

CELEBRATING BLACK HISTORY MONTH

CMHA commemorates important people and events in history with five events

This year, CMHA held Black History programs and activities at five properties including, Riverview Park Estates, Lakeview, Outhwaite Homes, Garden Valley and King Kennedy. Each estate honored and recognized significant contributions made by African Americans to society.

One program, conducted by the Southeast AMP, was held at the Garden Valley Community Center on Thursday, February 19, 2009. It was titled "Inaugural Celebration" - the past inaugurates the future. CMHA staff collaborated with the Girl Scouts, where lighting and pinning ceremonies were held for Garden Valley Troop 5221, as well as the depiction of an inauguration presented in the shadow of "Legends of the Past." Residents of all ages participated in a skit, storytelling and the re-creation of an inaugural address by President Barack Obama.

Then on Friday February 27, 2009 all roads lead to the Riverside Park Estates Community Center to celebrate their 1st Annual Black History Month event. The program started with sounds of drums and instruments and a collage of interesting and historical art work. With more than 250 people participating, it was standing room only. In attendance were CMHA staff members along with Commissioner Doris Jones and the entire PAC Board.

"It felt as if you were going to Opening Night at the Downtown Cleveland Theater. Upon entering the Community Center auditorium, your breath was taken away; the entire room was transformed into an African village. I explained that they would be going on a journey though time and would experience the History and Culture of African Americans," said Michael Burns, CMHA Self-Sufficiency Coordinator, who narrated and coordinated the event.

The welcome was given by CMHA AMP Leader Pamela Bradley and invocation by Pastor Baylor from In His Image Ministry. There was a candle light ceremony conducted by resident Kimyatta Jackson and the children of Riverside Park, who performed and sang in front of the audience. The program concluded with the Cleveland Metropolitan School District's Terrance Greene and the Cleveland School of the Arts Dance Troup along with David Johnson's Puppets and Marionettes. At the very end, a surprise guest Dr. Woodrow Whitlow Jr., Director of the NASA National Aeronautics and space Administration, joined the festivities.

"Each event was a complete success," said George A. Phillips, CEO of CMHA. "It was great to see so many of our residents getting involved and celebrating Black History Month."