

CIRCLE OF BOSS SISTERS C.O.B.S.

Queens COURT

**EYERI ANGIE
GONZALEZ**

CO-OWNER & EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR OF EARLY
BIRD EDUCATIONAL
CENTERS

BEAUTY SPOTLIGHT

**DIARRHA
N'DIAYE-MBAYE**

FOUNDER OF
AMI COLÉ, INSPIRING
EVERY BROWN
GIRL TO DREAM
BOLD

Kings COURT

CJ NEVELS

THE RISING
STAR REDEFINING
HIS STAGE

WOMEN WERK

**DR. SHERRONDA
BANKS**

OWNER/CLINICAL
DIRECTOR INTENTIONAL
STEPS COUNSELING
SERVICES, PLLC

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WOMEN INNOVATORS

SONTERIA BOWIE

FOUNDER/OWNER
OF TRANQUIL BLENDS

Author's CORNER

**D. ELIAS
LOADHOLT**

HIDING BEHIND
THE CROSS

INANNA JOY

AUTHOR OF THE
JANE LUCK SERIES

YOUNG TRAILBLAZERS

**RHYAN &
RHYLEE
COOPER**

AUTHORS AND
MODELS

TELESA WRIGHT

OWNER/MANAGING BROKER OF BESPOKE REALTY/AUTHOR

STAFF



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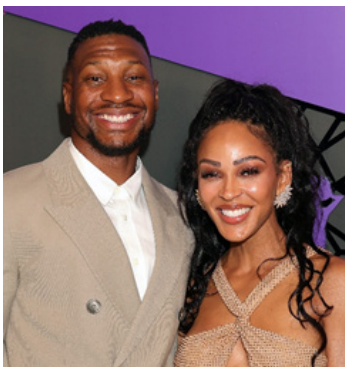
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Editor's Note

A TABLE FOR ONE

HOW ALONE TIME IN NEW ORLEANS UNLOCKED MY CREATIVITY AND SPIRITUAL CALLING

WRITTEN BY: DR. TREVI BOOKER-PERSHAY

There's a certain power in taking yourself on a trip with no one else to answer to. No agenda but your own. No conversations that distract, only the quiet hum of your own thoughts. I didn't know how much I needed that kind of space until I gave it to myself.



Recently, I traveled to New Orleans alone. Not with my husband. Not with my grown daughters, who double as my best friends. Just me.

And let me be honest: this was my first time traveling solo. At first, I was nervous, maybe even a little afraid. Isn't it funny how being alone with yourself can feel so intimidating? You'd think we'd be the most comfortable with the person we've known the longest. But solitude can be loud. It forces you to listen to thoughts and feelings you've shoved aside for years. And that can be uncomfortable. But it's also the beginning of transformation.

The first two days, I played the perfect tourist. I walked the vibrant streets of the French Quarter, listened to jazz floating from open doors, tasted food that hugged your soul, and soaked in the powerful, resilient history of Black New Orleans. It was joyful, inspiring, and affirming, but I knew deep down that the real purpose of this trip had not yet begun.

By day three, I checked myself into a different kind of tour, a spiritual one. I locked myself down in my hotel room for three whole days. No distractions. No sightseeing. Just me, my Bible, my laptop, and God. It was time to clean the house, the kind of cleaning that has nothing to do with brooms and everything to do with soul work. I prayed, fasted, cried, and listened. I asked hard questions. I repented for delays, disobedience, and doubt. I faced the parts of myself that had been stuck.



And then something broke loose.

I hadn't written a full script in five years. Not because I lacked ideas, but because life was too noisy. I'd been putting everything and everyone before my calling. But in those three sacred days of silence and surrender, the clog lifted. Words flowed. Scenes revealed themselves. A new script was born, one that had been sitting inside of me for years, waiting for my obedience.

What I learned in New Orleans is this: alone time isn't lonely, it's necessary. It's where we meet our most authentic self. It's where God has room to whisper without having to compete with the crowd. When we spend intentional one-on-one time with ourselves, we stop performing and start becoming.

So yes, I traveled alone. I was scared at first. But what I found in that quiet space was far greater than fear; it was freedom. I encourage you to take your own solo journey. It doesn't have to be far. It doesn't even have to be long. But it must be sacred. Protect it. Prioritize it. And when you do, don't be surprised if what was once buried in your spirit begins to rise again, clear, strong, and divinely aligned.

Find Your Inner Self

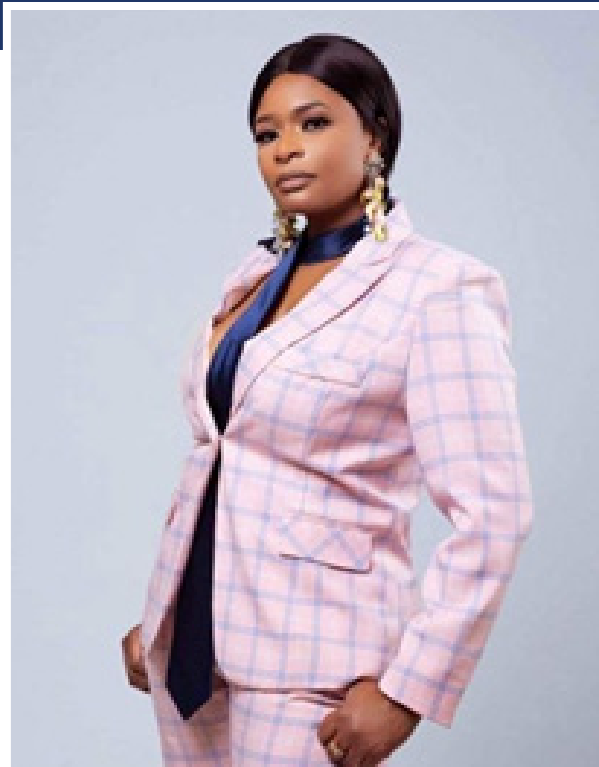
Dr. Trevi Booker-Pershay



NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION AWARENESS MONTH SEPTEMBER



Featured Story



TELESA WRIGHT

BUILDING LEGACIES, HEALING HEARTS, AND
INSPIRING GENERATIONS

WRITTEN BY: C.O.B.S EDITORIAL TEAM

When I began the search for the next face of the C.O.B.S. Magazine September Issue, Publicist, Ms. Brandi Lynn of Memphis, Tennessee, knew exactly who should grace our pages. She introduced us to Telesa Wright, and we could not be more grateful.

Few embody this calling as powerfully as Telesa Wright, a woman whose influence spans real estate, personal development, and community empowerment. As Co-Owner and Managing Broker of Bespoke Realty, serving Mississippi, Tennessee, and Arkansas, she has built more than a multi-state brand; she has built a reputation for excellence, intentionality, and service that leaves a lasting imprint wherever she goes.

A Luxury Certified Real Estate Broker, Certified Elevation Coach, motivational speaker, and award-winning author, Telesa moves with both precision and passion. Her career is marked by achievements that speak to her skill, but her life's work reveals something more profound: a mission to help others rise above pain, reclaim their worth, and step fully into their purpose.

Bespoke REALTY

Her authorship spans three impactful books: *Boss Lady Confessions*, *Worth It*, and her most recent, *Look Back For What*. This latest work is more than a book; it is a mirror and a map for those ready to confront their past, heal from trauma, and move forward with courage. It sparked the creation of *Patio Conversations*, a national movement of intimate, judgment-free gatherings where women share their truths, rediscover their strength, and rise together in the company of those who understand.

“Healing is not the end of the story: it is the beginning of your legacy.”

Telesa's commitment to empowerment extends beyond women and into the next generation. She is the founder of LIT: Ladies in Training, a summer camp that teaches transitional etiquette, leadership skills, and personal growth to young girls. It is a safe space where confidence is built, character is shaped, and young women are equipped to lead with clarity and grace.

As a local board member of NAMMBA (National Association of Minority Mortgage Bankers of America), Telesa knows that representation matters and works tirelessly to create opportunities for those whose potential has too often gone unseen. She has also graced stages as a nationally recognized speaker.

Her accomplishments are as impressive as her heart. A multi-million-dollar producer in real estate, HER Award recipient, and winner of the National Association Literary Contest on Why I Love Being a Realtor, she has also graced stages as a nationally recognized speaker. Whether in a boardroom, on a platform, or in a coaching session, she blends practical expertise with heart-centered storytelling, making her message unforgettable.

“Your pain can become your platform, and your platform can change lives.”

Yet behind the accolades is a woman deeply anchored in faith and family. Married for 18 years, she is the proud mother of six and grandmother of three. Her personal life is proof that success does not require sacrificing what matters most. In fact, it is her faith, her love for her family, and her belief in service that fuel her professional excellence.

Through her work in real estate, authorship, coaching, and community leadership, Telesa Wright is not just building homes; she is helping people build futures rooted in healing, resilience, and purpose. Her life is a living reminder that the most accurate measure of success is not in what we accumulate, but in the lives we transform along the way.

