

# NAACP

“Of all the forms of inequality, injustice in healthcare is the most shocking and inhumane.” Martin Luther King Jr.

## Women and Minority Candidates Run For Elected Office

The midterm elections are over! We had unprecedented numbers of women and minorities running for office this election. Some were elected. Our success in getting more people registered and to the polls was a gift for our democracy.

## Goals of the NAACP Health Committee

At this time the health committee goals include: 1. Staying abreast of the latest healthcare policy developments at the local, state and national levels. 2. Influencing African American youth to consider healthcare professions as possible career tracks so they can prepare themselves for the rigors of the academic preparation needed.

## Meet Starlynn Stinson, Nurse Practitioner

*Who are your heroes?* My mom is my hero. Although she was often very sick, she never complained about her illness or pain. I grew up in St. Louis and although we were poor she never used that as an excuse for me not having what I needed for school. My mom would bring kids in and feed them during holidays, if there were leftovers she would feed the other kids in the neighborhood. She made me accountable, good or bad. She preferred positive reinforcement and would give me \$10 for an A or \$5 for a B. She also made a big deal of award ceremonies. My mom never let anything hold her back. She had kidney failure and passed when I was 15 years old. She didn't let her situation drag her down, that's what I do now.



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*Tell us about your background and education.* I was born and raised in St. Louis and got a chance to go to St. Louis University (SLU). At SLU I started off with courses that would prepare me for some type of future in healthcare. I was taking hard classes like Anatomy and Physiology, Biology and Chemistry and felt discouraged when I got a C and a B+ in a couple of classes so I switched to psychology. I also got a degree in Spanish. As a part of studying Spanish I did a study abroad program and lived in



## NAACP Health Committee/Sertoma Healthcare Event

On November 9th the Health Committee, the Sertoma Boys and Girls Club fielded a team of 8 African American healthcare professionals to speak with children about healthcare professions. We spoke to about 90 children from all of the clubs in Springfield. The children, grades 3-5 spoke to nurses, doctors, a nurse practitioner, a pharmacist a physical therapist an Informaticist and a Residential Caregiver.

From left to right: Louis Kynard PharmD, Cox. Leslie Botchway MPT, Mercy. J.R. Chappell NP, Mercy. Dr. Kofi Asare-Bawuah, Cox. Tausha Burton LPN, Mercy. Dr. Justin Clark, Mercy. Austin Boyland IT, Cox. Toni Robinson Residential Caregiver, ARC of the Ozarks. Not pictured: Diane Marshall RN, Mercy. Many thanks to the Sertoma club, Mercy, Cox and our friends at Springfield Public Schools for their support. Thanks to KOLR 10 for their coverage of the event.

Madrid for four months. I learned quite a lot in Spain, mostly about independence and how to manage money. I had to break out of my shell and learn how to ask people for help. In Spain they are not as strict about work, they take a two or three hour siesta in the afternoon, they lack a sense of urgency and are more careful about spending money (as opposed to our wasteful spending). I didn't sense racism there but did discover that the Spaniards are more hesitant about Americans in general.

*How did you end up in Nursing?* After receiving BS degrees in Spanish and psychology, for a while I worked with developmentally delayed women and then decided to go to nursing school. I did the accelerated BSN program. While in the nursing program I worked as a tech at the children's hospital. When I graduated with my BSN they offered to keep me on as a tech saying there were no openings for nurses. After they told me that, they hired several white nurses. I did not let that discourage me. Even though I loved working with the babies, I was eager to start my nursing career. I transferred to another hospital and never looked back. My first nursing job was working on a Renal/ Telemetry floor. After four years there I went to float nursing which meant I got to see everything. Being a float pool nurse allowed me to keep my skills sharp and really keep me on my toes. *Have you ever experienced racism?* In my masters of nursing program there were three African Americans. Two of them had the highest GPAs of anyone in the class and all three of us had trouble finding jobs. This is my first nurse practitioner job. I have helped to open the Occupational Medicine Clinic here in Lebanon that had been closed for a year and a half. In my role here I work for both the Company and the injured employee. My varied background is very helpful in this setting because I will see a wide range of complaints. *What advice do you have for young people?* Never lose focus on what you want. There are many distractions, walls and barriers to your goals. Never give up. Be open to help and have the initiative to ask for it. Many things can become barriers; money, time and sometimes even family. You will have to work hard for what you want. At one point in my schooling I was discouraged. I read Ben Carson's book "Gifted Hands". In the book he talks about the resistance to him and his own self doubt that he had to push through in order to be successful. *What are your goals for the future?* Eventually I would like to have my own practice, my own business, but for now I need more experience.