

UNITED TOGETHER LUPUS FOUNDATION



UNITED TOGETHER LUPUS FOUNDATION
LET'S HELP BLESS SOMEONE ELSE



GIFT OF HOPE

A LUPUS AWARENESS EVENT



HELP LOVE SUPPORT

**LET'S BLESS
SOMEONE ELSE**

WWW.UTLFOUNDATION.ORG



A MESSAGE FROM THE FOUNDER

Greetings. On behalf of United Together Lupus Foundation, it is our great pleasure and privilege to host our 1st Annual Event focusing on awareness and support for lupus and other autoimmune ailments for Saginaw County and surrounding areas.

This year's theme is Gift of Hope, which is very dear to my heart. I have experienced firsthand how detrimental lupus can be physically, as well as, its mental and financial impacts. I was blessed to have the continued support of my family and friends; however, that is not always the case for many individuals battling a disease. My goal is to help advocate for individuals who may be struggling silently, be a supportive hand to those who may require financial assistance, and a listening ear for those who may simply need an outlet to express themselves.

This event will provide guests the opportunity to learn and discuss the impacts that lupus has on our community. It is estimated that 1.5 million Americans have some form of lupus and it is two to three times more prevalent among African American, Hispanic/Latina, and other minority women population¹. The symptoms vary and can exhibit the appearance of many other ailments, which has led to late diagnoses, as well as, undiagnosed cases. I truly believe that as a community we can work together to provide resources and support to people affected by lupus, and have an immeasurable impact on the positive progression of their quality of life.

To all guests, may Gift of Hope provide you with an informative and entertaining evening that leaves you with new or additional insight about lupus. Lastly, please remember: Together We Can Make a Difference in Our Community for Those Battling Lupus and Other Autoimmune Ailments.

Sincerely,

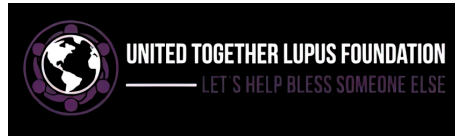
Tonya Jones

CEO / Founder

United Together Lupus Foundation



EVENT AGENDA



GIFT OF HOPE

A LUPUS AWARENESS EVENT

5:00 PM	Doors Open/Vendor Tables Available
5:45 PM	Opening Remarks – Councilman George Copeland, Master of Ceremony Welcome/The Occasion – Toni Wise Prayer – Councilman George Copeland
6:00 PM	Dinner Served Musical Selection – Sharrie Williams
7:00 PM	Guest Speaker – Terry Pruitt Lupus Testimony – Nicole Liggins
7:30 PM	Musical Selection – Sharrie Williams Lupus Testimony – Tonya Jones Keynote Speaker – Dr. Delicia Pruitt
8:30 PM	Panel Discussion (Q & A) Closing Remarks – Tonya Jones
9:00 PM	Vendor Tables Available Immediately following Closing Remarks

MEET OUR FOUNDER



TONYA DIONE JONES

**CEO / Founder
United Together Lupus
Foundation**

Tonya was born in Saginaw; she is the daughter of Thomas Askew, Sr. and Daisy and Benjamin Furlough. She is the devoted wife to James Jones, Sr. for 29 years and counting. They have four boys and three daughters, twelve grandchildren and one great-grandson.

Tonya Jones was raised by her mother and grandparents. It was her grandmother Eddie Mae Weston who instilled in her the importance of having a relationship with God and accepting His Son Jesus Christ as Lord. In 1998 Mrs. Jones became a member of Greater All Nation Prayer Tower COGIC, in Saginaw, MI under the leadership of Superintendent Louis Bishop for twenty years, until his retirement. While under his leadership Tonya received her Deaconess License in 2000, and her Evangelist License in 2001 under the Jurisdictional Southwest #1 COGIC MAAI Institution.

In June 2015 Tonya became a member of Dominion Life Ministries in Bay City, MI under the leadership of Pastor Mestisha Castleberry. In 2019 Minster Jones received her Minister's License under the leadership of Pastor Mestisha Castleberry. Tonya has a servant's heart and faithfully serves where there is a need.

