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**OCTOBER
2024**



**TIS THE SEASON
OF FASHION
NEW YORK AND
PHILLY FASHION
WEEK DIDN'T
DISAPPOINT**

**A
TRUE
SURVIVOR
STORY**

**GOLD FEVER
IS BACK**
**MALACHI COLEMAN HAS INSPIRED
HIS TEAM AND THE COMMUNITY**

HONORING STAN HALE



**THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE
JUSTICE BUSINESS ECOSYSTEM CENTER**

CULTURE | BUSINESS | ORIGINATORS

Cover photo
courtesy of

Shannon Sweeney

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Years of The Focus Magazine



we are the New Focus.



HELLO

The Focus Magazine has been a voice for a group of innovators to project the positivity we desire to see, and make it manifest

WE ARE NFX

October we celebrate the future while honoring what has literally passed.

Stan Hale was truly a hero to The Focus Magazine family. It was in his building 11 years ago we published the first edition. His passing has left us all sad. However, to know him, you could never forget him.

His wisdom and actions were truly the catalyst behind the Justice Business Ecosystem Center.

While he was still living, we were able to introduce him to Malachi Coleman when he wrote his article in the March '22 edition. His team is winning just as he promised Stan they would.

Thanks for believing in Us!
STAY FOCUSED MY FRIENDS!

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THE TRUTH IS...

"The Focus" Magazine is a rising star among regional publications that reflects a new and balanced perspective on Arts, Entertainment, Sports, Business, and Community. We stay FOCUSED through support from communities that want to know more about what's happening around them.

Each month "The Focus" spotlights small businesses, entrepreneurs, community events, political topics fashion and the arts. With our headquarters located in the heart of the Star City (Roanoke, VA), we are cultivating markets in Richmond, 7 cities, and Northern Virginia. With our media presence, we are poised to stay relevant and influence what people are talking about and doing.



www.NuFocusVA.com 3

we set the culture...

5 PROVEN WAYS TO STAY FISCALLY SOUND:

A GUIDE FOR ENTREPRENEURS, INDEPENDENT ARTISTS, AND NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS



by **Steve Martin**

A Guide for Entrepreneurs, Independent Artists, and Nonprofit Organizations

By a Financial Planner with Over 40 Years of Experience

In today's dynamic economic landscape, ensuring fiscal soundness is paramount for entrepreneurs, independent artists, and nonprofit organizations aiming to scale their operations. After four decades in the financial planning industry, I have identified five strategic approaches that can help sustain financial health and facilitate growth. Here, I present these proven methods to assist you in navigating your financial journey.

1. Unlimited Prospects

Understanding the Importance of Prospecting

For any business or organization, having a steady influx of potential clients or supporters is essential.

Unlimited prospects refer to the continuous generation of leads and opportunities that can be converted into revenue or support.

How to Cultivate Unlimited Prospects

- Networking: Attend industry events, join professional associations, and engage in community activities to meet potential clients and collaborators.
- Digital Marketing: Utilize social media platforms, SEO, and content marketing to expand your reach. Create valuable content that resonates with your target audience and encourages them to engage with your brand.
- Referrals: Encourage satisfied clients and supporters to refer others. Implement a referral program that incentivizes them for bringing in new prospects.

- Market Research: Regularly analyze market trends and customer needs to identify new opportunities. Adapt your offerings to meet these emerging demands.

2. Consistently Growing Monthly Income

The Need for a Steady Income Stream

A reliable monthly income is crucial for maintaining operations, planning for the future, and investing in growth. For entrepreneurs and nonprofits alike, fluctuations in income can lead to instability.

Strategies for Consistent Income Growth

- Diversified Revenue Streams: Explore multiple avenues for income. For entrepreneurs, this may include product sales, services, and passive income streams such as affiliate marketing or online courses. Nonprofits can consider grants, donations, merchandise, and fundraising events.
- Subscription Models: Implement subscription-based services or membership programs. This approach can provide predictable cash flow and foster community engagement.
- Upselling and Cross-Selling: Train your sales team to identify opportunities to upsell or cross-sell to existing customers. This not only increases

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revenue but also enhances customer satisfaction by providing additional value.

- Regular Financial Reviews: Conduct monthly financial reviews to assess your income, expenses, and overall financial health. This practice will help you make informed decisions and adjust strategies as necessary.

