



COMMUNIQUE

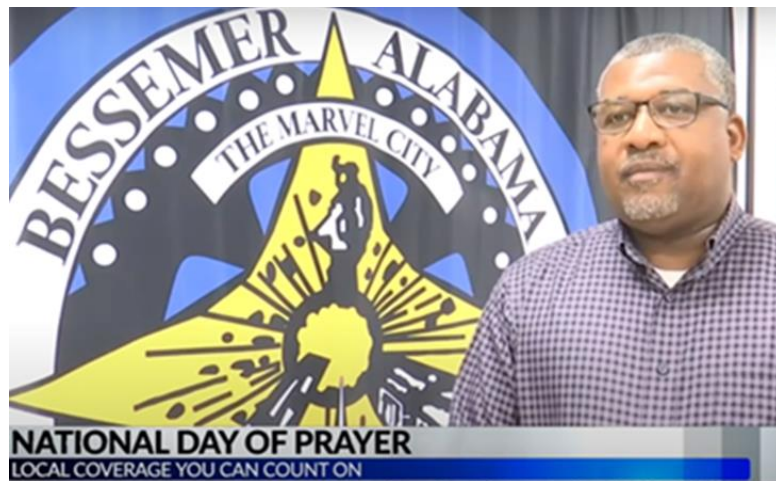
Celebrating 98 Years

1922 - 2020

MAY 2020

City of Bessemer's Annual National Day of Prayer Program

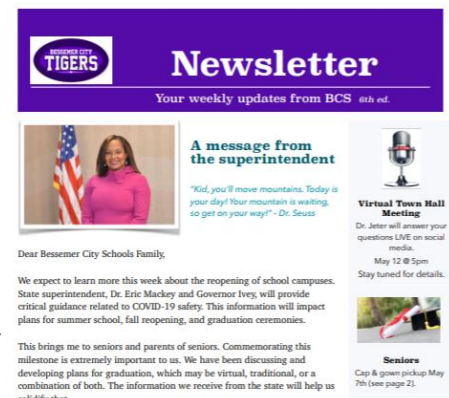
Every year, the Bessemer Area Chamber of Commerce hosts the City of Bessemer's National Day of Prayer program at a local church here in Bessemer. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this year's program premiered on the Chamber's Facebook page! With Dr. Reginald Calvert (New Jerusalem Missionary Baptist Church) facilitating the program, LaTasha Williams (BACOC President) and Mayor Kenneth Gulley gave welcomes and greetings, accompanied by prayers from the following ministers within the city of Bessemer: Pastor George Matthews (New Life Interfaith Ministries); Pastor George Blanks (Perfecting Reconciliation Church International); Rev. Dr. Carmen Walker (St. Mark AME, Brighton); Rev. Richard Hanna (Kirkwood by the River Retirement Community); and Pastor Bill McCall (The Baptist Church at McAdory). Tamala Briggins (Mt. Hebron Missionary Baptist Church) performed a beautiful solo before special guest speaker Sheriff Mark Pettway (Jeff. Co. Sheriff's Office) spoke on the importance of coming together during the unprecedented time. Pastor Edwin Attaway (Flint Hill Baptist Church) concluded the program with closing prayers. The National Day of Prayer program was shared and streamed on local news stations' Facebook pages and reached thousands of people not only in the Bessemer area, but around the county and the State of Alabama.



Bessemer Mayor Kenneth Gulley speaking about the importance of National Day of Prayer during this time, *via CBS 42.*

BCS Continues Learning Online

The Bessemer City School system has gone virtual to maintain a connection between teachers, parents, and students during the COVID-19 pandemic. Their website's "District News" tab is where you will find *The Purple Tiger News*, a weekly newsletter that contains update to date information for parents/guardians and students within the school system. The latest edition of the newsletter includes a message to the 2020 Senior class from BCS Superintendent Dr. Autumm Jeter as well as information about cap and gown pick up for the upcoming graduation ceremony. This section on the website also contains information and opportunities to attend Virtual Parent Town Halls, the Summer Book Club (grades K-3), Summer Camp 2020, and even Virtual Summer School.



For more information on these and other topics, visit www.bessk12.org!

