

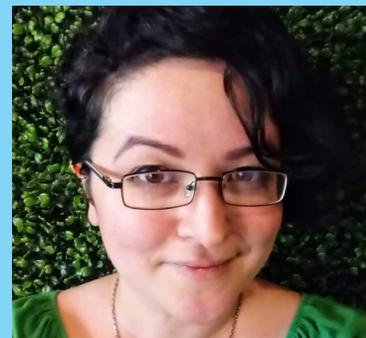
FLINT COURIER NEWS • FACEBOOK PROJECT

FLINT WATER CRISIS 2020

Past and Present



It's not over yet.
Personal Stories from
Native Flintstones
Dr. Mona and Others



Introduction

It's hard to explain to a person who does not live in Flint how the water crisis has affected us. It is still with us in 2020, emotionally and physically. We are also dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic along with the rest of the planet. But the story of a government that deliberately poisoned its people is exclusive to the city of Flint and its citizens, known as "Flintstones".

On April 25, 2014, the city of Flint changed its water source and decided to save money by not including the chemical corrosion inhibitors that prevent the leaching of lead from the water pipes. This action allowed leaded water into homes, schools and businesses throughout Flint.

Our city became plagued with Legionella, rashes, sick children, sick pets, dirty and/or stinking water. Lead is invisible in water, so citizens of Flint had no suspicion that it was also in the water.

Despite multitudes of complaints, we, the residents of Flint, were told the water was safe. General Motors quickly changed their water source for their factories from the new Flint water back to the suburban water connection, as the "new" water was too corrosive for their engine parts. Still, we were told our water was safe.

Seventeen months after the water source changed, on September 25, 2015, we were finally told that there was lead in our water. Lead cannot be seen, tasted or smelled. Not only had lead leached into our water, but additionally there was E. coli, total trihalomethanes (TTHM*), dirt and more undesirables. The government had refused to listen to the Flint citizens for 17 months despite knowing about the toxicity much of the time.



Attorney Ben Crump visited the Flint Courier News in 2019. Left: Ben Crump, right: Pastor Floyd Fuller, CEO, The Flint Courier News. Photo by L. M. Land

Dr. Mona Hanna-Attisha MD, MPH, FAAP, was instrumental in discovering the lead in our children's bodies and stepping forward to bring this crisis to the people's attention. She is hailed by Flintstones as a hero. See our exclusive interview with her on page 28.

In Time Magazine, civil rights attorney, Ben Crump argued in the 1980s that minorities have been serving lengthy mandatory prison sentences for dealing drugs. Politicians, judges, prosecutors and police all proclaimed this was done because drug dealers were poisoning low-income communities and communities of color. Crump said in Flint, elected officials played a role in actually poisoning a community of Blacks and poor people. Crump, who also visited the Flint Courier News, joined the team of Napoli Shkolnik, whose local Flint office has been seeking justice for residents impacted by the water crisis since it began.

There were 12 or more deaths from Legionnaires' disease, and an estimated several hundred additional pregnancies that ended in stillbirths. Of the 15 people who faced criminal indictments, all but one case was dismissed or overturned. Corinne Miller, the only one convicted, was sentenced to a year's probation, 300 hours of community service and a fine of \$1,200. These court rulings, in addition to dismissing most of the

Introduction, Cont.

criminal indictments, directed our tax dollars to pay the attorney fees for all the people being indicted.

The city of Flint also began charging high service fees to cover their expenses. In all of Genesee County, Flint alone pays these high service fees.

On July 24, 2020, a plaintiff in one of several class action civil lawsuits told the Flint Courier News she was hopeful for a large settlement. The suit seeks monetary damages from Michigan's government.

The Flint Water Crisis decisions made by our government continue to cost residents of Flint financially, emotionally and physically, even though the people who caused the problem are no longer in office. Our current mayor, Sheldon Neeley, addresses this on page 27.

We, the Flintstones, thank people all over the country who have assisted us in procuring safe, clean and usable water for our homes.

We at the Flint Courier News, thank our previous editor, Sheri Stuart, in applying, receiving and utilizing a Facebook grant to share our stories of the Flint Water Crisis with the world.

We hope and pray not a single resident within the Flint community will be forgotten.

Tanya Terry: editor, writer

Lisa M. Land: writer, graphics

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www.TheFlintCourierNews.com

TheFlintCourierNews@gmail.com

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Sheri Stuart, Grant writer and former editor. Photo by L. M. Land

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See the Video by Antonio Davis at:

www.youtube.com/tch?v=MnANp94waks&feature=youtu.be

Digital copies are available for free on our Website and Facebook page.

Center cover photo: L. M. Land

**Trihalomethanes (THM) are a group of four chemicals that are formed when chlorine or other disinfectants used to control microbial contaminants in drinking water react with naturally occurring organic and inorganic matter in water. The EPA has published the Stage 1 Disinfectants and Disinfection Byproducts Rule to regulate total trihalomethanes (TTHM) at a maximum allowable annual average level of 80 parts per billion. These are all by-products of chlorination. They are Cancer Group B carcinogens (shown to cause cancer in laboratory animals) over 80 parts per billion.*

Jacquevis' Story

Written by Jameca Patrick-Singleton



29-year-old Jacquavis Patrick tells his story.
Photo courtesy of Mr. Patrick.

Jacquevis Patrick is a 29-year-old African American male who lives in Flint's 7th Ward. According to Patrick, the Flint Water Crisis was initially little more than an inconvenience for him.

"At the time that the water switch occurred, I was living in an apartment in the 5th Ward," he said.

"People would bring us water or we would go to one of the many places that people gave it out. I hated what was happening in my city, but I assumed that it wouldn't impact me as bad as it impacted some others," Patrick added.

Sadly this was not the case. In May 2018, Patrick moved into a house in the 7th Ward. He stated that in early June 2018, he went to the hospital emergency room suffering from an intense shortness of breath. After doing x-rays, doctors were immediately concerned because he appeared to have double pneumonia and initial tests couldn't confirm the exact type of pneumonia.

"They started asking me if I'd been out of the country recently, or if I'd been in contact with anyone who had been out of the country" Patrick said.

Patrick said his health became worse after that. He spent over a week in the hospital, spending much of that time in intensive care with a machine breathing for him. According to him, there was even

**"I almost died.
So, I feel like I appreciate life more."**

a point that his doctor warned his family that he may not live through the night.

Patrick says he now spends his time living life to the fullest.

"I almost died. So, I feel like I appreciate life more."

He believes that his pneumonia was a result of consuming the contaminated water.

"This water almost killed me, and I'm still constantly sick. It's hard. I get sick a lot with lots and lots of lung infections. When I'm not sick, I'm frustrated."

Nowadays Patrick can only drink purified water. He has been advised by his doctors not to consume filtered water from the tap, or any other forms of bottled water.

"There have been times that I've had to go to multiple stores to find the only kind of water that I'm able to drink".

Life for Patrick has forever changed.

"This crisis has forever altered my health and the way that I live".

The Taylors

Written by Jameca Patrick-Singleton

Both of my kids have had problems with their teeth. I was told that this was a result of not being able to brush their teeth with tap water. They lacked fluoride”.



Chuckie Taylor and his daughter Da'Zija Perry-Taylor prepare to attend a daddy daughter dance. Photo courtesy of Mr. Taylor.

Chuckie Taylor, a resident of Flint's 9th Ward, describes the Flint Water Crisis as a nightmare for parents. According to him, his 6-year-old daughter and 4-year-old son, both born during the Flint Water Crisis, have been robbed of a childhood that holds the sweet memories that he experienced growing up.

