

# THRIVE DETROIT

LIVING IN DETROIT:

FALL/WINTER 2019

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## I Thou, and Homelessness

by Delphia Simmons

This summer I was invited to give a fall lecture about homelessness. Requests such as these — this one from a group of active retirees somewhere in Oakland County — usually come from a desire for people to know more and to do more.

I've come to know that even compassionate, well-intentioned people need, and sometimes want, to challenge what they think they know about people who are living without shelter or housing. The words "homeless and homelessness" evoke images, snapshots that prompt thoughts and confirm held beliefs.

But although we all want to help, I can never take for granted that we are on the same page or that our words have the same meaning.

I sat with the invitation, pondering the possibilities, while gazing out the window from behind my desk with pen in hand. Then, I spotted Martin Buber's I and Thou in a stack of books on my desk. Perfect.

In Buber's book (published in 1923 and translated from German to English in 1937) he posits that the attitude of mankind--how we orient ourselves--is twofold, and based on the primary word pairs: I-Thou and I-It. What I've always understood Buber, an existential philosopher, to mean by his I-it and I-thou distinction is essentially the difference between othering versus being in harmony or relationship with.

Full disclosure, I've read Buber's work sporadically for over 25 years. I still don't fully get him. But I get the feeling that, somehow, his work gets me, and that keeps me going back for the challenge.

I recently learned that Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. quoted Buber's I and Thou in his Letter from a Birmingham Jail: "Segregation, to use the terminology of the Jewish philosopher Martin Buber, substitutes an "I it" relationship for an "I thou" relationship and ends up relegating persons to the status

of things. Hence segregation is not only politically, economically and sociologically unsound, it is morally wrong and sinful."

Together King and Buber help to explain my struggle with the labels homelessness and homeless. At the root of homelessness are poverty and the systems that hold it in place. Poverty is a form of segregation and othering. And although poverty is often the reality leading to homelessness, the use of the word homeless feels more "I-It" than "I-Thou" and, without intention, it limits the encounter to this thing of homelessness instead of creating an opportunity to see a connection with the human beings who are labeled. Too often their humanity is buried beneath the weight of the words. Homeless — end of story; end of purpose.

Buber posits that our lives are summarized by our encounters--some more important than others but with each encounter we have a choice of how to "be" in relationship to the world and others.

When we encounter another person, we have a choice to open ourselves to the whole of their humanity or the part. It's comparable to the difference between standing in front of a living breathing human with all of our complexity, and standing in front of a photograph of a living breathing human with it's one



dimension. The difference is obvious and incomprehensible and yet, we can find ourselves relating to the photograph, the snapshot, the "I-It" and not the "I-Thou" of one's full humanity. Whether we realize it, we are the results of the encounters we choose, for better or worse.

I don't have a new cut-to-the-chase word that feels better for me. Sadly, I think we'll still be using homeless as a descriptor into the foreseeable future. But what I offered the attendees in my workshop is something that I embrace daily: the realization that each encounter is an opportunity to offer a space of grace.

I can only hope the word homeless now hits their ears in a way that prompts a shift in orientation and heart from I-It to I-Thou, perhaps even we.



# Monthly Jewel of Wisdom: Thoughts Are Things and Words Are Spells

by Sajjiah Parker

Yes, thoughts are things and words are spells, and both our thoughts and our words have creative power--the power to create a vivid, colorful masterpiece of our dreams, visions, and goals, as well as the power to cause mass destruction to our hopes and dreams. Now, also consider the fact that we are thinking beings, thinking incessantly, all day, every day. In fact, most of the research I have explored on the subject suggests that the average person has 12,000 to 50,000 thoughts a day! Think about that--possibly as many as 50,000 thoughts a day! With so many thoughts, ask yourself: what are the true contents of your thoughts, and the words you are speaking to yourself? What predominates your thinking? Are you thinking about your well-being and how amazing your life is, how happy you are, how vivacious you look and feel, how you love your job or career, all the money you make, and how loved and in love you feel? Or, are most of your thoughts just the opposite: despondent thoughts, thoughts of doubt, worry, fear, insecurity, lack, and need? I believe that most of us, most of the time, are thinking about what we fear, what we dread, and what we "hope" doesn't happen.

There was a time when I would not have thought that statement true for me, because I regarded myself as someone deeply introspective and a generally positive person. It wasn't until I actually made a conscious effort to take real inventory of just how "positive" of a person I am on any given day, that I realized that this was true for me as well. For an entire day, I wrote in a journal, line by

line and bullet-point by bullet-point, any negative thought that entered my mind that day. I have repeated this exercise many times now (and it may not be a bad idea for you to try), and every time I am astounded, truly speechless, at how many times in a single day, my self-talk has been either critical, or centered around fear of failure, defeat, insecurity, inadequacy, disappointment in self/others, dread of a worse-case-scenario, worry, or anxiety over all the things that remain undone and that I have to get done.

What this revealed to me is the importance of being mindful at all times of what you are thinking and feeling, and what you are allowing to linger in your mind. You may not always be able to stop a thought from entering your mind, but you can control what you allow to stay there. Simply do not feed it, and thus it will have no energy and it will starve. What I have also found effective is to replace that undesirable thought with what I do desire and want to be my reality; the best possible outcome. This is not always easy to do--some days it is very challenging to maintain a positive state of mind--but is nonetheless imperative that you do because it makes all the difference in the world, literally.

