

Life!

THURSDAY, APRIL 9, 2026 SECTION B

An investment in statewide health initiative

By Herbert L. White

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A new statewide initiative aims to improve the health of people with chronic medical needs.

The Duke Endowment and North Carolina Healthcare Foundation are collaborating on Bridge to Health, a program for high-risk patients who suffer from substance abuse or mental health conditions rooted in trauma or unmet social needs related to homelessness and poverty. The program, funded by a \$9.8 million Duke Endowment gift over four years, takes a proactive approach outside traditional outpatient settings to reduce hospital interaction for avoidable health conditions.

"Our goal is to provide a coordinated approach to individualized care for this patient population to help them meet their unique circumstances and support them in achieving long-term stability," said Jay Kennedy, senior program officer with The Duke Endowment's Health Care program area.

The pilot will include a two-phased approach, with the first year focused on planning and building capacity followed by three years of implementation.

Duke will support six health systems in a pilot program that builds on collective experience and best practices developed by a model built by WakeMed's Center for Community Health doctors Brian Klausner and Theresa Amerson. The multi year investment includes \$7.9 million across the six sites, including \$1.4 million to WakeMed as cohort leader and key advisor and \$6.5 million to the five ad-

Please see **BRIDGE** | 2B

NC still an access point for abortion care in Southeast

By Rachel Crumpler

NORTH CAROLINA HEALTH NEWS

Despite a stricter abortion law that took effect in July 2023 — limiting most procedures in North Carolina to 12 weeks of pregnancy and requiring two in-person appointments separated by a 72-hour waiting period — the Tar Heel state is still a key access point for abortion care in the Southeast.

For the third consecutive year, North Carolina served the second-highest number of out-of-state patients in the country — behind only Illinois — according to a new report on national abortion volumes.

Of the nearly 48,000 abortions provided in North Carolina in 2025, more than one in three — about 37% — were for people traveling from states where they were no longer able to get them, according to estimates released last week by the Guttmacher Institute, a national organization that tracks trends in reproductive health.

That amounts to 17,890 abortions obtained by out-of-state residents in 2025, up from an estimated 16,220 in 2023 and 17,120 in 2024.

In 2020, before more restrictions on abortion access were added to state law, North Carolina had a total of 31,850 procedures.

The share of abortions for out-of-state patients has held steady at just over one-third since 2023 — more than double the 17% of patients who came from elsewhere in 2020.

That demand reflects North Carolina's geography: It is the closest option for many people in the South. Most other states have either near-total bans or do not allow abortion past six weeks in pregnancy — a point at which many women don't yet know they're pregnant.

"North Carolina remains a really critical access point, particularly in the Southeast," said Guttmacher Institute data scientist Isaac Maddow-Zimet, who leads the organization's Monthly Abortion Provision Study. "That's really clear from this data — that it's playing a really critical role for folks who want or need in-person care. We saw that role

Please see **NORTH** | 2B

« BLACK BRILLIANCE »

Lonnie Johnson, NASA engineer and inventor of the best-selling Super Soaker

NATIONAL INVENTORS HALL OF FAME

Engineer and entrepreneur Lonnie Johnson is the inventor of the Super Soaker, a best-selling toy generating well over \$1 billion in sales over its lifetime.

Johnson's longtime research focuses on energy technology, and his well-known toy resulted from his work on an environmentally friendly heat pump.

Trained as a nuclear engineer, Johnson worked as a research engineer at Oak Ridge National Laboratory, then joined the Air Force, heading the Space Nuclear Power Safety Section at the Air Force Weapons Laboratory. In 1979, he left the Air Force to become a systems engineer at NASA's Jet Propul-

sion Laboratory to work on the Galileo mission. Returning to the Air Force in 1982, he served in Space Systems at Strategic Air Command and was the first flight test engineer assigned by SAC to the B-2 Stealth Bomber at the SAC Test and Evaluation Squadron at Edwards Air Force Base. In 1987, he returned to JPL to work on the Mars Observer and Saturn Cassini projects.

In 1989, Johnson formed his own engineering firm and licensed his most famous invention, the Super Soaker, to Larami Corp. Two years later, the Super Soaker generated over \$200 million in sales and became the No. 1 selling toy in America. Larami was eventually purchased by Hasbro, and Johnson's pat-

ents are also the basis of the Nerf N-Strike line of products.

Johnson's current work includes a new generation of rechargeable battery technology and the Johnson Thermo-Electrical Converter, which efficiently converts waste heat to electrical energy and can be run in reverse as a cooling device.

Johnson, a graduate of Tuskegee University and holds more than 100 U.S. patents, is president and founder of Johnson Research and Development Co. Inc., an Atlanta-based company that has spun off additional companies, including Johnson Energy Storage and JTEC Energy Inc. He has been awarded the Air Force Achievement Medal and the Air Force



JOHNSON RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT CO

Lonnie Johnson with Super Soaker and Nerf toys.

Commendation Medal on two occasions and has received multiple awards

from NASA. One of his ventures is the Johnson STEM Activity Center, which in-

troduces students from diverse and underserved communities to STEM.



SUSIE MCILWAIN

Susie McIlwaine of Charlotte is an ambassador for the American Cancer Society's Voices of Black women study to better understand and improve their health.

Volunteers needed for national health campaign

American Cancer Society's study amplifies Black women's voices

By Cameron Williams

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Black women are often disproportionately affected by cancer and other health challenges.

The American Cancer Society wants to change that with the Voices of Black Women study, a large-scale cohort that aims to better understand and improve their health.

Dr. Lauren McCullough, one of the study's principal investigators, said the goal is to recruit 100,000

participants. There are around 6,000 at present; however, the study is relatively new having launched in 2024.

