



New Ohio Bill Would Allow Schools to Excuse Students for Mental Health Days

COLUMBUS, Ohio (WCMH) — A new Ohio bill would allow school districts to accept mental health days as excused absences.

Dubbed the Student Wellness Act, Senate Bill 330 was introduced in late November to codify mental health days for students. State Sen. Willis E. Blackshear, Jr. (D-Dayton) introduced the bill, which would allow — but not require — school districts to permit absences for mental health.

The Student Wellness Act would permit districts to enact a policy to count mental health days as excused absences. The bill says policies should include a definition of mental health days, a limit on how many mental health days a student may receive, and a method to determine whether the student would be referred to or receive school health or support services

Blackshear introduced the bill to help K-12 stu-



dents with mental health pressures. According to a state survey, one-fifth of Ohio middle schoolers and one-third of high schoolers reported that their mental health was “not good most or all of the time” in 2023. Nearly half of all Ohio high school girls reported poor mental health in 2023, at 46%.

Under current law, school districts can only excuse absences for emergencies, illness, appointments, religious holidays, college or military visits, absences due to major familial changes like foster care, or some work like

farm work for students over 14. School districts are permitted to make their own policies for excused absences, but S.B. 330 would offer structure for specific mental health day policies.

This is the third time the Student Wellness Act has been introduced. Blackshear served in the Ohio House until this year and co-sponsored similar legislation when he was a state representative. His previous bills would have permitted students to take up to three excused mental health days each year.

Teen Left Paralyzed By Trampoline Accident

The Tennessee community has come together to support a Liberty Creek High teen who suffered a tragic accident at a trampoline park earlier this month. Maggie Isble, 16, was having a typical day with her siblings, deciding to go to a trampoline park, having little thought of how that trip would change her life forever. The adventure began like any other, jumping and playing with each other, but it took an unthinkable turn when Maggie was rushed to the hospital with a broken neck.

Maggie’s sister, Destiny Isble, told WSMV she was doing a backflip off a trapeze bar but did not complete it, going into the foam pit.

“Mid-flip, she landed headfirst into the foam pit and went all the way through the foam and hit her head on the concrete and broke her neck.”

Maggie was rushed to the Vanderbilt Medical Center and, a few days later, was transferred to a spinal reha-



Maggie Isble

bilitation center in Atlanta, where she and her family are expecting a long road to recovery.

Initially, Maggie’s family did not think that she would be able to walk again, as her initial prognosis was that she would be paralyzed from her chest down. However, Maggie is already defying the odds and is able to move her hands, along with having some slight feeling in her legs:

“She was able to reach her hand to her mouth

and feed herself a Cheeto, which is amazing, because she couldn’t even get her arms past here. She was able to do that, and she has some feeling on the sides of her legs.”

Maggie’s sister shared.

Maggie’s aunt, Jessica Burton, also shared that she firmly believes that Maggie will continue to defy the odds because of her personality and resilience.

“We’re already seeing a miracle happen, so keep

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Dayton Metro Library Receives Prestigious North American Innovation Award

Dayton Metro Library (DML) has been named a Top Innovator for 2025 by the Urban Libraries Council (ULC), North America’s leading nonprofit for urban libraries. This recognition is in honor of DML’s Reading Railroad Initiative, which fosters a lifelong love of reading and learning by supporting Black boys, men, and their support systems.

“This award demonstrates the power of public libraries to uplift communities locally and globally with forward-thinking solutions,” said Dr. Karlos L. Marshall, Director of Community Impact and Innovation at DML. “We hope that Reading Railroad can become an international blueprint that strengthens literacy ecosystems for all children and families.”

ULC’s Innovations Initiative is a yearly showcase of exemplary projects from its nearly 200-member libraries across the U.S. and Canada. It seeks to highlight how the library’s role as an essential public institution is evol-



ing to meet the changing needs of communities. From initiatives that promote civic engagement and intellectual freedom to projects that enhance digital connectivity and economic mobility, libraries are at the forefront of addressing today’s challenges.

Reading Railroad was selected as a Top Innovator by a distinguished panel of judges. The project won in the category of Education: Children and Adults for its originality, measurable outcomes, and the potential for other libraries to replicate and implement this successful initiative. More than 180 library projects in six categories were submitted by ULC members from across the U.S. and Canada to be considered for the top awards.

DML joins world-class programs from peers

across North America. This marks the first time that DML has won the highest honor for a national or international library award.

Six public libraries in total received the “Top Innovator” designation, and six others received honorable mention recognition for their work.

“The Innovations Initiative highlights the best of what libraries across North America offer their communities,” said Brooks Rainwater, President and CEO of the Urban Libraries Council. “In a year that has proved especially challenging for libraries, this year’s winners, honorable mentions, and nominees all demonstrate our urban libraries are as important, resilient, and forward-thinking as ever.”

