

# MGM GRAND DETROIT

*Touching Communities. Touching Lives.™*

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## MGM Grand Detroit: United by a mission to serve our neighbors and region

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

“Touching Communities. Touching Lives.” More than a catchy, copyrighted phrase, MGM Grand Detroit and its team members have attempted to make these words matter for the betterment of our city and region since MGM Grand Detroit opened its doors on July 29, 1999.

One of the most impactful ways that MGM Grand Detroit touches communities and lives in our area is through the MGM Resorts Foundation.

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- Grants from MGM Resorts Foundation help fuel vital nonprofits across our region
- MGM Grand Detroit maintains strong bond with the proud city of Flint
- Charles Thomas redirects young lives positively through Results Mentoring
- And much more!



# The MGM Grand Detroit family will never forget our friends in Flint



**By Scott Talley**

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The cities of Detroit and Flint have had a special relationship for a long time. Separated by roughly 70 miles, both cities are strongly associated with the automobile industry, and for decades there has been a friendly debate over which city produces the best high school basketball players.

But most important, both cities are known for having compassionate people, and therefore it is not surprising that many Detroit residents and organizations have come to the aid of Flint during the Flint water crisis.

The effort to assist our friends in Flint has included a special partnership between the Flint Campus of Triumph Church and MGM Grand Detroit.

“We’ve had a longstanding relationship with MGM

Grand Detroit, including MGM sponsoring a basketball camp we present with Randy Henry, which focuses on athletic and life skills for youth,” said Cedric Scott, a Triumph Church member who also serves as director of communications “So when MGM saw the news reports that were coming out about the water crisis, they quickly called to see how they could assist. MGM was actually one of the first calls we received.”

As a result, MGM Grand Detroit donated and transported truckloads of bottled water to Flint residents that were in need.

“With the help of MGM Grand Detroit we were able to quickly mobilize and provide resources people and their families needed from day one,” Scott said. “By being able to quickly mobilize we could subsidize the assistance that people weren’t getting from the government. People have various needs for water and this allowed them to maintain their day-to-day lifestyles, without having to

wait days for verification and approval after filling out forms.”

Scott said the good people of Flint are most thankful for all the support they have received from Detroit and the world. However, he said serious concerns still remain and that Flint should remain in all of our thoughts.

“The issue that we are encountering is that many people simply do not trust the government,” Scott said. “We were told the water was safe to drink at a time when it was not. Therefore, people still have a mistrust of the government, and there are still a lot of people who will not drink even with water filters.

“The need has decreased to some degree, but we’re still distributing water. We feel it’s the right thing to do until all pipes are replaced.”

Scott said individuals or organizations in Detroit that are interested in donating water to Flint through Triumph Church can do so at any Detroit Triumph Church campus. For a list of locations, please visit [www.triumphch.org](http://www.triumphch.org).



# MGM Grand Detroit: United by a mission to serve ... (cont. from cover)



**What's in a name?** Everything if the names represent vital nonprofit organizations that MGM Grand Detroit team members are able to support through the MGM Resorts Foundation.



Combining charitable contributions and volunteerism, the MGM Resorts Foundation engages MGM Grand Detroit's team members' resources and talents to address community issues and change lives.

Team members can direct their contributions or time to the social cause of their choice, a general community-grant fund, or a local United Way Chapter. In turn, the MGM Resorts Foundation assures that 100 percent of all donations support charities and organizations that address critical needs in our region.

Community organizations across our area were recently notified that their grant requests will be supported by MGM Grand Detroit. These announcements are not done to generate big headlines, instead the opportunity to make a quiet, but significant contribution to our community is what matters most.

"I thank MGM Grand Detroit so much for awarding us a grant," said Beth O'Connor, director of programs



for Big Brothers Big Sisters of Metropolitan Detroit. "This enables us to support youth in our community by providing them with a mentor. We know that 1-to-1 mentoring is proven to provide that something extra so youth are less likely to engage in risky behavior, and more likely to do better in school, and graduate.

