



# ABIPA Health Highlights

CELEBRATING 17 YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY

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## EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

Visit us online at [www.abipa.org](http://www.abipa.org) and Facebook for virtual events and education sessions.

Call (828) 251-8364 to schedule ABIPA for your organization or church events.

## Donate to ABIPA

Tax deductible donations can be made by sending a check to: ABIPA, PO Box 448, Asheville, NC 28802; or click the donation tab at [www.abipa.org](http://www.abipa.org). Thank you for your support!

Thank you to our funding partners and community partner agencies for making our work possible.



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and the

Buncombe County Service Foundation

## ABIPA

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## Asheville Buncombe Institute of Parity Achievement

ABIPA promotes economic, social, and healthy parity achievement for African Americans and other underserved populations in Buncombe County through advocacy, education, research, and community partnerships.

[www.ABIPA.org](http://www.ABIPA.org)



Photo: Pro16 Productions

## 2021 ABIPA CAYLA Intern Take-Aways

*It's hard to believe that summer has come and gone so fast.*

By JéWana Grier-McEachin, Executive Director



Maria Melchor Guerrero

### Maria Melchor Guerrero

Working over the last few months with the Asheville Buncombe Institute of Parity Achievement (ABIPA), my experience with them surpassed my expectations. I have had the opportunity to meet and work with so many amazing people.

Through ABIPA, I was able to be featured on the Body and Soul Radio show on WRES 100.7 FM radio. I have helped organize games and run ABIPA's tent at the Shiloh Fun Day event, and have helped run their weekly Community Engagement Food Markets.

My favorite activity with ABIPA was helping with the food markets. The food markets ABIPA offers consist of packaging food and drink products into boxes, along with a meat products, eggs, fresh vegetables, and in some instances, milk. After helping package the food boxes, volunteers help distribute and give away the food boxes in our local communities. Although this activity seems simple, it has a deeper significance to me.

The food markets I've participated in gave me multiple opportunities to actually see a difference in my community. I try to do whatever I can to help those in need, and ABIPA has been very successful in providing me with activities that do just that. I have improved my communication and leadership skills by being allowed to help and run ABIPA's tent at the Shiloh Fun Day event, and in participating in the food markets hosted by ABIPA. I have gained insight on what it's like to have real solutions that can help the problems around my community.

My time with ABIPA was amazing and I will carry everything with me that I've learned from JéWana, Jennifer, Charlsie, Yvette, and others.



Kelly White, MHE, MPH. Photo: Pro16 Productions

## To Vaccinate or Not to Vaccinate, That is The Question

by Kelly White, MHE, MPH, ABIPA Health Education Program Manager

*There are many reasons people are choosing not to vaccinate.*

A couple of the reasons I can think of right off hand include the idea that the Covid vaccination is new to us and

that there was not enough research behind it's development, or that there was a government conspiracy going on to get us all in line with what they want us to do. Whatever the reasons to not get vaccinated, the virus is real and the numbers are headed in the wrong direction.

If you and I have spoken about the Covid vaccination, then you know that I am all about the science behind the cause. You have likely heard me say that science moves even while we are sleeping. So, while things may seem new to us, it is somewhat old news to the scientists

who work in the lab tirelessly to make sure that we never see a lot of the viruses or bacteria that are out in the world posing potential threats to the human race.

With that being said, there are many people who are still on the fence about being vaccinated. Vaccine hesitancy happens for many reasons, whether due to childhood trauma, history lessons, or the idea that a virus is just not real. The World Health Organization speaks about a vaccine hesitancy model that includes three main reasons which overlap each other—complacency, confidence, and convenience.

Complacency has to do with the feeling that the vaccine is not needed because the risk of getting the disease is low, or the thought that getting vaccinated can be put off for another day.

Confidence, or the lack of, comes when there is no trust in the vacci-

nation or the science behind it, and/or the effectiveness of the vaccine.

Lastly, vaccine convenience has to do with availability and how easy it may be to get vaccinated. I've had conversations with people who are either in one phase or all three phases overlapping.

As the fall season rolls around, schools are reopening for in-person learning and the mask mandate has been lifted. I implore you to think about why now would be a good time to get vaccinated. Not only for the protection of the people around us, but also for the ones within our homes who cannot get vaccinated, and lastly, for our own health.

I agree that it is a little disheartening that even those who are vaccinated can spread the Delta variant, but studies have also shown us that vaccination can lessen the severity

We are thankful for the CAYLA (City of Asheville Leadership Academy) program and the awesome students they provide us with every year. This year Maria and Paradise performed true to form and were wonderful additions to our team.

When you see them out and about, give them a shout-out for doing such a good job.



Paradise Smith

### Paradise Smith

During my time with ABIPA this summer I have gained so much more than if I was working on my own. I really enjoyed doing the food Community Engagement Markets. Preparing boxes of canned goods, produce, eggs, and more was fulfilling because I feel that just by doing something simple we have impacted someone's life so greatly.

In addition to being on the Body and Soul Radio show on WRES, we also helped catalogue an impressive collection of books, albums, and CDs. I will admit I was a little nervous when we first went on air, but it was fun once I got used to it. We also helped prepare bags of hand sanitizer and masks to help the community stay safe as we continue to open up during the pandemic.

However, one of my favorite parts of this summer at ABIPA was accompanying Yvette on her client visits out in their homes in the community. I have learned how to talk to clients and how it's very important to have good communication skills and build relationships when doing community work.

I am so grateful for the time I spent at ABIPA. I have gained leadership skills, confidence, and so much more. I have enjoyed my time giving back to my community—it was a really wonderful time. I thank everyone at ABIPA for letting me spend time with them this summer. You have impacted my life.



of the virus. Someone who has been vaccinated is less likely to die because there is a layer of protection from the vaccination.

When I am out, and someone asks, I like to tell people to seek out their own professional resources. Lastly, if you are not convinced that vaccination could save not only your life but the lives of others around you, and if you are still grappling with the decision, please continue to follow the original guidelines of wearing your mask, washing your hands, and giving that 6 feet of space.

Source: WHO