

### **DRJC UPDATE EDITION**

### **Celebrate or Commemorate?**

"Should I write *Happy Black History Month* or *It's Black History Month*?" my colleague Alex asked. "I want our post to be appropriate."

We were discussing our social media post featuring Delaware's first African American attorney, Louis L. Redding. Many people know about him but fewer are aware of the Delaware case that became the basis for the 1954 Brown v Board of Education Supreme Court decision that desegrated public spaces in America.

In 1950, Black students in Delaware were largely educated in crowded one-room schools with few supplies. Black students were not permitted to ride school buses and were not transported to their schools.



The Bulah family lived on a farm in Hockessin. Mrs. Bulah's initial request for her daughter to ride the bus to her colored school (Hockessin 107c) was denied. Delaware law prohibited Black and white children from riding together on the same school bus.

Mrs. Bulah and attorney Redding filed suit against the State Board of Education. They sued for the daughter's right to attend School 29, the white school (Bulah v Gebhart). The parents of eight black children from Claymont filed a parallel suit (Belton v Gebhart) and the cases were combined. The Court found that the school system violated the separate but equal clause in Delaware's constitution.

In 1952, Judge Collins Seitz, Sr. found that the plaintiffs' black schools were not equal to the white schools. He ordered the white schools to admit the plaintiff children. Seitz' decision was appealed and upheld by the Delaware Supreme Court. This decision caused then-civil rights lawyer (later Supreme Court Justice) Thurgood Marshall to offer, "This is the first real victory in our campaign to destroy the segregation of American pupils in elementary and high schools." *And this victory came from Delaware*.

The Delaware case was bundled with others from Virginia, Kansas and DC and reached the U.S. Supreme Court. Notably, the Delaware case was the only suit among the five that was successful at the state level. In the unanimous 1954 Brown v Board of Education decision, Chief Justice Earl Warren repeatedly cited Judge Seitz' opinions.

The brilliance of attorney Redding and the courage of Judge Seitz warrant cheers of celebration, making "Happy Black History month" an appropriate opening to our social media post.

However, we don't live in a vacuum. The brutal beating and subsequent death of 29- year-old Tyre Nichols turned our happiness to tears. We offer heartfelt condolences to the family and loved ones of Mr. Nichols. His death, at the hands of police officers, fits a pattern that we in the DRJC continue to fight.

We can do two things at the same time. While we celebrate the people and accomplishments of African Americans in our nation's history, we will simultaneously continue to fight for racial justice. Are you interested in being part of the fight? Here are some things you can do:

- Join us on Feb 8 for a community discussion in Bear on policing in New Castle County with the ACLU and others.
- Attend our Feb 8 DRJC general body meeting to learn about the HB 198 report from public and charter schools on their plans to incorporate Black history into K-12 curricula.
- Support our March 18 Black Student Summit in Middletown.
- Donate to our fight here.

But please do something. The children of our great state deserve to inherit the more equitable Delaware for which we are fighting. We need you to join with us in the fight!

Sincerely, *Raina*Raina Allen
Director, Delaware Racial Justice Collaborative

### Who We Are and What We Do

The Delaware Racial Justice Collaborative (DRJC) provides a platform for communities throughout Delaware to dissect and redress institutional policies and procedures related to racial justice.

DRJC members have been engaged in this fight since 2015. In its early days, this small but mighty collection of civic leaders and volunteers kept a laser-like focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion in State government employment. On the heels of the national racial reckoning and Black Lives Matter movement, the DRJC received requests from hundreds of new volunteers to join. People from across the state wanted to actively engage in the fight against racism in Delaware.

The groundswell of new members led the United Way of Delaware to fully embrace the DRJC. Since 2020, DRJC has been powered by the United Way of Delaware, providing administrative support to expand capacity.

