

health
happens
here



In Neighborhoods

BUILDING A HEALTHY SACRAMENTO

One of a series focusing
on efforts to improve
the health of residents in
the Sacramento region.

Black Lives Matter

BY EDGAR SANCHEZ

The 2018 killing of Stephon Clark by Sacramento police deeply impacted Josh Harris, an American River College student. Shocked and angry, he became an activist against police brutality and has joined protests organized by Black Lives Matter, or BLM.

In May, after Minneapolis police murdered George Floyd – whose name, like Clark’s, is now on the long list of unarmed African Americans slain by law enforcement – Harris vowed to continue to speak out against what he termed police oppression of Black people.

“The police are dangerous,” Harris, 23, who is African American, said recently amid the latest BLM protests in Sacramento. “We need to defund them so they can’t be a weapon against our communities.”

He wants police held accountable for murder, whether the innocent/unarmed victims be Black, Latino/a or of other races.

He is not alone.

As Harris chanted “No justice, no peace, no racist police!” in day-after-day local protests after Floyd’s death, marchers worldwide also demanded a halt to police violence.

The ongoing protests have a seemingly unstoppable momentum and have involved people of all races supporting systemic reform of law enforcement, the courts and the carceral network. It’s a historic moment with great potential.

By mid-June, Harris had participated in 10 local protests, most of which involved Capitol Park rallies.

Like Capitol Park’s mighty trees, many who mobilized there seemed to be from around the world.

Harris said, “There were Latinos, Native Americans, Muslims, Asian Americans, Sikhs, whites” and others, including LGBTQ+ people, protesting in solidarity with Blacks.

“THE POLICE ARE DANGEROUS.”

Josh Harris
Sophomore, American River College

At times Harris marched beside his mentor, Ryan McClinton, a community organizer for Sacramento Area Congregations Together, which is supported by The California Endowment.

“Ryan is like a big brother to me,” Harris said. “He taught me humility” and the importance of helping others.

Harris never met Stephon Clark.

But last fall, recalling Clark’s tragic death, Harris told this column: “I feel like Stephon Clark was my brother.”

Harris sharply criticized the over-reaction of two Sacramento police officers, caught on tape, who killed Clark in the backyard of his grandmother’s Meadowview home on the night of March 18, 2018.

Seeking a fence-hopping man who was



“I really hope we see long-lasting institutional change” from the worldwide protests against police brutality, said Josh Harris, a sophomore at American River College, posing before the fenced-off State Capitol in May. “I hope the momentum doesn’t die.”

Photo by Edgar Sanchez

smashing car windows, the officers fired 20 shots at Clark, believing he had pointed a gun at them. At least seven bullets struck Clark, 22, who was holding an iPhone.

No charges were filed against the police.

“I have three younger brothers,” Harris would later say. “I don’t want them shot by police for being Black.”

His brothers – Levi, 20, Jeremiah, 14, and Titus, 8 – are wary of anyone with a badge and gun.

BUILDING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

In 2010, The California Endowment launched a 10-year, \$1 billion plan to improve the health of 14 challenged communities across the state. Over the 10 years, residents, community-based organizations and public institutions will work together to address the socioeconomic and environmental challenges contributing to the poor health of their communities.

ZIP CODE
95219
Life Expectancy
73

ZIP CODE
92657
Life Expectancy
88

Your **ZIP code** shouldn’t predict how long you’ll live – but it does. Staying healthy requires much more than doctors and diets. Every day, our surroundings and activities affect how long – and how well – we’ll live.

Health Happens in Neighborhoods. Health Happens in Schools.
Health Happens with Prevention.

PAID WITH A GRANT FROM THE CALIFORNIA ENDOWMENT

For more info, visit
<http://www.sactakethepledge.com>

The
HUB
Building Healthy Communities
www.SacBHC.org