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C.O.B.S.

CIRCLE OF
Boss SISTERS

KING'S COURT

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CEO OF ALMIGHTY FORCE
FAMILY INC.

ARTIST'S CORNER

SHENIQUA KIA SCOTT
FOUNDER OF KIKAPUSH

QUEEN'S COURT

CHERYL THOMAS
OWNER/MANAGING DIRECTOR FOR
GO HARD DANCE, LLC

WOMEN WERK

COURTNEY FULTON
FOUNDER OF BROWN GIRL
DIAGNOSED, LLC

SPECIAL EDITION

MEET THE COX FAMILY
A FAMILY OF AUTHORS AND ENTREPRENEURS

WOMEN INNOVATORS

TRIVIA PAYNE
THE FOUNDER OF T.R.I.V.I.A.'S
INSPIRATIONAL RADIO NETWORK

Ahriana Edwards

FOUNDER AND CEO OF VAILA SHOES

FROM THE
OFFICE OF THE EDITOR

UNDERSTANDING YOUR SELF WORTH

DR. TREVI BOOKER PERSHAY



Hello April!!!!

I had the opportunity to meet a few young women at a conference where I was an invited panelist. The topic of conversation was pursuing one's dreams and learning to capitalize on your GRIND. As I was surveying the room, these women were empowered, looked confident, and enjoyed every speaker as they jotted down notes. I thought to myself, all this empowerment means nothing if Self-Worth wasn't the crown we own. Some women have a master plan, and in their love life, their partner interrupts the plans by destroying that women's self-worth.

Let's define Self Worth:

- Self-Worth refers to the value or importance a person place on themselves. It is an individual's belief or perception about their abilities, accomplishments, and character traits. It is the level of self-esteem and self-respect a person holds for themselves.

When someone tears down a person's self-worth, it can significantly negatively affect their mental health, self-esteem, and overall well-being. The impact can be short-term or long-term, depending on the severity of the criticism and the person's coping mechanisms. You need to own YOU fully and not allow someone to strip you continuously for being you.

Growing up, I did not know who I was, but I was told by my mother what I was going to become. My mother wanted me to finish high school and then get a factory job to help financially in the home. It was a generational curse that I had to break, and in doing so, I was identified as rebellious and out of control. A person with high self-worth has a positive attitude toward themselves and is more likely to pursue their goals, take risks, and overcome challenges with resilience.

Having a healthy sense of self-worth involves recognizing and valuing your strengths. I remember being a victim of rape and molestation. For years I allowed the prison of my past to become a prison for my future. I had to heal, let go and embrace my destiny without carrying unnecessary weight. I had to stop being a victim for 30 years, the person who molested me was dead, and I was still giving life to that trauma. I had to free myself to find myself. Healing, loving, and embracing YOU is the beginning of taking ownership of your self-worth.

Dr. Trevi Pershay

Dr. Trevi Booker Pershay

YOU JUST DON'T WAKE UP STRONG

ft

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MEET THE C.O.B.S. TEAM



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SPEAKS TO WOMEN

"UpRising Entrepreneurs" in the local Black and Hispanic Communities.

Our women went from weeping to winning, from the grind to the get it and from the struggle to their strengths.... in finding their purpose.

We are Queens!!!! Period!!!!

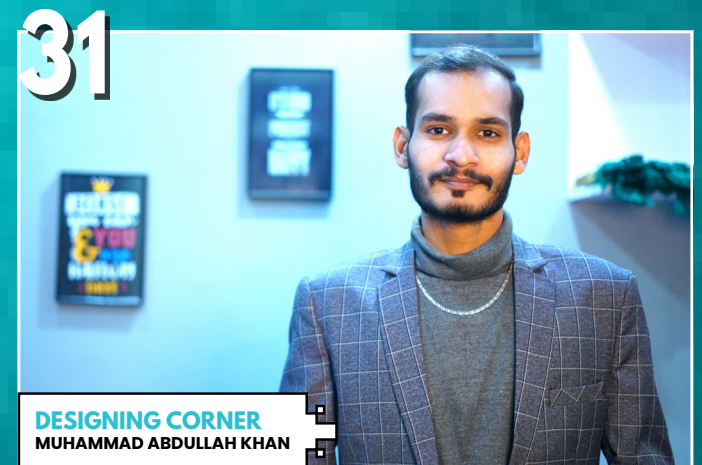
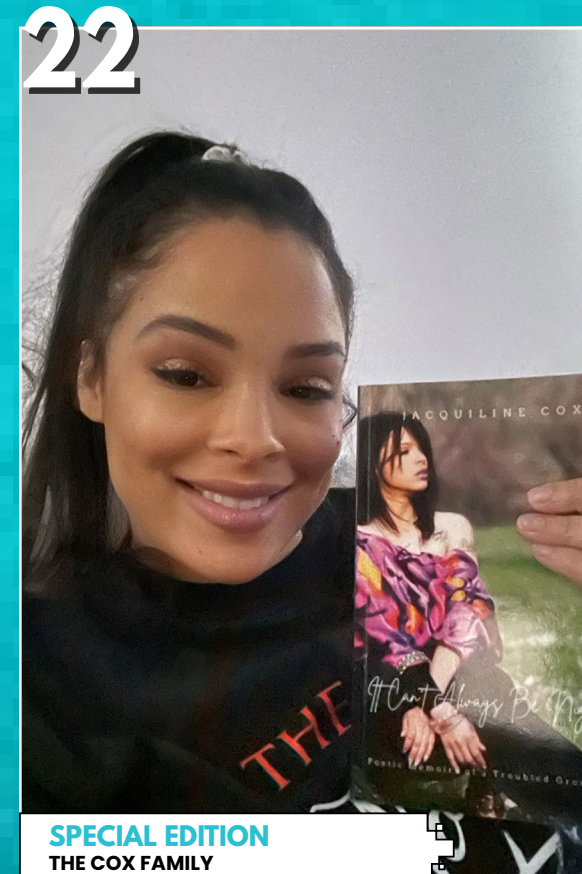
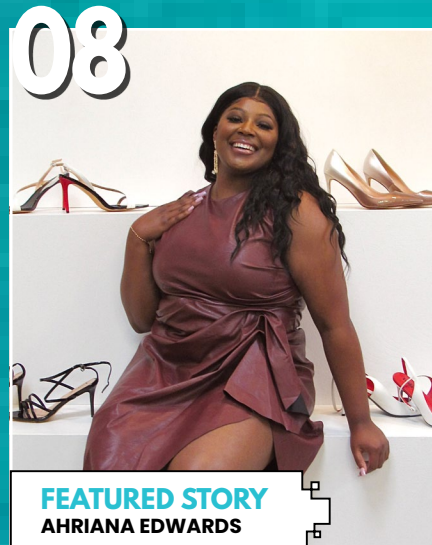
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GOT A STORY??????

Please email us if you're interested in sharing your story with us. We are looking for CEOs, Authors, Artists, Fashion, and testimonials. Connect with us at cobsmagazine@gmail.com



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AHRIANA EDWARDS

MEET FOUNDER AND CEO OF VAILA SHOES

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

Welcome to C.O.B.S Magazine. We are super excited to interview entrepreneur Ahriana Edwards who has strived to become a game changer in the fashion industry. Thank you so much for doing this interview with us. Before diving into your entrepreneurial journey, our readers would love to learn more about you. Can you tell us a bit about your childhood backstory?

AHRIANA EDWARDS:

Entrepreneurship honestly started when I was young, and at the time, I didn't know it was entrepreneurship. My mom knew I would be an entrepreneur before I knew (as she says). I found myself constantly being a problem solver, an innovative thinker, and a big dreamer at a young age. Whenever I was told "no," I went the extra mile to see if I could accomplish something anyway. Whenever I ran out of ingredients for my easy-bake oven, and my mom didn't have the money to buy me more; there I was, googling ways and testing out baking formulas with household ingredients for an easy-bake oven. When I was in middle school and wanted to save money to attend something, I sold candy until I got in trouble. When I lost all of my childhood weight and didn't have enough money to buy clothes, I saved up money, bought a sewing machine, and taught myself how to hem my pants tighter. Whenever I didn't have a solution to solve my problem or desire, I always found a way to get it done. So even as a young girl - I believe

entrepreneurship was naturally engraved in me.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

Can you tell us about your business Vaila Shoes? Where did the name come to derive from? What stimulated the idea for you to design a shoe line? What sets you apart from other companies like yours?

AHRIANA EDWARDS:

Vaila is short for available because it's about time ladies with larger shoe sizes had fashionable dress shoes available in their size. Since middle school, I've always worn a larger, more mature shoe size for my age. Talk about the struggle of going into a shoe store, wanting those cute sandals that all of my peers had in middle school, and having my mom tell me that I'd have to shop in the men's section. It wasn't very pleasant growing up trying to be feminine and be current - but my shoe size would never let me. It wasn't until college that I decided to do something about it. It was early 2020, and like many people, I was going through a reflection and transitional phase in which I started reevaluating how I wanted to show up in the world. I embarked on a journey to shop for apparel and attire to accommodate my business lifestyle. I was able to replenish everything but my shoes. It was a mess! I found myself going to multiple stores and shopping online for hours to end up at retailers who stocked limited, outdated, and less inclusive shoes for the workplace. I was frustrated because even after a decade, the fashion industry progressed with plus-size apparel but not plus-size footwear. Next thing I knew, those middle school feelings of not being enough, not



being qualified, and not being beautiful rushed to my body at 21 all over again.

After that moment, it was clear: millions of women like me needed access to footwear that fits well, looks good, and is workplace appropriate. From there, I set out to create a footwear brand that did just that. Vaila is a modern dress shoe brand for women with extended shoe sizes of 9-14. Our shoes are engineered for the larger foot structure, designed with current fashion trends in mind, and made for women who handle

business.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

Can you explain the process of designing your shoes? How hard is it to keep up with the ever-changing times in the fashion world?

AHRIANA EDWARDS:

I spent a lot of time in my customer discovery trying to understand precisely what styles my customer wanted. After interviewing these women, I discovered one key thing: our customers didn't need anything over extravagant and next-level design. They just wanted the cute and trendy shoes they saw the ladies wearing in smaller sizes. We create seasonal collections so that our customers can get a taste of the current fashion trends throughout the year, and then we put our spin on them to make the designs versatile for the workplace and after hours.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

Every entrepreneur has a secret to their success. Can you give me three ingredients that have helped with your success? How important does the role of leadership play when trying to achieve long-term success?

AHRIANA EDWARDS:

I would say keeping in tune with my faith, being humble, and always giving back. I've experienced the highs and lows of entrepreneurship, and personally, the only thing that got me through those

emotional rollercoasters was my spiritual practices. I've known what it was like to have thousands of dollars and zero-dollar months, and I am not afraid to say that I don't know everything - but I will work hard to be successful. That act of being humble and fully being myself when I walk into rooms has gotten me into doors and access to people I would've never imagined. Lastly, I will never forget where I came from. Many entrepreneurs sometimes make it and forget about who has helped them along the way. I have a gift, and where I can give that gift of knowledge to help others, I will, and I won't ask for anything in return. Leadership is essential when trying to achieve long-term success. You are establishing a culture and leading the individuals who will get your company to the next level. If you don't take the time to do this right, it will be hard to reverse the effects. Understanding your leadership style (strengths and weaknesses) and how you can alter your approach to lead diverse individuals is critical to the trajectory of your company.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

Can you tell us about the board you serve on at the Women's Business Center of Fayetteville and the mentoring program you are part of? How have your influences within these programs helped ris-

ing entrepreneurs?

