

GP TTM

GOOD PEOPLE THINGS

JAN 2016

JENNIFER
LUCY
TYLER

MODERN-
DAY
MISSIONARY

Red Carpet:
Make Time 4 Love
Private Screening
starring
Africa Miranda
& *Martin's*
Carl Payne

Simone Maybin
Triple-Threat:
Doctor
Air-woman &
Professional
Athlete

Collette B. Watson
Curious
Creative
Flowering
in the Desert



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ISSUE



MAGAZINE

goodpeoplegreatthings.co

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Happy New Year! Never did I think I would be charged with the daunting, yet honorable task, of owning and editing my own magazine. Let alone be introduced to the world of graphic design and photography. What do you know? God is truly awesome and God often requires much of His children. Not because He is cruel, but because He knows the potential that He has placed inside each and everyone of us. As you turn through the pages of this publication, may you reflect on your own journey with God and God's purpose for your life. Continue to be Blessed & Give God all you've got!

GPGT's core belief is that, "God uses good (regular, ordinary) people to do great things" and it is our goal to feature

them in this publication. Please send your letters to the editor at info@valencyathompson.com with GPGT in the subject line and your feedback or inquiries to info@goodpeoplegreatthings.co.

If your business desires to advertise in our next issue, please email us to request a media kit while special introductory rates are still being promoted! We will release issues quarterly.

Know some good people doing great things? Please tell us about them and perhaps they may be featured in our next issue.

God's Blessings to You! May You Be on **Path to Purpose!**

~Valencya Thompson



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Purpose Pusher!

Pushing You on Path to Purpose

Faith:

Since God gave you the vision, it is important that you trust God's voice above all others!

#1

Consistency:

Life will happen no matter what and life doesn't care about your deadline. Knowing that problems come along with the territory, opt to keep moving anyway.

#2

Block Out Naysayers:

Why are you listening to people who lack ambition? It may be time to re-evaluate your circle, if encouragement is lacking from your conversation.

#3

So many are perplexed about their purpose or God's calling for their lives. Well, it is my belief that in identifying our spirit(of God)-led passions, we might be propelled into purpose.

This is the second issue of GPGT Magazine and the second Purpose Pusher that we have released. If you're thinking what does purpose have to do with anything, I assure you it has something to do with everything.

We live in a society where so many people are plagued by strongholds that are not of God, addiction, and hopelessness. I would dare to say that some of these issues are coping mechanisms that have developed over time; due to some not being ready to operate in, or being unaware of their God-given purpose in life. How do we cure this issue? Well, the answer is

the same as it has always been, we must stay tapped into THE SOURCE! The source is Almighty God of course.

There are no quick fixes or short-cuts so you may as well stop looking for them. The only way is to go through the process and endure the path that God has drawn out for you, no matter how many rocks or boulders stand in your way.

I think it is time that we clear up a common misconception,

Once you decide to fully walk with God and adopt God's purpose for your life, things do not get easier.

As a matter of fact you should go ahead and put

on the full armor of God already because you are about to enter into battle like you never have before (Ephesians 6:11).

Fear not, God is still in control and God still holds all power in His hands. As an heir of Christ, you are able to tap into God's power whenever you desire, just be sure to make yourself available to God so that you might be clear on how to discern His voice.

As usual, the world can be a very loud place with many things clamoring for your attention. Just as you would schedule a visit with a friend, go ahead and schedule an appointment to be with your Creator today. ■



Valencya Thompson

Passion for Purpose:

"Purpose" should not remain a foreign term in the body of Believers. As we work to engage culture, it is important that we keep the Word of God as our foundation. We must remember that God has promised to fulfill His purpose for each of us and that God's steadfast love endures forever (see Psalm 138:8)!

So what are you waiting for? Let go of other people's plans and pick up God's plan for your life today!

#PUSH

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Sabra Neal “Show Me the Money”

“I never said I wanted to do this, as a child; God always put me on the path to do what He wanted me to do.”

Sabra is a 25 - year old PhD student at Georgia Institute of Technology more commonly known as *Georgia Tech*. Sabra, who is originally from Irmo, SC, attended undergrad at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University. Sabra describes herself as having a love for

science and technology from an early age. This was mostly due to her mother’s interest in the field. Sabra attributes her work ethic to her parents, both being hard-workers, as well as; the rich entrepreneurial legacy her grandmother created by owning her own restaurant for 30+ years.

Sabra’s story is quite remarkable because we, unfortunately, live in a society where false information is depicted in main-stream media about Black and Brown people, versus the truth: that greatness lies within us.

If you caught our introduction, you may have inquired, “How is a 25-year old in a PhD program?” Well, Sabra is a part of the Bachelors direct to PhD trend that is more common than one might think. Sabra was advised by her parents that if she desired to attend undergrad out of the state of South Carolina, then she would need to be able to acquire funding for the majority of it and that’s exactly what she did. Sabra, more serious than some other high schoolers, opted to drop the basketball team so that she could fit more academic courses in her schedule and be able to effectively compete with her brilliant counterparts from around the

world that she would soon meet on the road to Computer Engineering.

Sabra remarked that, she applied early and “received an initial

scholarship to cover 50%” of her education, but Sabra’s award didn’t stop there, she also received a departmental scholarship in computer science. Sabra also joined a program known as SMART and as a result of all of these opportunities combined, Sabra was able to cover the full cost of her education, with no burden to her parents. Sabra said, “not only did they pay for me to go to school, but they gave me a stipend and health insurance.” “Because two different departments paid

my tuition and I was also apart of the SMART program, I received a refund check, as well as, payment for conducting departmental research.” WOW! Can someone say, “SHOW ME THE MONEY!”

This story gets even better folks. While, I admittedly know college students who purchased high-end merchandise with their student loan money refunds; Sabra who had only grants and scholarships, and in some people’s minds had every right to blow it, opted to save a **WHOPPING \$40,000 while in undergrad, instead.** When asked how she did it, she explained, “I’ve saved since childhood.” Thank you parents! As with most habits (good or bad), it starts while we’re young. Sabra expressed because of her housing and meal-plans being included she never had a reason to touch her *overflow* money. So what did Sabra do with all of that money, you may be wondering? Well, she purchased a condo when she made her big move to Atlanta for her graduate program.

Even after achieving such success, when asked about identifying her purpose,

Sabra responded, “Not sure I have. I never said I wanted to do this as a child, God always put me on the path to do what He wanted me to do.” Sabra shared that education was always very big in her home while growing up and she has always loved the “art” of learning.

Sabra’s future aspirations are to start a nonprofit and to create a scholarship for women at her alma mater in North Carolina because she works in a male dominated – field. Specifically, Sabra is the only African American in her department, which is comprised of mostly Indian and Asian men. Sabra is also only one of approximately six women.

