

# MGM GRAND DETROIT

*Touching Communities. Touching Lives.™*

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## A century of excellence: Celebrating the Urban League of Detroit and Southeastern Michigan

By **Scott Talley**  
Special to the Michigan Chronicle

When it comes to milestones, it's tough to top a 100th anniversary and that is why 2016 has been an extra special year for the Urban League of Detroit and Southeastern Michigan.

Since 1916, the revered organization has addressed the changing needs of African Americans and other people seeking a better life in our region.

"We are the original 'Black Lives Matter' organization," said longtime president N. Charles Anderson. "We weren't called that, but that's the function we performed."

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- MGM Grand Detroit's "Jubilee" was a special event on many levels.
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- And much more!



# 2016 'Jubilee' celebration touches lives on many levels



Photo by Rogers William Foster

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On a hot, August day there was much going on at the back of MGM Grand Detroit's property and it was all good. The special occasion was MGM Grand Detroit's annual Summer Jubilee Team Member Appreciation Event.

Shade was hard to come by, as the temperature hovered in the neighborhood of 90 degrees, but not even the blistering sun could suppress the boundless energy and enthusiasm that was in the air. The program menu for MGM Grand Detroit's deserving team members included scrumptious cuisine, music to groove by, and an array of fun games, including game show styled contests that promoted company pride.

"It's good for employees to have a special day just for us, to be able to enjoy the beautiful weather, and even food, that's different from the cafeteria," said Abbie Brown, an eight-year MGM Grand Detroit team member who works in the Banquet department. "We always serve our guests, so it's good to serve the employees and I learned some things too."

Brown's discovery was the Food Bank of Eastern Michigan, which was a beneficiary of the Jubilee event. Throughout the day, MGM Grand Detroit team members

worked seamlessly together in assembly line fashion to pack more than 2,800 nutrition bags that would be distributed by the Flint-based nonprofit.

"I'm going to find out how I can help the agency more because I really enjoyed it," said Brown, who helped pack six boxes of nutrition bags while attending Jubilee in the morning.

Equally happy that Brown was able to participate and appreciative of all the MGM Grand Detroit volunteers was Kathleen Payton, sponsorship manager for the Food Bank of Eastern Michigan.

"When Dee Dee (McKinney Odom, director of Public Affairs) called us and said MGM Grand Detroit wanted to help our area we were so excited," said Payton, whose organization distributes food to more than 400 partner agencies in 22 counties. "What the MGM volunteers are doing today is typically what we would do in a week."

Another example of MGM Grand Detroit's community partnerships at the Jubilee event was the presence of three enthusiastic young ladies who had worked at MGM Grand Detroit during the summer as part of the Grow Detroit's Young Talent program, which MGM Grand Detroit proudly supports.

The trio included Alexandra Riley, who in between

packing nutrition bags and sampling refreshments at Jubilee, shared some of her experiences of assisting MGM Grand Detroit's lost-and-found, while working in the Security department

"I think MGM Grand Detroit was the best work site to be placed at," said Riley, who will be entering the Culinary Arts program at Schoolcraft College in the fall. "I would start at 9 each morning on the computer covering the entire casino and hotel, and most lost items are returned. I learned this summer that it takes a lot of people with many different skills to operate a place like this. I like to learn new things so this was a great place to be."

Along with the opportunity to celebrate and give back to the community, Jubilee also demonstrated the strong bonds shared by longtime team members.

"We're like a family, when one works we all work," said Michael Dean, who proudly joined several of his Count Team mates on the same line that packed several nutrition bags in the sun. "I felt like I was doing something for the city of Flint, so the day has gone very well.

"If everyone gets on the same page like we're doing today, the world will be a better place."

# Celebrating the Urban League (cont. from cover)



The Urban League's proud history backs up Anderson's words. When African Americans began to arrive in Detroit in mass numbers during the Great Migration, Urban League staff members were there to meet incoming trains from the South and assist the new arrivals with housing, education, employment and access to adequate health care facilities. The first men, women and children assisted by the Urban League would become the foundation for the black working class, and later black middle class in Detroit.