Continued on Page 2

AT&T Internet Named #1 in Dayton, Ohio by J.D. Power

Dayton, Ohio customers have spoken. For the third year in a row, AT&T has earned the top honors from J.D. Power in customer satisfaction for residential wired internet service in the North Central and West regions of the country. This award reflects AT&T’s continued commitment to delivering millions of people the fast and reliable connectivity people need and the friendly service they want backed by The AT&T



Guarantee. Full press release here: AT&T Named #1 in Customer Satisfaction for Residential Wired Internet

AT&T Quote:
“For the third year in

a row, the real winners continue to be our customers. We are honored to receive this special recognition from J.D. Power, which demonstrates that when we put our customers at the center of everything we do – we deliver the best possible connectivity experience and set the standard for excellence in our industry,” said Erin Scarborough, AT&T’s SVP of Revenue Management & Commercialization.

Egbe Omo Yoruba of Greater Miami Valley Spreads Holiday Cheer with Blanket



By Dr. Tokz Awoshakin

The Egbe Omo Yoruba of Greater Miami Valley, a Nigerian group of

Yoruba Professionals in the Dayton Area, successfully completed its annual “Christmas Cheers Community Engagement Giveaway” this week, delivering warmth and cultural vibrant spirit to residents of two premier area care facilities.

As part of their ongoing mission to support health causes and engage with the local community, representatives of the organization visited Sycamore Spring Skilled Nursing and Rehabilitation in Miamisburg on December 12, 2025, and Mary Scott Nursing Center in Dayton on December 16, 2025.

During the visits, the group distributed a carefully curated selection of warm, colorful blankets designed to provide

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Around DAYTON

Miami Valley Weather


Saturday

Cloudy
High 46
Low 25




Sunday

Sunny
High 35
Low 26




Monday

Rain
High 48
Low 27




Tuesday

Cloudy
High 53
Low 33




Wednesday

Cloudy
High 54
Low 33







5 day Forecast





The world may be complicated, but giving this holiday season doesn't have to be.

In today's world, automated 1-800 numbers and AI-generated chat bots make life feel complicated and impersonal. But at The Dayton Foundation, we make your giving fast and easy with a click on our website or a phone call to a live person.

Our free Charitable Checking AccountSM Service helps you maximize your charitable dollars and support the causes you care about most. Learn more at daytonfoundation.org/easy or call (937) 222-0410 and speak to Nakia Lipscomb, Marianne Requarth or Michelle Lovely.





RTA Offers Free Rides on Christmas, New Year's Day



The Greater Dayton Regional Transit Authority (RTA) will be offering free rides systemwide on both Christmas and New Year's Day to help people spend time with their loved ones and celebrate the holidays.

This free service includes fixed-route buses, as well as rides on RTA Connect, the agency's ADA paratransit service. The call center will also be open regular hours.

There is still time to catch a ride on our December bus, which will be on various routes throughout Dec. 31. Also, Santa Claus will be riding the bus several more times this holiday season. The December bus and Santa's schedule can be found at www.iriderta.org/holiday-bus-schedule.

The RTA's historic Christmas trolley will also be giving free rides on Saturday, Dec. 20, from 4-6 p.m., in front of Wright Stop Plaza in downtown Dayton. Participants can visit Santa Claus and Buddy the Elf.

For more information about our historic Christmas trolley, visit <https://www.iriderta.org/ChristmasTrolley>.

DML's Holiday Closings

All Dayton Metro Library locations will be closed on the following dates in observance of December's holidays:

Wednesday, Dec. 24	Thursday, Dec. 25
Wednesday, Dec. 31	Thursday, Jan. 1
Regular operating hours will resume on Friday, December 26, and Friday, January 2, 9:30 am-6 pm.	

Additionally, all DML locations will be closed on Sunday, January 18 (the Main Library only) and Monday, January 19, in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day. Regular operating hours will resume on Tuesday, January 20, 9:30 am-6 pm.

For more information, visit DaytonMetroLibrary.org or call the Library's Ask Me Line at 937.463.2665.

Stretch Your Giving Dollars: Smart Strategies for 2025 and Beyond

By Kolita Hollins, Development Coordinator for The Dayton Foundation

When planning their annual budgets, many individuals include charitable giving commitments to their churches, their favorite nonprofits and even their alma maters. And while donors often spread these gifts throughout the year, recent tax law changes have made it worth considering some different approaches to help stretch charitable dollars and maximize support for nonprofit organizations during a time when they need it most.

One of these strategies – called bunching - involves grouping multiple years' worth of charitable contributions into a single tax year. For example, instead of only donating the total amount you had planned to give in 2025, you could also make the gift(s) you intended for 2026 and beyond in 2025. This allows you to itemize your deductions in 2025 and then take the standard deduction each year that you included in the 2025 gift. This way, you unlock greater tax savings in the year you "bunch" your donations, while continuing to support your favorite charities in future years.

If you currently itemize deductions, 2025 is a critical year to accelerate your giving. Beginning in 2026, charitable deductions will be subject to a 0.5% adjusted gross income (AGI) floor. This means you'll only be able to deduct charitable contributions that exceed 0.5% of your AGI. For many donors, this change will reduce the tax benefit of giving. Consider accelerating your giving into 2025 by contributing to a donor-advised fund (DAF). A DAF allows you to make a large, tax-deductible gift in 2025 and distribute funds to your favorite charities over time, preserving your giving rhythm while maximizing tax benefits now. More importantly, this strategy doesn't change your generosity – it simply changes the timing.

