

ABIPA – ASHEVILLE BUNCOMBE INSTITUTE OF PARITY ACHIEVEMENT

The Right to Vote

By JéWana Grier-McEachin, Executive Director

I know that we vote next month, but I want you to give it a little thought before the official get-out-the-vote push.

Historically, mid-term elections have a low turnout because we aren't electing a president. What do you think it will take to change the tide of civic engagement through voting? It amazes me that one of the rights people fought and died for is not utilized to its fullest power. Think about it. Black men were not able to vote because most were slaves. Then, after emancipation, there was a surge of voters, which was deemed "radical."



JéWana Grier-McEachin. Photo: Pro16 Productions

With passage of a new Reconstruction Act in March 1867, the era of Radical, or Congressional, Reconstruction, began. Over the next decade, Black Americans voted in huge numbers across the South, electing a total of 22 Black men to serve in the US Congress (two in the Senate) and helping to elect Ulysses S. Grant, in 1868.

As things were put into place like the poll tax to make it hard for black men to vote, women didn't have a voice. It took more than 50 years from the time when Black men gained the right to vote before the 19th amendment granted women the right to vote.

According to *Global Citizen* there are five main reasons people don't vote.

1. Many Americans want to vote but can't.
2. Age, gender, education, socioeconomic status, and race can impact whether a person votes.

3. Election Day is held on a Tuesday. (Did you know that Sunday is the most common voting day in other countries?)

4. Voters who don't feel candidates represent their views might choose to opt out.

5. Citizens are less likely to vote if they think their ballot won't matter.

I still think there is more to it. When I looked at our voting trends in Buncombe County from 2016 to the primary held earlier this year, we never come close to 100% voter turnout.

One of the trends that really baffles me is that the total number of Black people registered to vote has gone down every voting cycle. Although we average 10,000 people registered to vote, we barely squeak out 7,000 on an average who actually vote.

This is a soap box issue for me because there are so many injustices and inequitable practices—locally, statewide, and nationally—that will never change until people organize and mobilize around those things that are important to all of us in one way or another: family, health, and wealth.

I challenge everyone who reads our page to get one friend or family member who is not registered, to register and actually vote. And, take it a step further. Familiarize yourself with the candidates and what they are committing to do as they ask for your voice through your vote.

Intergenerational Jazz Reception & Southern Tea: Your Community Needs You

Sunday, October 23 from 3:30-5:30 p.m. at the Linwood Crump Shiloh Recreation Center.

Rally your neighbors, family, and friends for an uplifting event about the history, present, and future value of your civic engagement. This informative and social event will include music, conversation, and refreshments. We hope this event will initiate an opportunity to engage in a longer-term civic engagement.

This event is hosted by ABIPA, the Asheville (NC) Chapter of the Links, Incorporated, and AARP NC in the Mountain Region.



The Most Wonderful Time of the Year

We need your help for our Annual Joy Toy Drive. We are collecting gifts for 200 children and will be accepting gifts at our weekly Engagement Markets and during special events. You may also donate online at Abipa.org or send a check to PO Box 448, Asheville, NC 28802.

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.



CELEBRATING 18 YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY

Help Us Celebrate Our 18th Birthday by Gifting Us a Donation of \$18

Tax deductible donations can be made by sending a check to ABIPA, PO Box 448, Asheville, NC 28802; or online at www.abipa.org. Thank you for your support!

October is Health Literacy Month

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

The definition of health literacy was updated in August 2020 with the release of the US government's Healthy People 2030 initiative.



Kelly White, MHE, MPH. Photo: Pro16 Productions

According to the initiative, "Personal health literacy is the degree to which individuals have the ability to find, understand, and use information and services to inform health-related decisions and actions for themselves and others."

I recently had a conversation with one of my good friends whose child's provider was not taking the time to listen to her concerns about her child—concerns that could have cost him his life. Her son was born on time but had to spend some time in the intensive care unit for a few days before going home.

During his checkups, mom would mention things she noticed that did not seem right. But, it was as if the pediatrician did not believe that the things the mom mentioned were serious problems, and that the baby would grow out of them.

Almost everyone has heard a horror story about someone who goes to a doctor and feels as though the physician did not listen to a word they said. The doctor then decides what will be the best course of treatment without really giving

the patient much choice in the matter. The patient goes home feeling defeated and has no clue how to process the visit.

Unfortunately, this happens to be more and more common in exam rooms all over the country, which is why having a health care advocate is so important

regardless of your age. Studies show that only about 70% of people have a healthcare advocate. An advocate can be anyone who is close to you. They should be assertive and comfortable with asking questions when there is a lack of understanding.

When you select an advocate make sure that you:

- Choose someone who will listen to your concerns and is willing to help with your healthcare needs.
- Give the person your medical history so they know what medications and test results to ask about if needed.
- Make sure to sign a medical release document.
- Ask your advocate to take thorough notes during your visits.
- Leave your advocate's information with your healthcare team.

The family mentioned has a long road ahead of them, but with mom's persistence, and knowing her baby and his needs, at least there is a starting point and a better understanding for how to take care of the little one and give him a better outcome.

If you do not already have someone, take time to find a healthcare advocate. Begin to have a conversation about your needs and how the advocate can help you reach optimum health.

Source: Johns Hopkins University



Community Spotlight



Congratulations to Johanna Johnson for becoming a Gold Certified Professional Parent for Children's Hope Alliance of North Carolina.