Today, the Urban League is still in the business of helping people in metropolitan Detroit live better lives through a variety of programs and initiatives including a workforce career development center; the operation of WIC offices, which provide supplemental food, nutrition education, and medical referrals based on health screening and needs assessment to eligible women, infants and children; and, training and enrichment efforts that benefit mature workers and students.

"We are not loud or boastful, but we're steady, and we steadily touch 12,000 to 14,000 people each month," said Anderson, who passionately makes it known that Urban League has a helping presence across our community including southwest Detroit, Dearborn, Oak Park, and the east and west sides of Detroit.

To assist in fulfilling its mission through the years, the Urban League of Detroit and Southeastern Michigan has established partnerships with organizations that share the Urban League's vision for our region, including MGM Grand Detroit.

"MGM Grand Detroit has proven to be a tremendous corporate citizen not only to the Urban League, but to a lot of nonprofit organizations in our region and we

appreciate what they contribute," Anderson said. "And the support is not just financial. MGM Grand Detroit has hosted events for us and also shared its talent. Dr. Juliette Okotie-Eboh (MGM Grand Detroit Senior Vice President of Public Affairs) has served on our board, and Dee Dee (McKinney-Odom, director of Public Affairs) is on our board now.

"As a nonprofit, we still have to have business savvy and business sense, so to have people like Juliette and Dee Dee lend their expertise from Corporate America is a tremendous benefit to everything we do."

This milestone 100th anniversary year has included a host of special fundraising events that will help keep the Urban League moving forward in our region for years to come, including the always-memorable "Distinguished Warriors Dinner," and a recent 25th annual golf outing at TPC Michigan Golf Course, which supported education.

"I believe in the Urban League because ultimately I



believe in Detroit," said Jason Tinsley, an executive at J.P. Morgan, who has a 15-year relationship with the organization and is the current board chairman for the Urban League of Detroit and Southeastern Michigan. "We are always trying to help as many people as we can and we want Detroiters that have been here to know that the Urban League has a plan for them. All Detroiters should know that our organization has their back. We have been doing it for 100 years and we're ready to do it for 100 more."

To learn more about the Urban League of Detroit and Southeastern Michigan, please visit [www.durbanleague.org](http://www.durbanleague.org).



# “Welcome Inside the World of

## Record summer for Grow Detroit’s Young Talent benefits area youth



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As a seasoned administrator, Dierk Hall is no stranger to crunching numbers, but recently one particular number had added significance for him.

The magic number was 8,157 and it represented the number of teens and young adults that were trained and found employment during this year’s Grow Detroit’s Young Talent (GDYT) program. The number exceeded a lofty goal of finding employment for 8,000 youth this year.

“It was a beautiful thing,” said Hall, president and CEO of City Connect Detroit, which worked alongside Detroit Employment Solutions Corporation and SER Metro to execute this year’s version of GDYT. “Our agencies have worked together for nine years, but our collaboration as equal implementation partners allowed us to expand the impact of the program and expand our outreach.”

GDYT is a citywide summer jobs program that employs young adults between the ages of 14 and 24 for six weeks in July and August. All participants are permanent Detroit residents.

In addition to the total number of participants, there are two other program-related numbers that bring a smile to Hall’s face.

“All participants received 120 hours of paid experience and 20 hours of training,” said Hall, when describing the full objective of the program. “The training component is very important, and each participant received a training workbook, which contained information about future employment.”

Past jobs worked by GDYT participants include community cleanups, event planning, accounting, and working with the Director of Youth Services for the City of Detroit. Included among the 2016 job sites was MGM Grand Detroit.

“I learned different aspects of the business world and how I can apply them to my career,” said Aisha Dean, who spent the summer in MGM Grand Detroit’s Sales department.

Like Dean, Brandie Brown enjoyed her work assignment and the people she worked with at MGM Grand Detroit.

“It’s a great company to work for and the people I worked with were fun,” said Brown, who worked in Human Resources and had a chance to reflect on her summer experience during MGM Grand Detroit’s Jubilee Team Member Appreciation Event.

Hall expressed his appreciation for MGM Grand Detroit as a work site provider, and as a sponsor of the overall program.

