



FREEDOM FESTIVAL

This month's Juneteenth celebration in Harrisburg is set to be the biggest yet.

BY MADDIE GITTENS

For Dr. Kimeka Campbell, Juneteenth means a lot of things.

It's about celebration, history, reflection, rest, education and economics. People may spend the day differently, but one thing's for sure—it's an important holiday for all.

"We are celebrating American history," Campbell said. "It's an important day for every single American. How you observe it is in your hands."

All of these different meanings behind the holiday will be spotlighted in this month's Juneteenth HBG event, hosted by the Young Professionals of Color-Greater Harrisburg (YPOC), co-founded by Campbell. And while the holiday itself may be just one day, YPOC plans to celebrate all week long with conferences, reenactments, art experiences, concerts and vendor markets.

Juneteenth—June 19—commemorates the ending of slavery in the United States. It is recognized as the day in 1865 when the remaining African American slaves in Texas received word that they were free. While celebrations of the holiday date back to as early as the year after those last slaves were freed, Juneteenth was only officially recognized as a national holiday in 2021.

YPOC has held Juneteenth events for the past few years, but 2022 will be their biggest yet. Their vision is far-reaching, as shown through their theme, "One City. One Team. One Economic Impact."

The economic impact of Juneteenth is of special importance to Campbell and the team as they head into the holiday.

"The ending of slavery is not just about freeing people physically, it's also about being free to economically advance," Campbell said. "Wealth was stolen from Black people, even post-slavery."

After slavery ended, targeted policies and structural practices such as sharecropping, Jim Crow laws and redlining made economic advancement difficult. With the long-lasting, multi-generational effect of this history in mind, YPOC came up with its program for Juneteenth.

"It's this idea of economic impact and restoring wealth to the Black community," Campbell said. "This is a drop in the bucket of that very huge landscape, but we wanted to do something and craft a week where we had education, economic drivers, entertainment and celebration."

Throughout May, the committee held microenterprise business courses, free to 10 local entrepreneurs. All of those who completed the course were offered free vendor slots at the June events. La Cultura, a partner in the Juneteenth events, hosted the courses.

"There needs to be more Black businesses to shop from, and they need to last longer," said La Cultura founder Elyse Irvis.

People will be able to shop from local Black-owned businesses at a few of the Juneteenth week events, most notably the Juneteenth Jubilee.

The Jubilee will take place on June 19 at Reservoir Park. The event will showcase live music, local vendors, speakers, talent acts and community resources.

Additionally, earlier in the week, organizers will



Dr. Kimeka Campbell

LEGACY BUILDING

Campbell is proud of the unity her organization has achieved through partnerships in the Juneteenth event. In past years, community groups have largely held separate events scattered throughout the city, but she feels that this year is more of a collective effort.

“It is probably the most collaborative Juneteenth event the city has ever seen,” she said. “Together, we can do more and leave more of an impact.”

Organizations like UPMC, the African American Chamber of Commerce, The Singer’s Lounge, La Cultura, Capital Blue Cross and Dauphin County are partners in the event.

YPOC also received a state grant from the Pennsylvania Tourism Office’s “Journeying Toward Freedom” grant program in April. The funds will support their Juneteenth efforts.

“To see it come this far—I’m very grateful,” Campbell said. “This is a legacy building event for the city.”

While the team plans for the day, Campbell has a request for Harrisburg-area businesses—give employees the holiday off from work.

“You’ll actually make your employees feel like you care about them,” Campbell said. “It’s a tangible thing to do. Give people the day off.”

Shaniqua Williams, another member of the Juneteenth leadership team, sees the day off as a way for people of all races and cultures to learn more about the history of the holiday. She hopes YPOC’s events will prove educational for attendees.

“This is something that Harrisburg truly needs,” she said. “There’s just so much to celebrate. The celebration starts in your heart.” **B**

hold a concert, featuring rapper Bow Wow, at XL Live, a Harriet Tubman reenactment, and a “Paint Noir” interactive art event with artist Bryan “King Prolifik” Hickman on City Island.

Additionally, there will be a downtown restaurant crawl, a joint event with UPMC’s “Healthy Harrisburg” program and a kickoff event at the state Capitol. A Juneteenth conference will be held on June 14 at HACC, featuring local speakers from the region and nationally renowned keynote speaker Michael Eric Dyson. The event will include interactive sessions, panel discussions and a Q&A. Many of the events are free, but some require tickets.