3. Effective Use of Time

Time as a Financial Resource

Time is often overlooked as a financial asset. For entrepreneurs and nonprofit leaders, effective time management can lead to cost savings and increased productivity.

Techniques for Maximizing Time Efficiency

- Prioritization: Use the Eisenhower Matrix to prioritize tasks based on urgency and importance. Focus on high-impact activities that drive revenue and growth.
- Delegation: Empower your team by delegating tasks that do not require your direct involvement. This allows you to concentrate on strategic decision-making and high-level oversight.
- Automation: Leverage technology to automate repetitive tasks. Use tools for email marketing, customer relationship management (CRM), and accounting to save time and

reduce errors.

- Set Boundaries: Establish clear working hours and stick to them. Avoid multitasking and distractions to ensure focused and productive work sessions.

4. Motivated Accountability

Accountability as a Key Driver of Success

Accountability can be a powerful motivator for maintaining financial discipline and achieving goals. It creates a culture of transparency and responsibility, essential for any organization looking to thrive.

Implementing a System of Accountability

- Goal Setting: Establish clear, measurable goals for financial performance. Ensure that everyone in your organization understands these objectives and their role in achieving them.

- Regular Check-Ins: Schedule weekly or monthly meetings to review progress towards goals. Discuss challenges and celebrate successes to foster a sense of community and shared responsibility.

- Accountability Partners: Form partnerships with other entrepreneurs or organizations. Regularly share updates on your goals and progress,

providing mutual support and motivation.

- Performance Metrics: Use key performance indicators (KPIs) to track financial health and operational efficiency. Make these metrics visible to everyone in the organization to encourage a shared commitment to success.

5. Multiple Partnerships Marketing One Another's Businesses

The Power of Collaborative Marketing

Building partnerships can significantly enhance your marketing reach and



foster community support. Collaborative marketing allows organizations to leverage each other's strengths, audiences, and resources.

Strategies for Effective Partnerships

- Identify Synergistic Partners: Look

for businesses or organizations that complement your offerings. For instance, an artist can partner with local galleries, while a nonprofit may collaborate with businesses aligned with their mission.

- Co-Host Events: Organize joint events, workshops, or webinars to introduce each other's audiences to your services. This can increase visibility and generate leads for all parties involved.

- Cross-Promotion: Use social media, newsletters, and websites to promote one another's products or services. This not only expands your reach but also reinforces community ties.


- Shared Resources: Consider pooling resources for larger projects or campaigns. This can lower costs and enhance the impact of your initiatives.

Staying fiscally sound is a multifaceted endeavor that requires strategic planning, collaboration, and ongoing evaluation. By focusing on unlimited prospects, consistent income growth, effective time management, motivated accountability, and partnerships, entrepreneurs, independent artists, and nonprofit organizations can position themselves for long-term success. Implementing these proven strategies will not only enhance your financial stability but also empower you to scale your operations and create a lasting impact in your community.

As you embark on this journey, remember that financial health is not merely a goal; it is a continuous process of learning, adapting, and thriving.



Saying Goodbye to Stan Hale



Stan Hale made a huge impact in the Roanoke MSA. Never asking for credit or attention, we honor this pioneer that inspired us in the work we do.

Kings Of The Valley

February 17, 2018

Terry Alghizer

A HEARTFELT TRIBUTE TO THE LEGACY OF STANLEY ROBERT HALE

I first met Stanley Robert Hale in 2005, shortly after I purchased my home in Roanoke. At that time, I was unfamiliar with many facets of the community, one of which was the Lawson Building, a place that would later become significant in my life and work. It was in this building that I would come to appreciate the depth of Stan's commitment to community and

his unwavering support for those looking to make a difference.

Fast forward to 2013, when I brought my business back to Roanoke. I was brimming with fresh ideas and a vision for what I wanted to create. Little did I know, I would find a tremendous ally in Stan. He welcomed my enthusiasm with open arms, encouraging me to explore my ideas and supporting my vision wholeheartedly. I can confidently say that without Stan's guidance and belief in our mission, the Justice Business Ecosystem we established might never have come to fruition.

The work we do today is a direct reflection of the community building projects that Stan and his beloved daughter, Valerie Nichole "Nicki" Hale, were actively engaged in during my early days in the Lawson Building. Their dedication to uplifting the community and fostering opportunities for others was evident, and it inspired me to carry that torch forward. Stan was not just a mentor to me; he was a hero, a guiding light who showed me the importance of service, commitment, and love for one's community.

