

The Day the Baby Comes Home from the Hospital

What is the first thing that an infant does? He/she starts learning. Learning about Mom and Dad (bonding), learning the sensation of being touched, about feeling hot and cold, wet and dry. And how to get attention and change uncomfortable situations (crying.)

Brain development between conception and age three is an active frontier in child development academia. Vast numbers of studies on how infants learn are underway worldwide, and the results are consistent: starting at conception, a child's brain development is on overdrive.



When the child is born, his/her brain has nearly all the neurons it will ever have. The brain doubles in size in the next year, and by age 3, it has developed to 80% of its eventual adult size. What children learn in the first three years can change their entire lives. Early stimulation and education are crucial for a child's development, and that starts at birth – not at preschool or kindergarten.

Next Wednesday is World Read Aloud Day, followed in March by Read Aloud Month. Frankly, these designations are largely unnoticed in the general population. But I suggest to you that they should be as celebrated as any major holiday because they promote an activity that can change the world. Literacy is key for academic achievement and is linked with higher high school graduation rates and enhanced productivity in adult life.

Working for reading proficiency by age 3 has long been an important pillar of United Way of Delaware's mission. Through the combined efforts of our [Help Me Grow](#) program for parents of infants and babies, our [Reading Angels](#) initiative, our work with [Get Delaware Reading](#) and [My Very Own Library](#), our involvement with Learning Pods and out-of-school programs, our collaboration with a wide range of community centers and organizations, and our support of [Delaware Afterschool Network](#), we put our commitment into action.

Bringing attention to the importance of infant and early childhood development can be a tough sell in a society that has many more visible issues. But the body of knowledge uncovered by education professionals is irrefutable: brain development and learning in the earliest months is every bit as important – and possibly more so – than that which takes place beginning in first grade.

Raising children who are proficient at reading and who love books is important to the community's overall success. Studies show that children who receive high-quality

early childhood education have 46% lower rates of incarceration, 33% lower rates of arrest for violent crimes, and are 26% less likely to need government assistance as adults.

There is a saying that parents are a child's first and most important teachers, and that is clearly a fact. We suggest that parents, grandparents and friends begin to read aloud the day the baby comes home from the hospital. The infant will make a connection between your voice and the feeling of being close to you with books. They will associate books with happiness, and lifelong avid readers can be created.

It's never too early -- or too late -- to start! If you or anyone you know has a child, why not start reading aloud beginning next Wednesday, World Read Aloud Day.

Sincerely,

Michelle

Michelle A. Taylor, Ed.D.
President and CEO, United Way of Delaware

It's Tax Season! Don't Forget About the Earned Income Tax Credit

The Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) is a credit for workers with low to moderate income. Eligibility for the tax credit is based on various factors including family size, filing status and income. If you qualify, you can use the credit to reduce the taxes you owe – and maybe increase your refund. You can use the EITC Qualification Assistant at [IRS.gov/EITC](https://www.irs.gov/EITC) to find out if you may be eligible for the credit. The EITC Qualification Assistant is available in English and Spanish.

The IRS Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) and Tax Counseling for the Elderly (TCE) programs offer free basic tax return preparation to qualified individuals. VITA sites offer free tax help to people who need assistance in preparing their own tax returns, including:

- People who generally make \$60,000 or less
- Persons with disabilities; and
- Limited English-speaking taxpayers
-

In addition to VITA, the TCE program offers free tax preparation for those who are 60 years of age and older, specializing in questions about pensions and retirement-related issues unique to seniors.

For a local resource on tax advisement, please see the article below about Nehemiah Gateway's free tax preparation services.

HAPPY

EITC

AWARENESS

DAY



The Earned Income Tax Credit lifts nearly 6 million people out of poverty a year, helps children excel in school, and benefits single mothers.

"Whether Our Nation Has the Will..."

Dr. Martin Luther King said that there are three evils in the world: racism, poverty, and war. He spoke about poverty in his address *America's Chief Moral Dilemma* to the Butler Street YMCA in Atlanta in 1967.

"Now there is nothing new about poverty. It's been with us for years and centuries. What is new at this point though, is that we now have the resources, we now have the skills, we now have the techniques to get rid of poverty. And the question is whether our nation has the will ..."

