

ABIPA – ASHEVILLE BUNCOMBE INSTITUTE OF PARITY ACHIEVEMENT

Being Thankful for Tragedy and Triumph

By JéWana Grier-McEachin, Executive Director

The past month has been a whirlwind, to say the least.

I am in a space of thankfulness for tragedy and triumph because we learn from both. The tragedy of the storm that hit our region has been devastating physically, emotionally, and financially.

Though many of us are thankful to be here, we still must acknowledge that we are not truly OK, even though we are making it through. However, we cannot get stuck in devastation, dismay and depression. We push through. For inspiration, we can acknowledge how we come together as community locally, regionally, and nationally.

When I think about how, at such a time as this, God has provided us with a building with the address of 220 that we are under contract for as a small organization celebrating its 20th anniversary, I am thankful. We are not a large organization with a large capital stack, but we serve an amazing community that reciprocally supports us.



JéWana Grier-McEachin. Photo: Pro16 Productions

I am thankful that, as we registered for disaster relief, the seller of the building provided us with an early occupancy lease at no cost for the last month so that we could continue to serve.

I am thankful that, at a time of tragedy, we have been able to receive small donations from pick-up trucks and large donations from 18-wheelers that have come from as far as Southern California, delivered by a father with his toddler daughter in tow.

Whether it was the hundreds of handmade cards sent to us for community from children across the country, to a brand new hoja lift, we are grateful.

I am thankful for my amazing team, from full time staff to volunteers, who always rise to the occasion to serve community from the heart, even when they are depleted. I am thankful for one of the visiting volunteers who came to support disaster relief. When we were not able to get our regular vehicle from Enterprise, he offered his cargo van and rode along to help us make our food box deliveries to Rutherford without blinking.

I am thankful that where God guides, He provides. At this very moment, do we have the \$1 million dollars needed to finish executing our contract? No. But I know we will have it, and I say "Thank you," in advance.

Like many, I am disappointed about the results of the election and my feelings are layered. I know that God is on the throne and for that reason I am not dismayed. But, just like the grief of the storm, the grief of the outcome is real. For me it is not about Republicans and Democrats, it is about the display of hate and vitriol that was dismissed as a non-factor. It is seeing how a woman who has served her country at every level—the epitome of a public servant—was remarkably rejected and lost to a convicted felon.

So, yes, it makes me feel some kind of way as an African American woman who recognizes the impact of epigenetics and economic biproducts that we still deal with as a people. Honestly, it was, and is, a trigger for me as a leader of an organization that still has to fight to serve. Yet, I revel in what we are able to do even when we do not have the manpower or economic war chest that other nonprofits have access to.

After I have acknowledged this sentiment that I feel to my core, I am able to move forward because that is what we are made of. We do not always get our way, but, with God's help, we always make a way.

I am thankful for tragedy because there is always a lesson to be learned and an opportunity to leverage that lesson for betterment. I am thankful for triumph, for it is the manifestation of hard work and remarkable blessings. I am thankful for you, our readers and village, for being a firm foundation.



Celebrating 20 Years of Being the Community Health Connection for Asheville and Beyond

Help Us Celebrate Our Birthday by Gifting ABIPA a Donation of \$20

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!

Making Small Lifestyle Changes for a Better Health Outcome

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



Kelly White, MHE, MPH. Photo: Pro16 Productions

Earlier this year, one of my cousins revealed that he lost a lot of weight after a recent diagnosis of type II diabetes.

Shocked, I thought about how we do not have a family history of diabetes, nor did he have any signs of trouble that we knew of while growing up.

While there may have been other signs, his diagnosis came after a sudden bout of blindness while driving. He explained that his vision began to blur, and there was a period where he could not see at all. After heading to the nearest emergency department, he was told that his blood sugar was over three hundred and that he would need to begin taking insulin shots in order to treat his diabetes.

Fast forward to today, he is doing really well and is mindful of the things he needs to do to keep his blood sugar within the range that he and his provider set for his specific treatment plan.

The month is American Diabetes month, and one of my favorite holidays, Thanksgiving! We cannot "fix" everything all at once, but the American Diabetes Association provides us with a few great tips on how we can become more conscious while learning to make small lifestyle changes for a better health outcome.

One of the first things to do is to plan and write down some of the goals you would like to achieve. The second thing is that, in some cases, medications may not have to be involved in your specific treatment plan when coupled with small changes in your diet,

and including exercise. These changes can aide in weight loss as well as lowering your A1c.

Another added bonus is that your blood pressure, and some of the risks of chronic health issues, can decrease. Lastly, lean on the people who support you when things are tough!

Find more information and tools at diabetes.org.

Source: American Diabetes Association

It's Time to Bring the Joy!

Toys, Books, and Funds Accepted!



Donate using the QR code shown, go online to our Donate page at www.abipa.org, or send a donation to PO Box 448, Asheville, NC 28801.



Save The Date

**ABIPA's 2024
Grand Opening
Weekend**



Events take place at 220 Continuum Drive, Fletcher, NC 28732.

Friday, December 20
Ribbon Cutting at 12 noon

Saturday, December 21
Sankofa Crimson Gala at 7 p.m.

Sunday, December 22
Polar Express Community
Christmas Party begins at 6 p.m.

ABIPA, 220 Continuum Dr., Fletcher, NC 28732

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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.