

IF YOU HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY

# SPEAK UP!

SPRING 2020

*"Serving in the Four-State area for near 20 years"*

Speak Up Community News promotes the Culture, Health and Success of the community. Subscription is free. Articles and remarks are welcomed. Contact: Brothers Who Care, 131 W. North Avenue, Martin Luther King Community Center, Hagerstown, Maryland 21740. Phone (301) 393-9290. Download a full-color copy of this news publication at: [www.brotherswhocare.org](http://www.brotherswhocare.org)

## SUCCESS NEWS

### **Jonathan Street: Can Public Safety be Restored?**

*Despite funding to help fix the neighborhood swimming pool and planned Heritage Preservation projects, violence in the neighborhood is escalating.*

**By Brother Andy Smith**

The Jonathan Street neighborhood in Hagerstown, Maryland has a chance to become one of the best communities in the City. Having historically dealt with being underserved, poverty ridden and left in mounting despair, things have happened lately that can make the City of Hagerstown's name sake be a place where residents can flourish and offer hope to the others. Within this historic neighborhood you can find eight churches, two vintage social groups (The Progressive Men's Club and Elks Lodge #278); community programs that help others (Boy Scouts Troop 75/Cub Scout Pack 75; Brothers Who Care; Children In Need; Girls Scouts, Head Start of Washington County; Martin Luther King Jr. Community Center; the City's Medal of Honor - Neighborhoods 1<sup>st</sup> group) three community centers including the Robert W. Johnson Community Center.

The Jonathan Street neighborhood hosts community wide events that include: an annual Turkey Bowl football game dates back over 70 years; an annual Soul Day on Wheaton Park which started 2 years ago; Santa on a Fire Truck visits in December; a Neighborhood Day of Hope is held in May; a food pantry at the Johnson Center as well as an annual Thanksgiving Day Community Dinner led by Art Hicks; Children In Need offers weekly hours to give school supplies, clothing and staple items to children and families, plus they have a Santa On A Motorcycle visit during the Christmas holidays; The Doleman Black Heritage Museum broke ground for plans on opening a facility in the neighborhood.

The Robert W. Johnson Center did not open its neighborhood swimming pool during 2019 for the first time in many years and this issue was addressed with an award of \$100,000 in funding to help get the swimming pool operation for the neighborhood. An unfortunate accident involving a police car wrecking into a residence on Jonathan Street uncovered a historic log cabin dwelling concealed under aluminum siding and an effort led by Preservation Maryland is involved to preserve the home and other historical landmarks in the neighborhood. Efforts to transform the basketball courts on Wheaton Park into a modern day competition arena appears to have been abandoned.

The violence cropping up in the Jonathan Street community is responded to with "knee jerk" reactions instead of taking advantage of the proactive measures that can restore public safety. Brothers Who Care led a

proactive event on the 2020 Martin Luther King Day of Service in which only two people, fitness business owner Chad Smith (no relation) and myself walked the community in an effort to engage the neighborhood residents and local police in next steps to head off the expected violence that will emerge once the warm weather sets in unless measures are taken to prevent it.

I had wondered why there was such a lack of response from the neighborhood until I had to accept that the type of people living in the Jonathan Street neighborhood and elsewhere in Hagerstown has changed. Plus, families that have lived here for generations in Hagerstown may feel they will are not getting the support needed from the local government, the police and landlords who can help put an end to the violence, eliminate the criminal activities and reduce the loitering that breeds trouble. I simply refused to join others that think protesting, marching or candle light vigil will change things. The violence and criminal activities will increase all throughout the City, until authorities puts an end to the loitering that is not allowed in our more “affluent” neighborhoods. I challenge anyone to hold a tailgate party in wealthier parts of the City to see how quickly the residents of those neighborhoods and Police would respond to put an end to it. Yet, I am told by police officials there is no effective law to stop the loitering which is going on in the neighborhoods that have a lower income advantage. So please let me know how public safety can be restored.