"I would say that first recruiting for these types of studies are hard," McCullough said, "particularly in the digital age we live in. I wouldn't necessarily say on track; we were hoping to be able to begin to do some scientific inquiry. And 6,000 is still just too few women to be able to do that. ... We'd love to get to 10,000 by the end of the

year. That's the number at which time we can begin to do some science and begin to make new discoveries."

Joyce Wright of Charlotte is an ambassador for the study and cancer survivor who had her first bout with the disease in the late 1980s when she was dia-



Wright

Please see **VOLUNTEERS** | 2B

Add homegrown flavor to your gatherings

By Melinda Myers

FOR THE CHARLOTTE POST

Fill your crudité platters with vegetables grown in your own garden and containers.

Arrange the raw vegetables neatly on a platter or board and add a homemade dip seasoned with fresh herbs. Your family and guests are sure to enjoy the selection and fresh flavor.

Look for opportunities to grow and share your favorite vegetables at gatherings with friends and families. Many vegetables work well in containers and small compact varieties make it easy to include them in just about any size garden.

Create an attractive display with seasonal bite-sized vegetables that are easy for guests to enjoy. Snap peas, radishes, and carrots are most readily available during the cooler months of spring and fall.

As the season progresses, include broccoli and cauliflower florets. Try growing some purple varieties like purple magic broccoli, purple crush and amethyst purple cauliflower. Blanch them in cold water to bring out the color.

By mid- to late summer, you'll have tomatoes, peppers and cucumbers to include. Grow some colorful cherry tomatoes like sunset torch with excellent flavor and unique yellow with orange striped fruit. The compact patio choice yellow and fantastic red cherry tomatoes are the perfect size for containers and fit in any size garden.

Plan to grow a few small peppers like pick-n-pop,

Please see **ADD** | 2B



ALL AMERICA SELECTIONS

Purple magic broccoli adds color and interest to gardens and meals.

Volunteers needed for national health survey

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gnosed with breast cancer.

"Progress has been really great as far as how to treat the cancer," Wright said. "Then in 2021 I found out I had lung cancer, so that was a whole different cancer journey then. And just two years ago I had breast cancer a second time, so I have been on a roller coaster with cancer."

Wright said becoming an ambassador for the study was a no-brainer, adding it may identify genetic differences that can be addressed through new treatments. That's why input from Black women is necessary.

"We do need to find a way to treat the type cancers that I had," she said. "I think to have a study of that to make sure that we are provided with the medications that will help prevent or help treat cancer for us. Maybe it may not be any different, but there may be just one element that could make a difference in the chemotherapy I took or the radiation that we have."

McCullough adds the study has two aims: amplify voices and experiences of survivors.

"The first is to better understand why Black women are getting more aggressive types of cancer," she said. "If these cancers are innately more aggressive and harder to treat, then what Black women are going to have poor outcomes, we need to know what to tell Black women to do to prevent those more aggressive types of cancer. The second part of this is to ensure that they can survive their cancer. So again, those disparities exist in survival. Is it the treatments? Is it integration back into the medical care system? Is it long-term adherence? These are things that we really don't know and understand."

Campaign ambassador Susie Bell McIlwaine, a 13-year breast cancer survivor from Charlotte, said what caught her attention as an ACS volunteer is the lack of minority representation for fundraisers and other initiatives.

"It wasn't 'til maybe three years ago, I was advised of this particular program that they were putting in place which was Voices of Black Women," McIlwaine said. "So, at that moment, I realized it was an opportunity for me to lend my voice, not only lend my face and just showing up, but it was opportunity for me to use my voice to let people know, 'Hey, I survived, and this is what we have going on in our community as minorities.'"

"So, as I started volunteering and working with Voices of Black Women, I've spoken anywhere I can speak. I'll tell anyone. If I speak to one or 1,000 people, it doesn't matter, as long as I reach one person, because I never want anyone to go through what I went through in the process."

McIlwaine doesn't want Black women to miss their chance to be heard.

"As an ambassador, I want to go around and let everybody know about the program and let them know we need you to get involved," she said. "This is an opportunity for them, anyone to hear our voice. We can't say no one is listening to us if you don't speak when you give the opportunity to speak."

McCullough wants to make sure everyone knows the study is safe. The history of medical mistreatment and malpractice against Black Americans has led to skepticism and hesitancy of studies and research like this. She wants to ease those concerns.

"I would say all of your concerns are valid," she said. "I think it's important that we acknowledge history and how history has really sort of used and abused black women for medical advancements that then didn't advance the health of black women. ..."

Voices is overseen by the Institutional Review Board at Emory University. They ensure patient [and] volunteer participants rights. In this study, we do a lot to ensure the privacy of the information that we collect, and so your personal identifying information, like your name, address, phone number, etc, are never tied to your survey data. Even as one of the lead scientists on the study, I can only have access to survey responses.

"This study is purely observational, so we're just asking you to report to us kind of what's happening in your day-to-day life. Where do you live? Are you able to get fresh fruits and vegetables? Do you have a sidewalk? Do you exercise? How do you sleep? The fact that it is observational lessens the risk."

Wright and McIlwaine both want to make it clear the study will benefit the future health of Black women.

"Now is the time for us to take advantage of an opportunity to help find a way to combat cancer and to change cancer from the way we see it today or the way we saw it 38 years ago," Wright said.

"The only way we can get better is through asking questions and providing answers and if, if folks want to feel comfortable, I think the main thing about doing this survey is do something that can help you in the future and protect those who will be coming of our younger generation that's coming up after us be a part of finding the cure."