"This is a mutually beneficial relationship. Our mentors will tell you that they get as much out of the relationship as their mentees do. MGM Grand Detroit is helping to change lives for the better, forever."



Michigan, Greening of Detroit, National Kidney Foundation of Michigan, Neighborhood Services Organization, Mariners Inn and St. Vincent and Sarah Fisher Center just to name a few.

However, along with supporting nonprofit organizations that have earned our community's trust through their successful track records, MGM Grand Detroit team members, through the Resorts Foundation, also try to identify programs that make an impact in areas that may otherwise not be addressed without the program's existence.

For example, a recent grant to the Midnight Golf Program (MGP) has really nothing to do with the classic game, but everything to do with putting local youth on a successful career path. The grant supports the MGP High School to Career Pipeline Program, which partners with universities and corporations seeking to grow and diversify their student bodies

and workforces. The program delivers a unique, early opportunity for the partner companies to actually vet potential employees through internship experiences beginning as early as a student's senior year in high school.



Upon completion of the high school portion of the Midnight Golf Program all students are automatically transitioned into the Pipeline, which is expected to increase college matriculation and subsequent graduation rates for students from Detroit and our surrounding communities.

"MGM Grand Detroit has been a consistent supporter of Midnight Golf and all the ways we attempt to develop youth for a number of years," said Reneé Fluker, MGP founder and president. "The support from individuals and entities that believe in our mission is the only way MGP exists."

And belief in our community is something that all MGM Grand Detroit team members share when providing support to the MGM Resorts Foundation.

"The way we give back is something we continue to work at and refine," said Dee Dee McKinney Odom, director of Public Affairs at MGM Grand Detroit. "It is definitely not a top-down initiative—it's something we share and value equally. We are proud of all the community partners that we support through contributions and volunteer efforts and we take enormous pride in all the good that they do. In that way they allow us to fulfill a very important mission."



# “Welcome Inside the World of

## Getting to Know: Jenifer Hughes



**When did you join MGM Grand Detroit?** 2012

**What is your job title?**

I am the food and beverage supervisor of the Roasted Bean-Detroit and Breeze Dining Court

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

I enjoy the diversity of the employees and the challenges that I have experienced since I have accepted this position. All of my duties were new at first, including running the coffee shop, but it's been fun learning everything.

**You also are known for volunteering your time out in our community with other MGM Grand Detroit team members. Why do you volunteer?**

At one time I had needs and there were people who had to step up to help me and that is how I got to where I am today. Volunteering is my form of gratitude to help people in the way I was helped.

**What are some of the volunteer activities that you most enjoy?**

Helping with the Covenant House (a sanctuary for homeless children and youth) would be my favorite. Also anything else involving children—Count Day school visits, passing out winter coats, serving lunch—just anything that helps kids.

**You also are the chairperson of MGM Grand Detroit's African American Employee Network. What is the function of that group?**

It's a lot of employment engagement to help employees get involved and the group also helps to enhance personal development. Those are things I want to do for others and myself at MGM Grand Detroit.



## Uncovering the genius of our own youth:

MGM Grand Detroit was proud to take a group of bright, engaging students from Detroit Public Schools to see “Hidden Figures,” which tells the story of three African American female mathematicians—Katherine Johnson (played by Taraji P. Henson), Dorothy Vaughan (played by Octavia Spencer) and Mary Jackson (played by Janelle Monáe) who worked at NASA during the Space Race. The brilliant Detroit students that went on our movie field trip represented Ben Carson High School of Science and Medicine, Cass Technical High School, Burton International Academy and Gompers Elementary-Middle School.

After the movie, our students were given a “Hidden Figures” quiz and in the last question the students were asked what they aspired to be? Following is a small sampling of the responses to our last question. Please join us in wishing the students listed below and all of the students that went on our field trip continued success, as they pursue their dreams and aspirations.