For more information about Juneteenth HBG and the Young Professionals of Color–Greater Harrisburg, visit www.ypoc-hbg.org.

JUNETEENTH HBG EVENTS

Meeting of the Minds Community Summit

Saturday, June 11

Capital Kick-Off

Sunday, June 12, 12 to 2 p.m.
at the state Capitol steps

Harp Love in Action Protest

Monday, June 13, 3 to 5 p.m., at the
Harrisburg Mall parking lot, opposite
the Dauphin County Prison

Juneteenth Conference

Tuesday, June 14,
12 to 6 p.m. at HACC

It’s Lit Black Theater Cafe + Harriet Tubman Reenactment

Wednesday, June 15, 6 to 8 p.m.
at Open Stage Theatre

Paint Noir

Thursday, June 16, 6 to 10 p.m.
at the City Island carousel pavilion

Discovery Walk and Restaurant Crawl

Friday, June 17, 5 to 10 p.m., starting
at Ad Lib Kitchen and Craft Bar
inside the Hilton Harrisburg

UPMC Healthy Harrisburg Kick-Off

Saturday, June 18, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
on N. 2nd Street in downtown
Harrisburg

Juneteenth Concert

Saturday, June 18, 8 p.m.
(doors open at 7 p.m.) at XL Live

Juneteenth Jubilee

Sunday, June 19,
1 to 8 p.m. at Reservoir Park

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Harrisburg Black Newsbeat sets the tone for Black culture, talent, community.

BY MADDIE GITTENS

Often, you'll find Dr. Kimeka Campbell leading rallies, holding large events, speaking on panels, and talking into the microphone during public comment at Harrisburg City Council meetings. Last year, she added hosting a talk show to her many roles.

Campbell exudes confidence, strength and passion in these leadership positions. So, when asked if she experienced stage fright, I wasn't expecting to hear her say, "yes."

But since day one of her show, "Harrisburg Black Newsbeat" at Open Stage, she's been nervous for every show.

"This is a completely different skillset," she said. "I'm always thinking—are people going to laugh at my jokes? How do I keep things light, but also inform people? I'm always nervous if people will like it, but they always do."

One year ago, Campbell began her show at Open Stage. It's a mix of news, comedy, music, art and interviews, all with one focus—spotlighting the Black community in Harrisburg.

"We try to highlight folks who don't traditionally get highlighted," she said. "We want to uplift Black and brown culture and art."

Campbell is the co-founder of the Young Professionals of Color-Greater Harrisburg and holds a full-time position at Hamilton Health Center, as well. In other words, she's busy.

But everything she does is part of her goal to build community in the city she calls home.

"It's always been my heart to show what Harrisburg has blessed me with," Campbell said.

ADDICTIVE ENERGY

Chris Gibson, production manager at Open Stage, met Campbell at a 2020 rally protesting the killing of George Floyd by a Minnesota police officer. He heard her speak and saw the passion behind her message. This led him to invite her to host a segment on the theater's show, "My Talented Friends Live."

According to Gibson, her segment quickly took on a life of its own and developed into its own show.

"It's been extraordinary," he said. "The show has really blossomed."

Campbell hosted shows twice a month from February through December 2021 and is resuming this month after a break in January. Shows feature several special guests—local artists, musicians, activists and business owners, among others.



Dr. Kimeka Campbell interviews Winnie Okello.

Each show also has regular segments, like "Sweeping the Streets," during which Campbell discusses goings-on in Harrisburg, and "Movies and Melanin," when she highlights films with Black lead actors. She often shares information gleaned from the city council meetings she attends, hoping to create another path of access for residents to educate themselves.

The fun doesn't stop at the edge of the stage. Campbell encourages audience members to engage, shout out comments, cheer and laugh out loud. While the audience has still been relatively small due to COVID precautions, there's no lack of energy.

"People will shout things back at us, and it always works," she said. "It's like being in my living room."

Gibson, who produces the show, has felt that energy as he sits behind the camera, calling it "exciting and addictive."

"It's always surprising how much joy the show brings to the audience, the guests and ourselves," he said. "We come off the show with a high."

