

Thousands of workers in Pa. owed back pay

U.S. Department of Labor holding \$16 million

By Michael Korsh
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

In the aftermath of federal wage and hour investigations, the U.S. Department of Labor has recovered more than \$16 million in back wages that remain unclaimed in Pennsylvania.

More than 16,000 Pennsylvania workers — including over 400 in the Greater Pittsburgh area — have yet to recoup the funds, the

agency said in a news release last week, often due to their inability to notify employees who have changed jobs or addresses.

“Our preference in a normal course of action is to have the employers pay these employees directly — but that’s not always possible,” said Dan Doherty, an assistant district director in the DOL’s Pittsburgh office. “And even when the employers are looking, they can’t always locate these workers.”

To facilitate the funds’ recovery, the department created an online search tool known as Workers Owed Wages, or WOW. The tool, which is available in both English and Spanish, enables workers and their advocates to determine if they are owed wages — and if so, claim them — by answering a brief series of questions.

In Allegheny County, \$1.1 million in back wages remains unclaimed by 1,134 workers, according to an agency spokesperson.

Notable cases of unclaimed funds in the Pittsburgh area include

Christian Home Health Care, which paid \$812,675 in back wages after a worker misclassification and overtime pay investigation. Of that, about \$365,000, or 45%, of the wages remain unclaimed by 369 workers.

Loving Kindness Healthcare Systems also paid nearly \$680,000 in back wages to 93 workers after the agency charged the company with overtime pay violations. About \$21,000 remains unclaimed by 92 workers.

The DOL’s Wage and Hour Division can only hold unclaimed back wages for three years before it is re-

quired to turn the money over to the Department of the Treasury.

“Despite the division’s best efforts, too much of this money remains unclaimed,” the agency said in its release.

For assistance with the Workers Owed Wages system, workers and labor advocates can contact the Wage and Hour Division’s Pittsburgh District Office at 412-395-4996. The agency provides phone assistance in more than 200 languages.

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Sebastian Foltz/Post-Gazette photos

From left front, Andrew Wickesberg, viola; Regi Papa, violin; Juan Jaramillo, violin; and Charlie Powers, cello, rehearse for a Candlelight Concert at the Omni William Penn Hotel on Jan. 18. The show was part of a series put on by the New York City-based entertainment company Fever in cities across the country. Thousands of candles are used at the concerts, which usually feature a string quartet or other small ensemble.

In fight for paid leave, bereavement often left out

By Laura Esposito
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

When Rochelle Jackson joined the Women and Girls Foundation of Southwestern Pennsylvania in 2017, it was supposed to be an exciting new time in her life.

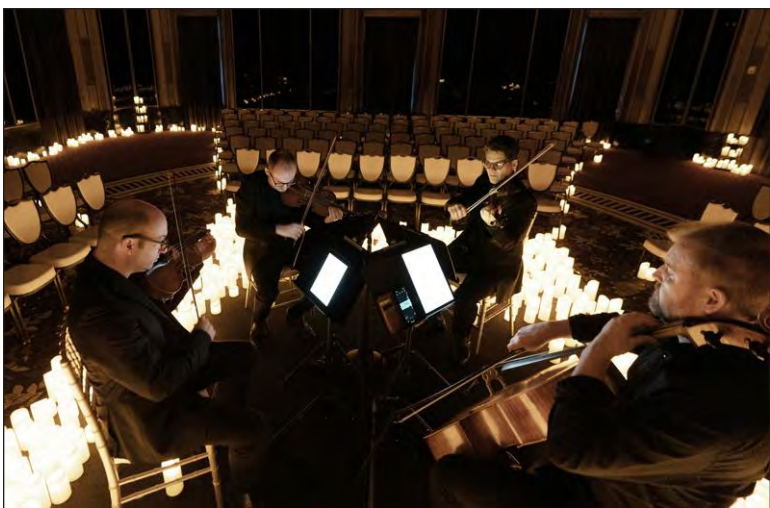
A friend of Ms. Jackson, 53, recruited her to spearhead a new project at the nonprofit organization. With her four children now grown, she could finally commit to the hard work that would entail.

That changed a year later when Ms. Jackson was in the emergency room at UPMC Monroeville with back pains. She remembers stressing that her hospital visit was taking longer than expected; she was going to be late for the Labor Day party her family had planned for that evening.

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Classics by candlelight

‘Immersive experience’ trend of the past few years seems to work



A closer view of the four practicing for their Omni William Penn Hotel show.

By Jeremy Reynolds
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

An entertainment company has hit on an idea that has actually made classical music profitable again: Play Mozart, but add candles.

That may seem more gimmicky than revolutionary, but it’s working. These concerts belong to a new trend in entertainment in recent years: the “immersive experience.” (Remember that trippy, immersive Van Gogh exhibit from a few years ago?) Something about dressing a concert up with hundreds or thousands of

twinkling candles has caught the listening public’s imagination in a way that playing Beethoven or Bach in a traditional concert hall hasn’t.

Plus, these concerts’ flickering social media ads spread like wildfire when they open in a new city.

Created by the New York City-based entertainment company Fever, the concerts started in 2019 and have crescendoed to more than 180 cities around the world. They kicked off in London, New York City and Dubai but are now spreading to smaller, more regional markets like

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Trae Patton/NBC

Pittsburgh native Loren Allred performs “Never Enough” on the Jan. 15 episode of the NBC competition show “America’s Got Talent: Fantasy League.”

‘Never Enough?’

North Side native aims to win on ‘America’s Got Talent’

By Joshua Axelrod
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Jaws dropped, eyes bulged and hands covered mouths during Loren Allred’s first appearance on the “America’s Got Talent: Fantasy League” stage.

The 34-year-old North Side native and “Britain’s Got Talent” alumnus brought the house down using nothing but her powerful voice during Jan. 15’s episode of NBC’s new twist on the long-running talent competition series featuring past contestants from across the “Got Talent” franchise.

Ms. Allred’s soaring rendition of “Never Enough” — the song she originated in the 2017 movie

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GERALD E. ‘JERRY’ MCGINNIS | March 17, 1934 – Jan. 25, 2024

Legendary CPAP inventor and Respiroics founder

By Michael Korsh and Jordan Anderson
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette



Gerald E. “Jerry” McGinnis, a celebrated biomedical engineer who turned a fledgling medical device company founded in his suburban Pittsburgh kitchen into a global empire, died Thursday from complications of Parkinson’s disease. He was 89.

Mr. McGinnis was widely revered as the progenitor of the first mass-produced breathing machine in the United States —

a device that has treated millions around the world who suffer from sleep apnea, a chronic and potentially deadly condition in which breathing starts and stops intermittently during the night.

Respiroics, the medical device

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Arturo Fernandez/Post-Gazette

Respiroics Founder Gerald McGinnis oversaw the first mass production of CPAP machines.