SPOTLIGHT ON TELESA WRIGHT

Patio Conversations

A safe, judgment-free space for women to reflect, release, and rise all in the warmth of a patio setting. Born from her book *Look Back For What*, it has grown into a national movement of healing circles.

Author and Storyteller

- *Boss Lady Confessions* — Raw and real insights on leadership and resilience.
- *Worth It* — A call to recognize your value and walk boldly in it.
- *Looking Back For What* — A deeply personal journey of overcoming and reclaiming identity.

Ladies in Training (LIT)

A life-shaping summer camp that blends transitional etiquette training with personal development to prepare young girls for leadership and success.

Leadership with NAMMBA

As Public Relations Manager and National Board Member, Telesa advocates for diversity, equity, and access to education in the mortgage and housing industries.



Kings Court

CJ NEVELS

TURNING PASSION INTO PURPOSE, ONE STAGE AT A TIME

WRITTEN BY: C.O.B.S EDITORIAL TEAM

In the world of entertainment, few actors embody both raw talent and a commitment to uplifting others the way CJ Nevels does. With nearly a decade of stage experience, Nevels is now making a bold entrance into the film industry, bringing with him not only versatility as an actor but also a passion for building spaces where other creatives can thrive.

From the Church Stage to the Spotlight

CJ's love for acting took root at New Direction Christian Church, where he performed in a Christmas play. What began as an act of service quickly blossomed into a calling—one that fueled his pursuit of acting as both a career and a ministry of storytelling. Through every role, he brings an authenticity that connects deeply with audiences, leaving them entertained, inspired, and reflective.

A Vision Beyond Acting

More than an actor, CJ is also an entrepreneur who believes in cultivating opportunities for others. In October 2023, he hosted Dreams Do Come True, an Art Mixer that blended stage skits, poetry, and fashion into one unforgettable night. Designed to inspire those who may have lost sight of their goals, the event was a reminder that with faith, perseverance, and vision, dreams are within reach.

"I want to create a space where aspiring creatives can develop their gifts and know that their voice matters," CJ says. His mission is clear: acting is not just about him; it's about opening doors for others to shine.

Storytelling with Impact

Recently, CJ expanded his artistry by co-writing, co-producing, and directing Under Pressure, a mini web series on YouTube. Tackling themes such as mental health, rejection, forgiveness, and loyalty, the series resonates with audiences navigating the struggles of modern life. Each episode is a testament to CJ's creative ability to craft narratives that are both timely and timeless.

His performance credits reflect his wide range, with standout roles in Pastor Terrell Monger's stage play Influence, the Tubi hit Troublesome, and the film Beyond the Doors. He's also brought depth and charisma to productions like Power of Generational Curse, P.U.S.H., and When No One is Listening.

Upcoming Shows

Fans will have multiple opportunities to experience CJ's work live in 2025:

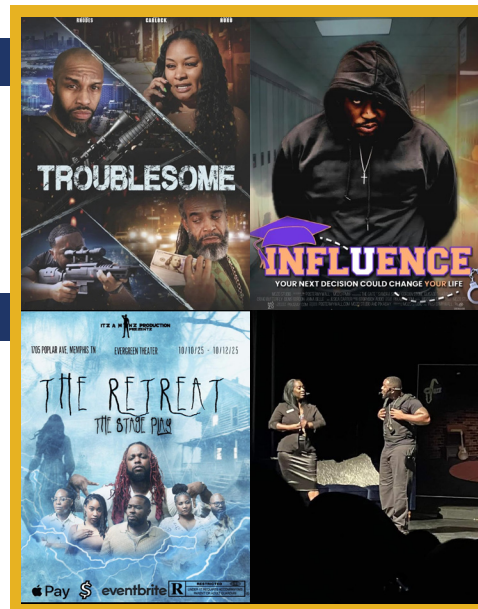
- **Soulful Murder Mystery** – August 15–17 | Jackson, MS
- **Who Dropped You** – August 23 | Memphis, TN
- **The Retreat Stage Play** – October 10–12 | Memphis, TN

These projects further solidify his reputation as an actor who can captivate audiences across genres, whether in film, web, or on stage.

The Actor, The Visionary, The Inspiration

What makes CJ Nevels truly stand out is his dual role as both entertainer and motivator. His work doesn't just showcase his undeniable talent—it ignites hope in others. By blending faith, storytelling, and community, he is proving that acting can be more than performance; it can be a purpose-driven journey.

Follow CJ Nevels' journey on CJ Nevels (Facebook), cj_nevels (Instagram), and catch Under Pressure on YouTube. Whether on screen, on stage, or in the lives of aspiring artists, CJ Nevels is a name to remember—an actor whose star is still on the rise, and a visionary determined to bring others along with him.



Author's Corner

FROM PULPIT TO PEN

D. ELIAS LOADHOLT SR., UNMASKS REDEMPTION IN DEBUT NOVEL "HIDING BEHIND THE CROSS"

WRITTEN BY: C.O.B.S EDITORIAL TEAM

In an era where authenticity and vulnerability are redefining ministry, D. Elias Loadholt Sr. emerges as a powerful voice, one that does not shy away from the broken places. His debut novel, Hiding Behind the Cross, is more than a book; it's a lifeline for readers who are navigating the complexities of faith, love, and loss.



A preacher, storyteller, and spiritual mentor, Loadholt brings years of ministry experience and an unmistakable honesty to the pages of his first fiction work. Born in New York and now grounded in Virginia, his voice is rooted in real-life struggles and shaped by the pews that raised him. With a ministry centered on truth, healing, and grace, Loadholt has touched countless lives, from mentoring youth to uplifting communities with bold compassion and unwavering faith.

Hiding Behind the Cross tells the layered story of Pastor Raymond Johnson, a man of God facing the emotional aftermath of a failed marriage, the demands of leadership, and the aching need for connection. The novel does not romanticize the struggle; instead, it leans into it. Through Raymond's spiritual crossroads, Shannon's haunting return, and Tasha's deeply personal journey as a single mother, Loadholt weaves a tale that reflects the real lives behind the pulpit and within the pews.

"People want more than just a polished sermon," says Loadholt. "They want to know that their story, their pain, confusion, even their silence, is seen and understood by a God who never leaves."

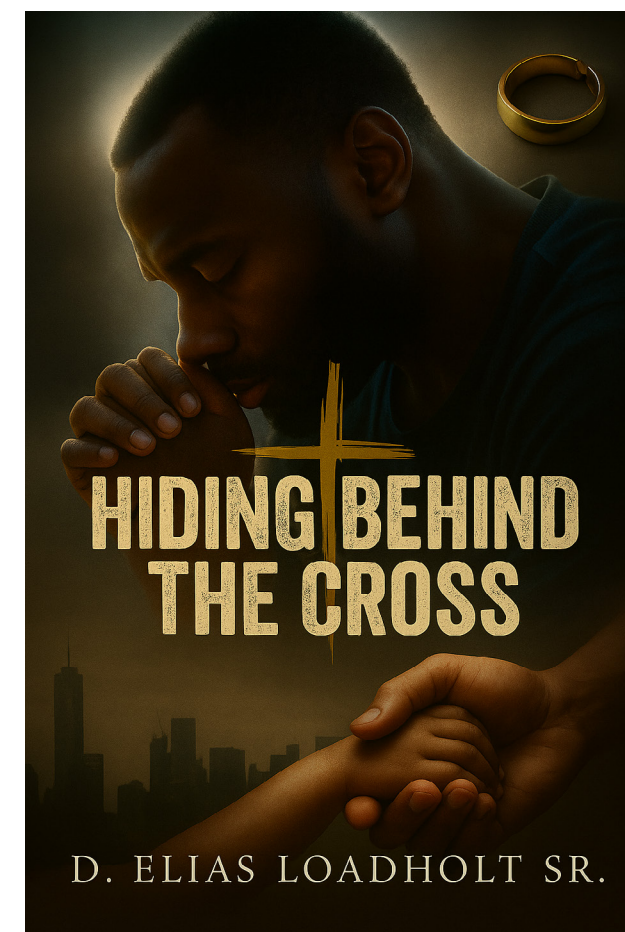
With lyrical prose and profound spiritual insight, Hiding Behind the Cross is a testimony wrapped in fiction. It captures the essence of redemption, the uncomfortable stretch of transformation, and the holy tension between who we were and who we are becoming.

Behind every powerful man is a powerful partner, and Loadholt is quick to acknowledge his wife, Charmaine. Her steadfast love, resilience, and encouragement have been a guiding light in his journey. Together, they are raising three remarkable children: Cy-arrah, Savannah, and Dwayne Jr., his most genuine inspiration and proudest legacy.

As a first-time author, Loadholt is already carving a space for faith-driven fiction that refuses to shy away from life's most difficult questions. He invites readers to walk alongside characters who fall, fight, love, forgive, and rise again.

Whether you're in ministry, rebuilding your life after heartbreak, or quietly wrestling with your faith, Hiding Behind the Cross offers more than just a story; it provides hope.

