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FEBRUARY 2018

We hope to see
you there!

- **Mural Dedication and Unveiling:**
Join Mayor Price and the City Council for the mural unveiling and dedication event honoring civil rights leader Attorney W. Hale Thompson on Saturday, February 10, 2018 at 11 a.m. Reception to follow. Location: 611 25th Street. See back page of Newsletter for more information.
- **Groundbreaking Ceremony** for the Newport News Shipbuilding Office Complex at Brooks Crossing on Tuesday, February 13, 2018. RSVP at 926.8428 by Friday, February 9, 2018.
- **Joint Task Force Meeting** on February 20, 2018 from 6 to 7 p.m. with dinner served at 5:30 p.m. Location: Marshall Early Learning Center, 743 24th Street.



NEWPORT NEWS CHOICE NEIGHBORHOOD

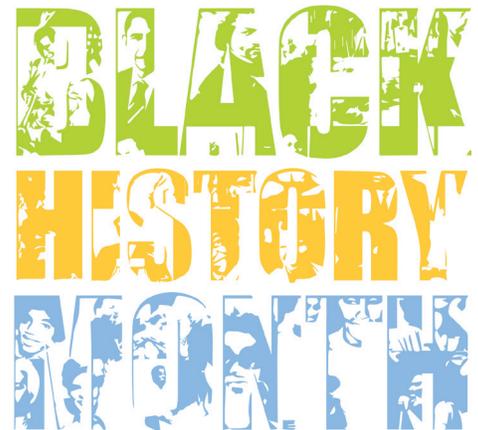
Get involved.

For questions or to **VOLUNTEER**, please contact: Garrett Morgan, Senior Planner at gmorgan@nnva.gov
Phone: 757.926.8761 (Department of Planning)
Britta Ayers, Manager of Comprehensive Planning at bayers@nnva.gov

Black History Month

Black History Month is celebrated each February in the United States and Canada to recognize the black experience. The origin of Black History Month can be traced back to the founding of the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH) in 1915. That year, Dr. Carter G. Woodson, prominent historian, author and journalist, established ASALH as a resource for African American scholars. Dr. Woodson, the second African American to earn a doctorate from Harvard University, recognized the need to document the many accomplishments of African Americans in the development of America and celebrate their contributions. In 1926, he started a special program to encourage the study of African American history, which was expanded from one week to include the entire month of February in 1976.

Each year, the ASALH establishes a theme for Black History Month to focus attention on a specific aspect of the African American experience. This year's theme is **African Americans in Times of War**, which explores the roles of African Americans in every American war from the Revolutionary to the current war in Afghanistan.



To find out more about Dr. Woodson, the ASALH and Black History Month, check out www.naacp.org and www.asalh.org.

Did You Know?

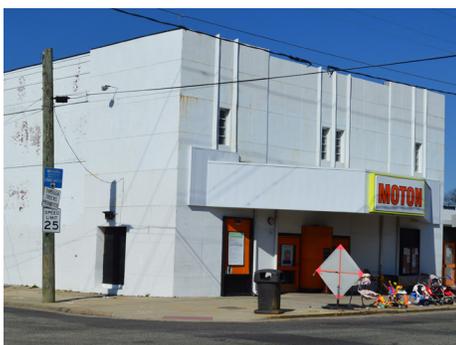
Joseph Lorenzo Rainey, Jr. was the first Newport News born African American to practice law in the city. A law graduate of Howard University, Mr. Rainey was admitted to the Virginia Bar in 1921 but was not allowed to join the segregated Newport News Bar Association. So, in 1930 he helped organize the Peninsula Bar Association for African American lawyers. Mr. Rainey was a well-known and respected lawyer who started his practice in the Southeast Community at 25th Street and Jefferson Avenue, where a Newport News historical marker commemorates

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his contributions to the community. He was actively involved in the community, focusing on youth and his church.

W. Hale Thompson, a local African American attorney, pushed to integrate the Newport News Public Library System. He filed suit against the city and the Library Board to desegregate the libraries. Before the trial was to begin in 1952, the Library System announced that its facilities were open to “all adult inhabitants of the city of Newport News.” Mr. Thompson will be honored with a mural on the side of Esquire Barber Shop (611 25th Street), the former home of Thompson’s law office. The mural will be unveiled on **Saturday, February 10, 2018 at 11 a.m.**

Moton Theatre, located at 2101 Jefferson Avenue, is named in honor of Robert Russa Moton, a Hampton Institute graduate who was instrumental in the establishment of the United Negro College Fund. The building was constructed in the early 1930s and used for community entertainment. It is the site of the city’s last original African American theater. Opened in 1941 as the Moton Theatre, it showed movies until 1968.