"I remember playing outside all day, drinking from a water hose on hot summer days and cupping my hands in the bathroom to drink water from the sink, things that my kids have never experienced; things that

they will probably never, ever experience" Taylor said. According to Taylor, his 6-year-old daughter slightly panics whenever anyone turns on the faucet.

"She will yell, 'Turn that water off. It's poison,'" Taylor said. "I am both happy that she understands that she cannot drink unfiltered water from the tap and sad that as a child she has such a burden. The water crisis dictated the way that I cared for my children when they were babies. I had to always make sure that we had an ample supply of bottled water, and I constantly worried about my kids getting exposed. Both of my kids have had problems with their teeth. I was told that this was a result of not being able to brush their teeth with tap water. They lacked fluoride."

According to Taylor, the only comparison to teaching his kids something as difficult as not trusting the water supply is explaining to them why they can't play with their friends right now.

"COVID-19 has hit us especially hard. Our kids can't drink water, and now they can't play outside with their friends. This is torture. I understand that it is bad for most of the country, even the world, but here in Flint we have a unique set of circumstances. We have a pandemic on top of a water crisis. We are robbed of basic needs, clean water and freedom to move around and interact with our families and friends. Every day, I watch the news and they say don't leave home unless necessary, and the first thing that I do is go into the kitchen and make sure that I have enough (bottled) water for my kids. This is our life, and I don't know why any of this has happened. I only know that our lives will never be what I once considered normal."

Tomoko Miller

Written by Antonio Sweeney



Tomoko Miller. Photo by Tomoko Miller

Tomoko Miller is a proud Michigander who lives in the city of Flint's 8th Ward. Miller is an aspiring actress and has done numbers of shows in the greater Flint area for over 15 years along with her husband, Jesse Miller.

Miller describes the water crisis as devastating to the city of Flint. She noticed early signs of the water after the city decided to switch to the Flint River for a more affordable plan.

"The water would smell bad, stinking up the entire house, and the pipes would often leak a lot!" Miller said.

Being cautious, she encouraged family and friends to use filters before Flint gained its national attention and noticed the red flags.

"I want the world to know this situation could happen to them."

When meeting people from different areas, she often feels as if people view the Flint Water Crisis as a laughing stock.

"It's hard for me to talk about the water crisis because I get emotional." Miller said. "People in my community have died. I try not to argue with people because I feel like they won't listen." Miller has lost faith in the government after the situation hit close to home and claims her elected officials did nothing.

"My cat died. The doctor rules it as cancer, but I noticed signs of sickness after the big water switch happened. Anytime they (elected officials) had a decision to make they made the worst one."

She has become one of the many Flintstones that were fortunate enough to have their pipes "repaired" so far. However, Miller said she does not trust the water and will continue her daily routine.

"This has become normal for me, and I'm going to continue to use filters. I want the world to know this situation could happen to them."



An excellent documentary about the Flint Water Crisis is **Flint: The poisoning of an American City.** Find more information about it at www.FlintPoisoning.org

Josephine Jones

Written by Tanya Terry

Josephine Jones, 75, lives in Flint's 1st Ward. She was just coming back from her sister's funeral in Chicago and had taken a bath when someone called her and told her not to drink the Flint water.

"I felt bad because I had just did everything (with the water)," Jones said. "My skin and my daughter's skin broke out in little bumps all over," she added. "I still have to work on my skin all the time, and we have to wait in long lines to get (bottled) water."

Jones goes to get the water around 5 a.m. By the time she gets the water it is about 10 a.m. Jones has filters in the bathroom and kitchen, but continues to use only bottled water for cooking and drinking. She goes to Help Centers, giveaways and churches to get the water she needs. Her pipes have not been replaced. The doctor gave her special lotion for her skin condition. The bumps go away and come back, according to Jones.

"That doesn't make me feel too good, but I know how to live with it," she said.

Jones recalls a time when she would look everywhere to finally find who was giving away gallons of water, which she would heat up and bathe in. "That was really bad," she said. "When they told us we could take baths in the water it was better. But I still get bumps from time to time. My daughter also has to live with it."

Jones said the water crisis has also affected her family socially because they can't do things like wash greens for family dinners. Although Jones does use the water at the restaurants she does not feel comfortable when doing so.



Josephine Jones. Photo courtesy of Ms. Jones.

Lifting the packs of water is my main concern right now.

Now because of the coronavirus pandemic, Jones said she is being told she needs to use even more water than before.

"Before I got my hip replaced, I couldn't stand on my leg. I couldn't carry the water. I called 211 and asked them to bring me some water. They bought me one little case of water. That wasn't enough."

Jones is currently living by herself and needs surgery on both her knees, as well as her other hip. She cannot get the surgery because of restrictions placed due to the coronavirus pandemic. She is using at least five bottles through the day and has three or four bottles of water in her bedroom at night. Her water supply has been getting low and she said lifting it is her main concern when it comes to getting water, which she may have to buy herself soon and will be a financial burden. She uses her walker to push it in the house from the garage to the house and has a problem with the steps near the back door.

"When people don't see me I don't feel as bad bringing it in the house. It's kind of rough sometimes, but the Lord blesses me."

Faith Taylor

Written by Jameca Patrick-Singleton

Faith Taylor lives in Flint's 1st Ward and was just 11 years old when she began experiencing severe physical symptoms.

"It started out as headaches that I couldn't shake," Taylor said. "Then I couldn't keep my food down, nothing, not even soup. Eventually the pain started to include my legs. It became difficult for me to walk or stand up, and I was severely anemic. Most days I would just sleep all day, but I had to take medicine to even sleep comfortably. I lost about 50-60 pounds in about a month. I didn't know exactly what was happening, but it felt aggressive. It was ravaging my body. To top it all off, my hair fell out. It got to the point that I told my mom that I would rather be dead than be in so much pain and no one knows what's wrong with me."

Taylor described this period as difficult for her. She said that the many, many doctors that her parents took her to couldn't figure out what was causing her symptoms. She says that one such doctor even accused her of faking her pain or said that it was psychosomatic. After visiting doctor after doctor and hospital after hospital, with little resolve for close to a year, Taylor ended up with a referral to University of Michigan hospital in Ann Arbor. It was around this time that the Flint Water Crisis was exposed and she stopped drinking water from the tap.

Once at U of M Hospital, Taylor met Becky Johnson; a physician on the U of M Medical Team. After a thorough examination, Johnson determined that Faith was in tremendous amount of pain.

"In addition to her being a doctor, she is a Christian," Taylor said. "That was helpful. She relied on the science and her faith. She was extremely helpful. She helped to get me through it. My official diagnosis was juvenile rheumatoid arthritis, believed to be exacerbated by drinking poisoned water."

Nowadays, Taylor copes with her diagnosis using medication management, including regular doctor visits. She only drinks bottled purified water.



Faith Taylor started having pain due to the Flint Water Crisis when she was only 11. Photo courtesy of Ms. Taylor.

“I didn’t have a normal childhood. I feel like it was taken away from me.”

"I feel like those symptoms were my entire childhood. I didn't have a normal childhood. I feel like it was taken away from me. I couldn't participate in cheer and basketball, and I missed so much school from being in pain that I was retained. I hated it. No child should have to endure it, and many grownups didn't understand enough to help. I remember only one teacher; Neil Adams, offering compassion during this time. He would allow me to wear extra hoodies in his class to combat the cold; a side effect from the anemia."

Taylor feels that the real impact of the water crisis occurred before the crisis was exposed. "The water crisis was before the water crisis. That's when I got sick, and I'm sure that's when many others got sick as well."

Teneisha Turner

Written by Jameca Patrick-Singleton



Teneisha Turner shows the scars that exist on one of her children resulting from eczema that occurred during the water crisis. Photo courtesy of Ms. Turner

Teneisha Turner, a single mom, lives in Flint's 5th Ward with her six children: Manuel-20, Ci'Ane-19, A'Isha-15, Da'Quari-13, Le'Neisha-12 and La'Monta-11. Turner's brother, Da'Quan, also lives in the home.