Stanley Robert Hale was born on December 22, 1943, to



Eleanor Hale and Richard Reynolds in the Slate Hill area of Roanoke County. He passed away on September 6, 2024, after a brief stay at Carilion Hospital. The legacy he leaves behind is immeasurable and will be felt throughout the community for generations to come.

From an early age, Stan was deeply embedded in his community, becoming an active member of Slate Hill Baptist Church, and later a charter member and trustee at Gospel Truth Ministries, where he worked alongside his childhood friend, Rev. J.R. Hughes. His faith was a cornerstone of his life, reinforced by his participation in evening Bible studies with Rev. Kevin McNeil at the Lawson Building. Stan's educational journey took him through Roanoke County and City Schools, culminating in his graduation from Lucy Addison High School in 1962. He was a standout student and athlete, excelling in baseball and basketball. His love for tennis blossomed after meeting Rose Hackley, who would not only become his first love but also his lifelong partner. Together, they shared countless memories on and off the court.

Stan's academic achievements earned him a scholarship to Fisk University, where he was actively involved in student council and played on the tennis team, ulti-

mately graduating with a B.A. in Economics in 1966. His thirst for knowledge led him to a post-baccalaureate fellowship at Haverford College, paving the way for a Full Graduate Fellowship at UCLA. After completing his studies, he returned to Roanoke in 1969, married Rose, and welcomed their daughter, Valerie Nichole, who later graduated from Washington & Lee University Law School and began her law practice before her untimely passing in 2013.

Stan began his impactful career with the Southwest Virginia Community Development Fund (SVCDF) in 1969, starting as the Director of Management and Budget. Under the mentorship of Judge George Harris, he rose to the role of Executive Director in 1980 and later became President



of both SVCDF and its subsidiary, Impact Housing. His leadership was pivotal in implementing community development initiatives, such as establishing a medical

we set the culture...



center and a childcare facility, as well as supporting recreational programs for youth, including an annual basketball camp. Stan took great pride in the Orange Avenue Industrial Park, which created 200 jobs, and the Shenandoah Industrial Redevelopment Project, which enhanced local infrastructure and generated additional employment opportunities.

Beyond his professional contributions, Stan was a charter member and past

president of the Roanoke-Lynchburg Boule of Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity, the oldest Greek-letter organization primarily for African American men. His commitment to excellence and community welfare extended to various boards, including Virginia Transformer Corporation, where he played a crucial role in securing loans that enabled the company's growth.

Stan actively participated in many organizations, including the National Alliance of Businessmen and the Citizens Services Committee appointed by the Roanoke City Council. His expertise was recognized by Congressman M.C. Butler, who appointed him to the Minority Business Action Committee, further solidifying his influence and commitment to fostering opportunities for others.

As I reflect on my journey with Stan, I am reminded of his profound impact on my life and the lives of many in our community. While his accomplishments are too numerous to list, it is the lasting impression he made that will continue to inspire us all. Stan, you will be deeply missed, but your legacy of service, mentorship, and community building will forever resonate in our hearts. Thank you for being a guiding light in my life and for the countless others who had the privilege of knowing you. Rest in peace, dear friend.

**THANK YOU STAN FOR A RACE
WELL RAN! YOU ARE MISSED**



by Thom Page



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SHOW YOUR SUPPORT FOR MS. BENTLEY

All proceeds from the shirt sales go directly to
Ms. Bentley for her care and recovery.

**Purchase your shirt
online by scanning the
QR code**



SCAN ME

Join SERV, Kiwanis, CVC, and Goodwill for a Fall Cleanup of Melrose and Horton Park

Nov. 9th, 2024 at 10am-12pm



Meet us at the pavilion beside Melrose Library
(2502 Melrose Ave) to get your supplies

We will provide all cleanup supplies but we encourage you to wear comfy/warm clothes and supportive shoes.

Supporting Entrepreneurship in Adversity



by Queen Kee

In areas plagued by poverty and adversity, organizations offering entrepreneurship programs and training play a vital role in providing a pathway to economic empowerment. By equipping individuals with the skills, knowledge, and resources necessary to start and operate their own businesses, these programs can help to break the cycle of poverty and create opportunities for economic growth.

