



# Branch Newsletter

## November 2023

By the Communication, Press & Publicity Committee

### NEXT MEMBERSHIP MEETING:

Our membership meeting will be Thursday, Nov. 30, 7 p.m. at the Ricketts Center, 658 Beech St. Our guest speaker will be Nicole Keels-McGruder, chair of the state NAACP health committee. She'll discuss the health objectives of the national NAACP, will talk about ways branches can recruit people for health committees and build on that, and will share resources. Keels-McGruder is also the founder and board chair of Community Hero Action Group and is a member of Habitat for Humanity-Philadelphia.

Here's a Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84995648174?pwd=QlAyaHZkWiJXZWk1T3FWcHNFVnJQQT09> Meeting ID:849 9564 8174 Passcode: 937480

### Nov. 16: Night Out for the Homeless

It was dark. It was cold. Try as she might, Alana DeHart, our secretary, couldn't get to sleep. She thought about what it must be like for people who don't have the choices she has. People who HAVE to sleep outside because they are homeless.

Earlier that evening, at the Montco SLEEP Out at the courthouse in Norristown, she had listened to speakers talk about homelessness and how it is "not a condition of a lack of willpower, it's not an expression of laziness, but it's due to a callousness of the heart."

County Commissioner Jamila Winder, State Rep. Greg Scott, Macedonia Ministries pastor Byron Craig, and others — talked about how people wring their hands and say "how awful," but they don't want to do anything about it. ....continued on Page 3

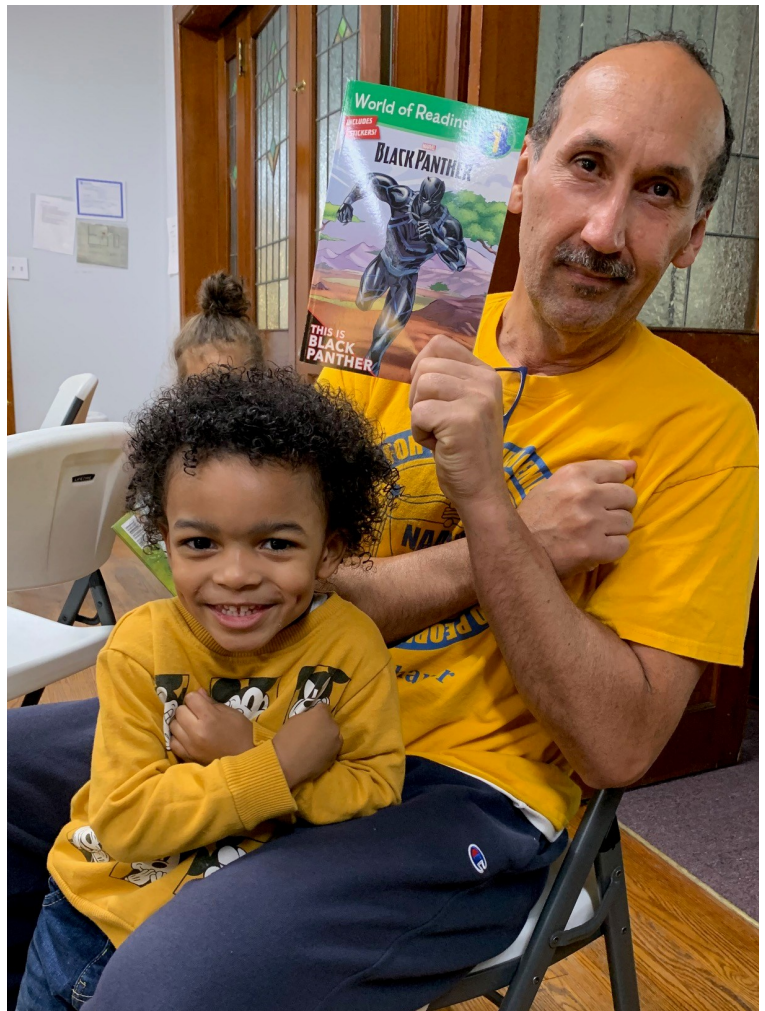




## Our reading/literacy project

Our branch’s Road to Reading project is already impressive. As of Nov. 20, one month since we signed our fiscal sponsor agreement with the Literacy Council of Norristown, we have distributed 1173 books to 7 organizations in Pottstown . The plan is to keep those groups — and others — supplied with books for children ages birth to 8 years. These books are gifts, not library supplies. Most are new. The recipients include: Pottstown School District, Salvation Army family shelter, Centro Cultural Latinos Unidos, WIC (Women, Infants and Children nutritional program), Kingdom Life Daycare, Head Start classes, St.Paul’s Diaper Exchange.

That is just the beginning. Stay tuned.



PHOTOS: President Johnny Corson, makes the Wakanda Forever gesture with a youngster at Kingdom Life.

Below, right: President Corson, branch member Sandy Bauers, Kingdom Life Education Director Char Queen and Pastor Justin Valentine.

Below, left: Pottstown School Superintendent Stephen Rodriguez, Bauers, and Curriculum Chair Ryan Oxenford.





### Election Day lesson

Election Day provided a first-hand civics lesson for students in an Advanced Placement U.S. Government and Politics class at the Hill School. They visited the polling place at the Ricketts Center, and some were able to vote. Pictured with the students are (from left) John Armato, branch President Johnny Corson and Tony Melton, of the Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity, whose members were on hand to assist voters.

### The Branch book club

We will meet again on Monday, Dec. 11, at 6 p.m. at the Pottstown Library to discuss *The First Ladies*, by Marie Benedict and Victoria Christopher Murray. The historical novel explores the partnership and friendship between Eleanor Roosevelt and civil rights activist Mary McLeod Bethune.



### Sleep out: (from Page 1)

Alana thought about her busy day at work the next day. She thought about how last year, 48 hours after sleeping outside all night, she tested positive for Covid. She thought, “Wow, this is what happens. Your immune system can’t stand up to the rigors of sleeping outside.”

Reluctantly, Alana went home. She said she felt guilty. She reflected on how lucky she was to have a choice. But next time, she’s going to clear her schedule for the day after the event. Then, she vowed, “I’ll be out there sleeping – or trying to sleep.”

### You can help a child with sickle cell

The branch is hosting a blood drive at the Ricketts Center, Thursday, Dec. 7, from 2 to 7 p.m. We welcome all donors. But we are making a special appeal to African-American members of the community because their blood may aid people with sickle cell disease.

To make an appointment for the drive, visit [www.RedCrossBlood.org](http://www.RedCrossBlood.org) or call 1-800-733-2767



**Wings  
Of Victory  
Fundraiser**

Members of the branch attended a dinner and jazz fundraiser for the Wings of Victory Outreach Corporation on Nov. 18. Jamila Winder, Montgomery County Commissioner, spoke.

According to its website, the nonprofit “offers a holistic approach and an opportunity to acquire an autonomous, self-sufficient lifestyle for those who are experiencing homelessness. Our program lends helping hands to the homeless by offering programs that develop self-sufficiency through education, life skills training, and character building.”

Its Community Outreach Coordinator is branch member Marlene Wood.



**Pictured upper left:** Branch and Pottstown School Board member John Armato, Branch President Johnny Corson, Pottstown School Board member Deborah Spence, who was honored at the event, and Branch Executive Committee member Bobby Watson.

**Above:** Shirley Barr and Bobby Watson.

**Left:** Branch members Sandy and Ted Josey.