"We are living in an Intelligent Universe, which responds to our mental states. To the extent that we learn to control these mental states, we shall automatically control our environment."

--Ernest Holmes, The Science of Mind

## Daily Affirmation:

*All good is now mine and is now manifest in my experiences. Today the possibilities of my experience are unlimited. My thought, which is my key to life, opens all doors for me. Life lies open to me; rich, full, abundant. I have an abundance of everything I need to express the fullest life, happiness, and action. I am surrounded by right action. I am filled with the consciousness of right action. I am surrounded by Substance, which is always taking the form of supply, and always manifesting Itself to me in the form of whatever my need may be at the time. There is continuous movement toward me of supply, of money, of all that I need to express the fullest life, happiness, and action. I have an inner understanding of my place in the Universe. I know that it is unique. I am unique and forever individualized. There is that within me that others recognize as worthwhile and desirable, and everyone whom I meet loves this self of mine and recognizes its worth. I draw all toward me and those whom I can benefit and those who can benefit me are irresistibly drawn toward me. The opportunity for self-expression and compensation is always open to me, and I am at all times compelled to know, accept, and operate upon this opportunity. Happiness and wholeness fill my entire being.*

(Science of Mind)



In closing, I would like to share with you one of my morning rituals that I find helps me tremendously to calm my spirit, get centered, find balance, and gain courage I need to face the day ahead. To enhance my experience, I light a candle and burn incense as part of my ritual, but this is not necessary for you to experience the positive effects of this practice.

Start by getting up at least 30 minutes before you normally arise in the morning. Sit in a comfortable place, a place free from distractions. If you choose to, light a candle or an incense cone or stick, and breathe for several minutes while allowing yourself to become mesmerized by the flicker of the flame, and aroma from the incense. If no candle/incense, simply quiet your mind and breathe. Close your eyes, and breathe, concentrating on your breath--the sound, the rise and fall in your chest--and when you feel a sense of calm come over you, try then to visualize and imagine a beautiful, radiant, and luminous glow of light consuming your body, from the soles of your feet to the very top of your head, filling all the inner-spaces of your body and mind. Feel the warmth of the light, and the powerful energy of this light Source, vitalizing and illuminating every cell in your mind and body. Then, open your eyes, and read the following affirmation. Please take your time, concentrating on every word. Choose to Believe, to Know, that with every word spoken, the Universe is listening!

# Think 'Bout It

by Majallen Cespedes

Hey guys! It's been a while since I've last submitted an article, but today I'm going to talk about something that's had a direct, positive impact on my life. I want to share this knowledge and these understandings with you all in hopes of helping anyone reading this to achieve their most high sense of self and peaceful existence.

Life is hard. No doubt. As we're all growing, maturing, and experiencing transitions in our life like graduating from high school, we're starting to get a sense of what it's like to be an adult: drifting away from those you thought you'd know forever, rekindling old friendships because you're now more mature, heartbreaks and relationships, struggling with managing your money or struggling because you're trying to make some money. Whether it's dealing with the stress of college classes or stressing because you're watching all of your friends go away to universities and you wish you would've gone away to college, we're all in a pretty weird transitioning place. At least I know I have been.

I lost my grandmother in April, I graduated in June, and I started my first college class in October. The month of April through now has been, hands down, the worst few months I've experienced thus far in my 17 years of life. I've been feeling as if my mind, heart, and body are changing immensely. It's almost as if I can subconsciously feel myself moving into the next phase of my life. Emotionally, I have experienced being at what seemed to be my all-time low, trying to comprehend losing a loved one, feeling out of place everywhere I went, not being able to see a future for myself, pushing away people who I know had my best interest at heart, experiencing my first taste of heartbreak, re-living haunting things from my past, dealing with depression and extreme anxiety, and feeling completely and utterly hopeless at achieving a state of contentment and happiness. I had no answers, no drive or motivation to pick myself back up. I felt as if mentally, I was too far gone. I was overwhelmed with feelings of hopelessness, but I knew that if I kept the mindset that I had, I would literally NEVER achieve this state of peace and happiness that I longed for. I knew for a fact that by continuing to feed my mind all of these negative things and believing them to be absolute and unchanging, I was pushing myself further and further away from a state of tranquility.

My mom would always tell me the power that my mind held. She would tell me how

important it is to only speak and think things that I wanted to do, be, and have, and to be mindful to not speak of or think anything negative into existence because that is what I will manifest for myself. Please trust that I know that when you're at rock bottom, the last thing you want to hear is that the answer to solving all of your problems is to be, speak, and think positively; it sounds like straight b.s. and it most definitely sounds as if it is much easier said than done, but it isn't. It's easily the most simple, yet complex principle in the entire world, the idea that your own words and thoughts are what molds your entire existence. This realization was almost too much for me to fathom. I was finally beginning to understand that I am the creator of my own reality, and that the severity of the depression and



PHOTO BY HIAN OLIVEIRA ON UNSPLASH

anxiety that I was feeling was self-inflicted. I knew that in order to feel better, I had to make the decision to do so. Yeah, I was hurting, and yeah, my circumstances still weren't ideal, but by constantly saying and repeating things like "I'm so sad" and "It seems like I'll never be happy" and "I'm so broke," nothing would ever change. Ever. I realized that most of all of my stress was coming from the way that I was responding to things, not the way that life is.

