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2023

Rising Into Our Collective Power!

Rustin Lorde Breakfast



SouthernUnityMovement

The Loudermilk
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MONDAY
JAN. 16, 2023

breakfast

RUSTIN LORDE



Congratulations
Rustin Lorde
Breakfast 2023



22

ANNIVERSARY



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Atlanta City Council

January 16, 2023

RE: 2023 Bayard Rustin-Audre Lorde Breakfast

It is a pleasure to welcome you and distinguished guest to the 2023 Bayard-Rustin Audre Lord Breakfast.

I want to take this opportunity to congratulate you on 22 years of service in educating communities about the life and contributions of Bayard Rustin, Audre Lorde, and other activists.

The Rustin-Lorde Breakfast is grounded in Black LGBT organizing yet it convenes a multiracial, intergenerational platform for mobilization. The Bayard Rustin-Audre Lorde Breakfast was founded in January 2002 to provide attendees the opportunity to connect before participating in the Martin Luther King, Jr. March. Co-founders Roshelle Darlene Hudson and Craig Washington conceived of the breakfast as a fellowship space for LGBT people to enjoy before joining the Martin Luther King Jr. March and Rally on MLK Day.

On behalf of the City of Atlanta, I extend best wishes for a memorable and successful 22nd celebration.

Keisha

Keisha Sean Waites
Councilmember, Post-3 At-Large



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COMMISSIONER
DISTRICT 4



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January 12, 2023

Greetings

Dear Friends,

On behalf of the Fulton County Board of Commissioners and the residents of District 4, it is with great pleasure that I extend a warm welcome and greetings to the organizers and attendees of ***The Southern Unity Movement's, 2023 Rustin/Lorde Breakfast***. Your dedication to serving our community for the past 20 years has helped build a more unified Black LGBTQ Community through advocacy, cultural education, recreation, and intergenerational participation.

Freedom fighters like Audre Lorde, Bayard Rustin, and my former boss Fulton County Commissioner Joan P. Garner, inspired me to prioritize the need for an equitable community. I understand the importance of encouraging collaboration, providing resources, and fighting for the overall well-being of the Black and LGBTQ communities.

This year's theme "We're Back!", reflects our need to continue supporting the movement and working together to serve our underserved communities. Thank you to the Southern Unity Movement, volunteers, sponsors, supporters, and the co-founders of The Rustin/Lorde Breakfast, Craig Washington and R. Darlene Hudson. Through education, networking, and collective efforts we can continue making significant advancements in social justice.

I look forward to continuing to do this heart work with you.

Sincerely,



Fulton County Commissioner, District 4



ANDRE DICKENS
MAYOR



CITY OF ATLANTA

55 TRINITY AVE, S.W.
ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30303-0300
TEL (404) 330-6100

January 16, 2023

Greetings:

As the 61st Mayor of Atlanta, it is my pleasure to welcome the attendees of the *Bayard Rustin & Audre Lorde Breakfast* to the city of Atlanta.

The Rustin Lorde Breakfast, hosted by the Southern Unity Movement, has continued to uplift, and celebrate Atlanta's LGBTQ+ community for more than 21 years. This event continues to support human rights and equality, while honoring the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. He once said, "Make a career of humanity. Commit yourself to the noble struggle for equal rights. You will make a better person of yourself, a greater nation of your country, and a finer world to live in."

Through the Mayor's Division of LGBTQ Affairs, our administration works every day to ensure that our city remains inclusive for all residents, employees and visitors - including the LGBTQ+ community.

On behalf of the people of Atlanta, I extend best wishes for a memorable occasion.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andre Dickens".

Mayor Andre Dickens





DARLENE HUDSON CEO & CO FOUNDER

New Year greetings on this Rev Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of remembrance and action!

It's been two years since we met face-to-face, and you all look marvelous!

As you all know, we had to take a long break from in-person activities as we learned to live with a new virus called COVID-19 that killed over 1 million Americans by the end of 2022. It was a season of grief and uncertainty as some of us became sick, and many of us know someone who perished from the disease. We've also lost loved ones to other causes since the last time we came together. In 2020, my mother was here at our previous Breakfast and died six months later. I can't begin to tell you about the emotional pain of dealing with that loss. But as much sadness as we've experienced, we know "joy comes in the morning."