If you typically take the standard deduction, you may wonder how these changes affect you. Starting in 2026, a universal charitable deduction will allow non-itemizers to deduct up to \$1,000 for individuals and \$2,000 for married couples filing jointly. While this is helpful, it's capped – meaning larger gifts won't provide additional tax benefits.

No matter the route you take, The Dayton Foundation's free Charitable Checking AccountSM Service (CCA) is a type of DAF that can make budgeting for your charitable giving easier, more efficient and tax-wise. With a CCA, you deposit cash or appreciated assets, such as stocks, mutual funds or real estate, into an account when it's most advantageous to you. Then you can direct grants to any IRS-approved charity of your choice, anytime and in any amount. You also can request recurring gifts on a monthly, quarterly or annual basis.

Another advantage to a CCA is that by setting aside charitable dollars into it, you know exactly how much you have available to give when approached for a donation. There is no need to go through cumbersome calculations or worry about dipping into a cash flow that might be needed for other purposes. Plus, there are no fees, no minimum deposit or balance requirements, and grants to charities can be made either in your name or anonymously.

To learn more about this free service and how The Dayton Foundation can help you help others, visit www.daytonfoundation.org or call (937) 222-0410 and ask to speak to a member of our Development and Donor Services department.

DML to Host Lunch Program for Older Adults

Dayton Metro Library's Miamisburg Branch will host Congregate Dining every Wednesday beginning January 7, from 11 am to 1 pm.

Congregate Dining offers community members age 60 and older a hot lunch and the opportunity to enjoy the company of others. It is funded by the Area Agency on Aging PSA2. It is scheduled to last through February 25.

For more information, visit DaytonMetroLibrary.org or call the Library's Ask Me Line at 937.463.2665.

Dayton Metro Library Receives Prestigious North American Innovation Award...

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In 2025, DML's Reading Railroad Initiative drew attendance from nearly 1,000 program attendees. This included Black Boy Excellence Storytimes across DML's 17 Branches and its Hometown Hero Guest Reader Series, a signature storytime featuring local Black male leaders like Commissioner-elect Darius J. Beckham. Reading Railroad also highlights the importance of Black men in the library profession through its monthly podcast, Cataloging the Culture. Signature annual events like Flowers for Fathers, Student Mental Health Symposium, and The Black Child Book Fair Tour support and celebrate people of all ages.

"We also want to thank all of the DML staff, guest readers, and partners who made this award possible," stated Robert Owens, Manager of Community Impact and Innovation.

"We look forward to creating mindful programs that continue to be innovative, inspiring, and impactful to help libraries change the world one idea at a time."

Information about the winning project from DML, honorees, and a wealth of past submissions is available at ubranlibraries.org/innovations. Additional information about DML's Reading Railroad Initiative can be found by visiting DaytonMetroLibrary.org/readingrailroad.

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National

Black-Owned Designer Jewelry Brand, Balacia, is Now Available at Nordstrom

Nationwide -- Jasmine Carter, Founder and CEO of Balacia, the Black-owned, designer jewelry brand best known for its signature engagement rings and unisex fine jewelry, has officially launched online at Nordstrom – a powerful milestone marking five years of dedication, prayer, and vision.

Founded by designer Jasmine Carter and built in partnership with her husband and business partner Devon Carter, Balacia began in Dallas as a passion project rooted in love and purpose. What started as sketches and faith has grown into a designer label now showcased alongside the world's leading brands.

“Getting to this point has been a miracle and a dream come true,” shares Jasmine Carter, Founder and Designer of Balacia. “There were so many moments along the way where we had to lean entirely on God and just trust in our hard work and meaning. To now see our engagement rings and fine jewelry in Nordstrom is humbling beyond words. We’re just grateful to share our testimony and to remind other creatives that with faith and hard work, anything is possible.”

Balacia’s signature style is most famously expressed through its engagement and wedding collection: diamond and gemstone designs that turn commitment into an art form. Every piece reflects Jasmine’s structural expertise and Devon’s vision, with their shared belief that fine jewelry can carry both beauty and legacy.

At its core, Balacia is more than a jewelry brand. It’s a movement: a designer brand that celebrates love in many forms, uplifts its community, and



brings storytelling, craftsmanship, and spiritual integrity to the forefront of high fashion. Now available at Nordstrom.com, Balacia continues to grow with the same spirit that started it all: rooted in faith, built on love, and designed to shine.

About Balacia is a designer jewelry brand based in Dallas, Texas, celebrated for its men’s and women’s fine jewelry and timeless designs. Family-owned and spiritually led, the brand tells stories of love, legacy, and elevation through every piece, and offers worldwide shipping. Learn more at Balacia.com

For press inquiries, contact info@balacia.com or 469-722-3062

Arts & Entertainment

DML Announces its Adult Winter Reading Challenge

Dayton Metro Library’s Adult Winter Reading Challenge begins Monday, January 12.

Adults aged 18 and older can track their reading days and complete themed activities online using Beanstack (or the mobile app). Badges are earned for every 10 days of reading and for completing

weekly challenges. Each badge earned enters participants into a drawing for a Branch raffle prize basket.

