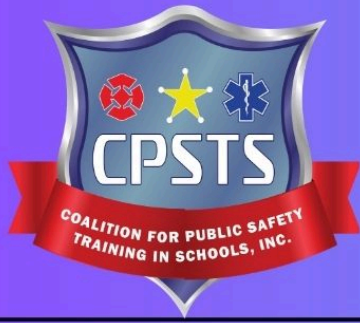




THE COALITION CHRONICLES NEWSLETTER

“PATHWAYS TO SERVICE”



**AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH
TOGETHER WE THRIVE**



**AUTISM: EMBRACE UNIQUENESS
FOSTER UNDERSTANDING**

The Coalition for Public Safety Training in School, Inc. (CPSTS) is in support of Eric Blessed Carpenter-Grantham, and the bill passing of Eric's ID Law.

In the heart of Maryland, a young man named Eric Blessed Carpenter-Grantham was on a mission. At just 20 years old, he was not just a college student pursuing a dual degree in General Studies with a focus on Political Science and Media Production; he was also a passionate advocate for those with invisible disabilities like his own.

From an early age, Eric faced challenges that many could hardly fathom. Diagnosed as high-functioning autistic, he navigated a world that often misunderstood

him. His memories of bullying and isolation at school lingered, and a traumatic experience from his childhood, heart bypass surgery at just 11, shaped his resilience. As he grew older, the shame that once clouded his identity transformed into a proud acceptance of who he was.

Fueled by his experiences and the worries of his mother, Linda Carpenter-Grantham, Eric felt a stirring mission to create a safer environment for individuals with invisible disabilities. The catalyst for his advocacy came in the wake of George Floyd's tragic death, which left a profound mark on society and prompted conversations about systemic issues, including those affecting marginalized communities. Linda's fears for Eric's safety only intensified with each news report, igniting a flame within him to instigate change.

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Eric's ID Law was born. A proposed Maryland legislation that would allow individuals with invisible disabilities to voluntarily add a marker to their state ID. This small but significant symbol would signal to law enforcement and others that the person might need special assistance or understanding during interactions. Eric envisioned a future where individuals like himself would feel seen and protected, rather than judged or misunderstood.

With the support of his mother and a growing team of allies, Eric embarked on a journey that was both daunting and exhilarating. He passionately shared his story with anyone who would listen, attending community forums, reaching out to local politicians, and networking with organizations that championed disability rights. He spoke with raw honesty about his struggles and triumphs, framing his narrative not just as a personal battle, but as a broader call for empathy and awareness.



After relentless efforts, discussions, and negotiations, the moment finally arrived. On May 13, 2025, Governor Wes Moore signed Eric's ID Law into effect. The sense of triumph was overwhelming as Eric stood with his supporters, witnessing the fruit of his labor transform into reality. The law officially took effect on October 1st, and with it, the hope of safer, more inclusive interactions for countless Marylanders began to unfold.



As news of the law spread, there was a tangible excitement. Over 17,717 Marylanders proudly donned the ERIC's Butterfly Logo on their state IDs, a symbol of recognition and safety for those with invisible disabilities. Each badge represented a life touched by Eric's tireless fight.

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Each one is a testimony to his belief that everyone deserves understanding.

Reflecting on his journey, Eric felt a sense of fulfillment. What started as a young man's personal struggle had blossomed into a movement that empowered others. With gratitude in his heart, he continued to advocate for those who were often overlooked, reminding the world that strength lies in unity and that even the smallest voices can create monumental change.

Eric celebrates Autism Awareness Month every April with his Blue Runway Fashion Show sponsored by Macy's. Eric's models are from the autism and invisible disability communities, which truly marks a special moment. Eric is truly a hero! His passion, dedication, and unwavering support inspire everyone around him, proving that true beauty lies in authenticity and inclusion. As he takes to the stage each year, he not only showcases fashion but also fosters understanding and acceptance, lighting a path for others to follow. In this celebration of diversity, Eric reminds us all that we are stronger together, and every step taken on that runway paves the way for a brighter, more inclusive future for all.



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APRIL MONTHLY AWARENESS NATIONAL LIBRARY WEEK AND SCHOOL LIBRARY MONTH

TURNING PAGES, OPENING DOORS: CELEBRATING LIBRARIES THIS APRIL

Each April, we celebrate two powerful reminders of how knowledge shapes our lives: National Library Week and School Library Month. While they may not always make headlines, libraries continue to be some of the most important and accessible resources in our communities.