CITY/COMMUNITY EVENTS

Meet Kim Alexander, Bessemer (Ala.) Councilwoman, And Nurse, on the Frontlines in NYC

By: Sherrel Wheeler Stewart, *The Birmingham Times*



In Bessemer, most people know Kimberly Alexander as the councilwoman who represents District 2. But in recent weeks, the 39-year-old registered nurse has taken on a different role as a health care provider in New York City, taking care of patients with COVID-19. For Alexander, the decision to go to New York was not difficult. She's a travel nurse and typically accepts assignments that allow her to balance her family and civic life. Of course, she keeps in touch with her son, mother, father and city friends while she's in New York. Alexander said she had learned the protocol for working with COVID-19 patients and wanted to use her skills to help in New York. "It's really bad here; they needed help," she said, speaking from her hotel room near Times Square. No city in America has been hit harder by COVID-19 than New York. As of Tuesday, the city had more than 139,385 confirmed cases of the virus. An estimated 10,657 people have died from the disease in New York, and thousands more have died throughout the state, according to public health agencies.

A Day's Work

The nights are long for Alexander. She works a 12-hour shift from 7 p.m. to 7 a.m. Every day, a private bus picks up the nurses to take them to the hospital, she said. At the end of the shift, it's another 15-to-20-minute ride back to the hotel. "You never know what will happen," she said. "We see death every day. But I've seen people recover and be discharged." She recalled one of many patients on a ventilator. "He was being fed by tube," she said. "Gradually, he was weaned off the ventilator. It was amazing. I had seen him on the vent, then to know he got better. The tubes were out, and he went home. He was happy, and he was very thankful to God." In the hospital where she works, every floor is a COVID floor. Nurses who had worked in other units in the past are now working with COVID patients. Alexander has her nursing credentials, but preparing for this assignment every day requires more, she said. "I get up every day and pray," she said. "I thank the Lord, and I ask Him to please watch over me." Before she begins to work, she must prepare as though her life depends on it. "I wear my N95 mask for the entire 12-hour shift," she said. "We wear disposable scrubs. With the personal-protection equipment, you must be careful, and you can't rush putting it on or taking it off. It takes a while. You have to avoid cross-contamination." She says it takes 15 to 30 minutes each time she puts on and takes off her PPE.

The Challenge of COVID-19

While she's seen some people recover and be discharged, many have not been so lucky, Alexander said. "When the disease impacts several areas [of the body] at once, it's hard for them to make it," she said. "Some patients have respiratory distress, sepsis or kidney injury. Either you are treating one or you are treating all [areas of the body impacted by the disease]." Alexander hopes for a cure and relief for those who are sick, but said she realizes there still is so much that is unknown about COVID-19. "They know how to treat HIV," she said. "They know how to treat hepatitis C. But people fear COVID because of the unknown." But Alexander said she is concerned because it often appears that some people don't take the virus seriously enough to follow the guidelines. "When I look on social media, I get upset when I see young people who don't just sit down [and follow social distancing]," she said. "We have seen young people get this and die. We have seen people who are pregnant with COVID. We've seen people of different races get it." Statistics on the impact of COVID-19 on communities of color are alarming, she said. In an op-ed piece published in USA Today this month, Selwyn Vickers, M.D., dean of the School of Medicine at University of Alabama at Birmingham, said, "The COVID-19 pandemic is radically exacerbating the deadly consequences of racial and socioeconomic disparities in health and health care in America, creating a crisis within a crisis." In states such as Michigan and Illinois, more than 40 percent of the deaths are among African Americans who make up just 14 percent and 15 percent of their populations, he said. There's also disparity in Alabama. The state's Department of Health released a report earlier this month that showed African Americans accounted for 43 percent of the verified deaths from COVID-19 but make up 26 percent of the state's population. "I don't know why it's hitting the African American community so hard," Alexander said. "Maybe it's because some don't have the resources to go to the doctor, and there are so many underlying health issues out there in our community. We know when there are several pre-existing conditions, the impact is going to be worse. For us, diabetes, heart disease and kidney disease are problems in our communities."