By fostering a culture of entrepreneurship and innovation, these organizations can inspire individuals to pursue their dreams, create jobs, and contribute positively to their communities.

As I was scrolling through my news feed, my eyes caught a headline about a business incubator that promised to dramatically increase the chances of startup success. Intrigued, I clicked on the article and discovered BetaBlox. The combination of proven mentorship, a unique compensation model,

and comprehensive education immediately piqued my interest, leading me to delve deeper into this promising opportunity

"Behind the Brushstrokes:

A New Approach to Entrepreneurship Education"

Tired of the same old success stories? We get it. While it's inspiring to



hear about those who have made it big, it's often more valuable to

learn from the journey, not just the destination.

Introducing our new platform: A space where you can witness the raw, unfiltered process of entre-

preneurship. Instead of polished presentations and curated success stories, we offer speed consultation sessions moderated by our world-class coaches.

How does it work?

Choose your topic: Whether you're interested in fundraising, marketing, or product development, we've got you covered.

Dive into the content: Each topic has hours of recorded consultations, where our coaches are helping real entrepreneurs navigate challenges.

Learn by observing: Watch as our coaches provide expert advice, ask probing questions, and offer actionable insights.

By observing these rapid-fire consultations, you'll develop a keen eye for patterns. You'll start to recognize common pitfalls, effective strategies, and the nuances of different business models.

The goal? To equip you with the tools to become your own advisor. Instead of relying on others for guidance, you'll be able to confidently make decisions based on your own observations and insights.

Join us on this journey to demystify entrepreneurship. Let's get behind the brushstrokes and uncover the real art of building a successful business.

BetaBlox: The Secret Sauce to Startup Success

BetaBlox is more than just a

business incubator; it's a proven formula for turning entrepreneurial dreams into tangible realities. With a track record of doubling the survival rates of its ventures, BetaBlox has established itself as one of the world's leading incubators.

What sets BetaBlox apart?

Proven Mentorship: Unlike many incubators that rely on inexperienced mentors, BetaBlox pairs early-stage ventures with seasoned entrepreneurs. These mentors offer timely, relevant guidance based on their own firsthand experiences.

Skin-in-the-Game: BetaBlox's unique compensation model aligns our interests with yours. We provide our comprehensive services in exchange for a share of your first million dollars in sales. This means we're invested in your success, not just your potential.

Comprehensive Education: BetaBlox offers a series of educa-



Betablox: The Largest Competition TV Show On The Planet For Start-ups

tional assets that equip startups with the knowledge and tools they need to thrive. Our curriculum, developed by experienced entrepreneurs, goes beyond traditional business school teachings to provide practical, real-world insights.

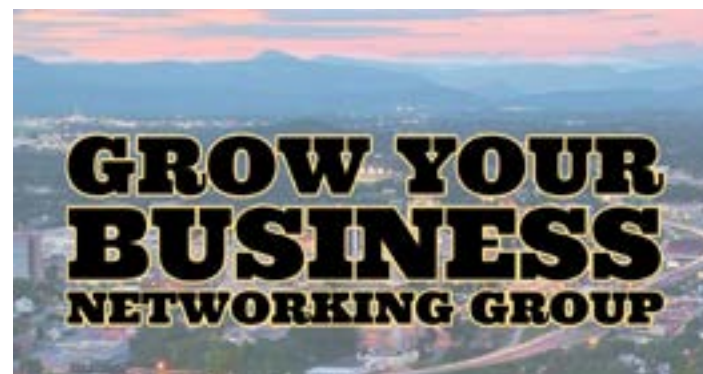
With BetaBlox, you're not just joining an incubator; you're becoming part of a thriving community of entrepreneurs. Our approach has proven effective time and again, helping startups achieve remarkable growth and financial success.

Are you ready to take your startup to the next level? Join BetaBlox and experience the difference.

Seizing Opportunities for a Brighter Future

In today's competitive landscape, it is essential to leverage all available resources to achieve success. By actively seeking out and utilizing opportunities, individuals and businesses can unlock their full potential and create a brighter future. Whether it's through education, mentorship, or strategic partnerships, harnessing the power of resources can open doors to new possibilities, drive innovation, and propel growth. By making informed choices and taking advantage of the opportunities that come our way, we can pave the way for a more prosperous and fulfilling tomorrow.

