

# Family Matters

November 30, 2009  
Volume 3, Issue 2

Official Newsletter of the Gillyard-Johnson-Mahoney Family Reunion  
www.gillyard-johnson-mahoney.com



Merry Christmas

## Family Reunion Team Leader's Corner



### Inside this Issue

Team Leader's Corner	1
Family Spotlight	1
Words	2
Family Happenings	2
Healthy Living	3
The Poetry Corner	3
On the Move!	4

### Memories and Gifts

The Christmas season is upon us. It is a time of giving and sharing. It is also a time of memories, and I find myself reflecting on many family memories.

I love the wrapping, unwrapping and the giving and receiving of gifts. For me, family memories are like gifts. I get such joy from them. Each memory is special. From each, I've grown a little. I am thankful that memories, happy and unhappy ones, are a part of me. That is what I enjoy most about our family reunions. As we spend time together, I am wrapping memories. Perhaps years from now, those memories will be unwrapped and I will have grown from simple lessons learned. Perhaps it was the best play strategy learned while playing a game of spade or bid whist, at the family picnic; or how a song can be brought to life through Mime dancing.

As you read this issue, think of it as your

gift of memories. Christmas poetry is shared with us (page 3) and Kwanzaa and its principles are highlighted. For the first time, our Family Spotlight (see below) has two people featured. We get acquainted with Tammi Gilyard and her son, Mikah.

And as we are out and about this Christmas season, eating and sharing with one another, don't forget that we are on a mission for a healthier family. On page 3, Family Matters Health Care Contributor, Dorothy Gilyard Obee provides us important information on diabetics. To ensure that we reached more relatives with this important information, she also donated toward the cost of postage. What a giving spirit!

Of course, it goes without saying that the most precious gift that any of

(Cont on page 4)

## Upcoming Events

- ◆ January 9, 2010  
Planning Team  
Meeting, Shreveport,  
LA
- ◆ July 6, 2010 - Reunion  
Fees Due
- ◆ August 6 -8, 2010  
Family Reunion Days

## Family Spotlight



This month the spotlight shines on **Tammi Gilyard**. Tammi is the daughter of R.L. and Sirece Gilyard and granddaughter of the late Della Gilyard. Tammi is a Computer Instructor in Shreveport. She

teaches all Microsoft Office applications, web design and has experience in Adobe Photoshop and Adobe InDesign. She also does contract work as a Certified Microsoft Office Trainer for businesses in North Louisiana. She is a musician at New St. Paul Baptist Church and also serves as the children's Sunday School teacher. She has a 5 year old son, Mikah, and when not working, can be found volunteering in Mikah's classroom. Last school year, she received a service award for amassing the most classroom volunteer hours! Tammi values being a visible, responsible, and involved parent. For leisure she likes reading, traveling, and experiencing new things.

Tammi is another beacon in our family emitting inspiration. The Spotlight shines on her!



Kinara (The Candle Holder)

**Kwanzaa** is a Swahili word that means "first" and signifies the first fruits of the harvest. From December 26 to January 1, many people of African descent in America-celebrate Kwanzaa. It is that time when we reflect on our use of the basic principles (see below) share and enjoy the fruits of our labor, and recommit ourselves to the collective achievement of a better life for our family, our community, and our people.

Principles

**Umoja (Unity)** to strive for and maintain unity in the family, community, nation and race.

**Kujichagulia (Self-Determination)** to define ourselves, name ourselves, create for ourselves and speak for ourselves.

**Ujima (Collective Work and Responsibility)** to build and maintain our community together and make our brother's and sister's problems our problems and to solve them together.

**Ujamaa (Cooperative Economics)** to build and maintain our own stores,

shops and other businesses and to profit from them together.

**Nia (Purpose)** to make our collective vocation the building and developing of our community in order to restore our people to their traditional greatness.

**Kuumba (Creativity)**To do always as much as we can, in the way we can, in order to leave our community more beautiful and beneficial than we inherited it.

**Imani (Faith)** to believe with all our heart in our people, our parents, our teachers, our leaders and the righteousness and victory of our struggle.

####

**Family Happenings**

The following news was submitted to the Family History Team:

Retirements

February 2009

Sirece Gilyard - 40 years

Graduations

August 2009

Kevin Dumas - Navy College Program/AA degree, Coastline Community College Program

School News

September 2009

KaNesha Gillyard - Named 2010 Salutatorian Southwood H.S., Shreveport, LA

Please remember to submit news to share with the family. The next edition of Family Matters is scheduled for mailing February 7, 2010. All news must be submitted by January 31, 2010 to be included in the February edition. E:mail news to [gjmfamilyreunion@gmail.com](mailto:gjmfamilyreunion@gmail.com)



I am happy to join Ida Thomas Oatis and the Family Matters team as a rotating contributing editor for Healthy Living. This month, we are sharing information on the Diabetes Epidemic among African Americans.

Diabetes is a group of diseases marked by high levels of blood glucose resulting from defects in insulin production, insulin action, or both.