According to Turner, before Flint's water source was switched and lead began leaching into the water supply, her household routines were successful.

"My kids were always really well behaved," Turner said. "They had good grades and participated in extracurricular activities. Things changed dramatically after the water switch. My kids began to suffer from eczema, especially Le'Neisha, who still suffers from the scars. La'Monta starting having trouble comprehending things and started being very hyperactive. Even I had symptoms. My hair started falling out, and I started being easily irritated, which was a direct contrast to my normal easygoing personality."

She and her children still experience these symptoms, according to Turner.

At the height of the crisis, Turner would visit one of the city's nine water points of distribution (PODs) to pick up water for her family to cook and prepare food with. She said that since the PODs are closed, she buys all of the water, which sometimes feels like an unnecessary financial burden.

"The lines at the Help Centers and other churches are too long, and most of the time they are out of water long before I get off of work," Turner said. "So, I buy water. I have a big family. We go through a lot of water. I feel like the traditional water PODs should be open. We were innocent in this. We didn't know how this switch was going to affect us."



Teneisha Turner and three of her children; A'Isha Sims and Le'Neisha Person and Manuel Woods
Photo Courtesy of Ms. Turner

"My kids began to suffer from eczema. Even I had symptoms. My hair started falling out."

Monique Howard

Written by Jameca Patrick-Singleton

In 2009, Monique Howard walked across the stage to accept her high school diploma with her baby girl Myla growing in her belly.

"I was merely more than a baby myself when Myla was born, but from the first moment that I held her in my arms she was my whole entire world," Howard said. "I knew that I would do anything in the world to protect her. I was young, but I instantly I knew that my little girl came first in this world. I instantly loved her more than I loved any other person, including myself. She was my everything. She still is."

Imagine her horror when about five years later, Myla's hair began to fall out, her skin was riddled with dry patches and Howard didn't know how to treat it.

"The doctors kept saying it was eczema, but it was beyond eczema," Howard said. "It was unlike anything that I had ever seen. At first, the doctors couldn't tell me why it was occurring. Then suddenly it became obvious to us all. It was the water."

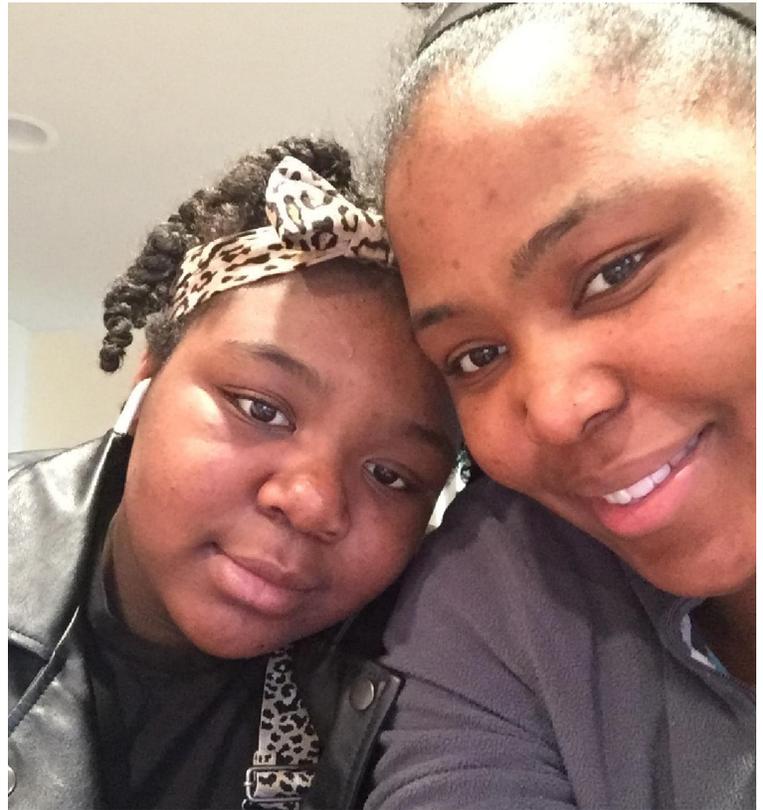
Howard describes struggling with treating Myla's overwhelming skin condition. She describes being sad and angry that her child was enduring this seemingly never ending rash with little reprieve.

"It was hard. When people normally get rashes, the instructions are to keep the infected area clean. How do you keep an area clean when the water that is coming from your faucet is the very thing that is causing the infection? It's a horrible place to be in. How do you protect your child from water? I was absolutely horrified, and more than anything, I was angry that this was being allowed to occur. It's like my child's life didn't matter to them (the governmental officials who initially ignored the crisis). They didn't care what this was doing to my child - what this was doing to so many children."

Though Myla still has eczema, her rashes are far better controlled.

"We use a shower filter and try to limit the amount that her skin touches unfiltered water. We also wash her hair with bottled water. While I am happy that she isn't constantly breaking out in rashes, I still have concerns. Myla has lots of scarring all over her body that is a result of the rashes. I worry that those scars may last through adolescence and into adulthood. I am very prayerful that they won't. I feel like this water crisis is never going to end, because even if the water ever becomes safe to drink, the scars from the crisis may never ever go away, literally."

"How do you protect your child from water?"



Myla and Monique Howard. Photo by Monique Howard.

Romeegan Norman

Written by Latisha Jones

Romeegan Norman is a single mother living in Flint's 5th Ward, with two kids. When Norman initially discovered that she could no longer use her tap water, it was very scary. Watching brown water spewing from her faucet just wasn't right, she thought. Living a life in fear and worry became her new reality very quickly. Additionally, she worried about the health of her children and her family, causing her anxiety levels to skyrocket.

Her son and daughter both experienced extreme dry skin and severe skin rashes, which caused her to take her children to a skincare specialist to get the problem fixed. Her daughter has had to visit urgent care multiple times because of skin irritation. Norman herself faced itching and burning problems on her arms.

Three people live in her household. They go through at least a case a week, depending on the quantity.

In her household, they use purified bottled water because Norman feels relief knowing that the water is clean. The fear of not being able to use the water



Living a life in fear and worry became a new reality very quickly.

that she is paying for is very emotionally draining for Norman.

Although her pipes have been replaced, she still doesn't trust the water that comes from her pipes. Therefore, she will continue to purchase bottled water.

Socially she became closer with her friends because they had a common issue, and she had the opportunity to help guide her friends in the right direction.

When Norman goes to restaurants she requests bottled water.

She feels as if the local officials haven't done enough to keep members of their community safe and lead-free.

Instead of fighting about differences, she feels it's time for her community to come together to become one-especially since surrounding cities look down on Flint and think it is funny to make jokes about the city, she said.

"The fact that its 2020 and people are still not able to use the water in their homes is disgraceful," Norman said.

Pam Folts

Written by Jameca Patrick-Singleton

Pam Folts, who lives in Flint's 5th Ward, says that although the water switch that occurred in 2014 did not seem to immediately impact her, she instinctively knew not to trust the new water source. She remembers when DuPont Chemical and the automotive factories were using the Flint River to dispose some of their chemicals. She also remembers stories from her friend's parents about how the Flint River caught on fire due to oil deposit pollution sometime around the 1930s. Still, she didn't know the hardships the water would be costing her years later.

"I saw the (then) mayor drinking the water, and I just didn't trust it," Folts said.

Folts was right to not trust the water source. Residents immediately started complaining about the smell and taste of their water supply and began to show up at city council meetings with containers filled with discolored water, claiming to have captured the water from their faucets.

