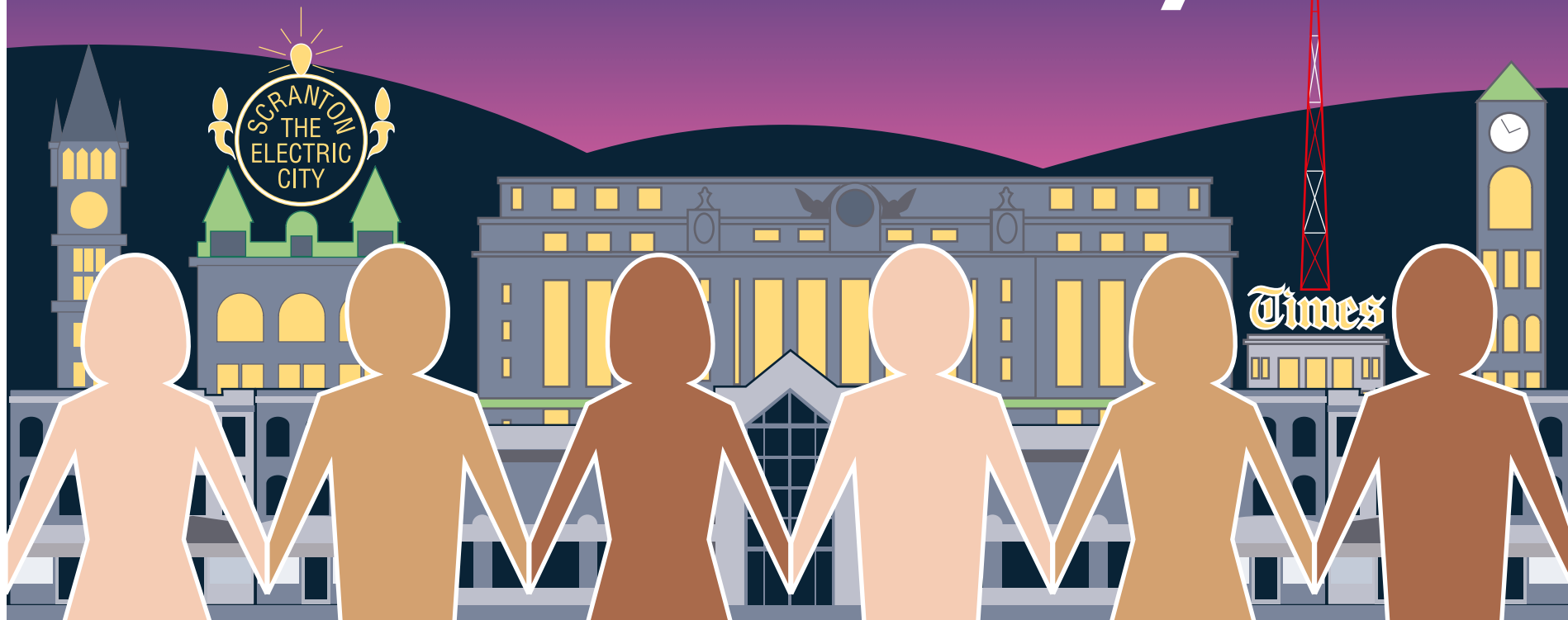


The color of the city



Black Scranton Project's website celebrates and advocates

There's a video clip on blackscranton.org, the website of the Black Scranton Project, that features its founder and CEO, Glynis M. Johns, talking about the perceived invisibility of African Americans' contributions to the city. She talks of wanting to leave the city as soon as possible as a youth. She finally makes her break when she goes to New York City for college. But while working on her thesis on that very subject for a master's degree in sociology, she finds herself drawn back to her hometown.

Her thesis became a mission to educate, advocate and inspire people about the impact people of color have had and continue to have on Scranton. She founded the Black Scranton Project to be the means to deliver her message, and its website is a good place to start.



The homepage of the site features a wonderful illustration of Scranton landmark buildings arranged in a colorful skyline with a mission statement superimposed over the art. Below that is a celebration of the organization's acquisition of the historic North Scranton Bank building at Providence Square for use as the Black Scranton Project Center for Art & Culture. The building was donated by PNC Bank, and the organization is seeking funding to transform it into a space to be used for art, culture, education, recreation, wellness, meet-

ings, and youth and senior programs. There are links on the site that let you donate to the campaign or volunteer to help.

Across the top of the site are links to different sections. Under the Projects link are several areas that get to the core of its mission. The first one is Uncommon Knowledge. This section focuses on African American individuals and incidents that had a significant impact on the city but are not well known.

It starts with Dr. James E. Foster, Scranton's first African American doctor. The article details his medical contributions, especial to people of color during the Spanish Flu epidemic of 1918, as well as his community involvement. When you get to the bottom of his story, you can click right or left for more articles. They cover Scranton's first

Black mail carrier, first Black woman to graduate from the Scranton Conservatory of Music, the opening in 1957 of the Scranton Progressive Center, the Battling Giants (Scranton's Negro League professional baseball team), entrepreneur and community activist Louise Tanner Brown and others.

Of course the history is not all about inspiring and successful individuals. There are also dark moments, such as racist remarks on social media, a Ku Klux Klan parade in Scranton, the brutal mistreatment of a 13-year-old Black boy by police in 1894 and more.

There's a Black Business Directory on the site that lists local businesses owned by people of color. The Juneteenth section takes a look back at local celebrations of the day when

news of the abolition of slavery in America reached the people in Galveston, Texas (June 19, 1865). The Black History Month section looks back at the city's Pan-African flag-raising ceremony at city hall and related events. There are also sections on upcoming events, including the Inaugural Black Excellence Gala, and an online store where you can buy Black Scranton Project merchandise.

The site is a mixture of celebration and advocacy. Like many sites run by smaller nonprofits, it could use a little polishing in the form of tighter editing and some design direction. But its core mission, equality for all, doesn't need any changes.

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