Change how you see things and adjust your attitude. Look for the good in all situations even when it seems like there isn't any and learn to take lessons instead of losses and use them as new opportunities to grow. Let all of the extra worrying, stress, and overthinking go! After feeling like there was nothing left for me to lose, I made the choice to be patient and trust MY process. I'm learning to have complete faith that everything that I have visualized, intended, prayed about, and worked on is in the process of manifesting. Many people aren't satisfied with what they have and are discouraged by what they don't. How can you look to have more if you aren't happy with what you already have? When in reality, some people have nothing. Nothing. No, I may not have all that I want, but my attention to the lack of it is the equivalent of focusing on a problem so hard, yet wondering why I can't find a solution. So, I will remain at peace and centered because that is all I can do. If you want to be happy,

then be happy on purpose. Every morning you have the choice to decide the fate of your day; it is never decided for you. You have so many manifestations waiting for you; decide that you're no longer going to be held back by circumstances. We all possess the power to take our life down a completely different path than what is expected from us. Allow yourself to trust that a higher power is working to bring you all that you deserve out of life. Take complete control over the things in your life that you have control over. What is the point of wasting so much energy over things that aren't in your control and that never will be? Manifest more love to get back more love and be intentional in everything that you do. You have a purpose in this world and the day that you allow your mind and heart to guide your life, you will begin the beautiful journey that's been awaiting you, the journey to an abundance of love, happiness, and success.

Please always remember that the first step to creating more begins with making the best out of who you are, where you are, and what you have already; from there, the world is literally in your hands.

Higher thoughts. Higher energies. Higher vibrations. Higher frequencies. Higher experiences.

Think 'bout it, ya'll.

Jelly!



# It's Never Too Early to Save for Retirement... Truly!

Ina Fernandez CPA

A 2018 report by the Transamerica Center for Retirement Studies\* made me sit up and take notice. It found that the median savings for people in their sixties, including equity in their homes, was \$172,000. That seems like a lot of money until you divide it by the 20 years that most are likely to live beyond retirement. That calculates to \$8600 per year, hardly enough to supplement the \$17,000 per year from social security that the average retiree is likely to get, and way, way below what most will need to cover expenses in their retirement.

So, with pensions now as rare as landlines, we need to start saving for retirement early, as soon as our first job. If we put away small sums that we will not miss, we save on income taxes and have the awesome power of tax-sheltered compounding turbocharging the growth of our retirement nest eggs.

Here is how we suggest each age group can save for retirement:

## Twenties:

If you have enough for your basic needs and your employer offers a 401(k), start contributing to it right away. Contributions are automatically taken in small amounts from each paycheck, and you are unlikely to miss what you're not used to getting in the first place. Many employers match your contributions to a certain extent, giving you additional return right out of the gate. The icing on the cake is that these contributions lower your taxable income and result in you paying less in income taxes as well. If your employer does not offer a 401(k), consider opening a tax-deductible IRA or a Roth IRA to allow your savings to grow, tax-sheltered, until retirement.

Rule of Thumb: Per Investopedia (<https://www.investopedia.com/retirement/how-much-you-should-have-saved-age/>), you should save at least 15% of your gross (before taxes) salary. We recommend you invest most of what you put away in diversified stock funds.

## Thirties and Forties:

You are now hitting your stride in your career, earning "real money" along with higher expenses on your family and home. If you can afford to, max out your 401(k) contributions and also consider adding to IRAs.

Rule of Thumb: By age 30, you should have a total of 50% of your gross salary in retirement savings. By age 40, that goal rises to twice your salary.



## Fifties:

You are now approaching peak earnings and should have about four times your salary saved. It is also time to assess whether you are on the right path to saving enough for retirement. Consult with a financial planner, or if you are a "do-it-yourselfer," check out the handy tools available online and at your local public library. At age 50, you can become an AARP member, which gives you access to many tools and advice on retirement. As a card-carrying member myself, I can vouch for the consistently helpful articles I find in their publications.

The AARP Bulletin of October 2019 discusses a relatively unique approach to assessing retirement security. In simple terms, it looks at the number of retirement years you will be able to fund given your current level of savings. The calculation requires knowledge of how much you have in assets, minus what you owe (call this "net worth"). You will also need to be able to estimate your expected annual inflows from all sources, minus your expenses ("net income") in retirement. If you divide your net worth by your net income, you get the number of years you can expect to fund with your current savings.

Rule of Thumb: You should have four times your salary saved in your fifties.

## Sixties:

If you are healthy and can afford to, delay taking your social security as long as you are able, until age 70. For every year you delay, your benefit increases by 8%. Nice payback! As withdrawals from regular IRAs are taxable (Roth IRA withdrawals are tax-free), delay taking money out of them if you don't need to. You are required to start withdrawing from your IRAs the year you turn 70 ½.

Rule of Thumb: By age 60, you should have 8 times your gross salary saved, 10 times by age 67. You will need to generate an average of 80% of your pre-retirement income to maintain the same standard of living in retirement.

If you are already retired, a way to stretch your retirement dollars is to go back to work. A 2017 survey done by the Rand Corporation (a nonprofit research firm) found that 40% of retirees return to work, many on their own terms. If you have a choice, do something that you enjoy with enough flexibility to take time off or sleep in late when you want to. As for that rocking chair? Let it rock on... without you.

