

# IN THE NEWS

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## Local Non-Profits Working Together



Above photo include from left, Marty Lowe; Neshawn Bynum; Donna Lowe; John Edwards, representing Chronicle Media Group and Mary Walker Foundation; and Dr. Eleanor Woods, Alton Park Development Corporation, along with community stakeholders and volunteers. Planning for community broadcast, from left, Marty Lowe and Donna Lowe, People's Choice radio station, WPTP-100.1FM; John Edwards, III and Dr. Woods. Local students of the arts are provided instruction by seated center, Neshawn Bynum, teacher and vocalist, as radio emcee Donna Lowe looks on. Photos by G. Faye Stoudemire/CNC.

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MAGIC HAPPEN!**

By Camm Ashford

Leaders from the Chronicle Media Group, Mary Walker Foundation, and Alton Park Development Corporation are joining forces to forge a historical legacy that's crucial to the survival of each organization.

"A major God-given force to be reckoned with" is how Dr. Elenora Woods, president of the Alton Park Development Corporation, labels the historic collaboration between the three entities.

"Yes, I truly believe this amazing project is ordained by God," explained Dr. Woods. "I'm very big on maintaining, upholding, supporting and preserving Black History. It has always been so important to me that we as African Americans maintain our ability to communicate with one another, and to maintain our own stream of connectivity. With this collaboration, we are pulling all our resources together into an economic dynamic that will preserve the history of the Black pioneers of this great city, as well as to keep our community informed and empowered for years to come. We can't do anything if we try and do it by ourselves."

The Alton Park Development Corporation, 701 Hooker Rd., was begun in 2014 by Dr. Woods and George Calhoun. Its crown jewel is "The People's Choice" radio station, WPTP-100.1 FM, founded by Dr. Woods. The station officially signed on the air March 8, 2018, as the "home of Informative and educational programming, smooth jazz, contemporary gospel, blues and classic R&B."

Also housed at the Alton Park Development Corporation is the Chattanooga Civic Center at Mountainside, a sprawling eight acres featuring the 48,000 square foot former all-Black Piney Woods Elementary School.

Dr. Woods said fundraising efforts are currently underway to renovate the school, which was built in 1963, and place it on the National Register of Historic Places.

"We want to preserve the history, not only of the building, but of all the things that happened inside," Dr. Woods said.

The Alton Park Development Corporation is a 501c3 nonprofit, so all donations are tax deductible, Dr. Woods noted.

The Civic Center at Mountainside

features a state-of-the-art playground and park, high school equivalency tutorial and testing, computer and other classes, library, emergency dental clinic, fitness room, performing arts, thrift store, voter registration services and a newly remodeled events hall, among others. A Chattanooga native, Dr. Woods has been practicing dentistry for more than 30 years. She is the founder of the Dental Angel Fund Foundation, which is responsible for providing free dental care to Chattanooga's indigent population.

Dr. Woods is a Pierre Fauchard Fellow, which recognizes the top dentists in the country and internationally for their contributions to the advancements in the field of dentistry. The former president of the local NAACP chapter, she is also a member of Greater Emmanuel Apostolic Church and Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc.

Founded in 1970, the mission of the Mary Walker Historical and Educational Foundation is to help bring social and economic justice for all Chattanooga citizens through literacy. The nonprofit was named for Mary Walker, a former slave and tenant of what is now Mary Walker Towers in South Chattanooga. Mary Walker learned to read and write at age 117 and lived to be 121. She was proclaimed the Oldest Student in the United States by the U.S. Department of Education and received recognition from the President of the United States and numerous dignitaries across the world. Lurone "Coach" Jennings, Sr. currently serves as Executive Director.

The Chronicle Media Group was established in May 2021 by John L. Edwards III and Lurone "Coach" Jennings Sr. "Our goal is to work in concert to expand literacy programs and provide computer training and vocational opportunities for all children and adults", said John Edwards. "This multi-media group includes print, radio, on-line TV, and publications that will focus on enhanced opportunities for our diverse communities."

"Bottom line is that I'm just so very happy and excited about being a part of this amazing collaboration and all of its possibilities," said Dr. Woods. "We as African Americans can't always depend on others to accurately tell our stories for us. It's important that we not lose our footprint and our history in this city."