AHRIANA EDWARDS:

I interned at WBCFay during college to better understand entrepreneurship. During that time, I was also building Vaila and attending multiple pre-accelerator programs myself. I used my strength in pitching, marketing, and sales and started hosting webinars on my own time for the company. They saw that I was helping to transform the community and thought it would be great to bring me on board to help with founders and initiatives. I ended up planning and orchestrating a local pitch competition for the town that went amazing. I use my love for mentoring and giving back to help the community of Fayetteville and other organizations, such as Future Founders, where I mentor aspiring high school entrepreneurs. When individuals see how young I am - it gives them a great perspective and example that they can accomplish their dreams.

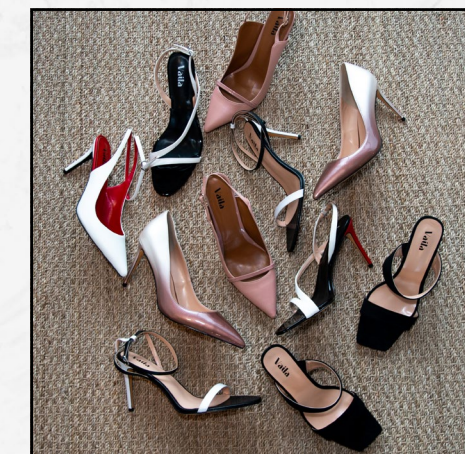
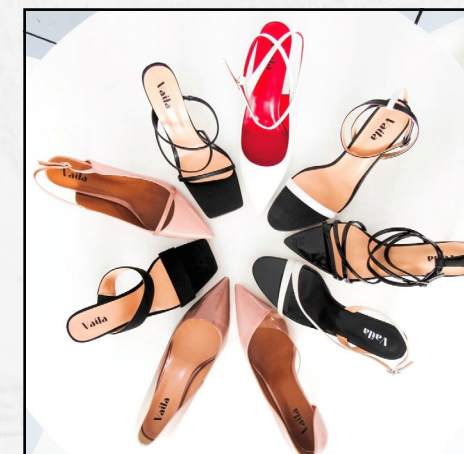
C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

What are the five things you wish someone told you when you first started your company and why?

AHRIANA EDWARDS:

1) I wish someone had told me about Overseas Supply Chain when it came to receiving products from overseas

a) I had already started production, and when 75% of the produc-



Vaila

tion was finished, I learned that there was an extensive process and documents that I needed to complete in a timely fashion to ensure that my goods passed to customs. Always know how the supply chain works in depth!

2) I wish someone had told me to factor in extra weeks on my timeline when it came to production and shipping my products from overseas

a) Multiple factors, such as production, shipping delays, and US customs ports being backed up. Even though this was out of my control, it kept pushing back my launch date. It came to a point where I finally announced my launch date to the public, and my shipment was running behind; however, it showed up in my fulfillment center three days before launch (whew).

3) I wish someone had told me to not only have a plan B but have a plan C when things went left

a) As entrepreneurs, most of our job is being problem solvers and thinking on our feet. When I planned my launch date, I hoped for the best with my shipment arriving on time. You could only imagine how stressful it became when you didn't have your operations in order. At one point, I thought about scenarios and what would happen if something went wrong. If the product didn't show, I would have to pivot to do pre-orders. But then, what if your timeline was off for pre-orders? What would you do? That process taught me to think many steps ahead of time (especially within the fashion industry).

4) I wish someone told me that not all advice is good advice

a) In the beginning, I participated in many programs and sought advice from anyone who could give it. But at a certain point, when my business was clear and established, the quality of advice I received didn't match up. I sought advice from those who didn't understand the industry, business,

and vision. This often led me to be confused, delayed, and even questioning the company I was building. Find those mentors who have your best interest at heart and who actually "get" your company. It will save you a lot of time.

5) I wish someone had told me that there is no standard journey in entrepreneurship - for anyone. Anything can happen at any stage in your company, and follow your path, and you will be successful.

a) I started doubting my capabilities in entrepreneurship in the beginning. I saw people on my timeline and feed making "6 figures in 2 months!" and thought I wasn't doing enough. Then, when I started getting big deals with retailers as a "rookie" in my business, I started having imposter syndrome because I didn't see anyone my age in retail. I had to realize early on that my journey does not have a perfect path and that I should not compare it to anyone else's.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

In one of your interviews, you stated, "I had to be in spaces and with and learn from Black women who understood the vision and why I felt the need to create Vaila Shoes." Can you please elaborate on this statement and the emphasis on people understanding the vision?

AHRIANA EDWARDS:

When I first was pitching Vaila for startup funding, I always found that my judges were individuals who didn't relate to or understand the value behind what I was building. I found myself confused and changing my company repeatedly to fit their needs. But, when I talked to my ideal customers and black women who understood the vision, it clicked. I didn't need to alter my story and "why" for those who didn't care. I started creating Vaila for those who looked and felt like me, not the ones who had the checkbook.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

Are there moments when you want to throw in the towel? What/who keeps you motivated, and what or who sustains your drive?

AHRIANA EDWARDS:

Absolutely! Especially when you're a solo founder, and you have so many pressures on you and so many hats to wear. It can become extremely overwhelming. There were many times when I doubted myself and my ability to carry out the company. But one thing that made me persist was the younger me. If only I had shoes available in my size, I wouldn't have gone through that emotional trauma of not being enough, not loving my attributes, or not finding my fashion expression. Every time I'm on the verge of giving up, I think about her and all of the younger "Ahrianas" that come after me. I'm doing everything I can to ensure that she has a better shopping experience, which is all I need to get me through the tough times.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

Here at C.O.B.S Magazine, we love to share daily affirmations. What are your daily affirmations for life? Can you please share your company website and social media platforms for us to continue to follow? COBS Magazine wishes you continued success.

AHRIANA EDWARDS:

I'm all about affirmations! My favorite is "If it's meant for you, it will be for you no matter what," and it will continue to be in heavy rotation. Thank you so much, C.O.B.S Magazine, for this fantastic opportunity!

Vaila Shoes Instagram: @vailashoes

Vaila Shoes Website: www.vailashoes.com

Ahriana Edwards LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/in/ahriana-edwards

ADONIS RICHARDS

Disney Unveils Little Mermaid Doll in Halle Bailey's likeness for pre-order.



Disney Unveils Little Mermaid Doll in Halle Bailey's likeness for pre-order.
By Adonis Richards

In the wake of the hype of the highly anticipated and polarizing Disney live-action remake of 1989 The Little Mermaid movie, Disney just revealed a Little Mermaid doll set to release on April 23rd. The doll is said to have been created in the likeness of the new movie's titular character and star, Halle Bailey. Now available for pre-order, the doll can be purchased on Amazon and delivered in early May just before the movie's release on May 26th.

With anticipation rising and a new trailer for the Little Mermaid revealed at the Oscars, this unique doll is set to be cleaned off shelves fast as pre-orders begin. Releasing on Amazon for just \$15.00 on April 23rd, fans can get their hands on this beautiful accessory just before the movie arrives in theaters. The doll matches Halle's likeness almost to a T. From her beautiful bronze skin color to the mole just above Halle's eyebrow, every detail matches the star actress' look. Some of the best pieces come from the bright auburn colored locks and ombre mermaid tail attached to Halle in the movie trailer. Halle shared her excitement for releasing the new doll on a reel on Instagram, "I am choking up because this means so much to me," the star actress and singer explains. "And having one that looks like me, my favorite Disney character, is very surreal." All of this is coming despite the backlash of the initial reveal of the live-action movie in the fall of 2022.

There was significant backlash and criticism of Disney when the news of a black actress playing a memorable character was revealed. Disney has decided to dive deep into supporting their titular character and creating a space for representation in their movies with Halle Bailey. Both parties have embraced the spotlight well. This is especially evident from Bailey, who excitedly revealed the official trailer of the live-action The Little Mermaid during the Oscars in March. Now with a new doll on the shelves, the wave of this new adaptation of a Disney classic will be crashing into theaters and dazzling a new generation of fans innovatively and progressively.

With the doll ready for pre-order now and releasing on April 23rd, a new generation of fans is set to experience a childhood classic that showcases how versatile and amazing Halle Bailey is. Incredibly, Disney is not afraid to step out of their comfort zone to bring brilliance to the silver screen. The doll gives many young children a showcase of how representation matters and the impact on young black and brown children who will be inspired to do anything they wish.



PHOTO: HALLE BAILEY/INSTAGRAM

SHENIQUA KIA SCOTT

MEET FOUNDER OF KIASKRUSH

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

Welcome to C.O.B.S. Magazine Artist's Corner. We are delighted to interview the creator and designer Sheniqua Scott. Sheniqua considers herself to be the "Creator of beautiful things." Sheniqua has created a platform where we can learn to celebrate our children through educational activities enjoyable to children. First, can you give us a little insight into your upbringing before becoming a great creator?

SHENIQUA KIA SCOTT:

Thank you for having me; please feel free to call me Kia. I was born in Queens, New York, but I also spent a lot of time in Georgia with my grandparents. I'm like a New York Southerner. Growing up, I always dressed differently and had a vivid imagination but never considered it creative. It was just me being me! I remember the class was told to wear business attire for career day at the college. I walked into the classroom with bell bottom jeans, straw platform shoes, and a permed afro. That didn't go well with the teacher, but I knew I would walk to my beat right then. When I was pregnant with my second daughter, I had the urge to sew. At the time, YouTube tutorials on how to sew were rare, and I didn't understand a sewing pattern yet, so I would look at the garment as a shape. I would take each shape, cut it out on fabric, and sew the shapes together. That's

how I taught myself how to sew. I love the holidays, and I fell in love with sewing my children's clothing, so they were wearing holiday-themed outfits I made head to toe.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

Can you tell us about KiasKrush? What inspired you to start your custom children's business? What do you find most rewarding about running it? What do you believe sets you apart?

SHENIQUA KIA SCOTT:

Kiaskrush is a Children's Lifestyle Brand where we uplift, inspire, and educate our children through play. Our collections boast educational, affirmation-led activities such as jigsaw puzzles, paint kits, and coloring/activity books, also custom children's clothing and accessories that highlight each character which leads with affirmations in place of traditional names. My children inspired me to create Kiaskrush. They loved everything I sewed for them so much that my son did not want to take his pajamas off. I knew if he felt like this about the clothing I made, I wanted other children to have the same feeling. So I started making children's loungewear with fun fabric and added touches like when I hand embroidered their name on the set with glow-in-the-dark thread. The most rewarding part is to have my children part of my journey as an entrepreneur.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

How do you approach the design process of your custom products, and how do you work with clients to bring their visions



to life?