Ina Fernandez CPA is President and CEO of Fern Capital Inc., an independent registered investment advisor.

\*[https://www.transamericacenter.org/docs/default-source/retirees-survey/tcrs2018\\_sr\\_retirees\\_survey\\_financially\\_faring.pdf](https://www.transamericacenter.org/docs/default-source/retirees-survey/tcrs2018_sr_retirees_survey_financially_faring.pdf)

# Researchers assess link between healthcare and evictions

by Jared Brey

Expanding Medicaid in the United States may help reduce the rate of eviction by lowering the cost of healthcare for low-income people and giving renters a better shot at keeping up with housing costs, according to a new study published in the journal Health Affairs.

Researchers at Columbia University and Boston University analyzed eviction data in 51 California counties before and after the state's expansion of Medicaid in 2011 and 2012, following the passage of the Affordable Care Act. They compared that data to eviction records in 14 other states that did not expand Medicaid. (By comparing before-and-after records from multiple states, they attempted to control for some of the influence of other factors, like changes in the housing market.) After Medicaid expansion, they found, California counties had "significantly fewer total numbers of evictions" — and "expansion was associated with 24,517 fewer evictions per month in each county, compared to a pre-expansion mean of 224,718 evictions per month."

"Poor health can be a contributor to eviction when people with limited resources cannot afford both housing and medical care. Medicaid may mitigate the risk of eviction directly by reducing the cost of medical care and indirectly by protecting earning potential through better health," the researchers write.

The new research answered a call from the Russell Sage Foundation to study the social, economic and political effects of the ACA, also known as Obamacare, according to lead author Heidi L. Allen, an associate professor at the Columbia School of Social Work. Another study by the same team published in the American Journal of Public Health in September found reductions in nationwide eviction rates that were associated with Medicaid expansion. And some of the same researchers also published a related study in 2017 showing that Medicaid expansion in California was associated with reduced payday borrowing among low-income people. Allen, who began her career as a social worker in a hospital emergency department, was also an investigator with the Oregon Health Insurance



IMAGE BY AREK SOCHA FROM PIXABAY

Experiment, a series of randomized controlled trials monitoring the impacts of health insurance expansion on low-income people.

"[The reduced eviction rate] wasn't surprising to me because we knew from prior work — pretty definitively — that Medicaid is good for the finances of low-income people," says Allen. "And I knew from working with low-income populations and growing up in a low-income family myself how tight the financial margins that low-income families are operating under are."

The study was published in Health Affairs amid growing national recognition that eviction is a cause of poverty, and not just one of its outcomes, as illustrated by the work of the Eviction Lab and Princeton University sociologist Matthew Desmond. Tenants' rights movements around the country have focused on limiting evictions in various ways, by pushing for rent control to keep costs down and promoting rules that prevent landlords from evicting tenants without just cause. Some efforts, like the national Homes Guarantee campaign, have started drawing explicit connections between healthcare costs, eviction, housing instability and homelessness.

"Health insurance is fundamentally a financial product," says Tal Gross, an associate professor in the Department of Markets, Public Policy and Law at Boston University and co-author of the Health Affairs report. "It doesn't directly affect healthcare so much as who pays for healthcare, and it affects the price of healthcare."

In other words, the expansion of Medicaid in places like California is primarily a financial benefit to low-income people, Gross says.

"They're still suffering and getting sick and missing out on work," Gross says. "But they're not getting hit with that big bill. So that means they're less likely to end up not paying rent."

Healthcare — and, to a lesser degree housing — has become an issue once again in the Democratic presidential primary campaign this year. Some candidates have emphasized the ways that a lack of access to affordable health insurance has been detrimental to low-income people's lives, either physically or financially or both. After the passage of the ACA, some

states declined to expand Medicaid to more people, even though under the law, the federal government would cover 90 percent of the cost. Some of those states, like Florida and South Carolina, are dealing with a range of problems related to the lack of affordable housing for low-income residents.

The report "contributes to an existing body of literature suggesting that one of the principal benefits of Medicaid expansion is related to protection from encumbering medical debt, leading to improved financial well-being," the authors write. Allen says one limitation of the research that she'd like to know more about is how access to expanded Medicaid impacts the lives of people who actually have gone through eviction.

"I'm interested in economic policies that can improve health, and health policies that can improve the finances of low-income families," says Allen. "We know that low-income people make really tough choices every month, but losing your housing is a really big deal. So the fact that money saved from spending on healthcare would be used on housing doesn't surprise me at all."

This article was originally published by Next City, a non-profit news organisation whose journalism amplifies solutions and helps spread them from one city to the next city. Support its work at [www.nextcity.org](http://www.nextcity.org).



# Wanderlust

by Martti C. Peeples

The year was 2014. I had spent the weekend at Oprah Winfrey's "Live Your Best Life" tour. Oprah had an exercise in the booklet we received. One of the exercises was called "Capture your new vision."

This is part of what I wrote: "I want to start preparing now to overcome my fear of leaving my current job and home and walking into my next Chapter."

By February 2016, I had resigned from my job and was venturing out into the travel business. Now, how did I get here? Well, between 2014 and 2016, a traveler started working at my job. This person was mentioning how much money he was making doing the same exact thing I was doing, yet making twice the amount. Let's just say, I was not pleased. I spoke to my manager about the huge difference in pay and she could not go into the details.