**Future aspirations of Ben Carson High School of Science and Medicine students that watched “Hidden Figures” with MGM Grand Detroit team members**

**Kyan Byers**, Nurse

**Emily Shelton**, Surgeon

**Olivia Ervin**, Mechanical Engineer in the Navy

**Mona Almathrahi**, Pulmonary Doctor  
**Tayebah Chowdhury**, Obstetrician-Gynecologist

**Mahbuba Miah**, Biomedical Engineer

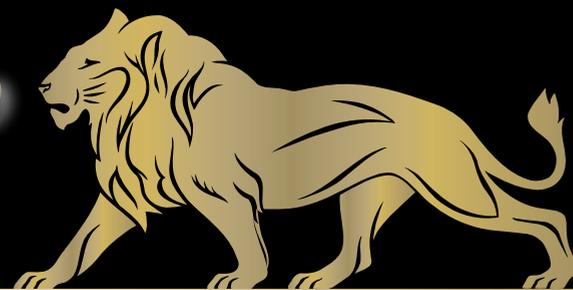
**Alexis Williams**, Physical Therapist

**Jaya Pullen**, Dentist or Pharmacist

**Madison Lee**, Musician

**Anita Evans**, The person who sits at the table as a participant, instead of the woman leaning on the wall as an observer.

# MGM Grand Detroit



## Honoring a proud musical legacy:

Did you know MGM Grand Detroit was a sponsor of the 13th annual “Black WOMEN Rock!”? The event, founded by the celebrated poet and Detroit’s own, Jessica CARE Moore, took place March 18 at the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History. “Black Women Rock!” is a grand celebration of black women in rock music and culture. The theme of this year’s event was Black WOMEN Rock REBEL WOMEN and honored the 50th anniversary of the 1967 Detroit Rebellion. Performers included Tamar-kali, Navasha Daya, Jessie Wagner, Steffanie Christ’ian, Zakiya Harris, Divinity Roxx and more. More than a one-night performance, “Black Women Rock!” is described by its founder as “an international movement of women of color who play music, raise children and create institutions around their art.”



# Through Results Mentoring, Charles Thomas helps youth see the 'light'



By Scott Talley

Special to the Michigan Chronicle  
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If you speak to Charles Thomas for just a brief time it becomes immediately apparent that he is a gentleman. “Yes sir,” “no sir” are staples in Mr. Thomas’ dialogue.

However, if you want to see him get worked up, start talking negatively about our youth.

“If you keep describing our youth as the lost generation, what are you saying about our future?” asks Thomas in a passionate tone that conveys his disdain for that type of blanket characterization. “You have to look deeper at our kids.”

Through his nonprofit Results Mentoring, Thomas is indeed part of the solution when it comes to working with youth. The mission of Results Mentoring “is to provide world class mentoring, monitoring, tutorial and redirection services that make a difference” in the lives of young people and their families.

When Thomas discusses the nonprofit’s “redirection” services, he gets right down to the core of the matter. The services address anger management, rechanneling negative energy, behavioral services and more,

with the goal of keeping young people out of the penal system.

“We deal with anger being one letter from danger and they come to understand the importance of decision making because a bad decision can cost you your life or your freedom,” said Thomas, who uses a tried and tested six-week boot camp program to redirect lives. “You can’t talk your way out of a problem that your behavior got you into. You have to behave your way out.

“We have to separate the person from what they were trying to be to help

them become the person they really want to be. It becomes the real person versus the clown—character versus reputation—and they come to realize on their own that the other person, the clown, has to die.”

Requirements of the boot camp include getting a hair cut, wearing military fatigues and boots, physical training, learning “the ways of the sir,” ongoing mentoring and more.

“It has to be impactful, strategic and most of all it has to be real,” said Thomas, who started mentoring youth while he was coaching Police Athletic League football in 1999 at the request of parents that were having trouble with their children at home and in school. “I care so much about the youth I work with because I was them. I was thrown out of all Detroit Public Schools at the age of 15. I dropped out and hit the streets. And then for a time on the streets I had it all and lost it all.”