The challenge will end Saturday, February 21. Participants should visit a Branch if they need to log reading time after the challenge ends. The final date to add any challenge activity will be Wednesday, February 25. Raffle

winners will be notified on February 26. Pre-registration opens Thursday, January 1, at DaytonMetro.beanstack.com.

For more information about the Adult Winter Reading Challenge, visit DaytonMetroLibrary.org/Winter or call the Library’s Ask Me Line at 937.463.2665.



Meet the Black Publishing Coach Empowering Authors to Turn Their Books Into Real Money

Nationwide -- Vanessa Collins spent sixteen years watching the same heartbreaking pattern repeat itself. Authors would pour everything into their manuscripts, celebrate their book launch, then sit back waiting for the sales to roll in.

They rarely did.

“These writers had powerful messages and incredible stories,” Vanessa said. “But after the book came out, they didn’t know what to do next. The momentum just stopped.”

She recognized this gap because she’d lived it herself. After publishing her first book, Vanessa discovered the real money wasn’t in book sales at all. The workshops, coaching pro-

grams, and digital products she created from her book’s message generated more than \$80,000 from a single title. That transformation became the foundation of what she now teaches through her Monetized Author Framework.

Her new book, *The Monetized Author*, tackles this reality head-on. It gives writers a practical roadmap for building sustainable businesses from their message, not just hoping book sales will pay the bills.

“Authors need to understand their book is the beginning, not the end,” Vanessa explained. “Your message is the asset. The book just introduces it to the world.”

The framework walks writers through identify-

ing their core message, connecting with the right audience, and creating income streams that grow from content they’ve already developed. It’s designed for both published authors and those still developing their ideas.

To support the book’s release, Vanessa created a free resource called *The Monetized Author Quick Start Checklist*. The guide breaks down the foundational steps and helps writers gain clarity around their expertise, message, and audience. Writers can access it at TheMonetizedAuthor.com/book

Vanessa believes this work holds special significance for Black authors, many of whom enter the publishing industry without the resources,



marketing budgets, or connections that larger publishers provide.

“This book gives writ-

ers a way to build real income and influence with what they already have,” she said. “It teaches them

how to turn their stories into tools for economic growth, community impact, and generational

Editorial & Comments

Something to Consider: Keeping Joy in Our Lives

By: Brenda Cochran
Contributing Writer

Unlike feelings of happiness and contentment, joy is something that can fluctuate depending on the circumstances, but basically, joy is something that we could experience all the time. It is a state of knowing that you are living fully in a community with one another. It is also a likeness that comes from having a sense of purpose and meaning for our lives. It is also a feeling that is offered to us with no charge. All we have to do is receive it. There is however, a question that comes up – how do we actually receive joy?

Ultimately, joy is a gift from God, but we can only receive it by changing our thinking and habits. In other words, we have to choose actions and an attitude that will allow us to receive it.

Everybody feels sorrowful once in a while, but one of the best ways to combat feelings of hopelessness, anger, frustration, and envy is to choose to be grateful. All of these feelings are states of being that are opposed to joy. The fact is that we can be thankful for all sorts of things even some of the most mundane and small things, but this happens so long as we appreciate them. It simply requires some effort, consistency and creativity.

Here are some examples: How about being thankful of that hot cup of coffee that you can wake up to every morning? How about the chance to have a



Brenda Cochran

special dinner with family or friends? How about the fact that you had a commute, but there were no accidents or traffic jams? We can also consider more fundamental things in our lives that are easy to take for granted, such as legs we have that allow us to walk and exercise, have heat in our homes during the winter, or eyes that allow us to marvel at the beauty of our surroundings?

While there are so many things to be grateful for in order to reap the benefits of joy through our gratitude, we have to call to our minds these things often and consciously. One way to do this is to write down three small things that we are grateful for. We could also develop a journal a few times a week about all the prayers that were answered or just offer a prayer of gratitude at bedtime.

According to an article by Chris Hazel, there are four simple ways to cultivate joy – not only for ourselves, but also to share with others. The first

idea is to serve others by helping in all those small ways. Any service for others helps us to see the world from a special perspective. We don’t have to serve in large ways in order to receive joy. It only takes a few minutes to reach out and make a phone call to someone who is having a difficult time or send an email or card to someone who is always doing something for us. Offering a prayer for someone who is ill or committing ourselves to complimenting someone each day is bound to bring us joy.

The fact is that there are millions of ways to offer small acts of service that can bring joy to others and ourselves. The key is to be intentional about actually doing these things – so just decide to plan it out or perhaps add an event to your calendar. If you can find ways to serve others, you will find that over time these small acts will become a habit.

Here is a list that can be sure to keep joy in our lives: Stop waiting to be happy, add happiness to your life, make self-care part of your routine, get in a joyful state of mind, stop worrying, keep appreciating the small things, surround yourself with positive people, and work at laughing more.

Remember- it is not always easy, but we can find that joy is something that we can experience all the time.

DML’s Festive and Seasonal Programs

Dayton Metro Library offers a variety of festive, seasonal programs for all ages throughout December.

Holidays Around the World, 11 am-12 pm, Southeast Branch (Families)

Monday, December 22: Explore Diwali by crafting Rangolis with pattern rocks, and discover Hanukkah traditions through the game of dreidel.