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*THIS IS
THE NEXT
LEVEL*

*Malachi
Coleman*

*2024 Season
92 CARRIES
1,315 YARDS
16 TOUCHDOWNS*

*And
Counting...*



Reprint of Malachi Coleman's Article in The Focus Magazine Mar '22

Hey it's your boy Malachi, speaking to you. I am a freshman student athlete at William Fleming High School. I've seen close friends and fellow athletes get taken away from the game. This is becoming more relevant with the times we are in; I would encourage more student athletes to get back in the game for our future to make it.

William Fleming Athletics offers a great opportunity to fellow students like me. Keeping us out of the streets, focused on the game, and ahead of our academics to go to college & become better professionals, as well as teaching us discipline. It's a great outlet and great experience to be out there as part of the game. In order to participate, you must be passing five classes, which keeps us focused on our schoolwork.

I would encourage fellow athletes to take our futures seriously. I've seen close friends and fellow athletes get taken away from the game doing unnecessary stuff; it's painful to not see them in the game. Life is what you make it; let's try to make ours the best we could be.

The Value of Leadership in Sports

Fast forward to Malachi's senior year, and the narrative surrounding William Fleming Athletics has dramatically shifted. Once coming off one of the toughest seasons in the program's history, the Colonels now stand as a force to be reckoned with, boasting an impressive 5-0 record and breaking scoring records along the way. At the heart of this resurgence is Malachi Coleman, leading the charge with an astounding average of close to 200 yards per game. His commitment to play at Syracuse University next year is a testament to his hard work, dedication, and resilience.

This transformation is not just about wins and losses; it speaks volumes about the value of true leadership in sports and the impact it can have on an entire community. Malachi's journey illustrates how a single leader can inspire a team to greatness, pushing them to focus not only on athletic performance but also on their academic responsibilities

and personal development.

In his initial article, Malachi highlighted the importance of staying focused and using athletics as a pathway to a better life. His words resonated deeply with his peers, reminding them that the game is more than just a pastime—it's a lifeline. In an era where gun violence has tragically claimed the lives of many young black men, Malachi's leadership serves as a beacon of hope. By encouraging his teammates and peers to remain focused on their futures, he provides a powerful counter-narrative to the distractions that can lead to negative outcomes.

A Community United

The current success of the Colonels is not merely a reflection of individual talent; it is the result of a collective effort fostered by strong leadership. Malachi's commitment to excellence on the field translates into motivation for his teammates to strive for their best, both academically and athletically. The rigorous requirement of maintaining passing grades in five classes is a crucial aspect of the program that instills discipline among the players. This focus on academics ensures that student-athletes understand their education is equally as important as their performance in the game.

Moreover, the revival of William Fleming Athletics has generated a renewed sense of pride in the community. Families, friends, and supporters rally behind the team, creating a positive environment that encourages young people to pursue their goals. Malachi's journey is a living testament to the idea that hard work, perseverance, and leadership can lead to monumental change—not just in sports, but in life.

Staying Focused on the Future

As we reflect on Malachi's journey from a freshman filled with hope to a senior leading his team to victory, we are reminded of the importance of vision. To succeed, you must be able to see where you are going before you can ever get there. This principle applies not only to athletes but to all young people navigating their paths in life.

we set the culture...

Malachi's story is a call to action for student-athletes everywhere. It is a reminder that they have the power to shape their futures and the futures of those around them. As we continue to face challenges such as gun violence and societal pressures, let us remember that the game can be a powerful tool for change.

We encourage all young athletes to stay focused on their goals and to use their talents to uplift themselves and their communities. Just like Malachi Coleman, the journey may start with challenges, but through leadership, discipline, and teamwork, greatness is within reach. Let's make our futures the best they can be!

by Nari'k Page



Justice Business Ecosystem



Building is what we do

Providing much needed resources and support mechanisms with equity, diversity, and inclusion in mind to minority owned as well as all other disadvantaged businesses to assist them to achieve success within the first two





Sheriff's Ball

SATURDAY, JANUARY 11, 2025
5 PM - 9 PM

| EARLY BIRD TICKETS: | TICKETS INCREASE: |
|------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| \$60 OCTOBER 1, 2024 - NOVEMBER 30, 2024 | \$75 DECEMBER 1, 2024 - JANUARY 11, 2025 |

VIP TICKET:
\$100 INCLUDES: PREFERRED SEATING, FREE PHOTO, AND A COMPLEMENTARY DRINK

THE 'COMMUNITY IMPACT AWARD' IS GIVEN TO AN INDIVIDUAL, BUSINESS, OR ORGANIZATION THAT ACTIVELY DRIVES AND INFLUENCES POSITIVE TRANSFORMATION WITHIN IT'S COMMUNITY, ORGANIZATION, OR FIELD.

