



Lifting travelers' spirits, one dish at a time

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A mother's path to advocacy

When Judith Brown's oldest son entered kindergarten 30 years ago, the school suggested that she place her autistic child in an institution.

"I believed my son could learn," says Brown, founder and executive director of the nonprofit [Project 70Forward](#). "That was the beginning of advocacy. It didn't start with myself, even though I was born with disabilities. I didn't grow up really having an idea of what advocacy was, what support was. I learned it through my children."

Brown grew up in Queens in New York, with hearing and visual issues. As an adult, she supported C-suite officers as an administrator. At 37, Brown left the workforce after undergoing back surgeries that left her with mobility issues. She still uses a wheelchair on occasion.

While raising her two sons, both with autism, the younger son was also diagnosed with Postural Orthostatic Tachycardia Syndrome, a condition preventing the autonomic nervous system – a network of nerves that controls such functions like breathing and heartbeats – from functioning correctly.

"I'm a reluctant leader," says Brown, who lives in Charlotte, North Carolina. "I just felt like there wasn't help for our families, help for our young people.

"(I thought) 'I've got to help my sons, not only navigate the medical world but education.' I was an advocate for them and then I began being a parent advocate for other families."

Brown became a member of the Abilities Leadership Program of North Carolina and the Parent Advisory Board at the National Research Center for Parents

With Disabilities at Brandeis University. She's a frequent panelist for the state's International Visitors Learning Program and a founding member of the statewide chapter of REVUP NC, a national awareness initiative for voters with disabilities. Brown earned a Duke University Certificate in Nonprofit Management in 2025.

A time to act

Project 70Forward, a play on Charlotte's 704 area code, launched in 2018. The organization is "committed to the support and advancement of people with disabilities," and its vision is to "provide hope, build resilience and be a voice for change so that those with disabilities can navigate services to achieve self-sufficiency and equal access."

"There really isn't an organization to help families navigate these things that we have to learn," Brown says. "I always said, when the boys grow up, I'm going to start a nonprofit and it's going to be different. It's not going to be clinical."

The nonprofit offers a hot line to connect people with equipment, food and legal resources; virtual workshops about topics such as the American with Disabilities Act and grief support after suddenly becoming disabled; and disability activism.

"We're advocating for people with disabilities so that their resources and their services are not lost," Brown says. "We are on 'The Hill' (Washington, D.C.) and in Raleigh (North Carolina) and in front of our elected officials, constantly, letting them know what their constituents need."

Grassroots catalyst for improving heart health



Heart Foundation Chairman Mark Litman, left, Digital Content Manager Hannah Drake Litman, Executive Director Catherine Mullaney and Auction Coordinator Margaret McNicoll attend the 27th annual Galpin Motors Golf Classic benefitting The Heart Foundation. Photo by Tom Neerken

A year after Steven Cohen died of a heart attack in Los Angeles, his friends, family and community founded the Steven S. Cohen Heart Fund in 1996. Cohen was a seemingly healthy 35-year-old husband and father of two children. His untimely death motivated those who knew him to keep his legacy alive and raise awareness about heart health, early detection and intervention.

In 2004, after years of building a partnership with Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles, the fund's name was changed to [The Heart Foundation](#). It's based in Westlake Village outside Los Angeles.

The mission grew to "save lives by increasing awareness of heart disease, promoting early detection and supporting the innovative research taking place at Smidt Heart Institute at Cedars-Sinai under the direction of world-renowned cardiologist Dr. P.K. Shah."

"We are very proud to fund groundbreaking research ... under Dr. P.K. Shah," says Hannah Drake Litman, the foundation's digital content manager. "He's a rock star in the world of cardiology and hearth health."

A grassroots nonprofit

Private donors, patients and corporate sponsors help to fund The Heart Foundation. The nonprofit's largest fundraising event is the annual [Galpin Motors Golf Classic Benefitting The Heart Foundation](#) at Sherwood Country Club in Thousand Oaks, California.

"We are very much a grassroots nonprofit," Litman says. "It's a tiny group of people motivated to create change."

Litman's social media posts share information about health tips, questions to ask your doctor, and how overconsuming alcohol and energy drinks can affect heart health.

"I do a lot of live interviews on our Instagram," she says. "I've interviewed Jamie Foxx, Dana Carvey, David Foster, Paul Stanley. I've interviewed influential people about their experiences with heart health or with heart disease. They're really happy to use their platforms to spread even more awareness and help their supporters."

Heart Warriors is a series on The Heart Foundation's social media channels. People who have been touched by heart disease or have experienced a cardiac event go live with Litman to discuss symptoms they had or didn't notice, their journey and what their future looks like.

