

**PNA Foundation Fellows Grant Program
TheBurg: Diversity Initiative
Final Report**

On July 15, 2022, the PA NewsMedia Association Foundation awarded TheBurg a \$1,500 grant to support our ongoing “Diversity Initiative.” This is the final report on how these funds were deployed and their role in this initiative.

Background: Several years ago, we began our Diversity Initiative in an effort to better cover the multicultural city of Harrisburg. We applied for the Fellows Grant so that we could publish additional stories focused on diverse topics, people, businesses, etc. We set a goal of publishing six additional stories over the course of a year, with the funds deployed to offset additional expenses, mainly freelance fees.

Results: Due the requirements of the grant, we accelerated our original timeline, setting a goal of using the funds within an eight-month period. I’m delighted to report that we succeeded in this effort, publishing some two-dozen such stories over this period in our monthly magazine and many others online from our daily news reporting. I would like to highlight six feature stories that we published in our magazine that were funded directly from this grant:

[September 2022: “Empower Play,”](#) a story/profile of a Black author from Harrisburg who recently published his second novel.

[October 2022: “Jump for Joy,”](#) a feature story on the 40+ Double Dutch Club, a group of Black women from central PA who have found health and sisterhood by reviving their love of a favorite childhood sport.

[January 2023: “Training, for Life,”](#) a feature on Austin Qualls, a young Black man who has opened his own gym, with a unique approach to training and fitness.

[February 2023: “Streets of Success,”](#) a lengthy feature story on the lives and service of two long-time community activists in Harrisburg who recently had streets renamed in their honor.

[March 2023: “Worldly Mission,”](#) a story on a local high school’s large number of international students, with a focus on one from the Republic of Congo and another from Ukraine.

[April 2023: “Pioneer, Powerhouse,”](#) a profile of Hettie Simmons Lee, a centenarian who has been devoted to education and activism in the local Black community.

Each of these stories furthered the goals and mission of our Diversity Initiative, highlighting people from historically underrepresented groups who deserve to be featured in our pages and who are having a positive impact on our community.



On behalf of TheBurg, I would like to thank the foundation and the selection committee for this Fellows Grant. With these funds, we were able to achieve our goal—to increase our coverage of the powerfully diverse city of Harrisburg and the increasingly diverse surrounding area.

Lawrance Binda
Publisher/Editor
TheBurg