"My children were just as concerned," Folts said. "They no longer live in Flint, But for Christmas that year they got me a water cooler and insisted that I drink from it long before the announcement of lead and copper in the water."

In addition to switching the way that she drinks her own water, Folts said that the new water source started causing problems in her home that she is still experiencing today!

Her house came with a 100 year old boiler. Once the water switch occurred, she had to replace the boiler and then four years later, replace the newer boiler. She believes the issues with the water caused corrosion to the water pipes in her home, causing crud and corrosion in her entire boiler system that remain today. The issues with the boiler system actually impact her heat and they have caused the floor in her sunroom to buckle.

Folts also installed a whole house filter that has three levels of filters. One filter is required to be changed monthly, another every three months and the other yearly. According to Folts, when she changes



Folts has had to replace and pay for two new boilers after the lead corrosion destroyed them. Her insurance company refused to cover the costs. Photo by L. M. Land

her monthly and three month filters there is a half inch of orange, gray and black goo on the filters. Folts feels that this is proof that the Flint Water Crisis is far from over.

Not only is the water crisis affecting her home, it is affecting the way that she socializes.

"After the water crisis occurred, I still have parties, but instead of lovely glasses with ice in them, I have a plastic bottle of water at each place setting, emphasizing that my guests don't have to worry about whether or not to drink the water."

Today, when she changes her whole house water filters, there is a half inch of orange, gray & black goo on the filters.

Balicia Young

Written by Jameca Patrick-Singleton



Top: Balicia Young with her children Larrion Taylor and Ana Young. Ana has had reoccurring rashes as a result of the Flint Water Crisis.

Left: Larrion Taylor holds his baby sister Ana Young, who was born at the peak of the Flint Water Crisis. Photos courtesy of Balicia Young.

Like many who have endured the Flint Water Crisis, Balicia Young, a single mother of two found, herself to be in disbelief that the crisis was actually allowed to occur.

“This was a man-made disaster,” Young said. “A horrible event caused by people, that changed the entire trajectory of a whole city. How does a government allow this to happen? I kept asking myself ‘why don’t Flint lives matter?’”

During the height of the crisis, Young gave birth to her daughter, Ana.

“I remember warming up bottled water to bathe her, or other days just giving her wash ups with a wet towel, still with bottled water,” Young said.

According to Young, using bottled water was still not enough to protect her child’s skin. She said her daughter kept having reoccurring rashes and her hair even fell out.

“It was horrible. I had to smear her with steroid cream every day.”

Young and her family are still navigating the water crisis.

“I hate it. It’s not over. We still have to brush our teeth with bottled water, which isn’t easily accessible because the lines at the Help Centers are so long.”

Young said that access to and using bottled water isn’t the only water crisis issue that she is experiencing with her family.

“The crisis that created the crisis was the high water bills. My water bill has always been high and recently, the city changed my water meter, and it has gone up even more. This is baffling to me because we use less water and not more. I truly hope that the crisis is over soon, However, I hope that with its resolve the cost of water for Flint residents is also addressed.”

“This was a man-made disaster. A horrible event caused by people, that changed the entire trajectory of a whole city.”

The Simpson Family

Written by Jameca Patrick-Singleton

Makela Simpson is a 42-year-old wife, mother of four and grandmother of three. Simpson's family, like any other family in Flint, still struggles with the community devastation commonly called the Flint Water Crisis. According to Simpson, the water crisis hit hard and fast.

"We were barely able to complete daily tasks," Simpson said. "I couldn't cook or use the water to wash my daughter's hair. I even struggled with washing dishes because I didn't know how it would impact my family."

Simpson describes her daily life at the beginning of the crisis like something out of a war movie.

"There were military personnel driving up and down the streets delivering water," Simpson said. "You could also go pick up water from the fire stations. It was crazy. I remember driving past a closed gas station and seeing someone in a parked truck passing out water. I remember this day vividly because for some reason this was my breaking point. I just broke down crying, and I couldn't stop. I don't know if I was crying because I was grateful for all of the help or crying because I was overwhelmed by the situation. Maybe it was a combination of both,"

For the Simpson family, the devastation from the water crisis still exists today.

"It has been horrible. We are still breaking out in rashes from washing our bodies with the water. We can't brush our teeth with the faucet water. We have to use bottled water to do everything. I bathe my grand kids in bottled water just so they don't break out. It's hard."

Simpson said her outside pipes were replaced but she is frustrated that nothing has been done with her indoor plumbing, appliances (such as her hot water heater) or faucet fixtures. She stated that she does not trust the water in restaurants and that she and her family have no faith in the government. Simpson stated that though she purchases most of the water that she and her family uses, she does occasionally go to some of the water distributions from the local Help Centers. She finds waiting in lines for free bottled water to be both time consuming and humiliating.

"We are waiting in line like we're asking for handouts, and all we want is clean water. This is America. It's crazy that we have to live like this. Our water was poisoned, and we're just trying to figure out how to make it through this storm and how to save our children from the impact of the water affects."



Top: Makela Simpson said she has struggled washing dishes because she didn't know how it would impact her family due to the Flint Water Crisis.

Below: The Simpson family is one of numerous Flint families still using bottled water to brush their teeth.

Photos by Alvin J. Brown, Jr./Eye Snap Studios.

“We are still breaking out in rashes from washing...with the water.”

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East Siders Still Using Filtered and Bottled Water

Written by L. M. Land

Paul Wizynajtys and David Barber have been residents of the “east side” of Flint for over 30 years, near Kearsley Park.

During the Flint Water Crisis, they did not experience the discoloration in their water as reported in other parts of the east side. A water department employee had explained to them that the sewer in their particular area was one that flushed more effectively than other parts of the east side.

Although Flint residents have been told their water is safe, they have no intention of discontinuing use of the filter on their kitchen faucet or bottled water. Their pets are also receiving filtered water.

There were so many layers of lies from multiple sources about the Flint water, they still do not trust if the water is truly safe to drink. Wizynajtys said, ***“The same people who are telling us it is OK now, are the same who lied to us before.”***



Paul Wizynajtys and David Barber in their exquisite east side garden. Photo by L. M. Land

Our Yards and Streets

Written by L. M. Land

The city of Flint did not coordinate the project of replacing pipes in the most efficient way. Only the pipes to the house from the road were done. I don't know if the pipes running along the roads were lead too. The same street sometimes had work done one year, then some more the next year. Using my block in the 5th ward as an example, the original digging took place one summer three years ago. They filled most of the holes in the road, and left three filled with stone and sand. Last summer they finally filled in holes on my block, but not on nearby blocks. Holes filled with sand and stone wash out in heavy rain, leaving deep holes.

The lawns torn up to replace pipes were also intermittently filled. ***My neighbors have had holes in their lawn for three years.*** They did come by this summer to replace some sidewalks and curbs, but again, did not fix the lawns. One neighbor now has a new sidewalk, yet still three separate holes in his lawn...for three years! If you go to the expense of filling them yourself, they just get ripped up again.

Oren Street is another example of huge holes left in the pavement. I have had to have my tires balanced and aligned twice due to the sand filled potholes washing out. This is a predominately Black neighborhood, and I do wonder if racism was involved in the decision to leave my area unfinished. Even though we had a Black mayor at the time, it appears to my eye from driving around that our Black neighborhoods have been slighted.

Now they are tearing up the same roads in my area again.

I wonder, does leaving just one corroded lead pipe affect the entire water system? (Update Aug. 2020-the holes in my neighbor's lawns were filled after going to press.)



Two of three separate ripped up lawns on one block in the Metawanenee Hills area, which have been ripped up each year for three years. Photo by L. M. Land

The Tunstall Family

Written by Tanya Terry

Geralda Tunstall, 37, lives in Flint's 2nd Ward and remembers when she first became aware of the Flint Water Crisis. She recalls a time when she was able to get free bottled water for drinking, cooking and for herself and her family to brush their teeth. She was told it was OK to take a bath or shower with the water, and her family maintained their normal hygiene routine.