Sabra also desires to help young girls to develop an interest in computer coding and to develop programs to assist children with learning disabilities in the future.

“Nothing in my life has never, not worked out. Favor comes from way back in my bloodline.” Sabra grounds herself in the Word of God and she acknowledges her faith to be the foundation for her achievement.

KD Boyd: Creative Activist



KD is an Atlanta native whom I had the pleasure of crossing paths with during my time as an AmeriCorps volunteer. KD may appear as quiet at first, but it is clear that he is very opinionated and strong-willed. KD is a former marine who has experienced war and as a result of people admittedly not voting in the community in which he grew up, he became passionate about mobilizing individuals to become registered to vote. KD also worked to provide a platform for local politicians to take notice of individuals from communities that might otherwise go unnoticed.

KD started the “Feed A Starving Artist (FASA)” initiative and though he is a writer, he does not consider himself to be an artist; instead, he sees himself as an individual who saw a need and opted to do something about it. Being catapulted by a job lay-off, KD honed in on his networking skills and used his knowledge of local business owners’ desires to bring more customers into their doors as an opportunity for change; because of this, he created the FASA “Open Mic Night”.

KD could have launched his “Open Mic Night”, generated revenue for himself and the venue owners and stopped there, but he instead made it his point to add a social activism component to his work.

KD often rallies spoken-word artists together (myself included) to speak before Atlanta City Council. Aware of the laws about speaking in this forum, KD knew that there was nothing that said constituents weren’t able to go before Council and speak poetry.

Picture this: In the midst of a formal City Council meeting, various constituents are raising valid concerns regarding their communities and the normal flow of events is interrupted by an introduction about what FASA is, then there is an announcement on an upcoming “Open Mic Night”. This is followed by a few great spoken-word artists sharing poetry all while the City Council members turn their heads with confused looks on their faces.

If you ever want to run for political office, you should strongly consider hiring KD as your campaign manager. He definitely has a knack for gaining the attention of those in leadership positions.

BY: VALENCYA THOMPSON
PHOTO PROVIDED BY: KD BOYD



Being Millennial Parents
Meet The Grimes!

Jonathan and Tamika Grimes reside in the metro Atlanta community with their 3 beautiful little girls. Self-noted to be the first out of their friends to have a child, these two have definitely gained some wisdom as a couple and as parents over the years. Jonathan holds a corporate position by day and works on his dream as a singer by night. Tamika is a professional counselor and also blogs as, Millennial Motherhood, when she has time.

Through the course of our conversation, it was clear that in addition to their calling to inspire others in a variety of ways: counseling, music, comedy, and providing words of encouragement; it was also clear that they have a direct call to parent their daughters and also share what they have learned throughout their journey as millennial parents.

It was refreshing to hear Jonathan so eloquently share, "As spouses, it is important for Tamika and I to compartmentalize and shift from one thing to the other to be effective." Jon, as called by his friends, also acknowledged that being a good father does not equate to being a good husband so he makes it his duty to re-assess his behaviors often to ensure that Tamika's needs are met, aside from his children's.

When asked about dating in college and being together even over the course of a long-distanced relationship at one point; Tamika shared that she, "just knew he was the one." Jon shared that he "knew there was no other person that would love me just for me, we had an instant connection".

In addition to being a great mother, Tamika has great ambitions. She believes that, "it is important for me to shed light on young moms, to show people what mothers like you and I are doing so other

mothers will know you can do it all: have a business, a job, and we are showing people that motherhood is a big deal."

Both Jon and Tamika chimed in to note that they each, "sacrificed a lot when it was just Sydney (their eldest daughter)". Jon noted some differences from him being a father in his early 20's to a father now in his early 30's. "I learned how to change diapers at the age of 23 and that babies had acid reflux because I had no clue, and I can cook now. I help with homework and re-direct Kenzie (middle-child) all while cooking dinner." Jon knocked down gender roles by helping as needed when Tamika's job required her to work some evenings.

Tamika noted the difference between her married self versus herself as a single: **"marriage taught me not to be so selfish, not that I thought of myself as such, but I had to learn that I just couldn't walk up in here and make decisions without consulting my husband first. I learned that if you put your energy into your spouse's needs, it can really work."**

Jon supported his wife's notion in saying, "yeah with us having children early and having three children by 31, it gives young millennials the hope that you can still pursue your individual goals after you start your family." "We are starting a family blog and we want the world to know that God can still use you." God has used us to encourage a countless number of people and at the end of the day we are ordinary people with extraordinary goals." Sounds like good people doing great things to me, as usual.

Robin C. Edwards, Owner



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Jennifer Lucy Tyler:

The Modern Day Missionary



BY: VALENCYA THOMPSON

I can recall trying to determine who GPGT should feature on our second issue's cover and Felicia Walker called me up and said, "I don't know if you've already considered who your cover feature should be, but I have the perfect suggestion." I replied, "Okay, who?" Felicia responded, "Jennifer Lucy Tyler." "She is approachable and kind and I know that she will share about what you are doing." I thought, "I'll give it a shot." My first email was sent from my business account, which usually bounces back from people's Gmail accounts and I could have given up and said, "Well I tried." I persevered and decided despite my concern with not looking professional, I wrote to Mrs. Tyler from my personal Gmail account and forwarded my previous message. When I tell you that she responded within a few seconds on the evening that I wrote, said she was honored that I would ask her and, was delighted to be featured in GPGT Magazine; I am telling you the truth. Whew! Look at God!

So we arranged a meeting time to conduct a phone interview since she is based in the DMV and I am in Atlanta. Here goes a lot of something!

GPGT: Where were you born? What was growing up like for you?

I grew up in Washington, D.C. I had a good childhood, with both parents. My father was on drugs most of my life and in and out of the streets and my parents did not have a strong relationship with God though, until our aunt moved in



with us and brought God with her. My aunt taught her kids the Bible and included me. In elementary, school I studied and poured into the Word. This was during the crack era in the 80's in D.C. We moved to Maryland when I was a teenager and were away from my aunt's influence. There were new, crazy doors that opened for me, like promiscuity.

GPGT: What is your faith background and what is your faith today?

Christian, non-denominational. Today it is non-traditional. I attend DC Metro Church and serve in the Metro Students Ministry, where I pour into teens.

GPGT: Before your internal shift that you wrote about, what did you envision your life as an adult could be?

Physical Therapist. I volunteered at doctors' offices and hospitals. My freshman year in biology I received all A's and one F. I always loved caring for others, seeing people healed, and seeing people change.

GPGT: What drew you to be bold enough to sign up for your first missions' trip and how many have you been on?