Today, the DRJC comprises more than 200 individuals and organizations working in committees to uncover, repeal, and restructure policies and practices that negatively impact people of color. The work is organized around seven impact areas: health equity, wealth creation, public policy, education, criminal justice, youth advancement, and Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI). They function in work groups where "agents of change" from the grassroots to the grasstops join forces and work together to drive change. Each of the DRJC work groups meets on a regular schedule via Zoom.

The DRJC also hosts events, community conversations and other meetings. We need you, your involvement and passion, to power up the fight! Please reach out to Alex <a href="mailto:asoutherst@uwde.org">asoutherst@uwde.org</a> for the meeting invitations to committee, workgroups and general body meetings and to be added to our email list.

# **DRJC Public Policy Work Group Update**

We have come to the end of the first week of Joint Finance

Committee hearings and are using this time to regroup and prepare for the rest of session.

So far, the DRJC is supporting HB 37: Rent Escrow, SB 1: Eviction Right to Representation, and HB 55: Bill of Rights for People Experiencing Homelessness. We supported last year's iterations of these bills and plan to support them again this year.



We also look forward to supporting Sen. Pinkney's probation reform bill that is expected to be filed soon. Sen. Pinkney joined Alex on *Tea Time with Alex* to discuss the bill, the inequities in our probation system, and tips on how to level up our advocacy. Watch the episode **here**.

Our public policy committee meets biweekly on Mondays at 9 a.m. However, we understand that schedules can preclude prospective members from attending meetings which is why our public policy advocacy takes many forms. One of them is public comments.

We frequently have opportunities to deliver public comment during House or Senate committee hearings either virtually or in person. Should you choose to volunteer for public comment, we'll set you up with a statement, give you all of the meeting information, and walk you through the process. If you're interested, please email <a href="mailto:asoutherst@uwde.org">asoutherst@uwde.org</a>.

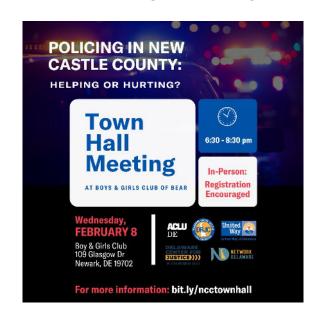
We also frequently conduct letter-writing campaigns, asking advocates to send a prewritten letter (with space for your additions) to their legislators in support of a particular bill or issue. It takes as little as two minutes to enter your information to connect you to your legislators and send your message. Visit our <u>Campaign Action Center</u> for more information.

If you're interested in joining us or have questions about the DRJC, please visit **uwde.org/drj** 

# Policing In New Castle County: Helping or Hurting? An ACLU DE & DRJC Event Wednesday, February 8

Join ACLU DE and DRJC on Wednesday, February 8 from 6:30 to 8pm at The Greater Newark Boys and Girls Club for a town hall to discuss policing in New Castle County. Share your experiences or hear from others as we come together to determine a path forward.

Our policing systems should keep communities safe, treat people fairly, and use fiscal resources wisely. Yet more people in our state and country are deprived of their liberty than ever before — unfairly and unnecessarily, with no benefit to public safety.



We want to hear your experiences.

How do you feel about the police presence in your neighborhood? Is policing helping or hurting your community?

This town hall is an opportunity for impacted communities to have an open conversation about their interactions with the police. The work to hold police accountable, combat racial inequities, and push for investments in alternatives to

policing begins with sharing our stories. Warning: Please be aware that some of the stories shared may be triggering to those who have experienced police violence and/or state-inflicted trauma. We ask all those who attend to be respectful of this space.

Register here and please join us.

## **How to Transform Business Cultures: Fusion Alliance**

Like many places across the country, in Delaware the workforce (including C-Suite & Senior Leadership) often does not represent the demographics of the communities they serve.

The DRJC wanted to do something to help eradicate workplace inequities. As a result, in 2021, *Fusion Alliance* was launched in partnership with United Way of Delaware and the Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce (CDCC). Fusion Alliance is an easy, accessible way for



businesses and organizations to learn to incorporate and embed Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DE&I) into their business operations.