Follow D. Elias Loadholt Sr. on social media @BishopDlo for powerful faith-based content, daily encouragement, and upcoming releases that promise to stir both the heart and spirit.



Queens Court

LEADING WITH HEART AND VISION

EYERI ANGIE GONZALEZ AND THE FUTURE OF EARLY LEARNING

WRITTEN BY: C.O.B.S EDITORIAL TEAM

We celebrate women whose work builds stronger communities, uplifts others, and creates legacies that last for generations. Few embody this mission as profoundly as Eyeri Angie Gonzalez, the visionary Co-Owner and Executive Director of Early Bird Educational Center. Her life's work is a testament to what happens when determination meets purpose — and the result is nothing short of transformative for the children and families she serves.



FROM CORPORATE LEADER TO COMMUNITY BUILDER
“QUALITY AND COMMUNITY ARE AT THE HEART OF EVERYTHING I DO.”

Angie's career began in corporate human resources and administration, where she held leadership roles at top New York City investment firms. While she thrived in the high-pressure corporate world, her heart yearned for work that would leave a personal and generational impact.

In 2012, she made a bold and life-changing shift into Early Childhood Education. It wasn't just a new career—it was a mission. Partnering with her mother, Founder & CEO Marianela Jimenez, Angie transformed a shared vision into Early Bird Educational Centers, a thriving multi-site program that today stands as a model for high-quality education, cultural inclusion, and deep community care.

From the very start, Angie and Marianela knew their work had to honor the community that had poured into them. This belief became the heartbeat of their mission and inspired the school's guiding mantra: “It takes a community to educate a child.” Through partnerships with fellow community leaders, they ensure that students receive not only a well-rounded education but also access to resources that strengthen families and open doors to brighter futures.

That commitment doesn't end when a child leaves Early Bird. Angie and her team continue to walk alongside families long after graduation, connecting them with local leaders and organizations that can support their next chapter. In June 2025, Early Bird proudly celebrated its 10-year partnership with the NYC Department of Education, a milestone marked by returning parents whose children had once been in Angie's preschool programs, some of whom were soon preparing to enter college. Among the honorees was Committee Woman Dorita Clarke, New York State Committee Woman for the 29th Assembly District and founder of You Can Go To College. Angie personally introduced parents to Ms. Clarke, ensuring they had the guidance and resources needed to navigate the college application process, another example of how she uses the power of community to serve both current and former families.

Building Programs with Purpose

Under Angie's Leadership, Early Bird Educational Centers has launched several successful programs, including 3K and Pre-K sites in partnership with the New York City Department of Education. Each initiative has been guided by her unwavering values: providing children with the best start in life, fostering a sense of belonging, and empowering staff to be leaders in their own right.

Angie knows that outstanding leadership is never a solo act. She credits much of Early Bird's success to the dedication, talent, and heart of the incredible team she leads. For her, teamwork isn't just a management principle; it's the foundation of everything they do. She takes pride in hiring from within the very communities she serves, creating opportunities for local talent to grow while ensuring the staff reflects and understands the families in their care. She believes that when people are supported, trusted, and inspired, they bring their best selves to the mission, and that collective effort is what turns vision into reality.

Her ability to grow and scale with integrity has set Early Bird apart. To parents, it is more than schooling—it's a place where their children are intellectually, emotionally, and socially supported. To educators, it is a workplace that values professional growth, collaboration, and excellence.



Mentoring the Next Wave of Child Care Leaders

In addition to leading her centers, Angie has become a sought-after childcare consultant. She helps both new and established centers navigate the complexities of licensing, operational strategy, and sustainable growth. With her guidance, many childcare entrepreneurs have turned their visions into thriving programs that serve their communities.

“Education is not just about teaching children, it is about building the future.”

Her influence reaches beyond her own business. She is a proud Minority and Women Owned Business Enterprise (MWBE) leader who understands the importance of representation. She uses her platform to show other women of color that it is possible to excel in both business and education, even in spaces where they are underrepresented.

Life Rooted in Balance

For Angie, this work is far more than a professional calling woven into the fabric of who she is. While her professional accomplishments are extraordinary, her heart is anchored in family and community. She is a devoted wife, a loving daughter, and a proud sister to a brother with special needs—roles that have shaped her empathy, resilience, and unwavering commitment to others.

Above all, she is a mother to two beautiful children, determined to be the example they can look to for strength, integrity, and purpose. Every choice she makes is rooted in her desire to show them the power of service and the impact of living with intention. She is building a legacy they can be proud of—one grounded in faith, perseverance, and the belief that strong communities create strong futures.

Beyond her work in education, Angie embraces life fully. She finds joy in traveling, managing her Airbnb business, and creating memories with her family that will last a lifetime. She understands that personal fulfillment fuels professional excellence, and she leads with the same heart, vision, and determination in both her personal and professional worlds.

Through her leadership, consulting, and entrepreneurial spirit, Eyeri “Angie” Gonzalez is not only shaping the next generation—she is redefining what it means to lead with purpose. Her journey is one of transformation, not just for herself, but for every life she touches, leaving an enduring imprint of hope, empowerment, and possibility.

Learn more about her work at www.earlybirdeducationalcenter.org and follow her on Instagram at [@earlybirdec_](https://www.instagram.com/earlybirdec_) and [@angie_childcare_guru](https://www.instagram.com/angie_childcare_guru).

Leader's Corner: Angie's Top 3 Lessons for Women in Business

1. Lead with Purpose:

“Every decision I make is rooted in why I started. When you know your ‘why,’ it will guide you through challenges and keep you grounded.”

2. Invest in People:

“Strong businesses are built on strong relationships. Invest in your team, your clients, and your community, and they will invest in you.”

3. Create Your Own Opportunities:

“If the door does not open, build your own. Do not wait for permission to pursue your dreams.”



Women Work



DR. SHERRONDA BANKS

LEADING WITH INTENTION, HEALING WITH PURPOSE

WRITTEN BY: C.O.B.S EDITORIAL TEAM

At C.O.B.S. Magazine, we are always on the lookout for women who are not just excelling in their fields but also creating waves of change that ripple far beyond their immediate circles. This month, we are honored to shine a spotlight on a woman whose life's work is igniting transformation, building stronger communities, and re-defining what it means to lead with both courage and compassion. She is not just making an impact—she's starting a quiet revolution in how we think about healing, leadership, and purpose.

Dr. Sherronda Banks, LCSW, LISW-CP, has dedicated more than twenty years to building a career grounded in healing, empowerment, and transformation. Her journey is a testament to the power of intentional living—one that bridges clinical expertise, educational leadership, and faith-based advocacy to create lasting change in the lives of others.

As the founder and Clinical Director of Intentional Steps Counseling Services, PLLC, Dr. Banks leads a thriving group practice committed to delivering culturally responsive and trauma-informed care. Her vision is clear: to provide a safe space for individuals and families to explore their challenges, reclaim their voice, and take purposeful steps toward healing. Every client who walks through their doors is met with respect, compassion, and the unwavering belief that they can move from surviving to thriving.

Her influence extends far beyond the therapy room. As a Lecturer at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, Dr. Banks invests her time and energy into shaping the next generation of social workers. She not only teaches the fundamentals of the profession but also mentors her students in the values of empathy, cultural humility, and advocacy. For her, social work is not just a career; it is a calling rooted in service, justice, and the belief that every person has inherent worth.



Dr. Banks's work is deeply informed by her commitment to radical preservation and resilience within historically marginalized communities. Drawing from both professional training and lived experience, she addresses the systemic barriers that often silence voices and limit access to quality care. She understands that healing is not a one-size-fits-all process, and she ensures that her approach reflects the cultural realities, spiritual values, and personal histories of those she serves.

In addition to her clinical and academic roles, Dr. Banks is a dynamic speaker and educator. Whether addressing a conference audience, leading a community workshop, or speaking to a small group, she creates brave spaces environments where people can engage in honest dialogue, confront hard truths, and envision new possibilities for themselves and their communities. Her message resonates across settings: healing is possible, leadership is an act of service, and purpose is found in showing up fully as yourself.

Highlighted Projects & Achievements

- **Founder & Clinical Director, Intentional Steps Counseling Services, PLLC** – Grew a solo practice into a thriving group practice, serving diverse clients across North Carolina.
- **Capstone Project: Resiliency Reimagined** – Designed an antiracist, culturally responsive orientation training for first-year, first-generation college students.
- **Academic Leadership** – Lead faculty for graduate-level field education courses at UNC Charlotte, integrating simulation-based learning and resilience training.
- **Professional Development** – Creator of Radical Preservation: Sustaining Your Resilience as a Helping Professional.
- **Mentorship & Supervision** – Established the Growing with Guidance Mentorship Program and a comprehensive clinical supervision program.
- **Community Engagement** – Facilitates workshops, panels, and trainings for organizations on mental health, resilience, and culturally responsive care.

Community Initiatives & Impact

- Advocates for equitable mental health access for BIPOC communities.
- Supports resilience skill-building for college-aged students, particularly in the wake of the pandemic.
- Mentors both new and seasoned clinicians through the Growing with Guidance Mentorship Program.
- Partners with educational institutions and community organizations to create safe, inclusive spaces for healing and personal development.