## **SPEAK UP: NEWS ALERT!!!**

For the first time since we started, we did not publish an issue. The December 2019 issue never got produced or published. Speak Up Community News is a FREE news publication providing outreach through media without sales ads. This community news publication is done through volunteer work which includes: reporting, photography, interviews, videos, layout and publishing.

Before the “Virus” crisis the publication was delivered door-to-door in the Jonathan Street neighborhood. Now that the world has changed, we have discontinued the door-to-door delivery, however you can print your own copies to comply with State of Emergency guidelines and we only now only publish quarterly issues of the Speak Up which is an online publication. You can download every issue we have published since 2001, from our website: <http://brotherswhocare.org/speakup.html> and you can join us on social media by “Liking” our news page: [www.facebook.com/speakupnews](http://www.facebook.com/speakupnews) and get current up-to-date reports which you can link to your Instagram and Twitter accounts.

And for an added information you can become Friends with me on my personal Facebook profile Andy Smith and see the wonderful adventures that I go on with my children and their kids, who are actively participating in news stories and interviews around the four-state area (Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia and West Virginia), Canada, Chicago, Rochester, Washington D.C. even in from the White House and wherever else our weekly outings lead us. Mollie Smith and my adult children serve on our Community Outreach Team engaging the community with the assistance offered by Brothers Who Care – Speak Up Community News.

We offer online up-to-date reports on State Openings and State of Emergency statuses locally and across the country in hopes to prepare you to make the best decisions for you, your family and friends.

Contact our office at Brothers Who Care – Speak Up Community News if you would like to join our news team and participate in a life enhancing experience that can open opportunities to meet and interview celebrities, dignitaries, local entertainers and entertainment venues. Call 301-393-9290 or email: [speakup@brotherswhocare.org](mailto:speakup@brotherswhocare.org)

Thank you for your help,  
Brother Andy Smith, Chief  
Brothers Who Care – Speak Up Community News

# Medal of Honor Group



NEIGHBORHOODS 1<sup>st</sup>

## Participant invitation to the 2020 Neighborhood Day of Hope August 15, 2020 from 12noon to 4pm Wheaton Park in Hagerstown, Maryland 21740 *“Remembering Brother Henry Smith”*

On behalf of the Neighborhoods 1<sup>st</sup> – Medal of Honor Group, I wish to invite you or your organization to join us as an outreach participant at the 2020 Neighborhood Day of Hope. Each year we have had over 30 organizations, agencies and businesses offer their services at our annual event which attracts hundreds of friends and neighbors who gather at this joyous celebration of community and heritage.

The **Neighborhood Day of Hope** is sponsored by the City of Hagerstown’s Neighborhood 1st Medal of Honor Group in partnership with the Brothers Who Care who also share health initiatives from the Washington County Health Department and the Maryland Department of Health.

The Day of Hope event schedule has been filled with cultural presentations, interactive activities, speakers, poets and live bands. You or your group could fill one of these event presentation slots or provide services.

This event which started back in 2009 grew into an annual neighborhood celebration so we are inviting the first 150 of our guests to have a free meal at this year’s Neighborhood Day of Hope with food prepared by local Boy Scouts/Cub Scouts Troop/Pack # 75, who will also have food to sell for those who do not receive a FREE Meal ticket. So get their early enough for your FREE meal ticket or help the Scouts raise funds by purchasing food.

We hope that you, your organizations and friends will join us for the 2020 Neighborhood Day of Hope planned for Saturday, August 15, 2020 from 12noon to 4pm on Wheaton Park\* in Hagerstown, Maryland. Please mark your calendar and contact or email Brothers Who Care to participate as a vendor, business or agency. Phone (301) 393-9290 email: [bwc@brotherswhocare.org](mailto:bwc@brotherswhocare.org)

Click on this link to take a peek at a slideshow movie of one of our past Neighborhood Day of Hope gatherings: <http://www.brotherswhocare.org/images/2015DayOfHope.wmv> (Windows Movie Viewer required to watch)

Again, thank you for your interest and support. *Brothers Andy Smith, Neighborhoods 1<sup>st</sup> Medal of Honor Group*

***\*This event is rain or shine***

*Call or email today to register for your participation at this event to be part of making a difference*