

Has Tipping Point Arrived In America? The Answer Is Blowing In The Wind

In his book, *Restless Faith*, theologian Richard Mouw writes about the importance of remembering the lessons of the past. He quotes sociologist Robert Bella, who said, "Healthy nations must be communities of memory." Remembering is an important part of living in community.

It can be a stabilizing or destabilizing force; it might prompt a celebration, or it may persuade mournfulness. Either way what is done with those memories resides in the quality or the failure of leadership. Former Harvard University professor and essayist George Santayana capsuled that principle, saying, "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it."

Ultimately, memory is crucial in answering the question of had I learned anything from that which I remember. Did I learn to stop and take stock of where I was on life's pilgrimage to affirm that I was on the right track, or to sound the alarm that I was way off course?

In *Tipping Point*, Malcolm Gladwell, whose mother is Jamaican, explains that the expression became popular in the 1970s to describe the flight to the suburbs of whites living in the older cities of the American northeast.

When the number of incoming African Americans in a particular neighborhood reached a certain point, for example twenty percent, sociologists observed that the community would tip. The tipping point is the moment of critical mass, the threshold, and the boiling point.

The Bible teaches the value of community memory as well. The Israelites were given the Passover feast to remind them of what God had done to rescue them from slavery in Egypt. Still today, Jewish people around the world revisit that rich community memory every spring. The biblical record suggests that God had a tipping point. When the cry for relief from the harsh and punishing conditions of slavery had reached a certain crescendo, God brought Moses to lead the exodus from Egypt.

A man who takes away another man's freedom is a prisoner of hatred. He is locked behind the bars of prejudice and narrow-mindedness. I am not truly free if I am taking away someone else's freedom, just as surely as I am not free when my freedom is taken from me. The oppressed and the oppressor alike are robbed of their humanity.

The governor of Virginia, Ralph Northam, has ordered the removal of the statue of Robert E.



Jim Z. Daniels

Lee from its lofty position on Monument Avenue in Richmond. General Robert E. Lee's veneration is, and should be, particularly troubling to Americans because not only did he support slavery, he earnestly tried to sever the young nation of the United States of America into two parts.

He occupies his place of prominence since 1917 because of the fact that he sought the destruction of the United States of America. It was only when defeat stared him in the face that he surrendered to General Ulysses S. Grant at Appomattox.

The tipping point has clearly arrived in this country with the murder

of George Floyd by police officer Derek Chauvin in Minneapolis. The pattern is endemic. A day of reckoning has arrived and it pre-dates the killing of Treavon Martin in 2012. It calls out to a nation determined to keep African Americans in their place led by a man who has no sense of history.

Today, the minds of many who have paid keen attention to our national upheaval, stiffened since the election of President Obama, are taken back to the words, some would say prophetic yet continuous, of the 1960s and penned to us by Bob Dylan, *Blowing in the Wind*. Could anyone have imagined nearly 60 years ago this song would have equal relevance today as it did then?

It was Nelson Mandela who said, "A man who takes away another man's freedom is a prisoner of hatred, he is locked behind the bars of prejudice and narrow-mindedness. I am not truly free if I am taking away someone else's freedom, just as surely as I am not free when my freedom is taken from me. The oppressed and the oppressor alike are robbed of their humanity."

This country is still not ready and eager to correct and remedy the issues that are clearly self-evident regarding equal treat-

ment under law and equal opportunity then there should be an expectation that these crevices in our nation's mural will simply widen.

Music journalist Greil Marcus who has written about Dylan and the 1960s says, "Blowin' in the Wind" was a product of its era. "You know, there are songs that are more written by their times than by any individual in that time. And this was that kind of song. Someone had to write this song."

What does the song say? How many roads must a man walk down before you called him a man? Yes, how many years can some people exist before they're allowed to be free? How many times can a man turn his head and pretend that he just doesn't see?

Yes, and how many years can one man have before he can hear people cry? Yes, and how many deaths will it take till he knows that too many people have died. The answer my friend is blowing in the wind, the answer is blowing in the wind.



Healing Must Start At The Root



Leon Fraser

The current social-climate temperature is rising faster than the systemic controls can handle, and as we are aware, there is not a thermostat to regulate the pressure, so explosions will occur; pipes will burst.

Also, to a certain extent, the current pandemic that has hastened the death of more than 100 thousand individuals in this country, in some respects could be thought of as less threat than the virus of prejudice and the inequality that have grown, thrived, existed, and endured in all facets of the fabric of this society of America.