Returning Home

This assignment is all about work and service, Alexander said. There is no time for great food and entertainment. But even if there was, most restaurants are closed or only offer to-go orders, she said. "After my shift, I'm tired," she said. "I try to rest so that I can be ready for the next shift." Alexander will return to Alabama after her 21-day assignment ends at the New York hospital on April 24. Then she said she will have to self-quarantine for two weeks before she can be with her family. Her work in New York is what many nursing and health care professionals do, she said. "Nursing is like a sisterhood. We help each other," she said. And if the outbreak of COVID-19 intensifies more in Alabama or the state experiences other tragedies, she hopes to see a similar response. "I tell the nurses here, 'When it gets bad in Alabama, you have to pick up and come to Alabama. But right now, we are here to support you guys,'" she said. "I've made some friendships that probably will last a lifetime."

CITY/COMMUNITY EVENTS

Virtual Spotlight Tour – Greater Birmingham Area

The Business Council of Alabama featured two Bessemer businesses during their Virtual Spotlight Tour of the Greater Birmingham area! The purpose of the tour was to remind people to shop and support local businesses as well as highlight businesses who have gone above and beyond to provide COVID-19 support: Chambers Funeral Home and Medical West.



Chambers Funeral Home: During the COVID-19 pandemic, first responders continue to protect and serve our communities. On Friday, April 24th, 2020, Chambers Funeral Home provided lunch to dozens of policemen, firemen, and paramedics as a way to show their heartfelt appreciation for those still out on the front lines every day!



Medical West: The staff at Medical West has done an awesome job treating and accommodating patients and their families during the pandemic. Medical West has collected and distributed over 1,000 masks to their non-COVID 19 patients at their Bessemer and Hoover locations (For information on where and how to donate, visit medicalwesthospital.org or Medical West Hospital Facebook page).

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Your Chamber Leadership Team



Charles King
Regional Paramedical Services
Chairman



Carlton Jackson
Bessemer Fire Dept.
Chairman Elect



Reggie Mays
United Prosthetics & Orthotics
Past Chairman



Mitch Avery
Spire
Treasurer



Connie Fuell
Dex Imaging
Finance Chairman



Dr. Cynthia Anthony
Lawson State



Laurence Baird
Oak Trace Care & Rehab Ctr.



Ashley Brazel
BB&T



Reginald Calvert
New Jerusalem Bapt. Church



Bryonda Collins
Chambers Funeral Home



Tabitha Dudley
Legacy YMCA



Deaunka LeBeauf-Webster
AAA



Antoinette Madison
Alabama Power



Keith Pennington
Medical West



Sheriff Mark Pettway
Jefferson County Sheriff's Office



Paul Teasley
Buffalo Rock



LaVada Varner
Alabama Technology Center



Pete Winslett
The File Depot

AMBASSADORS



Sitting – Left to Right

Sarah Beasley (Joe Beasley Memorial Foundation, Inc), Lori Chisem (Lawson State Community College), Minnie Roper (Retired), Anna Wooten (First Financial Bank)

Standing – Left to Right

Dorian Waluyn (Lawson State Community College), Danielle Matthews (Matthews & Associates), Chyna Brown (Brown Beauty Barber School), Denise Jackson (New Jerusalem Baptist Church), Tamala Briggins (Oak Trace Care & Rehabilitation), Cathy Ackerman (First Financial Bank), Daryl Owens (New Jerusalem Baptist Church)

Not pictured

Sarah Belcher (Retired), Claire Mitchell (Retired), Andie Sloan (Comfort Care Home Health), Donna King (D & K Lawncare)

Ambassadors are the key resource in extending hospitality in the Bessemer area and are experienced in business, community, and promotional arenas.

An Ambassador must serve as an active public relations arm of the Chamber and be prepared to meet visitors, local businesses, and various forms of the media.

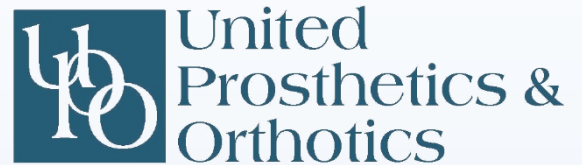
We encourage you join the ambassador program. The ambassadors meet on the 1st Tuesday of each month at 8:30am at the Bessemer Area Chamber of Commerce.