SHENIQUA KIA SCOTT:

I try to focus on the collections I have available for my customers, but occasionally I may get a request for custom holiday-themed children's pajamas, and I can't say no!

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

What are some of the biggest challenges you face in running your business to date, and how do you overcome those obstacles?

SHENIQUA KIA SCOTT:

My biggest challenge is definitely time management. I always have ideas and want to create, but that leads to being distracted from my family and not having a personal life. Now, I set a limit on how much time I spend working on Kiaskrush; it has made entrepreneurship much more effortless.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

We love the idea of the puzzles that you created. Can you please share how the development of the puzzles came about?

SHENIQUA KIA SCOTT:

I went to a gathering, and out of all the conversations we shared, I was intrigued about the 3D crystal puzzles a mom mentioned. I went home and googled them, but instead, I was distracted by these colorful wooden jigsaw puzzles shaped like animals, and each piece was unique. I thought it would be cool to get a few for my children, but I couldn't find one that would spark their interest. As a creator, I've had many ideas of clothing I wanted to make but couldn't find, and I always thought, "if you can't find it, make it!" I spent almost a year creating these characters, and that's how "Hey Pretty Girl" and "Hey Little Man" wooden jigsaw puzzles came to life!

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

How important is it to you to create and design characters that bring awareness to the black and brown community?

SHENIQUA KIA SCOTT:

I know how important it is for my children to see characters that look like them. My mom always shares stories of how she grew up, and she would tell me about when she was a little girl. I remember her telling me for Christmas, she would receive dolls that didn't look like her, and even as a child, she didn't understand why. Whether it's a doll, a puzzle, a TV show, or at school, every child should feel in-

cluded and represented!

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

What was your biggest fear when starting Kiaskrush?

SHENIQUA KIA SCOTT:

It wasn't easy for me to be vulnerable to the world. I was opening the door to people's opinions of what I am passionate about. But, you know what? It wasn't bad at all, and I'm happy I was able to climb out of my shell.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

Can you share the advantages and disadvantages of being a business owner? Do you feel this is the wisest decision you made for yourself?

SHENIQUA KIA SCOTT:

I don't view my decision to become a business owner as a disadvantage. When I look at all the advantages that I have achieved, I love the ability to create and share those creations with the world. The joy of showing my children what I am building for them and the fact that I can move to my beat.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

Who have been your biggest mentors, and what is the best advice they have ever given you?

SHENIQUA KIA SCOTT:

My dad is my biggest mentor. Even though he lives in the South, we speak often, and if he

hears one pinch of hesitation in my voice about my progress with Kiaskrush, he will text me throughout the day encouraging GIFs. He always gives feedback, and if he has an idea, he will call and say, "Kia, I was just thinking..." He always tells me, "Kia, you got a good thing going here!" That is my fuel to keep going.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

What other products would you like to add to your website? What does the future look like for Kiaskrush?

SHENIQUA KIA SCOTT:

Kiaskrush will have additional electronic free activities for children. We will also continue to grow with more unique affirmation-led characters. Please Stay Tuned!

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

Do you have a daily affirmation that you can share? Can you please share your website as well as social media platforms? We wish you continuous success.

SHENIQUA KIA SCOTT:

My daily affirmation that I can share is "You Got This." It is just that simple.

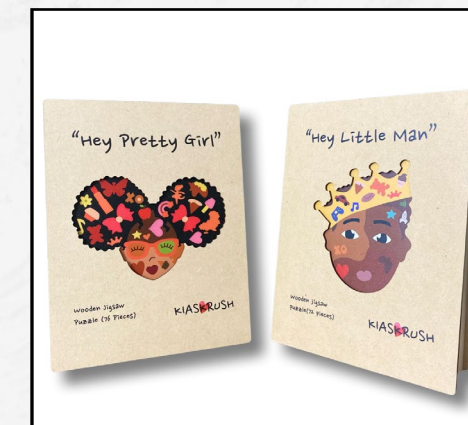
You can find us at:

Instagram: Kiaskrush

Facebook: Kiaskrush

Website: www.kiaskrush.com

Thank you for having me!



KIASKRUSH

WHERE WE UPLIFT, INSPIRE & EDUCATE OUR CHILDREN

CHERYL THOMAS

MEET OWNER/MANAGING DIRECTOR FOR GO HARD DANCE, LLC

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

Welcome to C.O.B.S Magazine. We have the pleasure of interviewing Cheryl Thomas, who has the privilege of working with some of the best dancers in New York City. Cheryl is introducing dance masters and programs to youth and adults to encourage, strengthen, and build confidence. We will discuss her journey to where she is today. Cheryl, can you tell us a little about your upbringing?

CHERYL THOMAS:

I would love to! First, thank you for having me be a part of this amazing issue. I truly appreciate the acknowledgment of my life's work. As for me, I grew up in Harlem, NYC, and always dreamed of being a dancer. I started my dance journey at Ruth Williams Dance Studio in Harlem at the age of 9, and I still dance at age 48. This love affair I have with dance will never end. I even danced/performed while pregnant with my first child, Dakota P. Hill! I'm proud to say that although I did not become the dancer I dreamed of being (due to an injury when I was a young dancer), I became a choreographer and fan of behind-the-scenes stage work as a producer. My daughter is the most talented dancer on the planet! Yes, I said it. LOL, nurturing her talents, watching her spearhead our family business, and opening the doors of Go Hard Dance to other aspiring dancers in NYC has brought me immeasurable joy!



C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

Can you tell us a bit about your background in dance and how you came to start your program in Harlem? Can you tell us about your program? Where did the name derive from? What sets your dance program apart from others in the area?

CHERYL THOMAS:

As a young dancer, I not only danced, but I did everything those beautiful Black women told me to do at the dance studio I grew up at. Thank God I did. I learned the inner workings of how the team worked together and how they worked administratively. We were responsible for ourselves and had to know precisely how to behave at show time – as we danced every year at Avery Fisher Hall in Lincoln Center, NYC. Therefore, my formula is simple, and I stick to the script of what I saw worked for over 60 years. I have to give credit where credit is due. Now, the way Go Hard Dance got started is something special. My daughter, Dakota Hill, and our other master choreographer Lacey Thomas (who was raised at Dance Theater of Harlem), had over 19 kids taking their Hip Hop classes in any studio that they could rent in downtown NY from 2017–2018. I thought to myself that they needed a home in the community that we are from and to share what they learned with kids who may not be able to afford the great dance schools in our city. So I drove around until I found our home; the rest was written. We opened our doors in November 2018 on 135th Street and Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Blvd. We came into existence from the entrepreneurial spirit of young black women, and it infected my soul. My past dreams were given life again. So we threw ourselves into it. We created a program that



infuses Hip-Hop in all disciplines and tells our stories. We connect the past with the present. While we attract our young people with our Hip-Hop choreography, the children know that we pay homage to the past and our culture as we train. So you can't just take Hip-Hop. You can combine your Hip-Hop training with Tap, Storybook Ballet, Contemporary/Modern, and West African Dance. That's how we Go Hard. Our program is for kids from 3.5 years old to 18 years old. Our adult company, Legacy (with Ms. Lacey Thomas as Director), takes the lead. This is our formula, which works and keeps us different from the rest.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

What are the critical factors in your business success?

CHERYL THOMAS:

I believe the critical factors in the success of our business are honesty, clarity, over-communicating our goals, and setting high expectations for our children. We do this

because we care. We love our families; however, we make it extremely clear how they are meant for GREATNESS. Believing in ourselves will be the way we succeed and win.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

Can you talk about some of the challenges you have faced in running your dance program and how you have overcome them?

CHERYL THOMAS:

Like many small businesses, we were heavily affected by the pandemic, but thanks to our families, they kept us alive by sending over tuition payments even when there were NO CLASSES. It was incredible and gave me such hope when I was down. I lost my mother to cancer in November 2019, and my spirits were low. My sister was fighting cancer herself, and I didn't know how to push forward. (I lost my sister in November of 2021). While everyone wasn't making tuition payments during that time, it gave me the fuel I needed, I had my family, and I made personal sacrifices to keep the doors open. At that time, we were all facing

hardships, but it was enough to let me know that my community cared for us and gave me a reason to fight for my business. While we are still struggling, we fundraise and work hard to overcome financial challenges by going hard in everything we do.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

How do you go about selecting the choreography and music for your dancers, and what is your creative process like?

CHERYL THOMAS:

At the beginning of our seasons, our team will host a round table discussion on what our spirit/energy is telling us should be the theme of our show. For example, our show is called Once Upon A Time in Harlem, "Evolution," this year. As we are in Season 4, we plan to show our audience how Go Hard Dance has evolved. How black culture has evolved, and Hip-Hop culture has evolved in these last 50 years. We're storytellers, and we tell our stories through dance.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

How do you want your performances to impact your audiences?

CHERYL THOMAS:

Well, I always want the audience to experience the love we have for dance as dancers and the love from being a dance family. Our dancers (from the babies to the adults) work as one. We take care of each other, on stage and off. We go hard for ours! Our audience members see it, as well as feel it. Our show leaves our families and friends feeling good and inspired. That's a fact! Lol – It's a family party on steroids!

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

How do you ensure that your dancers get the support they need to succeed, both physically and mentally?

CHERYL THOMAS:

We ensure our dancers get the support they need by keeping our hearts and doors open. We create initiatives outside of dance to feed the soul and celebrate each other. We listen and let them know that we can do anything as long as we do it together. That's how



we ensure each child's success.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

How do you stay up-to-date with the latest trends and developments in dance, and how do you incorporate these into your teaching and choreography?

CHERYL THOMAS:

Easy... I stay around young people (LOL). No, I'm fortunate to have a daughter whose drive is incredible. She loves being in the best city in the world for dancers and taking classes. So thanks to her, we stay fresh, and our choreographers are the same. They are masters at what they do and continuously reinvent themselves by staying true to the past, to the greats, and to this constant evolution of dance.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

In your opinion, can you give five reasons why community dance matters now more than ever before? What is the difference you are seeing among those individuals who are a part of your program?

CHERYL THOMAS:

There are many reasons why dance matters more now than ever; however, dance is the heartbeat of humanity. This pulse, this heartbeat, provides people with a way to express themselves. Release themselves from oppression and pain. Seek a deeper meaning of self, as this craft is not meant for the weak. Commit to something bigger than self. The work you

create and the work you perform can change lives. Most importantly, it is the best way to celebrate the gift of life. Nothing is better than that. With that being said, I can honestly say that the kids and young adults that walk in those Go Hard doors know that they are safe and are at home. They care more, work harder than ever, and feel good inside. They come early to teach each other before class even begins for their age group/session. They won't let each other fail. They never want to go home and let me lock up (LOL). That's the sign that tells me this thing here is working.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

How do you balance the needs of your program with your personal life and other responsibilities?

CHERYL THOMAS:

I don't do it alone. In the beginning, it was hard because a brand-new business is like a newborn baby. However, the team grew, and our "dance family" is strong. This mission to raise these children in dance to prepare them for the world is well-received and supported. Every family does their very best to make sure that we soar. We share responsibilities and work as a solid team. For that, I am grateful.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

What is a good piece of advice you would give to any young dancers who aspire to pursue a career in dance or start their pro-

gram someday?