I am excited to welcome you back to the 22nd Annual Rustin-Lorde Breakfast. What started as a gathering in the parking lot near the Civic Center over 21 years ago has grown into an event focused on social justice for people of all ages and backgrounds. The Breakfast is our homecoming, where we break bread together, mourn our losses, and reenergize ourselves to continue to make "good trouble" as a friend to the Breakfast, the late Congressman John Lewis would say.

So, like in the story of the Phoenix rising from the ashes, we reemerge in 2023 smarter and stronger. We rise to fight against both physical violence and mean-spirited legislation that targets LGBTQ people, racism that disproportionately affects Black and brown communities, the assault on women's reproductive rights, violence against our Asian sisters and brothers, and people fleeing violence and poverty in their own countries. We understand Civil Rights are Human Rights, and all people are entitled to be treated with dignity and respect. We've got a lot of work ahead of us.

Let's also celebrate our hard-fought victories, like Senator Raphael Warnock's reelection to the Senate and the elections of Park Cannon and Karla Drenner to the GA General Assembly, along with Atlanta City Council members; Keisha Waites, Liliana Bakhtiari, Alex Wan, and other LGBTQ representatives across the country.



We also rise in power and strength when we take better care of our mental health, walk or engage in regular physical exercise, establish community gardens to feed ourselves better, check on each other, and show kindness. I am reminded of one of those rhymes from my childhood, and you can sing along with me if you remember it—"the more we get together, together, together...the more we get together, the happier we will be."

Thank you to one of the best planning committees. They have provided new and innovative marketing, registration, and planning approaches to this year's Breakfast.



RIM Fellowship UCC: LGBTQ Congregation

Takes Ministry Beyond The Four Walls of the Church

By Darian Aaron

When Bishop-Elect Sonya Williams took a leap of faith in 2008 to start RIM Fellowship, an Atlanta-based ministry within the United Church of Christ, she was clear about her role as a spiritual leader to a historically marginalized group of believers.

“If it doesn’t remove stigma and restore dignity, then it’s not ministry,”

Williams says matter-of-factly.

“Like most Black churches where women are the majority of weekly attendees, RIM’s congregation reflects the trend; however, there are exceptions—RIM’s female majority identifies as LGBTQ, and unlike most traditional and even some affirming Black churches, women in leadership are ingrained in RIM’s culture.

continued on page 20



By Darian Aaron

Gifted Girls Of Grace Mentorship Program

Continues Legacy of Visionary Founder

Before Deanna Lanier stepped into her current role as CEO of Gifted Girls of Grace (GGOG), a nonprofit organization launched in 2015 to provide one-on-one and group mentorship to teenage girls, she was an original mentee and little sister to GGOG's founder, the late Erica Danielle Lanier. A former Spelman College education major with dreams of becoming an education superintendent focused on reform and the prioritization of urban and lower-income communities—Erica did not live to see her dreams come to fruition—passing away following a tragic car accident in 2017.

“Erica was my biggest role model. Being a little sister, you look up to everything she does, and I kid you not, everything she did, I wanted to do,” Lanier says. “And so part of being in this role has been finding my voice and path, but also, it’s great to know that I have her footsteps to walk in, and she had such a powerful impact in the community.”

Before her passing, Lanier says Erica identified a need for mentorship programs explicitly designed for teenage girls.

“She realized that sometimes nonprofits don’t target the high school age group because they’re seen as more difficult to work with,” Lanier says. “You see a lot of mentoring programs that are focused on elementary school students, which is great. We need all those programs, but there aren’t enough

that target teenage girls.”

GGOG focuses on mentoring girls 12 to 18 by incorporating sisterhood, culture, etiquette, and self-empowering activities into their daily routines. Currently, GGO serves 14 mentees paired with Spelman College mentors under this year’s theme—“GGOG and Tech.”

“We have a [new] theme each year,” Lanier says. “We’ve had a theme about art and exposing them to different art outlets around Atlanta. We’ve also had a theme related to political awareness during the election year. We wanted to make sure that they were aware of the political climate that we live in [currently]. And so, our goal is to immerse them within the community and help them build trusting relationships,” she adds.

Lanier says many initiatives Erica began before passing have been achieved or surpassed. The Erica D. Lanier Gifted Girls of Grace Book Scholarship, created in Erica’s memory, awards \$250 and \$500 scholarships to incoming first-year students to help offset the costs of books.

