



THE MALES PLACE

The Males Place, founded in 1993, helps boys make the transition to adulthood through mentorship and projects that connect them to culture, travel and food security.

Mentor initiative helps boys make transition to men

By Heather Mims

FOR THE CHARLOTTE POST

The Males Place is still preparing boys for adulthood.

The mentorship program founded in 1993 offers weekly manhood training involving social justice and community service, agriculture, food justice work, farming, and travel on international, regional, and local levels.

Participants, called warriors, answer to their elders, mentors, parents, known as Mshauris. After high school, emphasis shifts to initiation projects like financial literacy, healthy relationships, post-secondary careers and civics.

The Males Place is the brainchild of Reggie Singleton, who was inspired by the 1970s television miniseries "Roots" as Kunte Kinte went through what was called Feats of Strength that allowed him to endure enslavement. Singleton was a corrections officer who wanted to solve juvenile delinquency before young men ended up in jail.

"They benefit from learning in the now," Singleton said. "It will benefit you in the future. You respect your neighbor, you are kind, don't steal or rob."

The boys traveled to South Africa in June for service projects.

Please see **MENTORS** | 2B

Plant these deer- and rabbit-resistant spring flower bulbs

By Melinda Myers

FOR THE CHARLOTTE POST

Plan and plant a variety of colorful spring flowering bulbs this fall to welcome in spring with a beautiful floral display.

Fill garden beds with deer- and rabbit-resistant bulbs like daffodils, hyacinths, alliums, fritillaria and ranunculus.

Deciding how many bulbs are needed to make an impact can be challenging. The Spacing Recommendations for Fall-Planted Bulbs blog on longfield-gardens.com offers insight and guidance. This plus the amount of garden space, design goals and of course budget can help gardeners decide how many bulbs to add to their gardens in the fall.

Daffodils (Narcissus) are not only critter resistant but low-maintenance and long lasting in the landscape. There are a wide variety from the traditional yellow Dutch Master to the more unique double-flowered varieties like Sherborne with its giant lemon-yellow flowers held upright on sturdy stems and the long-lasting, heat-resistant Tahiti with bright yellow blossoms and red-orange ruffles.

Daffodil flowers also come in a variety of sizes and color combinations. There are all white and yellow varieties and those with bicolor blooms of white or yellow petals with white, yellow, peach or orange coronas, the daffodil flowers' cup-like structures. Some, like Cassata and Cum Laude, have split coronas of different colors, adding a distinctive flair to spring displays. For more information read the All About Daffodils guide (longfield-gardens.com) to learn more.

Please see **ANIMAL** | 2B



MATT LACZKO | THE CHARLOTTE POST

As school sports season cranks up, parents and athletics staff should be aware of the physical rigor of practice and games on the cardiovascular system of young athletes.

Be heart aware for young athletes' health

With school sports season underway, recognize the signs of distress

By Cameron Williams

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In May, Bryson Blanton, a 13-year-old from Rowan County, collapsed from sudden cardiac arrest during a baseball game in Charlotte while rounding second base.

An off-duty Charlotte-Mecklenburg police officer performed life-saving CPR. Paramedics restored his heartbeat using an automated external defibrillator.

Caden Sorrell, a 13-year-old from Greensboro, died earlier this month after running at the beginning of football practice.

With high school sports in full swing, it is important to take control of cardiovascular health.

For parents with children that play sports, the first step is to see a pediatrician for a sports physical prior to participating in whatever sport the child plays. There is a growing conversation about whether additional screenings like electrocardiograms should be

come routine. Nationally, health-care providers and school policy-makers continue to discuss the role of cardiac screening in identifying certain heart conditions in young athletes.

An EKG, for instance, is a quick and painless test that records the heart's electrical activity.

"EKGs have a lot of false positives and false negatives," said Dr. Shyla Sachdev, assistant medical director for sports cardiology at Novant Health.

"It's sort of like we're missing when we do it. We get a lot of positives that are fine because athletes in general have slower heart rates. That shows up on an EKG - it alerts someone that maybe it's an abnormal EKG. Then they end up going somewhere and getting an ultrasound or stress test or whatever, so it's extra, extra

money.