In 1619, when the first free Africans arrived here on the shores of America, according to the records of the Euro-American system, were sub-

jected to a racial system engineered to maintain suppression and dominance.

According to Winston Hubert (Peter Tosh) Mackintosh who wrote the lyrics and sang the song saying, "... don't matter where you come from, as long as you are a black man, you are an African." No matter how long you've lived in the country of your colonizer/oppressor, whether Belgium, England, Spain, France, or the USA, your roots are from the continent of Africa, the bottomless pit of humanity and minerals.

In the teachings about the building of this nation, the true value and contributions of black labor, culture, and intelligentsia are not conveyed in the dogma inculcated from the early learning years.

The psychosocial contingencies that are engineered to keep the ever-permeating power of blackness in check are through the teaching of slavery. How can that be? You may ask. To illustrate: Most prosecutors in the defense of police officers always say to the jurors, "You don't know what actions precipitated the altercation

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A Message For Millennials

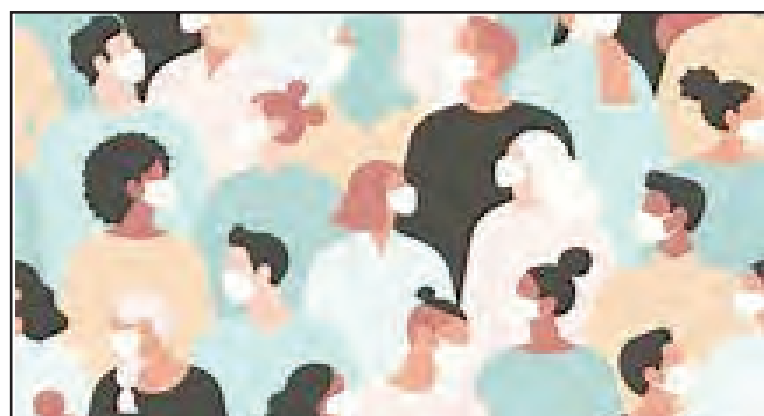
By Denise T. Best

Black lives haven't mattered for a very long time, not since 1619 when *they* brought our ancestors here on slave ships. Brown, Red or Yellow lives do not matter either. Ghettos, barrios, reservations, cages and the conditions within: poor education, poor healthcare, poor housing, poor access to healthy food, all weapons used against you from birth. Shot while driving, shot while jogging, shot while having a cup of coffee, asphyxiated by a knee at your throat. All too often no one pays!

Think about it. What better way to destroy a people than to wipe out their youth? Then along came Covid-19.

I'm was skeptical, and if this virus were only here in the United States, I might even consider the possibility that this is a hoax, but this is a *global* pandemic. This is not a worldwide joke. This is real! The fact that black and brown people are infected and dying at a higher rate than others is real! Everybody knows about somebody who died, my brother died!

The plan is not to save you, but to confuse you, to make you distrust the news, to make you think that the scientists and doctors are wrong, and the politicians are right. *They* held back the distribu-



tion of safety masks and gowns and access to tests. *They* knew that Black and Brown people were more susceptible and were dying in larger numbers, long before they told us. If you don't value your own life, who will? *They* won't mind if you die.

The one percent who controls the wealth in this country would love for you to believe it's a hoax, and I'll tell you why, *they* won't mind if you die. That means more money for them, less money needed for education, healthcare, housing and other social services. Everything is always about money, and let me remind you, Black lives have never mattered to them! *They* have been taking our lives one by one for 400+ years. Covid-19 will do the job *for* them and quickly, and in large numbers.

You are the smartest

young men and women this world has ever seen, because you have immediate access to knowledge through technology that past generations did not, and knowledge is power.

So, wake up! Running around without masks, congregating without practicing social distancing is just what *they* hope you will do! *They* will not mind if you die!

My sons and daughters, I am begging you to protect yourselves; you are our future! Protect your grandparents, mothers and fathers, your girlfriends and boyfriends, and kids, your sisters and brothers, and friends. Stay home, stay safe, and stay healthy.

Wear masks and practice social distancing, 6 feet apart, when in public, and wash your hands when you return home! Remember, *they* won't mind if you die! Not one little bit!