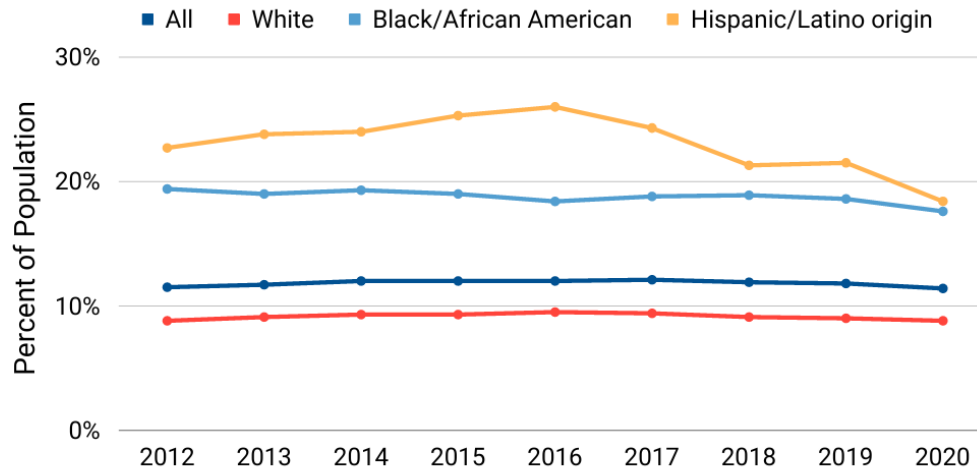
Much of what MLK said then is still relevant 56 years later. People living in poverty should not be invisible. Take a look at these recent trends in poverty in Delaware:

DID YOU KNOW?

Black Delawareans face poverty rates that are twice as high as White citizens (17.6% vs. 8.8%).

An even larger share of Hispanic Delawareans experience the burden of poverty (18.4%).

Trends for Poverty in Delaware from 2012 to 2020 (ACS 5-year estimates)



Find statistics like these and more at the [Equity Counts Data Center](#).

This initiative was supported by funds made available from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Center for State, Tribal, Local and Territorial Support, under National Initiative to Address COVID-19 Health Disparities Among Populations at High-Risk and Underserved, Including Racial and Ethnic Minority Populations and Rural Communities.



Keep It Going, Fairview Elementary, and All the Delaware READbowl Teams!

Fairview Elementary of Capital School District is **leading the nation** in primary schools for the second quarter of this year's ReadBowl with some 20,000 reading minutes! Team Wolskee is charging ahead under the inspiring leadership of teacher Jonni Wolskee.



READBowl is a global reading competition where teams around the globe compete to read for the most minutes. The competition begins the day of the American College Football National Championship (2nd Monday in January) and culminates with a live crowning of the World Champions of Reading on the morning of the National Football League's (NFL) Super Bowl Sunday.

Also known as *Read With Malcolm*, it is an initiative of the Share the Magic Foundation. Super Bowl Champion, Author, Keynote Speaker and Founder/CEO of Share the Magic Foundation, Malcolm Mitchell has created READbowl as part of his commitment to early childhood reading.

Fairview Elementary also won READbowl for the state of Delaware last year. We are proud that they participate in our **My Very Own Library** (MVOL) program. Other

READBowl Participating MVOL Schools are:

- Thomas Edison Charter School
- Lewis Elementary, Red Clay School District
- Bunker Hill Elementary School, Appoquinimink School District
- The Bayard School, Christina School District
- Warner Elementary School, Red Clay School District
- Forest Oak Elementary, Red Clay School District
- North Georgetown Elementary School, Indian River School District

These schools have created 39 reading teams who have read for a combined 1,026,726 minutes to date.

If you want to send a message of encouragement to Team Wolskee or any of the participating schools, please send your message to **Ken Livingston** and he will forward it to the teacher in charge.

Buy a Book During Black History Month

United Way of Delaware is on a mission to provide 150 third-grade students throughout Delaware with two books (300 total books) each by the end of February, Black History Month, to foster the love of reading and expand home libraries.

Want to help? Use the link below to purchase books by Tuesday, February 7. Books will be delivered directly to the students.

Bookshop: Buy books online.

Research shows that proficiency in reading by the end of third grade enables students to shift from learning to read to reading to learn. Many students who fail to reach this critical milestone falter in their later grades and are at greater risk of dropping out of school before earning a high school diploma.

Won't you support our local schools by purchasing a book today!

Local EITC Awareness Day and Tax Prep Event Tomorrow at Route 9 Library!

Nehemiah Gateway announces our upcoming "National EITC Awareness Day" event to be held on Saturday, January 28th at 1 p.m. at the Route 9 Library and Innovation Center.

Daniel Diesem, Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Assistant to the Area Director and Taxpayer Advocacy Services (TAS) and our very own Wendy Figueroa, Acting Local Taxpayer Advocate, will attend along with a possible appearance from the State Treasurer Colleen Davis.