Tuesday, December 23: Learn about the history of English Christmas cards, the German pickle ornament tradition, and the cultural significance of poinsettias in Mexican celebrations.

Friday, December 26: Build Kinaras out of

Legos and discover the cultural significance of Kwanzaa.

Saturday, December 27: Explore Lunar New Year by creating Zodiac animals, then make origami envelopes filled with acts of kindness to celebrate Ramadan.

Full S.T.E.A.M. Ahead: Winter Magic Edition, Tuesday, December 23, 4:15-5:15 pm, Huber Heights Branch: Learn magic tricks using science, technology, engineering, art, and math. (Grades 1-4)

Imperfect Crafts, Saturday, December 27, 12-1 pm, Huber Heights Branch: Make sock snowmen with provided materials or bring your own colorful or patterned socks to use. (Adults)

Happy Holidays: The Black Candle, Saturday, December 27, 2-4 pm, Southeast Branch: Enjoy a screening of *The Black Candle* (Rated PG) in honor of Kwanzaa. Families

Holiday Bingo, Tuesday, December 30, 2-3 pm, Vandalia Branch: Families can play picture bingo and win small prizes.

Story Stroll: The Mitten, Monday, January 5-Wednesday, January 14, Southeast Branch: Stroll through the Children’s Area to experience *The Mitten* by Jan Brett. (Families)

For more information, visit DaytonMetroLibrary.org or call the Library’s Ask Me Line at 937.463.2665.

Egbe Omo Yoruba of Greater Miami Valley Spreads Holiday Cheer with Blanket... Continued from Page 1

physical comfort and uplift spirits during the winter season.

Highlights of the 2025 Holiday Outreach:

- Dec. 12 at Sycamore Spring: Group representatives joined Activity Director Yolanda Brewer to personally hand out blankets to residents.
- Dec. 16 at Mary Scott: Mrs. Badiru, President of Egbe Omo Yoruba, presented blankets to Activity Director Becky Hall during a ceremony at the facility.
- Future Partnerships: Dr. Bisi Adegbile engaged with Mary Scott Administrator Christine Chelle to discuss expanding future collab-

orative efforts between the organization and the facility.

“The Yoruba people have a rich heritage rooted in community and care for our elders,” said Mrs. Badiru. “Bringing these gifts of warmth is a heartfelt way for us to celebrate our culture while giving back to the Miami Valley we call home.”

The Yoruba people are one of the largest ethnic groups in West Africa, primarily concentrated in South-Western Nigeria. The Egbe Omo Yoruba of Greater Miami Valley serves as a cultural beacon in Ohio, dedicated to promoting socio-cultural heritage, economic devel-

opment, and educational support.

Looking ahead to 2026, the organization aims to broaden its holiday outreach to reach even more communities and individuals in need across the region.

The Egbe Omo Yoruba of Greater Miami Valley is a non-profit organization dedicated to celebrating Yoruba socio-cultural heritage. Through community involvement, health initiatives, and educational support, the group strives to foster economic development and cultural awareness within the Greater Miami Valley area.

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Things to Know for Buying and Selling in 2026

For 2026 real estate, buyers should focus on strengthening finances, getting pre-approved early, and being flexible on size/location, while sellers need to strategically price, stage well (especially with eco-upgrades like

LEDs/smart thermostats), and prepare for continued, though potentially easing, competition with mortgage rates likely hovering in the low-to-mid 6% range. Expect a more balanced market with slight price stability, more inventory, and in-

creased costs for utilities and taxes, requiring strong financial prep and smart, data-driven strategies for all parties.

Tips for Buyers in 2026

- **Strengthen Finances:** Improve credit, reduce debt, and save for a larger down payment.

- **Budget Beyond Mortgage:** Factor in rising property taxes, insurance, utilities, and maintenance.
- **Get Pre-Approved:** Understand your true monthly budget (aiming under 30% of gross income) before house hunting.
- **Be Flexible:** Consider trade-offs between location, size, and condition to find opportunities.
- **Watch the Market:** Monitor inventory and price trends in your target areas to act confidently.

Tips for Sellers in 2026

- **Strategic Pricing:** Price competitively based on current market data, not emotion.
- **High-ROI Prep:** Focus on repairs, decluttering, and staging, including energy-efficient upgrades (smart thermostats, LEDs) that appeal to eco-conscious buyers.
- **Professional Marketing:** Invest in professional photos and market heavily on social media.

Know Your Market: Work with an agent who understands local trends and can advise on timing.

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217 We Care Looks Help Give Youth A Better Future

The nonprofit organization 217 We Care is based in Dayton, looking to inspire the next generation of Black men in the community. Spectrum News 1 caught up with two young men who said this program saved their lives.

“Keeping Christ in you, keep getting good grades, doing good on test, do your assignments and be at home,” 217 We Care member Jordan Jackson said.

Jackson believes this organization is setting him up for a good future and away from violence.

“I feel like they can support you or whatever you've got going on," he said. "You can do whatever you want. You can stay off the streets. You can flip your life."

According to Dayton Police, 2024 was a year of record highs, with over 130 youth crime victims and 10 youth homicides. This year, the city has already surpassed that tragic mark. However, 217 We Care, which was founded in February 2024, has a vision to create meaningful opportunities for youth to learn and grow.

