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The News - Messenger

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Pandemic results in rise in homeless



Maurice Neal volunteers every other Friday at the Community Fortress homeless emergency shelter in Fremont. PHOTOS BY DANIEL CARSON/THE NEWS-MESSENGER

Daniel Carson
Fremont News-Messenger
USA TODAY NETWORK

FREMONT - For Maurice Neal, there's thick blankets that need folding and laundry loads that need sorting on a quiet Friday night at the city's Community Fortress emergency shelter.

When he was homeless during the height of 2020's COVID-19 pandemic, Neal, 52, found his way to the downtown Fremont homeless shelter and stayed as a guest for several months.

The demand for beds has risen substantially at Community Fortress and Liberty Center of Sandusky County's facility on East State Street during the pandemic, as homeless people like Neal with nowhere to turn sought emergency shelter.

A Detroit native, Neal had briefly relocated last year to Norwalk, where his

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Fremont's Community Fortress, which offers emergency shelter to the area's homeless population, has seen an increase in its number of guests during the pandemic. The shelter recently increased its number of beds from 8 to 20.

John Glenn statue by Zanesville sculptor headed to statehouse

Chris Crook
Zanesville Times Recorder
USA TODAY NETWORK

ZANESVILLE - Ohio will honor native son and former astronaut, senator and presidential candidate John Glenn with a statue in time for his 100th birthday.

The statue, by Zanesville sculptor Alan Cottrill, will stand at the Ohio Statehouse for a year starting next month, a time frame spanning his birthday and the 60th anniversary of the historic space flight where he became the American to orbit the earth.

The project was spearheaded by State Rep. Adam Holmes (R-Zanesville), who represents New Concord, where

Glenn grew up, and Cambridge, where he was born.

Holmes spoke to the Capitol Square Review and Advisory Board recommending the project, which was originally scheduled for last year but delayed because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"We really felt now is the time to seek any way to build unity that we can," Holmes said after the unanimous vote in favor of the statue. "And this was one of them, someone we can all agree on. He was such a role model."

The sculpture will be installed in early March. Rules governing statues on the statehouse grounds say a person depicted must have been dead for 25 years, so the placement is temporary. Glenn

died at age 95 in 2016.

Cottrill started sculpting the statue in 2017, and worked on it between other projects. Cottrill met Glenn when he was a boy, when Glenn returned to his hometown after his first spaceflight. Glenn was also a cousin of Cottrill's uncle.

His first copy of the statue is displayed outside his studio in downtown Zanesville.

"To say it is an honor is cliché," he said, "but it is, to be able to honor someone like that, of that stature, and from here."

"Blue collar, rooted in Appalachian

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Zanesville sculptor Alan Cottrill's depiction of John Glenn is heading to the statehouse.

CHRIS CROOK/TIMES RECORDER

History provides minorities reason to doubt vaccines

Craig Shoup
Fremont News-Messenger
USA TODAY NETWORK

FREMONT - At 82, Solomon Woodson was ready to get the COVID-19 vaccine to keep himself and his family safe.

As a Black man, he never hesitated about getting the vaccine despite some minorities struggling to trust the medicine and the government.

But Black men and women have reasons to be skeptical of a vaccine that many still know little about.

Skepticism among minorities

From 1932 to 1972, medical researchers withheld treatment from around 400 Black men in Tuskegee, Alabama, in order to study the course of an untreated disease, syphilis.

After researchers obtained consent from the men, they did not tell them they were not being treated for syphilis, instead they were told they were being treated for "bad blood."

Regina Vincent-Williams, a local poet, writer, and motivational speaker and president of the local chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, knows all too well the stigma minorities have against vaccines and other government-led medical projects.

Vincent-Williams said the Tuskegee tests left a lasting scar on many Black people that caused a rift between the racial group and government and medical experts.

"For a long time, there have been disparities in health and in our ability of getting health coverage," Vincent-Williams said. "There have been shown to be health disparities in terms of how we're diagnosed, what doctors we go to and what kinds of procedures we get and what kind of medicine we are prescribed."

Vincent-Williams referenced experiments done in her home state of Tennessee at Vanderbilt University in the 1940s in which pregnant women

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