To learn more about Dr. Sherronda Banks's work, visit

www.intentionalstepservices.com or www.sherrondabanks.com.

You can also connect with her on Instagram at @dr_sherrondabanks, <https://www.linkedin.com/in/drsherrondabanks/>, and @intentionalstepscounseling.



Fashion Corner

THEBE MAGUGU

AFRICA'S VOICE IN GLOBAL FASHION

WRITTEN BY C.O.B.S EDITORIAL TEAM

In an industry often dominated by Western aesthetics, Thebe Magugu has emerged as a groundbreaking force redefining the global narrative of fashion. Born and raised in South Africa, Magugu is not just a designer; he is a storyteller, weaving together threads of heritage, politics, and modernity into garments that speak louder than words.

A Star on the Rise

In 2019, Magugu made history as the first African designer to win the prestigious LVMH Young Fashion Designer Prize, instantly placing him among the industry's most promising talents. His collections are celebrated for their intellectual depth, drawing from South Africa's social and cultural landscape. Each piece feels like a dialogue between past and present, addressing themes such as identity, resilience, and empowerment.

Fashion as Storytelling

Magugu's work stands out because it is unapologetically African and fiercely contemporary. Collections like African Studies and Gender Studies showcase not just exquisite tailoring but also a commitment to education, art, and activism. Through structured silhouettes, unexpected textures, and bold prints, he creates garments that celebrate African narratives while pushing fashion forward.

Beyond aesthetics, Magugu collaborates with local artisans, ensuring traditional craftsmanship remains alive and celebrated on a global platform. His designs have graced international runways, been worn by icons, and featured in publications like Vogue and Harper's Bazaar.

Breaking Global Ground

Since launching his eponymous brand in 2017, Magugu has partnered with powerhouses like Adidas and Dior, proving that African design belongs on the world stage. He's also a finalist for the International Woolmark Prize, further solidifying his status as a designer to watch. Yet, amid global recognition, he remains deeply rooted in his South African heritage—something that continues to set him apart.



The Future of Fashion

Thebe Magugu's rise signals more than just the success of one designer—it reflects a shift in fashion's future. Diversity, authenticity, and cultural storytelling are no longer optional; they are essential. Through his work, Magugu proves that fashion can be both beautiful and transformative, a platform for voices often unheard.

As the world leans into inclusivity, Thebe Magugu stands at the helm, championing a vision that is bold, intellectual, and undeniably African. His name doesn't just belong on the runways of Paris and Milan—it belongs in history.



Women Innovators

SONTERIA BOWIE

POURING PASSION, BREAKING BARRIERS, AND BUILDING LEGACY

WRITTEN BY: C.O.B.S EDITORIAL TEAM

This month, we raise our glass to Sonteria Bowie, a visionary entrepreneur whose journey proves that perseverance, creativity, and purpose can re-write the rules in any industry.

Sonteria is the owner and founder of Tranquil Blends Wine, a Milwaukee and Kenosha-based brand known for bold flavors, creative events, and an unshakable commitment to community. Her story began during the pandemic, a time when uncertainty clouded the future. While the world slowed down, Sonteria set her sights on creating wines infused with natural antioxidants from berries, offering not just a rich taste but also a sense of calm and comfort in a world that desperately needed it.

"When the door is closed, I build my own."

Breaking into the wine industry was no easy feat. As a Black woman with no financial backing, no winery access, and no formal training, the odds were stacked against her. But instead of accepting closed doors, she created her own opportunities. She taught herself every aspect of the business from production and distribution to marketing and branding, transforming barriers into stepping stones and paving the way for others who have been historically underrepresented in the wine world.

Today, Tranquil Blends has grown from a small-batch idea into a multifaceted business. Her wines are available through nationwide shipping, wholesale distribution, and a growing brick-and-mortar tasting room. Her collection is a celebration of variety and innovation, featuring both traditional and sparkling blends. Favorites include Raspberry Peach Sangria, Blood Orange, Strawberry Watermelon, Pétillant Chardonnay, and Wildberry, alongside bold and unexpected creations like Mango Jalapeño and Pineapple Jalapeño.

"I want every sip to be an experience that connects people."

Sonteria's creativity extends far beyond the bottle. She is the visionary behind the Tranquil Blends Wine Train, an immersive tasting experience that pairs her wines with curated bites aboard a scenic ride. Her future plans are equally ambitious. In 2026, she will debut Winos Fest, a large-scale celebration spotlighting Black wine culture and community, where joy, culture, and connection will flow as freely as the wine.

Beyond her success as a winemaker, Sonteria is deeply committed to empowering others. She leads an HSED initiative to help adults earn their High School Equivalency Diploma, opening doors for personal and professional growth. She is also the author of *Color Me Powerful: Black Women of Milwaukee*, a coloring book that educates and inspires by honoring influential local Black women across history and industries.

Her impact has been recognized in media features and speaking invitations, including "Building a Brand That People Love" during Women's Entrepreneurship Week. Whether through a bottle of wine, a community event, or an educational resource, Sonteria Bowie's mission remains the same: to create meaningful experiences that connect, inspire, and empower.

In an industry where representation has long been lacking, she is not only filling glasses, she is opening minds, building community, and proving that success is possible when passion meets persistence.

Discover more at www.tranquilblendsllc.com and follow her journey on Instagram @tranquilblendsllc.

Sip & Learn: The Tranquil Blends Experience

Signature Flavors

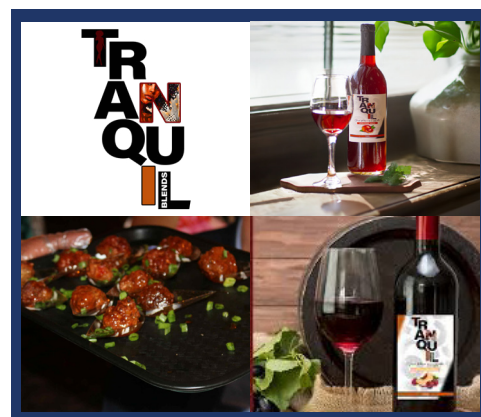
- Raspberry Peach Sangria – sweet, fruity, and refreshing
- Mango Jalapeño – a daring blend of sweet and heat
- Pétillant Chardonnay – light, bubbly, and perfect for celebrations
- Blood Orange Sangria – Award-winning, bursting with bright, zesty blood orange flavors, this refreshing sangria is perfectly balanced and irresistibly smooth.

Unique Experiences

- Tranquil Blends Wine Train: A scenic wine and food pairing journey
- Winos Fest 2026: Celebrating Black wine culture and community

Philanthropy with Purpose

- HSED initiative for adult education
- Color Me Powerful coloring book honoring Black women in Milwaukee



Author's Corner

INANNA JOY: CRAFTING MAGIC FROM LIFE'S MESS STORIES OF TRANSFORMATION, RESILIENCE & RADICAL SELFHOOD

WRITTEN BY: C.O.B.S EDITORIAL TEAM

Some writers entertain, and then some heal. Inanna Joy belongs to the latter, an unapologetic voice rising from the ashes of heartbreak, faith deconstruction, and rebirth. She is not simply an author; she is a vessel. A truth-teller. A modern-day griot whose pen unearths the beauty in being broken and brave.

Joy Outlaw, also known as Inanna Joy, writes with the fierce tenderness of a woman who has lived through storms and dared to name them. Her stage name, Inanna, draws power from the ancient goddess of love, war, and transformation, a nod to her own life's journey: from religious restriction to radical selfhood, from silence to sacred storytelling.

A Voice Carved by Fire and Freedom

Born during the height of the crack epidemic, Joy's early life was marked by chaos and a deep hunger for love and stability. But rather than sink into despair, she made a sacred vow to turn her pain into purpose. Her writing is not escapism; it's exorcism. And it shows.

Whether she's reflecting on love or weaving intricate plots with flawed, unforgettable characters, Inanna Joy always writes from the soul. Her words linger. They liberate. They confront what's often hidden behind the Sunday smile.

The Jane Luck Adventures Series: Faith, Grit, and the Cost of Reinvention

Her debut novel, *Pretty Little Mess: A Jane Luck Adventure*, introduces us to Jane, once a devout daughter, now a calculating hitwoman. Set against the backdrop of Southern religiosity and generational trauma, the series doesn't offer tidy redemption arcs or easy answers. Instead, it dares to ask: What happens when a good girl chooses survival over sanctity?

In Book 2: *Things Fall Together: A Jane Luck Adventure*, the heat rises. Jane's decisions have consequences, and each chapter pushes the boundaries of morality, identity, and inner freedom. Through Jane, Inanna Joy explores what it means to be a woman navigating the shadows armed not just with a weapon, but with wounded wisdom. A bold integration of the hallowed and profane, this is Christian fiction turned on its head. And thank God for that.