Terry Matthews, the director of sports for the nonprofit, hopes for change and for people to put the guns down.

“I speak to a lot of kids and they're saying they don't know what they want to be when they grow up," Matthews said. "Some are not even expecting to be there. I can only give that hope to them, that not only you will be there, you will be somebody."

Other kids in the organization believe it's made a big difference in their lives.

“Very great program overall, they do their best to help you,” 217 We Care member Tristen Murphy said.

“It has helped me stay away from trouble, different activities outside of school to not get in trouble,” 217 We Care member Tristen Murphy said.

The organization has programs that help kids with schoolwork and offer one-on-one sessions to discuss mental health and life at home.

Co-Founder Lamar Ford said he was moved to act by the recent youth violence in the area and wanted to give young men a safe space to embrace the future they want.

“It's very important, because the first thing our young people will tell you, when you ask, 'what are y'all doing?' They say they don't know," Ford said. "We want to give them something to do, and this is an outlet they can explore some of there creative crafts."



Black Women United Gifts Diverse Dolls To Dayton Foster Kids

Black Woman United donated culturally representative dolls to Montgomery County Children's Services on the morning of Friday, Dec. 19.

Caseworkers will later distribute the dolls to children in foster care, giving them gifts that reflect a diverse range of skin tones, hair textures, and features, which Black Women United say is often forgotten about when donating toys.

“As an organization, we remember growing up as little black girls and not always having dolls that looked like us,” said Dr. Karen Townsend, one of the founders of Black Women United. “We’re really excited to be able to share the spirit of the season and help girls feel beautiful, seen, and loved.”

The event highlighted the importance of representation, community partnership, and caring for children in foster care this holiday season.

Beavercreek Woman Spreads Kindness To Shelter Animals For Christmas

A Beavercreek woman decided to give to provide joy to some four-legged animals waiting for their furr-ever home in a unique way.

Earlier this week, Ashley Cooper posted she made 22 “Santa sacks,” each containing a bag of treats, Christmas plush, squeak bone and a flannel blanket.

Our partners at the Xenia Daily Gazette reported Cooper has been giving back to temporary residents at the Humane Society of Greater Dayton.

Cooper started giving to the animals after the death of her daughter, according to our partners. The Gazette reported the local woman was inspired to donate after adopting the service dog her daughter wanted and seeing others donate to shelter pets on social media.

“It may not be much,” said Cooper’s post. “But from one person its a small effort put fourth to create a difference.”

Cooper explained she wanted to share her holiday generosity to encourage others to do something similar for those in need.

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Legal Notice 2026 Annual Budget

Copies of the 2026 Annual Budget adopted by the Board of Trustees of the Greater Dayton Regional Transit Authority (RTA) in Montgomery County, Ohio, are available for public inspection in the office of the Chief Financial Officer at 4 South Main Street, Dayton, Ohio 45402.


2024 Annual Financial Report

Copies of the 2024 Annual Financial Report of the Greater Dayton Regional Transit Authority (RTA) in Montgomery County, Ohio, are available for public inspection in the office of the Chief Financial Officer at 4 South Main Street, Dayton, Ohio 45402.

Ms. Mary Kay Stanforth
Chief Financial Officer
Greater Dayton Regional Transit Authority


Miami Valley

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Church School 10:00 a.m.
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WEDNESDAY Noon
Prayer Meeting/Bible Study
THURSDAY 1:00 p.m.
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SERVICE SCHEDULE
Adult Bible Study - Sunday 9 AM
Worship Service - Sunday 8 AM & 10:30 AM
Sunday School - Sunday 10:30AM


Reverend Father
Benjamin E. K. Speare-Hardy II, Rector
The mission of St. Margaret's Episcopal Church is to worship, to serve and to form the spiritual and moral growth of individuals according to the teachings of Jesus Christ.


Greater Allen AME Church
Rev. Elmer S. Martin, Pastor
1620 West Fifth Street
Dayton, OH 45402-2910
Church Phone: 937-223-5115
Fax: 937-223-8872
Email: greater_allen_ame@att.net

Church Sunday School.....9:15 a.m.
Sunday Worship.....10:45 a.m.
Women's Bible Study - Monday.....6:30 p.m.
Noonday Bible Study - Wednesday.....12:00 p.m.
Prayer Meeting - Wednesday.....7:00 p.m.
Bible Study - Wednesday.....7:30 p.m.





Mt. Enon Missionary Baptist Church
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(937) 222-0867
FAX: (937) 222-7336
SUNDAY 8:30 a.m.
Sunday School.....10:00 a.m.
Morning Worship Services.....
WEDNESDAY 9:30 a.m.
AM Prayer Meeting.....6:00 p.m.
Bible Study.....11:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.
Saturday 11:00 a.m.
Bible Study.....
Pastor Cory J. Pruitt
1501 W. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Way, Dayton, OH, 45412




Believers Christian Fellowship Church
3010 McCall Street, Dayton, OH 45417
Tel. No.: 937-279-9343, Fax: 937-279-9342
Toll Free: 1-844-679-9343
email:bfcchurch@swohio.twcbc.com
Sunday Service.....9:30 a.m.
Church School - Sunday.....8:45 a.m.
& Wednesday.....1:00 p.m.
Bible Study/Prayer Meeting - Every
Wednesday starting at.....6:00 p.m.
Check out our website: www.believers-christian.org
Listen to our weekly radio show every Sunday at 8 am on 98.7 FM




Zion Baptist Church
"And I, if I be lifted up from the Earth, will draw all men unto me."