Nine organizations now are in varying stages of their intensive DEI journey. A DE&I consultant, Jamee E. Boone (Eddee Boone Consulting LLC), works to design, develop, implement and sustain company-specific strategies over a two-year time frame. The Fusion Alliance leads members along the continuum, addressing the practical and structural components of a DE&I initiative, resulting in a customized plan that aligns with each company's unique culture, industry, and situation. Companies fund the internal implementation of their own DE&I strategies.

Fusion Alliance provides infrastructure, support and resources to transform business cultures and landscapes to more accurately reflect the diversity of the clients, constituents, and community they serve. What's more, there's measurable (qualitative and quantitative) return on the investment when creating a DE&I-infused workplace culture backed by data and research.

We urge companies and organizations to take the journey into DEI for the benefit of your business and your employees.

We believe, over time, the impact of the Fusion Alliance, leaders and employees working together on real solutions will help to improve opportunities for underrepresented communities, strengthen business returns for participants, help grow the region's economy and contribute to building a more diverse, equitable and inclusive culture among small and midsize businesses in Delaware.

Please **contact Raina** for more info on Fusion Alliance and how to participate.



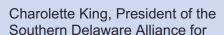
Here are real quotes from companies and organizations currently participating in Fusion Alliance work:

- "I am loving the lightbulb moments where I am unlearning years of unconscious bias."
- "I love the feedback we are receiving from parents."
- "Enjoyed the comprehensive nature of the topics covered."
- "The staff engagement and eye-opening moments that have given us strength, grace, and the confidence to face our personal and school weaknesses as it relates to DE&I."
- "We have gotten to a place where the staff is really engaged and growing with the material."

# Black Student Union at Sussex Tech is First in Sussex County

By Jalyn Powell Founder & CEO, OUTLOUD LLC

Sussex Technical High School's Black Student Union (BSU) has hit the ground running with more than 50 students showing interest in participating. President Nessy Cherazzard and team organized their first official meeting of the new year with a special guest on Friday, January 20.





Racial Justice and renowned community leader, spoke to the students about the historical relevance of organizing the first BSU in Sussex County.

Ms. King encouraged the students to use this platform to educate their peers and use their voices in their school and community. Ms. King shared the importance of taking advantage of opportunities to grow as leaders, advocates and change agents, including opportunities to write for the *Black Voices* newsletter and to take part in the upcoming Annual Black Student Summit hosted by the DRJC.

The students are currently preparing for weekly events during Black History Month to uplift, empower and highlight black businesses, HBCUs and students. Sussex Tech's BSU members are looking forward to attending this year's Black Student Summit as representatives of their own black student organization for the first time.



### **PROFILE: Newark Charter School Black Student Union**

Year established: 2020

Advisor's name: Heather Hingston

Number of years serving as Advisor: 3

**BSU officers**: Ademide Ajeigbe, Wynnie Kamau, Jasmine Calhoun, Da'Nasha Stokes, and Yasmeen Abdullah

Number of BSU members: 168 members (Schoology group), weekly meeting attendance 40-50 consistently

Meeting frequency: Weekly

**Q:** Why did you become an advisor?:

**A:** One of our fantastic alumni, Mya Brown '22, reached out to me during the summer of 2020 and asked if I would help get a BSU off the ground at our school. As someone who's always had a passion for social justice and student voice, I'm honored that she thought to reach out to me. Ultimately, I'm just glad that I can facilitate a place where Black students at our school feel safe, seen, and heard.

Q: What has been a highlight of serving as a BSU advisor?

**A.** As with all things in my line of work, the biggest highlight is always the students. Whether they're organizing a read aloud event for our primary school or sharing their own life experiences during club discussions, I am always in awe of them.

**Q:** What would you like to share with others in the community about students in your BSU?

**A:** Our students are willing to have tough conversations and are so ready to make change in this world! We're also open to working with other local BSUs, and are excited for the Black Student Summit in March!



