

ABIPA – ASHEVILLE BUNCOMBE INSTITUTE OF PARITY ACHIEVEMENT

Fatherhood and Legacy

By JéWana Grier-McEachin, Executive Director

Our readers know how I feel about fathers.

Every year we intentionally celebrate dads because of the prevalence of the focus on deadbeat dads and the lack of amplification for dedicated dads. Today I reflect on the legacy of fatherhood.

My daddy did not meet his father until he was in his late teens, a story that would fill an interesting chapter in the book I need to write. When we would visit my paternal grandfather, John Arnett Lane, I would marvel at how they laughed alike and the similarities in their quiet strength and personalities.

My granddaddy Lane would always send me a card with money in it for birthdays, Christmas, and graduations. He was very thoughtful. I now wish I had saved those cards.

My daddy, John Wallace Grier, was a very present and involved dad. Anything I was a part of, he was there to support with video camera and Nikon in hand. He, too, would give me cards for all occasions; flowers and chocolates for Valentine's day. We never lacked because he was a provider and protector. He never raised his voice, but that tone could do something to you. He was stern, yet thoughtful and loving.

My maternal grandfather, Wilson Webb, was a hard worker and a natural entrepreneur. As a father of seven, he became the first Black foreman for Blithe Construction company; they laid every part of the highway in Charlotte at that time. Simultaneously he sold coal in the winter and ice in the summer.

He had his own urban garden in downtown Charlotte on an empty lot beside his house to feed his big family. He ultimately purchased three houses in the cul-de-sac on his street, and one that is near what is now Panther Stadium, by taking on boarders and using the profit to buy the next house.

He worked at Blithe so long they gave him a truck with a little caution light on it when he retired—he poured concrete independently into his 80s. He was a provider and very frugal.

The fathers in my legacy line were very different, yet I am inspired by them and feel like I move the way I do because of what they poured into me, whether by intention or instinct.

As a parent, I am of the mindset



JéWana Grier-McEachin. Photo: Red Angle Photography

that some things are rooted in DNA, some things are learned, and some things are self-taught and personally refined with context. On Mother's Day the flowers are flowing, the cards are lyrical, and the lines at restaurants stretch into infinity.

In comparison, on Father's Day all we hear are crickets. But let's change that locally. There are countless dedicated dads we need to lift up. Let them know we see them and appreciate them.

ABIPA will be hosting a Father's Day Friday Food Truck Night where dads eat free. Please join us! I look forward to seeing Facebook flooded with #DedicatedDads posts.



John Grier, John Lane, Marcus McEachin, and JaiEssence McEachin.



Wilson Webb with JaiEssence and JyAire.



Wilson Webb and his work truck.

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 21 Years of Being the Community Health Connection for Asheville and Beyond

Help Us Celebrate Our Birthday by Gifting ABIPA a Donation of \$21

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



Kelly White, MHE, MPH. Photo: Red Angle Photography

Celebrating Men's Health

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

The month of June is all about celebrating our men.



This month we encourage our young men, including our boys, to take charge of their health by implementing healthy living decisions. With mental health and other chronic health conditions, it is vital that we encourage our men to get their regular check-ups and to get to know their risk factors for disease.

Over the last couple of months you may have heard myself and Joe Greene talk about our campaign, "45 in 45," in hopes of getting 45 men to get a colonoscopy screening, or Cologuard, to test for colorectal cancer in 45 days. This is an ongoing campaign to get our Black men and young men to focus more on their health and get screened if they are of age, have a family history, or are experiencing symptoms.

According to the American Cancer Society and other studies, it is projected that more than 100,000 people will be diagnosed with colon cancer in 2025. With only six months left in the year, I encourage you to get your screening and encourage others to get screened as well, especially if you have had changes in your bowel habits.

Armed with this information, what can we do to turn those numbers around

so that our men live longer and thrive?

- Seek medical advice or see your family doctor on a yearly basis.
- Get to know your numbers and risk factors for chronic disease.
- Make healthy food choices or make small changes to improve your overall diet by adding more fruits and vegetables.
- Get age-appropriate preventative health check-ups that could include a colonoscopy, prostate exam, and/or a lab test for younger men.

Take charge of your mental health by seeking help when things may not feel right.

We need to keep our men around for as long possible, so we want to encourage better health choices. Lastly, we should not celebrate our men only in the month of June, but every chance we get!

If you are in need of additional resources, feel free to reach out to Joe or myself for more information!

Exciting Events at ABIPA Life's Center

ABIPA's Annual Dedicated Dad Weekend

Father's Day Friday Food Truck Night. Dads eat free! Held on Friday, June 13 from 7-10 p.m.

Pre-Father's Day Building Brothers Brunch. Held on Saturday, June 14 at 11 a.m.

Sunday Shop with Father's Day Surprises! Held on Sunday, June 15 from 3-5 p.m.

Free Sunday Shops

Held from 3-7 p.m.

Sundays, June 15, 29
Sundays, July 13 & 27

Juneteenth at ABIPA

Thursday, June 19
Held from 12-7 p.m.

These events take place at ABIPA Life's Center, 220 Continuum Drive in Fletcher, NC 28732.

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