"Cardiac MRI - that's a popular one for athletes that costs a lot of money - and then it misses the big one. The number one scary thing, especially in black athletes, is hypertrophic cardiomyopathy."

Hypertrophic cardiomyopathy is a genetic heart condition where the heart muscle becomes abnormally thick and stiff, making it harder to pump blood effectively. While this condition hasn't been found to be more common in Black people, they will often experience more severe disease progression.

"The problem is that hypertrophic cardiomyopathy does affect them but the other thing is that we're also dealing we're not sure why but more black athletes die than other groups," Sachdev said, "and it could be is it hypertrophic cardiomyopathy, or is it that we're just not paying attention to it?"

Please see **BE** | 2B

Felony conviction can mean no SNAP

By Rachel Crumpler

NC HEALTH NEWS

Jennifer McCord, who became disabled in 2021 after a drunk driver crashed into her car, relies on \$994 in Social Security disability income each month.

Nearly \$700 goes toward rent for a studio apartment in Asheboro. Then she pays her phone, internet and car bills. Typically, she said, she has \$30 to \$50 left for food each month. Sometimes, there's nothing.

That happened in August when she faced additional expenses for property taxes and a car inspection. A few weeks ago, she stood in a Food Lion parking lot asking strangers if they would buy her some food.

"I was like, 'I'm not asking for cash. I truly need food. I have no food in my home,'" McCord said.

She said a pastor agreed and bought her about \$100 worth of groceries.

Based on McCord's income alone, she would

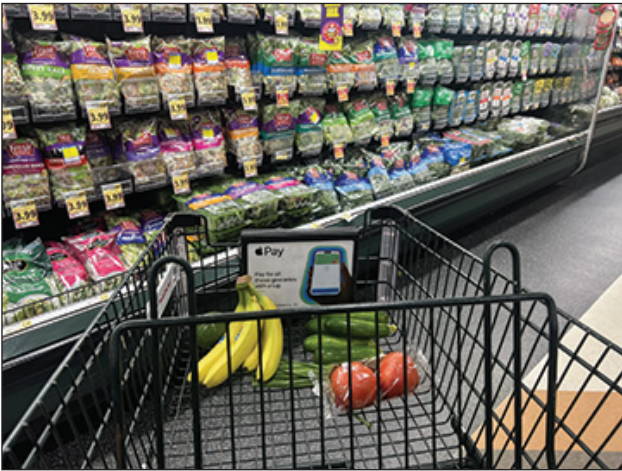
qualify for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP, which provides food benefits to more than 1.2 million low-income North Carolinians who struggle to afford food.

But she is permanently ineligible because of a 2009 drug trafficking conviction. She spent seven years in a North Carolina prison and was released in February 2016.

McCord is one of thousands of North Carolinians affected by a policy that restricts SNAP eligibility for people with felony drug convictions. Some face temporary exclusions, while others, like McCord, are barred from receiving SNAP benefits for life.

"They take my food for the rest of my life because of a choice I made when I was 23, which I know I shouldn't have done," said McCord, now 42. "It really does affect me daily."

McCord said the exclusion has contributed to a near-constant struggle to



RACHEL CRUMPLER | NC HEALTH NEWS

More than 1.2 million low-income North Carolinians receive SNAP benefits to help pay for groceries. But thousands of people with felony drug convictions are subject to restrictions that make them temporarily or permanently ineligible to receive the food assistance.

put food on her table - first after her release, when she had no savings and was trying to rebuild her life, and later when she lived out of her car for months after her divorce.

Now, her health has declined and the stakes are even higher.

McCord was diagnosed with breast cancer in February. Doctors are recommending a double mastectomy and several rounds of chemo and radiation, she said. But before treatment can begin, her doctor told her she needs

Please see **FELONY** | 3B

The ultimate primer for first-time homebuyers eliminates process mystery

BRANDPOINT

If you've never bought a home before, you may be overwhelmed by what you don't know or concerned about what you think you do.

Luckily, you don't have to do it alone. To help, Chase Home Lending offers this essential primer on the key aspects of homeownership first-time homebuyers should know before entering the market.

A home lending professional can be your guide. Before you begin searching for your home, consult a home lending professional. They can help you get preapproved, navigate the homebuying market and review loan options.

