'Abreu	June 17
Cynthia Parker	June 19
Lennox Brown	June 21
Delores Cyprien	June 28
Lenata Bristow	June 29
Leroy Bingham	June 30
Robin Smith	June 30

Looking for qualified candidates for BVSJ Board of Directors:
Legal, Accountant/CPA, Real Estate, Service Provider
Please send candidate resume to Nigel Tucker @ (718) 852- 4805 (Fax)

Editor's Comments
This newsletter is to keep the staff informed. If you would like to submit an article or an upcoming event please feel free to send your submission to Vanessa Jackson in the Executive Office. It must be submitted by the second week of the month for the following month. If you have any questions I can be reached at (718) 852-6004 ext 276.

Congratulations ... Awardee BVSJ's Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program

On March 17, 2005, Black Veterans for Social Justice, Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program received the US Department of Labor Exemplary Public Interest Contribution Award (EPIC) 2004.

Excerpt from a letter sent by Charles E. James Sr., Deputy Assistant Secretary for Federal Contract Compliance

The Department chose BVSJ from a field of very impressive nominees. Your organization has made commendable contributions to equal opportunity by helping your clients overcome barriers-to-employment. Through recognition of organizations such as BVSJ, the Department will encourage other organizations to join our common goal of promoting equal opportunity.

Congratulations to you and all of your colleagues at BVSJ.

Excerpt from a letter sent by Carolyn Jones, Food Bank for New York City I was most impressed with your organization's dedication and commitment to feeding the food insecure in your neighborhood.

As always, it was a pleasure visiting your program. Mr. Smith did an awesome job with educating me about your organizations political battle with the government to secure additional benefits and opportunities for veterans. Good Luck!

The Food Bank For New City deeply appreciates your continued commitment to feeding the hungry in your neighborhood, and looks forward to hearing about your progress towards achieving our mutual goals.

Job well done!!! Keep up the good work!!!

Dear BVSJ
Greetings,
I just read about your wonderful organization on the web today, and I was so impressed that I would like to know how I may become involved with your efforts?
I am a retired Army vet, and reside in the Philadelphia metropolitan area. Originally from NYC so my heart is with you even more.
Sincerely,
CG

DONATIONS
To help homeless veterans & veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan make checks payable to
Black Veterans for Social Justice, Inc.
Donations are tax deductible

" A race of people is like an individual man; until it uses its own talent, takes pride in its own history, expresses its own culture, affirms its own selfhood, it can never fulfill itself."
- Malcolm X