CHERYL THOMAS:

JUST DO IT! Life is what you make it. If you feel like dance has saved your life, the way I feel like it saved mine, the way my daughter says just being able to dance has saved her life, then just do it. Don't hesitate. Life is hard as it is. Take comfort in studying and perfecting your craft. Do what you love by any means necessary.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

Thank you for taking the time to share your journey with our readers. Can you share what the future holds for your dance school? Can you share your website and social media platforms for our readers to follow you? We wish you continuous success.

CHERYL THOMAS:

Thank you for inviting me to tell our story. The future of Go Hard Dance is bright, brilliant, and full of promise. The children are growing up beautifully and getting stronger and better every day. We have a recital on June 25th, 2023, at Symphony Space Theater in NYC, and they will rock out. We hope our story excites other dancers and communities to get together and dance! However, if you want to see us get busy, follow us on Instagram @goharddance_harlemnyc or our website www.goharddancenyc.com. We'll love to have you! Dancingly Yours, Ms. Cheryl Much success and love to C.O.B.S. Magazine!



TINIKA THOMAS

INSIDE TIPS FOR EVERYDAY MAKEUP ROUTINE – REGARDLESS IF YOU ARE A NEWBIE OR EXPERIENCED IN THE MAKEUP WORLD.

MAKEUP IS A FORM OF SELF-EXPRESSION AND AN ART IN ITSELF...

In every article, I give beauty tips and secrets for using makeup. In this article, I wanted to discuss how makeup is an art form. Makeup is a form of self-expression and an art in itself. It allows people to enhance their features, cover up blemishes, and experiment with different looks. From bold and dramatic to subtle and natural, makeup can transform one's appearance and boost confidence. The beauty industry has exploded with the rise of social media, with makeup tutorials and product reviews readily available at our fingertips. Many people enjoy playing with different makeup trends and techniques, creating unique looks that are fun and empowering.

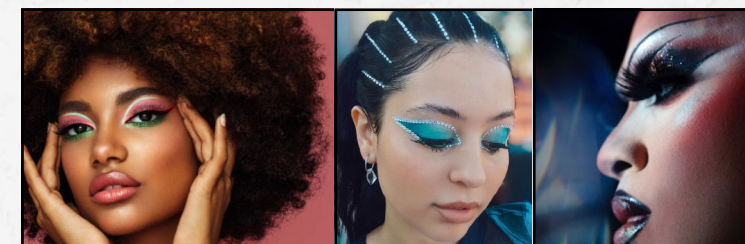
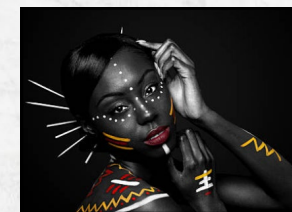
Makeup has been an essential part of human culture for thousands of years. From ancient Egypt to modern-day Hollywood, people have used cosmetics to enhance their natural beauty and express their personalities. Today, makeup is more diverse and accessible than ever, with countless colors, textures, and styles to choose from. Whether you're looking for a subtle day, look or a bold night look, there's a makeup product for everyone.

But makeup isn't just about looking good – it can also positively impact your mental health and confidence. For many people, putting on makeup is a form of self-care and a way to boost their mood. Applying makeup can be therapeutic and empowering, helping people feel more in control of their appearance and lives. Additionally, makeup can help to cover up flaws or blemishes, which can be especially important for people with skin conditions or scars.

Of course, like any form of self-expression, makeup is not without its controversies. Some people argue that it reinforces unrealistic beauty standards or that it is a waste of time and money. However, ultimately it's up to each individual to decide whether or not to wear makeup and how much importance to place on their appearance. Whether you're a makeup enthusiast or a minimalist, makeup can be a fun and creative way to express yourself and feel good about who you are.

However, it's important to remember that makeup should never be used to mask one's true identity or to conform to societal beauty standards. Wearing makeup should always be a personal choice, and individuals should feel comfortable in their skin with or without it. Additionally, it's crucial to use high-quality, non-toxic products that are safe for the skin and do not harm animals or the environment. Sustainable and ethical beauty practices are becoming more popular as people become more conscious of their impact on the planet.

Just know makeup is a versatile and creative tool that can enhance one's natural beauty and express their individuality. As with any form of self-care, it should be done mindfully and with respect for one's values and beliefs. Whether you prefer a full face of glam or a fresh-faced look, there is no right or wrong way to wear makeup. Ultimately, it's about feeling good in your skin and having fun with your beauty routine.



IRENE BOOKER

MEET AUTHOR OF AWAKENING THE SEED

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

Welcome to the Author's Corner of COBS Magazine. We are pleased to have Southern native author Irene Booker. Irene's love for writing motivated her interest in the journey of self-discovery. Can you give our readers a little introduction about yourself?

IRENE BOOKER:

I am a native of Mississippi and began writing poetry and poems at a young age. I have worked in the real estate industry for 32+ years, and I am a seasoned investor who loves collector items. One of my greatest joys is talking to my nieces and nephews about investments and the importance of investing early in life.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

What inspired you to become an author?

IRENE BOOKER:

My love for writing motivated me to go further than just writing poetry and poems. I love to tell stories; I love to roam around inside my brain by thinking, creating, and coming up with new ideas. Stretching my imagination and writing it down in books gives me great joy.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

How long have you been writing, and what genres are you most interested in exploring?

IRENE BOOKER:

I have been writing since I was 12 years old. Creative fiction is my favorite genre because it stimulates my brain and motivates me unconsciously. For example, I can wake out of deep sleep and write a complete book in less than an hour, and that is when true creativity is at play.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

Can you tell us about your book? What inspired you to write this book?

IRENE BOOKER:

"Awakening the Seed" is the awakening of one's true self, becoming one with you and your Creator, and allowing your most authentic self to be exposed to the world. Look in the mirror and go beyond the flesh and the bones. There lies a spirit seeking to become connected with its original owner. I wrote this book for others to question the

normalcy we are engulfed in. There is nothing about our world that is normal. The preconceived normality is alleviating us. We tend to walk this earth never knowing who we truly are. We have taken on the identities of strangers. We are disconnected from our Godly selves. We must take back our power from our imitated selves which do not know us by our birth names. Society is the culprit! We must find peace within ourselves to function at our highest levels.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

What message do you hope to convey through your writing, and how has your personal life influenced your writing?

IRENE BOOKER:

My message is that just because I was born into poverty does not mean I have to reside there. We can move mountains with our minds and overcome any obstacles if we believe in ourselves and our abilities. My personal and professional life have influenced me greatly. Everything that I have learned has value throughout my life, and I share that knowledge in my writings by teaching our future generations the actual value of a dollar, the importance of a Financial Statement, and investing in oneself. I have co-written a curriculum called "Wealth Building - Reducing Generational Poverty" to advance the skill set of our youth and adults. The transformation of information should be shared, not held onto. I believe wholeheartedly in connecting the dots and making every household accountable. Knowledge should not be the forbidden key or the unapplied key!

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

As an author of 15+ books, what challenges have you faced in becoming an author? What have been the most rewarding moments of your writing journey so far?

IRENE BOOKER:

My major challenge is not being able to attend schools and organizations upon request. Working in the real estate industry is very demanding, and it limits my ability to do so freely. My most rewarding moments are Zoom lectures with families and the joy I see in the face of children reading my books worldwide, especially in Africa. I truly believe, "When we feed the seed of knowledge to a child daily, that child's thirst for knowledge will never dry." We must not ever forget to feed them.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

Which of your books is your personal favorite and why?

IRENE BOOKER:

"We Were Born for Greatness" is one of my favorite books. I genuinely do believe that we were born for greatness. Just saying these words motivate everything within me, and it also challenges one to see greatness



within oneself. In today's society, many of us lack confidence in ourselves. It has a lot to do with outside chatter, but when we block the chatter and become one with ourselves, we can channel that energy to a different level. We were born for a reason, and it is up to us to discover the reason and purpose.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

Are there any particular authors or books that have influenced your writing style?

IRENE BOOKER:

I read various financial books that have helped me evolve my economic thinking. "Dinner Table Conversations" is a children's book I wrote to awaken a child's mind to the concept of investing; that child was able to introduce this topic to his parents during dinner. Investing is a topic that should be taught early in life.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

None of us can achieve success without some help along the way. Is there a person you are grateful for helping get to where you are today?

IRENE BOOKER:

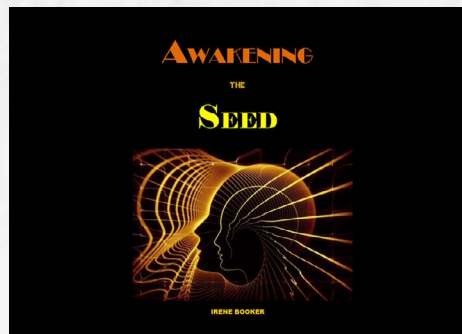
I would have to say my grandmother. I remember as a young girl, I could not wait to finish writing a poem so that I could share it with her. She was my audience, and she loved everything I wrote. I was very shy growing up, but grandma made me feel like I could do anything. She was my strength during my adolescent years.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

What advice would you give to aspiring authors who are just starting?

IRENE BOOKER:

Write, write, and write. The pen is one's voice, and one should write with the gift of passion that God has born within themselves. Writing is the stepping stone that will lead one to greatness in life. Please visit my website, www.irenebooker.com.



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JAIVON MARTIN

MEET CEO OF ALMIGHTY FORCE FAMILY INC.

COBS MAGAZINE:

Welcome to COBS Magazine King's Court. We are delighted to interview South Queens native Jaivon Martin. Jaivon is a coach, mentor, artist, community partner, youth programs organizer, and an Honorary Doctorate Recipient from Exousia University. Jaivon's passion is to mold young people into leaders, and he has used his community experiences to give adolescents something to do. Before talking about your company, can you please tell us about your upbringing?

JAIVON MARTIN:

I grew up in a two-parent household with my sister, and my parents grew up in the same community where they raised me. I grew up between South Ozone Park & Jamaica Queens, NY. I went to all the schools my mom attended from elementary through high school (PS155Q, JHS226Q, and John Adams High-school). I went to August Martin HS in 9th-11th grade but graduated in 2001 from the same high school my parents met each other. Both sides of my family were heavily involved in providing community services when they weren't working their 9-5 jobs. My mom operated a dance school named Askew Dancers, where I danced from age 5-1. My dad ran a youth and adult basketball program called the Almighty Force (fun fact: Almighty Force was a rap group out in the early 80s-mid'90s), where I played ball from age 11 until I began coaching/playing at the age of 13.

I'm merely a reflection of my parents. They taught me to be a leader, be confident, independent, respectful, and strive for greatness. They instilled values that I carry on to this day. My grandparents on both sides were huge on treating everyone as family and coordinating events where families would have the best experiences. They allowed everyone into their homes and would feed the entire community. Some weren't deserving at times, but it didn't stop my grandparents from spreading love. I'm a combination of all the things mentioned above, and my upbringing consisted of learning from some of the most remarkable individuals from South Queens, NY. I danced, played basketball, made music, and still am very

influential in my community.

