

Saving Our Youth



May 2025 News Brief

After School Programs Community Service Employment Assistance



It's time to celebrate our Moms! We might not often have time to express our emotions for them, but this month, especially on Mother's Day, May 11th, take some time out of your busy schedule to say thank you to your mother and any mother figure who has blessed you over the years. If you were a hard person to raise, thank her for putting up with you. If your mom smiles a lot, let her know how her smile brightens up your day. If you've had crazy ideas, thank your mom for believing in you. If you've had a crazy love life and brought your tears to your mom, thank her for being your anchor in the storm. If you've had financial issues and your mom came to the rescue, let her know how much of a gift she is to you, not just for the money, and pay her back

with interest. If you're blessed for being in this world, thank your mom for bringing you into it. If your mom is your role model, thank her for being an incredible role model with her support and guidance. Those are just a few thoughts to help you start your Mother's Day messages.



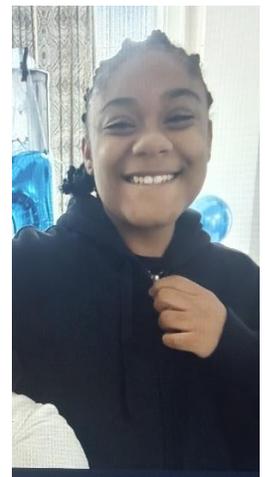
We have seen with many of our youth over the past 15 years, mental health awareness is very important so we want to share this with you this month. May is Mental Health Awareness Month, an annual observance founded by Mental Health America in 1949 to highlight the importance of mental wellbeing.

Mental health awareness plays a crucial role in reducing stigma, encouraging early intervention and fostering empathy and understanding. By normalizing conversations around mental health, it nurtures a more compassionate society where individuals feel empowered to seek help, leading to improved mental wellbeing. Key objectives of Mental Health Awareness Month include:

- Educating the public about mental health conditions and their impact.
- Reducing stigma by encouraging open conversations and fostering acceptance.
- Highlighting the importance of early intervention and access to treatment.
- Sharing available mental health resources, including support groups and crisis services.
- Building solidarity and reducing isolation for those facing mental health challenges.
- Advocating for improved mental health policies, increased funding and better access to care.
- Promoting mental wellbeing and self-care practices for overall health.



Join us in congratulating Ace and Kimani! They will be graduating from John Marshall High School and Henrico High School this month. Ace and Kimani, your futures are bright, and you've earned this moment. We are so proud of you guys! You know that we will continue to be there for you, and we look forward to seeing your next steps.





After School Programs

The Program we're highlighting this month is
"Not Left Behind By Choices".

We embody both prosperity and leadership. Socioeconomic factors affecting our youth include family incomes at or below poverty levels, housing instabilities, and inadequate educational systems. The choices available to them impact their ability for wealth building.

Low educational achievement leads to lowered economic prospects later in life, perpetuating a lack of social mobility across generations. High and rising inequality is one of the United States' most pressing economic and societal issues. Unfortunately, our education system does not compensate for these inequities by helping level the playing field and enabling children to rise above their birth circumstances.

Not Left Behind By Choices is our afterschool program aimed at helping to give our youth the best opportunities to succeed through entrepreneurship options. Through this program the youth are increasing their creative writing skills, learning project planning, understanding the barriers they face, how to collaborate, how to actually open a business, how to market and present their services.

For this project, they are opening up a business that does commercial jingles for companies and organizations. They have already landed their first job to work with an organization doing refurbished sneakers.

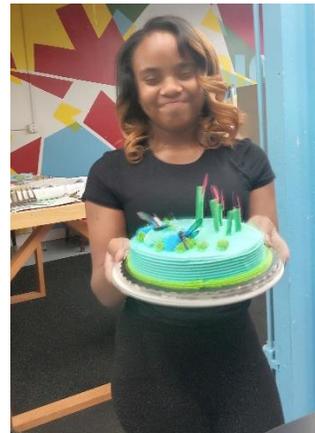
Keep an eye out for more on this.

Play Time Highlights

All work and no play makes for a dull time, so we mix it up with some fun.
Here are a couple of highlights



Picture in Style Weekly of us at Monument Avenue Easter on Parade



Happy Birthday Amaya!

Personal Message from the Executive Director



May the Fourth Be With You

My Birthday is May 4th and I hear so many people telling me “May the Fourth Be With You”. I love it so I thought I’d share the real story of how May the Fourth Be With You came along as I found out in Wikipedia. The first recorded reference of the phrase being used was on Thursday May 3, 1979, the day of the 1979 UK General Election in which Margaret Thatcher was elected as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. To express their support before the votes were counted, her political party, the Conservatives, purchased a half-page advertisement on page 13 of the *London Evening News* reading "Dear Maggie, May the Fourth Be with You.

In the 1988 episode of Count Duckula, "The Vampire Strikes Back", a space-faring superhero, Tremendous Terrance, asks Duckula the date and is told, "May the Fourth". As Terrance departs, he tells all below, "May the Fourth be with you."

The phrase was used in a UK Parliament defense debate on May 4, 1994. Astrophysicist and author Jeanne Cavelos used the saying on page 94 of her 1999 book *The Science of Star Wars*.

In June 2021, it was announced that Carrie Fisher would receive a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame in 2022. She received the star on Star Wars Day, May 4, 2023.[]

There was much more but I shortened it to make sure you didn’t fall asleep. For everyone who was born on May 4th, and all you Star War Fans.... MAY THE FOURTH BE WITH YOU throughout the whole month of May!

We Need Your Support

We need your support now more than ever, and everything helps! From spreading the word about what we do, to making a donation of any size, your support makes a difference and will be a huge part of getting us through times of crisis in a transformative way. So please remember us throughout the year with your giving. Your donations are tax deductible.

FOOD

Food is our biggest program expense. On Tuesday and Thursdays the youth come to the center directly from school so we have to supply dinner for them. One simple yet impactful way you can help is by ordering meals from a restaurant to donate to SOY. Let us know in advance if you plan to donate so we can coordinate distribution.

FUNDS

Thank you in advance for your donations and your continued support. Every donation, big or small, makes a difference and helps us continue our programs. If you will donate to us, you can click on the link below. Your generosity means the world to us!

<https://www.savingouryouthva.org/donate>