The true cost of homeownership

If you're making the move from renting to own-

ing, you may be focused on the opportunity to build home equity but perhaps overlook the added costs like property taxes and home maintenance. Taking the time to understand the full scope of homeownership can help you decide if the time is right to buy.

Explore educational resources

If you're a first-time buyer, the homebuying process can seem overwhelming. Luckily, there are many resources available to help boost your homebuying knowledge, such as how-to guides, webinars and podcasts.

Pro tip: Make sure to check the Chase Homebuyer Education Center, where you'll find answers to mortgage questions, useful tips for buying and maintaining a home and an Affordability Calculator

that can help you determine how much home you can afford.

The mortgage approval process

During the mortgage approval process, lenders carefully review several factors that determine if they'll approve your mortgage and at what rate. Two important factors that influence their decision are your credit score and debt-to-income ratio.

Your debt-to-income ratio - how much of your gross monthly income goes toward monthly debt payments like rent, student and auto loans and credit card payments - helps creditors assess your financial health and creditworthiness.

Lenders typically want to see that your DTI is low, as it tells them you'll be able to manage the payments.

Please see **TAKE** | 2B



SHUTTERSTOCK

Buying a home - especially for first-timers - can be less stressful with a primer on the process.

Felony conviction can take SNAP out of reach

Continued from page 1B

to improve her nutrition. The prescription: protein drinks like Boost and Ensure — which cost about \$2 for an eight-ounce bottle — to help build up her strength.

"I'm so small, and my body isn't going to be able to take six rounds of chemo and six rounds of radiation without having proper nutrition," she said.

McCord has relied on food pantries and food banks over the years and keeps a schedule for when she can visit local sites. But she said they don't always provide enough food, particularly as some are increasingly strained from an influx of demand for assistance due to changes to federal food aid, including expanded work requirements.

Her nausea also makes some of the foods commonly available at food pantries — such as spaghetti sauce — difficult to eat.

"I'm literally sitting here hungry," she said.

Targeting drug-related convictions

Thirty years ago, Congress passed the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 as part of a Clinton-era welfare reform package. A provision, which received only two minutes of debate after it was introduced, created a federal lifetime ban on SNAP benefits for people convicted of drug-related felonies. The aim was to discourage drug crimes.

The language gave states the ability to set their own policies, and soon after implementation, some states began modifying the restrictions.

Just over half of states and Washington, D.C., have since passed legislation to fully opt out of the federal ban. Dozens of other states — including North Carolina — have modified the ban, including by adding drug testing or drug treatment as a condition of receiving SNAP payments.

In North Carolina, people with low level felony convictions are barred from accessing SNAP benefits for at least six months after completing their sentence and must comply with certain requirements, such as drug treatment, to regain access. Those with more serious Class A through G felony drug convictions face a lifetime SNAP ban.

"From my assessment of the national landscape — outside of South Carolina — we have one of the harshest felony SNAP ban laws in our nation," said Laura Webb, director of the Fair Chance Criminal Justice Project at the North Carolina Justice Center.

South Carolina is the only state that hasn't modified the federal policy and enforces a lifetime SNAP ban for people with drug-related convictions. Webb said North Carolina is "just a step above" by allowing a select group of people to regain eligibility, while leaving many others subject to the lifetime ban.

About 16% of North Carolina's state prison population of more than 33,000 are incarcerated for drug crimes, according to N.C. Department of Adult Correction data. In 2025 alone, 4,924 people were released to the community after serving time for drug offenses.

"For people who are coming back, particularly people who have felony convictions, who have a rough time finding employment, which they need to help them make income to buy food for themselves and their family, often SNAP is a lifeline for them," Webb said. "To deny them [SNAP benefits] because of a past mistake is cutting off that lifeline, which undermines their ability to re-enter. It undermines health outcomes, and it also undermines public safety."

"Perpetual punishment"

When Brent Bailey was released from prison in 2004, one of the first things he did was apply for SNAP benefits as he tried to get back on his feet. But he was blindsided when he was denied benefits and told his 1999 drug felony conviction excluded him.

He thought SNAP could serve as a bridge helping to meet his needs while he rebuilt his life. Instead, he was left to scramble without it.

Now coordinator of the Buncombe County Reentry Council, Bailey said he repeatedly sees people encounter the same barrier after returning home from prison or jail.