# **UWDE and World Read Aloud Day**

Nearly 1,000 students 10 schools 6 school districts



Brader Elementary School guest authors Dwight BoNey and Shawn Gains



Dr. Julius Mullen, guest author at W. Reily Brown Elem. School



Harlan Elementary School students, guest readers from Wilmington Police Department including Sgt. Andrew Conine and Officer Rittenhouse, accompanied by first grade teachers

# **Books for Nearly 1000 Students in One Day!**

United Way of Delaware celebrated World Read Aloud Day this past Wednesday with the support of local authors and community partner guest readers who shared their love of reading by reading aloud to students at schools throughout the state.

Through this effort, 981 students from 10 schools representing six Delaware school districts enjoyed hearing these readings and also were given new books to take home to add to their home libraries.

Schools that participated are:

Harlan Elem. The Bancroft School The Bayard School Wilmington Manor Brader Elem. School Eisenberg Elem. School W. Reily Brown Elem. School N. Georgetown Elem. School The Warner School

W. Lewis Dual Language Elementary School

Participating School Districts are Brandywine, Christina, Colonial, Red Clay, Caesar Rodney and Indian River.

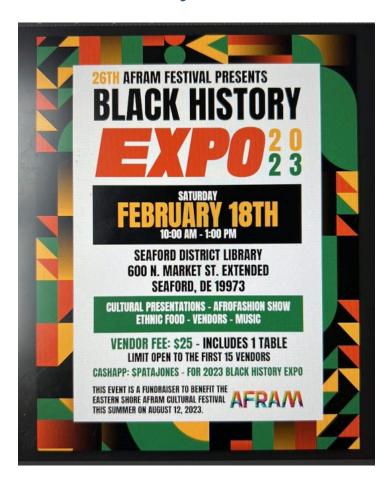
World Read Aloud Day is designed to support kids and communities through the power of stories. The well-known book publisher, Scholastic, sponsors World Read Aloud Day. Reading aloud gives teachers, authors and volunteer readers the opportunity to model expert, fluent reading of the text. This liberates the students from having to do the work of decoding and allows them to focus on comprehension, acquisition of new vocabulary and phonemic awareness.

### Other benefits include:

- Reading Aloud builds vocabulary. When we read aloud, students encounter new words and concepts
- Reading Aloud improves comprehension and active listening

- Reading Aloud reduces stress
- Reading Aloud strengthens fluency
- Reading Aloud can improve working memory

# **Black History Month Events**





### **DOCUMENTARIES**

Friday, February 17 - 7 pm – Streetlight Harmonies Saturday, February 18 - 2:30 pm – A Most Beautiful Thing 7 pm – Who We Are: A Chronicle of Racism in America

### SHORT FILMS

Sunday, February 19, 2 pm

- A Vanishing Legacy: Black Captains of the Chesapeake Bay
- Black Jockeys and the Kentucky Derby: A History of Race and Racism
- Street Knights (Black Chess in Washington Square Park)

- A Concerto is a Conversation
- Mr. Tindley

### **Route 9 Library and Innovation Center**

Our History, Our Struggle 2/5/2023 - 2- 4pm
The Essence of Black 2/11/2023 - 11am-3pm
Hip-Hop Dance 2/15/2023 - TBD
Black Expressions 2/25/2023 - 2- 4:30 pm
Early Childhood Drama 2/28/2023 - TBD
- Hidden Figures

### Walnut Street YMCA

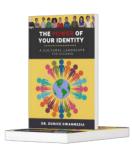
A Celebration of African Culture 2/4/2023 - 11 a.m. - 2 p.m.