FROM A SISTER'S PRESPECTIVE

From 2009-2016 Tonya began to have one health issue after another, then finally, in the summer of 2016, she was given the devastating diagnosis. You have lupus. As I watch my sister go head to toe with lupus, my thoughts are W.O.W., what a "Woman of Warfare". Mrs. Jones refused to lose this battle with lupus. She took the Word of God and planted her faith in the Word of God. She began to go even more boldly and confidently into God's presence, than she ever had before. She was determined to find help from God her Father during this time in her life when she needed him the most. (Hebrews 4:16)
I watched lupus turn her legs into soft mass with no bone, unable to walk with her own two feet. I watched as lupus attacked her eyes impairing her ability to see, but thank God Tonya relies on the light that comes from the Word of God. (Psalm 119:105)

MEET OUR FOUNDER

I watched lupus snatch the hair from her head, Satan's goal, to destroy her self-esteem. I watched lupus attack her heart and her kidneys. In all that Tonya went through, she refused to believe the report of the enemy; instead, Tonya made a conscious decision to protect her heart with the Word of God. Mrs. Jones knew to guard her heart above all else, because it determines the course of her life. (Proverbs 4:23 NLT) She refused to give up no matter what her body went through. She relied on her spirit man to be renewed day by day, because she knew that was where her true strength lies. (2 Corinthians 4:15-17)

TONYA SPEAKS ON HER JOURNEY

In 2009 my health started to decline at the young age of 40. On December 31, 2012, I had to close my day care due to my declining health. Twenty-five years in business snatched away from me because of the pulverizing affect lupus had on my body, I was devastated. Soon after I closed my daycare; my health took a serious nosedive. I was in and out of the hospital week, after week, after week.

Finally in 2013 I was sent to a neurologist, my God-ordained help. As he looked at my chart, I could see the concern on his face. This neurologist sent by God, under the unction of the Holy Spirit went against protocol and told me, "If you value your life, you will find a new doctor. He wrote down the names of three doctors. I moved quickly.

By June of 2013 I had a new doctor. I saw specialist after specialist to no avail. I was taking 22 pills daily. I was unable to live the life I once lived and was greatly depressed because of it. This debilitating disease had made me a prisoner in my own home. The stress of it all caused me to fall into a deep depression; and to make matters worse, the 150,000 we had set aside from my husband's disability settlement was now all gone. The mental stress of it all. If only I had never gotten sick. Now how are we going to take care of our family of five. It was too much to bear, I had a nervous breakdown, that left me unable to walk or talk.

Looking at myself in this situation put a fight in me unlike I had never known. My faith in God gave me the strength to take the control Satan thought he had over my life back. I told myself, this is not who God created you to be. I began attending church and family functions again. I pressed my way, often in tears because the pain was so excruciating, but nevertheless, I pressed on.

In 2015 my primary doctor, recognizing that I was showing symptoms and signs of lupus sent me to a Nephrologist and a Rheumatologist specialist. After not knowing all these years it was finally confirmed that I had lupus. I was devastated. Yet at the same time, thankful to God that I now had a name, that I could tell to bow down and surrender its authority to my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

MEET OUR FOUNDER

Finally, my life seemed to be getting back on track. In the summer of 2016, I began having unbearable pain all over my entire body. I eventually went to the hospital and was diagnosed with Stage 5 Lupus Nephritis. Satan was coming after me with a vengeance. The organ he assigned to kill me was my very own kidneys. The report finally came back, kidney failure. The last words the doctor spoke was, "It's in God's hands now!" My children were around my bed crying. There I lay refusing to believe the report of the enemy. I told my children; "Momma will be alright. I am going to beat this!" God has not failed me yet. "I will not die; instead, I will live to tell what the LORD has done." (Psalm 118:17 NLT)

Shortly after that I was sent to the University of Michigan. The team of doctors there helped me get lupus under control. I went from taking twenty-two pills daily to six pills a day. Lupus is still a daily battle, but the worst is behind me. God has without a doubt shined His face upon me over the years, and I am so grateful that he did!

In February 2022 the Lord spoke to me with a soft voice, "It's time!" "Time for what", I asked. "Time to look for a building" my Father God, replied. I followed my Father's instructions, with nothing but faith to pay the rent. Finally three months later, in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. I opened the doors to United Together Lupus Foundation. How wonderfully orchestrated by God, that I would open the doors to my foundation in the month that brings awareness to lupus.