"I have seen it time and time again, just the disappointment of people coming out with all of this hope and being inspired and then to get that denial where they go 'It ain't even no need of trying, cause I'ma just keep getting these no's,'" Bailey said. "People are still getting out today who do not know that's the law."

In some cases, people like Gina Jacobs are initially approved to receive SNAP benefits before being told they are ineligible due to their conviction.

"We all have to eat — that's the bottom line," said Jacobs, who was released from state prison in 2018 after serving time for a drug trafficking conviction. "Eligibility for SNAP should just be about the financial need of somebody, not based on any

conviction."

For people returning from incarceration, the challenges stack up. Finding employment is often difficult: Only 37 percent of individuals exiting prison in 2024 found employment within a year after their release date, according to N.C. Department of Commerce data. Those who found work made an average of just \$15,560.

Daquan Peters, who was released from federal prison in 2019 and returned to Wilmington, said being denied SNAP benefits because of his drug conviction felt like he was being set up to fail. He said he was determined not to revert to his old ways of selling drugs to make money, but said the lack of food aid made rebuilding his life harder.

He eventually found a job, but said he wasn't making a living wage and finding enough to eat was a daily struggle.

McCord said at an especially low point about four years ago when she was homeless living out of her car, she stole some food from Walmart — the one time she has gotten into trouble since her release.

"It wasn't the right choice, of course it wasn't," McCord said. "But at that point, I feel like it was a point of desperation. Thankfully it got dismissed, but that could have very well sent me back to prison."

Bailey and Peters said the policy functions as a "perpetual punishment" long after a person has completed their sentence. While they now exceed the income threshold to qualify for SNAP, they said the ban based on their convictions prevents the safety net from being something they can turn to if their circumstances change.

"I do understand if I need [SNAP benefits], I can't get it, and that's relative to a conviction of 27 years ago," Bailey said. "At some point people should complete their sentences. Right now, very technically, I'm still doing a sentence."

Pushing to change the policy

For years, advocacy groups have pushed for North Carolina to join the majority of states that have fully opted out of the federal SNAP felony drug exclusion. They argue the restriction creates more obstacles for formerly incarcerated people trying to rebuild their lives, especially as they face high rates of food insecurity.

Research shows denying people food assistance worsens health outcomes and can increase recidivism.

Last year, a group of bipartisan state lawmakers in both chambers introduced House Bill 682 and Senate Bill 564 — both called the Public Safety Through Food Access Act — which sought to lift North Carolina's SNAP restrictions for people with drug-related convictions.

"Just from an evidence based perspective it sort of is a no brainer that, if public benefits are going to exist, offering a person the ability to feed themselves and their family immediately after incarceration is pretty much what they exist for," said Tarrah Callahan, executive director of Conservatives for Criminal Justice Reform.

Despite having bipartisan sponsorship, neither bill advanced out of committee.

"The singular obstacle, really, that I heard was timing," Callahan said. She said some lawmakers had concerns about adding this additional group to the SNAP rolls at a time when the program is undergoing other changes and states and counties are being asked to shoulder more of its costs.

Webb said the lack of movement was a result of competing priorities.

"We don't have strong opposition that I know of against it," Webb said. "It's about getting the word out and getting these bills prioritized."

Advocates are also pushing at the federal level to repeal the policy nationwide.

Callahan said 2025 public polling commissioned by the NC Chamber found that about 80% of respondents supported providing food assistance to everyone who qualifies, regardless of whether they've been convicted of a drug offense.

"Being able to ensure that people have the ability to feed themselves is a critical component of the reentry package," Callahan said.

In fiscal year 2026, SNAP recipients nationwide received an average of \$189 per person each month. By comparison, it costs an average of \$145 per day to house one person in a North Carolina prison — more than \$4,300 per month.

Lives affected

Sybrieta Lundy, who was released from state prison in July 2016, said it would be "an absolute game changer" if she were not excluded from SNAP eligibility due to her drug trafficking conviction.

As a low-income single mother in Asheville supporting two daughters — one with Down syndrome — she said making ends meet is especially challenging, particularly as grocery prices have risen in recent months.

« BLACK BRILLIANCE »

Soul City was developed as a rural utopia in NC

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

Soul City was a failed attempt to build a majority black community in the heart of rural North Carolina.

