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The Skanner Newspaper, established in October 1975, is a weekly publication, published every Wednesday by IMM Publications Inc.

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The Skanner is a member of the National Newspaper Publishers Association and West Coast Black Publishers Association.

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Opinion

A New Generation of Freedom Fighters

Black youth are taking up the mantle of leadership in America

Without being given much direction, Black youth have seemingly taken matters into their own hands, relative to their future here in America, by strategizing, organizing and mobilizing.

Whether on social media or through community activism in the streets, Black youth are proactively pushing the agenda forward and forcing society to no longer ignore many of the issues that have impacted the Black community for decades. Many have decided to take an even greater step towards bringing about change, by getting involved with politics.

These bold efforts to express themselves in ways that are progressive and substantive have given Black youth a clearer vision for their future and an even greater sense of purpose that has given them an alternative to doing things that are detrimental to their future.

Because many of their Black predecessors dropped the ball and failed to effectively protect them from the many dangers and pitfalls they have had to face without adequate support, it forced this new generation of Black freedom fighters to become

Jeffrey L.
BoneyNNPA
Columnist

more knowledgeable about things.

Black youth have chosen to stand up and fight for themselves, in spite of the lack of collective support they have received from the Blacks who came before them who were beneficiaries of the civil

“Black Lives Matter was formed by a small remnant of Black youth who were sick and tired of being sick and tired

rights struggle.

That is why the Black Lives Matter movement was birthed and gained so much traction.

Black Lives Matter was formed by a small remnant

of Black youth who were sick and tired of being sick and tired. This energized group of young, African Americans wanted to do something about the issue of police brutality, as well as other critical issues that were negatively impacting the Black community, particularly Black youth.

Black Lives Matter isn't the first example of young, African Americans creating movements and platforms to allow their voices to be heard and making a difference. The hip-hop community was formed because many Black youth wanted to express themselves and needed an outlet to talk about the things they were dealing with in their respective communities and facing in this country. Just as it has been since inception, hip hop has become a steady tool used by Black youth to influence society and make a difference.

While there are a myriad of things currently impacting Blacks in America, the advent of social media has given Black youth the necessary access to news and information to keep them up-to-speed on everything they need to know.

Prior to social media, many young, Black people were disconnected from news and

politics and had limited interest in things such as reading newspapers, watching news channels, listening to talk radio or keeping up with major current events and social issues online.

Now, through social media, Black youth have the ability to get this information in real time and in a way that is interactive and enlightening to them. This has caused many young, Black people to become more engaged in and educated about issues that truly impact their daily lives.

As America finds itself in the midst of a crucial midterm election, young, African Americans have chosen to get even more involved and are looking for more ways to make a difference, versus looking for leadership and assistance from older Blacks who many believe have abandoned them or from traditional mainstream Black institutions where they feel they don't belong. Black youth have found themselves searching for answers and looking for quality leadership to help them navigate through these tumultuous waters called life in America.

Read the rest of this commentary at
TheSkanner.com

Scarred and Battle Tested from Heart Disease, Still Fighting

WomenHeart (the first and leading voice for the 48 million American women living with or at risk of heart disease) story begins in February of 1999, when three women, united by heart disease, formed an organization that was destined to become a lifeline for women across this nation. And at the same time, in February of 1999, a young mother in Charlotte, N.C. suffered a stroke while she was pregnant with her second child. Fortunately, she suffered no long-term deficits, but was horrified by her temporary left side paralysis.

Five years later, this size six, 36-year-old woman would suffer the first of three heart attacks just five days after giving birth to her third child. It was May of 2004. She was misdiagnosed for an entire week despite an EKG showing an acute myocardial infarction. She sought treatment six of seven days before someone finally listened.

On that sixth night, she laid on her bed with one foot on the ground for the entire night, afraid to relinquish her physical attachment to earth, because she felt her body shutting down. She prayed. And she vowed that if she lived, she would raise her voice so that no other woman suffered her fate.

Rhonda E.
MonroeBoard
Chair-elect,
Women-
Heart

After this week-long heart attack, she returned to the emergency room. She was rushed by ambulance to another hospital and taken to emergency bypass surgery. She had five coronary artery dissections, and she underwent an emergency quadruple bypass. Her heart was so remarkable that the surgeon literally held it in his hand and had someone capture a photograph.

Eight months later, that same young mother learned that her bypass grafts had shut down. Her rejection fraction was only 21 percent. She was advised to get her affairs in order.

It was then that I became intimately acquainted with her. I marveled at her strength and resolve as we walked this journey together. She became a force of nature, moving heaven and earth in her fight for life. She underwent a repeat bypass, had part of her heart cut off, 15 laser holes drilled in her heart, a pericardial window cut in the sac around her heart, three de-

fibrillator implants, stents, angioplasty, and then some.

She's flatlined four times, and suffered from congestive heart failure. She's experienced more heart issues than generations of a family. But I am happy to share with you that she is still with us. This is my story, and WomenHeart has been a lifeline for me.

I became a WomenHeart Champion in 2007 and it changed my life. The sense

“The sense of sisterhood and friendship are truly priceless

of sisterhood and friendship are truly priceless. WomenHeart is the nation's only patient-centered organization solely dedicated to advancing women's heart health through education, advocacy and patient support. At its core are WomenHeart Champions—women living with heart disease—who are trained to be community educators, support network leaders and advocates for women's heart health in the communities in which they live.

WomenHeart is a friend to many WomenHeart Champions like me. Today, I speak to audiences of women living

with heart disease and medical professionals. I'm a little scarred and battle tested, I am no longer 36, I am no longer a size six, but I am still here. And I am determined more than ever now, to keep the vow that I made 14 years ago in May of 2004, so that not another woman suffers my fate. I, along with WomenHeart, am fighting for every heart with the same tenacity and vigor that saved my own.

As an African American woman, I know that this disease impacts women differently than men, especially minority women. Heart disease claims the lives of nearly 48,000 African American and 21,000 Hispanic women annually. Which is why I am asking other women of color who are heart disease survivors to join the fight and become a WomenHeart Champion at the 2018 WomenHeart Science & Leadership Symposium. It's the nation's only free volunteer program that trains women with heart disease to be community educators and support network coordinators in their communities. They are real women living with heart disease, who share their stories and important messages about heart health—all in the mission to save lives. Join me.

To learn more or to sign up, visit www.WomenHeart.org/empower.