"I think my husband's skin may be a little more sensitive than mine because he was breaking out with the water," Tunstall said. "He had to limit the time he was in the shower, and when he washed his hands he had to use bottled water."

The Tunstalls live on Cloverlawn Drive, in what she considers a newer neighborhood, .

"We never had the brown tinted, yellow tinted water," Tunstall said "But they started to send some chemicals through our water, and sometimes we can smell it."

According to Tunstall, it smells like a chlorinated swimming pool.

Tunstall said that her city of Flint water bill is roughly \$120 per month, and it is for water her family cannot use for drinking, cooking and brushing teeth. In addition to this water bill, Tunstall is forced to purchase bottled water for daily use.

"In other places in Genesee County, such as Grand Blanc and Burton, people pay around that much every three months. We're paying three times as much for water we can't really use, as a whole."

When the details about the Flint Water Crisis started to be exposed in the news is when Tunstall said she realized the seriousness of the matter. She, her husband and her son had their lead levels tested. Fortunately, their lead levels were appropriate.

"But, now every time something happens with my son at school, it's like 'was that because of the water we were drinking?' You just don't feel safe even though they told us a couple times it was. You just don't have any trust in the system."

Numerous Flint children have learning or cognitive



Geralda Tunstall and Isaiah Tunstall. Photo by Geralda Tunstall

issues as a result of drinking the lead in the water. Tunstall's son, who initially drank the water, has not been tested to determine if he has learning or cognitive issues.

The Tunstalls have had their pipes replaced. Tunstall describes this as a disaster.

"They dug up our grass in our front yard, and when they put the dirt back in, they didn't put the dirt in a way that was leveled. So, then our sidewalk sunk in. They left it like that a year. They never came and planted any grass seed for the grass they dug up."

Because there was a patch of dirt in the area, the Tunstalls planted their own grass. Then, when the sidewalk had to be fixed they had to plant grass seed again. Tunstall said they were not reimbursed for this.

Though their pipes were replaced, (Continued on page 19.)

The Tunstall Family, Continued

In addition to buying bottled water, her water bill for water she cannot use is roughly \$120 per month.

“In other places in Genesee County, people pay around that much every three months.”

(Continued from page 18.) Tunstall questions where the pipes are running from, whether they're running from old pipes or if there are still particles running through from other places in the water mains.

“I don't know whether they can be 100% sure with us. What about next week after they disrupted some pipes replacing them? I don't even know whether they got all the pipes tested.”

As a state employee, Tunstall doesn't believe the correct testing is taking place per the regulations that were set. The Tunstalls have not have their water tested in a year or more.

Tunstall has a filter on her faucet in her kitchen but is skeptical about using it.



*Photo of the way many yards were left after water pipes were replaced. This example is on Lyon Street, and has been there for three years. Every summer they work on it again, but never finish.
Photo by L. M. Land*

“They said the first set of filters they gave us for our faucets weren't separating the lead out like they were supposed to.”

Tunstall and her husband differ in their opinions about Flint leadership, which she said causes a strain in their relationship. She said none of them trust the leadership of the city right now.

Tunstall said she appreciates friends from other states asking her if she needs water, but said it makes her feel somewhat ashamed.

She does not trust the drinking water at local restaurants unless it comes out of a bottle—even when they have signs up that say the restaurants get their water from Detroit.

“It (The Flint Water Crisis) really made me more enlightened at our political system here in Genesee County. I wasn't a big political person before. I voted. But, I'm really starting to pay more attention to the issues. I pay attention more to make sure the officials we elect really are involved in the issues and have something they can bring that affects us in Flint.”

STRANGE BUT TRUE

*When the lead was announced in our water, local authorities put up billboards telling Flint residents to boil the water to make it safe to drink! The opposite is true, lead is heavier than steam, so it concentrates in the bottom of the pan, making the water **more toxic**.*

A counter campaign by an unknown source thankfully put up their own billboard signs warning people:

DO NOT BOIL THE WATER.

Dennis Williams-Mitchell

Written by Antonio Sweeney



Dennis Williams-Mitchell.
Photo by Mr. Williams-Mitchell.

Dennis Williams-Mitchell, 22, is a loving mentor and director of many non-profit youth organizations within the city of Flint. He currently attends Mott Community College and Northwood University, studying business and non-profit management.

Williams-Mitchell describes the water crisis as shocking to the city of Flint. He was living in the 6th Ward at the time.

"I was in disbelief when the water crisis started to happen here (and thought) this can't be real," he said.

A lot of his young relatives were hit hard by the water crisis causing physical and mental damages. Yet he perseveres for a brighter day.

Being a mentor to people of all ages, he wanted to set an example by volunteering.

"I always strive to make an impact!" Williams-Mitchell said. "I would volunteer at churches to hand out water cases along with my mentees and be involved within the community, helping any way that I can."

Williams-Mitchell is one of the many Flintstones who decided to relocate to Grand Blanc, just outside of Flint. Being a public speaker, he travels often, and people are impressed by his

“Flint means rock from a spiritual perspective. Flint is a hard place, not a city for the weak. Being from Flint is on the come up and not dead!”

character. When asked where he is from, he proudly tells people about his hometown of Flint, Michigan. "How are you from Flint?" and "is the water really bad there?" are questions he is often asked. He believes labels have been put on the city of Flint and people don't look at the positive things about the city, only the negative.

"I've never looked at the water crisis as a setback. It's a blessing in disguise. This water crisis is an opportunity to put Flint back on the map".

Williams-Mitchell continues to be a shining star in his community by uplifting and motivating people. A message he would like to say to the world is that Flint is a place of growth.

"Flint means rock from a spiritual perspective. Flint is a hard place, not a city for the weak. Being from Flint is on the come up and not dead!"

Mona Jones

Written by Latisha Jones

Mona Jones, a resident of Flint's 2nd Ward, is not one to panic. When the Flint Water Crisis initially started, she did not let her emotions take control over her. Her main concern was for her grandchildren and her family members and the fact that now they have to share the common struggle of not having clean water in their households.

Jones uses both filtered and bottled water to make sure that she is using clean water.

She feels as if the water crisis has had a psychological affect on her mental health.

What bothers her the most is the fact the local officials continued to lie about the water being clean and usable. She also believes that the water has more problems than the public knows about. Although Jones' pipes



Mona Jones (front center, in black jacket), a resident of Flint's 2nd ward, is from a large Flint family and does not trust the water in her city. Photo by Floyd Clack.

“We have one of the top engineering schools in the country. We also have The University of Michigan Flint, which is one of the best colleges. However..we will only be known as the city with the dirty water..”

have been replaced, she thinks that the chlorine levels in the water are too high. During the process of getting her pipes replaced, her lawn was destroyed and the construction workers left a huge pile of dirt on her lawn for weeks. It wasn't until she called city hall to complain that the pile was removed from her yard. The construction was also very inconvenient, according to Jones.

Jones buys water from local grocery stores. Because she can afford to buy cases of water, she will continue to do so. She doesn't think that the organizations that give away water are reliable and would rather let people who can't afford to buy cases take advantage of the water distribution opportunity.

She is blessed to say the water crisis has had no physical impact on her life. She feels like the older people in her neighborhood have gotten closer because they had to make sure that they were looking out for each other as far as providing information for each other. Being that Jones is a senior citizen, she feels like it is very important to know information before she panics.