Civil rights activist turned developer, Floyd B. McKissick, secured funding from the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development in 1972 to create Soul City as one of 14 new planned towns. The predominantly Black community was to encompass 3,500 acres in Warren County. McKissick's vision focused on families and included businesses, residences, recreational spaces, and a water treatment plant.

Soul City was built from the ground up and populated by people of all races as an alternative to crowded urban slums and expensive suburbs.

McKissick wanted Soul City to be a mixed-use town, with houses, factories, and stores in one convenient location. He chose to build in Warren County, one of America's poorest, where of its 15,810 inhabitants, 6,500 lived below the poverty line; its schools had a drop-out rate of 44.7% and most people earned a living growing corn or tobacco.

Within two to three decades, McKissick expected Soul City to have 50,000 residents and produce 24,000 jobs as well as elementary schools, man-made lakes, and an "Afro-American trade center." City planners named streets after African American heroes: Nat Turner Street, Frederick Douglass Street, Sojourner Truth Trail.

HUD halted funding after



WIKIPEDIA

Soul City, billed as a utopia in rural Warren County in northeast North Carolina, was developed by civil rights activist Floyd McKissick.

eight years. Lacking financial support and with limited investment from potential buyers, development ended. McKissick sold his investments in the development, but some Soul City residents and the town's imprint remain.

When Warren County allowed the dumping of

tainted soil in a landfill near Soul City in 1979, Black residents protested by lying in front of trucks carrying hazardous materials.

Their actions were foundational to the civil rights-inspired environmental justice movement.

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BIDS

NOTICE TO BIDDERS
Sealed proposals will be received until **2 pm, on Tuesday, October 6, 2026, in the office of Mecklenburg County Asset & Facility Management Department, 3205 Freedom Drive, Suite 6000, Charlotte, NC 28208**, for the construction of the **Hal Marshall Center Roof Replacement Project** which time and place Bids will be opened and read aloud. Single-prime, lump sum bids will be taken for construction as indicated in the bidding documents. Proposals must be made on standard forms furnished by the County. The project is located at **700 N. Tryon Street, Charlotte NC 28202**

The Contractor can obtain the Bid Documents digitally at **no cost** from the County's Authorized Design Consultants: **Terracon Consultants, Inc.** Contact Vicky Neal via email at Vicky.neal@terracon.com

Prime Contractors wishing to submit a bid for this project must provide a **MANDATORY** written, **Letter-of-Interest** to the County's **authorized Design Consultant** at least 48 hours in advance of the bid opening in order to be placed on the official Bidders List for automatic distribution of potential addenda and offered consideration by the County as a responsive bidder. **Bids shall be submitted by Prime NC Licensed Roofing Contractors that have not provided a Letter-of-Interest may be considered non-responsive.**

A mandatory pre-bid meeting shall be held at **9 am on Tuesday, September 22, 2026**, at the **Hal Marshall Center Roof Replacement Project** located at **700 N Tryon St, Charlotte, NC 28202**.

Performance & Payment and Materials Bonds and a Bid Bond shall be required for this project.

The laws of North Carolina and applicable regulations of various Licensing Boards will be observed in receiving bids and awarding contracts. Mecklenburg County reserves the right to reject any or all proposals and to waive informalities or technicalities, as it may deem to be in its best interest. Upon request, this information will be made available in an alternative format for persons with disabilities. Please call 980-314-2432 for assistance.

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« ON THE MARQUEE »



GETTY IMAGES

Multi-platinum recording artist Young Thug is the headliner at New Generation Tour stop at Bojangles Coliseum Sept. 18.

Young Thug headlines New Generation Tour stop

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

The latest events, productions and exhibits in Charlotte and beyond:

Sept. 18
New Generation Tour at Bojangles Coliseum.
Multi-platinum artist Young Thug makes his first headlining run since 2019. Special guest Nav. The tour will also showcase the label's newest signees, Tezzus, Diamond*, 1300saint, Iyrus, Yume, Biggs, and Unky.
Tickets available at newgenerationlive.com.

· Jazz Funk Soul, Middle C Jazz, 6 p.m. The Grammy-Nominated group featuring Jeff Lorber, Everette Harp & Paul Jackson Jr. Tickets: \$70.15 for Baby Grand members, \$86.15 for general admission.