Said McIlwaine: "There are some disparities when it comes to African American women. ... I think that we have to be one to advocate for ourselves and any person participating in this study, we can't focus on what happened in the past. If we continue to focus on disparities, malpractice, and say I don't want to get involved, because they're just going to not take care of us or treat us the same. No, you have to look forward and let your voice be heard."

On The Net
voices.cancer.org



RACHEL CRUMPLER | NORTH CAROLINA HEALTH NEWS

The waiting room at Planned Parenthood's Winston-Salem clinic, which provides abortion care.

North Carolina still an access point for Southeast abortion care

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accelerate after Florida's six-week ban [took effect in May 2024] and it seems to be sustained in 2025."

The sustained level of travel to North Carolina is somewhat surprising, Maddow-Zimet said, given the state's 72-hour waiting period and requirement for two in-person appointments, which can be challenging logistical hurdles on top of long travel distances. Nationwide, interstate travel for abortion is declining, according to Guttmacher data: In 2025, about 142,000 people traveled across state lines to obtain an abortion — down from 154,000 in 2024 and 170,000 in 2023.

"It's really notable that there's still so many people traveling to North Carolina," Maddow-Zimet said. "For many folks in Florida and in other states in the Southeast, North Carolina is just the place that they have to go to get in-person clinic care, and it's by no means close for a lot of people. For somebody living in Florida, it could be a trip of 500 miles or more."

While many patients travel for care to states that are less restrictive than where they live, others are increasingly turning to telehealth for medication abortion as the way people get abortion care has shifted since the Supreme Court's June 2022 Dobbs decision overturning Roe v. Wade.

Growth of abortion via telehealth

Nationwide, there were an estimated 1,126,000 clinician-provided abortions in 2025, according to Guttmacher — the most provided in the United States since 2009, though still well below the historical peak of about 1.6 million in 1990. The Guttmacher numbers undercount the total number of abortions because they do not include self-managed abortions — people using medications at home without initiating contact with the health care system.

While the majority of these abortions occurred in person, a growing share were obtained through telehealth from clinicians in states with telehealth shield laws. Eight states — including California, Massachusetts and Colorado — have laws that explicitly protect clinicians using telehealth to provide abortion remotely by mailing abortion pills to patients in states that have total abortion bans or other restrictions.

In December 2021, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration eased restrictions on the abortion medication mifepristone by eliminating the in-person dispensing requirement. That change expanded access, including by allowing the drug to be mailed. Studies show that abortion provided through telehealth is as safe as in-person care.

Angel Foster, founder of The Massachusetts Medication Abortion Access Project, is a shield law provider. The organization mails a two-drug abortion regimen to patients up to 11 weeks after their last menstrual period in all 50 states — including North Carolina — after a licensed clinician reviews medical information.

The organization operates on a pay-what-you-can model, with a minimum payment of \$5.

"There is this sort of assumption that it's an automated thing — that people are just sending pills to everyone — but there's actually a whole process that's happening that's very much akin to what happens when you get in-person care," Foster said. "It's what's happening within a lot of different fields of telemedicine, not just abortion care."

In the first six months of 2025, 27% of the 591,770 abortions obtained in the U.S. health care system were provided through telehealth, according to the latest

#WeCount report, an abortion data collection effort led by the Society of Family Planning. By June 2025, nearly 15,000 abortions per month were provided under shield laws, accounting for more than half of total telehealth abortions.

North Carolinians are among those using telehealth shield law protections. It's the only way for patients in the state to access telehealth abortion care, since state law adds restrictions beyond the FDA's rules, requiring all medication abortion pills to be dispensed in person by a physician after a 72-hour waiting period and state-mandated counseling.

In the first six months of 2025, about 18 percent of total abortions in North Carolina were obtained by telehealth through shield law providers, according to #WeCount data.

The number of patients getting care this way has steadily increased since July 2023 — when the state's stricter abortion law took effect. That month, 250 telehealth abortions were reported. By June 2025, the monthly number had grown to 730.

"It's becoming even more attractive as a mode of care, because it's so much less expensive and less onerous than in-clinic abortion care," Foster said. "It's so much more affordable than traveling out of state to a brick-and-mortar facility somewhere else if you're in a state with a near-total ban or a gestational age restriction."

Since launching in September 2023, Foster said demand has continued to grow. The organization serves 3,000 to 3,500 patients a month, including 130-140 from North Carolina, she told NC Health News.

"We can't care for people who age out of the 12-week ban," Foster said. "So for us, the patients that we're seeing from North Carolina want telemedicine care because that's their preferred model. It could be that it's less expensive, and it may be that folks are having a difficult time accessing brick-and-mortar facilities."

A shifting abortion landscape

Though the role of telemedicine in abortion care continues to grow, Foster said that in-person options are still vital.

"There are always patients who are going to need to go to a brick-and-mortar facility — whether that's patients in the first trimester of care who aren't eligible for medication abortion, or really don't want a medication abortion, and certainly for patients who are beyond the first trimester — especially as we get into later gestational ages," Foster said. "With this shift towards telemedicine, how can we make sure that we still protect and fortify our clinics so that we have that as a continued part of the landscape?"

North Carolina has just over a dozen abortion clinics spread over nine counties offering in-person abortion care. Still, some North Carolinians travel to Virginia or other states with broader access — including in cases of fetal anomalies, in which North Carolina's law isn't clear-cut.

According to Guttmacher data, 2,250 North Carolinians traveled to Virginia for abortion in 2024, making it the most frequent out-of-state destination. The number of North Carolinians who sought care there in 2025 has not yet been released, though providers say Virginia is still a key option because it does not have a waiting period and allows abortion through the second trimester of pregnancy.