I have found purpose in the midst of my fight with lupus. My purpose has become crystal clear: to be a voice to the voiceless, and to give hope to the hopeless by being an advocate for those just like myself, battling lupus.

My sister has manifested this verse in her life, and it bears repeating, "Tonya will not die; instead, she will live to tell what the LORD has done", and that is exactly what she is doing.



GUEST BIO



TERRY PRUITT

**President
NAACP Saginaw Branch**

Terry Pruitt is a respected civil rights and social justice leader from Saginaw, Michigan. With extensive experience in both public and private sectors, Terry has dedicated his career to advocating for underrepresented communities. He has held positions such as Manager of Public Affairs and State Government Relations for Dow Corning Corporation and Executive Director of Business Services for Saginaw Public Schools. Terry is also an active member of several organizations, including the NAACP and Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc. His contributions have been widely recognized, and he has received awards such as the Community Service Award from the Saginaw Community Foundation. Terry's passion for equity and social justice is unwavering, and he continues to inspire and make a positive impact through his work.



SHARRIE WILLIAMS

**Singer, Songwriter
Blues/Gospel/Soul**

Powerhouse. Tour de Force performer. Songstress. Writer. Curator of oral history. Purveyor of life lessons. Sharrie Williams embodies all of these categories and more. Sharrie has written and produced four exceptional CDs to date. She was nominated three times by the Blues Foundation for Traditional Female Artist and Soul Blues Female Artist of the Year. She won JAZZed Magazine's World Music Artist of the Year. Her concerts span the world from Europe to the Middle East, from Africa to the USA. Her powerful voice is the perfect vehicle for her hard-drivin' blues, her vocal dexterity infuses her music with lyrical shades of jazz, and the sweet tenderness within her musical range is invoked by subjects containing deeply personal events and feelings. Her concerts leave a lasting impression of an intimate encounter with a talented storyteller and leaves one in eager anticipation for her next performance. She truly is Saginaw's own "Princess of Rockin' Gospel Blues".

GUEST BIO



NICOLE LIGGINS

CEO
Guided Grace FYS
25 Years Lupus Survivor

Nicole NeShone Liggins is a highly experienced professional with over 20 years of expertise in business development, childcare, OST care, program development, management, macro and micro community development, and training. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Community Development Administration from Central Michigan University and a Business Acumen certification from Michigan State University. Nicole is the owner of Building Blocks Childcare & Preschool Center and the visionary, co-owner, and CEO of Guided Grace, a mental health agency. She is also the co-founder and acting President of Guided Grace Family & Youth Services, a community-based organization that offers unique interventions integrating technology and mental health to help clients overcome barriers and challenges. Additionally, Nicole has served in leadership roles in various organizations, including the Saginaw ISD Great Start Readiness Program Advisory Board and the Great Lakes Bay Region chapter of Jack & Jill of America Incorporated. She is currently serving on Governor Gretchen Whitmer's team of Small Business Leaders, representing Saginaw County, and received the 2022 Saginaw NAACP Young Professionals Award.



DR. DELICIA PRUITT

Medical Director
Saginaw County Health Department

Dr. Delicia Pruitt is the wife of 28 years to Brian Pruitt. She has 4 children: Brianna, Destiny, Brian, and Diamond. One of her life's joys is her family. She enjoys being a wife and mother. In addition, she has been practicing medicine for 20 years as a Family Medicine Physician. Her current job is the Medical Director of the Saginaw County Public Health Department where she gives medical guidance to the residents and medical professionals of Saginaw County. Her former job was Program Director at Central Michigan Medical Educational Partners in Saginaw, MI. In this position as the lead educator, she led the training of medical residents and students. She is an associated professor of Family medicine at CMU. Dr. Pruitt has led an active role in her church with running youth ministries with her husband. She is an educator to both the public and medical profession about health, wellness, family values and multiculturalism. She has spoken at many conventions, conferences, and churches over the past 30 years. Her goal is to positively impact the people of Michigan and the United States for the improvement of families, health, and wellness.


DONATION

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Your support and contributions will enable us to meet our goals and improve conditions. Your generous donation will fund our mission.