ALL ABOUT COMMUNITY

Harrisburg hip-hop artist Mikikka3K has pursued music for about a year. When Campbell invited her to perform on Black Newsbeat, it was her biggest stage yet.

"I was intimidated," she said. "But she made me feel so accepted."

Mikikka3K performed her song, "Visions," on stage and received a standing ovation from the audience.

"It made me feel confident," she said. "I really appreciate that experience. [Campbell] inspired me so much. She's doing more for the community than she even knows."

That's why Campbell does what she does. She and her husband Basir Vincent, who handles much of the technical work on the show, put in countless hours prepping for each show. This is all added to the time she spends on her many other ventures in the city. To her, it's all worth it if it's helping others feel a sense of belonging.

"I know a lot of people who work really hard," Gibson said. "But I don't know anyone who works as hard as Dr. Campbell. She's an inspiration."

Gibson also explained how much he has learned, as a white man, from being there for every episode of the show. He encouraged other white community members to come and experience the knowledge, activism and talent of the Black community.

Harrisburg Black Newsbeat's one-year anniversary is in February, fittingly during Black History Month. Campbell has plans for two special shows that will bring back former guests to the stage and feature new games for audience members to participate in. Artists will also have pieces for sale in the theater.

"It's about highlighting the talented people of Harrisburg," Campbell said of the show. "It's all about community for me." **B**

Harrisburg Black Newsbeat's anniversary shows will take place at Open Stage on Feb. 9 and 23. Open Stage is located at 25 N. Court St., Harrisburg. For tickets and more information, visit www.openstagebbg.com.



A LASTING LEGACY

Last year, the Jewish Federation delivered some stunning news—it was buying the former Dixon Center. How did that happen—and what comes next?

BY M. DIANE MCCORMICK



Abby Smith

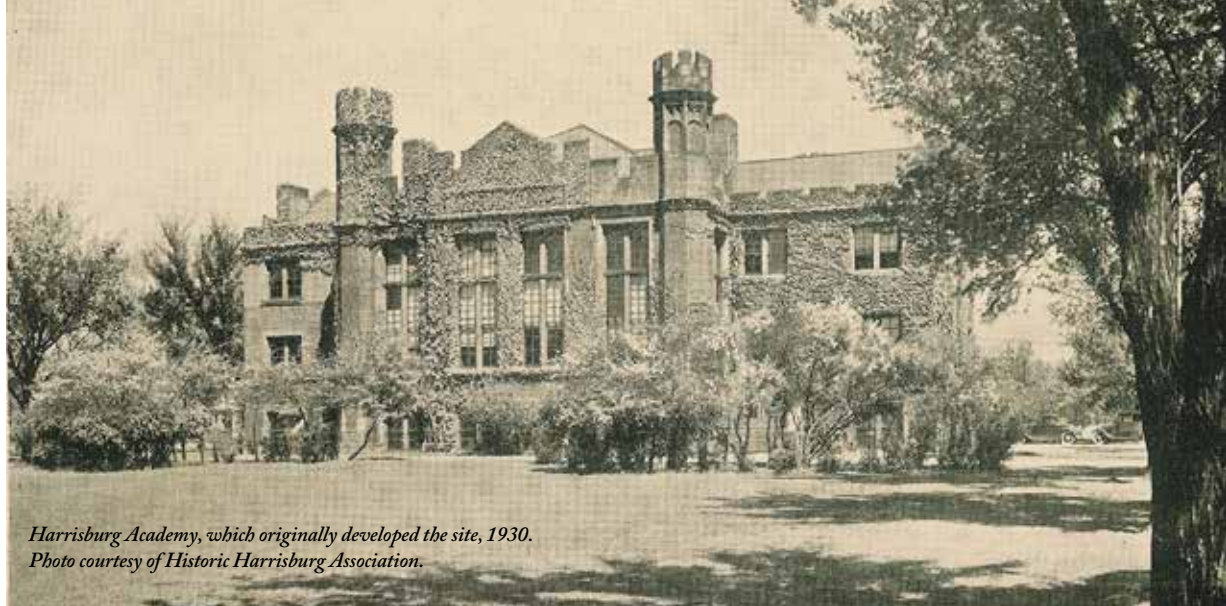
“It takes one second to walk on the campus and be inspired by what’s happening here, and a lot of people felt that immediately.”