“The number of scholarships we provide is solely dependent on the amount that we receive in donations,” Lanier says.

During the pandemic, financial support from Southern Unity Movement to GGOG provided funds for an additional GGOG Book Scholarship.

“Being a nonprofit, it’s sometimes difficult to get funding. But [Darlene Hudson] has been an avid and consistent supporter of Gifted Girls, not just in terms of monetary support, but also with helping to expand our reach and finding people we can help as a nonprofit,” Lanier says.

“She’s helped students at Spelman College and New York University. We’ve had students all over who’ve received our scholarships, and her monetary donations help to provide those contributions,” she adds.

Nearly eight years after Erica initially saw a need for GGOG and almost five years since her passing, Lanier says it was never a doubt the work would continue.

“We had to continue the vision because it was a need in our community, and she noticed it, and there still was a need despite her passing,” she says.

“I would hope that she is proud of the work that we’re doing. We’re trying to make sure that we hold on to her initial vision while also trying to expand our reach.”

Taylor Alxndr



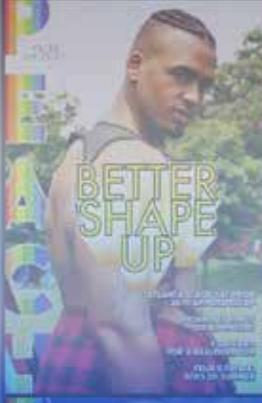
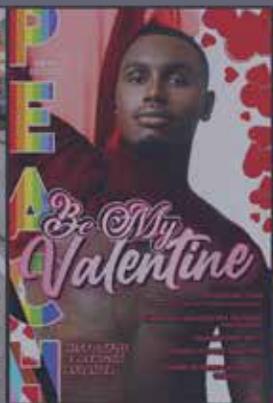
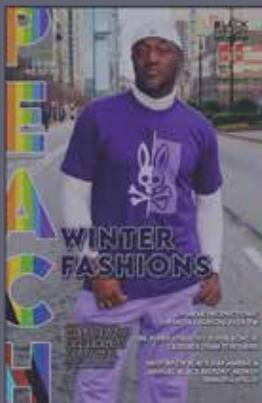
TAYLOR ALXNDR (they/she) is an Atlanta-based musician, drag performer, multi-media artist, and community organizer. ALXNDR is the co-founder and current executive director of Southern Fried Queer Pride (SFQP), a queer + trans, arts + advocacy organization centering Southern queer communities. They are also the mother of the House of ALXNDR, an Atlanta-based drag family and events hub, creating drag-centered, inclusive events.

Miko
"Meak"
Evans



CO-HOST RUSTIN. LORDE.

Miko "Meak" Evans is a full time Artist-Entrepreneur with over 20+Years of experience in music entertainment management, performing arts, creative design, marketing & advertising to include new media consulting, small business & community advocacy. Through his entrepreneurship and innovation, he has created and produced countless branding Identities, remix projects, special events and Marketing Campaigns for some of the nation's newest small businesses, Indie recording artists, and major non-profit organizations.



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&
Dr. Everett Long
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RUSTIN. LORDE.
*and the journey to a
Beloved Community.*



A photograph of the Georgia State Capitol building with its iconic gold dome. A diagonal stripe with rainbow colors (black, brown, red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple) runs from the top left to the bottom right, partially obscuring the building. The background is dark blue.

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Rustin Lorde 2020 Program

Call to Order
Blessing of the House

Breakfast
Traditional Southern and Vegan Breakfast

Welcome
Darlene Hudson and Ashe Hernandez

Featuring Djoli Kelen African Dancers
&
Invocation of Our Elders and Ancestors
Elder Claude Bowen & Rev. Duncan Teague

Introduction of Emcees
By Maurice Robinson Cook

Miko Evans and Taylor Alxndr

Southern Sounds of
Ms. Monica Simpson

Word from Our Sponsors
Gilead, Center for Black Equity and SisterSong & AARP

Words of Liberation
Larry Walker

Children and Youth Presentations

Word from Our Sponsors
, Georgia Equality, Emory University, Dr Fred Smith

Final Presentation - U-First

Closing remarks-

Recorded music by DJ Boogy LOV

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RIM Takes Ministry Beyond The Four Walls of the Church

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“I definitely wanted a place where there would be equality and equity, and everyone had a chance to use their gifts, use their talents, and be respected as a child of Christ,” Williams says.