“MGM Grand Detroit contributed to the program’s success in two key ways,” Hall said. “They provided training and work experience for 11 young people. And MGM Grand Detroit also has helped us tremendously as a point of leverage. MGM is seen as major player in Detroit and the region, and with them at the table since Day 1, other dollars have come into play from other partners through the years.”

While elated by the success of this year’s program, Hall says the full benefits will not be realized for years to come.

“Research supports the long-term benefits of youth employment,” Hall said. It’s a proven fact that young people who are engaged in the world of work have higher graduation rates and youth violence is also reduced.

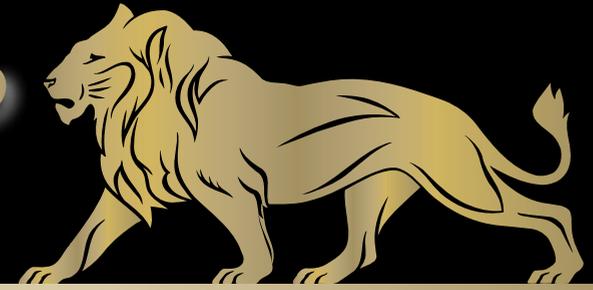
“A summer gig is important—it’s valuable—and all of our supporters can take pride in knowing their dollars and support are laying the seeds for future progress.”

To learn more about the agencies referenced in this article, please visit [www.gdyt.org](http://www.gdyt.org), [www.cityconnectdetroit.org](http://www.cityconnectdetroit.org), [www.descmiworks.com](http://www.descmiworks.com), and [www.sermetro.org](http://www.sermetro.org).



**All smiles due to a productive summer:** The 2016 Grow Detroit’s Young Talent class included three industrious young ladies that worked at MGM Grand Detroit. Listed from left to right with the departments they worked in this summer are: Alexandra Riley (Security), Brandie Brown (Human Resources) and Aisha Dean (Sales).

# MGM Grand Detroit™



## Getting to Know: John Green

### When did you join MGM Grand Detroit?

I started my journey with MGM Grand Detroit on September 7, 2007.

### What is your job title and primary job duties?

I am a valet services attendant and my primary duties consist of parking and retrieving guest vehicles in a timely manner issuing 5-star service, while meeting Forbes (Travel Guide) standards.

### What do you most enjoy about your job?

I mostly enjoy meeting people and satisfying guest's requests and complaints. I am very passionate about my position with the company and my goal is to never let a guest leave unsatisfied.

### What makes MGM Grand Detroit special?

MGM Grand Detroit is a diversified company and it is special because the company maintains its property, takes care of its workers and makes sure each interaction with guests is memorable. MGM Grand Detroit strides to maintain our Forbes 4-Star rating, while instilling in team members the desire to provide 5-Star service daily. I am MGM Grand smart and I am proud to be a part of this company. I welcome more people around the world to enjoy MGM Grand Detroit and the outstanding service we have to offer them.

## Providing the highest level of service:

Did you know that MGM Grand Detroit's hotel and Immerse Spa are the only Detroit hotel and spa to appear on the 2016 Forbes Travel Guide Four-Star Hotels and Spa lists? Only properties that meet Forbes' hospitality standards — the most stringent in the industry — achieve a Four Star rating.



**Forbes**  
TRAVEL GUIDE





*Programming for children is one of the many ways Franklin Wright Settlements has provided essential services for more than 135 years.*

# Standing the test of time: MGM Grand Detroit salutes Franklin-Wright Settlements

**By Scott Talley**

Special to the Michigan Chronicle

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Helping the community help itself is what Franklin-Wright Settlements Inc. is all about, and in an era where the next great thing is often touted, Franklin-Wright Settlements stands out by demonstrating its value to our region for more than 135 years.



“Franklin Wright Settlements is a human services agency addressing the needs of families in virtually every aspect of support,” says Monique Marks, president and CEO of the proud human service agency, whose roots date back to 1881. “We offer family and individual therapy, housing assistance, senior citizen care, after-school and tutorial services, an annual college tour and a host of other services to assist families.”

While proud of its long history of service, Marks says the need for community resources remains strong, which makes the role of Franklin-Wright Settlements critical to our community.