"Everybody's situation is really specific and unique, and people are weighing a lot of complicated factors when they're deciding whether they're going to travel for care or whether they access care through telehealth," Maddow-Zimet said.

Add some homegrown flavor to your gatherings with veggies

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lunchbox, just sweet, and yum yums or include slices of your favorite sweet peppers. Make room in your garden to grow a few miniature cucumbers like Persian and green light with thin skins and crispy mild flavor.

Fill the voids in your platter with seasonal and colorful fruit like grapes, raspberries and strawberries. Add a little crunchy, flavorful food confetti to the mix with homegrown microgreens. Sunflower microgreens remain firm and have a nutty flavor that is similar to the seeds. Spice things up a bit with radish greens and add welcome color with red cabbage and bull's blood beet greens. Your microgreens are ready to harvest in just 10 to 14 days after planting.

Also use them to add some of your own homegrown flavor when you have to purchase vegetables at the farmer's market or grocery store.

Anchor the platter with a bowl of dip. Even a simple dip of sour cream, mayonnaise and chives will work. Add more complex flavor by adding additional

homegrown herbs like basil, dill and oregano to your favorite dip base. Experiment with various combinations of what's available from your container and in-ground gardens.

Be flexible. As a gardener you know plants do not always follow the descriptions on the seed packet or label. Cooler than normal weather can delay the harvest while hotter than normal weather can speed things up. Just enjoy what is ready and supplement with what you purchase at the farmer's market or grocery store.

Melinda Myers has written more than 20 gardening books, including the Midwest Gardener's Handbook, 2nd Edition and Small Space Gardening. She hosts The Great Courses "How to Grow Anything" streaming courses and the nationally syndicated Melinda's Garden Moment TV & radio program.

Myers is a columnist and contributing editor for Birds & Blooms magazine and was commissioned by Wild Valley Farms for her expertise to write this article. Myers' website is www.MelindaMyers.com.

Bridge to Health initiative spans NC

Continued from page 1B

ditional health systems to plan and implement the model over four years. The award also includes a \$1.9 million investment in technical assistance and evaluation provided by the North Carolina Healthcare Foundation and the Duke-Margolis Institute for Health Policy.

The participating health systems are WakeMed

Health, Novant Health Forsyth Medical Center, Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist, Cone Health, ECU Health and UNC Health. The companies will start and expand hospital-based clinics that stabilize high-risk acute medical, mental health, and social needs and collaborate with primary care providers and community-based organizations that continue their

care.

"This is an exciting opportunity to ensure high-quality health care is accessible to patients across our state who need it most," said Emily Roland, executive director of Program Implementation for NCHF. "We are looking forward to the success of this pilot and the participation of six North Carolina health systems."

House of Prayer hosts Family and Friends Day

STAFF REPORTS

The United House of Prayer for All People is celebrating community for its 26th annual Family and Friends Day.

The congregation at 2321 Beatties Ford Road Sunday, will celebrate on April 19 with performances by praise bands, choirs and marching bands at the 11 a.m. service. The purpose is to bring the larger community, families and friends together for a show of community, love and unity.

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SHUTTERSTOCK

Mississippi Mud Cake.

A classic southern dessert

FAMILY FEATURES

Delight the chocolate lovers in your family with this easy recipe for a Southern classic like Mississippi Mud Cake.

Find more sweet recipes at Culinary.net.

Mississippi Mud Cake

1 chocolate cake mix (15 1/4 ounces)

1 1/4 cups water

1/3 cup canola oil

1/3 cup creamy peanut butter

3 eggs

1 cup semisweet choco-

late pieces

1 can (16 ounces) choco-

late fudge frosting

1 bag (16 ounces) minia-

ture marshmallows

1 cup chopped pecans

Heat oven to 350 F.

Grease 13-by-9-by-2-inch

baking pan.

In large bowl, using elec-

tric mixer on low speed,

combine cake mix, water,

oil, peanut butter and eggs.

Stir in chocolate pieces.

Pour into prepared pan.

Bake 30-35 minutes, or

until toothpick inserted in

center of cake comes out

clean.

Pour marshmallows over

top of cake. Return to oven

and bake 2-3 minutes, or

until marshmallows are

somewhat melted.

In microwave-safe bowl,

melt fudge frosting in microwave.

Drizzle frosting over

melted marshmallows.

Sprinkle pecan pieces

over frosting.

Allow cake to cool com-

pletely before serving.



SHUTTERSTOCK

Rainbow Tuna Bowl is nutritious and can be prepared with ease.

Busy families can balance time, taste and nutrition

FEATURE IMPACT

In those precious few minutes between waking up and heading out the door or arriving home from school pickup, the pantry is a common destination.

Seeking a grab-and-go lunch, sending your student off with a bite of protein or searching for an afternoon snack can leave you scanning the shelves for a go-to solution.

With snackers increasingly mindful about what they put in their bodies, you're not alone if you're looking for a snacking shakeup - in fact, in a recent survey conducted by Bumble Bee Seafoods and FleishmanHillard's True Global Intelligence, 50% of Americans agreed it's hard to find snacks that meet all their needs. According to the survey, people are looking for foods that offer:

- "Bang for their buck" (78%)
- Affordability (61%)
- Protein packed (51%)
- Meet specific dietary goals (48%)
- Easy to eat on the go (35%)

Among all factors, however, 70% said great taste is most important, proving flavor remains the single biggest driver of snacking decisions.

In response to demand for powerhouse snacks that do it all while tasting amazing, Bumble Bee Snackers easy-open, single-serve cans are shaking up snack time with a variety of bold flavors that are perfect for any time, place, budget or craving.