Diaspora Day Celebration

On Tuesday, June 16, 2020, Jamaicans worldwide will join together to celebrate Jamaica Diaspora Day with a full day of virtual sessions. The event hosted by the Jamaica Diaspora Taskforce Action Network (JDTAN) in association with Jamaicans.com will highlight the extraordinary work and contributions of the Diaspora in collaboration with Jamaica. The Diaspora is estimated to be approximately 3 million worldwide, the largest populations being in the United States, the UK, and Canada respectively.

This year, 2020, is the 17th anniversary of the day a resolution was proposed during the first Jamaica Diaspora Conference in 2004. It was declared a year later by Jamaica’s late Governor-General, Sir Howard Cooke, and is now celebrated annually. The date also falls within Caribbean American Heritage Month.

The full day of activities will be broadcasted live on Jamaicans.com Facebook’s platform (https://www.facebook.com/OneLoveJamaica), starting at 10 AM US ET through 10 PM US ET. Over 10 sessions and 40 speakers across the Diaspora and Jamaica are on the schedule, including a series of professional development sessions for

the Jamaica Teachers Association themed “Future Ready Educators.” Leo Gilling, chairman of JDTAN said, “It’s good to see Jamaicans around the world converging on a virtual platform to commemorate an important day in the history of the Diaspora movement. We are continuing to deepen the engagements and exploring varied ways to collaborate with Jamaica.”

Rukie Wilson, Diaspora Day coordinator and chair of the Citizen Security and Safety Taskforce added, “This event is a testament to how the Diaspora will continue to pivot in these times to show up for our beloved Jamaica.”

JDTAN is a network of 15 sectoral Diaspora Taskforces with members across 21 countries. Taskforces have been operating for the past seven years as a collaborative approach to engage, and mobilize the Jamaican Diaspora to join forces and support Jamaica in achieving Jamaica Vision 2030 and UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs.)

Jamaicans and friends of Jamaica across the world are invited to join the first global and virtual event of this nature. For more information and to register, visit diasporaaday.jdtan.org.

[Article submitted by Staff Writer, Jamaicans.com].

Coronavirus Pandemic: Frustrations In Minority Communities

By Jacqueline Rabe Thomas and Gregory B. Hladky

The following is excerpted from CT Mirror and printed with permission.

In May, Olga Gutierrez called a taxi so she could take her 11-year old son Julio to the hospital. His sore throat was unbearable and she was worried he had COVID-19.

But Julio’s symptoms weren’t enough to warrant a test, Gutierrez was told, so she brought her son back to the cramped Bridgeport house they share with 14 other relatives, including Julio’s sister and father. Two weeks later, an uncle living with them tested positive for the coronavirus – although he, too, was initially told he didn’t meet the criteria for a test at Bridgeport Hospital.

Everyone else in the family was denied testing at the local community health center except for one aunt, who had a fever. She tested positive and has quarantined herself in one room of the small home.

Members of Julio’s family--all undocumented, uninsured

immigrants from Honduras – have been out of work since the pandemic hit and don’t know how they will pay the \$2,000 bill for his emergency room visit last month – or any other medical bills associated with the virus.

“We’re just hoping no one else has it,” said Gutierrez.

While accounts of people being denied testing due to scarcity of supplies were not uncommon at the beginning of the public health crisis, frustration is growing that Connecticut residents living in low income, predominantly minority neighborhoods continue to face larger barriers to testing and other services.

Nine weeks into the pandemic, there are only a handful of walk-up testing sites in the state, prohibiting those without cars from getting tested. Soon, two-thirds of the state’s testing sites required a doctor’s note, and many of the residents living in these communities have no insurance or primary care doctor to refer them. Most of the community health centers located in these struggling neighborhoods have not been able to expand the number of

COVID tests they can complete.

Kevin Hall, a resident of New Haven’s Whalley Avenue neighborhood who lost his job because of the pandemic, said he knows there are testing sites in the city, but they aren’t anywhere near his high-poverty neighborhood.

“I haven’t actually seen any,” said Hall. “Government moves slower where the money is small. When the money is small, things always take longer.”

People living in inner-city neighborhoods also warn that communication about the disease and how to get assistance has been confusing, that financial support for those who have lost their jobs has been sluggish, and that hunger is now a real threat for many blacks and Latinos living in poverty-stricken areas.

There is also a growing sense that, as Connecticut’s focus turns to reopening the economy, pandemic-related dangers and hardships experienced by poor people of color are being overlooked or disregarded. Minority lawmakers and community activists are now pushing for a dramatic change in the state’s coron-

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caught on tape,” to imply that the actions that precipitated the altercation should be scrutinized. In the same application, for possibly a similar reason and enlightenment, it can be rationalized for not teaching the stories of our past.