Beyond the Books: Building Sacred Brands

As the founder of OmniMind Media, Joy has taken complete control of her narrative. She publishes independently, not as a last resort, but as a powerful, intentional choice. Her brand isn't just about books; it's a movement. From her BookGems collection (handmade gemstone bookmarks that honor spiritual alignment) to her raw Instagram reflections, Joy builds sacred space around everything she creates.

Why She Writes

For Inanna, writing is a spiritual assignment. "I write to uncover what's been buried and to remind women that they are still whole even with scars," she says.

Her readers don't just finish a chapter; they transform. They meet themselves in the mirror of her words. They cry, they rage, they reflect. And most of all, they heal.

A Final Word: Joy as Rebellion

To read Inanna Joy is to encounter the holy in the hood, the divine in dysfunction, and the possibility of light after long seasons of dark. She does not ask for permission to be loud, layered, or liberated, and that's precisely what makes her a literary voice for our time.

If you've ever searched for God in a messy life, if you've ever questioned your worth, or fought to forgive yourself, her words were written with you in mind.



Food Court Corner

BLACK, HANDSOME & FLAVORSOME

THE SEXIEST CHEFS COOKING TODAY

WRITTEN BY: C.O.B.S EDITORIAL TEAM

INTRODUCTION

There's nothing more irresistible than a good man, but a man who can throw down in the kitchen? Now that's a whole new level of sexy. For 2025, COBS Magazine is serving up a taste of pure flavor with four of the sexiest Black chefs who prove that confidence, charm, and culinary skills make the ultimate recipe. From sizzling grills to gourmet plates, these men are dishing out more than meals; they're serving an experience that's as mouth-watering as it is memorable. Get ready, ladies... this one's a yummy indulgence you won't forget.



CHEF AARON "AB" BROWN – SMOKIN' & GRILLIN WITH AB

Aaron "AB" Brown is the self-taught, family-inspired chef behind the hit channel Smokin' & Grillin' with AB. What started in his grandmother's kitchen has grown into a YouTube empire with over 2.6 million subscribers. Known for his ribs, candied yams, and Southern comfort classics, AB makes cooking approachable, fun, and downright irresistible. Beyond YouTube, he's launched his own seasoning line, released a cookbook with 100+ recipes, and even co-hosts a podcast with Food Network's Pat Neely. Now based in Las Vegas, AB is building a brand that's as bold as his flavors — proving he's not just grilling food, he's grilling up dreams.



SMASHBURGERS - INGREDIENTS

- For the Patties
- 1 lb ground beef 80/20 blend recommended
- Kosher salt to taste
- Freshly ground black pepper to taste
- Optional Homemade Burger Seasoning
- 2 tsp garlic powder
- 2 tsp onion powder
- 1 tsp paprika
- Pinch of cayenne pepper, optional
- ½ tsp dried oregano
- 2 –3 pinches kosher salt
- 1 tsp freshly ground black pepper
- For the Burgers
- 4 brioche buns
- Mayonnaise for toasting buns
- 4 slices American cheese or cheese of choice
- Pickles, sweet or dill
- Bacon optional, cooked crisp
- Burger sauce is prepared separately

CHEF GERRY "G. GARVIN" GARVIN

Known as one of America's most beloved chefs, Gerry Garvin — better known as G. Garvin — blends Southern comfort with refined elegance. From his hit TV show Turn Up the Heat with G. Garvin to bestselling cookbooks, he's proven that soul food can be both approachable and upscale. Garvin is celebrated for his effortless charm, smooth storytelling, and recipes that feel like home with a touch of class. Whether he's serving shrimp and grits or a perfectly seared steak, he reminds us that a man with skill and style in the kitchen is always unforgettable.



SPICY SHRIMP - INGREDIENTS

- 2 lbs jumbo shrimp peeled and deveined
- 2 tsp kosher salt
- 2 tsp course black pepper
- 4 tsp red chilli powder
- 2 tbsp minced garlic
- 1 tsp red dried chilli flakes
- 2 cups white wine
- 2 tbsp butter
- 6 tbsp olive oil
- 2 chopped scallions



CHEF GREGORY GOURDET

Charlie Mitchell is one of the hottest names in today's culinary world. As the Executive Chef and co-owner of Clover Hill in Brooklyn, he became the first Black chef in New York City to earn a Michelin star in 2022. With French technique and modern creativity, Mitchell crafts dishes that are as refined as they are soulful. His youthful energy, polished presence, and undeniable skill make him a chef to watch — and the kind of man who proves excellence in the kitchen never goes out of style.



HAITIAN SPICED PINEAPPLE UPSIDE-DOWN CAKE - INGREDIENTS

FOR THE CAKE

- 23/4 cups Paleo-Friendly Flour Blend (page 327)
- 1 tablespoon plus 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- One 1-inch piece of cinnamon stick
- 2 cups coconut sugar
- 3/4 cup melted virgin coconut oil
- 5 large eggs
- 1/2 cup well-shaken coconut milk
- 2 tablespoons vanilla extract, 2 teaspoons almond extract, 1 lime, for zesting

FOR THE PINEAPPLE TOPPING

- 3/4 cup virgin coconut oil, plus more for greasing the pan
- 1 ripe pineapple
- 1/2 cup coconut sugar
- 1/2 cup maple syrup
- Three 3-inch cinnamon sticks, 5 star anise

CHEF ERIC ADJEONG

Eric Adjepong is a Ghanaian-American chef, author, and TV personality who's captured hearts with his infectious smile and culinary storytelling. A finalist on Top Chef, he became known for introducing bold West African flavors to mainstream audiences. Through dishes like jollof rice, suya-spiced meats, and plantain-forward creations, Adjepong celebrates heritage while making African cuisine accessible to all. Beyond the kitchen, he's an author of children's books that spotlight food and culture, blending education with inspiration. Handsome, talented, and deeply rooted in tradition, Adjepong proves that cooking with culture is always in good taste.



CHICHINGA (GHANAIAN BEEF KEBABS) - INGREDIENTS

GINGER-GARLIC PUREE (MAKES 1½ CUPS)

- 3/4 cup virgin coconut oil, plus more for greasing the pan
- 1 ripe pineapple
- 1/2 cup coconut sugar
- 1/2 cup maple syrup
- Three 3-inch cinnamon sticks, 5 star anise

SUYA SPICE BLEND (MAKES ABOUT 2 CUPS)

- 10seasoning cubes, such as Maggi
- 1½teaspoons anise seeds
- 1/2teaspoon whole cloves
- 5grains of Selim
- 1cup unsweetened peanut butter powder
- 1/4cup cayenne pepper
- 3tablespoons ground ginger
- 3tablespoons garlic powder
- 3tablespoons sweet paprika
- 3tablespoons onion powder



ALL-DAY SEASONING BLEND (MAKES ABOUT 3/4 CUP)

- 1tablespoon dried parsley
- 1tablespoon dried oregano
- 1tablespoon kosher salt
- 2teaspoons dried thyme
- 2teaspoons dried rosemary
- 2teaspoons whole black peppercorns
- 1teaspoon cumin seeds
- 1/4teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1/4cup sweet paprika
- 3tablespoons granulated garlic
- 2tablespoons granulated onion
- 2teaspoons Worcestershire powder (optional)

KEBABS

- 2pounds of sirloin steak
- 3tablespoons ginger-garlic puree, homemade or store-bought
- 2tablespoons all-day seasoning blend (recipe above)
- 1½tablespoons kosher salt
- 2teaspoons tomato paste
- 1teaspoon sweet paprika
- 3/4cup suya spice blend (recipe above), plus more for garnish
- 1/3cup neutral oil
- 2medium red onions, cut into large dice
- 2red bell peppers, stemmed, seeded, and cut into large dice
- 2yellow bell peppers, stemmed, seeded, and cut into large dice
- sea salt, for garnish

Beauty Spotlight



DIARRHA N'DIAYE-MBAYE

THE CEO OF AMI COLÉ CHANGING BEAUTY ONE
COLOR AT A TIME

WRITTEN BY: DR. TREVI BOOKER-PERSHAY

Now and then, I find myself looking for someone I want to pay tribute to in our publication, Circle of Boss Sisters Beauty Spotlight Corner. We're not looking for another Boss, but for women who are innovative, impactful, and changing beauty one color at a time.

I stumbled upon Diarrha N'Diaye-Mbaye's video, "CEO of Ami Colé, Diarrha N'Diaye-Mbaye's Journey as a Solo...", and something about her raw, candid introduction, "I'm a solo founder..." struck a chord with me. It wasn't just her drive; it was the honesty with which she unveiled the unseen struggles of entrepreneurship. That moment alone, her transparency, resonated deeply. I found myself rooting for her, and I knew she deserved the spotlight. As a CEO, I struggled with those same thoughts as I navigate through my journey.

From Harlem to the Heart of Beauty

Raised in Harlem, Diarrha grew up surrounded by the energy of her mother's braiding salon, a space that represented community, culture, and care. It was only natural that her career path would take her deeper into the world of beauty. Before founding her own brand, she sharpened her skills at L'Oréal and Glossier—two beauty giants where she observed both the brilliance of product innovation and the glaring gaps in inclusivity (King, 2021).

