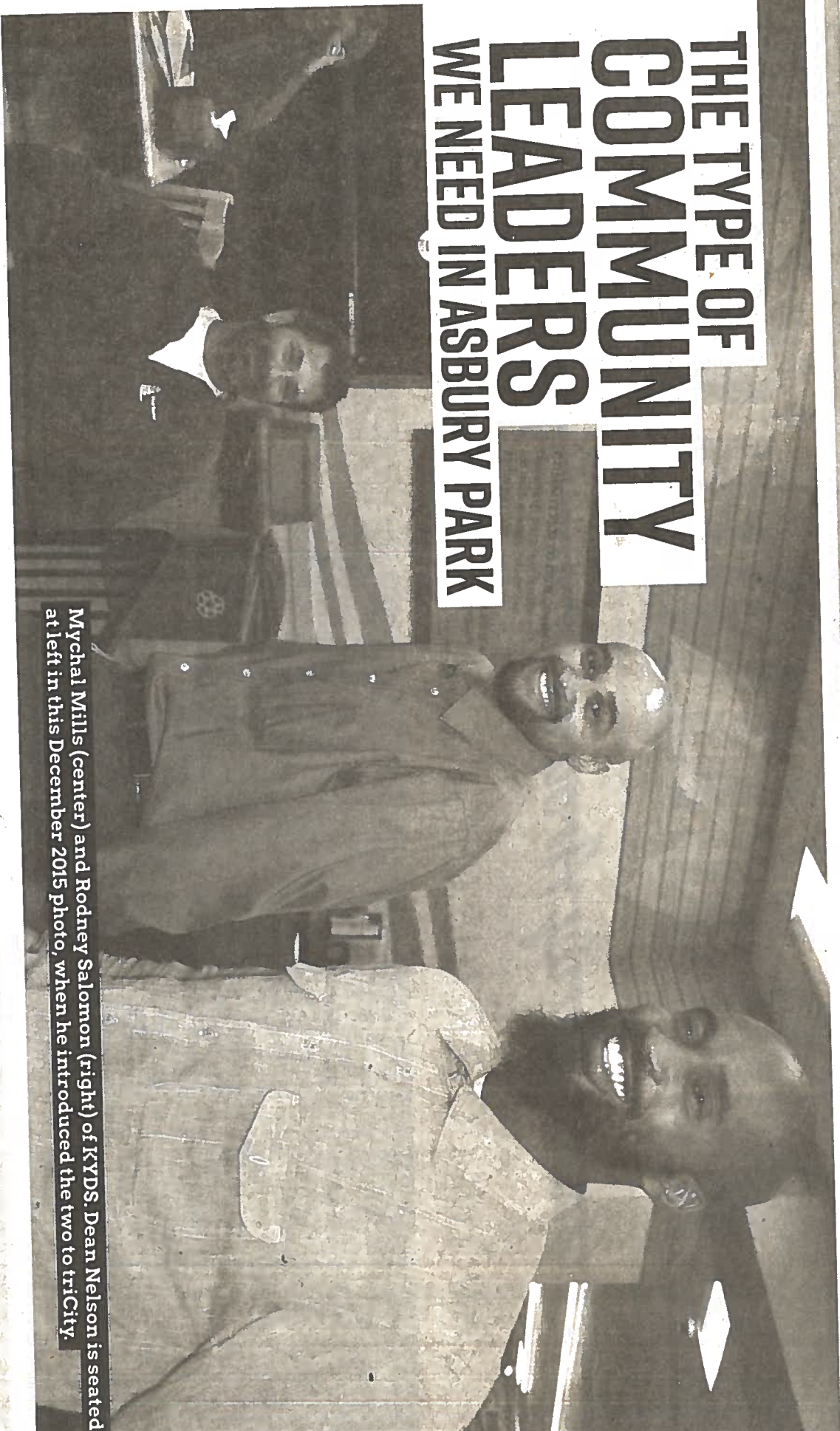


THE TYPE OF COMMUNITY LEADERS WE NEED IN ASBURY PARK



Mychal Mills (center) and Rodney Salomon (right) of KYDS. Dean Nelson is seated at left in this December 2015 photo, when he introduced the two to triCity.

FULL-TIME COMMITMENT TO A GROUP PROMOTING BALANCE AND CALM

ASBURY PARK — Mychal Mills and Rodney Salomon are exactly the type of community leaders we want to promote and develop in Asbury Park.

The two, both only 29, founded a group two years ago called KYDS, which targets a population in need with programs, strategies and instruction to provide balance and calm in life. They draw from all types of sources — yoga, meditation, mindfulness, healthy nutrition. You name it. They concentrate their work on the West Side of Asbury Park, while building programs in Red Bank.

Keep an eye on these guys. They have tremendous potential. They come with no bullshit agendas. It's solely about bringing peace, balance and calm to people, particularly young people, who need it. These are just two really nice men of obvious ability and intelligence, who also understand the street. (Both went to Monmouth University as undergraduates and received masters degrees there too — Mills with an MBA and Salomon with a Masters in management.)

What triggered this article is that Mychal Mills just left his job as a supervisor at the Food Bank to devote himself full time to building the KYDS organization. (Salomon says that while he currently loves his job as a youth development supervisor in the Asbury Park school district, his plans are also to eventually go full time with KYDS. In the meantime, he will continue to run KYDS with Mills in his off hours.)

With co-founder Mills taking the full-time plunge, we want to make sure KYDS is a success. The two men will now build a larger board of trustees and step up both the group's programming and fundraising. So before we go any further, here's the group's contact information: kyds.nj@gmail.com is how you can contact them, while konscious.org is their website. You can also follow KYDS on Facebook. If you like what you read in this

article and have access to financial resources or expertise to help them build the group, then get in touch with them to learn more about how you can help.

Dean's Natural Foods owner Dean Nelson turned us on to these guys, as Nelson has served as a mentor. He told us they're the real deal, and put together an impromptu meeting about a year ago with Mills, Salomon and triCity at Dean's in Ocean Township. We were impressed, and immediately put them on our cover with a story noting their potential. Meanwhile, the triCity-affiliated asburyparksun.com now regularly covers KYDS.

Here's what's so interesting to us about KYDS. You read all the time about people of means practicing mindfulness training, and other activities for calm and balance. Of course, they have the resources to pay for such instruction and guidance. We think of someone like Gwyneth Paltrow and her Manhattan and Hamptons followers practicing all that stuff — and well they should, like anyone else. But we single out Gwyneth for her somewhat self-indulged goop.com lifestyle website, which combines all this good mindfulness and balance stuff, with a large dose of expensive shopping and indulgences. It's a bit silly.

Contrast that with Mills and Salomon bringing all these healthy practices to Asbury's West Side. KYDS participants are largely African-American and live a much different life than those who read the goop.com website, with let's just say a whole different set of stresses and challenges. In Asbury's West Side, these practices can be revolutionary in their impact. It's new there, and both Mills and Salomon know its potential. They can already feel it through what they've accomplished just by doing the KYDS group in their free time. Now that Mills is going full-time, with Salomon to one day follow, they hope to achieve a revolutionary impact. We can see the organization one day copied in other urban areas.

continued on p.62