We will share the importance of tax credits that help so many residents keep food on table, roofs over their heads and provide much-needed financial support to help families stay afloat.

The IRS joins partners nationwide to launch the Awareness Day outreach campaign to ensure millions of workers get the credits they earned and deserve. Join our elected officials, funders, supporters, stakeholders, and the community at large, as we put a face to the heroic work done by volunteers throughout the tax season.

Our tax site locations opened on Monday, January 23rd. Please visit our website <https://nehemiahgateway.org/> to learn more about scheduling tax appointments today!

DELAWARE'S HOME FOR FREE TAX PREP

Serving those who need it most, including non-filers!

For household income \$57,000 or less, or \$0 taxable income but need to file to receive stimulus payments and child tax credit



Nehemiah
GATEWAY CDC

SCHEDULE YOUR FREE TAX APPOINTMENT TODAY

NehemiahGateway.org



Scan to make a drop-off appointment!

GO VIRTUAL!

All you need is internet access, an email address, and a cell phone number.

Sign up and submit your information 24/7 from anywhere.

starting 1/24/23



Scan to Have Your Return Prepared Virtually

In conjunction with eReturn2Go, powered by Code for America

DROP-OFF TAX SITES

January 23 - April 22, 2023

All sites by appointment only. Hours listed are subject to change. Please see website for up to date information.

NEW CASTLE COUNTY

Hudson State Service Center
601 Ogletown Road, Newark, DE 19711

Appointments Available:
Monday and Thursday 11am - 6pm
Wednesday 11am - 5pm

Route 9 Library & Innovation Center

3022 New Castle Ave, New Castle, DE 19720

Appointments Available:
Monday 11am - 6pm, Tuesday 5pm - 8pm
Saturday 10am - 4pm

Wilmington Public Library

10 East 10th Street, Wilmington, DE 19801

Appointments Available:
Tuesday, Thursday, Friday 10am - 4pm

Woodlawn Library

2020 W 9th Street, Wilmington, DE 19805

Appointments Available:
Tuesday 5pm - 8pm, Wednesday 11am - 6pm
Saturday 10am - 4pm

University of Delaware

(near Star Campus)

Division of Professional & Continuing Services
501 S. College Avenue, Newark, DE 19716

Appointments Available starting 2/4/23:
Saturday 10am - 4pm

KENT COUNTY

Dover Public Library

35 Lockerman Plaza, Dover, DE 19901

Appointments Available:
Monday and Saturday 10am - 4pm

SUSSEX COUNTY

First State CAA

308 N Railroad Avenue, Georgetown, DE 19947

Call 302-856-7761 (Se habla Español)

Appointments Available:
Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday 9am - 5pm

Georgetown on Laurel

1 East Laurel Street, Georgetown, DE 19947

Appointments Available:
Monday and Friday 8am - 1pm

Goodwill Milford

684 N. DuPont Highway, Milford, DE 19963

Appointments Available:
Tuesday 10am - 4pm
Wednesday and Thursday 10am - 1pm
Saturday 10am - 4pm

FOR A SUCCESSFUL TAX APPOINTMENT, KNOW WHAT TO BRING!

- ❑ Current Government issued photo ID for taxpayer and spouse
- ❑ Social Security cards and/or ITIN letter for everyone listed on tax return
- ❑ Childcare statement from all providers with address and tax ID# and/or SS# for childcare provider (or provide receipts with amounts paid)
- ❑ 1095-A for Marketplace Health Insurance Coverage
- ❑ W-2s, 1099s, 1099-MISC, 1099-NEC, 1099-R, 1099-SSA for all employers, retirement, and social security benefits (no pay stubs accepted)
- ❑ 6419 Advance Child Tax Credit and 6475 Economic Impact Payment (EIP) stimulus letters
- ❑ 1098s for education expenses paid, mortgage interest paid, property taxes paid and list of any other itemized deductions
- ❑ Bank account and routing number for direct deposit
- ❑ Copy of prior-year tax return (may be required for new credits)

(302) 655-0803 • (800) 560-3372 • DIAL 2-1-1 • Fast refunds! • Get a Prepaid Visa Debit Card • Open a Savings Account

Sponsored by the Delaware Tax and Financial Services Campaign founded and operated by Nehemiah Gateway Community Development Corporation in partnership with First State CAA



Register Now for *Do More 24*

Calling all nonprofits! Register now for Do More 24 Delaware -- Delaware's Largest giving day. You don't want to miss out on the chance to earn thousands of dollars of undesignated funding for your nonprofit.