### Network Connect

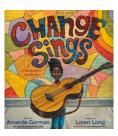
Black History Family Feud 2/28/2023 - 5:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

# **Black History Month Reading Suggestions**

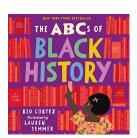
"The Power of Your Identity: A Cultural Landscape for Children" will be published on February 8th, 2023. Join a Zoom for a virtual book launch on the same day from 12 PM - 1 PM. Please register <a href="here">here</a>. The book is available for pre-orders <a href="here">at this link</a>. Written by local author and speaker Eunice B. Gwanmesia, PhD, CEO, Eunity Solutions



Change Sings A lyrical picture book debut from New York Times bestselling author and presidential inaugural poet Amanda Gorman and #1 New York Times bestselling illustrator Loren Long. In this stirring, much-anticipated picture book anything is possible when our voices join together. As a young girl leads a cast of characters on a musical journey, they learn that they have the power to make changes--big or small--in the world, in their communities, and in most importantly, in themselves. Available here



A book that takes a bold journey through the alphabet of Black history and culture letter by letter, *The ABCs of Black History* by Rio Cortez celebrates a story that spans continents and centuries, triumph and heartbreak, creativity and joy. In addition to rhyming text, the book includes back matter with information on the events, places, and people mentioned in the poem, from Mae Jemison to W. E. B. Du Bois, Fannie Lou Hamer to Sam Cooke, and the Little Rock Nine to DJ Kool Herc. Available here.



We Still Here - In the midst of loss and death and suffering, our charge is to figure out what freedom really means--and how we take steps to get there, according to Marc Lamont Hill. In this

urgent and incisive collection of interviews bookended by two essays, Hill critically examines the "pre-existing conditions" that have led us to this moment of crisis and upheaval, guiding us through both the perils and possibilities, and helping us imagine an abolitionist future.



# **Buy a Book During Black History Month**

United Way of Delaware is on a mission to provide 150 third-grade students throughout Delaware with two books (300 total books) each by the end of February, Black History Month, to foster the love of reading and expand home libraries. Want to help? Use the link below to purchase books by Tuesday, February 7. Books will be delivered directly to the students.

Bookshop: Buy books online.

Research shows that proficiency in reading by the end of third grade enables students to shift from learning to read to reading to learn. Many students who fail to reach this critical milestone falter in their later grades and are at greater risk of dropping out of school before earning a high school diploma. Won't you support our local schools by purchasing a book today!



# A quarterly journey of self-discovery begins in February 2023



The 2023 Racial Equity Challenge series, powered by United Way of Delaware (UWDE), and the Delaware Racial Justice Collaborative (DRJC), is a quarterly journey of self-discovery designed to help Delawareans build more effective social justice habits, particularly those dealing with issues of race, power, privilege, and leadership.

For five consecutive days each quarter during 2023, participants are prompted with a daily e-mail challenge — such as reading an article, listening to a podcast, or watching a video—and are then encouraged to reflect on that content and to relate the situation to their own lives. Participants discover how racial inequity and social injustice impact our community. The goal is to build new understandings and new connections and in so doing, to begin dismantling systemic racism in Delaware.

February 20 – 24th | Implicit Bias in the Workplace

May 22nd – 26th | Implicit Bias in HealthCare

August 21st – 25th | Implicit Bias in Schools/Parenting

November 27th – December 1st | Implicit Bias inVoting

# Sign up now for the 2023 Challenge!

www.deracialequitychallenge.org

# Free Tax Help Now Available

UWDE partners with Nehemiah Gateway Development Corporation and First State Community Action Agency to promote FREE tax filing services in Delaware.

FREE in-person drop-off is available by appointment only. Virtual tax services are also available.

For the most current information, residents looking for free tax service can dial 2-1-1.

Learn more about the service by visiting Nehemiah Gateway CDC
Learn more about making a tax appointment here
Learn more about volunteering here

### **DELAWARE'S HOME FOR FREE TAX PREP**

Serving those who need it most, including non-filers! ehold income \$57,000 or less, or \$0 taxable income but need to file to receive stimulus payments



SCHEDULE YOUR FREE TAX APPOINTMENT TODAY NehemiahGateway.org



drop-off appointment!