Abby Smith, president of the Jewish Federation of Greater Harrisburg, is giving TheBurg a tour of the Alexander Grass Campus for Jewish Life. Seen through her eyes and ebullience, the reimaged but still-vacant space—most recently known as Dixon University Center—truly does seem to hum with activity.

“Our current campus just doesn’t reflect who the Jewish community is,” she said. “We didn’t look on the outside how we are on the inside—this very philanthropic, community-minded set of organizations in this not-that-spectacular space. This lives up to who our community is.”

The Jewish Federation is “planting a seed” that will radiate throughout central Pennsylvania, said Benedict Dubbs, president of the campus designer, Murray Associates Architects.

“It is not just limited to the Jewish culture,”



Harrisburg Academy, which originally developed the site, 1930. Photo courtesy of Historic Harrisburg Association.



Photo courtesy of CBRE

Dubbs said. “That opportunity for education, that opportunity for engagement, that sense of community is so much more now because of the size and the relationship of the campus to the surrounding neighborhoods and the surrounding community.”

PAST AND FUTURE

The Jewish Federation of Greater Harrisburg encompasses several initiatives supporting Jewish life and overall community wellbeing, including the Jewish Community Center and Brenner Family Early Learning Center. Other groups, including Jewish Family Service of Greater Harrisburg, rent space from the federation as they carry out collaborative missions.

Since 1958, the center of the region’s Jewish community has been the JCC at 3301 N. Front St. Today, the building buzzes, beehive-like, with yoga classes, childcare, Jewish education, music recitals, lectures, film festivals, senior lunches, summer camps, religious observances, board meetings and busy staff.

And like a beehive, the space is crammed beyond capacity. News in August 2020 that Pennsylvania’s State System of Higher Education was selling its six-acre, underutilized Dixon University Center three blocks down Front Street set off a cascade of activity. Calls to backers. Board votes. Dialog with tenants and stakeholders. Preparing a bid. Finally, accepting the gift that made it all possible—backing

from the Alexander Grass Foundation to help buy the \$4.56 million site.

The foundation president, Elizabeth Grass Weese, and her brother, Roger Grass—children of the late Rite Aid founder and philanthropist Alex Grass—appreciated the site’s self-sustaining business model, said Smith. They also liked “the idea that their dad’s legacy could be connected not just to such a beautiful campus and Harrisburg’s Jewish community but to future generations, as well. Alexander Grass was a huge part of how Jewish Harrisburg was on the map nationally, and this puts us back on the map.”

Sandy Cohen, past president of the JCC and the Jewish Federation, is co-chairing fundraising for the new site. He attended kindergarten in the JCC, when the building was new and marked a new era for Harrisburg’s Jewish community as it moved from the Midtown building that now houses H*MAC.

Cohen “grew up in that building,” the social hub where kids bowled and danced, he said.

“Someone built that for us,” he said. “It’s now 65 years later, and our current building—it needs a lot. The Grasses did this for us. Giving back to the community, I can’t say no. If someone did it for us, I want to do it for that next generation, for generations to come.”

ROOM TO GROW

With the October 2021 announcement that the federation had submitted the winning bid for the site, the Grass Campus was born.

“While we did not have requirements for the use of the property, we believe the Jewish Federation’s plans are a good fit for the location and the community,” said PASSHE spokesman Kevin Hensil.

Programs Director Terri Travers envisions a space that strengthens community ties through expansion in fitness and recreation, summer camp, children’s theater and senior living.

“We’ve already been able here at the ‘J’ to have some intergenerational programs, but I really see us being able to expand our offerings,” she said. “The sky’s the limit. We want to make sure we’re serving the needs of the community for generations to come.”

A vision of better serving the entire community is driving the transformation, said Smith. Plans tuck existing uses and programs into the campus buildings constructed, mostly, in the early 20th century for the original site developer, Harrisburg Academy:

- **Education.** The early childhood center, currently in the JCC basement, will no longer flood with tropical storm mud but with light flowing through tall windows into rooms made more spacious by knocking down walls. Silver Academy, Harrisburg’s Jewish day school, will move to Duncan Hall, across 2nd Street from the main campus.
- **Senior and wellness programming.** Clinical space already equipped with sinks and floor drains—and in one room, an eye wash station—create possibilities for partnering with a health care organization.
- **Spaces campus-wide for conferences, meetings and gallery showings.** An ornate hall could host recitals and lectures. Duncan Hall’s “gymatorium” will have a sleek stage and backdrops that convert a new basketball court into event space.
- **Office space for federation staff.** Travers said that she finally will have separate storage for the program detritus cluttering her current office—water bottles, boxing equipment, keychains and a Slip ‘N Slide “that looks pretty darn fun.”
- **A 15,000-square-foot fitness center on the administration building’s second floor.** Whether on cardio equipment or the balcony just meant for yoga and tai chi, members will have serenity-inducing views of the quadrangle and river. A lap pool will be part of the gym complex in Duncan Hall.
- **Jewish Family Service in the former PASSHE chancellor’s home.** JFS offerings include clinical counseling and therapy, adoption and foster care, refugee resettlement and food assistance. Clients will be invited to wait in a glass-enclosed solarium that is Smith’s favorite room on the campus. “When you’re coming in for social services, to be in a home is just special,” she said.



The Jewish Federation of Greater Harrisburg envisions a lap pool and convertible ‘gymatorium’ for Duncan Hall on its new Grass Campus.

The grassy quadrangle bordered by campus buildings and Front Street will remain unspoiled. For one thing, there’s a parking garage underneath. For another, it’s just beautiful, and the Jewish Federation likes it that way. Smith envisions neighborhood residents walking their dogs. Dubbs sees outdoor lectures and movie nights. A volunteer committee of landscapers and arborists is developing plans for the site, including the early learning center’s garden-to-table curriculum.

“Within Judaism, there are so many values that connect back to the earth,” said Smith, citing the Tikkun Olam teaching of a “responsibility to heal the world. It is within our tradition to care about the spaces that we inherit on the earth.”

Other volunteers are offering their expertise to develop IT schemes or address security. “I think they just need to be asked,” said Smith, a volunteer whose day job is president and CEO of Team Pennsylvania. “Just give them the opportunity to step up.”

Within that volunteer cadre, Cohen and his wife, Marcia—who led development of the JCC’s childcare in the early 1980s—see young leaders emerging.

“I’m now the old guard, but I’m happy to see that younger people are stepping up to take leadership roles,” Cohen said.

“They’re enthusiastic about it. They’re excited about it.”

Much of the office space will be ready for occupancy this year. Completion of the early learning center and the gym will stretch into 2023, but “hopefully, early 2023,” said Smith. Programs are expected to continue uninterrupted through the transition.

The master plan allows flexibility to meet current needs while adapting to future, unseen developments, said Dubbs.

“If this is a very large book, I think we are in the early chapters of something that will write itself over many years and decades, and it will become better and better,” he said.

Just like the JCC today, much of the Grass Campus will serve the non-Jewish community, said Smith. After all, the conversion also embodies the Jewish value of tzedakah, “an obligation to giving back.”

“We’re here for generations to come, but in a way that better serves the community, that better connects to the community,” she said. “To me, with what we’re able to do on this campus, it changed the future.” **E**

For more information on the Jewish Federation of Greater Harrisburg, visit www.jewishharrisburg.org.



B&B, BREAKING BARRIERS

*The Keystone Inn is
Gettysburg's first Black-owned
B&B—part of a nationwide small
business and travel trend.*

BY KAREN HENDRICKS



Stephen, Christine & Patrick Campbell



Gettysburg is a town known worldwide for its history, but there's a new chapter being written in its supporting tourism industry.

When siblings Patrick, Christine and Stephen Campbell purchased Gettysburg's Keystone Inn, they became the town's first Black bed and breakfast (B&B) owners, among more than a dozen area B&B's.

"We really fell in love with this place. It was the location, the draw of history and tourism, the architecture, the historic renovation," Patrick said. "We also fell in love with Gettysburg. Beyond the history, we're loving that this is a great place for people who love the outdoors, it's a foodie place, and it's those type of things we enjoy when we travel also."

What led them on this journey to B&B ownership? Quite honestly, the Campbell family had a problem. No one owned a home large enough to host extended family gatherings.

"Three of us started flipping houses to get investment money to buy an inn," said Patrick, 54, the youngest of six siblings. "And through flipping, we learned we could work well together."

Their grandmother—one of 14 siblings—and family roots are in the Washington, D.C., and Maryland areas. So, when Patrick, Christine and Stephen began searching for the perfect B&B to operate, they cast a wide net through the Mid-Atlantic, including Maryland and Lancaster.