With a vision to fill those gaps, she launched Ami Colé in 2021, a clean-beauty line dedicated to melanin-rich skin. Named after her mother's salon, the brand was both personal and revolutionary, carrying forward her family's legacy of celebrating Black beauty.

AMI COLÉ

Building a Brand That Spoke to Us

Ami Colé wasn't just another beauty line; it was a movement. With hero products like the Skin-Enhancing Tint and Lip Treatment Oil, Diarrha offered formulas that celebrated, not covered, natural beauty. The brand quickly gained traction, making its way to Sephora shelves nationwide, earning Allure's Best of Beauty Award, and becoming a staple in the routines of women who longed to see themselves reflected authentically.

What made Ami Colé so special wasn't just the product; it was the feeling. As many beauty editors and customers have said, it felt like home. For once, melanin-rich skin tones weren't an afterthought—they were the main character.

A Love Letter and Legacy

In July 2025, Diarrha shared an emotional love letter to her supporters on Instagram. She wrote with gratitude, recalling the journey:

"You've witnessed me start from a sketch in my Brooklyn apartment to the shelves of every Sephora in North America in 4 years. Thank you for everything you've taught me about living your dreams out loud."

She didn't shy away from the hard truth either, explaining that while Ami Colé had made incredible strides, the current beauty market wasn't sustainable for her brand to continue. Yet, even in closing this chapter, her message was one of courage, hope, and empowerment:

"To every Brown girl out there, don't be afraid to fail out loud. Take it there! Dare to dream big!"

That love letter wasn't just a farewell; it was a reminder that impact isn't measured only in years or revenue, but in the lives touched and the inspiration sparked.

A Celebration of What's Next

As we close this spotlight, we don't see the end of Ami Colé as a loss; we see it as the beginning of something greater. Diarrha N'Diaye-Mbaye has already proven that she is a visionary, a builder, and a voice that refuses to be silenced. Her courage to create, her willingness to be transparent, and her heart for community have left an imprint on beauty that cannot be erased.

At Circle of Boss Sisters Magazine, we celebrate Diarrha not only for what she has accomplished but for the inspiration she leaves behind. We send her our warmest congratulations as she steps into her next chapter, knowing that whatever direction her journey takes, she will continue to lead with brilliance, innovation, and authenticity.

Cheers to Diarrha and every Brown girl watching, may her story remind you that your dreams are valid, your vision is needed, and your time is now.



Travel & Leisure



NEW ORLEANS

A CITY OF BEAUTY, HISTORY, AND SOUL

WRITTEN BY C.O.B.S EDITORIAL TEAM

Every city has a story, but New Orleans sings Hers. She whispers through the Spanish moss that drapes over live oaks, hums from the brass bands parading down Tremé, and echoes in the cobblestones of the French Quarter. A visit here isn't just a trip, it's an immersion into rhythm, resilience, and romance. The people are as vibrant and colorful as their city.

A Living History

Founded in 1718, New Orleans has always been a place of convergence. French, Spanish, African, and Caribbean cultures came together to create something entirely new: Creole. That blending still breathes through the city's architecture, food, and music.

The wrought-iron balconies of Royal Street, the stately St. Louis Cathedral overlooking Jackson Square, and the centuries-old streetcar lines aren't just photo-worthy; they're living chapters of a city that has weathered storms, both natural and man-made, yet always rises with unmatched grace.

The French Quarter's Charm

The French Quarter is where time slows down. By day, it's artists' sketch portraits, locals sipping chicory coffee, and jazz notes spilling from shaded courtyards. By night, neon lights, laughter, and the soulful pull of music remind you why the Quarter never sleeps.

Slip away from Bourbon Street and you'll discover quiet corners where gas lamps flicker and history feels close enough to touch. Every balcony, every hidden courtyard tells a story, each one more colorful than the last.

Music That Moves the Soul

New Orleans gave the world jazz, and the city never lets you forget it. From Louis Armstrong's trumpet to today's brass bands leading spontaneous second lines, music here is not background; it's life itself. Preservation Hall, street corners in the Marigny, or even a casual Sunday parade all prove one thing: in New Orleans, rhythm is as natural as breathing.

A Feast of Flavor

To taste New Orleans is to understand her. A bowl of gumbo feels like warmth passed down through generations. Jambalaya brings together the city's many influences in one pot. Beignets at Café du Monde, dusted with sugar that somehow always ends up on your shirt, are the sweetest reminder that indulgence is encouraged here.

And then there's the po'boy, humble yet iconic, reminding visitors that great flavor doesn't always need fine dining, it just needs heart.

Celebration is a Way of Life

If joy had a capital city, it would be New Orleans. Mardi Gras is the crown jewel, with its kaleidoscope of colors, music, and pageantry, but it's only the beginning. Jazz Fest, French Quarter Fest, and countless neighborhood parades ensure the party never really ends.

What makes it extraordinary is not just the spectacle, but the spirit, the way locals throw themselves into the celebration, inviting you to join in until you feel like family.

Why It Stays with You

New Orleans is not simply visited; she is felt. She lingers in the sound of a trumpet at dusk, the taste of powdered sugar on your lips, the warmth of strangers who call you "baby" or "darlin'" as if you've always belonged.

She's a city of contrasts, old yet modern, joyful yet deeply soulful. And once you've walked her streets, danced to her rhythms, and tasted her story, New Orleans never lets you go.

Things to Do in New Orleans

- Stroll the French Quarter – Wander Royal and Chartres Streets for art, antiques, and historic charm.
- Ride the St. Charles Streetcar – A scenic ride past oak-lined streets and classic mansions.
- Visit the Garden District – Admire stunning 19th-century homes and boutique shops.
- Explore Frenchmen Street – Live music every night, from jazz to funk to blues.
- Take a Steamboat Natchez Cruise – Experience the Mississippi River from a historic paddlewheel boat.
- Tour the Historic Cemeteries – Above-ground tombs and hauntingly beautiful architecture.
- Join a Second Line Parade – Dance behind a brass band for the most authentic New Orleans experience.

Foods You Can't Miss

- Beignets at Café du Monde – Sweet, powdered-sugar perfection.
- Gumbo – A rich, soulful stew blending French, African, and Creole traditions.
- Jambalaya – A flavorful rice dish with sausage, chicken, and seafood.
- Po'boy Sandwich – Try it with fried shrimp or roast beef, dressed with lettuce, tomato, and mayo.
- Crawfish Étouffée – Spicy, buttery, and deeply satisfying.
- Red Beans & Rice – A Monday tradition that's hearty and comforting.
- Bananas Foster at Brennan's – A flaming dessert born right in New Orleans.

Best Time to Visit New Orleans

The best time to visit New Orleans is from February to May, when the weather is pleasant and the city is alive with festivals. Mardi Gras (February/March) is the most iconic celebration, drawing visitors from around the globe for parades, music, and pageantry.

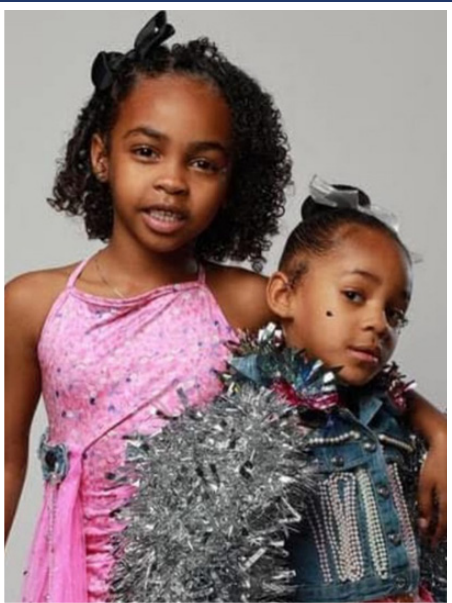
If you prefer a quieter atmosphere, late fall (October–November) is ideal. The temperatures are cooler, the crowds lighter, and you'll still find plenty of live music and cultural events.

Summer (June–August) brings hot, humid weather but also lower hotel rates—perfect for travelers who don't mind the heat and want a budget-friendly trip.

Tip: Book well in advance if you're planning to visit during Mardi Gras or Jazz Fest (late April/early May), as hotels fill quickly.



Youth Trailblazers



RHYAN & RHYLEE COOPER YOUNG AUTHORS, MODELS, AND THE NEW FACES OF CONFIDENCE

WRITTEN BY: C.O.B.S EDITORIAL TEAM

At C.O.B.S. Magazine, we celebrate trailblazers of every age, and this month our spotlight shines on two sisters from Detroit who prove that leadership, creativity, and impact have no age limit. Meet Rhyan (8) and Rhylee (6) Cooper, dynamic, stylish, and unstoppable. They are authors, models, champions, and entrepreneurs who are rewriting the story of what it means to dream big while giving back.

“Dreams have no age limit.”