“I’ve noticed that there were a lot of affirming churches operating in the same oppression but just kind of slapped gay or affirming on it. But were still not giving women a lot of the opportunities that the men had,” she adds.

Now, nearly 15 years after opening its doors, RIM’s ministry is living its mission of reaching the masses with a message of inspiration that moves people to their destination through the radically inclusive love of Christ—the good news that Williams refuses to only share within the confines of the church.

“We have to make sure that we are meeting people where they are,” she says. “Take the church to the people. Leave the four walls.”

The Jackson, MS, water crisis presented an opportunity for RIM Fellowship to do just that.

“When we saw on the news what happened with the pipes in Jackson, MS, that was the straw that broke the camel’s back,” Williams says. “How

could we not find it in our hearts to get water and supplies to people who need it? We had to be there to help people who looked like us.”

Shortly after, Williams launched a public drive to collect bottled water and other critical supplies for Jackson residents. A flier posted by Williams on RIM’s Facebook page caught the attention of Southern Unity Movement and Rustin/Lorde Breakfast co-founder Darlene Hudson.

“She’s always been a support to RIM,” Williams says. “She said, ‘I wanna help.’ And she wrote a check and said, ‘Hey, when can you pick it up?’ We thank God for her generosity and willingness to respond to people in need.”

Williams says RIM made four trips to Jackson to deliver water and other supplies, with more trips planned soon.

“The problem persists,” she says. We’re taking ministry out of the four walls into the places where people need to know that there’s love and hope and that somebody cares—somebody sees them.”

“We have a saying at RIM that outreach is our heartbeat. That is who we are.”

Angel

CHARLIE ANN'S
Food Service

**'IT'S JUST NICE TO BE
NICE:'**

**Atlanta Retiree Feeds Over 500 Senior Citizens
During Pandemic**

By Darian Aaron

In 2020, Cynthia McKinney, a 20-year service desk analyst at the Federal Reserve Bank, found herself at an unexpected crossroads. Like most Americans overwhelmed by the emergence of COVID-19, McKinney had to reevaluate her priorities. She took an early retirement package and began to substitute teach. Surprisingly, she fell in love with the profession and earned the proper credentials to become a Douglas County fifth-grade science and social studies teacher. But her lifelong passion for cooking and community became defining elements in her second act.

"I would cook and serve meals, and people would purchase them," McKinney says. "So one of my classmates messaged me one day. She said, 'I'd like to buy a couple of meals. But can you donate them





to senior citizens? Maybe to people who are quarantined and can't get out?"

McKinney says the exchange between her friend was the impetus for Charlie Ann's Angels Food Service. The LLC is the brainchild of McKinney and is responsible for feeding over 500 senior citizens in Atlanta during the pandemic. Barge Road HighRise Senior Apartments Complex in Southwest Atlanta was one of the first communities to receive McKinney's meals.

McKinney says what began as a vision to feed a few people quickly morphed into a feast for a few dozen.

McKinney prepared a menu of baked chicken, candied yams, cabbage, and cornbread muffins for the first meal. And for dessert, peach cobbler and pound cake. Due to COVID-19 protocols, she was not allowed entry into the facility, so she dropped the meals off. Once COVID restrictions eased, McKinney says she was able to engage Barge Road residents. And as the service began to expand, the residents inside an additional facility with support from Hillary Thomas of AARP.

"We took meals to them, and then we went back again, and I set up outside, and we did a fish fry," McKinney says. "We purchased blankets when it got cold. And we got the names of the individuals, and we gave them embroidered throws for their laps."

Named after her late mother, Charlie Ann, who passed away in 2016, McKinney says the Food Service continues her mother's legacy.

"Everything that I am is my mom," she says. "I'm always trying to continue her legacy of kindness. One of her main mantras was, "It's just nice to be nice."

The youngest of five kids, McKinney was raised in Burdette, AR, a small township with a population of 140—about four miles from the Missouri state line with her mother and father, who currently resides in a nursing home in West Helena, AR.

