In Kenya, two out of three teenage girls don’t have access to sanitary pads and reproductive health education. To provide them with more resources, the Nairobi-based ZanaAfrica Foundation launched Nia Teen, a magazine that addresses questions about reproductive health, adolescence and puberty. The magazine is being distributed to more than 5,000 Kenyan girls three times a year and, in 2018, will expand to East Africa and other regions.
Live out loud,
and understand that
what’s in your brain
is really useful. Do
not hide it. Don’t
dumb it down. Don’t
apologize for it. Just put it on the table
and let people deal with it.
—Mrs. Michelle Obama, offering advice to young girls, during a
CBS interview with Oprah Winfrey

I guess they couldn’t
relate to me because I’m
Black, I’m strong, I’m tall, I’m
powerful and I’m confident.
And my arms might not look
like the girl’s over there. Or
my legs might not look like someone else’s.
Or my butt or my body or my anything…If you
don’t like it, I don’t want you to like it. I’m not
asking you to like it. I like it and I love me.
—Serena Williams, on accepting her body, during an interview with
Common for ESPN’s The Undefeated

There’s a new way to congrat-
ulate students for a job well
done. Küdzoo, a mobile app,
allows students ages 13 and
older to upload a photo of
their report cards to gain
Küdzoo Cash for good grades.
The cash can then be
redeemed for chances to
receive deals, gift cards and
scholarship information.
Download Küdzoo from the
App Store or Google Play.

Detroit start-up The Soulcial Scene is looking to
increase patronage of Black-owned restaurants in the
city’s downtown and midtown areas. This spring the
company will provide shuttle services for area
residents and workers to social events, like happy
hours, at these establishments. Visit soulcialscene
.com for more information.

A cohort of researchers is acknowledging the underre-
ported yet critical roles that Black women have played in
shaping American history. The group reviewed some
800,000 documents via high-performance computing and
found evidence of Black women’s significance in the field
of medical science and other contributions from colonial
times to today. The findings (“Rescuing Lost History: Using
Big Data to Recover Black Women’s Lived Experiences”) were presented at a forum this past September.

MEDICAL BREAKTHROUGH
Diabetes, which dispropor-
tionately affects African-
Americans, often requires
invasive glucose monitoring.
In 2015 Black-owned firm Better
Life Technologies Group applied
for a patent on a wearable device
that detects glucose levels and
blood content in gases emanating
from the skin’s surface, as opposed to pricking a finger. The
instrument will be available by the end of 2019.

The Canadian $10 bill is getting a face-lift. In 2018 the
image of Viola Desmond, a Black civil rights leader,
will replace that of the nation’s first prime minister.
She will become the first woman ever to appear on the
country’s banknote. In 1946 Desmond made her mark
by refusing to give up her seat in a Whites-only
section of a movie theater in Nova Scotia.

The United Negro College Fund has helped send
hundreds of thousands of students to college
since 1944. Over the next five years, the civil rights
organization will continue its legacy by dispersing
$35.3 million in grants to 24 colleges and universities—
most of which are HBCUs—for programs that will
specifically address the unemployment and
underemployment rates of Black college graduates.

For the latest news, follow ESSENCE Features Editor
Lauren N. Williams on Twitter @LAURNWILLIAMS.