Sept. 19
Emmy award-winning journalist Don Lemon and comedian and radio host D.L. Hughley extend their DL + DL 'Anything Goes' tour to Owens Auditorium at 7 p.m. Tickets range from \$55 to \$197 and are available at Ticketmaster.

Together, the pair delivers a comedy-meets-politics live experience where no topic is off limits.

Sept. 25-26
"Bugs Bunny at the Symphony" brings Looney Tunes favorites to the big screen with original scores performed live by Charlotte Symphony. Showtimes are 7:30 p.m. on Sept. 25 and 3 p.m. Sept. 26.

Conducted by George Daugherty, the program features animated classics including "What's Opera, Doc?" and "The Rabbit of Seville," with the orchestra performing in sync with the action on screen.

Sept. 25-27
Festival in the Park Fine Arts & Crafts Festival and Traditional Arts & Crafts Festival, Freedom Park.

Since 1964, the juried arts festival has brought popular music, arts and crafts and family entertainment to visitors from around the South. Artist applications are online at festivalinthepark.org.

Please see POTTERS | 6B

« MOVIE REVIEW »

Despite title, the slasher siege movie 'Onslaught' takes its time

By Jake Coyle
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Masked soldiers deployed on domestic soil and an air of conspiratorial paranoia give Adam Wingard's not-quite-grind-house siege film "Onslaught" a contemporary pulse, even if this lean, B-movie thriller doesn't deliver much more than a flicker of its throwback promise.

Wingard, though, does seem freshly liberated in this return to his low-budget thriller roots ("You're Next," "The Guest"). He has since spent the last decade in more IP-managed releases: the 2016 "Blair Witch" sequel, a Netflix adaptation of "Death Note" and a pair of "Godzilla vs. Kong" movies.

But the 92-minute "Onslaught," written by Wingard and his regular collaborator Simon Barrett, is intentionally straightforward — to the point, you could say, of brainlessness. It's aiming for a very simple slasher setup in the mold of John Carpenter: A single mom and PTSD-riddled former Army sniper, Celeste (Adria Arjona), living

in a desert trailer park, defends herself and her young daughter (Blake Kennedy) from an invasion of three highly programmed super-soldiers who have sprung out of a nearby military contractor facility.

Even though "Onslaught" begins with a clock that's already ticking below 12 hours, the movie takes its time leading to a bloody finale that isn't quite worth the drumbeat. But Wingard is in no great hurry, and he lingers in the anticipation, for both better and worse.

So early on we get Dan Stevens (deliberately hammy) as a suspiciously old, white-haired Nazi scientist crawling across the room to lick the stiletto-heeled foot of his wife and co-conspirator (a queenly Rebecca Hall, suggesting great depth in her few minutes on screen). From the bodies of dead soldiers, Stevens' mad scientist has engineered three elite killing machines. They are devoid of personality, with beady lights for eyes. Still, he's given them nicknames: the Butcher (Alex Pereira), the Cockroach (Dave Campbell) and the Crybaby (Tyler Hall).

They get out, of course, and begin causing trouble. "Onslaught" likewise lingers on the quickly dispatched operative, Cyrus (Drew Starkey), sent to clean up the ensuing mess. Wingard delights in introducing the character, who's more drugged up and charmingly laid-back than your usual cleanup expert. It's a lot of set up for a guy who, ultimately, doesn't do much.

But what's the rush? Wingard also takes his time surveying the female bodies at the S&M club Cyrus is attending when we meet him, just as he does looking over some of the bloody wreckage left by the super-soldiers. He even, momentarily, takes one of their perspectives in a random killing at a gas station convenience store — a point of view that's hard to justify, considering there's no other attempt to consider the inner horrors of the brain-dead soldiers.

They start unleashing mayhem across a Western plain that looks like it could either be where Wile E. Coyote chases the Roadrunner or the setting of Chloé Zhao's "Nomad-



RICHARD FOREMAN | A24

This image released by A24 shows Reginald VelJohnson in a scene from "Onslaught."

land." "Onslaught" has a bit of both. The movie is best in its leisurely depiction of life at the Windy Oasis, the trailer-park remove where Celeste has found some rough-hewn sense of peace — away from society and with plenty of room for target practice.