“The water crisis has been the most challenging thing that Flint has ever had to go through during my lifetime of being here,” Jones said. “The fact that its 2020 and the water crisis still isn't over is very bothersome. Flint deserves clean water. We have one of the top engineering schools in the country. We also have The University of Michigan Flint, which is one of the best colleges. However, we will never be known for any of them. We will only be known as the city with the dirty water, not where the first sit down strike happened. Flint has such a rich history that has all went down the drain.”

Kimberlee and Bethany

Written by Tanya Terry

Kimberlee Ferris, 64, and Bethany Gerhardt, 65, are residents of Flint's 3rd Ward who can testify to the fact the Flint Water Crisis has affected them and continues to make their lives a struggle. According to Ferris, when Flint's water source was first changed to river water, they immediately started buying bottled water because the water in their home smelled and looked like a "fish tank."

"I would clean the toilet with bleach daily because it would leave rings and heavy deposits in the toilet water," Ferris said. "Because of the smell and the look of the (tap) water, I told Bethany 'nobody drinks this water'".

When one of the ladies' cats and their poodle started having seizures is when they realized how dreadful the water situation was. The pets were taken to the veterinarian and put on phenobarbital; one of the most commonly used drugs to treat seizures in dogs. The ladies figured the problem was the water and began giving the pets bottled water, as well. However, the seizures continued even with the medication.

Ferris and Gerhardt also started to have irritating body rashes. They put filters on their shower heads to try to combat the problem, but said that didn't help much.

Gerhardt has been diagnosed with Crohn's disease, which she said has gotten worse because of the water. She has also recently been diagnosed with lung cancer.

Because of the treatment and support Gerhardt needs, Ferris has to buy water often and cannot wait in line hours to get free water even when it is available to others. Gerhardt gets radiation treatment five days a week and chemotherapy one day a week, and Ferris drives her to her appointments.

The ladies are not sure whether their pipes have been replaced.

"Our property has water lines coming from two streets," Ferris said. "They replaced the water lines from Thom Road, but they had marked it off for in front of our house, which is Branch Street, and they never did anything. So, I don't know where we actually get



*The Flint Water Crisis has caused several complications for Kimberlee Ferris and Bethany Gerhardt, of Flint's 3rd Ward.
Photo by L. M. Land*

our water from."

The ladies do not trust the water coming from their pipes.

"My hair thinned and it started snapping off," Gerhardt said. "I have intermittent tremors now." Gerhardt said these complications are due to the Flint water.

Ferris wonders if her extreme forgetfulness is also because of the water's effect on the brain.

She said the water crisis is an extra financial strain.

In addition, she needs help from one of her grandkids or her son to get the water in the house because of her bad back.

Gerhardt's main issue has been anger, she said. She said she has been very angry because she was lied to and told the water was drinkable when she is pretty sure it isn't. Gerhardt said it is because of the water they do not have family dinners at their house very much anymore.

Both ladies said it is embarrassing when family comes to visit who live outside of the Flint area and they have to remind them not to drink water from the tap. They do not trust the water at restaurants or other local establishments. Rather than *(Continued on page 23.)*

Kimberlee and Bethany, Continued

“Our property has water lines coming from two streets.” Only one was replaced. “So, I don’t know where we actually get our water from.”

(Continued from page 22.) spend money outside their community, they have opted not to go out to eat since before the coronavirus pandemic.

They vividly remember when a grandchild was about 5-years-old and they started bath water for her only to see the water was brown and to smell a stench as the grandchild was stepping into the bathtub just before they stopped her. Unfortunately, they have not been able to find a filter to fit on the bathtub head.

“We didn’t know the water was that bad,” Gerhardt said

“It looked like sewer water.”

Ferris and Gerhardt together go through about eight to 10 cases of water a week.

Gerhardt said she showers a lot less since the Flint Water Crisis began. She also said because of it she doesn’t drink as much water as she should.

“With cancer I’m supposed to stay hydrated,” she said.

Ferris and Gerhardt are two Flint residents whose lives remain difficult because of the Flint Water Crisis.

The Water Bottle

On a single day, September 25, 2015, the entire city of Flint found out we could no longer drink the water, due to the invisible presence of lead.

Instantly, the water bottle became a lifeline for residents of Flint, Michigan. **We all had to switch to bottled purified water (not spring water) immediately.**

There were debates, such as “no plastic to save the earth” vs. “save yourself!” Then it became “recycle bottles to save the earth!” One concept developed was to put the empties in a large clear plastic bag so the recycling truck could tell it was not for the garbage truck. These large clear bags were delivered to our doors by the amazing crew who literally walked the city handing out water filters for our faucets.

I remember putting out my plastic bottles for recycling. A late night storm came through and blew them all over the street. I used the clear plastic bags after that. I also crushed bottles and used them in the bottom of large tomato pots instead of rocks for water drainage. There were art exhibits at The Greater Flint Arts Council and Buckham Gallery in downtown Flint, where the art was made of water bottles.

These little transparent bottles became controversy, art, and life itself.

Over time, water bottle usage has gone down as alternatives are being found. Still, we are all grateful for the ubiquitous clear plastic water bottle. -L. M. Land



Pets were also Poisoned

Written by L. M. Land

On April 25, 2014, I did not know that I had begun poisoning my beloved pets.

I already understood the long term ill effect of lead poisoning when we found out Flint's water was toxic. For an unrelated reason, I had previously suffered a long illness from heavy metal poisoning, and my health never fully recovered. My heart aches for the Flint people who have been affected for the rest of their lives due to mismanagement by our former governor, Rick Snyder, and his appointed "Flint Emergency Manager" Darnell Earley.

I cannot take the risk of being poisoned again, so I do not drink the Flint city water to this day, and my *pets* don't either.

On April 25, 2014, I did not know that I had begun poisoning my beloved pets. This is the day the Flint River water was sent through our water pipes without the chemical corrosion inhibitors that prohibit the leaching of lead from the pipes into the water supply. **This was a conscious "money-saving" decision on the part of the city overseers.**

There were a significant number of "boil water" notices shortly after. The problem with this was that we always heard about it *after* the fact, which meant we were drinking what we thought was E. coli water. I later found out there was also TTHM toxicity in the water at the time as well as the lead and other toxins.

At this time I rented from my friend on Welch Blvd; between us we had five dogs and cats. Our assumption was that a little E. coli would not affect our dogs because they eat disgusting things normally. (They really do.)

By summer 2014, we already did not trust the authorities regarding the boil water notices, and acquired a water cooler with purified water.

Our early distrust saved us from getting lead poisoning or Legionnaires' disease.

Slowly, as the months went on, we noticed the pets were all acting old, prematurely graying, had achy joints and were becoming lethargic. My dog Lino, only 4 years old, had been epileptic and under control with medication. His hair was going prematurely gray, and he began to have seizures again. Initially a brain tumor was suspected. One day he had a horrific seizure that literally killed him before I could get him to the vet.

I also lost my cat, Magic Kitty, at this time, who became sick and had to be euthanized. My veterinarian could not figure out what was wrong with him.

On September 25, 2015, Flint was officially notified that our water had been poisoned by lead for the past 17 months. We *immediately* changed our pets over to bottled water. Within about two months the remaining pets started slowly bouncing back. We did not know to test for lead when Lino began having seizures and died, but my veterinarian said it was most likely the cause of his horrific death. We were unable to prove it by then, of course. Three of the other dogs developed bizarre cancers rarely seen in dogs within the following year. The fifth dog became senile rapidly, and had neurological damage. That is five dogs who all suffered permanent damage from lead poisoning, and one cat.

If this was the effect on pets, imagine what happened to people, growing children, even the soil we watered our gardens with in the summer, all contaminated with the neurotoxin lead!