The person mentioned to me that I may be a good fit for this travel business and gave me their company information. I took the information and put it away. By November of 2015, I received a call from a travel company. The gentleman said he found my resume online. He went into details about how I could make a new income and get to travel around the country. I told him to let me think about it and I would get back in touch. Well, this guy would not stop calling. He had a six-month assignment in Denver, Colorado.

I went to my sister and my Grandmother for their counsel, and both said GO! My son was grown and starting junior college. There was nothing keeping me from going except myself. So I prayed about the situation and reached back out to the recruiter and said if he could work out a start date in February 2016, I would go. This was music to his ears, and within two days, he had a start date of February 22, 2016.

As I prepared for this new adventure, two days before I was to board my train, I found the exercise I had completed. When I read what I wrote, it was like I had written down my destiny. I was overcoming the fear of leaving my employer of ten years and starting to travel the country at the age of 44.

When I arrived in Denver, I was nervous. The first building I saw was Union Station in downtown Denver. The only things I knew were that Denver was supposed to be cold, and that it wouldn't be a shock to see Goldie Hawn and Kate Hudson shopping. Denver had mountains everywhere. There

wasn't one location where you could not see a mountain. Also, Denver was home to twelve tribes of Indigenous Americans (American Indians). Denver was also experiencing an influx of people moving there hoping to cash in on the legalization of marijuana. Denver also had a high homeless rate. For the first six months, I had no car and walked everywhere, except when I used Uber for shopping. A six-month assignment had now turned into a year, so I flew back to Michigan, collected my car, and grabbed my mother and son. We were doing our first road trip. Our road trip took us to Chicago, Iowa, Nebraska, and finally Denver. I was thrilled to have been able to do this for my family. While they were with me, we toured Estes Park and went by the Stanley Hotel, the inspiration for the movie *The Shining*. After my family left, I went to



Gods, 1300 acres of sandstone formations. I toured Manitou Cliff Dwellings, home of the Anasazi or Ancestral Puebloans. Denver also was known to have the largest celebration of Juneteenth. At City Park, Denver had one of the most beautiful monuments to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The city was a mix of cultures and ethnicities but was also undergoing gentrification. Many of the homeless were veterans, which I could not understand.

After my year was up in Denver, I returned to Michigan, where I spent three months in Western Michigan near Grand Rapids. I lived in Byron Center, a small yet beautiful, new, and growing area with a mix of city life and country. There was a horse ranch down the street from me, as well as many nearby lighthouses. The downside was that this was 2017, the first year of a new presidential administration, and racism was on the rise. Although I was back in my home state, the atmosphere was changing rapidly. Where you lived predicted what type of atmosphere you might encounter. After leaving Western Michigan, I returned

to Southfield and started working in Ann Arbor. My old home. I loved doing the drive to the hospital to which I was assigned because I passed the railroad tracks over a nearby river. Thirty years prior, as a senior in high school, I allowed a group of friends to persuade me into jumping from the railroad tracks into the river. Every year, I went to the Ann Arbor Art Fair, one of the largest in Michigan. Ann Arbor was a "mixing bowl" of America because it is a college town, Wolverine territory and home to largest stadium in the country, known as the Big House. This assignment was pretty good, because after being away from Michigan in the past year, a lot had changed. Little Caesars Arena had been built in downtown Detroit. The night before I started work in Ann Arbor, I was able to fulfill a lifelong dream for my son. He got to see Janet Jackson in concert. I was also able to reconnect with some of the nonprofit groups I had worked with before I left for Denver.

Approaching 2018, my travels would now take me to Indiana, the home of cornfields and more cornfields. Home to the Hoosiers, Indiana Pacers, and Purdue College. Also the home state of Vice President Mike Pence and where Jim Jones started his ministry, which would move from Indiana to California and finally to Jonestown, Guyana. Indiana was also home to the Lilly family, founders of the Lilly pharmaceutical company. I would settle in the city of Lafayette. This would become the city and assignment which would change me. Politics and racism went hand-in-hand there. If you were African-American, you were automatically assumed to be a Democrat and you were perceived as part of the reason why America needed to be made "great" again. When I tried to go shopping, I was followed; when I tried to pick up food I ordered, I was rushed out the door. At my place of employment, I was the only African American in my department. So to balance the television viewing in the breakroom, the channel was changed from Fox to CBS. I was being called "gal" by the white janitorial staff. With every error made, I was the first to be questioned, even on days I was not there. I was stopped by the police three times and always followed on the highways. Traveling from Indiana to Michigan was one of the most stressful times of my life for fear of being pulled over again. I had become a caged bird. My car's gas tank stayed on full because everything I did was within 1.3 miles of my apartment. I went to work and the nearby Walmart and

# Lunch on Me

by Tash Moore

**Westlake is a long way from Oak Park, Michigan.**

It's a neighborhood that skirts downtown Los Angeles and has become home to La Bodega. The concept is the brick-and-mortar home base of LaRayia Gaston's vegan cafe and shop, as well as Lunch on Me. Gaston, originally from New York, founded Lunch on Me, a pop-up that serves the homeless throughout Skid Row, Watts, Venice, Compton, and lately MacArthur Park. Through partnerships and sponsorships with big names like Whole Foods and BuzzFeed, LaRayia--alongside President, Venus--has been able to provide healthy, affordable meals to locals of all stripes.

