

thera martin milling



# Back to School Time

Whew, we made it through another summer. Unfortunately I cannot say it was pretty for some area youth. I think about the children between the ages of 2-18, who were shot - if not killed - during the summer of 2016, in Philly, Camden or Chester, just to name three local hotspots. These children should not have to know what it feels like to have a bullet rip through your skin. But they do know.

It hurts my heart to think about the empty chairs that should have been filled by children this fall, in some elementary, middle or high schools that are vacant because those children were murdered over the summer. We must keep all the children who did survive in prayer. That's why I applaud David Fattah from the House of Umoja, City Councilman Curtis Jones, Jr., Pastor Alyn E. Waller of Enon Tabernacle Baptist Church, Evangelist Belle Meyers from Solid Rock Baptist Church, PA State Representative Rosita C. Youngblood from the 198th Legislative District, City Councilman Kenyatta Johnson from the 2nd Council District, City Councilwoman Cindy Bass from the 8th Council District, City Councilwoman Jannie L. Blackwell from the 3rd Council District and all other elected officials and people in positions to help, who helped with back to school book bag and school supply drives - thank you.

One Day At A Time, (ODAAT) hosted its annual Back to School/Labor Day Block Party and school book bag giveaway on Labor Day, Monday, September 5, 2016. Seems this year's event was bigger and better than ever. One of ODAAT's steadfast supporters is Philadelphia Sheriff Jewell Williams, who made sure the Labor Day event was on his calendar. Williams was right in the mix to help hand out awards to youth who participated in special summer programs born out of ODAAT, and to help hand out almost 300 school bags to children who needed them.

Councilman Curtis Jones, Jr. stated, "The National Million Father March that took place September 7 was so very



**Mel Wells, President of ODAAT during Labor Day Back to School Event in 1600 block of W. York Street, preparing to hand out 300+ school book bags** photo by Thera

important and I am very glad that this wasn't an action that only took place in one city. The Million Father March took place in 800 cities across the nation. I commend Brother David Fattah and others for encouraging this march to take place every year in Philadelphia, to demonstrate to our children that there are men in this city, fathers in this city, who care about all the children, not just their biological children, but all children. We need and want our children to feel safe as they get to school and come from school. We want this to be an everyday scenario, not just on the first day back to school. I get it. Some fathers, some men,

have to be at work between 7 and 8 a.m. But for the retired men who care and have the ability to be there for our children, we need you to be there for them, every morning when children are heading to school, and at about 2:45-3:15 p.m., as they're heading home."

For the record, most charter schools in Philadelphia reopened for students on Monday, August 22, 2016. Public schools opened Wednesday, September 7, to some 130,000 students. The good news is that for the first time in years,

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## Cover story

# Hundreds attend McClinton's Bartram Community Day

State Rep. Joanna McClinton, D-Phila./Delaware, said hundreds of people joined her for her "Celebrating Bartram Village" Health and Wellness Community Event on Aug. 27 in Bartram Village.

McClinton was joined by state Rep. Dwight Evans, Sharif Street, Anna Brown and Dr. Branville Bard Jr., public safety director for the Philadelphia Housing Authority.

"I was thrilled with the community support for my first Bartram Village Community Day," McClinton said. "Thank you to all of the local organizations that offered information, fun and entertainment for local residents of all ages. We were able to offer face painting, fitness classes, interactive games and live musical entertainment."

More than 200 registered residents from the Bartram and Southwest Philadelphia area were offered a number of free health screenings and other health and wellness information.

Some 100 youths received book bags and school sup-



plies in preparation for the school year.

Cookout food was prepared by the Bartram Village Council and was provided by the Philadelphia Housing Authority and Brown's Shop-Rite. Other sponsors that contributed to the day included: ACHIEVEability, Comcast, Gateway Health Plan and the Outreach to Youth program of Open Door Church.

Dr. Kim C. Davis and Dr. Juwan Bennett provided musical entertainment with an inspirational concert.

Children's activities, including games and face painting, were run by the Doors to Destiny Family Life Center.

"The day also gave the residents an opportunity to meet my hard-working staff and learn how we can assist residents with state issues," McClinton said.

Among the issues McClinton's staff were able to assist with during the event were applying for state programs such as the Children's Health Insurance Program, Medicaid and the Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program.

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