I moved in 2017 into a house with a new reverse osmosis system. This is an (*Continued on page 25.*)

Pets were also Poisoned, Continued

(Continued from page 24.) ideal setup until you need filters or the bladder in the holding tank goes bad. Filters are expensive and no longer carried by stores in Flint. We are struggling now to figure out how to reset the bladder in the holding tank, and if it won't work I will have to buy a new tank. The tank holds only one gallon, so if you are cooking or have guests, bottled water is still needed for backup. I am back to exclusively purified bottled water until I can resolve and pay for all of this.

We also have a filter on our shower head. I will always use purified water for consumption at my house, for myself and my loved ones, with either two or four legs, for as long as I live in Flint.

Emotionally, I cannot believe that our water is OK. As I understand it, not all lead pipes were replaced as permission was not obtained from all the home owners, although our water is now treated for pipe corrosion in the proper way. The pipes in the roads were not changed in my neighborhood, just the pipes from the road to the house.

Flint residents were lied to for 17 months, repeatedly, deliberately, and I just can't feel any trust. Every one of the people who poisoned my city have been declared innocent, and we also got to pay everyone's legal bills with our tax dollars. *One of the long lasting effects this crisis has had on me is a lot of anger, grief and a deep distrust of politicians.*

To review the history of the Flint Water Crisis, the most complete and accurate summary I have found is at <https://www.nrdc.org/stories/flint-water-crisis-everything-you-need-know#sec-whyis>.



Wu Li Dancer and Lino Alexander were both affected by lead in Flint's water, which resulted in Lino's death. Photo by L. M. Land

Future Fallout

The children who were born at the beginning of the Flint Water Crisis have begun elementary school. Early reports are indicating that many of the children of all exposed ages are having problems with health, behavior and education. We will have to wait for statistics and official reports in the future to fully understand the extent of effects that 17 months of exposure to lead has had on our children.

We do know that it isn't good.

The effect of lead poisoning on the children of Flint, the 12 or more lives lost to Legionnaires' disease and the stillborn deaths of several hundred is the largest crime of the Flint Water Crisis.

The effects of lead poisoning will be with our children for their entire lives.

The Jenkins Family

Written by Jameca Patrick-Singleton

“I have to do what’s in the best interest of my kids.”

The Jenkins family is a loving family in Flint’s 1st Ward. Marchand Jenkins is wife to 39-year-old Nicholas and mother to 3 children, 15-year-old Quinaries Holden, 11-year-old Nicholas Jenkins Jr. and 2-week-old Nicolette. She describes the water crisis as “frustrating and frightening. I’m very frustrated” said Marchand Jenkins.

When little Nick (the nickname that the family calls Nicholas Jr.) was around 8 years old, his skin broke out uncontrollably. “Nothing that we tried worked. It was horrible” said Jenkins. “The only explanation that anyone could give me, even the doctors, was that the water was breaking him out. So here I was, a mom who had inadvertently put my children in harm’s way. That’s a heavy burden for a mom to carry. I was sad, I was angry, I was in disbelief that this was actually happening. I still carry a lot of that anger.”

Recently Jenkins gave birth to two-week-old Nicolette Jenkins. She stated since the time of her daughter’s birth, her family has tripled the amount of bottled water that they’ve had to purchase. “People keep telling me that I can bathe my baby in tap water, but I refuse. I’m literally paranoid to give my little baby a bath in that stuff. What if she breaks out the way that my son did? I refuse to take that kind of chance with my newborn.”

Jenkins reported that she absolutely does not trust the water. She stated that though her lead service lines have already been replaced, she doesn’t feel enough has been done to address the water crisis.

“I have to do what’s in the best interest of my kids, ***I have to protect them and right now that means not bathing my daughter in the water and not allowing any of my kids to drink from it***”.



Marchand Jenkins with newborn Nicolette. Photo courtesy of Ms. Jenkins.

Mayor Sheldon Neeley

Written by Tanya Terry



Sheldon Neeley was sworn in as the 94th mayor of Flint on Nov. 11, 2019. Photo courtesy of Mr. Neeley.

“The water crisis is not over. We still have a lot of work to do. I hope through our hard work, this administration can begin to earn back some of that trust and move our community forward.”

Mayor Sheldon Neeley told the Flint Courier News on July 8, 2020, that as a resident of the city of Flint, he is impacted at home by the Flint Water Crisis in the exact same way as all residents.

“We all bear the scars of this gross injustice and I remain hopeful that those responsible will be held criminally responsible for both their actions and their failure to act,” Neeley said. “I also am frustrated that so many projects designed to repair our infrastructure languished with inactivity for so long under the previous administration.”

Neeley said he regards the \$100 million service line replacement project as by far the most recognizable of the city’s water recovery efforts.

“I am happy to say that we are now about 90% complete, and, after being shut down for several months as part of the state response to COVID-19, work has resumed to complete the project,” Neeley said. “The city of Flint has excavated service lines at more than 25,600 homes. Lead or galvanized steel pipes were found and replaced at approximately 9,600 of those residences. When we are done, the service line replacement project will have checked (and replaced when necessary) all possible residential service lines in the city of Flint.”

Under the current administration, construction has begun to create a secondary water source, capacity of water reservoirs was increased and the chemical feed building was upgraded.

“We are doing the work needed to repair our infrastructure. We are building a new, more transparent city hall that engages residents and respects their concerns....Few Flint homes still have lead service lines-and even those that do are showing their water quality levels are as good or better than other communities nationwide.”

The 90th percentile testing showed four parts per billion or micrograms per liter (ppb), according to the *City of Flint 2019 Annual Water Quality Report*. The federal action level is 15 ppb.

Still, Neeley said he uses filtered tap water. “I do drink water and coffee at restaurants and elsewhere in the city. The water crisis is not over. We still have a lot of work to do. I hope through our hard work, this administration can begin to earn back some of that trust and move our community forward.”

Doctor Mona Hanna-Attisha

Written by Tanya Terry



Doctor Mona Hanna-Attisha is regarded as a hero in Flint. Photo courtesy of Dr. Hanna-Attisha.

Even the initial impact of the Flint Water Crisis was tremendous, affecting every dimension of life, according to Dr. Mona Hanna-Attisha MD, MPH, FAAP. Hanna-Attisha is a pediatrician in Flint and a medical educator who used to oversee the training program for pediatric residents at Hurley Children's Hospital. "From the moment of recognizing and learning about the potential of lead in the water, my role as a clinician and my role as an educator quickly shifted to that of a detective-scientist to figure out what was going on-and also very much of an advocate," she said.

Every part of her professional and personal life was changed because of the water crisis.

The trouble began when the city switched its water supply to the Flint River in 2014 in an effort to save money. Almost immediately, residents of Flint started noticing the water had a bad smell and color, and they began to observe other serious problems with it, as well.

Although Hanna-Attisha said others had been raising alarm bells that something was wrong before her involvement, her awakening to this serious problem came from the moment she heard about the possibility of lead in the water. This occurred in August of 2015.

"That is the moment I realized something is serious," Hanna-Attisha said. "You do not mess around with lead. Bacteria and other things-that sounds like it has been taken care of. But, when you know what lead does, especially as a pediatrician and a public health expert, when you know how it can impact children, you get involved."

At high levels of exposure, lead attacks the brain and central nervous system to cause convulsions, coma and, in the most severe cases, death. Children who survive severe lead poisoning may experience behavioral disorders or suffer mental retardation.

Hanna-Attisha advised city officials to stop using the Flint River for water in September 2015. She said she went through a significant pushback where people were denying and dismissing her work. In October of 2016, Flint officially switched back to using Detroit's water. By then, Flint was left with thousands of damaged water pipes. The damage to Flint and its children had already been done.

