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**Trailblazing couple hosts first Black Men Buy Houses event in Atlanta expanding their 500 Black Men Buy Houses initiative**

**Atlanta, GA – October 30, 2024** – Black Men Buy Houses Co-Founders Kevan and Ayesha Shelton hosted their inaugural **Black Men Buy Houses** event in Atlanta on October 12<sup>th</sup> at The Russell Innovation Center for Entrepreneurs, presented by Citizens Trust Bank featuring special guests **John Hope Bryant**, a renowned entrepreneur, economic empowerment advocate, Author, Founder & Chairman of Operation HOPE and **H. Jerome Russell Jr.**, President of H.J. Russell & Company. The Shelton's launched the "Black Men Buy Houses" initiative to address the barriers and historical inequalities Black men face in homeownership. The event provided attendees with essential financial literacy tools to begin their home-buying journey, focusing on overcoming limited access to knowledge and financial resources.

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*"Black men often face challenges when purchasing homes, stemming from limited information about the process and financial resources, which can hinder their ability to secure funds for down payments, credit, and closing costs. Our initiative's objective is to break down these barriers, enabling more Black men to achieve the dream of homeownership," said the Shelton couple.*

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This initiative was created because, historically, there has been a lack of focus on Black Men. Homebuyer data indicates that Black men lag behind Black women in homeownership, education, entrepreneurship, and earnings. Black women are achieving higher levels of education which directly translates to workforce participation, hence the need for initiatives such as Black Men Buy Houses to address the disparities that exist for Black men.

What started in Houston as the Shelton's' goal to help 500 Black men purchase homes has expanded into a nationwide initiative focused on empowering Black Men to become homeowners, providing financial literacy through real estate, allowing Black Men to have a piece of the American Dream. The Atlanta event offered one-on-one sessions with credit specialists and mortgage representatives and panel discussions designed to prepare participants with the tools needed to start the homeownership journey.

Black Men Buy Houses currently holds a National MOU with Operation HOPE which allows attendees to gain credit counseling beyond the event, directly tying into **John Hope Bryant's** mission of advocating for financial literacy and empowerment within the Black community.

During the event, John Hope Bryant shared his experience on overcoming financial barriers and the importance of economic equity.

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*The event's presenter, Citizens Trust Bank, shared, "Partnering with the Black Men Buy Houses initiative has been a proud moment for our bank. This event gave us the opportunity to engage directly with Black men in our community, offering tools and guidance to help them navigate the path to homeownership", said Farrand O. Logan, Executive Vice President, Chief Lending Officer, Citizens Trust Bank. "We believe that financial empowerment begins with access to knowledge and resources, and this partnership is about more than just buying houses—it's about creating lasting wealth and stability for future generations", concluded, Logan.*

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The Shelton's plan to host additional events in major cities, under their National MOU with NAREB on their "Building Black Wealth." continuing their mission to support Black men in achieving homeownership. **"This is just the beginning,"** said The Shelton's. **"We are determined to expand our efforts and impact even more lives."**

For media inquiries, or to schedule an interview with Kevan and Ayesha Shelton—the couple is available for both in-person and Zoom interviews—please contact Innovating Marketing Group at [info@innovatingmarketinggroup.com](mailto:info@innovatingmarketinggroup.com) or call 346-980-9062.

### **About Citizens Trust Bank**

Ranked 28<sup>th</sup> by S&P Global among the top 100 best-performing US Community Banks under \$3B\*, Citizens Trust Bank celebrates over a century in the community. The bank continues to prioritize offering customized service and financial solutions to address the community's evolving needs. Through a legacy built on economic equality and well-being, headquartered in Atlanta, Georgia, Citizens Trust Bank goes beyond meeting the needs of offering banking solutions. Today, Citizens Trust Bank continues to be led by its founding mission to empower customers and future generations for financial success and takes pride in offering financial solutions across the country. Through its parent company, Citizens Bancshares Corporation, the Bank offers its common stock over the counter to the public under the trading symbol CZBS and can be found at [www.ctbconnect.com](http://www.ctbconnect.com), and in the social media communities of [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Instagram](#), [X](#), and Citizens Trust Bank Learning Channel on [YouTube](#).

\*Based on financials for the year ending December 2023.

### **About Black Men Buy Houses**

Our mission is to elevate the rate of homeownership within the Black community, fostering financial literacy, wealth creation, and the stabilization of family structures through equity and property ownership. We believe that by addressing the root causes of the homeownership disparity, we can spark significant change, enabling Black men and their families to build generational wealth and achieve economic empowerment.

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