THIS AWARD RECOGNIZES SOMEONE WHO CHALLENGES THE STATUS QUO, IMPLEMENTS INNOVATIVE IDEAS, AND FOSTERS MEANINGFUL CHANGE THAT BENEFITS OTHERS.

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From Small Towns to Big Cities: A Journey Through Fashion Weeks



by Erica Jenkins

As the producer and owner of Roanoke Fashion Week in Roanoke, Virginia, I make it a point to attend fashion weeks in various locations, from small towns to major cities. This year has been filled with exciting opportunities for growth and connection, starting with my own show in April 2024, followed by New York Fashion Week in September, and more recently, Philly Fashion Week. At New York Fashion Week on

September 7, 2024, I attended outdoor shows in Times Square, where I witnessed incredible emerging designers taking their rightful place on a global platform. One of the most surreal and proudest moments was seeing Roanoke Fashion Week's billboard displayed right across from the shows. Not only did I see our amazing model coaches, but also my mom, my cousin, and two of our stunning models, Kathryn and Whitney.

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Watching them light up on that massive screen was a moment beyond words. Experiencing New York Fashion Week alongside my mom and two of my closest lifelong friends made it even more meaningful, creating memories I'll cherish forever.

Next on my fashion week tour was Philly Fashion Week, where the talent, designs, and the entire event layout were nothing short of spectacular. Held at Live! Casino in Philadelphia, it was an unforgettable five-day experience. I had the pleasure of attending with my amazing aunt Dawn, who has her hands in so many things, always creating and connecting. It was through her that I was introduced to the producers and owners of Philly Fashion Week. Their openness, humility, and extensive knowledge were truly inspiring, and I am beyond grateful to my aunt for that connection. Before leaving Philly, we also visited their store in the Fashion District, which featured collections from the designers showcased during the week. It was such a thoughtful and impactful way to honor the in-

credible talent of Philly Fashion Week.

With Philly Fashion Week now 19 years strong, it gave me hope and reassurance that, as Roanoke Fashion Week heads into its sixth year, we are on the right path. Seeing how these other fashion weeks have grown and evolved reinforces the idea that with time, dedication, and hard work, we can continue to elevate Roanoke's fashion scene. In fact,



I found myself thinking that Philly Fashion Week had even outshined New York this year with its stellar execution and welcoming atmosphere.

Back home in Virginia, the surrounding areas also have a vibrant fashion scene. Richmond Fashion Week and Danville Fashion Week both