Hanna-Attisha experienced extreme feelings of anxiety, fear, anger, sadness and stress as a result of *(Continued on page 29.)*

The Flint
Registry
website is
[https://www.
flintregistry.
org/](https://www.flintregistry.org/)

Doctor Mona Hanna-Attisha, Continued

(Continued from page 28.) the crisis. Still, she is an Oakland County resident, who only needs to use bottled or filtered water at work or when in Flint. She said the way she continues to cope with the water crisis is nothing compared to the way those living in the city still deal with the crisis. She has tried to channel her emotions into action.

Hanna-Attisha has no biological relatives living in Flint.

"But there are lots of folks I consider my siblings and family. I was away from home a lot, especially in the very beginning. I was away from my biological children day and night. My biological kids said: 'It's OK. If Mom's not with us, she's with our 6,000 siblings.' There was this saying at my house. We said 'our Flint kids are no different than my kids.' This is something we should all care about and be working to prevent."

Hanna-Attisha said though pipe replacement was on hold due to the pandemic, the pipe replacement program should still be completed by the end of 2020.

U.S. District Judge David Lawson approved a settlement agreement at a 2017 court hearing brought by several advocacy groups who sued the city and state of Michigan over the lead crisis. At that time, the city agreed to dig up services lines at 18,000 homes and replace lines made of lead and galvanized steel.

"If anyone hasn't had their pipe replaced, this is the time where they really have to reach out to the city to get that done."

It's available to everybody who has lead pipes or a galvanized pipes to get them replaced. There's no cost, which is amazing-because in some of the other communities there's a cost to get a lead pipe replaced."

Hanna-Attisha said Flint is only the third city in the country to replace its lead pipes. She said people in other cities are learning because of what happened in Flint, and more cities are replacing their lead pipes.

Hanna-Attisha also encourages Flint residents to register with the Flint Registry and take a short survey, for which they are compensated \$25.

According to the Flint Registry's website, the Flint Registry is a project that will identify individuals

exposed to the Flint Water Crisis, connect people to services and programs, promote health and wellness and help understand how the crisis has affected both the community and Flint's children. Hanna-Attisha leads the registry's effort.

"What we are learning through the data that comes out of the Flint Registry is people have ongoing needs. Even to this day, people are signing up for the registry and there are a lot of gaps in their health that we are trying to alleviate. They still need things like food, healthcare and developmental assessments."

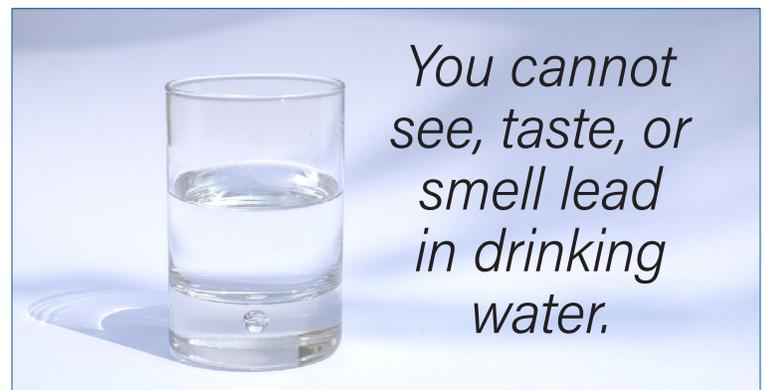
When in Flint, Hanna-Attisha does, unlike many, trust the water at restaurants and other establishments. She trusts they are using filters or have tested the water. She said restaurants don't normally have lead pipes, which are normally found in homes.

"In addition, if you're using your water a lot and it's a busy place-those risks are also minimized."

Hanna-Attisha said if she was a young child or pregnant she would have more concern. She pointed out pregnant women who are exposed to lead also expose their unborn child. Lead can damage a developing baby's nervous system.

So, according to Hanna-Attisha, the fight is not over.

"We work with many community partners who are still actively involved in water donation. There are partners in all of our work. We help promote those events, encourage donations and increase advocacy about these issues."



Summary of The 2019 Annual Water Quality Report

Summarized by Tanya Terry

What follows is a summary of the The City of Flint 2019 Annual Water Quality Report, which was mailed to Flint residents from Flint City Hall in July 2020. It indicates a reporting requirement had not been met for the city of Flint, and a violation had been issued to the city for not collecting the required 60 lead and copper tests.



The report read: *We are required to monitor your drinking water for specific contaminants on a regular basis. Results of regular monitoring are an indicator of whether or not our drinking water meets health standards. **During the July 1, 2019 through December 31, 2019 monitoring period, we did not obtain the requisite number of samples and have them tested for lead and copper. Even though we collected lead and copper samples from 123 sites, only 49 were acceptable for compliance.***

Residents were told there was nothing they needed to do at this time. However, **it was recommended that as a precaution filters be used on faucets, which the report said are available free of charge at the Flint City Hall kiosk** from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Monday through Friday. The report stated this is not an emergency, but said customers have a right to know what happened and what was done to attempt to correct the situation.

The federally mandated reporting date was January 10, 2020 for the six month period ending December 31, 2019. The city requested an extension to complete and submit their Lead and Copper Report to the Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy (EGLE) on December 27, 2019. Additional samples were taken in the period between January 1, 2020 and June 30, 2020. The city was able to collect samples from 123 sites and submitted their Lead and Copper Report to EGLE on February 12, 2020 and 163 total as of July 14. Only 49

Tier 1 sites were validated for compliance. At least 60 of those samples were to be valid to meet state and federal testing guidelines. **Three of the samples were found to have a concentration of lead above the level which, if exceeded, triggers treatment or other requirements that a water system must follow.** The likely source was said to be corrosion of household plumbing, erosion of natural deposits. It would take several weeks for a final determination of how many of the new samples meet all the testing requirements, as of July 14, 2020.

Anyone with questions about the City of Flint 2019 Annual Water Quality Report or other water related concerns is advised to contact the City of Flint Water Treatment Plant at 810-787-6537.

We still can't trust the city water. April 2014 - August 2020.

CONTRIBUTORS



Tanya Terry: Editor, writer. Photo by Alvin J. Brown, Jr./Eye Snap Studios.



Jameca Patrick-Singleton: Project Coordinator, writer. Photo by Alvin J. Brown, Jr./Eye Snap Studios.



Linda Boose: Writer. Photo by Alvin J. Brown, Jr./Eye Snap Studios.



Latisha Jones: Writer. Photo by Alvin J. Brown, Jr./Eye Snap Studios.



Pastor Floyd Fuller: CEO, Flint Courier News. Photo by L. M. Land



Alvin Brown, photographer. Photo by Alvin J. Brown, Jr./Eye Snap Studios.



*Not Shown:
Antonio Davis,
Videographer.*

Special thanks to Pamela Folts.



Antonio Sweeney: Writer. Photo by Alvin J. Brown, Jr./Eye Snap Studios.



Lisa M. Land: Writer, photographer and graphic design. Photo by Angelica L. Roth.

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Who have you worked with here in Flint in support of the Flint Water Crisis?

◆ From the beginning, we wanted to provide more for the Flint Community than legal services. To that end, we have been fortunate to collaborate with equally passionate and dedicated individuals and organizations who are also committed to making a difference for Flint. We continue our partnership with actor, activist and humanitarian Hill Harper and the National Clean Water Collective who also works tirelessly for environmental justice. We have also had the opportunity to co-host events with local officials and community leaders along with Rev. Dr. Al Sharpton and attorney Ben Crump. Together, our message resonates stronger as we advocate for resolution and accountability in the Flint Water Crisis.

Is it too late to sign up for the Flint Water Crisis Lawsuit?

◆ We are quickly approaching deadlines, but it is not too late. We strongly encourage all current and past residents of Flint who have children under the age of 18 to contact our local Flint office if they have not yet filed a claim or are unsure of their eligibility.