COBS MAGAZINE:

Let's talk about your business. Can you tell us about your program? What was your vision when you started your program? What inspired you to create your basketball program?

JAIVON MARTIN:

Almighty Force Family Inc. is an up-to-date version of what my dad and uncle operated on from 1991 until I took over in 2010. We are a nonprofit organization geared towards uplifting and teaching young people through basketball and mentorship how to be successful and productive citizens of our community. My ultimate vision is to own a recreational center or an institution that will provide all the resources needed to assist families in need and develop young people into future leaders. What inspired me to operate the program was watching my elders change lives and provide safe havens for so many people for so many years, and I wanted to carry on their legacies and help as many people in the process.

COBS MAGAZINE:

Can you tell us about your coaching philosophy and how it has helped shape your program's success? What training methods do you use to help your players improve their skills and reach their full potential?

JAIVON MARTIN:

Basketball is the tool I use to teach young people life lessons. We all know some people are visual and physical learners; therefore, I use basketball to bring them in and teach them the sport. I also use it as an opportunity to educate them in fields that interest them other than basketball. A large percentage of the young men I coached went on to become productive citizens. In turn, they begin to pay it forward and provide community services for young people within their communities. It is a positive cycle that I know will continue. I had players who went on to play at collegiate levels and players who played on a professional level. The method I use to develop them is I start them as young as three years old. I train/practice with them until they outgrow what I have to offer, and then I bring in trainers or outsource them to other trainers/programs that will enhance their skills. I'm not one to hold anyone back. I want them to go as far as they would like to go with the sport or any endeavor they have their minds on. This method has helped me gain the trust of both parents and players and to gain much success overall.



COBS MAGAZINE:

Can you share a specific example of how you have helped your players overcome a challenge or obstacle and achieve success?

JAIVON MARTIN:

I currently coach a group of 8th/9th-grade boys. Some have been playing on this team since the 3rd and 4th grades. I explained to the players and their parents in the beginning that we would lose a lot of games, but it was a part of the process. I've been coaching for so many years I knew that it would turn around and we would eventually become a winning club. We lost a lot of games. In the past three years, we went from not making the playoffs to playing in the championship rounds in almost every league we compete in; now, we are a respected team. We have been named AAU Nationally division 3. We placed 4th and then became 1st place champions. In the division 2 league, we ranked 4th place in one of the biggest tournaments in the country. The boys got to see the result of hard work and dedication. They overcame being the losing team everywhere to become the winning team that every high school in NYC wants to recruit from.

COBS MAGAZINE:

How do you define success throughout the

season? Do you break it up, or do you focus on seeding? Or do you try to stay as present as you possibly can?

JAIVON MARTIN:

I find success in every game. Whether we win or lose. I look for individual and group progress in each competition and use that to build on. I stay as present as possible. We live in the moment and prepare for the future. So in each game, there is a teachable moment that can be used in future ball games and life. I'm not going to say I am ok with losing, but I'm going to say I look for the win in each loss and ensure my boys see it as well. I believe a form of success is applying what I was taught, and it lets me know they get what I am trying to teach.

COBS MAGAZINE:

How do you balance the demands of running a basketball program with your personal life and other responsibilities?

JAIVON MARTIN:

A lot of planning. I have a calendar in almost every room in my house. I have a planner that I update daily and sync to my cellphone, iPad, and laptop so that I get constant alerts and reminders of tasks that need to be completed. I have a very supportive family, and I make time for everything. I pray, I meditate, and I execute.

COBS MAGAZINE:

Outside of basketball, your program has coordinated and hosted significant events within the community. Can you please describe some of these community events? Why was it important to you that your organization was becoming bigger than just a basketball program?

JAIVON MARTIN:

We have held back-to-school drives, coat drives, toiletries, pamper drives, feed the community events, hats & scarves for the elderly, raised money, marched for breast cancer awareness, coordinated basketball showcase games, toys for tots, free haircuts for boys, essay contests, art contests, etc. It was imperative to become more intentional with providing community

services for those in need because we must take care of ourselves. If we don't do it, who will? That is what I say. It takes a village, and I believe we are the village.

COBS MAGAZINE:

Aside from his career with NYDOC and the Almighty Force Family, Jaivon is also involved in the music industry. Can you tell us about your involvement in the industry? Who have you had the opportunity to work with?

JAIVON MARTIN:

I grew up in a household where music was created and constantly played. My dad was a rapper, and my mom was a dance teacher. I was blessed with the ability to compose music. I've recorded songs and showcased my talents in my early years at different events, and over the last 2-3 years, I've had the opportunity to write music with and for some artists. Some names of people I've worked with that come to mind are YG the Great, Suge White, Ralph Lo, Shankz, Grand-Wiz, and Ali Vegas. Ali Vegas was put in rooms with some of the world's biggest producers, engineers, and DJs.

COBS MAGAZINE:

Support is everything when starting your own business. Who have been your greatest supporters during your process? How do you personally keep yourself motivated during those frustrating times?

JAIVON MARTIN:

My immediate and Almighty Force families have been my biggest supporters. They take on tasks and roles as needed for things to go smoothly. I've always been a self-motivated person because it is one of those traits instilled from a young age. I'm rarely frustrated, but I know if I am not mentally or physically, I can't be good to anyone. I take time as needed to always be on my A-game.

COBS MAGAZINE:

What advice would you give to young athletes who aspire to play at the collegiate or professional level?

JAIVON MARTIN:

My advice is to work hard daily. Every single player I know that played on those levels worked towards it daily. They ate right, exercised daily, and worked on their craft frequently. If anyone is interested in playing at a high level, they must put in the necessary work, and it will definitely pay off. I always tell my players to ensure they handle their business in the classroom.

COBS MAGAZINE:

Where do you see yourself in the next five years? What does the future hold for your basketball program, and what are your long-term goals for its continued success? Can you please share your website and your social media platforms? We wish you continuous success.

JAIVON MARTIN:

In the next five years, I will be retiring from NYDOC to focus on my nonprofit. I imagine evenings and weekend programs for young people, summer camps, and a community or recreational center. Part of my goal is in motion currently. 70% of the players on our travel team attend Eagle Academy Queens, where I'm a volunteer assistant coach. I want my boys to stay together throughout their journeys and send them off into the world over-prepared. I hope they will all either come together to carry on what I've done for them or create their own organizations and do for the next generation coming up under them. Thank you, COBS Magazine, for this great opportunity. Wishing you all much love and continued success

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Jaivon Martin

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THE COX FAMILY

MEET A FAMILY OF AUTHORS AND ENTREPRENEURS

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

Welcome to COBS Special Edition of Power Families. As part of this month's special edition, we are interviewing the Cox family, who has changed the game of building generational wealth. An old saying states, "A Family that Prays Together Stay Together." We are excited to hear about their journeys and how to keep the peace in a busy entrepreneurial family. We are delighted to be speaking to Jacqueline Cox. Jacqueline, can you give us a little background about your family?

JACQUILINE COX:

Well, first, let me thank you guys for highlighting us! We are a family of 7 (5 total between us), but we are a family of strong faith. My husband and I met in 2006 as friends and married in 2015. He is an Army Veteran Retired, and I am a cancer survivor and lupus advocate who also suffers from autoimmune disease and fibromyalgia. We reside in the suburbs with our five wonderful kids, who live with us, Jayden Marvis.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

Maintaining a family of entrepreneurs can't be the most straightforward task. Can you give us three ways to achieve the essential goals alongside your loved ones?

JACQUILINE COX:

We achieve anything in life by knowing that God and prayer come first. Knowing what's important by prioritizing, setting goals, sticking to them, and believing in God's word to know that dwelling in the secret place and not allowing distractions to overpower our progress, and teaching

our children at home first.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

What are some of the challenges you didn't anticipate when starting the journey to entrepreneurship?

JACQUILINE COX:

We didn't expect things to take off so quickly! We knew we had so many gifts and saw the same blessings in our children. We know that when God gives you gifts, they are supposed to be used to manifest your inheritance, and you'll never lose. So any talents or skills we see in ourselves or our kids, we pray to God for confirmation, and we pour into these talents, and God blesses them.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

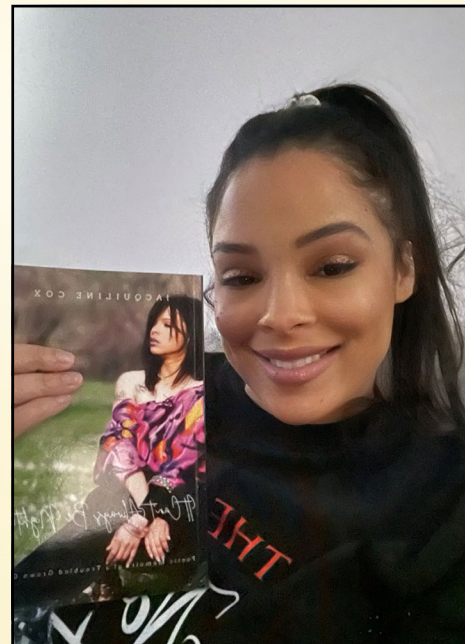
I understand from your bio that you and your husband are published authors. Can you tell us the names of the books and a summary of those books? Can you please provide the websites your books are available for purchase?

JACQUILINE COX:

Yes! The name of my book is called It Can't Always be Night! Poetic Memoirs of a Grown Girl. I've written this book of poetry throughout the trials and tribulations of growing up dealing with the foster care system, domestic violence, rape, incest, manipulation, and heartbreak. My husband has two books, and One is My Box of Chocolates, a brief memoir of his life growing up as a kid and the challenges he faced on the west side. The book tells about him growing up as a fatherless child, becoming a father himself, and his deployments overseas in Iraq, where he served. Also, he is a part of the anthology Unknown Battlefields via Pa-ProVi Publishing. All books are available on our family website <https://youngsavedleaders.myshopify.com>

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

Did you know before writing the books that you wanted to be an author? How is that interest starting to pique the interests of your sons?



JACQUILINE COX:

I started writing in the 5th grade with the help of my teacher Ms. Joiner. From there, I fell so in love with it that by the time I made it to college, I won best new student essay at Columbia College and interned at Channel 7 news with Susie Perez. My husband always was a talented artist and writer as well. He was a talented rapper but pursued the army to escape the environment he was in so he could raise his firstborn and give him a better life. The children we have now feel natural to this talent, and they also have so many skills I lose count. We, as parents, just let them flow and allow them to be their artistic selves. We support and encourage them and try to continue to do as the word says "Raise them in the way they should go, and they will never part from it."

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

Besides becoming an author, you are also the C.E.O. of your own business. Can you give us a brief overview of the business's purpose and vision? What inspired you to start your business?

JACQUILINE COX:

My world went into a spiral when I

got diagnosed with Thyroid Cancer in 2013. I was a single parent at the time, working for a nonprofit as an executive assistant, but I also volunteered as a youth life coach and motivational speaker. Once I learned I had to have surgery, my job was at risk. I asked God for guidance. My husband was only a platonic friend at the time, but he stuck with my son and me the whole time and never left my side. I told him my vision, we prayed on it, and that's where it became something small. I did it with his support on the side. Once life started, and lupus came next, I felt I couldn't maintain it on my own I knew I had to choose.