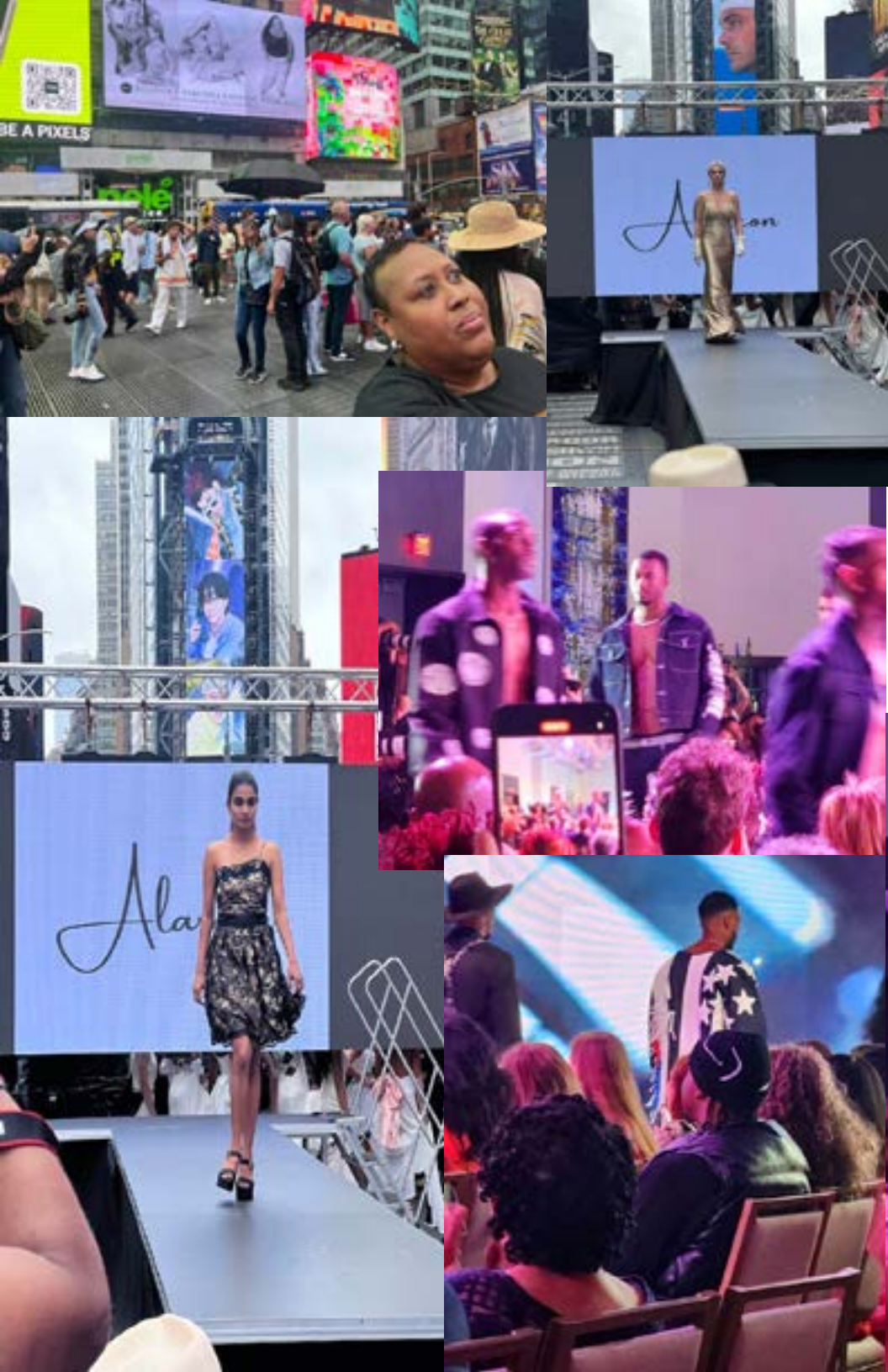


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host remarkable events that bring their own creativity and innovation to the table. Although I won't be able to attend Winston-Salem Fashion Week this year, I'm eagerly looking forward to seeing what they bring to the runway through photos and videos.

My travels to these fashion weeks aren't just about supporting other events—they're opportunities for learning, networking, and growth. I go to work, to learn from the best, and to seek out opportunities for my models. This isn't about one person or one show; it's about contributing to the broader fashion community and helping everyone rise together.

Fashion is alive and thriving, whether in small towns or big cities. As I continue to learn and grow from these experiences, I'm excited to bring back new ideas and fresh energy to Roanoke Fashion Week. Here's to another season of innovation, collaboration, and unforgettable moments on the runway!



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HELP THEM BECOME AN EXCEPTIONAL LEADER BY ENROLLING THEM IN

TOMORROW'S LEADERS!

THIS YOUTH MENTORING PROGRAM MEETS EVERY 1ST SATURDAY OF THE MONTH FROM OCTOBER - JUNE. IN THIS PROGRAM WE FOCUS ON:

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- EDITING
- MARKETING
- CONTENT BUILDING
- SHOW PRODUCTION

MENTOR GROUPS ARE RUN BY TRAINED ADULT MENTORS. STUDENTS WILL ENGAGE IN TEAM-BUILDING ACTIVITIES, FIELD TRIPS, AND MORE.

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OCEANFRONT 24TH STREET PARK BREAST CANCER WALK



NOVEMBER
2
2024

10AM REGISTRATION
11AM EVENT STARTS

2400 ATLANTIC AVE, VIRGINIA BEACH

HRVASTRIDES@CANCER.ORG



by Kista Thurmon

Being a breast cancer survivor has been one of the most profound and faith-defining experiences of my life. As a 52-year-old African American woman, deeply rooted in my faith and committed to serving both my church and my community, this journey touched me in ways I could have never imagined. It began with an unsettling discovery—a lump, small but significant, that left me feeling shaken and vulnerable. I knew something was wrong, and it wasn't long before my doctor confirmed my greatest fear: breast cancer. That diagnosis marked the beginning of a whirlwind of emotions that included fear, uncertainty, and questions about what the future held for me.