The first year of my marriage in 2011, God said, "You are to do missions." I immediately went down stairs to tell my husband. Our current church did not do missions, but God said I was to do it. I had no clue as to what missions looked like. I had to research it and figure it out

(sounds like God to me). I then had a friend to reach out and say, "My husband and I are going to Ethiopia, Do you wanna go?" We went in 2012 or 2013. This trip planted a deep seed. I became hungry and I wanted to see more of the world. On



Facebook, I saw a friend post about taking a team to Thailand. I went off because she assumed that I didn't want to go because I was a newlywed. Thailand solidified and showed me this is what I need to do. There were all women on this trip. **Because I learned of the trip around the deadline, I raised funds in 2 weeks.** (Wow look at God!)

GPGT: We are calling you the Modern-Day Missionary in this issue. What does that mean to you?

I love the concept of Modern-Day Missionary.

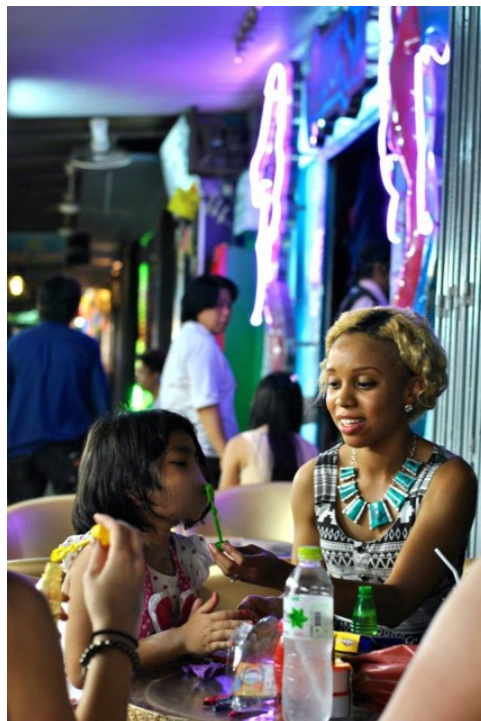
Traditionally we picture someone drab in style; long skirts, and we couldn't see anyone

with any type of fashion sense. There is a stereotype of how "they" looked traditionally. I have the belief that any and all of us could be a missionary. This defies the stereotype of how a missionary looks and how they minister. Missionaries aren't afraid to get their hands dirty, to go out into the world or to go into a different country.

GPGT: Given your own personal experience, how does modern-day missions compare to what you have learned about missions done in prior decades?

I am not an expert, I am still learning. Missions' work still looks pretty much the same. Connie Rock is my mentor that I met in Thailand. She led that trip. Connie grew up as a missionary kid. She bathed in a river, boiled water to drink, etc. I haven't always experienced it on that level. The people change such as the people you meet. We are to be the hands and feet of Jesus. Some are cocky and are

like, "Hey, I have the Gospel," and try to shove it down people's throats; whereas we get to know you, your



families, your stories, your hearts and preach the Gospel with signs following. It's not about numbers, it's about building a relationship. **If you're hungry, you don't want to hear my Gospel.** In Thailand, there is mostly Buddhism, you have to pray that they have an encounter with the Holy Spirit. There is an organization that I've done awesome trips with to Thailand and we have ministered in the *Red Light District*.

We have invited them to our party, where we would have fun with them, eat food, and play games together. We even laughed and after this we would do a Gospel presentation. I shared my testimony through a translator, and all we saw were the tears beginning to flow. God moved in that moment. God drew them in and that was the first time I preached with a translator.



things. It helps you more as a couple when you focus more on the ministry (versus petty things). When we are in the field together, we're not focusing on stupid stuff, but the big picture. Things like, our marriage and God being glorified. In the future we will lead teams of married couples into the field. This is one way to have a great marriage, and we do this together. If Jeff says, "I don't think you should go," I'm not. We honor each other, as we honor Christ.

GPGT: How does your work as a missionary impact your marriage?

Specifically, how does your husband view your work?

Missions made my marriage better. We work from home. Our finances allow us to be on the field together. There is a minister who I am reminded of who preaches, "Marriage in light of eternity." Couples often focus on the wrong

GPGT: As a businesswoman, minister, and wife; how do you keep balance in your life?

By re-discovering balance and understanding that seasons change. There are times when more is on your plate than usual, but we always strive to keep "first things first." When we follow



these rules; handling business becomes easier, our customers come to us easier, and that's what keeps it all in order. This is also what keeps us sane.

GPGT: What have you found to be the best fundraising method to fund your missions' trips?

Social media has been awesome for me because it allows

me to touch people all over the world. People have been able to find me and connect with my ministry. My husband and I are also blessed to work a pretty good business so we don't have to fundraise as much anymore. My health and wellness business is my vehicle to just grow the kingdom and keep it all in perspective. I am also now working to launch a mission-based NPO to assist others who are new to this journey as I once was.

GPGT: What has your journey to purpose been like and what words of wisdom would you share to others in search of their purpose?

I began to understand and know once I got closer to the One who created me and that purpose. I think so many of us feel like we have to figure out our purpose on our own and we are often doing "good" things, but not "God" things for our lives. Our Creator fashioned and formed us. God wants to reward us with our purpose and connect with us. So I would advise that we all get in touch with our Creator.



BOSSSES IN BUSINESS

It was a rainy afternoon in December when I encountered this powerhouse trio. I had the privilege of meeting Naporsha, Nicole, and Lisa; each in their early 30's, on a brief intermission from their normal "business talk". All three women's stories solidified that just as it is important for an attorney to know the law, it is also necessary to be able to navigate the unspoken rules of the field. This is especially true for Black Women attorneys in the south. This "vibrato" as described by Nicole is key - as in situations when put on the spot with new information about your client while in the courtroom. This vibrato must ring loudly because your client's future may very well depend on it.

I can vividly recall Naporsha Valentine discussing being enrolled in nursing school and practicing law as she held her 6-month old daughter, Justice, in her arms. While this might seem like too much for someone else, Porsha - as her law partners call her, is taking action as God leads. You see Naporsha has a vision of operating in medicine and law so that she might unite the two worlds. Yes, you read that correctly, Porsha wants to be able to speak to medical patients and medical professionals from a legal and medical perspective. Whew! Talk about a lofty goal, but as one who speaks from a heart of faith, I have no doubt that she will succeed.