The various unique flavors can be eaten right from the can and are perfect for snacking occasions, from zesty Lemon Pepper to bold and savory Hickory Smoke, tastebud-tingling Sweet Heat, spicy Thai Chili and nostalgic Tuna Salad while traditionalists can opt for classic Chunk Light Tuna.

"Snacking has evolved," said Dana Kowal, senior director brand marketing and corporate affairs at Bumble Bee Seafoods. "People want it all: bold flavor, real protein and grab-and-go simplicity - and they want it at a price that makes sense."

The 3-ounce cans are premixed and can be enjoyed straight from the can, paired with crackers or veggies, or tossed in salads, sandwiches or wraps. To turn them into quick, family-friendly dinners or make-ahead lunches, consider these

adorably colorful and crave-worthy Rainbow Tuna Bowls balanced with sweet mango, creamy avocado, crisp radish and spicy tuna.

For a perfect addition to game day, these Bang Bang Tuna Sliders are spicy, creamy, crunchy and easier to make than they look with just a few ingredients and fun flavor. Tuna is topped with a layer of coleslaw and spicy mayo to solve those afternoon hunger pangs whether you're in the office or enjoying the comforts of home.

To find more snacking solutions that are packed with flavor while saving time and money, visit BumbleBee.com.

Rainbow Tuna Bowls

Servings: 2

2 cups cooked sushi rice

2 radishes, sliced

1 can Bumble Bee Snackers Sweet Heat

Tuna

1 mango, cubed

3 tablespoons shelled edamame

1 avocado, sliced

1/4 cup shredded red cabbage

2 tablespoons thinly sliced scallion

furikake, for serving

Sriracha, for serving

In two shallow bowls, layer rice on bot-

tom then evenly divide radish, tuna,

mango, edamame, avocado, cabbage and

scallion. Sprinkle with furikake and Sriracha.

Bang Bang Tuna Sliders

Servings: 2

8 ounces tri-color shredded cabbage

(coleslaw mix)

2 tablespoons fresh lime juice (1 lime)

2 tablespoons olive oil

1/2 teaspoon sea salt

1/4 cup mayo

2 tablespoons sweet Thai chili sauce

1 can Bumble Bee Snackers Thai Chili

Tuna, included whole chili minced and

reserved

4 slider buns

In small bowl, mix cabbage, lime juice,

oil and salt.

In another small bowl, mix mayo, chili

sauce and minced chili from tuna can.

On bottom of each bun, evenly divide

layer of coleslaw followed by tuna. Driz-

zle sauce over top, to taste. Cap with top

bun and serve.

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STOCK PHOTO

Women and wealth: Tips for navigating your lifelong financial journey

SPONSORED BY J.P. MORGAN WEALTH MANAGEMENT

We are in the midst of a seismic shift in wealth.

This phenomenon, often referred to as the "Great Wealth Transfer," describes the unprecedented movement of assets from the Baby Boomer generation to their heirs - an estimated \$105 trillion by 2048. And women are poised to inherit most of this.

J.P. Morgan Wealth Management's 2025 Investor Study found that women are not only set to receive significant wealth - they're actively working to build it on their own. Ninety-three percent of women surveyed who are expecting an inheritance aren't relying on it to reach their goals.

Here are a few tips for women to consider in their wealth-building journey.

Create a financial roadmap

A detailed, well thought out plan is important. J.P. Morgan's study found that 90% of those surveyed with a plan feel confident about reaching their financial goals, compared to 49% without one.

Your plan should reflect your unique goals, priorities and circumstances. Consider your investment horizon and risk tolerance, and remember to revisit your plan regularly as life evolves.

Are you saving up for goals like buying a house, sending your kids off to college or retiring early? Where do you want to be in the next five, ten or twenty years? Everyone's financial situation is unique, so it's important to think about these questions and build a plan that is unique to your life.

Women tend to live longer than men on average. Many take career breaks or care for family members, which can influence long-term planning. It's important to adjust your strategy with these factors in mind.

Where to start with investing

Don't let misconceptions hold you back. Starting to invest doesn't require a large sum, and beginning early can be beneficial. The earlier you start, the more time your money has to potentially grow over the years. Understand your overall financial situation, set clear goals and develop a long-term plan.

It's important to also make sure you're covered for unexpected expenses that come up before you start to invest. Build up a cash emergency fund, typically enough to cover three to six months of expenses, and pay down any high-interest debt.

Taking charge of your finances

The good news is that women are taking charge of their finances. J.P. Morgan's research found that 75% of women respondents make financial decisions with their partner or take the lead themselves.

For those who have a spouse or partner, it's important for each person

in the relationship to play an active role in the process.

Building wealth can be empowering for many women. The same survey found that 73% of women respondents said money gives them "security," while 64% of Gen Z and Millennial women associated it with "freedom."

The power of having a team

Some people find it helpful to work with a financial advisor, so you don't have to tackle things alone. An advisor can help you craft a plan tailored to your needs and keep you on track throughout your lifelong financial journey. If you expect to receive an inheritance, you should also consult with estate planning and tax professionals.

No matter where you are on your wealth-building path, education is key. It's so important to be an informed investor, and there are plenty of resources out there to help. You can find a library of free educational resources at chase.com/theknow.

As the landscape of wealth continues to evolve, women have a unique opportunity to shape their financial futures and those of generations to come. By staying informed and planning ahead, women have the tools to help them confidently navigate the Great Wealth Transfer and set themselves up for financial freedom.

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The Creatives:
A podcast about Charlotte's most creative people

On SoundCloud, Apple Podcasts and Spotify



MINT TO BE

"Mint to Be: The Feminine Body as Costume Art" is part of an exhibit that centers the voices of marginalized communities.