At that moment, my faith was

the only anchor I could cling to. Scripture tells us, “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future” (Jeremiah 29:11). Those words became my daily meditation, a reminder that even in the darkest of times, God was in control of my story. I had to surrender my fear and lean into the strength that only comes from a deep, abiding trust in Him.

The months that followed were filled with treatments, surgeries, and the discomfort of chemotherapy. There were days when I felt physically drained and emotionally defeated. But even in the most difficult moments, I discovered a well of strength within me that I didn't know existed. Each morning

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when I woke up, I thanked God for another day. It didn't matter how hard it was—each day was a gift, a testament to His grace. This journey wasn't just about battling cancer; it was about reimagining my life through a lens of faith and purpose. I started to see the world differently. Little things that once seemed insignificant—like a morning walk or a hug from a loved one—became moments to cherish. I came to understand

when I needed comfort. The support I received from my community was overwhelming, and I was reminded of how powerful we are when we come together in love and faith. My church sisters, in particular, stood by me, reminding me that I was not fighting this battle alone. Together, we leaned on our collective faith, knowing that “where two or three are gathered in My name, I am there in their midst” (Matthew 18:20).



how fragile life is and how precious each breath we take truly is. My faith deepened as I recognized God's hand in every step of my recovery.

But I didn't go through this alone. My family, church family, and close friends were my rock. They lifted me up in prayer, brought me meals, and simply sat with me

I also connected with other survivors, women who had walked the path I was now walking. Their strength, their vulnerability, and their willingness to share their stories gave me hope. We formed a sisterhood of survivors, bound together by a shared experience that only we could truly understand. We celebrated each other's milestones, whether it was the

we set the culture...

end of treatment, the return of hair, or simply a day of feeling good. These women taught me that there is beauty in survival and that resilience comes from community.

Now, as a survivor, I feel a profound sense of responsibility. Breast cancer has disproportionately affected African American women, and it is more important than ever for us to be vigilant about our health. We must advocate for early detection, regular screenings, and more awareness in our communities. During the month of October, Breast Cancer Awareness Month, I stand with so many other survivors in my faith community as we declare that there is hope for a cure. Our faith drives us to action, and we use our voices to spread the message of awareness and support research initiatives that will bring us closer to ending this disease.

Through Faith for a Cure, we work to raise awareness in churches and communities across the country. It's not just about pink ribbons or fund-raising events; it's about educating our sisters, mothers, and daughters on the importance of self-examinations and mammograms. It's about creating spaces where women feel supported and empowered to share their journeys. And most importantly, it's about bringing the message of faith into the conversation about healing. We know that God is a healer, and we believe that through Him, we will see breakthroughs in breast cancer research and treatment.

Today, I live with a heart full of gratitude. I am not defined by my diagnosis, but by the strength God gave me to overcome it. My life has been forever changed, not just by surviving breast cancer, but by the deeper faith that this experience has brought into my life. Each day is a new opportunity to give thanks and to use my testimony to uplift others. I know that there are many women still fighting this battle, and I want them to know that they are not alone. With faith, love, and a community of support, we can face whatever comes our way.

Being a breast cancer survivor isn't just a title—it's a testament to my faith, my courage, and my commitment to living with purpose. I stand as a witness to the power of prayer, the strength of community, and the unyielding hope that through faith, we will find a cure.



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Carolyn H. Coles
Project Connect*
Medicaid/FAMIS Outreach Specialist
Phone: 540-344-5156 x131
carolync@bradleyfreeclinic.com

Carolyn's position is funded through a grant from the Virginia Health Care Foundation with funding from the Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services and the U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services



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CAROLYN COLES
PROJECT CONNECT ENROLLMENT SPECIALIST

540(344-5156 x131

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FLYCODES INVITATIONAL BASKETBALL

SHOWCASE 24

@ *William Fleming High School*

RADFORD VS EC GLASS (G) 2:00 PM

RADFORD VS ROANOKE CATHOLIC (B) 3:40 PM

SPOTSWOOD VS EC GLASS (B) 5:20 PM

GW DANVILLE VS WILLIAM FLEMING (B) 7:00 PM



DECEMBER 14, 2024