FAITH & LAW

A Tale of Three Attorneys

BY: VALENCYA THOMPSON

Left to Right: Nicole, Naporsha, & Lisa



Porsha is in good company too! Her colleague Nicole Page Theodore is multi-lingual as a result of having aspirations of being a translator for the United Nations, prior to 911. She has since, evolved her dream into wanting to use her knowledge of foreign languages intentionally in her law practice. Nicole clearly knows God and makes it her point to consult the Lord in her daily movement. I particularly enjoyed our photoshoot in Nicole's home – as it provided an opportunity for Jerrell and I to get to know her husband, Rodney. Nicole and Rodney are newlyweds and I smiled as he described the all-to-familiar story of everything going on at once: having to search for a home and plan a wedding all while Nicole leaped into partnering with Lisa and Naporsha to see their own law firm into fruition.

It was neat to hear Lisa Robinson say, "I had no idea what this interview would be about and I typically say no to these things."

This was in the midst of all four of us acknowledging the presence of God permeating throughout our dialogue as we gathered around the table. It was clear that each lady had a remarkable journey to allow her to become the woman that she is today and it was clear that journey came with its own sets of trials.

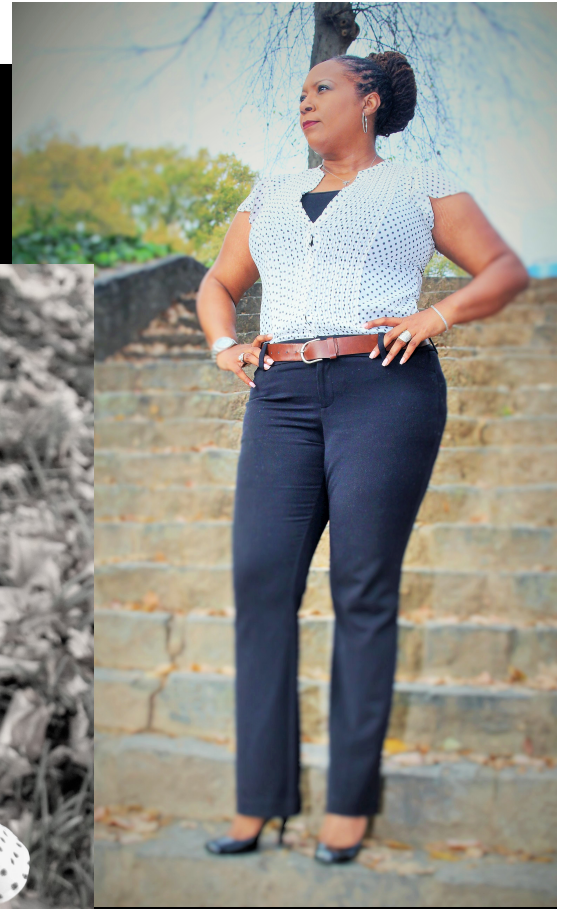


Lisa's presence brought into the space a special candidness of not always being certain of how God operates as a believer and not being certain if she had always done everything "right" along her journey, but it was clear that she has always wanted to be an attorney and she attributes the strength she exudes as a woman to having been raised by a dynamic mother. The other ladies shared in this notion of being grateful for parents and even grandparents, who showed them how to be God-fearing women first, and then, women to be reckoned with in business.

We, four ladies, shared a special moment back at that interview table as each one spoke of her gratitude. Nicole spoke of her bowl of "thank-yous" where she keeps record of all that God has done in her life, especially during down days.

Porsha chimed in with her practice of verbally just looking around and telling God, "thank you for my house, thank you for my car, thank you for my health..." Through it all, it was evident that faith is what allows these ladies to practice law in the first place. ■■■

TERRA GAY



BY: VALENCYA THOMPSON

PHOTOS BY: ALLISON L. GAY

“The greatest leader is not the one who is the loudest, but the one who is the quietest and seeks God.”

Terra Gay is poised, polished, beautiful, and confident. If she didn't say so herself, you wouldn't believe that she is shy. Shy or not, Terra takes the time to teach and educate others and does not appear to have an issue with speaking before large crowds. It is awesome to meet women in our community who mentor others. Yes, Black women do mentor other Black women; despite, what mainstream media might suggest. Terra had a diverse upbringing with time spent between New York and Atlanta as a youth.

Terra was taught to value education and works to instill the same value system in her nephews and the world at-large. Terra currently serves as a Senior Director of Education Programs at Points of Light.

Terra is an Emory University alumna and children's book author. Terra writes under the pen name, Jordan Trent and she has written a brilliant book to help children grieving over the loss of a loved one entitled, *If Tomorrow Comes and I am Gone*.

GPGT is proud to salute Terra Gay and the many women who serve others without accolades on a daily basis. ■

I had to remind myself that I was built for this. He built me for something specific, "for this". I'm built to overcome this, to withstand this, and come through this. Each story is for a reason and they challenge us to become who God intended for us to be.

KaCey grew up in Virginia Beach, VA on land full of family where fresh food was farmed and love was plentiful. Like most people though, KaCey has had her share of adversity. KaCey has battled various illnesses and even been given unfavorable prognoses by doctors who declared she wouldn't make it, but clearly our God said, "not so."

KaCey is living proof that God is still in the miracle – working business and while her strength is apparent in what she has lived through, she still finds it not robbery to give back to her community.

KaCey is the founder of *Hey Day Camp*, an organization that provides free activities, food, games, and enrichment to children. Though "Hey Day Camp" is open to boys and girls alike, it has seen its season of mostly boys. Perhaps this suggests something about KaCey's calling. While

KaCey serves in ministry in a traditional church – setting, she realizes, as we acknowledge at GPGT, that all people do not enter the four walls of the church. In order to impact the masses, she must operate a vehicle that will engage culture.

I had the pleasure of visiting *Hey Day Camp* once and at that time volunteers were educating young elementary – aged children on how to create Microsoft PowerPoint presentations and even

provided them with an opportunity to present before their peers. This was followed by a bike ride outside and a

meal. *Hey Day Camp* is definitely appealing to the child holistically. The workshop facilitators announced that they would return to teach the youth how to build computers next time. I was elated when I saw the advertisement for this post on social media!

In addition to her work with *Hey Day Camp*, KaCey has started a movement known as *Built for This*, which birthed out of her passion to overcome her own obstacles with self-

esteem. KaCey made it her point to remind herself that, "I am the apple of God's eye, and I am a part of a royal priesthood," she is now encouraging others to do the same. For more information regarding Kacey and her projects, please visit kaceyvenning.com.

KaCey Venning: Built for This!



Celebrating H.E.R.!

Two Ladies, One Vision, Countless Lives Being Touched.



GPGT had the opportunity to speak with the co-founders of a new nonprofit organization entitled H.E.R. Foundation (His Elegant Rubies), Zakiyrah Ficklin and Meyhgin Harrington. These young ladies are making a huge difference in their community, especially in the lives of women.