Reginald VelJohnson and

Eric Wareheim gamely play Celeste's neighbors, adding to the eccentric ensemble. But "Onslaught" is most of all a chance for Arjona, a supporting standout in "Hit Man" and "Splitsville," to show some leading-woman grit. And she does that in Wingard's quirkily contradictory movie: gleefully violent despite its military

satire, curiously unhurried despite its title.

"Onslaught," an A24 release, is rated R by the Motion Picture Association for strong bloody violence, some gore, sexual material/nudity, and language. Running time: 107 minutes. Two stars out of four.

From the very beginning, I felt a special bond with this orchestra. The musicians and the entire CSO family have created an environment where artistic curiosity and collective ambition flourish.

Charlotte Symphony music director KWAMÉ RYAN

There's more music ahead for the maestro

Kwamé Ryan signs a long-term deal to lead Charlotte Symphony

By Herbert L. White
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Kwamé Ryan's earned an extended stay with Charlotte Symphony.

Ryan, the company's music director and Grammy winner, signed a four-year extension that will keep him in Charlotte through 2032, the orchestra's 100th season. Ryan, who is in his third season with CSO, won a Best Opera Recording Grammy with Houston Grand Opera's recording of Jake Heggie's "Intelligence."

Terms of the deal were not disclosed.
"I am thrilled to be extending my commitment to the Charlotte Symphony Orchestra for four more years," Ryan said in a statement. "From the very beginning, I felt a special bond with this orchestra. The musicians and the entire CSO family have created an environment where artistic curiosity and collective ambition flourish. Charlotte has truly become my second home, and I have great affection for the warm, vibrant community the orchestra serves. I look forward to the journey ahead — to the music we will make, the stories we will tell, and the shared experiences that will continue to shape the Charlotte Symphony's future."

With Ryan as director, CSO has worked at expanding programming initiatives and connections across Charlotte. The orchestra returned to national broadcasts through American Public Media's "Performance Today,"

Please see KWAMÉ | 6B



Charlotte Symphony Orchestra and music director Kwamé Ryan agreed to a four-year contract extension that will keep the Grammy-winning conductor in Charlotte through the 2031-32 season.

Theatre Charlotte kicks off 2026-27 season

By Nikya Hightower
FOR THE CHARLOTTE POST

Theater Charlotte is centered on connection for its 99th season.

It begins Sept. 11 at 501 Queens Road with seven productions running through May 30, 2027. Tickets are available online at theatrechCharlotte.org. There'll be familiar favorites, local premieres and productions with new perspectives.

The season opens with "Come From Away," running Sept. 11-Oct. 4, followed by "Frankenstein" (Oct. 23-Nov. 15). The season continues with the 20th anniversary production of "A Christmas Carol" (Dec. 11-20).

In 2027, "Lost in Yonkers" will run Jan.

22-Feb. 7, followed by the North Carolina premiere of "Terminus" March 5-21. "Six Degrees of Separation" runs April 9-18, and the season closes with the Charlotte premiere of "BKLYN the Musical" May 14-30.

Artistic director Chris Timmons said connection became a common thread while putting the season together. When it came to choosing which productions would hit the stage this season, the theater wanted to make sure both the audience and the artists were considered.

"What we have found with this season is that it really is a season of connection, humanity and empathy," he said

The season gives Theatre Charlotte an

opportunity to introduce audiences to productions they may not have seen before, including "Terminus," directed by Chloe Shade. But the theater is also curating a season that has something for everyone.

"I'm always excited about the shows that I think are new to our audiences," Timmons said. "And it doesn't necessarily mean that it has to be a new title, but just something that maybe people don't expect Theatre Charlotte to produce."

What makes Theatre Charlotte productions special is that they are made by people in the community for the community. As the company prepares for its 100th anniversary, Timmons said the theater is looking at how it can continue to grow.

"It's our neighbors. It's our co-workers who are up on the stage," Timmons said. "It's people that you can meet. That makes it special regardless of the title of the show but being able to share something new."

"We've done a great job over the past decade or more, stretching our audiences and bringing new people into Theatre Charlotte and introducing them to not just locally produced theater, but high-quality theater that is unique. It's not something you're going to see somewhere else."

