

LIFT EV'RY VOICE

LiftEvryVoice.org

Celebrating
African-American
Culture & Heritage
In The Berkshires



Be Part of Lift Ev'ry Voice 2017

Founded in 2011, the Lift Ev'ry Voice Festival is a biennial, summer-long celebration of African-American Culture & Heritage in the Berkshires. The festival celebrates the rich traditions of the African-American community, arts and culture, history and heritage, while acknowledging the larger global context in which this community exists.

Rather than a site-specific series of events presented by a single organization, Lift Ev'ry Voice is an umbrella under which a wide range of events, exhibitions, forums and celebrations are gathered to create a rich tapestry across Berkshire County. We welcome organizations and institutions, from anywhere in the county, to contribute events and exhibitions that resonate with the spirit of the festival.

Past partners who we are looking forward to working with again for 2017 include Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, Mass MoCA, the Mount (Edith Wharton) and the Berkshire Chapter of the NAACP.

The history of the African-American community in the Berkshires stretches from the War of Independence, which dozens of blacks from this region fought in, to the present day's diverse community, including the second African-American female astronaut, Stephanie Wilson. Famous Berkshire natives include such historic figures as the legendary writer and activist W.E.B. DuBois; Elizabeth "Mumbet" Freeman, the first American slave to successfully sue for her freedom; and the Reverend Samuel Harrison, who served as the chaplain to the legendary African-American 54th Regiment of western Massachusetts in the Civil War and successfully fought for and won equal pay for black soldiers.

We are inviting libraries, historical societies, arts organizations, galleries, museums and educational institutions to consider how they might participate in the 2017 festival.

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Organizations and institutions with events or exhibitions that resonate with the spirit of the festival, are invited to join us in weaving this tapestry.

continued other side

For Example

- Libraries and Historical Society might organize an exhibition of relevant town history from their archives. Could be as simple as a display case or as elaborate as a gallery exhibition. Imagine a network of town-based historical exhibitions woven into a county-wide story/road trip.
- Educational Institutions might offer a book club to explore relevant literature. Perhaps read the current bestseller *Underground Railroad* by Colson Whitehead and facilitate a discussion about the fictional story relative to the local history of the Underground Railroad. Or schedule a relevant guest speaker, offer a forum, etc.
- A performing arts organization might look at its planned programming and find that a particular production resonates with the theme of the festival.
- A gallery might look to present relevant art.
- An organization could facilitate a creative writing contest or challenge for school age children or young adults based around a relevant theme.
- A library, theatre or community center could host a relevant film series.

*Consider this your
invitation to be a
part of Lift Ev'ry
Voice 2017*

Above are only a few of the most obvious possibilities. We're confident you - the creative community - will have others. We're looking forward to hearing your ideas. Consider this your invitation to be a part of Lift Ev'ry Voice 2017.

Already have an idea? Want to talk it through in person?

Share your idea online at LiftEvryVoice.org/2017
or email LiftEvryVoice@gmail.com

Important Deadlines

- March 28 - Draft Proposals Due - Not as complicated as it sounds. In some cases this can be as simple as a commitment to host an exhibit of archival materials on hand and the dates for the exhibition.
- April 2 - LEV Confirmation of Projects to be Included in Festival
- April 16 - Collateral Materials for Marketing/PR Due - Examples would include partner logos, event description/copy, photos, etc as appropriate
- May 2 - Festival announced to press for public release
- May 21 - Flyers and posters available for distribution

Relevant events that take place between Memorial Day and Labor Day are eligible for consideration to be included under the Lift Ev'ry Voice 2017 umbrella with inclusion in festival press releases, calendar, and marketing materials.

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