“Now more than ever, families that are challenged

economically need as much help and support that we can give,” said Marks, whose organization’s values are based on the settlement house concept of “self-help for the continuous improvement and preservation of the family.”

Last year Franklin-Wright Settlements further served notice that it would be a major part of Detroit’s resurgence by purchasing the former YouthVille Detroit property at 7375 Woodward in Midtown.

“The acquisition of YouthVille by Franklin Wright Settlements will have a huge impact on our community,” Marks said. “This purchase gives us greater access to Tech Town and Wayne State University and expands our footprint for service delivery in a major way.

“We now have a direct connection to the cultural and educational hub of Detroit. The exposure for our children and the partnerships we create will have a lasting impact.”

As Marks and her team welcomes new partners that will enhance their programming, they also are grateful for longtime supporters like MGM Grand Detroit.

“We are incredibly thankful for the generosity of MGM,” Marks said. “They have allowed us to distribute clothing, backpacks and supplies to school children. MGM also consistently supports our annual Spirit of Giving dinner.

“MGM Grand Detroit has been a wonderful and generous corporate sponsor allowing Franklin-Wright Settlements to meet and exceed our mission to help the child, strengthen the community and preserve families. Their generosity allows us to be an important part of vulnerable families lives in very helpful ways. Our work is resource driven and we are very grateful that MGM Grand contributes to our mission on a consistent basis.”

Marks also invites the general public to support the



mission of Franklin-Wright Settlements by volunteering, donating goods, or simply writing a check of any amount. All contributions are appreciated and tax deductible. For more information on how you can support Franklin Wright Settlements, please call 313 579 1000 and ask for Ahmed Nassar or visit the organization online at [franklinwright.org](http://franklinwright.org).



# Wright Gala will showcase music while raising funds for one of Detroit's cultural gems



History is located at 315 E. Warren in Detroit's Cultural District. To learn more about the Museum, including how to make a contribution and how to attend this year's Gala on Oct. 8, please visit [thewright.org](http://thewright.org). or call 313-494-5800.

*The entertainment and glitz of The Wright Gala supports Museum initiatives that enrich all segments of our community, including children.*

**By Scott Talley**  
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First-class entertainment for a worthy cause is what our community has come to expect from The Wright Gala, and the 2016 edition of this event, which benefits the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History, will take place Oct. 8.

"The theme of this year's gala, 'Music On My Mind,' invites attendees to experience and enjoy the transformative power of music with an array of outstanding musical entertainment," says Juanita Moore, president and CEO of The Wright Museum. "Following the museum's 50th anniversary in 2015, this year's gala focuses its attention and fundraising efforts on the museum's next 50 years.

Since 2011, The Wright Gala has become a signature event and one of the most important fundraisers for The Wright Museum, which is the world's largest institution dedicated to the African American experience.

Last year's 50th anniversary Gala was the Museum's most successful fundraiser ever, raising \$1.8 million during an extravaganza at the Detroit Marriott Renaissance Center. This year's Gala will be presented at The Wright Museum and to build on last

year's success organizers welcome new supporters, while being most thankful for the support of longtime community partners, like MGM Grand Detroit.

"MGM Grand Detroit has been a steadfast supporter of the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History and The Wright Gala, being a significant sponsor each year since its inception," Moore said. "MGM's support is especially significant as it helps fund the museum's ongoing educational and outreach programs, including five weeks of Camp Africa. This free summer camp is specifically tailored for children from families that might not otherwise have the resources to enroll their children in summer programs, including low-income households and those in homeless shelters. Camp Africa engages children, ages 7 - 12, in S.T.E.A.M. (science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics) activities that contribute towards their holistic educational advancement."

The comments of Moore also speak to the Museum's full value to our community. In addition to housing nationally recognized exhibits and a vast collection of artifacts and archival materials, the Wright Museum provides ongoing community programming which aligns with the institution's mission "to open minds and change lives through the exploration and celebration of African American history and culture."

The Charles H. Wright Museum of African American



2016 WRIGHT GALA

THE NEXT 50 YEARS

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2016

THE WRIGHT MUSEUM 315 EAST WARREN DETROIT, MI

7:00 PM TO MIDNIGHT

# MUSIC ON MY MIND

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