Corporate job or my dream. After we married in 2015, we had my youngest in 2016. I was at high risk the whole pregnancy, and I knew if I let my dream die, I would never get the chance to fulfill my purpose. So in 2017, I started full steam ahead and went to work part-time and full-time on my own. ClassEDefined L.L.C. consists of all the gifts God has given me. Those gifts included Life coaching, virtual assistance for businesses, tax preparation, and consulting. Before the pandemic, I offered Cryoskin Services and eyelash extensions, for which I have certifications for both.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

Your sons are also C.E.O.s of their clothing apparel. Can you please tell us about their company? What inspired them to want to start their clothing line? Can you please share the website where their apparel is

available for purchase?

JACQUILINE COX:

My son came up with the idea. As I stated, we are a very faith-based family, but it's also a home full of boys. Most of the clothing that is out now just isn't what my sons feel they should wear. They wanted clothing to be stylish and comfortable but to have a spiritual purpose. He created the brand YoungSavedLeaders. We saw how well he started the brand, but we still wanted to push him to do more. We told him to come up with a plan and a logo, and he did. Once he explained his vision, we poured into it with the help of family, friends, and the community, and we were able to make that dream a reality for him. In return, he took half the proceeds he made and donated back to a nonprofit in our area for people with disabilities, as well as free apparel to different organizations and churches. Jayden was nominated and won the City of Aurora, IL MLK Award for Service Above Self on his dad's birthday on 1/16/2023. He was honored at a highlight ceremony, and we were so proud of him. You can purchase his apparel at <https://youngsavedleaders.myshopify.com>.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

How can families grow, manage, and safeguard their long-term wealth? How does a lifetime of work become a legacy?

JACQUILINE COX:

My husband and I agree that God is first; find the word in everything you pursue. Keep your family first

and never discount your price. Your faithful supporters will support you and won't have to ask. Let your faith guide you and leave everything to God. He will provide for you to pay your tithes and offerings faithfully. A seed sown is a great and mighty harvest.

Last but not least, listen and dream with your kids. Listen and pour into them. Praise all the good they do, and correct the bad but don't dwell on it. Tell them you love them and mean it. Most of all, keep them covered in God's word.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

How do you clarify business roles and responsibilities with your respective family members? What can cause a business-couple relationship to "crash and burn?" Do you feel all families can be in business together?

JACQUILINE COX:

Anything is possible if the spirits are aligned and the morals are in the right place. My husband has always said, "We have to NO people to know people." All money isn't good money. We know our vision and goal, generational wealth for our kids and their kids. But, all families don't have God first or may not share the same vision we do. Do I believe all families can be in business together? I think humans are going to be just that. When you are elevated in life and allowing God to use you, you know the purpose is bigger than ANY WORLDLY possessions. Some people have it but still don't get it. So I won't say



it can't happen, but we tend to trust only God and our household and any family meme beds outside our home that can't respect it, we love and support them, but we know our journey is ours, and we won't allow any distractions to derail our train from rolling.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

Has it become harder to be an entrepreneur in such a struggling economy?

JACQUILINE COX:

It can be frustrating when you are dealing with an autoimmune disease and being on top of your regular life. Kids' school, husband appointments, having service-connected disabilities, a child with Autism, another one with A.D.H.D., but we serve a G.O.D. who works miracles, and we are TRULY walking testimonies. As long as there is faith, you will always win the race. We had some financial difficulties but had support from the crisis and the community via donations to Jayden and Marvis Cash App. Whatever he raised, we matched, so that's how we have been helping him, and I have been using all of my gifts to keep going. My husband is the fuel that keeps things in order, takes care of the finances, and truly manages and budgets better than any C.F.O. He knows when to tell me to take time, walk away for a while, take a mental health break, and get back to it when I'm ready. He keeps me motivated while investing in our business and passion. I couldn't and wouldn't be where I am without his

support. There are no gender roles here. That's what's vital that we share all roles.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

How does your family practice self-care routines? What is next for the Cox family in the next couple of years?

JACQUILINE COX:

We take the kids to get pedicures with us, dad takes them to the barber shop, I take self-care days at the beauty shop every month or so, and I get my nails done. We also ask the kids every day how school is and have family time after six every night. We eat together and talk about our plans for the next day. We have a movie night, and we have husband and wife night three nights a week after the kids are in bed. Screen time is limited, but we make sure we take trips and carve out time for ourselves to have fun. We pray when leaving home, before every meal, and before we go to bed. We stream church every Sunday and pay tithes and offering every week, no matter what.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

What is the best advice you have received that you can share with other entrepreneurial families looking to go into business or already have an existing one? What would you want them to know to thrive? Please share where our readers can follow everyone's social media platforms.

JACQUILINE COX:

The best advice we can give is Keep God first. Keep those kids close.

Don't allow other people, whether it's friends or family or even your parents, to dictate your life or raise your kids for you and pay attention to the kids that never talk. They have a lot to say; let it be you who is on the receiving end. Our link tree is provided below; everyone can follow us here! Also, my mother-in-law just debuted her new Gospel Album on her record label Psalms 91 Records called The Secret Place (Patricia Cox), available now on all platforms worldwide. Also, you can find me on my new radio T.V. show, Listen to Linda Hosted By Jacqueline Cox, on all platforms via Trivia's Inspirational Radio NETWORK and live every Sunday at 7:30CST/8:30 E.S.T.

<https://linktr.ee/youngsavedleaders>
Cash app: \$youngsavedleaders
<https://linktr.ee/youngsavedleaders>

https://www.amazon.com/gp/aw/d/1959667149?psc=1&ref=px_pop_mob_b_asin_title

https://www.amazon.com/My-Box-Chocolates-Marvis-Cox/dp/1959667009/ref=mp_s_a_1_5?crd=37UG8ZQ5P30M5&key-words=my+box+of+chocolates+book&qid=1676595834&s=books&prefix=-2Caps%2C99&sr=1-5

https://paprovipublishing.com/shop/ols/search?keywords=Unknown%20battlefields&sortOption=-descend_by_match



NISHA PERSHAY

NISHA'S 101 TIPS -

"SPRING FORWARD INTO THE TRENDY STYLES OF 2023."

Tick Tock on the clock, so let's get into these 2023 spring-forward trends! Here are my latest Hair trending styles and hair products you may want to consider. Let's start with hairstyle trends. When spring season arrives, the hairstylist is ready for clippers, razors, and hair lighteners. Why? Haircuts are the go-to for embracing a new look, whether the cut is a pixie, bob, or layers, and most importantly, hair color additions.



PIXIE CUT/LOW CESAR AND HAIRCARE PRODUCTS

GARNIER FRUCTIS DECONSTRUCTED PIXIE PLAY

This product can add texture and create out-of-bed looks for all-day. A deconstructed style that looks done yet undone. How to apply, scoop a dime-size amount and apply to the ends or throughout damp or dry hair. Create movement and texture by piecing hair in multiple directions.

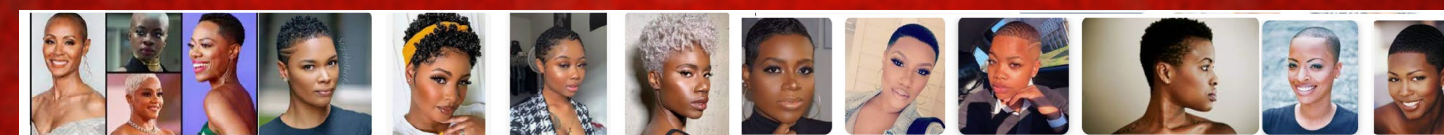


KALEIDOSCOPE SOULFED PEACH COBBLER GEL STYLE

his nourishing and defining gel gives touchable hold, frizz control, and shine. You can use this product for wash-and-go curls, wet sets, twists outs, and sleek up-dos.

THE PIXIE CUT OR LOW CESAR

super popular and most trending styles to stand out from the rest. This style should be done by a professional, but if you can attempt it on your own, go for it! However, the upkeep takes a lot of prep, and you will need weekly cuts.



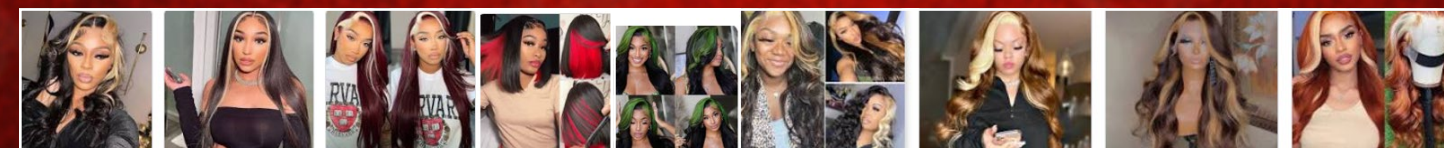
TRENDING HAIR COLORS FOR SPRING

You can try some highlights, ombre, or full head of color, but if you choose these colors will spring you forward. The most on-trend colors are reddish brown, gingers, cooper, blonds, and reds of all ranges.



SKUNK STRIPE HAIR

It's an easier transition if you are unsure if you are ready for a full head of color. It's a popular way of trying out colors and adds so peek a boo to the style. You can do this color technique on long or short hair, but if you decide to do this on your natural tresses, you must treat your hair every other week with a deep conditioner.



TRIVIA PAYNE

MEET THE FOUNDER OF T.R.I.V.I.A'S INSPIRATIONAL RADIO NETWORK

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

Welcome to Women Innovators. We have the pleasure of interviewing Baltimore native Trivia Payne, a passionate community leader, speaker, and consultant. Trivia's message of educating, empowering, and assisting urban communities has motivated and inspired others to continue transforming their lives for the better. Can you share a little background about your upbringing?

TRIVIA PAYNE:

Growing up in Baltimore, Maryland, was interesting for me. When we moved to South Baltimore, our family was one of two black families on the block. Although I wouldn't classify my growing up as a great one, I would say that it was necessary. I grew up in a household with my mother, my stepfather for a few years, and my two sisters. I can honestly say I was the middle child with middle child syndrome. I spent time with my father's side of the family, but even with that, I had blended family issues. To make my life make sense, although I had love around me, I felt like an outcast regardless of where I was.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

Can you tell us about your network? What inspired you to start your radio network, and what sets it apart from others in the industry?

TRIVIA PAYNE:

T.R.I.V.I.A's Inspirational Radio Network was God Ordained. What started as a small platform for me to share my voice has now grown to give voice to men, women, and even children on more than just an internet radio platform. We have expanded from internet radio to YouTube, social media, and podcasting; most recently, we are on R.O.K.U. Television (Internet T.V.). I started this network because, in a place where I felt that I didn't matter, others in my corner believed in me. They were willing to invest in me even when I didn't know how to start the process. These loved ones saw that I could open doors for others and use my voice simultaneously. What sets us apart as a network is that our show hosts are not mainly looking for numbers, but we provide multiple platforms for our host's voices to be heard. We are not just a podcast, we are not just an internet radio or television station, and we are not just a social media live platform. We reach listeners across over 15 media sites and over 18 podcast sites. We also reach our viewers and listeners through internet radio and television. We surpassed a radio station and expanded to a network at the beginning of our three-

year mark.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

How has technology impacted the radio industry, and how have you had to update to those changes?