Their primary criteria? In addition to finding a property that could accommodate their own family holidays, they wanted to pay homage to a bigger-picture family heritage. They were seeking a B&B in close proximity to the Underground Railroad—a network of safe houses that helped slaves make their way northward from the South in the 1800s. Gettysburg-area safe houses played a vital role along the route.

That's because, in Gettysburg, there was a fine line between slavery and freedom. The town is less than 10 miles north of the Mason Dixon Line.

While the Keystone Inn isn't a Civil War-era home—it was built in 1913—its owners through the years have been pillars of the community. And the Campbells want to continue that tradition.

"One of the core values we share as siblings—it's not enough for us to own a B&B and treat it as a business—we want to be part of the community also," Patrick said.

He cites partnerships with Adams County wineries, coffee roasters and farms such as Apple Valley Creamery—breakfast at the Keystone Inn features their eggs, milk and yogurt.

But the Campbells' sense of community goes even deeper.

"We're very aware of the question, 'What is the diversity of Gettysburg?' One of the things we



were happy to see, given the overall political climate, is that Gettysburg itself seems to be not only diverse but really promoting diversity, even before Rita was elected mayor,” said Patrick, referencing Rita Frealing, Gettysburg’s first female and first Black mayor, elected last fall.

That culture and tone is one that the Campbells now emulate as the eight-room Keystone Inn’s owners, as they roll out the welcome mat—especially for Black travelers.

“One of the things we discovered as we were going through the process of becoming innkeepers, is that B&B’s generally are not an option African American travelers consider,” Patrick said.

Leah Bell, hired by the Campbells as Keystone Inn’s innkeeper, sees the family as “part of a new wave of ownership—broadening our vision of what a B&B can be.”

The Campbells joined three B&B associations—the local Inns of the Gettysburg Area, the statewide Pennsylvania Association of Bed & Breakfast Inns (PABBI), and the African American Association of Innkeepers International (AAAI), with membership across the country.

“Less than 1% of inns are minority-owned,” said Monica R. Edwards, AAAI’s executive director. “There’s been more of a spotlight on supporting African American-owned businesses, so the AAAI website allows travelers to find Black-owned inns in one [online] location.”

And it turns out, the Campbells’ purchase of the Keystone Inn in mid-2020 was well-timed with a pandemic surge in B&B-based travel.

“As travel started to come back, our innkeepers were absolutely packed,” said Rose Mape, PABBI director. “Inns already had a high level of cleanliness, and I think the traveling public felt more comfortable staying in smaller properties.”

Many Pennsylvania B&B’s surpassed all occupancy records in 2021—an upward trend that’s continuing into 2022. The state, with 600-some B&B’s, has the second-most B&B’s in the country, behind California.

Being on the forefront of welcoming Black travelers to Keystone State B&B’s is a priority, Mape said, with the Keystone Inn’s Christine Campbell instrumental in leading the charge. Christine serves on the association’s annual fall conference committee, which is organizing a session on inclusion.

Groundbreaking work seems to be in the Campbell family genes. Patrick retired as a global enterprise planner with PayPal several months ago. Stephen, who earned a master’s degree in architecture from Harvard, is Lancaster’s director of public works. Christine, focused on the nonprofit sector, is a consultant to HUD.

The apples didn’t fall far from the tree. The Campbells’ parents were the first in the family to attend college. Their mother was a teacher and mathematician who worked with NASA’s computer systems in a position similar to those showcased in the movie “Hidden Figures.” Their father, now 94, retired as one of the USDA’s national directors.

So what does the family patriarch think about his “kids” purchasing the Keystone Inn?

“I’m hearing from his friends that all he does is brag about us,” Patrick said, with a smile. **B**

The Keystone Inn is located at 231 Hanover St., Gettysburg, and online at keystoneinnpa.com. For more information on Inns of the Gettysburg Area, PABBI and AAAI, see gettysburgbedandbreakfast.com, painns.com and africanamericaninns.com, respectively.



TASTE OF HOME

Chef Nadine Graham expands Jamaican restaurant, continues family legacy.

BY MADDIE GITTENS



Nadine Graham grew up in a big family, which meant lots of cooks in the kitchen. While it was a necessary daily task of feeding the many family members, it was also a time for bonding.

