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### LOCAL NEWS

## Community Tournament Shoots for Success

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By Tiamoyo Harris



Photo by Shenarri Freeman

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Hoop For Hope Breast Cancer Awareness Tournament tipped off Sept. 14 at Bruce Monroe Park. Free to all in the community, about 16 three on three teams competed in the single elimination style bracket tournament with the court split in half. Crowds filled with students, parents, and community members looked on as they were entertained with giveaways, food, music, dancing, contests, as well as information about breast cancer. The tournament began at 1:00 p.m. and by 6:30 p.m. founders Kierra “KB Steez” Thomas and Ayo Amoo were packing up from a successful day.

“Everybody loves basketball so you can’t really go wrong with basketball. Plus, I really wanted to bring awareness to breast cancer,” Thomas said. “Breast cancer is something that really impacts our community, especially us women, but it’s great we have men out here as well participating and supporting the cause.”

Thomas and Amoo, who’ve known each other since their freshman year, started the event in 2012 when they were Howard University students. After graduation this past spring, Thomas relocated to New Orleans and Amoo relocated to Wisconsin. With the help of volunteers, they continue to hold the annual event working year round. Red Bull, Gatorade, GMChrysler and Pretty Girl Sweat are just some of the sponsors that the two were able to pull. One of the sponsors and partner, The Susan G. Coleman Foundation, happens to be the heart of the cause.

“Our foundation gives money to community grants as well as clinics that help women get more information about breast cancer as well as free screening.” Susan B. Coleman volunteer Adrian Johnson said. “I like how this event combines the community around and Howard too. As long as we’re invited, we’ll keep coming back.”

One person who has not only participated, but won the tournament all three years is senior Legal Communications major Bryce Fluellen of Oakland, Ca. whose team name is “The Money Team.”

"My friends put this together and I was with them when they first started, so it's a beautiful thing to see the growth," Fluellen said. "We had a goal and it was a three peat. It gets pretty competitive but we all know it's about the cause."

Majority of the crowd contained Howard University students but there were some others.

"When I saw the Hoop for Hope on the T-shirts I decided 'Hey let me stop by and talk to a few people.' I have a niece that just had a double vasectomy in February too," D.C. resident Kitty Chaney said. "I live in this area so I'm glad to see this going on. This is a good cause. I'm glad I'm here."

According to the National Cancer Institute, no city in the U.S. has a higher mortality rate from breast cancer than Washington, D.C. Johnson noted that many may think it is a disease for older women, but it is a disease that affects all ages.

"A couple of my friends have breast cancer so I think it's really important for people to be aware and that it's something that's really huge that we all need to know about," second year Volunteer Keya Kellum a Marketing major of Oakland, Cal. said.

The purpose of the tournament was to raise money and awareness on breast cancer. The power duo founders, sponsors, tournament participants, and crowd did just that and more.

"We want to make a big difference in the DMV community and the Howard community," Amoo said. "It's only going to get bigger and better."

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