TRIVIA PAYNE:

One of the most discouraging parts of a long road trip is driving, listening to terrestrial radio only to have the station cut off or try to connect to something else I didn't want to listen to. With technology, I have provided a technology platform that will play anywhere and everywhere as long there is Wi-Fi or cell phone data. All of our channels are internet or Android/Apple accessible.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

How has your radio network platform helped you give a voice to urban communities? Have you had the opportunity to partner with other networks? What has been the outcome of those partnerships?

TRIVIA PAYNE:

Coming from an urban background and feeling like I was voiceless, our network provides multiple platforms for anyone to encourage, inspire and motivate their listeners. With the use of internet radio/television, the conversations and topics give hope and empower its listeners and viewers. I am researching other networks and stations, but I haven't succeeded. What I didn't mention is that before starting my stations, I was a host on another platform that helped me to build a little confidence within myself. The station owner took her work very seriously, showing me that the work must continue despite any obstacles. Because of that, I have intentionally worked my network as a business while supporting my teams. By the grace of God, I haven't been driven by finances, even though finances are needed to run a business.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

Can you tell us about your journey to becoming an entrepreneur, radio host, and author?

TRIVIA PAYNE:

At the precious age of 39, I heard the calling on my life and began walking in it. It was like an overnight change where I believed God was taking me to a higher call and moving me away from the fear of rejection. In 2016, when I finally walked away from the job that was paying me \$12 per hour to run programs, fill in for other departments, and be an administrator for over four sub-departments, I walked away knowing that others wouldn't agree with my decision. I received enough money from my siblings and decided to start my 501c3. Since 2017, I have become a business consultant, started a non-profit, and created a radio network. Most of all, I have become an eight-time author and motivational speaker, a dream of mine since around 2003. Although God has given me this platform to extend to others to use their voices, I,



at times, still struggle to use my platform as a resource to encourage, inspire and motivate others.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

Can you share some of the titles of the books you have written? Which one is your favorite and why? Where can your books be found for purchase?

TRIVIA PAYNE:

I have written in books such as Women of Virtue walking in excellence, Iron Sharpens Iron, We Pray, God Moves, and most recently, All the Preachers wives. My favorite books have been the series of Woman of Virtue Walking in Excellence volumes 1, 2, and 3 and the recent devotional. My Books and Products can be purchased from www.triviainspiration-aradiol.com

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

Can you share with us some of the biggest challenges you've faced in your career and how you've overcome them?

TRIVIA PAYNE:

The biggest challenge I have faced in my career as a station owner is having a heart for people. I have been faced with knowing the correct fee schedule since I haven't found anyone doing the same work that I am doing. Another challenge has been retention and recruitment, but I started giving myself grace and praying about each situation.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

You are also part of other organizations. Can you please give us a summary of your roles within these other organizations? How do you balance your time between your different business ventures and responsibilities?

TRIVIA PAYNE:

I am the founder of Bondage to Grace Connections, a mentoring program for youth affected by incarceration. I am also the

co-founder of the Philemon house, which houses men coming home from incarceration, and the co-founder of Grace Beyond the Walls Church, which is a vision that my husband had to create a place of worship for men coming home from prison and their families.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

What have been some of the most valuable lessons you've learned throughout your journey, and how have they shaped your leadership style?

TRIVIA PAYNE:

The biggest lesson that I have learned throughout this process is that there is nothing wrong with charging for your services. When I realized and understood that, I began to look at my network differently. I started investing more into my network to provide quality streaming for my host and sponsors/supporters. I also learned that in business, someone has to be the BOSS. I used to make a joke when providing someone with donated time. I would say, "This is T.R.I.V.I.A's Inspirational Radio Network," until something clicked and told me just because it is T.R.I.V.I.A's Inspirational Radio, the programs are God-breathed.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

How do you stay motivated and inspired to continue pursuing your passions and goals?

TRIVIA PAYNE:

Sometimes, staying motivated can be challenging. Knowing that it takes finances to run a company, I have been afraid to ask for donations and sponsors. When I become discouraged or need a pick me up, I reach out to my sister circle and host. I have allowed them to see me at my worst and best, and when I need motivation, they are there to pick me up. I am motivated and inspired every time I see the number of viewers for the segments of the host. When my staff is happy, I am delighted.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

What advice would you give aspiring entrepreneurs and authors looking to succeed in today's competitive market?

TRIVIA PAYNE:

My most extensive advice would be "just do it." When you get the prompting to go, pray and then go. That means that you are hearing from God, don't allow the nay-sayers to stop you from doing God's work.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

Can you give us a sneak peek into any upcoming projects or initiatives you have in the works? What has been your proudest accomplishment so far, both personally and professionally?

TRIVIA PAYNE:

Currently, I am working on writing one more Anthology (She said Yes to Herself Unapologetically). I am also working on completing my first personal book project that will be launched in August 2023. By December 2023, we will add one more platform to our network. One of my proudest accomplishments has been accepting God's call to ministry. I knew

God was calling me to speak to the masses, and I doubted myself and spent more time worrying about who would approve and who wouldn't. Once I said yes, I could gracefully walk into becoming an entrepreneur, an author, and even a motivational speaker. If I had been asked this question a year ago, my response would have been being a mother and a wife. One of my proudest professional accomplishments has been providing multiple platforms for others and myself to win souls for the kingdom of God, who loves the Lord and has not been afraid to encourage ministry on their shows. Also, growing up loving gospel music and club music and now being able to provide 24-hour gospel music.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

What continues to be your daily driving force? Can you please provide your website and social media platforms? We wish you continuous success.

TRIVIA PAYNE:

Being a mother for almost 30 years, I thought my children were my driving force until they became teenagers and started living their own lives. When I became an empty nester, I had to pray for a new drive. I realized that as life was happening, I didn't develop a new drive because my daily driving force has always been being in God's will. If I am not doing what God wants me to do, then I believe I am wasting time. If I am living life for others, then I am not in God's will. As I can reach men, women, and children through encouragement, inspiration, and motivation, I can wake up every morning and continue to do the work that God has called me to, being an author, motivational speaker, and entrepreneur

Internet Radio

Web: <https://s7.citrus3.com:2020/public/triviainspirationalradio>

Google: Google Play store (T.R.I.V.I.A Inspirational Radio)

Apple Products: App Store (TRIVIA Inspirational Radio)

Social Media

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/trivia-inspires-35a490242/>

Twitch: <https://www.twitch.tv/triviasinspirationalradio>

Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/trivia_inspirationalradio/

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/Trivialnspires>



Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/TIR-Network2023/>
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/TIR-Network2023/>
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/TRIVI-AInspirationalRadio/>

YouTube

Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/@triviainspirational7952>

Websites

Website: www.triviainspirationalradio.com

Podcast

Apple: <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/t-r-i-v-i-a-s-inspirational-radio-podcast/id1659135008>

Spotify: <https://open.spotify.com/show/4LZQF7rBDrwC095sW4XyG>

Google: <https://podcasts.google.com/feed/aHR0cHM6Ly9mZWVkc5idXp6c3Byb3V0Lm-NvbS8xODAlMzY4LnJzcw==>

AmazonMusic: <https://music.amazon.com/podcasts/d8e2975d-8052-4a27-b09d-d6921cb9e44a/t-r-i-v-i-a-s-inspirational-radio-podcast>

iHeart: <https://www.iheart.com/podcast/269-trivias-inspirational-radio-105643076/>

TuneIn & Alexa: <https://tunein.com/podcasts/Storytelling-Podcasts/LaQuita-Parks-The-Power-of-Your-Story-with-Guest-p308311/>

Castro: <https://castro.fm/podcast/20708214-fb6f-4abf-b8bd-b83abb-6c96a7>

Castbox: https://castbox.fm/channel/id5308110?utm_campaign=ex_share_ch&utm_medium=exlink&country=us

Podchaser: <https://www.podchaser.com/podcasts/trivias-inspirational-radio-po-5000480>

Deezer: <https://www.deezer.com/us/show/5514577>

Podfriend: <https://web.podfriend.com/podcast/1659135008>

goodpods: <https://goodpods.com/podcasts/trivias-inspirational-radio-podcast-249376>



COURTNEY FULTON

MEET FOUNDER OF BROWN GIRL DIAGNOSED, LLC.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

Welcome to C.O.B.S. Women's Werk. We are delighted to interview Courtney Fulton. After several years of therapy and profound work, Courtney's mission was to use her pain as a platform to empower other black women on their healing journey. Her goal is to transition strong black women into healed black women. Can you give us some history on your background before becoming an entrepreneur?

COURTNEY FULTON:

First, I would like to thank you for this fantastic opportunity and also thank you for what your magazine is doing for Black and Hispanic Women. The exposure and support are so needed! From 2004 - 2022, I taught different history subjects to grades 4th - 12th. I always loved history in school and excelled because of Mr. Richard Bartell, who inspired me to become a history teacher. However, when I returned to the virtual classroom in 2020, I didn't feel that rush of excitement or the joy I once had when I taught a few years prior. When I returned to in-person learning the following year, my anxiety was so high that I would have to take a valium to make it through the day! Each day I felt like a transition was about to happen, but I wasn't sure what or when; I just knew change was coming. When I decided to become a coach, I took a certification class that helped me understand the ins and outs of this profession, but I already knew all of what was covered in the course because of my years in teaching. I remember a long time ago, my dad and I were conversing, and he told me that all my years and experience in teaching were preparing me for something; he didn't know what, but he knew it was preparing me. I think about that often as life has certainly changed from what I thought it would be. However, I am thankful for my education and years of experience in and outside the classroom. I can use that experience and wisdom to empower Women of Color to live their best lives!

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

Can you please tell us about your company Brown Girl Diagnosed, LLC? Where was the name derived from, and what was your initial vision when you started your company?

COURTNEY FULTON:

Brown Girl Diagnosed is an online coaching program that empowers Black Women to interrupt the Strong Black Woman mindset by setting effective boundaries and incorporating easy self-care practices. The name of my business, Brown Girl Diagnosed, came from my branding specialist (Ki in This Moment). We went through many names, and nothing seemed to stick until one day, she called me and told me the name of my

business came to her in a dream! Once she said it, I knew that this was the name of not only my company. Many women have been 'diagnosed' with the Strong Black Woman mindset, but through my coaching program, you will learn how to interrupt that label and embrace the Healed Black Woman mindset. The Brown Girl Brand started as a blog, ForBrownGirlsBlog, I still blog about once a month, but the name has changed. After a year of blogging, I started my podcast, "Conversations with a Brown Girl," which will go into its 4th season later this year. I had toyed around with becoming a coach, but I was content making good money as a teacher. It wasn't until I had COVID in November of 2021 that I decided to go into coaching full-time. COVID did a number on me, and there were a few moments when I didn't think I would make it. I remember lying in my hospital bed, promising myself that if I made it through this, I would start living life on my terms. I went out on disability and laid the groundwork to bring Brown Girl Diagnosed to life. I officially quit my job on July 18, 2022, and although I may have some doubts, I don't regret it!