Reimagine feminine form as art

By Herbert L. White
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A new exhibit is reimagining femininity as art.

"Mint to Be: The Feminine Body as Costume Art," which debuts May 1 at Mint Museum Uptown, reimagines the feminine form as a living canvas by centering the voices of marginalized communities at the intersections of fashion, identity, and fine art.

General admission is \$45 at Eventbrite and includes museum and exhibition admission, photo activations, runway show, and cash bar.

The monthlong exhibition curated by Professor Perrine DeShield-Jenkins is a follow-up to last year's "Superfine: Exploring Black Dandyism," as a Met Gala-inspired experience where fashion and self-expression celebrate femininity as art. The display supported by Luvly Moon, King Carla, Davita Galloway, Shekinah Williams,

Gabi Richmond, and Kimberly Powell and the nonprofit gallery ArtPop includes interactive narratives of self-adornment, storytelling, and transformation.

In addition to the exhibit, 20 Charlotte designers, including Will White, Jamie Lykes II, and Gianna Ross will compete for \$1,000 for couture that best embodies the feminine body as costume art during the runway show. Scoring the competition is a panel of judges as well as the audience.

Anti-racism advocate takes on ugly side of human story

By Dwight Brown
BLACK PRESS USA

Jane Elliott Against the World
3.5 stars

Sometimes you have to clean your own house first.

That's what anti-racism activist and diversity educator Jane Elliott has been doing for decades. At age 92, she ain't stopping. This probing doc is telling audiences why.

Elliott has reasons, lessons and successes in changing stubborn bigoted mindsets. Guidance that should be captured, repurposed and taught for decades to come. Thankfully, documentarian Judd Ehrlich ("The Price of Freedom") sees the necessity and urgency and focuses on truth-telling by observation and display and not confrontation.

He's more an archivist than an interventionalist, a passive documentarian who lets the people, facts and life story do the heavy lifting.

Hence this extremely educational film teaches a lesson that may be even more important today than it was in the late '60s. With Jane as the sun and family, friends and former students as the stars around her, this doc tells the story of a small but hugely brave schoolteacher who discerned a moral urgency in 1968.

After the assassination of Martin Luther King, how do you channel shock and grief into a teachable moment for a third-grade class in nearly all-white northeast Iowa? Elliott found a way. She created, and still conducts, a blue eyes/brown eyes exercise. Divide the

Please see **ANTI-RACISM** | 6B

« ON THE MARQUEE »



DANIEL COSTON | THE CHARLOTTE POST

Vocalist Maria Howell shares the "Strings, Sax & Soul" program stage with Violinist Karen Briggs and saxophonist Jazmin Ghent on April 16 at Booth Playhouse.

Combo of 'Strings, Sax & Soul' at Booth Playhouse

Karen Briggs, Jazmin Ghent and Maria Howell take to the stage April 16

By Herbert L. White
herb.l.white@thecharlottepost.com

The latest events and exhibits in Charlotte:

April 11
Two-time Grammy nominee Maysa ("Milestones") returns to Charlotte for a show at Middle C Jazz, 300 S Brevard St. Tickets: middlecjazz.com.

Tosco Music Party at Knight Theater features several acts plus audience singalongs from 7:30-10:30 p.m. led by John Tosco and the TMP House Band & Singalong Choir. Performers include Grammy winner Don Henry, R&B group The Flying Clouds, jazz trumpeter Braxton

Bateman, singer-songwriter Sarah Tollerson, opera soprano Amber Rose, alternative funk-rock band Late Night Special, gospel choir 4 God We Live, Nashville Americana and folk artist Jessica Willis Fisher. Tickets: \$15.50 - \$49.50 (with venue fees \$22.41-\$59.58). Advance ticket sales at the box office at (704) 372-1000 or online: tix.blumentharts.org.

April 16
Strings, Sax & Soul with violinist Karen Briggs, Billboard-charting saxophonist Jazmin Ghent, and vocalist Maria Howell at Booth Playhouse. The collaboration brings smooth jazz, soul, and improvisation under

one roof. Showtime: 7 p.m. Tickets: www.blumentharts.org.

April 16-May 21
SouthPark After 5, a free evening entertainment series, returns over six Thursdays at Symphony Park at the corner of Barclay Downs Drive and Carnegie Boulevard, adjacent to SouthPark Mall.

Live music and free community events run from 5-9 p.m.

- April 16 - *Cocunut Groove Band* with the *Bald Brothers*.
- April 23 - *Bourbon Sons* with *Caroline & Omar*.
- April 30 - *Java Band* with *Rod*

Please see **GOT SOUL** | 6B

« MOVIE REVIEW »

'The Drama' doesn't quite match stars' energy

By Dwight Brown
BLACK PRESS USA

The Drama
2.5 stars

You wouldn't wish this wedding day on anybody. But there they are.

Two lovers who should be in bliss are trapped in their own turmoil.

Norwegian writer/director Kristoffer Borgli has built a solid reputation for dark comedy ("Sick of Myself"). It's an avenue he treads again, somewhat. Only this time out, the darkness is mixed with romance and drama. Any slight bits of comedy are meant to evoke only nervous laughter.

He takes a sweet couple and turns their relationship upside down in a love-gone-wrong narrative. Adding in a strange blend of present day, short flashbacks, longer recollections and cryptic glimpses.

In case audiences weren't squirming enough, he harps on a social issue that may be triggering to many U.S. audiences, school gun violence. The sensitive subject isn't broached cautiously. More like a blunt-force object meant to make the film more disturbing. As rendered, it's a repellent aspect. It's hard to understand Borgli's usage, confounding in ways. If he's trying to make a point about this tragic norm, it's lost and dubious.

