

The Warmth of Sankofa

By Mae Catherine Godhigh

Dispelling Taboo: Intimate Conversations About Hair Loss



“Early identification of hair loss and changed behaviors gives us the best chance of keeping our hair!” – Aishah Bilal-Ali

On Saturday, April 29, 2023 approximately 40 women gathered at SLE’ restaurant to lunch, liberate and to love on each other.

Visionary Aishah Bilal- Ali strategically guided the women into the light of hair loss and liberation. She provided a safe place where women were free to discuss their pain, vulnerabilities, stereotypes and the mirror. Alopecia does not discriminate. Men are affected as well.

Traditionally, in the black community the subject of hair loss is treated as something you don’t openly discuss. It is “taboo” and it is dealt with in private and eventually covered up. The racist myth of Black girls can’t grow long hair was also addressed and proven to be a lie.

As I listened and watched Ali pour information into the women, my mind immediately recaptured Viola Davis. It was during an episode of the Thursday night show, How to Get Away with Murder. Remember the scene, after running a hot bath and watching the Colbert



Aishah Bilal-Ali and Lakeisha Taylor

Report when Viola takes off her wig, lashes and makeup to reveal her natural side beneath? She stated, “I took off my wig because I wanted to step into who I was.” Now that was POWER!

Viola won the day! She emerged triumphant and fearless! She was a woman who was NOT becoming beautiful but was always beautiful. “We have to understand that hair doesn’t negate our beauty,” said Davis.

We enjoyed the retail therapy of community vendors. After lunch we were ushered into a mise-en-scene space and took our seats. We were given hand materials to guide us through the session.

Ali began the session with a reminder that at least 50% (half) of all women will experience noticeable hair loss at some point in their lifetime. However, this number can be much higher in some communities! Today, we will discuss alopecia (hair loss) types causes and possible solutions.

Ali guided us through the following topics: Hair Loss, Questionnaire Quiz, Alopecia (hair loss), How your hair is connected to your blood supply, Mental Health and Red Flags, Common Blood Testing, Func-

tional Blood Chemistry Analysis, Protocols and Hair Care.

The discussion continued in the areas of stressors, poor nutrition, rapid weight loss, illness, anesthesia, hormones, immunity, allergies, allergies, heavy metals/toxins, medications and environmental trauma.

Afterward, powerful testimonials were given by courageous women who bared their naked souls. They shared their personal experience and trauma of coping with alopecia. These were the real MVPs in the room. Finally, the moment of heightened inspiration was to witness the audience validate and encourage the hearts of the speakers. Dear Reader, I tell you, there not a dry eye in the audience.

I walked away from this event inspired and empowered. In a safe place we changed the narrative about alopecia. Because there is no easy fix for hair loss, Like Viola, learn to take the pain and wear it as a diamond around our necks.

We are more than our hair; it is really about our health. There is good News! If detected early, most forms of hair loss can be slowed down or even reversed. If you are interested in a consultation, you may reach Aishah Bilal- Ali at HAIRADOX HAIR CARE CENTER, 3815 N. Sterling Ave. in Peoria, Phone: (309) 339-3465 - Email: www.hairdox.com

What to Expect...

- Food and Refreshments
- Music
- Raffles
- Vendors

Peoria Fashion Week

Continued from page 9



Janet and George Davis

Following was the adult line from Creating Crafty Culture, with Victoria Isabella as the live artist that completely lit the stage on fire and guided the models down the runway. Next, we had 309 Fashion crew by the creative Mrs. Elle Day with Nathan Nix of California. Next, was Designer Chante’ Intimates with Artist V8 Vast Change from Bloomington, Illinois.



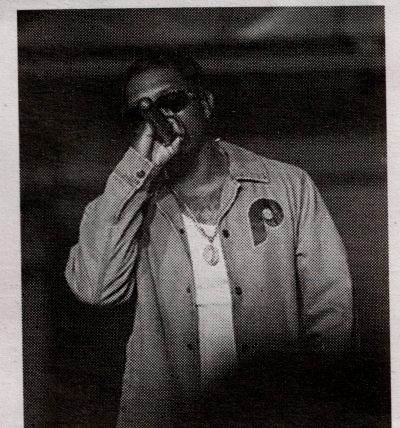
Design by Nyla Couture, Model Aysiah Cayson

Following designers One Hundred Degrees (Cannon Brothers Josh and Bryan), and the winner for Designer of the Year Rich Habits (Dre Bell) with music performed by King Hillian of Peoria, Illinois. Following we had designers and performers, Iron Rose, who not only showcased their line but also performed for themselves, as well as designer Zodiac Customs (Dwight Baldwin) of Springfield, Illinois. Closing the show for the competing lines was Identified Royalty, one of Peoria Fashion

our four lovely judges decided on who would be named Peoria’s Fashion Designer of the Year. The dynamic judge’s panel consisted of some of the most fashionable people in the Peoria area. Cleo Dailey, Jaleesha Allen, Dr. Elaine Gordon, and the mother of Fashion Shows, Mrs. Janet Davis. After a short intermission, the judges named three Designers as their top three picks. In 3rd Place, Leilani and Ryann of Peoria Illinois, in 2nd Place Zodiac Customs by Dwight Baldwin of Springfield Illinois, and the winner of Peoria’s Inaugural Fashion Week was Rich Habits by Dre Bell of Michigan.

Rich Habits is a designer streetwear brand, that was founded in 2020 by a 21-year-old designer determined to deliver style to customers worldwide. Dre started the brand with the intention for people to express themselves and look good while doing it. Dre Bell was born and raised in Pontiac, MI. Dre grew up playing basketball and went on to play 5 years of collegiate basketball at Lewis University, where He earned two bachelor’s degrees in business administration and marketing.

“These degrees are what drive my entrepreneurial journey,” says Bell. “I’ve always known I wanted to own my own business one day! I just never knew it would put me in the position I am today. I’m excited to see where this journey takes me.” Dre Bell of Rich Habits is excited to announce that he is Designer of the Year in The Peoria Fashion Week.



International Recording Artist John Givez

Peoria Fashion Week started off