In a reflexive manner, they “know what happened before, so will give our story to be told as his-story, to have it drilled at the early stage of learning and character development.”

The knee of the police on the neck of a black man is both symbolic and symptomatic of the disdain for the value placed on the life of persons deemed 3/5 of a person.

In a sentiment expressed about the destruction of a public space in the wake of the protests, a similar sentiment could be said of the document observed in or during the creation of the independent country away from the clutches of the home country, Britain, that required Blacks, former slaves be given their due in order for them to be considered citizens, and for the true healing to occur.

The Manifest Destiny along with the Homestead Act gave millions of acres to the dirt poor from Ireland and other parts of Europe, yet none to the laborers that were turned off the plantation when the Proclamation was enacted, no financial assistance, no social assistance, no visible or intangible assistance given to traumatized individuals that were at the bottom of the social ladder.

Clearly, the healing must start at the root, not at the limbs and branches, because the same branches and limbs will re-emerge, whereas when the root is taken out and a new tree planted a new structure will grow and the eventual shade, coverage, will be more inclusive, not exclusive.

Some cosmetic changes being made at this time are primarily to placate the existing anxiety and if the substantive systemic change is not made, a similar flashpoint will occur and re-occur as have happened with Emmitt Till up to George Floyd and the many in between.

Caucasian men, when they attempt to harm police officers; they have been treated with more respect and dignity than any Black unarmed man. Even when they (Caucasian) have actually killed police officers every effort is made to apprehend them so they can be analyzed, questioned, and evaluated to determine reasons for such behavior.

Historically, assassinations of black leaders in this country, either by characteristics or physically, have tempered the zest for pivotal individuals to step up and some of those that have realigned themselves at the front have been compromised and planted.

As Marcus Garvey and Booker T. encouraged, without an economic base all is lost. Can you imagine if the Black Wall Street was allowed to prosper?

If the true narratives of the past had made it into the curriculum of schools that promote the superior/inferior method of learning, would this anxiety and dread be so uppermost in the minds of the power structure? Only time can, and will tell, and healing must start at the root!

Coronavirus Pandemic And Minority Communities

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avirus response in their inner-city neighborhoods.

“We’ve heard state government talk about helping communities of color,” said Jean Jordan, a retired teacher who heads the New London NAACP. “But what are they doing about it? I don’t see anything being done yet.”

Members of the legislature’s Black and Puerto Rican Caucus are growing increasingly frustrated with the state’s slow progress to address gaps in services and testing.

“Long story short, our communities are suffering. There is a real need for the government to make this thing right,” said state Rep. Brandon McGee, a Democrat from Hartford and the leader of the caucus. “One major, major, major, major, major piece, is making sure we have access to testing in some of these areas.”

Health equity experts and members of the caucus are calling on the administration of Gov. Ned Lamont to better research the inequalities in communities of color that have been exacerbated by the pandemic and come up with a plan to tackle the problems.

The stakes are high to identify who has COVID-19 in communities of color so health officials and residents can stop the spread of the virus. Minorities are less likely to have health insurance,



Julio Ortega and his wife, Olga Gutierrez sit on the front steps of the two-family house where they live with their two children and other family members in Bridgeport. Photo: Cloe Poisson. CTMirror.org

and more likely to have respiratory illness, like asthma or other serious health conditions, that make COVID-19 more dangerous.

Seven weeks after the first Hartford resident tested positive for the coronavirus – the community health center increased its testing capacity from 5 to 60 people each day. It will still take days for people to get their results.

“I think the political community took it too lightly at first,” McCluster said of the need for swift action in communities of color when the pandemic hit hard. “Two weeks is huge in something like this.”

Coleman-Mitchell said increased testing capacity at the community health centers is a top priority, adding that the state intends to use some of the federal funds it

has received to pay for expanded testing in the coming weeks. “We are committed to testing mass numbers of the underserved and those at greatest risk for COVID-19,” she said.

The commissioner does not support the state establishing standards for centers to determine who gets tested.

Some advocates say such a step is necessary to remove any implicit biases that might lead to black and Hispanic residents being turned away.

“If everybody’s playing by the same rules, then people have a better chance,” said Pat Baker, president of the Connecticut Health Foundation. “Everyone would have a fair shot at it. So it does take away barriers to securing access that may

be there for some populations.” But those decisions are best left to medical providers, Coleman-Mitchell explained.