PGT: Tell us more about your non-profit organization entitled H.E.R. Foundation.

Zakiyrah: H.E.R. Foundation is an organization geared towards women's development, working with young ladies that have absent fathers, and recognizing women in the community who are doing great things. Our goal is to reach the hearts of women one crown at a time!



Meyhgin: Recently, we just had the opportunity to join forces with the Partnership Against Domestic Violence to put together care packages for the women housed there which included toiletries, feminine products, journals, and books. We also just recently had the opportunity to partner with the WNBA, Atlanta Dream team for their annual Winter Wear drive at the Atlanta Children's Shelter.

PGT: What prompted you to start H.E.R.?

M: Both Zakiyrah and I had a desire and passion to start a nonprofit organization. I personally wanted to focus on women's development and empowering young ladies. She

had the passion to reach young girls with absent fathers. We thought it would be awesome to bring our ideas together and that was the birth of H.E.R. Foundation. We also wanted to celebrate other women in the world who are impacting our communities and are successful.

PGT: Can you elaborate on the platforms that you all focus on?

Z: The first platform is women's development and we want to allow individuals to gain insight on what it means to be a woman: how to carry yourself, how to have high self-esteem, and how to bring out the person that's deep within you. We don't want

women to settle for where they are, but proclaim their God-given talents and abilities. The first event we did that focused

on women's development was the H.E.R. care packages for the *Partnership Against Domestic Violence*. The day was so

amazing when we delivered the care packages. They had amazing stories and we just talked to them about how your circumstances don't define you and how to overcome certain situations. The love and letters we



received from those women were so heartfelt. This experience definitely touched us. Our second platform is working with young ladies who have absent fathers. We will be starting a campaign next year called #IMissMyDaddy and #IMissMyDaughter.

The goal is to start mending those broken father/daughter relationships. Our third platform is recognizing women in the community who are doing great things. In today's society, there seems to be so much competition and



some women just think everyone can't win. So, we want to highlight those women who are doing great things and let them know to keep going; that they can't quit. I truly believe that when women come together to support one another and get things done, a greater force is created!

GPGT: How can people become involved with H.E.R.?

M: They can subscribe to our website to stay up to date with what we are doing and volunteer opportunities at

www.herfoundationinc.com We do have a calendar in the blog section of the website. They can follow us on Instagram,

Twitter, and Facebook which are all @herfoundationinc. We love to stay connected with people and have them be a part of what we're doing.

GPGT: What can we expect from H.E.R. in the future?

Z: In February, we are going to team up with a girl's group home to do a vision board party and have a "Purpose and Passion" session. Then, in March, we'll be teaming up with another organization that focuses on sex trafficking to host an event. Our big event for next year will be our awards luncheon which we

will host in May that will highlight women in the community that are doing great things. Our vision is to go international. Imagine H.E.R. Foundation going to Malawi, which is one of the most impoverished places in the world and building a home for young girls who don't have their parents, giving them all the

resources they need to succeed in life. This organization is much bigger than us. There are women and young ladies around the globe that need what we have. Our goal is to go international and touch the hearts of women, one crown at a time.

M: We'll be having our official launch Fundraiser in February which is entitled "A Royal Evening with H.E.R." We would love to have people come out, get to know what we're doing and be there for the official inception of H.E.R. □

**COLLETTE
B.
WATSON**



**Curious
Creative
Flowering
In the
Desert**

PHOTO BY:
BRIAN
WATSON

1) At what age did you know you could sing and when did you know it could become a career?

I didn't realize that I was able to sing solo until about age 15. I realized that it could be a career about ten years later, after I'd graduated from college. By that point, I knew that I could write and record my own songs at home with all the new technology that had emerged. I bought a microphone, installed a software program called Cubase, and started making music! I really knew it could be a career when I got my first booking outside my hometown. The International Soul Music Festival booked me to come sing in Atlanta, GA, and everything was full speed ahead from there.

2) What is your purpose in life? Do you believe you are operating in it?

My purpose is to use my gifts as a writer, musician and communications professional to spread messages - messages of understanding, enlightenment and inspiration. I'm here to help bridge the gap!

3) Born and raised in Columbia, SC, how did you find your way to Arizona?

I met a guy named Brian when I was living in New York City, and we fell in love. His job transferred him to Arizona, and I liked the idea of writing songs in the desert. So... voila! Here I am, with my husband in an amazingly different new place.

4) You are also a Creative Branding Strategist and a newlywed, and you hold many other titles; what methods have you found to work best in managing all of this?

I use a LOT of "To Do" lists, lol. I also hire help as needed - an awesome assistant named Kyley Jameison who helps me manage my branding clients' social media, and a great digital marketing pro named DJ Duporte who assists me with projects. I'm also always working with fellow singers, songwriters, producers and musicians. Most of all, my husband helps me keep myself balanced and supports me in a million amazing ways. He goes above and beyond to make sure that I eat healthy and take care of my body when I'm super busy. I do the same for him, and we always make sure that we have things to do *together* - church activities, arts, performances, etc.

5) What would you say to fellow Creatives who are afraid to take the leap?

When it comes to your career and calling, you **HAVE** to take leaps in order to move forward. Staying in one place is just another form of moving backwards. So, I'd say, do what my mom used to tell me to do when I was a kid: "Put fear in your back pocket and take that step." And if finances are a concern, launch your creative business while you're still working another full-time or part-time job, and make the transition in phases. Either way, just do **SOMETHING** to try your idea. Failure is totally okay - and also temporary.

BY: VALENCYA THOMPSON

Make Time 4 Love Premiere

This go around GPGT had the opportunity to attend some Great Events over the holiday season, hence this new section. Might I say, they were quite enjoyable.

First up, J. Carter's *Make Time 4 Love* premiere with a great cast, starring Africa Miranda and Carl Payne.



Left to right: Markell Williams, J. Carter, & LaShon Carter



Africa Miranda



Center: Carl Payne

As guests entered, they were met by a red carpet in front of the Purpose x Design step and repeat with interviewers ready to capture their story and photographers ready to capture their great looks.

Once inside, the pilot itself did not disappoint at all! Having enjoyed the original stage production, we at GPGT had nothing, but high expectations for this debut. The show was nothing short of excellent.

Here's to a lifetime of success to The Carter Family and many more Purpose x Design productions!



Left to right: BriQu'Elle Grant and Stephanie J. Williams



Judi Blair



Stephanie J. Williams

The GPGT party, free and open to the public, kicked off with a little mingling over some food and wine, and shopping. This event, which launched as a “thank you” to our subscribers, included two beauty panel discussions. Nicole Smith Hall moderated our panels. Beauty Panel #1 featured a Fashion segment where Jennifer Spears, of Recessionista's Closet, shared styling tips and Makeba Evans, of Inhairitance Hair Studio, shared hair care information.