**Type 1 diabetes** results when the body's immune system attacks and destroys its own insulin-producing beta cells in the pancreas. People with type 1 diabetes must have insulin delivered by injection or a pump. Symptoms are: increased thirst and urination, constant hunger, weight loss, blurred vision and extreme fatigue. Type 1 diabetes accounts for 5 to 10% of all diagnosed cases of diabetes.

**Type 2 diabetes** occurs when the body does not make enough insulin or cannot use the insulin it makes effectively. It usually occurs in adults over the age of 40 but is becoming more prevalent in younger age groups. The symptoms are feeling tired or ill, unusual thirst, frequent urination (especially at night), weight loss, blurred vision, frequent infections, and slow healing wounds. Some people have no symptoms. Type 2 diabetes accounts for 90 to 95% of all diagnosed cases of diabetes.

A person is more likely to develop type 2 diabetes if they:

- have a family history of diabetes
- are African American
- are overweight or obese
- are 45 years old or older
- have high blood pressure
- have abnormal cholesterol (Lipid) levels
- are not getting enough physical activity
- have polycystic ovary syndrome
- have blood vessel problems affecting the heart, brain, legs
- have dark, thick and velvety patches of skin around the neck and armpits

### Link Between Cardiovascular Disease and Diabetes

Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death for people with diabetes—about 68% die of heart disease or stroke; adults with diabetes have heart disease death rates about two to four times higher than adults without diabetes; the risk for stroke is two to four times higher among people with the diabetes; about 75% of adults with diabetes also have high blood pressure; and smoking doubles the risk for heart disease in people with diabetes.

### What Can Our Family and African Americans Do to Prevent Heart Disease or Stroke and Other Complication?

Diabetes is a self-managed disease. If you are diabetic, you must take responsibility for your day-day care.

If you are diabetic, you can manage the disease by eating healthy foods, being physically active, taking diabetes medicine as prescribed and testing blood glucose levels.

Participate in community education and support programs.

For more information, log on [www.YourDiabetesInfo.org](http://www.YourDiabetesInfo.org) and as always remember to be the best advocate for your health. Keep scheduled appointments with your health care provider and ask questions.

*We're on a mission for a healthier family!*

## The Poetry Corner

Submitted by: Alicia Brumfield

### Generations

By: Sylvia N. Durham

I am calling all generations  
I am calling out for those seeds of  
generations  
Those seeds that were planted in  
rich soil  
Soil rich in tradition and values  
Soil that will nurture and foster the  
growth of our future  
For this, I am calling  
I am calling you  
Look around you, these are the seeds of  
generations  
These are the seeds that show our  
ancestry

These seeds sprang up from kings and  
queens

From warriors and peacemakers  
From slaves and slave masters  
From the bold, the proud, the strong  
These seeds sprang up

And these seeds?

These seeds are still growing  
We are the seeds of generations  
We are the seeds that were planted in  
love and watered with knowledge  
We are the ones that will bring forth  
fruit for the future  
Our roots are deep and our history is  
long

We are the seeds  
The seeds of generations we are  
Seeds of generations  
Of generations  
The seeds of generations  
We are  
The seeds

*Sylvia Durham resides in Los Angeles, CA. She is cousin to Alicia and Takisha Brumfield*

Family Historian  
bettiegillyard@aol.com

**Family Reunions  
Mission:**

*To focus on the things that shape us rather than the circumstances that divide us; to strengthen and preserve family as God orders our steps. We value God's Plan, Family, Tradition, and Service.*

**We're on the Web!**  
gillyard-johnson-mahoney.com

Join our Gillyard-Johnson-Mahoney  
Family Reunion Group on  
Facebook

## On the Move!

Submitted by Glenda Terrell

Dr. Gretchen Gillyard Petterway has started a new Pediatric Medical practice at 1534 Elizabeth Street, Suite 300 in Shreveport. Gretchen is excited about being a part of Sutton Children's Pediatric Associates and offering her impressive pediatric credentials, to the community that is her home. Both Gretchen and her colleague, Dr. Capers received their medical degree from LSUHSC-Shreveport where they completed their internship and

residency.

The Clinic is now open and accepting new patients, Mon-Friday, 8:30 A.M. - 5:00 P.M., telephone (318) 681-7960.

## Team Leaders Corner

(Cont.d from page 1)

us could ever receive is Jesus Christ.

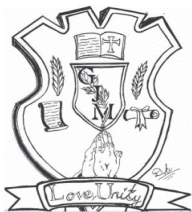
As we celebrate his birth by expressions of love and kindness, I hope that all of us will bring his light to those who have nothing and those that are forgotten or overlooked. Spread the spirit of giving beyond our family, our children and friends. Finally, as we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, let us be mindful; "For we are His workmanship, created

in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." (Ephesians 2:10).

I wish you all, Memories, Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Enjoy Your Blessings,

*Bettie*



**RECIPIENT NAME  
STREET ADDRESS  
ADDRESS 2  
CITY, ST ZIP CODE**