



THE BUFFALO SOLDIER

August 2020 Monthly Newsletter

SUPPORTING OUR COMMUNITY

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THANK YOU WILLIAMS-SONOMA

BG. Isaac Sandifer, Jr. Education Development

The 2020-21 School year is here and many students and families are still in need. On a very hot Tuesday, August 11th, the Buffalo Soldiers from Fort Bakersfield made 5 Backpack drops to 100 students in the southeast and the westside of the city of Bakersfield. These students attend pre-school, elementary, jr-high and high school. Even though our schools are engaged in distant, virtual learning, backpacks and supplies are still needed. All of the students were very grateful and excited to receive their backpacks.

The backpacks were donated by Williams-Sonoma, Inc. Lt. General Dee Slade, Major General Walt Slade and BG Isaac Sandifer were joined by Williams-Sonoma Administrative Assistant Megane Wilson who went to every site with us. The African American Network of Kern County along with the Buffalo Soldiers extend our thanks to Williams-Sonoma, Inc. for their generosity and willingness to assist students and families in our community. The backpack giveaway was covered on IMGRADIO by Gary Johnson. Mr. Johnson is the AANKC Chair of Media Communications.



FEEDING THOSE IN NEED

MG W. A. Slade Director of Communications

Millions of people can't afford food right now. We can't help all, but with the resources we have, we will help as many as we can. Due to the Coronavirus pandemic the demand for food assistance is rising at an alarming rate. The nation's food banks are being hit hard and there are shortages of both donated food and volunteer workers.

When Americans realized the gravity of the situation, they began stocking up on toilet paper, and food products and anything else they could get their hands on. Those in need of assistance are not just the elderly who can't get to the market or have the income to keep their pantries stocked, but youth of all ages who may have depended on school breakfast and lunch programs. Day care centers for young and old are in need of reliable sources of food.



During a severe pandemic, governments may find themselves overwhelmed and unable to provide timely assistance. Charities are facing shortages of their own. They rely on a volunteer labor force, that is heavily dependent on retirees. Older volunteers may be sheltering at home for their own health and safety, by choice or at the government's direction. Many organizations that donate large volumes of food may have shut down. Restaurants, hotels and grocery stores, which ordinarily share unsold inventory that is approaching its best-by date, have less to donate because their worried customers have been stripping the shelves bare.

The African American Network of Kern County and Its Buffalo Soldiers have partnered with companies like All Three Shuttle Service and Shar-on Corporation in delivering food to those in need. One of the first things



we had to do was identify people most at risk of Food Insecurity and being affected by the pandemic in terms of the ability to meet household food needs. Food insecurity encompasses more than hunger or a complete lack of food. It is defined as, "the lack of consistent access, quality and availability of food for an active, healthy life,"



- Overall rates of affected households have doubled, with one in five now reporting food insecurity.
- 17.4 percent of mothers with children ages 12 and under can't afford to feed their children enough to meet their needs, compared to 3.1 percent in 2018.
- The number of mothers with children ages 12 and under whose food supply ran out increased 170 percent.
- 34.5 percent of households with a child age 18 and under are food insecure, an increase of about 130 percent.

The impact on the health of our communities could be

tremendous. Lack of food can lead to psychological stress, poor health outcomes, chronic health conditions and malnutrition – especially for children and seniors. If adults don't have to worry about food, then they can concentrate on keeping the roof over their head and paying bills.

BPD GRADUATION CLASS



**1st Lieutenant
N. Renfro**

On the last day before the newest graduates of the Bakersfield Police Department's Police Academy were to be sent to active service, a panel of five people met with them to talk about what the citizens might expect from them. I, Lt. Nancy Renfro, was a member of the panel together with "T" Johnson, Raji

Brar, Patrick Jackson and Nadine Escalante. This was a four-hour conversation that was led by BPD Captain Clayton Madden and Captain Jason Matson.