This was followed by our Makeover Winner's Reveal, Kimberly Sumpter. Kimberly is an Atlanta-based cancer researcher, wife, and mother. We learned that Kim is often taking care of others while putting herself on the back burner. It was GPGT's pleasure to partner with some amazing individuals to provide this makeover to Kim. Our Makeover Partners included: Chasity Broughton – Makeup Artist, Robin Edwards – Evidence Nail & Beauty Boutique, Makeba Evans – Inhairitance Hair Studio, Nicole Smith Hall of Charleigh Rocks, Jennifer Spears of Recessionista's Closet, and Felicia Walker of Boutique 7.

Next on the agenda was Beauty Panel #2 which featured a Faith segment. In case you're wondering how beauty and faith go together; trust, we asked God the same question! Let's just say that God showed up and showed out! The room was moved as Elise Bethel shared her testimony about winning her fight with Stage IV Metastatic breast cancer. This was followed by words of encouragement for believers to keep moving in whatever fight they must conquer by Felicia Walker. Valencya Thompson closed by sharing her own testimony of battling miscarriages and ended with a prayer.

Attendees were able to shop, mingle, eat some more, take photographs, and grab their GPGT giveaway bags. There was even enough food left over so GPGT affiliates and attendees could share the overflow with those impacted by homelessness in the downtown Atlanta area. This was appropriate as nonperishable food items, as well as, monetary donations were collected for the Love Beyond Walls (lovebeyondwalls.org) ministry.



GPGT Magazine Launch & Makeover Reveal Party

12-20-2015
Held from 2pm – 4pm.



Words from our Makeover Recipient:

I would like to thank you for this incredible opportunity! I can't even begin to express how amazing I felt after my full makeover through GPGT. All of the vendors were not only kind and welcoming, but they helped me to find a "look" that expressed my inner confidence. With all of the time devoted to caring for a toddler, juggling work, being a wife, and squeezing in a social life, it's not surprising that I often put myself at the bottom of the priority list. It was time to make an investment in myself. Thank you so much for this remarkable experience!
~Kimberly Sumpter





PHOTOS BY:
JERRELL THOMPSON

Be sure to check out our Instagram
page @goodpeplegreatthings for
more photos!



Desireé McCarthy-Keith, MD, MPH, FACOG

The Faithful Woman Behind the Medicine



I will take a point of personal privilege to state that Dr. McCarthy-Keith (Dr. M-K) is the fertility specialist that properly diagnosed why Jerrell and I experienced miscarriages. Following her treatment, she not only referred us to the right OB-GYN, but an entire new team of doctors, from a general practitioner to even a counselor. Because of Dr. M-K's attentiveness, Jerrell and I were able to successfully birth our healthy son, Justice Elijah.

God's Miraculous Work

God is truly something else, as I found myself sharing about this particular testimony today with a friend and I was reminded of the heartache of having no success with a prior OB-GYN. I also remembered a time when I resolved that I was done with being intentional in hoping for a successful pregnancy and childbirth. Don't get me wrong, I believed God could do it; I just didn't want to think about it anymore. So much until, a best friend hijacked me and located Dr. M-K from a thorough internet-search. I vividly recall our phone conversation. My New Jersey – based friend said, "You need to go to this doctor in Atlanta!" "She has received awards and everything for her direct work in helping people overcome miscarriages." So, reluctantly I went, yet I was pleasantly surprised by my first office visit. Dr. M-K was the second doctor to take me into her office, formerly introduce herself and even pull out charts and diagrams to describe scenarios for what was potentially going on with my body. This was all before she ever examined me on top of a table with my feet in stirrups.

Dr. M-K provided service with a smile, as she shared intelligent medical information, while navigating her astute ability to breakdown terminology for laypersons as needed. She even wrote,

“God’s blessing” on the first ultrasound that I received of Justice during the visit where we heard his heartbeat. Having experienced a few ultrasounds before, it was powerful to have a moment where Jerrell and I would actually hear a heartbeat for the first time, and to have this moment further blessed by Dr. M-K’s beautiful presence. Her unique personality and brilliant expertise was just the breath of fresh-air a broken-hearted couple needed to push them further along this tumultuous journey.

When Dr. M-K and I sat down for this interview it was just after Justice’s first birthday. Because of my super crazy schedule, she has yet to meet him in person, yet I am confident that she prays for and loves him just the same. It was great to sit down and meet the faithful woman behind the medicine. During this meeting, I learned that Dr. M-K grew up in Greensboro, NC with two working parents and a sister. Her parents instilled education in her, as generations prior had a rich legacy as teachers. Dr. M-K said that she and her sister were raised to **“know that we could do what we wanted to do.” “If we can see it, then we can be it,”** Selah. This simple phrase is so important because it is key for children to be nurtured and inspired early on and for their lights to not be smut out by fearful parents.

Finding God’s Purpose

Dr. M-K shared that as a youth, she thought of being a teacher because of her family history, but she enjoyed science and was pushed by teachers to hone her scientific skills. Dr. M-K grew up visiting a Black dentist and observing an older cousin who is also a physician. Dr. M-K was born when her parents were a part of the Nation of Islam, so her early experiences were in temple and mosque, but her family separated from the Nation while she was in elementary school. Dr. M-K did not have a church background and while she still

didn’t attend a physical church during the time of this interview, she “believes in God and believes in God’s purpose and plan.” Dr. M-K acknowledged that the ministries of Joel Osteen, Joyce Meyer, and Bishop T.D. Jakes are those that have great influence on her. Thank God for tele-evangelism!

Dr. M-K noted that she was certain of her purpose in life because it was a “natural feeling and I didn’t have to sit up at night and question.” She also made the important note that this did not mean her journey was easy; in fact it was exacerbated by many trials and setbacks. She recalled having to retake examinations to accomplish her goals. She has even endured a divorce, but takes pride in raising her two sons to be positive, upstanding citizens and sees it as a part of her purpose to equip them to be the best they can be in the world.

Figuring it All Out

If you are in search of your God-given purpose, Dr. M-K recommends that you become “mindful of the clues in your life, sit still in the quiet, and feel what your purpose is. It all comes down to just faith and knowing that God put us here.” Dr. M-K shared that her patients need her most when she has to deliver the “bad news”, I believe if we all approached life in this manner, the world would be a much better place.

BY: VALENCYA THOMPSON
PHOTOS PROVIDED BY: DR. MCARTHY-KEITH

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When you look at Dr. Simone Maybin (M.D., NSCA-CPT), the first thing that you notice is she's drop-dead gorgeous. Let's just be honest about that. Then, if you get the opportunity to actually engage in a conversation with her you learn that she not only has beauty and brains, but she is kind. This is quite refreshing, especially in today's society.