"This gives people a support community that they can look at and say, 'I am not alone,'" Litman says. "It helps people see, 'That person is like me, and I didn't know that could be a symptom.'"

Research and development

The Heart Foundation has raised more than \$30 million to support research spearheaded by Shah and his team. They have been collecting information on heart failure, inflammation, metabolic syndrome and obesity, and have developed two vaccines for atherosclerosis, the buildup of plaque in arteries. One vaccine is in the preclinical trial stage and the other completed Phase 2A clinical trials and is preparing to enter more extensive Phase 2B clinical trials.

The P.K. Shah Laboratory centers its work on new techniques for diagnosing heart disease and therapeutic interventions.

"My focus is on prevention," Shah says in a [Cedars-Sinai YouTube clip](#). "There's been a revolution in the field of cardiovascular medicine and surgery. There's hope for every patient."

A tip of the hat to milliners



Pioneering milliner Mae Reeves, far right, opened her first hat shop in 1942. Photograph by Hall and Hall Photo Service



Ochre colored rolled brim suede hat, designed by Mae Reeves. Photo courtesy of NMAAHC

What do you remember most about Aretha Franklin's performance at President Obama's 2009 inauguration? Was it her riveting rendition of "My Country 'Tis of Thee"?

Or was it *that hat*? You know, the gray, big-bowed creation festooned with Swarovski crystals?

Franklin's hat ended up with its own Facebook page and racked up 10,000 tweets on inauguration day. So, there's a chance that you paid a tad more attention to the famed chapeau with the bow than Franklin's singing.

And that's OK. After all, hats have always held a special place in the hearts of Black women. Books like "Crowns: Portraits of Black Women in Church Hats" and exhibits like the one at the National Museum of African-American History and Culture are testaments to that. When NMAAHC opened in 2016, its collection included vintage turbans, caps and fascinators from the shop of Mae Reeves, one of the first Black women to own a milliner store in the U.S.

Reeves opened Mae's Millinery in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (her first shop) with a \$500 bank loan. She helped dress some of the most famous Black women in the country, including Marian Anderson, Ella Fitzgerald and Lena Horne. Reeves died a few months after the exhibit about her shop - which included a recreation of the store - opened at NMAAHC.

Reeves set the standard for other Black female milliners like the Rev. Georgiette Morgan-Thomas, who owns a hat factory in Philadelphia.

In 2015, one of Morgan-Thomas' friends tipped her off about Philadelphia's famed S&S Hat Co., which was up for sale. Without hesitation, Morgan-Thomas bought the failing company, invested more than

\$100,000, took control in 2016 and rechristened it American Hats.

By early 2025, her factory was producing thousands of hats, many crafted using original, early 20th-century equipment no longer manufactured. It is one of the last facilities of its kind in the U.S., selling to wholesalers, small businesses and retail customers.

American Hats' designs have appeared in magazines such as Vogue and even made their way to customers in Germany.



Georgiette Morgan-Thomas' company, American Hats, manufactures hats in Pennsylvania. Photo courtesy of Georgiette Morgan-Thomas

Historic preservation, one stitch at a time

Quilts have long been a vital form of expression for Black women, weaving together stories of resilience, heritage and community.

BISA BUTLER

Born in Orange, New Jersey, artist Bisa Butler has achieved national recognition for her vibrant quilted portraits that reimagine and celebrate Black historical narratives. Her 2012 work, "I Know Why the Caged Bird Beats His Wings," depicts poet Paul Laurence Dunbar. Dunbar's polished appearance and distinctive voice inspired Butler's portrayal.

In this quilt, Dunbar is shown standing before two birds, one caged and one free, symbolizing the struggle between constraint and liberation that defines much of Black creative expression.

Through hand-dyed batiks, layered appliqué and meticulous stitching, Butler transforms historical imagery into something timeless and contemporary. Her use of color, texture and scale infuses the work with emotional intensity, inviting viewers to experience the layered relationship between art, history and identity.



Bisa Butler, "I Know Why the Caged Bird Beats His Wings," 2012, commercial cotton fabric, rayon, linen, chiffon, batik fabric, cotton batting, acrylic paint and polyester fabric, 49 x 47 1/4 in. (124.5 x 120.0 cm), Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Fleur S. Bresler, 2023.40.5

MARION COLEMAN

Marion Coleman, a Texas-born, now Oakland, California-based textile artist, dedicated her practice to honoring Black history and achievement through narrative quilts. Her 2012 work, "Her Heart Was in the Clouds," pays homage to Bessie Coleman, the first Black and Indigenous woman to earn a pilot's license. Born in 1892 to sharecroppers in rural Texas, Coleman faced racial and gender discrimination in the Jim Crow South. Determined to fly, she traveled to France, where she received her aviation license from the Fédération Aéronautique Internationale in 1921. Upon returning to the U.S., she thrilled audiences with daring aerial stunts, famously refusing to perform at segregated venues. Her life was tragically cut short in a 1926 plane crash.