(937) 275-6906
Fax 276-6267
Sunday 9:30 a.m.
Church School.....11:00 a.m.
Morning Worship.....6:00 p.m.
Tues. Bible Study.....6:00 p.m.
Wed. Prayer Meeting.....
Other Ministry
email: rockney.carter@gmail.com
1684 Earlam Drive • Dayton, OH 45406





Bethel Missionary Baptist Church
401 S. Paul Laurence Dunbar St. - Dayton, Ohio 45407
Rev. Xavier L. Johnson, Senior Pastor
937-222-4373 - Office - Email: offices@bmbcd Dayton.org
SUNDAYS 9:30 a.m.
Church School 10:45 a.m.
Morning Worship
WEDNESDAY 12:00 noon
Bible Study 6:30 p.m.
Word & Worship
Bethel services are aired on DSTV Time
Warner Wednesdays at 3:00 p.m.
and Saturdays at 9:00 p.m. Time Warner Cable 992





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Church School9:00 AM
Morning Worship.....10:55 AM
Wed. Prayer Service.....6:00 PM
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Services Each Saturday:
Sabbath School 9:15 a.m.
Morning Worship 11:00 a.m.
Mid Week Prayer Service 7:00 p.m.
Dr. William T. Cox, Sr., Pastor



SHILOH BAPTIST CHURCH
3801 Fairbanks Avenue
Office: 937-268-6711 Fax: 937-221-8040

Rev. Dr. Marcettes Cunningham, D.Min., Pastor
Sunday School 9:30 a.m.
Morning Worship 10:45 a.m.
Wednesday Prayer/Bible Study, 12:00 & 7:00 p.m.
Evening Prayer, 6:30 p.m.



Dixon United Methodist Church
1691 Infirmary Rd. - Dayton, OH 45417
Church Phone: (937) 835-3366
Email: Dixonumc1691@gmail.com
Website: Dixonumcdayton.org
Sunday School.....10:00 a.m.
Sunday Morning Worship.....11:00 a.m.
Midweek Bible Study- Wednesday.....6:00-7:30 p.m. Via Zoom
Prayer Meeting - Saturday.....10:00 a.m.
Text In Prayer Request 1-888-646-9678



Advertise Your Church in the Dayton Weekly News

Religion

Spiritual Strength

By: Dr. Robert Jeffress

Spiritual strength doesn't come in a single moment—it's built over time. And after more than 40 years of pastoring and preaching God's Word, I've learned that consistent time in Scripture is the key to a grounded, courageous life of faith.

That's why I created the 2026 Pathway to Victory Daily Devotional—a weekday guide to help you start each day with biblical truth and encouragement.

Every devotional in this 260-entry collection was written to help you think biblically, live obediently, and trust God more fully. Whether you're walking through

trials or simply seeking daily direction, this resource is designed to meet you right where you are.

You'll start the year by grounding your faith in the foundational truths of Christianity, refocus your heart on what matters most in your daily walk with God, gain practical wisdom from the Ten Commandments and the Lord's Prayer, and follow the footsteps of Jesus through the Gospel of Luke. These are not abstract ideas. They are time-tested truths drawn from over forty years of biblical teaching to help you walk closely with Christ each day.

This beautifully produced devotional features a soft suede tan leather cover, gold and brown

foil, and easy-to-read print—making it both a meaningful spiritual investment and a joy to use.

"Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day" (2 Corinthians 4:16). This devotional is a simple but powerful tool to help you experience that daily renewal.

Your support makes resources like this possible. When you give to Pathway to Victory, you help us shine the light of God's Word around the world.

Request your 2026 Pathway to Victory Daily Devotional: <https://secure.ptv.org/2026-pathway-to-victory-daily-devotional-generous-gift-1>

Maple Heights Church Offered Free Coats, Shoes To Kids This Weekend

Kids grow fast, winter's here— and it's the holidays. So, Saturday, Citadel of Faith Ministries in Maple Heights is opening its doors to families who need a lift for a children's coat-and-shoe giveaway.

Pastor David McKenzie said the State of Ohio partnered with the church and provided hundreds of coats and shoes to help make sure children stay warm and cared for this winter.

McKenzie said the event is one of many that the church does to better connect with neighbors and take the stress off families who are worried about paying for things they need.

"We believe now more than ever is the time when the church needs to be the church and be concerned about everybody in our

community. It's easier to bear when we all share. That's what we say here," McKenzie said.

The church, on a regular basis, hosts clothing giveaways and has a monthly food pantry.

"We believe that we're supposed to be here to support the community, everything from spirituality to the natural. The Bible says it this way, first natural, then spiritual," McKenzie said. "It's hard for me to hear about God when my stomach's rumbling, feed me, then I can better receive. It's hard to receive a word about God when I'm freezing, give me some clothes because these are the commands that Christ told us to love our neighbors as ourselves. And so this is what we're trying to do in a nutshell — just give back."