The sisters first captured hearts with the release of their debut children’s book, *The Little Model That Could*, a vibrant and heartfelt story about confidence, resilience, and the magic of believing in yourself. They recently followed up with their latest inspiring title, *Cheer from the Heart*, a joyful celebration of teamwork, spirit, and determination. Each book reflects its own life experiences and carries a message that resonates with children and parents alike: you are never too young to believe in your own power. The girls are currently in first and third grade, and they attend Detroit Academy of Arts and Science (DAAS).

When they are not writing, Rhyan and Rhylee light up the runway as youth models, dazzling audiences with their poise and presence, they are also back-to-back national champions with the Eastside Cowboys PAL cheerleading team, showing the same discipline and teamwork in sports that they do in their creative pursuits. And as if that were not enough, the sisters run Cooper Cakes, a dessert pop-up shop that spreads joy and sweetness across the community.

“Confidence is our superpower.”

Balancing their careers and passions with their studies at the Detroit Academy of Arts and Sciences, Rhyan and Rhylee are deeply involved in programs that enrich their growth. From Detroit’s At Bat summer initiative to high-energy community events like Indie Fest, they remain grounded in their roots while reaching for the stars. Their lives embody Detroit’s values of hard work, hope, and family, lessons they carry with them in every project and performance.

But perhaps what makes these young trailblazers most remarkable is their heart for giving back. A portion of the proceeds from their books supports Girls Inc. and the Pretty Brown Girl Foundation, organizations that empower girls to be strong, smart, and bold. Rhyan and Rhylee understand that real success is measured not only by personal achievements but by the lives you touch along the way.

From striking poses in their living room to signing books for eager fans, Rhyan and Rhylee Cooper are proving that kindness and confidence are a powerful combination. They are role models for kids everywhere, especially young Black girls, showing that dreams are worth chasing and that your voice can make a difference, no matter your age.

As parents (Larry and Brandi Cooper), we’re genuinely inspired by our daughters, Rhyan and Rhylee. Watching them step into their roles as authors and entrepreneurs at such a young age motivates us every day. They chase their passions with so much boldness and creativity, and they don’t just dream for themselves; they uplift others along the way. Seeing them embrace leadership reminds us that their dreams have no limits, and it pushes us to keep cheering them on and supporting them in every way we can.

Follow their journey on Instagram @rhyan_cooper, @rhylee_cooper, @cooper_cakes, and discover their inspiring books, *The Little Model That Could* and *Cheer from the Heart*, wherever books are sold.

Fun Facts About Rhyan & Rhylee

- **Favorite Hobbies:** Baking cupcakes, creating runway walks at home, and writing new story ideas.
- **Role Models:** Their mom, grandmother, and other strong Black women in their community.
- **Biggest Dream:** To have their books in schools across the country and walk in New York Fashion Week.
- **Motto:** “Be kind, be confident, be you.”



The Queen Chat



QUEEN, LET’S TALK... ABOUT YOUR MENTAL HEALTH FROM THE AUTHOR OF QUEEN, LET’S TALK

Queen, Let’s Talk Healing

Queen, I need you to pause for just a moment. Inhale deeply, exhale slowly. Drop your shoulders. Unclench your jaw. Release that quiet tension you’ve been holding all day. You’ve been carrying so much silently, gracefully, but heavily. And while the world claps for your strength and resilience, I want to whisper this reminder into your spirit: your peace matters just as much as your hustle.

Too often, we glorify the grind. We applaud busyness, long hours, and pushing past exhaustion as if that’s the only definition of strength. But here’s the truth: mental health is not a luxury. It’s not something you address when everything else is done. It’s not selfish, dramatic, or unnecessary. Mental health is survival. It’s sacred. It’s the foundation upon which every dream, every ambition, and every relationship is built. Without it, the ground beneath you eventually gives way.

You are allowed not to be okay. You are allowed to say, “Today, I can’t.” You are allowed to rest without guilt. You are allowed to ask for help and still stand tall as the powerful woman you are. Strength is not about enduring silently or wearing pain like armor. True strength is in vulnerability, in choosing yourself again and again, even when others don’t understand.

So let this article serve as your permission slip, Queen:

- Go to therapy. Speak your truth in a safe space without apology.
- Journal it out. Let your pen hold what your heart can’t.
- Pray. Meditate. Cry. All are forms of release, all are healing.
- Take a nap. Your body deserves restoration.
- Cancel the plans. Protect your energy unapologetically.
- Set the boundary. Say no and mean it.
- Unplugging from the noise. The world will keep spinning while you reset.
- Stop defending your healing. You don’t owe anyone an explanation for choosing yourself.

You don’t have to fake it anymore. You don’t have to wear a smile when your soul is heavy. You don’t have to keep proving you’re “okay” just to silence questions or meet expectations. Your worth is not tied to how much you can endure without breaking.

You are human first. Queen always.

Protect your mind with the same ferocity you protect your dreams. Guard your heart the way you guard your ambition. Your peace is not a prize to be earned after you’ve worked yourself to the bone; it is your birthright. And your healing? That is not a weakness. It is your greatest power.

So today, let’s redefine strength. Let “strong” mean soft. Let “together” mean honest. Let “queen” mean whole.

I see you. I honor you. I love you. But most importantly, I need you to love you. Take care of your heart, your mind, and your spirit, because you deserve that level of care.

And when you choose yourself, Queen, you give permission for every woman watching you to do the same. Your healing doesn’t just restore you — it lights the path for others. So walk boldly in your softness, in your truth, and your wholeness. The world doesn’t just need your strength; it requires your healed, authentic, and fully alive self.

Let’s talk about healing. Let’s talk softness. Let’s talk truth”

Fitness Corner



BURNING FAT, NOT MYSELF A HEALTHIER WAY TO SEE RESULTS FASTER

WRITTEN BY: ARIELLE PERSHAY

In a world filled with quick fixes, crash diets, and Instagram fitness hacks, it's easy to feel overwhelmed when trying to burn body fat. The pressure to "drop 10 pounds in a week" can push people toward unhealthy extremes — but fat loss doesn't have to be a punishment. In fact, it shouldn't be.

Burning body fat effectively and sustainably isn't just about aesthetics — it's about building a more substantial, healthier body that works for you, not against you. When done the right way, fat loss leads to better energy, improved mental clarity, disease prevention, and enhanced self-confidence.

So how do you burn fat faster and smarter?

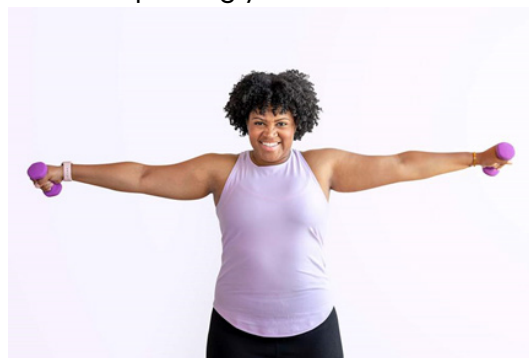
Why does Burning Body fat matter?

Burning excess fat is about more than fitting into more petite jeans— it's about improving your:

- Heart Health
- Hormonal balance
- Mobility and joint health
- Metabolism
- Mood and brain function

Too much visceral fat (fat around the organs) can increase your risk for conditions like heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and even certain cancers. So yes, burning fat is a wellness goal, not just a weight goal.

Let's cut to the part you really want to know. How to burn fat faster?



HOW TO BURN FAT FASTER-THE HEALTHY WAY:

1. Lift Weights and strength train.

Cardio helps, but strength training is the game-changer. The more lean muscle you have, the more calories your body burns at rest. Aim for 3–4 sessions per week focused on full-body strength movements like squats, lunges, pushups, and deadlifts. Don't be afraid to lift heavy— muscle doesn't make you bulky, it makes you burn more fat.



2. Dial in your nutrition (without starving)



Abs aren't made in the kitchen — but fat loss is. Focus on:

- High protein (chicken, eggs, beans, Greek yogurt)
- Healthy fats (avocados, olive oil, nuts)
- Complex carbs (sweet potatoes, oats, veggies)
- Lots of water

Cut back on sugar, processed snacks, and late-night eating — not food overall.

Tip: Instead of counting calories, count macronutrient balance and portions.

3. Add High Intensity Interval Training (HIIT)

Quick bursts of effort followed by short rests can help burn more fat in less time — even after your workout is over.

Try:

- 30 seconds sprint / 30 seconds rest x 10 rounds
- Jump squats, burpees, mountain climbers in circuit format

Tip: Keep it under 30 minutes, 2–3 times a week. Less is more when intensity is high.



4. Get Serious Sleep



Your body burns fat while you sleep. Inadequate rest raises cortisol (stress hormone), which can lead to fat storage — especially around the belly.

Tip: Aim for 7–8 hours of quality, uninterrupted sleep. Shut off screens an hour before bed.

5. Stay Consistent — Not Perfect

The real magic happens when you stay consistent for weeks, not just days. Results come from stacking good habits over time.

Tip: Track your non-scale victories: more energy, clearer skin, better mood, stronger lifts.