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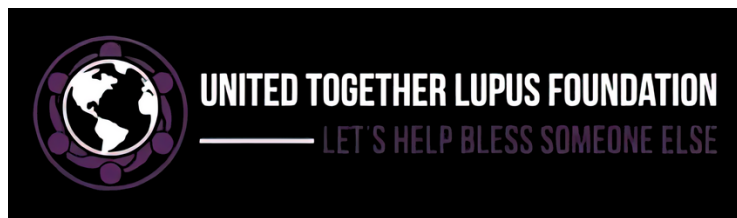
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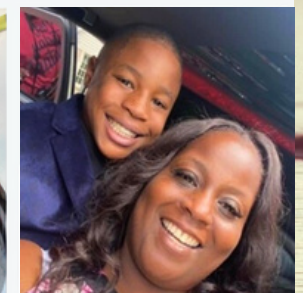
Congratulations Tonya

Congratulations on the One Year Anniversary of United Together Lupus Foundation.

You have always followed the Lord's plan and have never given up in the midst of difficult times. As a lupus survivor, you continue to display great strength each day and we are glad that you will also be able to help others with their lupus journey.

We love you and we are very proud of you.

Love Always, Your Husband, Children, Grandchildren, and Great-Grandson





it takes a village

Since 1984, Saginaw Community Foundation has been connecting our donors to the causes they are most passionate about. Education of our youth, arts and culture, and the health and wellbeing of residents – just to name a few. It takes all of us – *our whole village* – to make Saginaw a place we are proud to call home.

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Guided Grace

Actions Speaking Louder



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for 25 years of fighting , surviving and thriving with Lupus.

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Nicole Liggins...

Please continue to promote mental wellness and Lupus awareness for the betterment of Saginaw's youth and families.

NAACP SAGINAW BRANCH

Salutes

The United Together Lupus Foundation of Saginaw

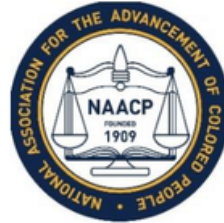
And



Tonya D. Jones, Organization Founder & CEO

For

THE COURAGEOUS EFFORT TO FIGHT LUPUS AND SAVE LIVES



Terry Pruitt, President

515 N. Washington Ave – Suite 400

Saginaw, MI 48607 – (989) 752-0614



The Michigan Lupus Foundation provides social, financial and educational support to improve the quality of life for people living with lupus and their loved ones. Learn more about the services we offer to receive real hope for a bright tomorrow.



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milupus.org



The Y of Saginaw Supports the United Together Lupus Foundation. Together we are strengthening the community through programs focused on Youth Development, Healthy Living, and Social Responsibility.





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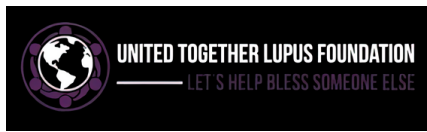
Congratulations Tonya D. Jones on your foundation United Together Lupus Foundation

Daniel 12:3, NLT

Those who are wise will shine as bright as the sky,
and those who lead many to righteousness will
shine like the stars forever.

Denise Nickleberry





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SHARRIE WILLIAMS

Acknowledgements

UTL would like to express its deepest appreciation to everyone who helped with the production of Gift of Hope. This event was a labor of love and we are forever grateful for the unwavering support, donations, and all guests who celebrated this milestone with us. Special thank you to: Councilman George Copeland for performing the duties as Master of Ceremony; Speakers: Terry Pruitt, Nicole Liggins, and Dr. Delicia Pruitt; and Sharrie Williams for providing musical entertainment. Thank you for providing your time and talents.



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The Mridha International Institute of Peace & Happiness (MIIPH) presents the First Annual Mridha International Peace Symposium, offering practical and inspirational content from community leaders and professionals from multiple disciplines in a collegiate setting. It may seem as if we are living in a time of chaos, but as MIIPH Founder Debasish Mridha, M.D. says, "Peace can be found everywhere. We just need to know how to find it." This interactive symposium will explore peace within the four main quadrants of our lives: community, workplace, family, and the individual. The event culminates with the awarding of the Mridha International Fellow award.



JUNE 9



8:30 AM - 1:00 PM



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