"My mother was extremely generous. She could be at a store, see some shirts, and think about the man down the street. 'I bet he can fit these, and they're only a quarter each. Let me get them for him'"

The late matriarch would not be surprised to learn that her daughter has founded an organization in her name and, besides a couple of volunteers, often steers the ship solo.

"I have people who come and volunteer to help me set up and help me make the meals," McKinney says. "I'm going to do better with delegating because I have sat and peeled 40 pounds of potatoes."

McKinney says she is grateful for the financial seed sown into her organization by Southern Unity Movement and Rustin/Lorde Breakfast co-founder Darlene Hudson, whom she met for the first time at the 2020 Breakfast and subsequently forged a social media connection.

"She saw what I was doing. And she called me up and said, 'Hey, lady.' I called her [by her first name] Roshelle, and she said, 'Look, I go by Darlene.' Her donation helped purchase food, containers, and the embroidered blankets."

McKinney says she's never felt this fulfilled in her entire life.

"All of it just fell into my lap and took on a persona of its own."

ARKANSAS RAPPS BUILDS ON EARLY HIV ORGANIZING TO SAVE BLACK GAY LIVES

By Darian Aaron



As HIV began to decimate the lives of Black gay men in the 1980s, Cornelius Mabin Jr., now CEO and founder of ARKANSAS RAPPS, began mobilizing members of Little Rock's Black gay community to develop a survival plan in the living room of his small two-bedroom apartment.

Without any financial assistance or physical meeting space outside his apartment to respond to the existential threats of HIV and homophobia, Mabin and other Black gay men organized to save their lives despite the misinformation, fear, and AIDS hysteria of the early '80s. Before then, Mabin says spaces in Little Rock were almost non-existent for Black gay men to share their hopes, desires, and traumas. But that would change.

Fast forward to 2014. The work that began in the late '80s in a residential space is now a 501(c)3 community-based organization providing an array of HIV services and support inside an official building. One of their most popular programs, "Welcome to The Living Room," is a nod to ARKANSAS RAPPS (an acronym for Reaching Affirming Positive Progressive Systems) early beginnings.

"I was asked by the [Arkansas] Department of Health to do an outreach program," Mabin says. "They asked me what I was going to call it, and I said, well, I'm going to call it The Living Room. I realized that the living room was not just merely a space where we were meeting. We were finding spaces to live in as individuals, as people," he says. "We needed a place where we could breathe and really live. We all needed living rooms to live in."

A weekly discussion group and HIV intervention model, "Welcome To The Living Room," gives Black gay and bisexual men an opportunity to talk about cultivating healthy relationships and, in some cases, the need for stronger father-son relationships, along with the impact of

homophobia on social determinants of health. Attendees can then utilize ARKANSAS RAPPS as an immediate resource toward harm reduction.

“I’ve always focused on making sure Black gay men had opportunities and spaces presented to them,” Mabin says. “I wanted to step up and create something that I thought would be useful to Black gay men.”

In 2022, Mabin says the Black gay men ARKANSAS RAPPS served sent a clear message that a retreat was necessary. But a retreat would require funding, which Mabin says was limited. He and colleague Keith Jones, who Mabin says suggested Southern Unity Movement’s co-founder Darlene Hudson as a potential sponsor, set out to acquire funding.

“We literally had no money, to begin with, and we were trying to gather some momentum. I was trying to find sponsors, and she [Darlene Hudson] came through and offered us some sponsorship.”

Although a native of Little Rock, AR, Hudson is a longtime Atlanta resident. Mabin says Jones was unsure Hudson would be interested in supporting the retreat.

“[I told him to] speak to her from your heart and tell her what we’re trying to do and see what happens. And that’s what he did.”

Southern Unity Movement’s financial support contributed to the successful three-day “Taking Charge of Change Retreat” held at Embassy Suites in Hot Springs, AR, at no cost to attendees.

While Mabin says ARKANSAS RAPPS works year-round to provide a safe place for Black gay men, the feedback after the three-day retreat was clear: “They [attendees] had a sense of belonging. They were seen and heard.”

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It is with great sadness that we announce that our beautiful sister in the Movement for Social Justice & Social Change, Jamida Orange, passed away.

Jamida served as a pillar of strength and love for our community. Always known for her smile and passion, "Come and sit by me" is the spirit she carried.

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