

Doctor

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medical expertise – she was one of only two African American women in her class at Duke University – are recounted in her new book, “Hundreds of Interlaced Fingers: A Kidney Doctor’s Search for the Perfect Match.”

When she began writing her intention was to

bleak.

“There are still Blacks and people of color in general that are waiting longer, overall, than Whites to get a kidney transplant.”

About one third of patients on a kidney transplant waitlist are African American, yet they receive only one in five of

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publish a decision-making guide to dialysis treatment. But through the suggestion of her literary agent, she weaved in her personal heart-warming story of patient and donor, and later, husband and wife.

“It makes the book much more appealing to more people, and that’s the point, to get it into the hands of as many folks as possible, and to widen awareness,” said Grubbs. “It’s very much written for a general audience.. This is not just for folks in medicine.”

“Hundreds of Interlaced Fingers” is part-memoir and part-love story, but also goes where few books do through candidly mapping out the racial disparities in the kidney transplant landscape.

African Americans and other minorities continually experience lengthy delays in the process of receiving a new kidney, from tests to diagnosis and treatment. And while waitlists have slightly improved – due to a systematic change which back-dates patients to when they started dialysis – Grubbs said the situation remains

all donated kidneys, according to Grubbs.

On the other hand, while White patients also account for one third of the waitlist, they receive every other kidney donated.

“The process should be more systematic and not left up to human error or bias,” said Grubbs. “There are lots of instances where people could fall through the cracks or simply not be considered.”

While Phillips was nearing the top of the transplant list, he received no clear answers from medical professionals, which only aggravated his dire situation.

Discouraged and fearful, Grubbs offered her boyfriend one of her own kidneys.

“We had surgery after nine months of dating, but I had made the decision a few months before that,” explained Grubbs. “I knew a living kidney would be the best possible option for him, and I knew that I was clearly very much in love.”

Grubbs has since become a nephrologist.

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Farming

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and also making sure there are kids’ activities nearby for adults who come to work and learn at the site, since a lack of child care can be a barrier to volunteering for some people.

“We have a really heavy youth and child engagement direction that we want to go,” Shavers told *The Skanner*.

Johnson and Shavers also work at other sites, assisting with community gardens and teaching gardening classes throughout the community.

The couple are also cofounders of the Black Food Sovereignty Council, and engaging African Americans and other people of color with their work – including advocating for more opportunities for people of color to grow food and own their own land.

“You don’t see a lot of folks of color in urban farming,” Johnson said.

Many people who come to volunteer at the farm, she said, have gardened in the past but have lost their yards or community garden spaces due to gen-

trification.

“Everybody’s looking to grow food because they’re losing that space,” Johnson said. “Even container gardens

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in apartments are not an option to everyone.”

Some property managers don’t allow containers, and other spaces just don’t afford enough space or light for even small pots, she said.

In addition to working with youth in schools, Johnson and Shavers are working to engage older generations. MudBoneGrown is working with Nathan McClintock, an associate professor at Portland State, on a series of inter-

views with older people about their gardening practices to document them for posterity.

“Our elders are dying off, and I think there’s a lot to learn from older folks that’s useful to us,” she said.

MudBone Grown was launched in 2016, and was the culmination of years of sacrifice. Johnson and Shavers even moved into a motor home last winter to save money for land. When they were approached earlier this year to partner with the Oregon Food Bank, it was a dream come true.

“It was an honor to be given such a big space,” said Roberta Eaglehorse-Ortiz, who manages a community garden at

degree at Portland State University, followed by two master’s degrees – one from the University of Oregon – and a doctorate from Brigham Young University.

“There was always the chal-

“If you give the right kind of energy and level of support to students when their mind is malleable, they’ll do all sorts of phenomenal things...

energy and level of support to students when their mind is malleable, they’ll do all sorts of phenomenal things at much earlier ages,” she said.

Her family held that same belief. Originally from San Antonio, Adair’s parents – both educators – arrived in Portland when she was three.

After Vestal, she attended Madison High School.

Of the 721 students in her graduating class, only five were African American.

Adair’s drive and intelligence earned her a bachelor of science

challenge of paying for school, but it was never a matter of whether you were going to go,” she said.

With parents that placed a high value on education, Adair is the sixth generation in her family with a master’s degree.

“If you get the right circumstances and you set things right, every kid, every person, can be more successful at whatever it is they want to do,” she said.

“That’s how I started and that’s what’s always been with me.”

Read the full story at
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PHOTO BY SUSAN FRIED

Charleena Lyles

Charles Lyles is greeted by people as they leave a public hearing about his daughter Charleena Lyles’ death at the hands of two Seattle Police officers June 18. The hearing, which was held at Kane Hall at the University of Washington on June 27, was attended by more than 700 people who demanded that things change in the way police interact with the community.

Adair

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Public Schools, where she served for 47 years. In 2014, she received the President’s Award from the Confederation of Oregon School Administrators.

At the close of the school year, Adair is one of two African American leaders at PPS to retire last month.

Adair began her career with PPS in 1970 as a middle school teacher, before moving to the ranks of principal, and finally to the district level.

Adair leaves PPS as the assistant superintendent in the Office of Early Learners, Schools and Student Supports.

Her achievements include leading key initiatives such as the PK-8 implementation, supervising principals in nearly every cluster of schools, and serving on the governor’s Early Learning Council.

Among PPS’s accomplishments in the work of early learning, she cites Oregon’s introduction of full-day kindergarten, as well as the state’s pioneering of the federal head start program.



PHOTO BY CHRISTEN MCCURDY

Shantae Johnson, co-owner of MudBone Grown, stands at the Oregon Food Bank’s Unity Farm, where her startup – which also provides education, outreach and advocacy around food justice and urban farming – is now growing food.

the same site.

“There’s a lot of healing in the soil that can happen,” Johnson told *The Skanner News*.