What to Avoid

- Skipping meals or extreme calorie restriction
 - Fat-burning pills and teas
 - Overtraining without rest days
 - Comparing your journey to someone else's
- Fat loss isn't linear, but it is possible. Trust the process.



Final Thoughts

You don't need to destroy your body to change it. Burn fat by fueling it well, moving it often, and respecting its need to rest and recover.

Whether you're just starting or bouncing back, remember this: you're one good decision away from being back on track.

Your body is capable. Your goals are valid. And the healthiest version of you is on the way.

Career Corner



I GOT GHOSTED BY A COMPANY HOW TO STAY ENCOURAGED AFTER BEING IGNORED WHEN APPLYING TO COMPANIES

WRITTEN BY: ARIELLE PERSHAY

It is a frustrating feeling when you spend hours tailoring your resume and carefully crafting a compelling cover letter. You spend time filling out multiple applications, whether they are long or short, click submit, and wait patiently to hopefully receive some exciting news. Days turn into weeks, and.... Nothing. No email. No call. No update. A company has just ghosted you. You were excited about it.

Why does Ghosting Happen?

First, let's get one thing straight: getting ghosted isn't a reflection of your worth or talent. There are so many reasons a company might go silent:

- High Volume of applications
- Changes in hiring needs or budget
- Disorganized or overwhelmed HR teams
- Internal hires or shifting priorities

Unfortunately, most companies don't send rejections unless you're far along in the process. It's not personal, even though it feels very personal.



The emotional toll

Job searching can feel like an emotional rollercoaster, especially when silence replaces feedback. It can trigger self-doubt, frustration, and burnout.

But here's the truth: every "no" (or non-response) moves you closer to your "yes." The key is not letting silence stop your momentum

HOW TO STAY ENCOURAGED AND NEVER GIVE UP

1. Reframe the Rejection

Instead of seeing ghosting as rejection, see it as redirection. A company that can't communicate upfront may not be the place for you long-term. You deserve a role where you're respected from day one, even in the hiring process.

2. Keep Your Pipeline Full

Don't wait for one opportunity. Apply consistently and keep multiple irons in the fire. Job searching is partly a numbers game; the more quality applications you submit, the better your chances.

3. Celebrate Small Wins

Track your progress: applications sent, interviews landed, new connections made. Progress isn't just about job offers; it's about building momentum.



4. Build and Leverage Your Network

Sometimes opportunities come from unexpected connections. Reach out to former colleagues, attend virtual events, and post your journey on LinkedIn. People want to help you; you have to let them know you're open.

5. Take Breaks Without Guilt

You're allowed to rest. Stepping away to recharge doesn't mean you're giving up. It means you're preserving your energy for the right opportunity.

7. Speak Life Over Your Career

Say this out loud:

"The right opportunity is aligning for me. I bring value, and the right team will see it."

Your mindset is your most powerful tool.



Final Thoughts

Getting ghosted hurts, but it's not the end of your story — it's just a plot twist. The company that never responded? They missed out. But your next opportunity could be one application away.

Stay consistent. Stay encouraged. Don't give up. You're not invisible — you're in transition.

The Crown Room

BACK TO BLACK

WHY TSSPLUS BLACK HAIR DYE SHAMPOO IS WINNING OVER GRAY HAIR WARRIORS

WRITTEN BY: C.O.B.S EDITORIAL TEAM

In a world full of harsh chemicals, smelly dye kits, and questionable claims, it's not often that a hair product earns the kind of loyal fanbase that TSSPLUS Black Hair Dye Shampoo has managed to cultivate. But this 500ml bottle of semi-permanent plant-powered color is doing more than just covering gray; it's redefining the standard for at-home hair color care. Whether you're looking to hide silver strands or restore richness to fading locks, TSSPLUS is proving to be a top contender in the organic hair dye game.

A Plant-Based Promise with Powerful Results

At first glance, the promise is simple: an organic, natural hair dye shampoo that covers gray and white hair instantly, in just 10 minutes. But TSSPLUS backs that up with a thoughtful blend of plant essences, a semi-permanent formula, and no ammonia or harsh chemicals, making it ideal for both women and men with sensitive scalps or chemical fatigue. Users rave about how this shampoo delivers not just color, but also softness, shine, and manageability. One user shared, "It doesn't burn, doesn't smell strong, and it left my hair feeling like I just had a deep conditioning treatment."

The Customer Verdict Is In

With over 1,000 customer reviews and a 4.3-star rating on Amazon, the love is real.

Top praise includes:

- Instant gray coverage (especially along the hairline and roots)
- A pleasant coconut scent
- No skin staining
- A non-drip formula that feels more like a spa treatment than a dye job

One of the standout features? The shampoo feels like shampoo, not a chemical science experiment. It blends the ease of your morning routine with the impact of a salon gloss.

My Personal Test: The Gray Girls Group Chat Experiment

A few of my growing-grays sisters got together and decided to see if the hype was real. I was the first partaker of the product—and let me tell you, I was amazed.

My hair came out soft, shiny, and vibrant. Most importantly, my grays were instantly covered—no traces left behind. Even better, the color held up beautifully. My grays only began to reappear lightly after about two months, which is expected for a temporary or semi-permanent color.

Encouraged by my results, I convinced a few friends to try it too. And here's what's even more impressive: the results were just as beautiful across different hair textures and curl patterns. From Type 2 waves to Type 4 coils, everyone saw noticeable coverage and improved shine.

I recommend this product—it's not just a shampoo; it's a confidence boost in a bottle.

No Lawsuits, No Scares

While some hair dye brands have faced scrutiny or lawsuits over harsh ingredients, TSSPLUS has no such red flags. No reported legal issues, no adverse safety alerts—just a growing community of repeat buyers and natural beauty advocates. Still, it's always smart to do a patch test. Even plant-based products can trigger sensitivities in rare cases, so follow the instructions closely, especially if you're new to hair coloring.

Application Made Easy

Forget gloves, timers, or awkward brushes. The application process is simple:

1. Wet hair and towel dry.
 2. Massage the shampoo evenly through your hair.
 3. Leave on for 10–15 minutes.
 4. Rinse and style as usual.
- That's it. No mess, no complicated steps, just clean, bold, black hair that looks as natural as it feels.

The Final Word from the Hair Editor's Chair

In the ever-evolving world of hair care, TSSPLUS Black Hair Dye Shampoo feels like a quiet revolution. It's accessible, affordable, and surprisingly effective. While results vary depending on hair porosity and condition, most users report noticeable changes after just one wash.

If you're tired of box dye disasters, lingering chemical odors, or patchy coverage, this shampoo might be your new go-to. Consider it the minimalist's secret weapon: part shampoo, part color, all confidence.

Editor's Tip:

To prolong the life of your color, avoid sulfate shampoos and over-washing. Pair TSSPLUS with a color-safe conditioner and a silk bonnet at night for longer-lasting results.



Spotlight Corner

FAITH, FITNESS, AND FASHION

MEAGAN GOOD & JONATHAN MAJORS LAUNCH HONOR CULTURE WELLNESS BRAND

WRITTEN BY: C.O.B.S. EDITORIAL TEAM

I am not the kind of person who gets into people's personal relationships. However, when I started following Meagan Good and Jonathan Majors' journey, I knew that God had purposely designed them to be together. While Jonathan was going through his court situation, I found myself praying for them, not just once, but fervently. As a married woman, I made it my mission to pray for the success of others' unions, even if they hadn't yet said "I do." Something in my spirit told me their connection was divine. I prayed without ceasing. Then one day, I forgot about it—and just like that, bam—it was announced that they were married.



But what truly excites me isn't just their love story; it's how they're now building something bigger together. Their new venture, Honor Culture, isn't just a brand; it's a movement rooted in wellness, discipline, healing, and Black excellence.

Honor Culture is a wellness and lifestyle brand that merges health and fitness with fashion and cultural empowerment. Built on the pillars of faith, discipline, strength, and inner healing, the brand reflects the couple's personal commitment to living a life of intentionality, self-love, and honor. The name itself is a reminder: we must honor our minds, bodies, communities, and each other.

From gym wear to athleisure pieces, Honor Culture offers sleek and functional designs made for both performance and style. The line includes unisex joggers, compression tops, sports bras, hoodies, and active sets that feel like a second skin but carry a more profound message—you are sacred, your body is divine, your wellness matters.

One of the standout items is the Honor Hoodie, embossed with the brand's signature logo and subtle affirmations meant to keep your mindset strong during workouts or meditation. Each garment seems to whisper a message of resilience and self-respect, true to both Meagan and Jonathan's values.

Their business partnership, much like their relationship, seems aligned with divine timing and purpose. I am so proud of them that I couldn't resist featuring their clothing line. It's not just about looking good, it's about feeling empowered and living well.

You can explore their collection and purchase pieces directly from their website: www.honorculture.com

Whether you're hitting the gym, running errands, or simply walking in your purpose, Honor Culture has something that will fit not just your body, but your spirit.



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SONTERIA BOWIE

FOUNDER/OWNER OF TRANQUIL BLENDS