Think about the first time a young person walks into a library. It may seem like just a room filled with books, but it is so much more. It is a place where curiosity is welcomed, where questions are encouraged, and where imagination is free to grow. During School Library Month, we especially recognize the role school libraries play in shaping students' academic success, critical thinking, and creativity. They are safe spaces where students can explore ideas, discover new interests, and build confidence in their learning.

National Library Week extends that celebration to the broader community. Public libraries are hubs of opportunity, offering not only books but also technology access, tutoring programs, career resources, and community events. In an increasingly digital world, libraries continue to bridge gaps, ensuring that everyone, regardless of background, has access to information and tools for success.



For young people, libraries can also be a first line of defense in learning how to navigate information safely and responsibly. From researching school projects to understanding how to identify reliable sources, libraries help build skills that protect against misinformation and empower informed decision-making.

Over the month of April, let's take a moment to visit our local or school library. Encourage our youth to check out a book, attend a program, or simply explore. Here at CPSTS, we believe that every book opened is a door unlocked and every library visit is a step toward a brighter, more informed future.

APRIL MONTHLY AWARENESS FINANCIAL LITERACY MONTH,



BUILDING GENERATIONAL WEALTH STARTS NOW

April is recognized as Financial Literacy Month, a time to focus on the knowledge and habits that can shape not just our financial future but the future of generations to come.

Financial literacy is more than budgeting or saving; it is about understanding how money works and using it wisely to create stability and opportunity. Generational wealth begins with simple, consistent steps: spending with intention, saving regularly, avoiding unnecessary debt, and investing for the long term. These practices, when passed down and modeled for younger generations, create a cycle of financial empowerment.

Equally important is education. Teaching youth about credit, banking, investing, and entrepreneurship equips them with the tools to make informed decisions early in life. Open conversations about money within families and communities help break cycles of financial uncertainty and replace them with knowledge and confidence.

Building wealth does not happen overnight, but it does begin with awareness and action. This Financial Literacy Month, let's commit to learning, sharing, and growing together. Because when we build strong financial foundations today, we create lasting legacies for tomorrow.

CPSTS AROUND THE COMMUNITY

THE ULTIMATE HBCU EXPERIENCE

CPSTS proudly joined the community as a featured vendor for the Ultimate HBCU Experience, a dynamic and inspiring event designed to connect, empower, and prepare the next generation of scholars. Hosted by Parks & Recreation M-NCPPC in Brandywine, Maryland, the day was filled with energy, opportunity, and purpose.



Youth ages 13 and up engaged in interactive workshops, connected with college representatives, enjoyed special guest appearances, and received prizes, giveaways, and a complimentary lunch. The event created a powerful space for students to envision their future and take meaningful steps toward higher education.

“At CPSTS, we believe exposure creates opportunity. Being part of events like the Ultimate HBCU Experience allows us to meet young people where they are, inspire where they are going, and equip them with the knowledge to get there,” said Mr. Williams Taylor, one of the Founders of CPSTS. “I am honored to be here today and share in the experience.”



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CPSTS AROUND THE COMMUNITY

TURNER MEMORIAL AME CHURCH GOOD FRIDAY COMMUNITY DAY

Turner Memorial AME Church brought the community together in a spirit of fellowship and celebration with its Good Friday Community Day. Families gathered to enjoy a free fish fry, where neighbors connected over great food, laughter, and shared moments of unity. The event also featured a lively Easter egg hunt, bringing joy and excitement to children as they searched for treats and surprises.

“Community is at the heart of everything we do. This fish fry is more than a meal, it is an opportunity to nourish relationships, celebrate togetherness, and remind everyone that they are seen, valued, and loved,” said Mrs. Tonya Sweat, Deputy Executive Director for CPSTS.

Mrs. Sweat continues by sharing, “It is amazing and heartwarming to be here and witness all the behind-the-scenes preparation. Especially during these times, it is very encouraging to see that the people in our community continue to have a heart to serve.”

The day served as a reminder of the church’s ongoing commitment to uplifting the community, not just spiritually, but through meaningful outreach that brings people together in love and support.





PLEASE JOIN
THE COALITION FOR PUBLIC SAFETY
TRAINING IN SCHOOLS, INC.

IN PRESENTING

NextGen

Public Safety Youth Expo



INSPIRING OUR YOUTH FROM FOSTER CARE
AND THE BROADER COMMUNITY TO
PURSUE CAREERS IN PUBLIC SAFETY



Saturday, May 30, 2026

Largo/Kettering/Perrywood Community Center

431 Watkins Park Drive

11:00 am - 2:00 pm

(Check-in starts @ 10:30 am)



Seminars and Demonstrations from Public Safety Experts
in the Motor and K-9 Units, Fire Services, EMS and More...
Mental Wellness for Parents

FREE FOOD & LIVE DJ!