What did we talk about for four hours? The conversation was quite personal for each of us. Captain Jason Matson began by telling us about himself. He grew up in Oildale and is the son of a Nigerian father whom he hasn't met and a Caucasian mother. Next came Captain Clayton Madden who also grew up in Bakersfield near Cottonwood Road. Both men went on to share some very personal information about themselves which set the tone for the rest of us. It was surprising and heartening to learn about these two men who seem so tough yet were able to share quite openly. Following them the panel members were asked to share something about themselves that would help the graduates feel that they came to know us. Each of us shared our story and then it was the graduates turn. That is when all of us began to find ourselves surprised by what we heard.

Several of the graduates were young women. They spoke about their struggles both at home and in the Academy to make themselves believe they could be cops. One young woman described her strenuous physical workouts before applying to the Academy. She knew she had to gain upper body strength in order to qualify. All the women had hair pulled back from their faces and secured in a short bun. They were mostly all in their mid-twenties. The women appeared proud and happy with determined looks on their faces. It was

obvious that the women and their male counterparts were friendly and shared experiences that created good and healthy bonds.

The young men were a varied group. Two were African American and three were Latino. The rest were Caucasian. It was very good to see some diversity in this class, though not enough. The youngest of these men is just twenty-one and his was the most compelling and memorable story. It seems he grew up with several siblings and a single mom who worked constantly to keep her family fed and cared for. This left this young man in charge of the younger ones. He spoke about a time when all the family had to eat was a 30 pound bag of rice so he cooked rice for breakfast, lunch and dinner for about a month. As soon as he was old enough, he began working. He managed to save \$10,00.00. Then his mom lost her job and was in danger of losing their home. He gave all his savings to his mother to save their home. He said he had given up a lot for his family including his childhood. Several of us were in tears. This young man has been mentored by Captain Clayton Madden and came from the Junior Police Academy to the official Academy. He now is a police officer with an understanding of many of the hardship's life can hold. He stated he hopes his experience will make him a good policeman. Nadine Escalante, a former probation officer, assured him that his earlier life has prepared him extraordinarily well for the duties ahead of him.



Time came for the panel members to ask questions of the graduates. Patrick Jackson, President of our local NAAPC, chose a graduate who told us he grew up and lives in Oildale. This young man is a tall, burly Caucasian and has a tough look.

Patrick asked the young man what he would say if his daughter came in and announced that she planned to marry a black man. This tough, burly guy stood up and put his hands on the shoulders of the 21-year-old graduate I described in the previous paragraph and said if the black guy was like this man, he would be happy and cheer. It was not the answer we expected and it brought a smile to our faces. Conversation about race was a large part of this discussion and was open and honest. There were no awkward moments and the openness was good for everyone involved.

Having this candid and personal conversation with the

Police Academy graduates provided an opportunity to share our common humanity. None of the graduates presented himself or herself as aching for a fight. The conversation was spontaneous and not at all scripted. The four hours flew by. The Academy had never done this before. The Bakersfield Police Department Captains brought up the George Floyd tragedy and both emphasized the need for all of the graduates to say something or intervene if they ever saw a superior, including the Chief, committing an act like the one that killed Mr. Floyd or any other heinous act. In addition, the BPD Captains indicated that they intend to have similar discussions including this or other citizen panels together with active patrol officers. The Captains suggested that those conversations might be different than with new graduates. Seasoned officers might well have had experiences that would elicit responses based on those experiences. I look forward to those discussions.

It was a very unique and memorable experience to be part of the panel and in talks so personal and candid. Speaking as people rather than police and citizens was gratifying and made me hopeful for the future of our Bakersfield Police Department. About six years ago then chief Greg Williamson stated that the department wanted to know how the city wants to be policed. So much has happened since he spoke those words including Bakersfield and Kern County being identified by The Guardian Newspaper as having the deadliest police in the country. The entire world has looked at the George Floyd incident and identified it for the horrific and inhuman abuse of power that it was. And the world is saying “NO MORE”. It appears we are in a time of significant change in law enforcement. It is our opportunity to have a voice in what that change might look like. There is much work to do. When I attended the event for the new Academy graduates, I asked for and received permission to wear my Buffalo Soldiers uniform. I am proud to represent and be a member of this amazing organization. We can have a voice in this process of change and speak for truth and justice. All of us in the Buffalo Soldiers share a love of community and a concern that justice isn’t always equal. Speaking to these incidents of injustice in a civil and truthful way will hopefully take us where we need to go to be the best we can be as a united community. Our beloved chaplain writes a column every month in our Buffalo Soldiers Newsletter. His is an example of the guidance and wisdom Bakersfield needs in order to move toward a better community. Hopefully this kind

of caring guidance can help our city come together and help our police show more of their humanity as they go about their complex duties. We need help with healing the many divisions so as to bring us together as it should be. These new graduates are being encouraged by their captains to show their humanity. How about that for a change in policing?!