Today, Thomas is the proud holder of a master’s degree, which by no means came easily, so he speaks from personal experience when he stresses education and perseverance. As Thomas goes about the work of helping young people in our community, who are very much like he was, Thomas said he is most appreciative of his nonprofit’s community partners, including MGM Grand Detroit.



“MGM Grand Detroit allows us to be able to do our six-week boot camps at no cost for parents and schools that are struggling with at-risk youth,” said Thomas, who works primarily with young people between the ages of eight and 16.

Thomas has many success stories to share, including seeing students go from less than a one-point grade point average to the honor roll, but his work is never done.

“For the kids, I’m here until the light comes on and then I’m still here,” Thomas promises.

And since starting Results Mentoring, more than 2,000 young people and their families have found Thomas to be a man of his word. To learn more about Results Mentoring, headquartered in Eastpointe, please visit [www.resultsmentoring.org](http://www.resultsmentoring.org).



**RESULTS**  
MENTORING

# An evening to remember: 39th Annual Classical Roots Celebration



By Scott Talley

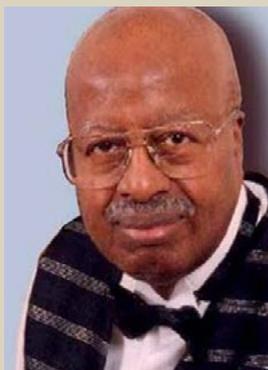
Special to the Michigan Chronicle

MGM Grand Detroit has the unique opportunity to sponsor some of the most highly-anticipated cultural and arts events in our region and that certainly was the case earlier this month when MGM Grand Detroit was a sponsor of the 39th Annual Classical Roots Celebration at Orchestra Hall.

Started by the Detroit Symphony Orchestra by the urging of the late Brazeal Dennard, founder of the Brazeal Dennard Chorale, "the mission of the Classical Roots Celebration is to increase awareness of the contributions of African-American composers and musicians through performance and recordings, and to support increased opportunities for African-Americans in classical music through the DSO's African-American Composer Residency, Emerging Composer Program, and African-American Fellowship."

Classical Roots also honors African-American composers, musicians, and educators for lifetime achievement and this year's honorees were extra special: Grammy Award-winning trumpeter Terence Blanchard, who local fans also know as the regular host of the Paradise Jazz series; and, Detroit's own Regina Carter, considered the foremost jazz violinist of her generation.

The two musical giants were not only honored, but



*The Late Brazeal Dennard*

they performed beautiful, brilliant, stirring music at different points of the program. While Blanchard and Carter (the pride of Cass Tech) brought the star power, it also was fitting that the person who initially envisioned this celebration be represented in some way, and he was through today's version of the Brazeal Dennard Chorale.

"The Brazeal Dennard Chorale had an opportunity to perform a world premier piece by Terrance Blanchard, 'Detroit 67,' said Yvonne Turner, a soprano, who also serves as the Chorale's executive director. "This piece resonated in the hearts and minds of the Chorale. Many of the Chorale members were in Detroit during this turbulent time, so as the piece was performed they had their own experiences to pull from. For those who did not live through this, they were able to gain insight to what had taken place in July 1967. The orchestration and video reminded us, as a city, how far we've come and how far we have to go."

And like Blanchard and Carter, the Chorale received nothing but love from an adoring audience.

"When the performance concluded we were greeted with a standing ovation and thunderous applause," Turner said. "I enjoyed this performance mainly because we, the Chorale and the Orchestra painted a vivid portrait of what took place that year and how we were able to live through it and rebuild our communities while moving forward.



*Yvonne Turner*

"Thanks to MGM Grand Detroit as a sponsor and longtime supporter of the arts we are able to continue to keep this legacy of music alive and vibrant in the city of Detroit."



*Regina Carter*



*Terence Blanchard*

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