Graham's parents were at the helm of it all, teaching her and her siblings how to make the traditional dishes of their home country—Jamaica. The crew cooked for their community, including local politicians and business people. Graham's father also owned a successful bakery.

The days of cooking with her family in Jamaica may have long passed, but, if anything, Graham has only spent more time in the kitchen in the years following her move to the United States. She's cooking up those same Jamaican dishes, but for a different community.

Porters House, Graham's Caribbean restaurant, a long-time Broad Street Market vendor, has expanded. The business now has its own standalone restaurant in Uptown Harrisburg, and Graham couldn't be prouder to see her dream come true.

CRAVING CARIBBEAN

After moving from Jamaica to New York to Harrisburg, Graham realized that authentic Jamaican cuisine was hard to come by in the area.

She set out to change that, opening Porters House in 2012, at a time when there were only a few other vendors in the now-packed market.

"This is the overall most authentic Jamaican restaurant from here to Philadelphia and Baltimore," she said.

Graham grew to love the market, making friends with regular customers and fellow market vendors. But she had a dream of growing her business and owning a restaurant, like her dad had with his bakery in Jamaica.

In December, she opened Porters House on N. 6th Street, painting the roof with the colors of the Jamaican flag. The inside of the restaurant is just as colorful. Palm trees painted on the walls give it a Caribbean feel, making even the winter months feel tropical.

At the counter, customers will recognize dishes from the market stand. There's fish, jerk shrimp, chicken soup, oxtail and beef patties, among other items. Graham's keeping some foods, like soup specials, exclusively at the market to encourage customers to visit both locations.

If anyone knows authentic Jamaican food, it's Raphael Simpson, and he gave Porters House a rave review.

Simpson comes from a Jamaican family, and his father owns a Jamaican restaurant in Philadelphia. He discovered Porters House while studying at Penn State University and quickly became a regular. It gave him a taste of home.

"It's rare that you find somewhere where you really enjoy the food," Simpson said, referencing how hard it was to find quality Jamaican cuisine in the area. "She really stays true to selling a variety of items. She carries the same or more than places in New York would carry."

Simpson even convinced Graham to cater quarterly events for PSU's Caribbean Student Association from 2016-19.

Over the years, they became friends, and Simpson admired the way Graham cared for customers. He recalls sometimes even seeing her give food to those in line who couldn't afford a meal.

"She sells food, but she loves people," he said. "She has a beautiful heart, and you can taste it in her food."

STUFF OF LIFE

Days are long for Graham. She gets up at 4 a.m. to pray and watch the news before work begins at 7. She's cooking and interacting with customers all day, she said. But she loves it.

"I'll cook in my sleep," she said. "If I'm not at the market or cooking, I get depressed. It's therapy for me."

When Graham's father passed away a decade ago, cooking was what got her through. She was depressed for seven years, and seeing the bakery that

her father put so much work into close down made it even harder.

But she kept moving forward, knowing how her father would feel seeing her succeed.

"He would be so ecstatic," Graham said, with tears in her eyes. "He would be very proud."

After securing the building, once a KFC and later Kennedy Fried Chicken, it took a year of hard work to get the restaurant open. It was taxing, and Graham had her doubts that it would ever open.

But sitting at a table in the restaurant on a Monday afternoon, Graham said that she felt like she had finally made it.

"This project took a lot out of me, and I felt like walking away," she said. "It's only up from here. It's like a dream come true."

Employee Geneva Hill has seen how Graham has not only succeeded in business, but in creating a welcoming atmosphere for staff and customers.

"She's like a mom to me," Hill said. "If I'm down, she picks me up. When I need her, she's there. It's like a big, happy family."

That's what keeps Graham going through the ups and downs of business—the people. She loves the cooking, but she especially enjoys the one-on-one conversations with regulars and first-timers alike.

For Graham, it all comes back to family. She hopes that Porters House will survive her and be there for her children and grandchildren to visit. She's already in the kitchen with her young grandson, teaching him to cook, like her family in Jamaica used to do.

"I want to leave a legacy for my children," Graham said. "Food always brings family together. Food is the stuff of life." **B**

Porters House has two Harrisburg locations, 2001 N. 6th St. and in the Broad Street Market. For restaurant hours and menus, visit www.portershousecuisine.com.

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