2020 Sponsors

PLATINUM SPONSOR



GOLD SPONSORS



SILVER SPONSORS



DOLLAR GENERAL®

SMALL BUSINESS PARTNERS

America's First Federal Credit Union
Chambers Funeral Home
Comfort Care Home Health & Hospice
Julie Bell, Agent – State Farm Insurance
Legacy YMCA
Regional Paramedical Services
William Parsons CPA



ZITI IN THE CITY LUNCH



Choice 1
Feed 5, 10 or 25
Homemade Baked Ziti with Meat
{Italian Sausage & Beef covered with three cheeses, Ziti noodles, topped with marinara sauce}
Green Beans, Garlic Bread



Choice 2
Feed 5, 10 or 25
Chicken Alfredo Ziti
{Grilled Chicken, Ziti noodles, topped with Alfredo Sauce and Italian Cheeses}
Green Beans, Garlic Bread

ORDER A PAN FOR YOUR OFFICE \ FAMILY \ NEIGHBOR
Feed 5 for \$45 / Feed 10 for \$ 85 / Feed 25 for \$200
{sides included}

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 10TH FROM 11 AM - 2 PM

Bessemer Elks Lodge - 1313 Fourth Avenue N.

~ Pickup or we will deliver your order within 15 miles ~

Fax (205-425-4979) or email (mmilan1@bellsouth.net) completed form no later than June 8th at noon.

{Checks should be made payable to the Bessemer Area Chamber of Commerce}

Select Choice: Baked Ziti w/meat ____ Chicken Alfredo ____ **Select Choice:** Feed 5 ____ Feed 10 ____ Feed 25 ____

DELIVERY TIME: ____ (Please give 30 minute window) **PICKUP TIME:** ____ **Phone #:** ____

Company: ____ **Contact:** ____

Street Address: ____

INDICATE PAYMENT: Check ____ Cash ____ Credit Card ____ Card # ____ CVV# ____
Name/Business on Card ____ Exp. Date ____ CC Billing Zip ____

First Responder's & Healthcare Day

Policemen • Firemen • EMT's • Sheriff's Deputies • Health Care Workers



CALLING ALL Heroes!

06.04.20 2-6 PM



**First Responder's &
Healthcare Day in the Park**

**Debardeleben Park
Downtown Bessemer**

For additional information call the
Bessemer Chamber at (205) 425-3253

**Social distancing will be observed
Facemasks are highly encouraged**

A Meal ticket will be provided for first
responders and healthcare workers
Must present official ID

Visit vendor booths

Music and Giveaways

Support Our Local Heroes



Business Name _____

Contact Name / Owner _____

Email Address: _____

Mailing Address _____

Business Phone _____

Type of Merchandise to be displayed in vendor space

INDICATE PAYMENT: Check ☐ Cash ☐ Credit Card ☐

Card # _____ Exp. Date: _____

CVV # _____ CC Billing Zip _____

Name/Business on Card _____

Mail your sponsorship to: Bessemer Area Chamber of Commerce
321 18th Street North, Bessemer, AL 35020

SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITY

\$400

Sponsorship benefits include:

Company logo on all pre and post advertising

Vendor space / benefits

Local newspaper advertisement

A door prize will be purchased on behalf of your
company

Complimentary Food Tickets with sponsor logo
provided for first responder and healthcare workers

Sponsor video in support of first responders and
healthcare workers

**** Sponsorship Deadline May 29th ****

Support Local Businesses!

Buy Bessemer, Buy Jefferson County!



From Top Left: LaTasha Williams, Bessemer Area Chamber of Commerce President; Charles King, BACOC 2020 Chairman of the Board; Connie Fuell, Dex Imaging; Sheriff Mark Pettway, Jefferson County Sheriff's Office; Dr. Autumm Jeter, Bessemer City Schools Superintendent; DA Lynneice O. Washington, Jeff. Co./Bessemer Cut Off District Attorney; Commissioner Sheila Tyson, Jeff. Co. Commission; Mayor Kenneth Gulley, City of Bessemer; Laurence Baird, Oak Trace Care and Rehab Center