### DROP-OFF TAX SITES

January 23 - April 22, 2023

### NEW CASTLE COUNTY

Hudson State Service Center 501 Ogletown Road, Newark, DE 19711 Appointments Available: Monday and Thursday Ilam – 8pm Wednesday Ilam – 5pm

Route 9 Library & Innovation Center 3022 New Castle Ave, New Castle, DE 19720

Appointments Available: Monday Ilam - 8pm, Tuesday 5pm - 8pm Saturday 10am - 4pm

Wilmington Public Library 10 East 10th Street, Wilmington, DE 19801 Appointments Available: Tuesday, Thursday, Friday 10am - 4pm

Woodlawn Library 2020 w 9th Street, Wilmington, DE 19805 Appointments Available: day 5pm - 8pm, Wednesday Ilam - 8pm Saturday I0am - 4pm

#### University of Delaware

(near Star Campus)
Division of Professional & Continuing Services
501 S. College Avenue, Newark, DE 19716

### KENT COUNTY

Dover Public Library 35 Loockerman Plaza, Dover, DE 19901 Appointments Available: Monday and Saturday 10am - 4pm

### SUSSEX COUNTY

First State CAA 8 N Railroad Avenue, Georgetown, DE 19947 Call 302-856-7761 (Se habia Español)

Appointments Available: Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday 9am - 5pm

Georgetown on Laurel
1 East Laurel Street, Georgetown, DE 19947
Appointments Available:
Monday and Friday Sam - Tyrn

Goodwill Milford 694 N. DuPont Highway, Milford, DE 19963

Appointments Available: Tuesday Nam - 4pm Wednesday and Thursday Nam - 1pm Saturday Nam - 4pm

### FOR A SUCCESSFUL TAX APPOINTMENT, KNOW WHAT TO BRING!

- ID for taxpayer and spouse
- W-2s, 1099s, 1099-MISC, 1099-NEC, 1099-R, 1099-SSA for all employers, a 6419 Advance Child Tax Credit retirement, and social security benefits (no pay stubs accepted)
- - and 6475 Economic Impact Payment (EIP) stimulus letters
- urrent Government issued photo

  Social Security cards and/or ITN letter for everyone listed on tax return

  on tax return

  99-R, 1099-MSC, 1099-MSC and elemptoyers,

  6419 Advance Child Tax Credit

  "This letter for everyone listed on tax return

  on tax return

  6419 Advance Child Tax Credit

  "This letter for everyone listed on tax return

  to return to correct statement from all providers with address and tax ID# and/or SS# for childcare

  to return to correct statement from all providers with address and tax ID# and/or SS# for childcare

  to return to correct statement from all providers with address and tax ID# and/or SS# for childcare

  to return to correct statement from all providers with address and tax ID# and/or SS# for childcare

  to return to correct statement from all providers with address and tax ID# and/or SS# for childcare

  to return to correct statement from all providers with address and tax ID# and/or SS# for childcare

  to return to with amounts paid)
  - mortgage interest paid, property taxes paid and list of any other itemized deductions

- 1098s for education expenses paid, mortgage interest paid, property (may be required for new credits)

(302) 655-0803 • (800) 560-3372 • DIAL 2-1-1 • Fast refunds! • Get a Prepaid Visa Debit Card • Open a Savings Account

onsored by the Delaware Tax and Financial Services Campaign founded and operated by hemiah Gateway Community Development Corporation in partnership with First State CAA











# Register Now for Do More 24

Calling all nonprofits! Register now for Do More 24 Delaware -- Delaware's Largest giving day. You don't want to miss out on the chance to earn undesignated funding for your organization.

Learn more and Sign up TODAY at www.domore24de.org





# Feb. 20 is Your Last Chance to Help Us When You Shop on Amazon!

AmazonSmile is a way customers can support United Way of Delaware at no additional cost every time they shop with Amazon. The bad news is that Amazon is ending this program on February 20. We hope you will keep us in mind until that time. Here's how you sign up.

























## United Way of Delaware | 625 North Orange Street, Wilmington, DE 19801

### Unsubscribe fmcclain@uwde.org

# <u>Update Profile |Constant Contact Data Notice</u>

Sent byleadingtheway@uwde.orgpowered by



Try email marketing for free today!