Dee Slade - African American Network of Kern County

Congressman TJ Cox held a virtual awards ceremony to commemorate the 100th Anniversary of the 19th Amendment to the Constitution, granting women the right to vote. He recognized some amazing women of the Central Valley who advocate and break down barriers for themselves and for the generations of women to come.

His office received numerous community nominations, and the women listed below were chosen to be honored for their contributions to California’s 21st Congressional District:

Fresno County:

Angelita Echevez-Duran, Neighborhood Resource Center; Diana Hernandez, Head Start Riverdale; Reyna Rivera, City of Selma; Julie Mendoza, HOPE Sanger

Kern County:

Arleana Waller, MLK Community Initiative & She Power; Dee Slade, African American Network of Kern County; Mayra Helo-Trevino, Richland School District; Suzanne Villaruz, Delano Union School District

Kings County:

Fabiola De Caratachea, KCAO; Patricia Nolen, Corcoran Vice-Mayor; Amy Ward, Greater Kings County Chamber

Tulare County:

Elena Saldivar, Pixley Town Council

“RIGHTEOUSNESS EXALTS A NATION”



**Brigadier General
I. Sandifer Jr.**

The wise man Solomon wrote in Proverbs 14:34: “Righteousness Exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people.” “Righteousness” in this context means to do right by everyone whether it be to God or to one’s fellow man. It means to engage in a righteous administration of governance of a people as well

as the impartialness of racial, spiritual and moral equity between man and man. In essence, it simply means that Leaders are to do what is right and people are to do what is right. As an observation, this is what is missing in our American society today.

Please note the following two passages and reflect on the following question afterwards:

Proverbs 29:4 “By justice a king/ruler gives a country stability, but those who are greedy for bribes tear it down. (Do we see this today in our country?)

Proverbs 29:7 “The righteous care about justice for the poor, but the wicked have no such concern. (Do we see this today in our country?)

To some degree in our society, man has had a pattern of disrespecting God and mistreating others. Some people care very little about doing the right thing before God for they think that there will be no accountability. On the other hand, there are those who look down on others and mistreat them even systemically, because of their race, religious beliefs, socio-economic status, political views, where they live in a city and etc... We find ourselves engaging in the same social fights and challenges that existed 40 years ago and when will this stop? Will our grand-children and great grand-children be fighting the same battles when they become adults? Our society, our nation is weighed down with

iniquity....from the sole of the foot even to the head there is nothing sound in it. (Isaiah 1:4-6)

Being exalted as a nation in God’s sight does not come from having a great economic system, or great military power, or enhanced academia. It is when our Government Leaders, our Community Leaders, our Religious Leaders, our School Administration Leaders, our Law Enforcement Leaders and our people in our cities and communities do right by one another that we are exalted or lifted up. There is no exalting when we commit sin and do harm to each other for Solomon says:” but sin is reproach/disgrace to any people.”

It is this writer’s prayer that we all will do what Jeremiah the prophet said in Lamentations 3:40 “Let us examine and probe our ways, and let us return to the Lord.” In Hosea 12:6 we find these words: “Therefore, return to your God, observe kindness and justice and wait for your God continually.” It is imperative that our society return to God!

“RIGHTEOUSNESS EXALTS A NATION. BUT SIN IS A REPROACH TO ANY PEOPLE”

Brigadier General I. Sandifer, Jr., Chaplain
Ft. Bakersfield, Buffalo Soldiers



Buffalo Soldiers
an

“Each One Teach One, Partners In Progress”
program of the

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