The creepy ambiguity mirrors head-scratching movies by Lars von Trier ("Nymphomania: Vol. 1"), another Scandinavian filmmaker who likes to press his audience's buttons.

It starts in a bustling Cambridge coffee shop. He sees her sitting at a window seat reading a book. He's smitten. Mustering up courage to approach her, Charlie (Robert Pattinson), a museum curator Brit living in Boston, starts a conversation with the very lovely Emma Harwood (Zendaya), a book editor. In the most disingenuous way, he lies, pretending he has read her book.

After an awkward conversation, the infatuated thirtysomethings start their very Gen Y romance.

In the beginning, viewers, especially couples, will be enthralled by the budding love story. Charlie's dishonesty may be off-putting, but he's in love—hate the game, not the player. Borgli's script pulls two lost souls together and gives them very approachable personalities, which are expertly displayed by Pattinson and Zendaya. They make the characters seem authentic and accessible, like people you might know.



WARNER BROS PICTURES

Robert Pattinson and Zendaya as Charlie and Emma Harwood in a scene from "The Drama."

Eventually cohabitating in a nice Victorian rowhouse, like career-minded couples might do. Once Borgli has you in his "this-feels-so-real" grip, he turns on the weirdness. The emotional torture. The "wish this never happened to these people" feelings don't abate.

One fated evening, as the couple and their best friends Mike (Mamoudou Athie, "Jurassic World: Dominion") and Rachel (Alana Haim, "Licorice Pizza") are doing a tasting of their impending wedding menu, the wine flows and confessions do too. Rachel, "Before we got married, we did this thing where we said the worst thing that we ever did."

Mike, "I'll tell mine if we all do it. Promise?" The foursome joins the game with the same verve that people play "Truth or Dare." Each tells a tale they should probably never reveal, and judging by their confessions, no one is in a position to shade another. Until one admits to planning a mass school shooting.

The shaming, blaming and questioning escalates. The friendship is blemished, a relationship torn apart. It's the week of the wedding; will the emotional chaos subside before they take their vows?

Attraction and serious romance give way. Mistrust and bleakness take the sheen off what began as a winsome love story. Viewers may not like what

Borgli does to their emotions, but if his goal was to make audiences feel uncomfortable, he wins. Can you imagine facing your wedding day and trying to put on a happy façade for guests, when underneath it there's serious doubt? That at any minute a lover, friend or acquaintance could destroy the big day with an accusation or revelation.

The film's quirky tone is accentuated by the staccato flute music in the score by Daniel Pemberton ("Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse"), which sustains a peculiar tone. Cambridge looks as inviting as a "Visit Cambridge" tourist commercial because cinematographer Arseni Khachatryan captures its urban, New England magic both on the streets and in the handsome apartments.

Charlie and Emma's flat looks welcoming, like you'd want to wake up in it, thanks to set designer Zosia Mackenzie's ("Fire Inside") cultured tastes. Clothes, provided by costume designer Katina Danabassis ("Past Lives"), help the cast round out the characters, both in casual scenes and in formal wear on the wedding day. Editor Joshua Raymond clips the scenes at the right moment, just when you're agast at what you've seen or heard.

Prepare to be suckered in by Zendaya and Pattinson's eye-catching performances. No matter what contortions the

Please see **THE DRAMA** | 6B



MIDDLE C JAZZ

Two-time Grammy nominee Maysa returns to Middle C Jazz on April 11.

Got Soul Festival at Mint Museum Randolph

Continued from page 5B
Fiske.

· May 7 - *On the Border Ultimate Eagles Tribute with Ryan & Woody* and the *United States Navy Band*.

· May 14 - Landslide tribute to Fleetwood Mac with *Square Roots*.

· May 21 - *Captain Mike & The Shipwrecked with Drew Nathan Duo*.

April 18

Got Soul Festival, 2-8 p.m. on the green at The Mint Museum Randolph is an adults-only experience centered on music and giving.

Tickets to the showcase hosted by the South Charlotte Chapter of Jack and Jill of America start at \$100 and available at CLTGotSoul.com. Bring your own food and lawn chairs or choose a curated food and beverage experience.

The festival will benefit Freedom Within Walls, Do Greater Charlotte, and Families Forward, nonprofits that support children and families in need. There'll be performances by Grammy Award-winner Quinn (Blackstreet) with The Jukebox Band and the Harvey Cummings Project.

April 19

Benefit concert for Botswana featuring Maestro *Henri Star Muhammad*, 4:30 p.m., Trinity Episcopal School, 750 E Ninth St. The concert, which will be held at the Main Auditorium, is sponsored by chapel of Christ the King Episcopal Church to celebrate the ordination of the Botswana diocese's first women ministers. Botswana is the companion diocese of the Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina.

Tickets are \$40 for the concert, \$75 for the concert and pre-concert artist meet-and-greet and reception. For ticket information, email Lois Johnson at ljohn202.lj@gmail.com or Anne Vani-Obey at asvobey@gmail.com.

Through April 26

In Pursuit of Home at Harvey B. Gantt Center for African-American Arts + Culture, Levine Center for the Arts, 551 South Tryon St.

Artist Mario Moore's exhibit encourages viewers to reflect on how the meaning of home is changing in modern America and the inequalities intertwined with its pursuit.

The exhibition explores the desire

for homeownership in the United States, particularly among people in their 20s and 30s, and the barriers that make achieving it more challenging.

For more information: ganttcntr.org/exhibitions/in-pursuit-of-home.