Simone shared that what she wanted to become as an adult evolved throughout childhood. In elementary school, she had aspirations of becoming an artist and a writer, but this shifted once she was introduced to Ben Carson's book, "Gifted Hands". From this point onward, Simone wanted to become a physician. Simone noted that she does continue to use her love for the arts and creativity in various aspects of her life.

Simone was raised with an awareness of two different faiths – Bahá'í, from her mother, and Christian with a Baptist denomination, from her father. As an adult, Simone practices the Bahá'í faith. We, Christians, have an impeccable opportunity to learn from Simone's story, if we open our hearts and minds.

Simone Maybin, The Triple-Threat: Doctor, Air-woman & Professional Athlete



“I had no reason to believe I could do this, other than, I wanted to. If I can do it, you can do it.”

So you may be thinking just like I did, how does a woman join the Air Force, become a physician, and a professional athlete in one lifetime? Well, it appears that with the right amount of perseverance and will to endure, anything is possible. Simone's father was in the Air Force so it was natural for her to gravitate to the military. Simone explained it was a known fact that she would be responsible for funding her college education. What better way than by joining the troops? Coming from a military family and having participated in JROTC in high school made this a clear choice.

Simone's dream college was the Air Force Academy and it is very competitive to get into. Simone shared that though she had the GPA and passed the necessary physical fitness tests, her Achilles heel was her SAT score. Because the Air Force Academy is very firm on their admissions requirements, Simone was offered the opportunity to attend the preparatory school on the Academy's campus before being considered for admission. You can imagine how my jaw dropped when she told me that the Academy still required her to re-take the SAT before admittance. Simone said she had to take the test 9 different times because she was in need of a few points and statistically, this is virtually impossible to achieve after a certain amount, but SHE DID IT.

Simone is definitely a fighter! Her battle did not stop here. She expressed that no portion of her journey has ever come easy. She even had to battle her own medical issue while working to become a doctor. Simone attributes her getting into the Air Force Academy to be THE determining factor that got her into medical school, so not only did it diversify her portfolio, but it seems that it was a necessary part of her path to purpose.

Simone is also an IFBB Professional Figure Athlete. She has always been athletic since childhood and her interest in this particular arena stems from providing herself with not only an active hobby, but a platform **“to impact as many people as possible and to inspire people to go after their dreams regardless of their current position or where they started from.”** Simone competes as a professional figure athlete because she knows it is a part of her purpose. Being on stage provides a way for her to reach people and share her story. May we all be inspired to push a little harder because of her willingness to open up her world to us.

BY: VALENCYA THOMPSON
PHOTOS PROVIDED BY: SIMONE MAYBIN

While most toddlers are busy exploring the world around them, Laci Chisolm was literally dancing to the beat of her own drum. My mom said that I was dancing in her belly. She said that as a toddler, I would dance to anything, even the sound of the rhythm of a dryer. I was always dancing, so she enrolled me in a



LACI CHISOLM: *The Dancer*

local dance school where I took tap and jazz. I just loved dancing. It came naturally to me, and I genuinely enjoyed doing it. I was shy when I was younger, but I felt that I could really open up and express myself through dance.

Laci's love for dance led her to make a courageous move from North Carolina to New York City where her passion for dance blossomed. It's in New York that Laci created her business, *Fit 4 Dance*. She started it three years ago after participating in a citywide initiative entitled *Shape Up NYC*, which trains



volunteers to teach fitness classes in recreational centers. While volunteering with *Shape Up*, Laci earned her Zumba certification. Shortly after, she became the Zumba instructor in the very same rec center for which she volunteered. Laci recalls the struggles she endured before joining *Shape Up*, "For a few years, I worked as an administrator and because of the high demand, I didn't dance for about three years and found myself very unhappy. I gained weight and was under a lot of pressure. I had high cholesterol and high blood pressure, but that wasn't me. I



was always fit because of dance. So, I had to take a look at my life and make the necessary adjustments. I had to change my eating and find a way to be active again which was through dance. “

Since rediscovering dance, Laci has worked vigorously to build *Fit 4 Dance*. She wanted to complete her business plan, so she entered a competition to gain the push she needed. Although she didn't win, that competition allowed her to gain a clearer understanding of her business and connected her to organizations that truly supported her mission. So much so that she was invited to Women's Entrepreneurship Day at the United Nations and was recognized for the work she's accomplished through *Fit 4 Dance*.

I want Fit 4 Dance to be more than a dance studio, I want it to be a place

where people in the community feel safe and feel welcomed and have a place to dance, and not only adults but kids too. I wanted to have my own studio so that I can offer a variety of classes. Now that I have my own storefront, I am excited to offer a variety of classes, as well as, workshops to inspire others. Classes like yoga, Barre and Pilates as well as cultural dance workshops.

If you live in any major city, then you know that gentrification is on the rise, which has diminished the sense of community. But, Laci is combatting this effect by offering a space that allows people in the neighborhood to connect. She's also using her studio to educate and empower women of color. *Black women make up the largest percentage of preventable health - related deaths, and it's mainly due to our lack of activity. Unfortunately, our girls don't have safe spaces where they can improve their self-esteem and learn how to develop friendships. Dance does that. It provides discipline and confidence. Black girls should be able to walk in a room and command the attention of others without saying a word. Dance teaches that. My joy lies in being able to pass on the confidence that dance gave me. My purpose is to inspire others through dance. I'm at my truest form when dancing and I'm able to connect with people on deeper levels.*

With such a clear purpose and vision, it's no wonder that



Laci has successfully raised the funds needed to open her storefront dance studio in Brooklyn, NY! Her passion for dance is undeniable and her genuine love for people is inspiring. I asked Laci to share what keeps her going during the rough moments. She responded by sharing some of the messages she's received from students and the look on one particular student's face, once she looked back on a picture from a year ago and realized how much weight she'd lost. "Those are the things that keep me going," she said. "I'm blessed to connect with groups of women who are so encouraging and welcoming. I

don't have to say anything, they just know and that blesses me."

Laci is just beginning! *Fit 4 Dance* is just beginning! I know without a doubt that God has so much more in store, and Laci does too. She believes that, "with the help of God and with supportive friends and family, my dream is unstoppable. My dream is to have a successful business, and I know that if I'm able to touch the life of at least one child or adult, develop their self-esteem, prevent them from having to go on medication and ultimately save their life, then that's enough for me."