Coleman's quilt depicts this story through a collage of blue-toned fabrics, photo transfers and maps of Texas and Paris. The sky-colored patchwork evokes the expanse of flight and the limitless pursuit of

freedom, while intricate stitching and layered textures transform personal history into collective memory.



Marion Coleman, "Her Heart Was in the Clouds," 2012, cotton fabric, cotton thread and cotton batt, 60 1/2 x 60 in. (153.7 x 152.4 cm), Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Fleur S. Bresler, 2023.40.14

JANICE HOBSON

Janice Hobson, a Chicago-based artist, celebrates the Tuskegee Airmen - the nation's first Black military pilots - in her 2012 quilt "Tuskegee Airmen." The piece features three P-51 Mustang planes soaring diagonally across a vivid blue sky, symbolizing movement, strength and pride.

Formed in 1941 after decades of advocacy by civil rights leaders, the 99th Fighter Squadron trained at Moton Field in Tuskegee, Alabama, earning three presidential unit citations for their service during World War II. Hobson's composition, crafted from cotton fabric, metallic thread, beads and paint, merges text and image to honor their heroism and their role in desegregating the U.S. military.

Once a dentist and professor, Hobson turned to quilting after a 1998 car accident as a means of physical and emotional healing. Through fabric, she found a renewed sense of purpose, transforming personal recovery into powerful expressions of historical tribute and resilience.



Janice Hobson, "Tuskegee Airmen," 2012, cotton fabric, cotton batt, acrylic paint, metallic thread, button and beads, 50 x 52 1/4 in. (127.0 x 132.7 cm), Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Fleur S. Bresler, 2023.40.27, © 2012, Janice E. Hobson

Lifting travelers' spirits, one dish at a time



Thompson Hospitality Executive Chef Donnell Jones-Craven delivers "ministry through food." Photo courtesy of Donnell Jones-Craven

Donnell Jones-Craven's favorite part of his job as an executive chef with Thompson Hospitality is connecting with people, whether from the kitchen or at the chef's table he's set up inside airport lounges. When guests appreciate how Jones-Craven's dish lifted their spirits during a long layover, he knows he's in the right place.

"Many times, as a chef, you don't get to interact with the guests unless they're displeased about something," Jones-Craven says. "I focus on the end result: It's to make someone feel good nutritionally, mentally and emotionally through what I deliver, ministry through food."

Jones-Craven credits his aunt for whetting his appetite for cooking by gifting him his first cookbook. The culinary shows on PBS, including "The French Chef with Julia Child," "Louisiana Cookin'" with Justin Wilson and "Yan Can Cook" with Martin Yan, captured Jones-Craven's attention while he was growing up in Richmond, California.

At Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia, where Jones-Craven studied sociology, he launched D's Delectable Cheesecakes and sold breads and desserts to faculty and students at local colleges. He transferred to The Art Institute of Atlanta to attend culinary classes. With his skills, Jones-Craven built a consulting firm for food service and menu development for health care and retirement communities.

Since early 2024, Jones-Craven has been flying from his home in Douglasville, Georgia, 30 minutes west of Atlanta, to operate chef's tables at airport lounges. He aims to leave an impression with his guests.

"If you have an awesome dining experience - good food, laughter, libation - you remember those times," Jones-Craven says. "I like to leave those pictures in people's minds."

Tequila-Lime Chicken Nachos

Servings: 7 to 8

Ingredients

- 2 boneless chicken breasts
- Kosher salt and black pepper, to taste
- 3 limes for juice
- 2 ounces reposado tequila
- 4 ounces olive oil, save 1 ounce for pan searing
- 1/3 bunch of fresh cilantro, chiffonade
- 1/4 yellow onion, diced
- 6 to 8 garlic bulbs, save 2 to 3 bulbs for pan searing
- 1 tablespoon ground cumin
- 1 tablespoon ground coriander
- 1/2 teaspoon adobo seasoning
- 1 to 2 bags of corn tortilla chips
- Pico de gallo, guacamole, crema, picante sauce, salsa verde and lime wedges for toppings

Directions

Rinse and pat dry the chicken breasts. Pound to 1/2-inch thickness; season with salt and pepper. In a food processor, make the marinade by blending the lime juice, tequila, olive oil, cilantro, onion, garlic and spices until smooth. Place 1 chicken breast in a container, pour 1/3 of the marinade over it, add the other chicken breast and then top with another 1/3 of the marinade. Cover and refrigerate for 2 hours or overnight.