May 1

Grammy Award-winning gospel music artist *Hezekiah Walker* in concert, Friendship Missionary Baptist Church, 3400 Beatties Ford Road.

Doors open at 7 p.m. for the program, from which proceeds benefit Barber-Scotia College. Half of proceeds will go toward accreditation preparation; 25% to scholarships and 25% to sustain operation needs. Tickets: <https://tinyurl.com/BSC-concert>

Mint to Be: The Feminine Body as Costume Art, Mint Museum, 6-10 p.m.

The exhibit is a living runway where fashion, identity, and self-expression collide. Created by Professor Perrine DeShield-Jenkins, the Met Gala-inspired event invites guests to experience femininity as both art and narrative.

General admission: \$45.

May 2

R&B performers *October London* and *Lalah Hathaway* take over Owens Auditorium, 2900 E Independence Blvd. for a concert event celebrating love, soul and timeless music. Showtime is 8 p.m. Tickets at Ticketmaster.com.

May 5

Robert Cray Band, 7:30 p.m. Carolina Theatre, 230 N. Tryon St.

The blues guitarist first picked up a guitar after seeing The Beatles on TV then after watching Jimi Hendrix perform in Seattle, determined his destiny would follow a similar path. Cray is one of American music's top artists of the last half century.

Tickets range from \$55-\$174 and available at ticketmaster.com.

June 6

Grammy-nominated R&B singer *Ari Lennox* brings her North American tour to Skyla Credit Union Amphitheatre. The show is in support of her third studio album *Vacancy*. Tickets available at livenation.com.

Anti-racism advocate takes on ugly side of humanity

Continued from page 5B

room into these two categories. Let one side abuse or deprive the other. When that's over, give the other side the opportunity to do the same to the other group, if they will. And some wouldn't. The instant result was empathy, a distaste for injustice based on experience and a moral to the story that changed her students' attitudes about bigotry for a lifetime.

Simple, easy, educational and appreciated tool? Not hardly. That landmark day in education came with a price. Elliott and her family were harassed for teaching fairness, equality and mutual respect among races. Yet the exercise was repeated in classrooms around the country, regardless. It led Jane to appearances on "The Oprah Winfrey Show," "The Tonight Show Starring Johnny Carson" and other showcases.

But wherever she sought to level the playing field, anger from racists followed her. These days, her thoughts are more controversial than ever. Her views are demeaned by the federal government, the Education Department—or what's left of it. She's banned from some schools, as if wanting equality for all was a disease.

The timing for this very inquisitive and enlightening doc couldn't be better or more needed. Elliott, emphatically and almost saintly, still communicates the importance of teaching fairness in schools: "Educators lead people out of ignorance. Teachers teach stuff so kids pass a grade." That said, the camera doesn't shy away from the less socially conscious parts of Elliott's life.

She's the daughter of a racist dad and was once reluctant to sell her house in an all-white neighborhood to a Black person back in the day. It's a background and set of mistakes she owns. "Wish I hadn't never done that" moments that changed her forever. Hearing her past, knowing her imperfections and seeing her change—for the better—is compelling cinema.

Outlining the previous events is interesting but when the film switches to present-day challenges it becomes even more engaging. A sequence that depicts Elliott helping teachers and students recall a

school board director who is a white Christian nationalist and racist shows her and like-minded people in action. Modern-day Temecula, California, is on view. Books by Black authors are being taken out of libraries.

Black activist teacher Dianne Solomon Cox, Black students and Elliott are on the frontlines. She's still giving fiery speeches: "There is no gene for racism, sexism or antisemitism. I will never get along to go along with racism!" This section of the film is like a call to action. It's invigorating.

For 99 minutes, a genius anti-racism educational theory is applied in ways that are quite immersive. Clips, old footage, TV shows and press conferences are aptly assembled. Cinematographers Peter Eliot Buntaine and Sean Hanley catch the action like it's an episode of TV's "60 Minutes." All those willing to comment on race relations, do. From equality advocates like Ibram X Kendi and Killer Mike to those who question the merits, like Donald Trump and Kash Patel. The subject matter is debated and expanded on well.

Some of the doc's length could use a clipping (editors Max Powers, Leah Goudsmit and Albin R. Pepe). Once Elliott's past is established, present day and future thoughts seem more important for maintaining an audience's attention. Onlookers may wonder, "How does this affect me today?" It's an area that deserved more time, not less. Also, the comments her adult children make about how they took a back seat to their mother's crusade provide a balance to the effusive look at Elliott's accomplishments.

Pride, anger, dereliction and hope are duly noted. While feelings of inspiration are likely what viewers will embody.

Educators should know the merits of Elliott's teachings. That's the gift documentarian Judd Ehrlich gives. The life lessons Jane Elliott champions are being passed on to the next generation. "Jane Elliott Against the World." No. "Jane Elliott Saves the World." Yes!

Visit film critic Dwight Brown at DwightBrownInk.com.

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'The Drama' doesn't quite match lead actors' energy

Continued from page 5B

couple's relationship goes through, you want to stick with them because these two talented and very photogenic actors don't let you give up on Charlie and Emma.

Even though you'll want to smack the anxiety out of him and tell her to find a better man. Their bent relationship isn't physically volatile like the one in "The War of the Roses." Yet their hurt feelings and mental fatigue feel as toxic. Athie and Haim are quite believable as their friends

who turn sour.

Hard to walk away from this trainwreck. Theatergoers may find themselves watching until the very end, hoping for a coda that redeems what they've just witnessed. But that flirtation with this grimdark romance may not transfer into positive word of mouth. Which makes you wonder who RSVP to this wedding invite will.

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