BY: FELICIA HEFNEY WALKER
PHOTOS BY: ADAM WAMSLEY



PHOTO PROVIDED BY: E. RENEE DAVIS PHOTOGRAPHY

Elise Bethel: The Good Fight

Elise Dunnigan Bethel's
Facebook Status Update 9-14-15:

The Miraculous

"He is the one who you praise; He is your God who performed for you those great and awesome wonders, you saw with your own eyes."

~ Deuteronomy 10:21

Jesus did it...My oncologist's words today were "The results are remarkable!" We got my 3 - month repeat scan results back - my repeat PET/CT scan shows that the spots in my lungs, chest, underarm and lymph nodes are ALL RESOLVED! RESOLVED = COMPLETELY GONE! The mass in my left breast has shrunk over 50%! The spots on my spine are dead and not active, but still visible on MRI, but my oncologist said bones take longer to

heal. The plan is to stay on my current treatment plan (chemo and my other drugs) indefinitely as it's working! THANK YOU JESUS! She said, I just have to continue to push through side effects (fatigue, body aches, etc.). I will be repeating my scans every 3 months. I will see my oncologist every 4 weeks. Dr. said healing has taken place and it will just take longer for my breast/back to completely heal --- GLOOOOORAAAAYYYYYY!!!!!!

Jesus STILL does the MIRACULOUS!!!!!!!!!! He STILL performs miracles! He STILL keeps His promises! He STILL makes ways out of no ways!!!!!!!!!! God STILL honors faithfulness! The prayers of the righteous STILL availeth much! Having faith in Him is STILL pleasing in His sight! Jesus is STILL a miracle worker! He STILL heals!!!!!!!!!! He is a

*rewarder to those who seek Him!!!!!!
Miracle worker! Miracle worker!!!!!!
Miracle worker!!!!!! Ehhhhh
God!!!!!!!!!! I bless Your name!!!!!!!!!!
Thank You! Thank You!!!!!! THANK
YOU LORD!!!!!! THANK YOU! You are
WORTHY God!!!! Thank You for
HEALING me!!!! Thank You Father for
loving me so!!!!!! THANK YOU for my
future JESUS!!!!!! THANK YOU!!!!!!!!!!!!!!*

*Today would not be possible
without the prayers of so many!!!!!!
Thank you ALL! We ask that you
continue to keep us lifted and to
please continue to pray for
continued healing! Thank you from
the bottom of our hearts!!!!!! The
Lord inhabits the praises of His
people, so go on and get your
praise on and praise the Lord for the
wonderful things He has done on my
behalf!!!!!!*

I met Elise at a Holiday Sip N' Shop early December in Douglasville, GA and upon meeting it was as though we had known each other our entire lives. Elise's presence is pleasant and her conversation was simply captivating. Unsure of what GPGT might find at this event, I came expecting for God to show up and He did, in the form of Elise. I knew instantly that I had to feature Elise in GPGT. I was so thankful that she obliged my request to be interviewed for this issue. Elise and I met over lunch at Houston's in Atlanta, while I was in the midst of a smoothie challenge, so I had a salad, and gave in to some of Elise's spinach dip. I found myself speechless as I listened to Elise share her story of faith and FIGHT.

Elise candidly acknowledged that she was inhibited by fear until God allowed her to fight breast cancer. I kid you not, Elise said, "Having breast cancer is the best thing that could have ever happened to me." HUH? My thoughts exactly. Elise explained that it was in her darkest hour that she woke up in the middle of the night being wracked with pain in her body and crying out to God. "GOD I WILL DO ANYTHING THAT YOU WANT, WHATEVER YOU WANT, PLEASE HELP ME!" It was in this moment that God brought to Elise's memory a t-shirt that a friend made for her to encourage her in her breast cancer fight. Elise found it weird as we often do when God speaks. God, then, let her know that she was to launch her t-shirt line, *Fight Apparel Designs*. God told Elise that she would be a living testament to His glory and that He was going to heal her while she was on a public platform so that others might know God's love and about God's ultimate healing power.

Can I tell you that lunch has an interesting taste when eaten with a pool full of tears? My life changed for the better as I gave Elise prayer requests for those I know in my own circle who are suffering directly and indirectly with their own cancer – battles. What I know for sure is that God can and will do absolutely anything! It is not some fictitious story from long ago, Father God is still absolutely in the healing business. Keep pushing "Fighties" for this is how Elise acknowledges her supporters.

BY: VALENCYA THOMPSON

fight

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Mr.
Sirjames
Buchanon



Sirjames'
Words
of Wisdom

I had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Sirjames

Buchanon during my time as an AmeriCorps volunteer. My program was based through Hands on Atlanta, a local nonprofit, and Mr. Buchanon was my supervisor. How can we describe Sirjames? Let's just say once you meet him, you will never forget him and you are bound to have a mind-shifting experience with this former marine, if you take time to truly listen to what he has to say.

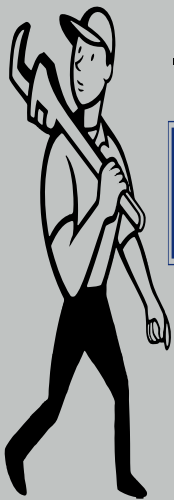
Mr. Buchanon currently serves as the Confidential Assistant & Community Relations Officer in the Office of the Chairman for Operation HOPE, Inc. We met on a beautiful afternoon in the

THE LIST:

- 1) Always remember to exercise mind over matter.
- 2) Never worry about things you can't control.
- 3) Never reason with unreasonable people.
- 4) Life is really about the lives that you impact, when you make it about others, it is more fulfilling.
- 5) Our destiny is pre-determined by God, Our relationship in faith is on us.
- 6) Your lack of success should never be based on not trying. Never leave it up to others to pre-determine your destiny.
- 7) Remember this simple prayer: "Lord bless me to be a blessing to others."
- 8) Change is by choice, not your situation.
- 9) When you get sick and tired of being sick and tired, you begin to control your purpose, while God maintains control of your destiny.
- 10) Family is very important.
- 11) Give to others.
- 12) Instill love and integrity in others.
- 13) Find someone or something to laugh at daily.
- 14) The healing process starts with you.
- 15) Stop, look, and listen. It is always better to open your eyes and ears before you open your mouth!
- 16) Before you inhale, assess whether it's poison or power.
- 17) There is something powerful about all of us. Some of us just need to take time to recognize how powerful we really are.

Operation Hope Office, which overlooks the downtown skyline in Atlanta.

Sirjames proudly introduced me to his colleagues in the office mostly millennial – age who graciously shared that they receive vital information from Sirjames on a daily basis. I could definitely relate. For it is Mr. Sirjames Buchanon who provided me with a quote some years back that helps me to push through during times of difficulty, especially when I want to quit. That quote is "We must adapt, improvise, and overcome." ■



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