Turn on the oven broiler. Heat a cast-iron skillet over medium-high heat, add the oil and garlic. Cook the chicken skin-side down for 5 to 7 minutes until seared. Flip and broil in the oven for 10 to 12 minutes until the chicken's temperature reaches 165 F. Let rest, then slice.

Line a baking sheet with foil and spray with cooking spray. Layer the chips, cheese, chicken, jalapeños and repeat for 2 to 3 layers. Top with cheese and bake on low broil for 6 to 8 minutes until melted.

Squeeze fresh lime over the nachos, transfer to a plate and add toppings.

Purpose, smoke and soul



"God crafted me to cook barbecue and to show hospitality to others," says Chef Christopher Prieto, "as my mother showed me."
Photo by Azul Photography

In 2015, a turn of events led to an invitation from Southern Living for a 20-something Christopher Prieto to be part of the "Ultimate Book of BBQ: The Complete Year-Round Guide to Grilling and Smoking." This was an important moment for Prieto; he had the opportunity to inspire new cooks and explain the why behind the techniques and styles of barbecue.

"It's (also) helped inspire kids like me who grew up with dyslexia," says Prieto, a pitmaster and restaurateur. "Growing up, I always had a hard time reading and writing. This was an opportunity to say, 'My brain is perfectly made; it's just made differently. It's made for different ways of visualizing and seeing things.' The cookbook was like a self-proclamation of, 'I am capable.'"

Prieto's family moved from Richmond, Texas, to Wake Forest, North Carolina, in 2001. Prieto cooked alongside his mother, who helped him understand the family's heritage and traditions rooted in Puerto Rican culture.

"When I got into barbecue, she said, 'If you're going to do barbecue, do it with excellence, live this food. Tell a story through your food,'" Prieto says. "She drove that into our hearts."

After high school, Prieto attended college in Florida but returned home when his mother was diagnosed with breast cancer. While his mom healed, he worked in restaurants and pursued an associate degree at the local community college. In 2004, Prieto joined the professional barbecue circuit, entering competitions and traveling every weekend.

He finished a business degree at East Carolina University in Greenville, North Carolina, in 2007.

Before opening Prime Barbecue in Knightdale, North Carolina, five years ago, Prieto cooked with the Kansas City Barbecue Society, taught barbecue cooking classes and worked for a contract research organization in Durham, North Carolina.

Prime Barbecue serves sandwiches and plates featuring brisket, pulled pork and turkey. The homemade sides such as sweet potato salad, barbecue rice and big boss beans are a nod to people and places important to Prieto.

"It's telling my story on a plate," says Prieto, a 2025 James Beard Awards Semifinalist for Best Chef in the Southeast. "We don't create a dish that I haven't been inspired by or practiced specifically. It showcases all the different styles of barbecue. So, there are no borders here. I am fusing all these different styles and melodies."

At night, Primo Latin Cuisine, Prieto's alter ego and what he calls his secret restaurant behind Prime Barbecue, serves authentic Puerto Rican foods. Diners enjoy classic salsa music while playing dominos on tables built in his parents' hometown in Puerto Rico.

Prime STQ, Prieto's newest restaurant, launches early 2026 in Durham.

"This is my purpose," Prieto says. "God crafted me to cook barbecue and to show hospitality to others, as my mother showed me."

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Purpose, smoke and soul

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Christopher Prieto was a 2025 James Beard Awards Semifinalist for Best Chef in the Southeast. Photo by Azul Photography

Prime STQ Chimichurri Sauce

Servings: 6-8

Ingredients

- 1/2 cup finely chopped flat-leaf parsley leaves
- 2 teaspoons freshly chopped oregano
- 4 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 tablespoons red wine vinegar
- 1/2 teaspoon dried red pepper flakes
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

Directions

Finely chop the parsley, oregano and garlic. Place the chopped ingredients in a small bowl. Stir everything together. Add the olive oil, vinegar, red pepper flakes, salt and pepper. Once mixed, let the chimichurri sit at room temperature for at least 1 hour before serving to let the flavors bind together.

Mix well before serving over a meal such as grilled bavette steak. Refrigerate any leftover sauce.



Courtesy of PRIME STQ

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