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

Your bio speaks about your struggles with anxiety and depression. Do you mind talking about this period of your life? How did those experiences help with building a solid platform for your company?

COURTNEY FULTON:

Four events in the last 16 years have hurt my mental health. The first was the birth of my son; I had a beautiful pregnancy but a traumatic delivery. My father, who was my best friend, suddenly passed away; I was present when he passed away. I was laid off from teaching and could find a job; this messed with my sense of identity because if I wasn't teaching, who was I? Lastly, my marriage was failing. Throughout these years, I would see a therapist and take some meds but would stop because I felt I was ok or just stopped going. I never dealt with what happened. I had a therapist helping me process my emotions or giving me coping skills. All of this led me to want to snap one day, but thankfully I got help - real help. I was enrolled in a partial program where I was taught what coping skills to use and how to use them. I processed my emotions through intensive group/therapy and was prescribed medication. I was taught the vocabulary to communicate what I needed during this time. I needed to ask for help, say no and not feel guilty, and learn how to rest my mind and body. After months of being consistent with going to therapy and taking medication, it helped me be more clear-minded, and I started to see the light at the end of the tunnel! I realized that I could continue on this healing



journey with the proper support around me. My family approached me about sharing my story with others to let them know they are not alone, which is something that I constantly felt even with a supportive village behind me. I brushed it off, not thinking that anyone would listen, but one day in October, I started blogging and got into podcasting. People were asking me to speak on panels and share my story. I was shocked that people did want to hear what I had to say and took my advice! Several women told me how much my story encouraged them and that they appreciated my transparency. My brand and business have gone through many stages, but the one thing that has remained constant is that I want to help as many women of color know that they are more than their struggles; they are not alone and can thrive despite their diagnosis.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

Can you tell us about the book you wrote? Why did you feel it necessary to create such a book for the busy woman?

COURTNEY FULTON:

While talking with other women who work, have families and have other responsibilities, I always heard them complain about the same thing - they don't have time to relax, do things they would like, or take care of their needs. I created my workbook with those women in mind with its purpose intending to:

1. Help those set intentions for practicing self-care; what do you want to get out of the practices? Restoration? Relaxation? Rest? Reconnect with yourself or others? (I didn't mean to use all R's)
2. Focus on activities that leave you feeling restored because you pour out of yourself to the point of being empty. What activity are you going to do to refill your cup?
3. Schedule time for you to experience your activities. Ambitious women are ruled

by their schedule; if something is on your calendar, you will make it happen. Also, it will become routine if it's in your calendar enough.

4. Reflect on how you felt about taking an active role in protecting your well-being and happiness. Reflection is good because it allows us to process our experiences and helps us decide if we want to continue with the activity.

Copies of my workbook are available for purchase on Amazon! I am working on another workbook about the importance of self-awareness and boundaries.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

What resources does your company offer to women to be able to share their journeys?

COURTNEY FULTON:

From start to finish, clients can access all the session notes and lessons in their google folder. On their last day, I send them a list of resources they can refer to at any time. For example, I include a list of the coping skills we came up with during a session or a link to an article with the information they can use to help them well after their process. Clients automatically receive a (mostly) weekly newsletter with tips, tricks, and personal stories from the lessons I have learned while healing. They also receive free downloads such as a self-care calendar, and those that receive our email get exclusive discounts on all BGD events. I am creating a journal specifically for clients to use during the program; I hope to have it published by the first quarter of next year.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

What were some of the challenges you have faced throughout your entrepreneurial journey? How do you continue to endure those challenging moments?

COURTNEY FULTON:

The biggest challenge I have faced since starting Brown Girl Diagnosed is self-doubt. I always wonder if I did the right thing by quitting a job with steady pay and summers off, especially when BGD (Brown Girl Diagnosed) has its dry spells. This is something that I continue to deal with since the BGD is relatively new. When I am most discouraged or frustrated, I come across a form of confirmation that comes in unusual ways. It could be something I hear someone say or read in a book. It could also be a thought that came to mind during my quiet times. I recently received confirmation that I am supposed to do this at a women's conference I attended last week. I heard the words boundaries, self-care, and strong black woman during a seminar (about work-life balance), which confirmed that I need to keep going. I will note that quitting is not an option, even though I may have doubts.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

How do you measure your business's success in fulfilling its mission to promote self-care for women of color?

COURTNEY FULTON:

I measure the successor of my business in 3 ways:

1. Clients are referring my business to others. This shows they believe in the results the Brown Girl Diagnosed Coaching Program delivers
2. Data collected from feedback questionnaires, I like to know in ways I can improve my services
3. Seeing how my clients grow confidently and gain more peace throughout their program. There are no words to describe how it feels when my clients tell me they used the skills they learned, and it's making a difference in their lives.

Short story. A client in a toxic relationship came to me for help identifying what boundaries she needs and how to communicate those boundaries. So, for the next few weeks, we did just that, and I took it a step further and helped her to create an action plan to leave the relationship. She would give her partner three months and go if there were no improvements. She immediately told me she didn't wait for three months at her one-month check-in! She was proud that she could set her boundaries, communicate her boundaries and hold herself and others accountable. I loved hearing her story, and it warmed my heart to know that working with me helped give her the confidence she needed to do what was best for her.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

How do you create a healthy work-life-balance between your personal and business lifestyles?

COURTNEY FULTON:

I'm still working on it - lol! Some days, weeks, and months are better than others. I don't think a person can balance work and life; giving both responsibilities equal time is hard. However, you can prioritize both duties and do what is the most critical first. As I said, I'm still learning how to do this since working from home is new to me, but I think I'm doing a good job so far by doing the following:

1. Putting dates and reminders on my Google calendar helps me remember when to prepare for a meeting, workshop, training, or coaching session.
2. Using Asana to create a schedule for my daily routine, each day is dedicated to a particular task that includes items from my To-Do List.
3. Working in 2-3 90-minute chunks of time with breaks in-between with a hard stop by 4 pm. This helps me not sit at my desk and work all day, and when I am done with work, I leave my computer where it is so I don't take it to bed.
4. Reserving Mondays to take care of household duties and go to any appointments
5. I'm telling my business here, but I'm one of the rare individuals called Long Haulers (COVID), and although I am COVID-negative, I'm still dealing with a few side effects, such as fatigue. It doesn't take much to tire me out, and if I'm too tired or stressed, my brain fog worsens. It is *crucial*

that I not only listen to what my body is saying but also do what it's telling me to do. There are days I feel great and work from 10-4 and pick back up later in the day, and there are days when I need to sleep an extra hour to function.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

What is next for Courtney Fulton in the next three years? Can you share sound advice that has benefited you throughout your journey? Can you please share your website information and social media platforms with us to continue following your journey? We wish you continuous success.

COURTNEY FULTON:

In 3 years, I will expand my business to include group coaching, quarterly workshops, and seminars on interrupting the Strong Black Woman mindset. I will be the keynote speaker at several Black Women and wellness conferences and will have hosted my conferences. Several of my workbooks, journals, coloring books, and t-shirts will be available to purchase. Lastly, I have been thinking about starting a non-profit to advocate for Black Women who are challenged with an anxiety and depression diagnosis. The non-profit will be in the begging stages in 3 years! A piece of advice that has helped me in my healing journey is that making yourself and your needs a priority is not selfish; it's necessary. A long time ago, I heard Whoopi Goldberg say that if you don't care for yourself, you won't be able to care for others. For Black Women, we are taught to put others first and ourselves last. However, where has that helped us? Because we put our needs to the side, we have several mental, physical, and emotional health issues. I can testify that when I prioritize taking care of myself, I can fully show up for others.

Here is my social media and contact information: Website: BrownGirlDiagnosed.com
Email: HeySis@BrownGirlDiagnosed.com
Instagram: [@BrownGirlDiagnosed](https://www.instagram.com/BrownGirlDiagnosed)
Conversations With a Brown Girl
Podcast: browngirldiagnosed.com/podcast



ARIELLE PERSHAY

TIPS & TRICKS TO STAY FIT

Hello beautiful, I am back with some new tips and tricks to stay fit! Spring is here, and summer is right around the corner. I know some of you are ready to hit that beach, wear fewer clothes, and go on vacation to exotic this is the article for you! We are prepared to hit the gym, change our diet, and cut back on different foods. I am doing that as well. Ladies and Gentlemen, below are some helpful tips to get started on the healthy path.



People, please note that going on a diet does not mean starving yourself or skipping meals, and our body needs the nutrients to help keep us healthy.

Are you ready to eat Healthy? Ready, Set, Let's Eat!!!!

CHOOSE WHOLE FOODS: Whole foods are minimally processed and contain no added sugars, fats, or other artificial ingredients. Examples of whole foods include fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, nuts, seeds, and lean proteins like chicken and fish.



INCORPORATE VARIOUS COLORS: Eating multiple colorful fruits and vegetables is an easy way to ensure you get a wide range of nutrients. Try to eat a rainbow of colors daily, including red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and purple.

DON'T SKIP MEALS: Skipping meals can lead to overeating later and mess with your metabolism. Try to eat three meals daily, plus snacks if needed, to keep your energy levels up and your hunger in check.



COOK AT HOME: Cooking at home allows you to control the ingredients and portions of your meals, which can help you make healthier choices. Try to cook at home as often as possible, and experiment with new recipes and ingredients to keep things interesting.

LIMIT PROCESSED FOODS: Processed foods are often high in salt, sugar, and unhealthy fats and can contribute to weight gain and other health problems. Limit your processed food intake and focus on whole, unprocessed foods instead.

DRINK PLENTY OF WATER: Drinking enough water is essential for good health, as it helps to keep your body hydrated and your organs functioning properly. Aim for at least eight glasses of water daily, and more if you're active or live in a hot climate.



PRACTICE MODERATION: Eating healthy doesn't mean you must give up all your favorite foods. Instead, practice moderation and portion control, and occasionally indulge in treats and less healthy foods.

DON'T FORGET ABOUT HEALTHY FATS: Healthy fats, such as those found in avocados, nuts, and olive oil, are an essential part of a balanced diet. They can help to reduce inflammation, improve brain function, and support heart health.



PLAN: Planning your meals and snacks can help you make healthier choices and avoid reaching for less healthy options when you're hungry and in a hurry. Try to plan out your meals for the week and prep ingredients and snacks in advance to make things easier.

LISTEN TO YOUR BODY: Everyone's nutritional needs are different, and it's essential to listen to your body and eat in a way that feels right for you. Pay attention to how other foods make you feel and adjust your diet as needed.



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ABOUT OUR BUSINESS

I am Abdullah Khan, CEO/FOUNDER of Maklion Creations, We are Graphic Designing Company providing our Services Worldwide on Freelance Marketplaces like Fiverr, Upwork, Freelancer and on Various Social Media Platforms. We are doing this work for more than 4 years and really love to deliver beautiful Graphic Designs to our Customers all over the World.

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