



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Announcing the 2nd Annual Celebration and Exploration of Black History and Culture at Old Town Hall

Salem, MA - Join us as the Salem Human Rights Coalition, in partnership with the North Shore Juneteenth Association, showcases Black History and Culture at Old Town Hall, located at 32 Derby Sq. in Salem, MA, every weekend in February 2025. Programming will include entertainment, and education, in the form of poetry, fashion, theatrical performances and music.

Events will kick off on Saturday, February 1st with a speaker series at 11am, featuring comments from Mayor Dominick Pangallo and State Senator Joan Lovely. Other highlights of the month-long celebration include performances from Dencity, Greg Coles, the Salem High School Jazz Band, as well as a special collaboration with History Alive, and Salem 400+.

The schedule for the month's events is as follows:

All events are free and open to the public. Donations to the SHRC support this work are welcome.

Feb. 1st, 11am: Kick-off.

We will begin with the singing of the Black National Anthem, and then move onto our speaker series. Scheduled speakers include; Mayor Dominick Pangallo; State Senator Joan Lovely; Salem Human Rights Coalition Chair, Alphonse Wright; and Michael Corley, City of Salem Constituent Services & Special Projects Assistant & LGBTQIA+ Liaison.

Feb. 8th, 3pm: Vendor tie-in with Salem So Sweet.

7pm: Soul Loved; An Exploration of Black Love through Music & Spoken Word

Feb. 21st, 3pm: Vendor booths

7pm: History Alive, Inc. presents "Fashioning for Freedom: Layers of Liberty", a runway of ideas to celebrate the region's Black change-makers throughout history. Conceived and created by Kristina Wacome Stevick, artistic director.

Feb. 22nd: Events TBA – Stay tuned for more!

Feb. 23rd, 12pm: Vendor booths

3pm: History Alive, Inc. presents "In Open Rebellion". Picture this: It's Autumn, 1774.

Massachusetts is confined, punished & neglected by the Royal Government. Tyranny sparks hopes of Revolution! When Patriots meet secretly in Salem, enslaved Africans want to take the talk of Liberty at face value. Can they? This piece, commissioned by Essex Heritage to be written by Kristina Wacome Stevick, invites the audience to join the forbidden assembly! Directed by Samantha Searles. Featuring Adeniyi Samuel as Caesar.

Feb 28th, 11am: Vendor Booths

12pm: History of the African Drum, by Greg Coles

4:30pm: Salem High School Jazz Band

"Sometimes history isn't about names at all, but tradition and duty. It's about the everyday struggle in a society that strategically undervalues you. It's also about beginnings, passing your story on so that future generations can have a sense of identity. All these pieces; names, tradition, duty, struggle and identity, coalesce into the story of Black History. From that story we learn that we have always been, and always will be, a vital piece of American history... whether you know our names, or not."

- Alphonse Wright, Chair Salem Human Rights Coalition

"Many aspects of Black history are often overlooked or minimized in traditional educational systems. Black History Month serves as a time to highlight the achievements, challenges, and culture of Black people, helping to educate everyone about the broader history of the world."

- Nicole McClain, President of North Shore Juneteenth Association Inc.; Lynn City Councilor

This programming was made possible, in large part, due to grants from the Massachusetts Cultural Council, the Office of Diversity and Inclusion at Salem State University and Hamilton Hall.

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