“They’re more than qualified to make a clinical call as to who should get tested based on what the CDC guidance provides in terms of symptoms, and the likelihood,” she said. “So they are able to make that assessment and we trust that they do.”

Walk-up testing options is critical, legislators and advocates say. The state also needs a centralized repository for all its testing information, including locations, hours and rules.

“I would urge the state to think about not only testing sites where people can drive, but how is it you could get to a test site on foot? Where are they? What are their hours?” Baker said. “I think we need a statewide messaging campaign to reach and target at-risk populations.”

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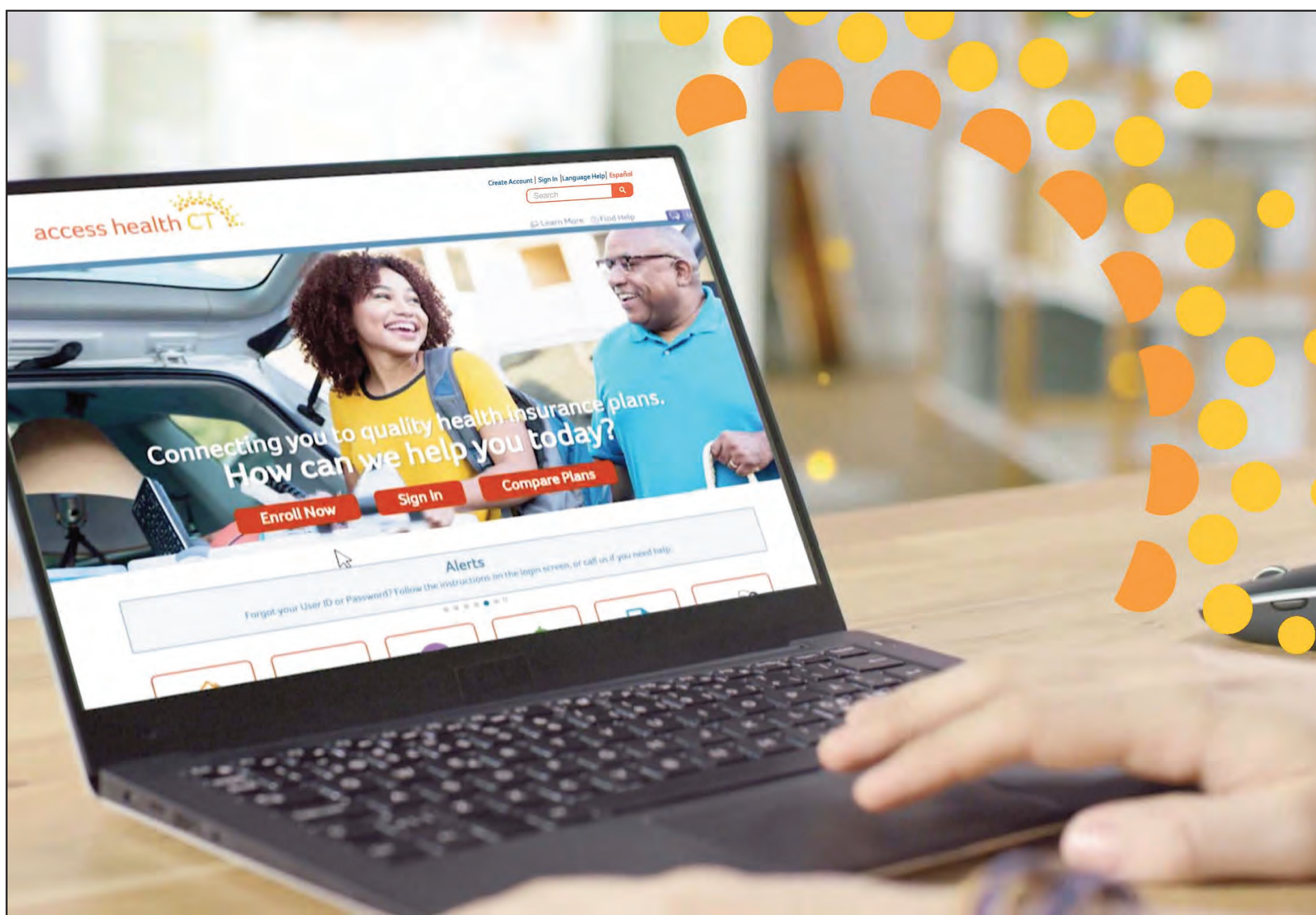
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