I was introduced to Lunch on Me through a pop-up in Detroit last winter, right before the polar vortex froze SE Michigan to a virtual standstill. I met Venus, ever enthusiastic, and we spent a toasty morning with other volunteers cooking and preparing full meals to hand out in Cass Park. This summer, I caught back up with Venus, who's currently organizing another feeding in NYC. She explained the concept of the bodega: to provide fantastic organic food at a super-low price point to ensure that longtime residents can continue to thrive

in an increasingly gentrified neighborhood cradled between downtown LA and the rest of Los Angeles. All food items available in the shop--whether a shelf staple like beans and grains, or refrigerated goods--are \$5 or less, with average prices somewhere around \$2, and their offerings are 99% organic. The majority of the food is provided through partnerships. Hot food is also cooked daily and lunches are organized each Monday to pass out to the homeless or undocumented citizens socializing in the nearby park or looking for shelter.

The feedings are six days a week, are free of charge for all in need, and are supported by a rotating team of volunteers. They provide about 10,000 meals per month in Los Angeles. The New York City branch is getting off the ground; however, it's a little challenging as they are starting over from scratch with attracting sponsors out East. The group is also currently fundraising to make some of their projects permanent as well as expand to Hawai'i, where much of the indigenous population is being priced out of their own homeland. The fundraisers are up on CrowdRise and a link is included below if you want to help support their expansion.

## LOVE WITHOUT REASON

LUNCH ON ME

To read more, check out writeups in

the Los Angeles Times (<https://www.latimes.com/food/story/2019-09-13/larayias-bodega-dtla-cheap-healthy-vegan/>)

and New York Times (<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/09/26/style/a-bodega-with-kale-and-activism-on-the-menu.html/>)

as well as their website: [www.lunchonme.org](http://www.lunchonme.org)

CrowdRise: <https://www.crowdrise.com/lunchonme/>

Walgreens. No place else. I lived in isolation and fear for nearly a year.

In 2019, I celebrated the beginning of a new year in my apartment, thanking God for allowing me to see another year and praying the next six months would fly by fast. In between this time, I had gone to New Orleans with my BFFs for our version of Girls Trip, then on a solo weekend trip to Chicago. June 7th came and I was free to fly. I hightailed it out of Indiana and back to Michigan, resting for a couple days and then heading off to Florida for my birthday. When I returned from this trip, I went to the dealership and picked up my brand-new Jeep, a present to myself. Four days later I was on the road again to a new assignment in Nashville, a.k.a. Music City. I loved the drive to Tennessee and my new surroundings. There's not a boring place in Tennessee. There are the Smoky Mountains, Indian reservations, many state parks, a country music museum, and a ton of celebrity country singers to bump into. The people are very friendly. I've met more friendly people than the opposite. The downtown area is similar to New Orleans. In Nashville, you have Broadway and Division Street, which are full of little bars similar to those on Bourbon Street in New Orleans. You have outdoor adventures as well as concert venues and a lot of water sports to do. I have taken up kayaking again.

None of this would have been possible if I had not stepped out on faith and trusted God to lead the way. And all of it was made possible by taking a 6-month course at Wayne County Community College District in Sterile Processing, inside of another program called Surgical Tech.

If you are interested in learning more about Sterile Processing (the handling of Surgical instruments) and the Surgical Tech Program (assisting doctors in surgeries via passing surgical instruments when needed), look up information at WCCCD or Macomb County Community College. You can Google information on traveling nursing, surgical techs and/or Sterile Processing.

This may be a career path for you, where you can earn a good living and tour the country visiting places you probably would never have thought to visit. The rewards are great if you're an adventurous person.



# A Great Season of Theater: 2019-2020

by Laurie Fundukian

Yes, there is life after Hamilton, last year's smash that was a must-see at the Fisher. Local theaters are in full swing with their offerings, and as the days get shorter and crisper, it's a great time to support them.

Detroit Public Theatre, housed in the Max M. Fisher complex along with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, has been producing great theater for a few years now, but you may not yet have experienced this hidden gem. Now's the time! DPT kicks off their fifth season with Dominique Morisseau's Paradise Blue, another in her three-play cycle "The Detroit Project." Detroit 67 (about the protests and violence and how it affected a family that summer) and Skeleton Crew (about Detroit auto workers) were produced in earlier seasons, but Paradise Blue is actually the second play in the trilogy. Morisseau's works are real and raw and important, and her Detroit connection is, as well—she was born in Detroit and is a University of Michigan grad. DPT gives Detroit audiences the chance to see new and innovative plays in our city. Broadway is important (in fact, Birthday Candles, which was DPT's first commissioned play and produced last season, is debuting on Broadway in 2020) but good theater abounds in Detroit, too. Another highlight this season from DPT should be Hedwig and the Angry Inch, which is a unique cult-favorite rock musical written and performed by John Cameron Mitchell (and revived in recent years on Broadway with actors such as Neil Patrick Harris). DPT is sure to put their own spin on it.