Learn more and Sign up TODAY at www.domore24de.org



World Read Aloud Day Is February 1

Get ready for World Read Aloud Day this upcoming Wednesday, February 1! This year United Way of Delaware highlights several Delaware authors who will read at nine schools throughout the state to some 400 students. Plus, each child will receive a new book to add to their own home library.

World Read Aloud Day is designed to enlighten kids and communities through the power of stories. The well-known publisher **Scholastic sponsors World Read Aloud Day**. Visit their website to learn more about how you can participate and the virtual worldwide readathon. Teachers can get reading materials at the site, as well.

Reading aloud is an opportunity for teachers, authors, volunteers and families to model fluent reading. This frees the students from having to do the work of decoding the written word and allows them to focus on comprehension, acquisition of new vocabulary and phonemic awareness.

Make sure you're preparing to participate on World Readaloud Day -- it's right around the corner!

DSU Celebrates Black History Month

As Seen in [Delaware Black](#)

Delaware State University will celebrate Black History Month with the following events that are open to the public:

Thursday, Feb. 2, 7 p.m. – A screening of *Out of Omaha* in Parlor C of the Martin Luther King Jr. Student Center. The 90-minute documentary provides a portrait of twin brothers Darcell and Darrell Trotter, two young black men coming of age in the racially and economically divided Midwestern town of Omaha, Nebraska. A panel discussion will follow the film.

Tuesday, Feb. 7, 7 p.m. – Dr. Julius Garvey, the son of Black History figure Marcus Garvey, will share his perspective on the life of his father in an event to be held in the Education and Humanities Theatre on campus. Dr. Garvey is the author of *The*

Philosophy & Opinions of Marcus Garvey. Jamaican-born Garvey came to the U.S. in 1916, where he became a prominent advocate for black separatism and Negro self-reliance, and provided a counterargument to the integrationist philosophy of prominent civil rights intellectual W.E.B. DuBois.

Wednesday, Feb. 8, 12 noon – University Historian Carlos Holmes will give a presentation on the 132-year history of Delaware State University in the Martin Luther King Jr. Student Center, Parlor C.

Monday, February 16, 7 p.m.– A “Discovering your Roots” workshop will be held in the MLK Jr. Student Center parlor. The event will share the tools that are available for people to begin finding out about their ancestors including public records, documents, ancestry portals and other resources that are readily accessible for beginners to paint a more comprehensive picture of their roots. Additionally, participants will learn how to verify documents to ensure that the researched person or information is accurate.

Monday, Feb. 23, 7-10 p.m. – The University’s Student Government Association hosts “Living Black Museum,” a business expo and a fashion show held in all the MLK Jr. Student Center parlors. DSU students will portray a key figure in Black History by telling that person’s story in his/her own words. At the Expo, student entrepreneurs will have the opportunity to highlight their businesses and provide a variety of goods for purchase. A fashion show will highlight student creativity and flair by modelling the latest designs and fashions for Gen Z.

Do You Love Your Afterschool Program?

Delaware Afterschool Network and The Afterschool Alliance are working to ensure that all children have access to affordable, quality afterschool programs. Afterschool programs are critical to children and families today, yet the need for programs is far from being met here in and nationwide.



If you are an afterschool worker, a family who relies on quality afterschool programming, or a student who uses out of school time programs, we need your help.

We Love Afterschool week is February 7 to 14. We're asking you to create Valentine's Day messages of appreciation for Afterschool programs that will increase awareness of their importance and impact. Then, send your messages to your elected representatives and ask them to support afterschool programming with increased funding. Post your messages on all your social media accounts. Let the world know how important it is to you.

For help creating your messages, [visit this website](#) for suggested art and social media posts.

2nd annual
SAVE THE DATE BLACK STUDENT SUMMIT

The Delaware Black Student Summit is by and for students who want to turn up the volume and activism of Black Student Unions/Associations and affinity groups.

The top 3 schools with the most students in attendance will win a cash prize!

Transportation will be provided in all 3 counties.

 Saturday | March 18, 2023
 St. Georges Technical High School
 Middletown, DE
 Registration deadline is March 1st, 2023

Learn more at uwde.org/BSU



Last Chance to Remember Us When You Shop on Amazon!

AmazonSmile is a way customers can support United Way of Delaware at no additional cost every time they shop with Amazon. The bad news is that Amazon is ending this program on February 20. We hope you will keep us in mind until that time. **Here's how you sign up.**



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