

CARRINNIA WOODSON – THE LUNCH LADY

Age: 60

Occupation: Lunch Lady

Location: West Philly

Relationship Status: Single



BACKGROUND: Carrinnia is an African American woman working as a lunch lady at a predominantly all-white Catholic high-school school in the greater Philadelphia area. She has been given the nickname "Spesh" (short for special) by the students, and she's become a parent figure to a lot of them. She doesn't have a high-school education, but uses her BIG personality and even bigger heart to help people who are in need. She lives on a rough block in the heart of West Philadelphia and is the "block mom" and runs a backpack drive for all the kids who can't afford school supplies. She has three kids (including her niece, Brielle, who she adopted 20 years ago). Brielle is currently transitioning from male to female, and Carrinnia is trying her best to be supportive.

WHY NOW: Carrinnia's trans daughter, Brielle, is coming home from college this summer and Carrinnia is nervous about how the "block" will react. Raising a trans child is still very taboo in the African-American community and Carrinnia is still learning the ins and outs of the LGBTQ lifestyle. After spending over 40 years being a parent to not only her biological children, but also her nephew, multiple foster children, students at her school, and countless disadvantaged/homeless kids on the street, Carrinnia has never put herself first.

CALLING IN THE EXPERTS:

FASHION: The Fab Five need to get this lunch lady out of her uniform! When Carrinnia isn't wearing her red Aramark uniform, she wears Archbishop Carroll sweats and t-shirts. She loves the color red, and her closet follows suit. Her favorite special store is Dress Barn, but she doesn't have more than 1 nice dress in her closet currently.

GROOMING: Sometimes Carrinnia changes up her look with different hairstyles, and other times she goes long periods without getting it done. She usually has a friend or family member come to her house to try different wacky looks, braids, beads, perms, you name it. She has dentures but hardly wears them because she says they are uncomfortable. She wears zero makeup and doesn't care for it.

DESIGN: Carrinnia lives in an old row home in the heart of West Philly. She's owned the home for over 35 years and bought it for a dollar back in the 80s. There is lots of wood paneling, fluorescent rainbow blinds, many mirrors and huge potential for transformation.

FOOD: Carrinnia loves, loves, loves food. She loves food so much she cooks for the entire block! At any given time, she'll have 15-20 people in the home eating her home cookin'. She has freezers full of frozen chicken wings, and is known for her homemade mac n cheese that is made with many sticks of butter. Not only does Carrinnia work in the school Wawa, but she also does catering for big school events. She would love to have Antoni try her home cooking. She thinks she can teach him a thing or two. Antoni could help her elevate some of her staple dishes.

CULTURE: Carrinnia wants to understand more fully what Brielle is going through so she can defend her to the block when she comes back from college to live at home for the summer. Her story opens up the conversation about being gay and or transgender in an African American community.

EVENT: Block Party for Brielle's Homecoming



Nominator: Precious Woodson (daughter)

- Precious is nominating her mother, because she wants her to finally start caring for herself. At 60, Precious thinks her mother could enter this next chapter in her life loud and proud. She wants her to start dating and learn how to bring back the joy in herself that she so effortlessly gives to others.