<http://www.detroitpublictheatre.org/>

Speaking of Broadway, Broadway in Detroit (which hosts touring shows mostly at the Fisher Theatre), has a good season that will

be almost as popular as last season when Hamilton reigned, with the highlight shows Come from Away (October) and Dear Evan Hansen (March-April) leading the lineup of touring musicals. Based on the book The Day the World Came to Town, the musical Come from Away (a term Newfoundlanders use for those who live far away) is a look into the day that many planes had to be re-routed into Canada due to the 9/11 terrorist attacks. 38 jets carrying people from all over the world landed in Gander, Newfoundland, and those aboard were taken care of by the Newfies in Gander and neighboring towns. Newfies are a unique bunch of people who came out in droves to help feed, comfort, and clothe the stranded passengers (and pets!). There is so much heart and excellent music in this wonderful show. Dear Evan Hansen is for the high-school crowd and addresses suicide and belonging in a technically fresh and visually stunning way. It's one of those musicals that leads audiences from laughing to crying and back. Don't miss these. Form your own opinion about Cats, which is a love/hate classic. The Bronx Tale and Summer: The Donna Summer Musical should be great fun as well. And it's always amazing to go into that beautiful Fisher Building or the Detroit Opera House!

<https://www.broadwayindetroit.com>

Wayne State University continues to produce excellent theater and dance within its programs, and the Hilberry (Wayne's graduate program theater) is renowned. This season has many offerings between the Hilberry, the Underground (formerly the Studio Theatre) and the Bonstelle (undergraduate theater). They kick off with the spooky and funny classic Blithe Spirit,

and in October, the Underground has Heathers the Musical, based on the cult-classic movie, which should be a blast. For their full season schedule: <https://www.theatreanddanceatwayne.com/season-tickets/>

The Detroit Repertory Theatre, Michigan's longest-running nonprofit theater, is staging the Michigan premiere of a new play by popular Michigan playwright Joseph Zettlemaier. Channel Cat opens in early November and is about a small southern town unveiling some long-held secrets. At the show's center is the town joint, Cully Shack BBQ. For information and tickets for this season: <http://www.detroitreptheatre.com/>

Other smaller, independent theaters in Detroit produce interesting, unique, and sometimes edgy shows, so don't forget to support them as well. One such example is Hamtramck's Planet Ant: <https://www.planetant.com/livetheatre>

Outside the city, regional theaters thrive and continue to entertain and move audiences. We can't list them all, but here are a few highlights: this year The Purple Rose Theatre (<https://www.purplerosetheatre.org/>) in Chelsea, founded by Jeff Daniels, will, as always, feature a few world premieres, including Daniels's latest, Roadsigns. This play "follows Lance, a young poet, as he embarks on a journey to find the way to himself. This nostalgic tale is filled with rich characters who dwell on the outskirts of life, each following a dream or hoping to bump into one." Daniels is also a musician and the production will feature original music by him and Ben Daniels.

Tipping Pointe Theatre in downtown historic Northville, founded with the help of former weathercaster and television personality Chuck Gaidica, is celebrating lucky season 13! Fans of the classic A Doll's House by Henrik Ibsen will not want to miss the chance to find out what happened to Nora, in A Doll's House, Part 2, a sequel that recently hit the Broadway stage. Glimpses at the set and early reviews point to this production being a must-see. <https://www.tippingpointtheatre.com/>

We can't mention all the wonderful theaters in and around the Detroit area, but we think we've given you a good start as you support local theater!

## THE WILD ONE: SUZI QUATRO TALKS ELVIS, DETROIT AND BEING A ROCK'N'ROLL TRAILBLAZER

by Michael Epis, Courtesy of The Big Issue Australia / INSP.ngo

When I was 16 I was two years in the band by then, very much ensconced in being in a band, doing five shows a night. We [The Pleasure Seekers, with her sisters and others] were doing 45 minutes on, 15 off. So my whole life was being on the road, already. I did have a boyfriend, but he was in Detroit and I was travelling. So that kind of petered out. I was a young teenager who had found her path in life. Oh Jesus, how lucky was I? How lucky that I found what I wanted to do for the rest of my life. I always say that everybody should be so lucky, you know.

It started with Elvis. I saw him at the age of six on The Ed Sullivan Show and this is absolutely true – if you know anything about me, I'm a no bullshit girl. My eldest sister by nine years was screaming and I'm wondering why she's screaming and then I looked at the TV. I went into the television and I just had that little light-bulb moment, I am going to do that. Simple as that.

I left school at 14, when I was just about to turn 15. I called my dad from a New York hotel room, on tour. My mom was on the extension and I – I've always remembered this – I said that I don't wanna come back and finish school, I have found what I want to do for the rest of my life. And he went very quiet. And then he said, "Is there anything I can say to change your mind?" And I said, no. And he put the phone down on me. He didn't slam it down. He just put the phone down. That was very clever. Because I sat there for a minute and I really had to think, Oh my God, am I really doing this? Yes, I am. It cemented it.

My dad was a musician, part-time musician in the evening, playing all the music of his time, from the 20s, 30s, 40s. He got us our first van, he helped us with the equipment. He gave me my first bass [guitar]. The biggest lesson I learned from him was to be professional at all times. He said, if you have 10 people in the audience or 10,000, those people have gotten the money that they earned out of their pockets and they bought a ticket to see you and you better give them everything. And you can see when I perform, I received that message loud and clear. I'm not happy till I see everybody smiling and I mean that. And if you're not smiling, I will find you.

I am a trained classical pianist and a trained percussionist. So I read and write on both instruments. I play good enough guitar to write on it. I didn't go from guitar to bass, so

I'm not a failed guitar player. The bass was given to me when the band started because nobody else took it. It was another light-bulb moment when I put it on, I just went, Oh yeah, this is me 100 per cent.