The coat and shoe giveaway is from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., Dec. 20. The church is located at 5250 Arch Street in Maple Heights. It's first-come, first-served.

Citadel of Faith Ministries said thie ongoing mission is to connect with community and meet local needs.

He said experiencing families' appreciation is life-changing.

"It's all worth it when you see somebody that comes in and genuinely needed a coat or needed something and they were able to get it," McKenzie said. "You feel better and God is pleased. For us, that's the ultimate, that God is pleased with our service."

Church Events?

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DML’s Health and Wellness Programs for the New Year

Dayton Metro Library is offering a variety of health and wellness programs for adult patrons to start the new year.

Stress and How it Impacts Our Health with Public Health – Dayton & Montgomery County, Monday, January 5, 5:30-6:30 pm, Southeast Branch: Learn how stress impacts health by discussing what stress is, how it affects the body, its impact on heart disease and diabetes, how to lower it, and ways to prevent it. Registration required.

Eating Smart, Being Active, every Wednesday, January 7-February 11, 4-5 pm, Trotwood Branch: This six-week course focuses on simple messages related to food and nutrition through interac-

tive activities, including a recipe demo, incentives, and physical activity. Participants will receive a certificate of completion from The Ohio State Expanded Food and Nutrition Program. Registration required.

Diabetes Basics with Public Health Dayton & Montgomery County, Thursday, January 8, 12-1 pm, Miami Township Branch: Learn the basics of diabetes, including the difference between type 1 and 2, causes, terminology, symptoms, what A1C and glucose mean, treatments, management, and the impact of lifestyle choices. Registration required.

No Equipment, No Problem, Friday, January 9, 3-4 pm, Electra

C. Doren Branch: Learn how to use body weight and minimal equipment to gain maximum fitness benefits. Hosted by Kettering Health Network.

Guided Meditation & Journaling, Monday, January 12, 5-6 pm, Huber Heights Branch: Following meditation, journal to relaxing music and finish with fellowship. Registration required.

Intermittent Fasting, Tuesday, January 13, 11:30 am-12:30 pm, Miami Township Branch: Learn about this popular approach to health and weight management and how to safely make it work. Presented by Premier Health. Registration required.

Make Every Move Count Workshop, Friday, January 16, 4-5 pm, Electra C. Doren Branch: This workshop illustrates the health benefits of regular, moderate exercise and how it leads to a more productive and engaged life.

Yoga for Beginners, Saturday, January 17, 11-11:30 am, Kettering-Moraine Branch: Learn yoga postures that help relieve chronic ailments such as back pain, stress, anxiety, and tension. Led by Cheryl Griffin, a volunteer with the Isha Foundation. Registration required.

For more information and to register if required, visit DaytonMetroLibrary.org or call the Library’s Ask Me Line at 937.463.2665.

Teen Left Paralyzed By Trampoline Accident... Continued from Page 1

on praying because we do believe in the power of prayer. We believe that because of Maggie’s personality and attitude that she’s going to shine through this and she’s going to help others through this.”

Since this tragic accident, Maggie’s family has launched a Facebook page called Miracle For Maggie, where family, friends, and community members can share messages of hope for Maggie and follow her progress. And now her story is getting the attention of more than Tennessee community members; it’s also getting the attention of some famous faces in the Tennessee area.

Country stars Luke Combs, Scotty McCreery, and Dustin Lynch took some time to share words of encouragement to the teen, which I am sure lifted her spirits. Josh and Jenny Isble, the adoptive parents of Maggie and her three siblings, shared the tender messages on their social media pages.

While all the messages are very heartfelt, Luke Combs went the extra mile to learn more about Maggie’s story and really took the time to celebrate the wins that she’s already had on her recovery journey.

“Hey Maggie, it’s Luke Combs here. Katy told me the tough times that you’re going through right now following your accident, but she also told me that you’re making some progress. That’s great news. I’m happy to hear that. Also heard you’re a big fan. I really, really appreci-

ate that, and I just wanted to reach out and say, keep your head up. Stay strong. These things take time.

But Katy also told me how strong you are and how amazing of a person you are and how amazing your family is. So you’ve got great people around you. You’ve got support. I believe in you. I would love to have you and your family out to a show sometime, meet you in person when you’re feeling better, and stay strong. You got this.

Scotty McCreery and Dustin Lynch kept their messages on the shorter side, but still shared thoughts of hope and healing for the teen.

“Just wanted to say hello and that I’m thinking about you and praying for you in your recovery. You got this, and hopefully, we get to meet sometime. Have a good one.”

“Just wanted to reach out and say hello. Send you a smile, a hug, and wish you a Merry Christmas. I’m decorating my tree. Hope to see you soon. Love you.”

It’s really cool to see country stars take time out of their day and time away from their families to spread a message of hope to Maggie. Keep on fighting, Maggie. We are cheering for you here at Whiskey Riff, too.

The post Luke Combs, Scotty McCreery, & More Send Heartfelt Messages To Tennessee Teen Who Was Left Paralyzed By Trampoline Accident first appeared on Whiskey Riff.

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