Register Here
Ages 15-25:



Contact Information:
info@cpsts.org or
Karen McConnell-Jones
202-904-1000

<https://zfrmz.com/a6ZN7s2lfCu12DY6R4yW>



ON THE WATCH WITH CPSTS PUBLIC SAFETY TIPS

Identity Theft: Don't Be Fooled!

Identity theft is less about “hackers in hoodies” and more about everyday slips, lost mail, weak passwords, or a convincing phone call. The good news: a few consistent habits go a long way.

Protect your personal information:

- Don't share your Social Security number, banking info, or passwords unless you initiated the contact and trust the source.
- Shred documents with personal data before tossing them.
- Be cautious on social media, details like your birthday, school, or pet's name can be used to guess security questions.

Strengthen your accounts:

- Use strong, unique passwords for each account (a password manager helps).
- Turn on two-factor authentication (2FA) wherever possible.
- Avoid using public Wi-Fi for banking or shopping unless you're using a secure connection (like a VPN).

Watch out for scams:

- Be skeptical of urgent calls, texts, or emails claiming to be from banks, government agencies, or even family members.
- Don't click unknown links or download unexpected attachments.
- Remember: legitimate organizations won't pressure you for sensitive info on the spot.

Monitor your finances:

- Check bank and credit card statements regularly for unfamiliar charges.
- Review your credit report for free at [AnnualCreditReport.com](https://www.annualcreditreport.com).
- Consider setting up account alerts for transactions.

Add extra protection:

- Place a fraud alert or credit freeze with the major credit bureaus: Equifax, Experian, and TransUnion.
- Secure your mailbox, consider a locked box, or prompt mail pickup.

Protect your devices:

- Keep your phone and computer updated with the latest security patches.
- Install apps only from trusted sources and review permissions.

Bottom line: Stay alert, verify before you trust, and monitor regularly. Identity theft often succeeds because it catches people off guard. Your awareness is your first line of defense.



CPSTS MONTHLY IMPACT REPORT

Scholarship Committee Report

April 15, 2026

The Scholarship Class Updates:

	Class Start Date	School District	Registered	Completed	Comments
1.	9/15/2025	AACPS	24	16.1	
2.	10/13/2025	PGCPS	30	19	
3.	10/27/2025	AACPS	33	17	
4.	11/10/2025	PGCPS	28	28	
5.	12/1/2025	PGCPS	31	31	
6.	1/5/2026	PGCPS	32	24	
7.	1/20/2026	PGCPS	24	14	
		AACPS	8	6	
8	2/17/2026	PGCPS	36	21	
9.	3/2/2026	AACPS	6	4	
		PGCPS	26	21	
10.	3/16/2026	AACPS	7	5	
		PGCPS	25	25	
11.	4/20/2026	AACPS			3 awarded
		PGCPS			34 awarded

REPORT

THE COALITION CHRONICLES NEWSLETTER

From the President's Desk



As we come to the end of April, a month that holds both personal meaning and national significance, I am reminded of the power of awareness, compassion, and community. Through our work with the Coalition for Public Safety Training in School, Inc (CPSTS), we continue to stand at the intersection of education, safety, and service.

In recognition of April as Autism Awareness Month, I want to take a moment to honor the outstanding work of Eric Blessed Carpenter-Grantham and the efforts surrounding Eric's ID Law. This important legislation has made a significant impact on our community, ensuring that individuals with Autism and other invisible disabilities receive the support and respect they deserve.

Autism and mental health are very personal topics for me. I am proud to share that I have two great granddaughters and one granddaughter who navigates life with ADHD and high-functioning autism. My journey began as an advocate on behalf of my family, which led me to become the PTA President of my granddaughter's school for ten years. I also served on the Maryland State PTSA as an advocate, striving to empower parents and students by helping them understand their rights and the intricacies of IEPs and our public-school system. This advocacy ignited my passion for making a difference, leading me to a fulfilling career within Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS) as a Parent Engagement Assistant. Additionally, my eight years as an elected PGCPS School Board Member have allowed me to ensure that parents have a strong voice in our educational landscape.

As we focus on Autism Awareness this month, CPSTS is committed to enhancing our approach to Autism awareness and training within the community. We believe that fostering understanding and empathy will create a safer and more inclusive environment for all students. Together, we can raise awareness, provide essential resources, and promote acceptance. Thank you for your continued support as we work collectively toward a brighter future.





**COALITION FOR PUBLIC SAFETY
TRAINING IN SCHOOLS, INC.**

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Creating a Brighter Tomorrow!