I always say I kicked the door down because I didn't see the door. Because I was the first girl to do what I did – do you know how many women that changed? Women actually started to pick up instruments and play in bands and figure I can do this. How wonderful.

Detroit shaped me. It's an edgy, edgy city; industrial, white and black, Motown and white rock. There's a real energy in Detroit and it has stayed with me my whole life. I will always be the girl from Detroit. I'll never be English. [Quatro has lived in England since the early 70s.] Detroit was absolutely beautiful, one of the top cities in the world, just gorgeous. And then everything went wrong. The car industry ended up on its back, Motown left town, the race riots. Everybody left. It looked like a ghost town. It's certainly coming back to life now. I had my 60th birthday there and my 65th birthday. I've got lots of relatives there, nieces, nephews, cousins, everybody.

I never had a plan B. There was never any question in my mind where I was going. And I think anybody like me, any other stars – I hate that word – but any other famous person, if they tell you that they didn't have that knowledge, deep in the pit of their stomach, they're lying. That feeling is what keeps you going. Because this is a business of rejection. I was always waiting for that tap on the shoulder. Waiting for that Come with me, I'm going to make you a star. Thank the Lord above that I've been allowed to be successful at my chosen profession.

There's always hard times. The loneliest part of my life was when I came to London. I left the family, which was a big emotional wrench. I came from a beautiful home and I went to a tiny little room with a tiny bed and I was very, very lonely, the loneliest I've ever been. I did cry myself to sleep, that's no secret. And then the hard times after that, you know, a marriage breaking up is just awful, especially when you've got two kids. I tried to keep it together for six years for the kids' sake, but it just wasn't gonna happen. I'm still good friends with him [Len Tuckey, her former guitarist]. He was actually in the studio while my son and I recorded No Control, because my son wanted him there. His father was so proud. You know, I lost a



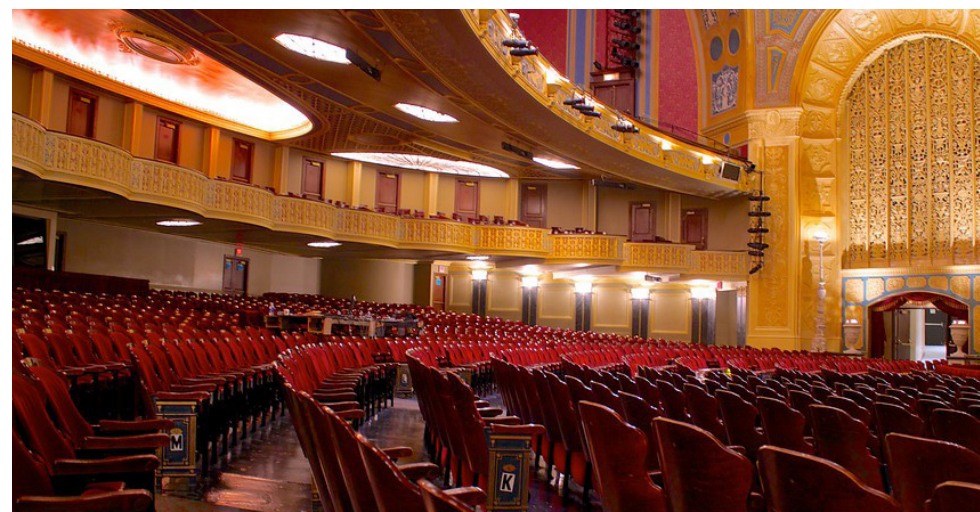
SUZI QUATRO, PHOTOS BY TINA KORHONEN

baby, that was very hard. When my mother died, that nearly killed me, 'cos I was always very close to her. Nobody gets a perfect life.

I'm lucky, I've got really good instincts and I always follow my instincts. I've always been that way. If I meet somebody and I don't like them, I know there's a damn good reason for it. If you don't mind my swearing, your biggest fuck-ups in life occur when you ignore your instinct. This is when you make your mistakes. Our instincts are there for a reason.

If I had the chance to go back in time, I'd go back to when I was just a little girl. Just the little girl with the dreams. I grew up in a good neighbourhood. It was a great neighbourhood, upper-middle-class, nice houses. Every family had loads of kids. The family across the road had eight kids. We had five. Next door had five. We played in the street until the street lights came on. You know what, the girl that lived one house away, Linda, she's still my best friend. We met when we were three and four and she's still my best friend.

I wouldn't change anything. It's all been worth it, 100 per cent. Some of the lows have given me some of the best songs. Some of the highs... I mean, I've had a wonderful life making people happy. It doesn't get any better than this.



# THRIVE DETROIT

Thrive Detroit is Detroit's Street Paper, joining more than 100 local street paper solutions, in 35 countries, working together to alleviate homelessness and poverty across the world.

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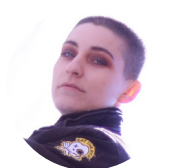
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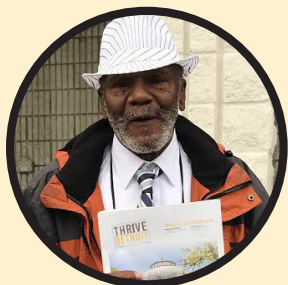
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