Moton Community House is named in honor of Robert Russa Moton, and is the site of the city’s last original African American theater.

The Greater Southeast Development Corporation purchased the building in 1978 and reopened the facility in 1981 as the Moton Community House, a multi-purpose center that provides culturally enriched programs.



Youth Scholarships Available

Are you a Newport News Redevelopment and Housing Authority (NNRHA) resident expecting to graduate with a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 2.5 or better, and have been accepted to an accredited college or institution of higher learning? If so, you are eligible for the NNRHA Youth Scholarship Program! Call **Ms. Charlene Bowser at 928.6170** for more information and an application.

Application deadline is March 20, 2018.

There’s Also an Adult Scholarship Program

The Newport News Redevelopment and Housing Authority (NNRHA) also offers scholarships to its adult residents who are attending an institution of higher education. For information, call **Ms. Charlene Bowser at 928.6170.**

Application deadline is March 20, 2018.

Need Help Filing Your Taxes?

The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program offers free tax help to households earning \$54,000 per year or less, persons with disabilities and limited English speaking tax payers. Through VITA, certified volunteers provide free basic income tax return preparation and electronic filing to qualified individuals. The program is available through both the Newport News Redevelopment and Housing Authority (NNRHA) and the Hampton Roads Community Action Program (HRCAP). Tax preparation assistance is available through NNRHA at the Family Investment Center (FIC) at 600 C Ridley Place, and HRCAP at Downing-Gross Cultural Arts Center at 2410 Wickham Avenue. For more information, call **FIC at 928.3680** or **HRCAP at 247.0379 (extension 323).**



Calendar of Community Events

Want to know what is going on in the community this month? Check out the events calendar at **www.newportnewschoice.com**. Want to share upcoming events with the neighborhood? Send event information to **Garrett Morgan at gmorgan@nnva.gov** to post on the website.



Job Readiness Workshop

Newport News Redevelopment and Housing Authority (NNRHA) is offering a 6-week job readiness program at the Family Investment Center (FIC) starting March 6, 2018. Two hour sessions will be held every Tuesday and Thursday through April 12, 2018 from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. The program will cover basic computer training, preparing effective resumes, preparing for job interviews and more. **This free program does require pre-registration.** Please call the **FIC at 928.3680** no later than February 23, 2018 to reserve your seat.



Meet Zach Elder, Pearl Bailey Librarian

This month, the CNI planning team had the opportunity to interview Zach

Elder. Mr. Elder is the Supervising Librarian at Pearl Bailey Library and active on the Neighborhood Task Force.

How long have you worked in the neighborhood? What brought you to Pearl Bailey / Newport News?

Since April, 2017. I wanted to transition from an academic library in Washington, DC to focus on serving the public.

What are some of the things that you like best about the neighborhood?

The people here have been incredibly friendly and kind. When I walk down the street or do an outreach event, people greet me by name, and that is a welcome change from what I'm used to.

What are three challenges that you think need to be addressed in the neighborhood to improve the overall quality of life?

1) Bridging the digital divide--getting every resident access to both the internet and teaching the skills so everyone can utilize the full benefit of that access. 2) Meeting the needs of young children in this neighborhood. I've met some incredibly dedicated parents who want whatever it takes to help their kids learn and grow, but it's sometimes hard for them to know where to start. I want the libraries to be a part of that solution for them. 3) Making the neighborhood walkable and improving access to public transportation. I came from a place in downtown DC where I had safe and easy walking access to jobs, grocery stores, hardware stores, parks, restaurants, and just about everything one would need, and I could see how that improved lives and reduced stress--especially for families.

What have you learned from the Choice Neighborhoods Initiative planning process?

That the residents are really dedicated to enriching and improving their neighborhood -- all the best ideas have come from them. Also, being relatively new to the community, it's been a great way to learn all of the partners and organizations involved in the neighborhood.

What role do you see Pearl Bailey Library playing in the continued transformation of the Choice Neighborhood?

I want to see us very involved in improving early childhood literacy, working with our daycares and preschools even more closely; I want us reaching out beyond our branch with outreach events and visits to all of the housing complexes and parks. I want our library to be that bridge across the tech divide, whether it is through computer/wireless access, STEM and Makerspace skills and knowledge, or computer classes and assistance.

Are there any events or announcements you'd like to share with the community?

*For teens, we have a gaming club that meets every other week--we have a Playstation 4 in our space now with some great games. Most important this month, we have a **Black History Month Event** that we are organizing at **Heritage High School on February 17th, from 2 to 4 p.m.** Performers will include the Hampton University Players, middle school choruses from Huntington and Crittenden, and many others. All are welcome!*

Driving Healthy Lifestyles

Join Hampton Roads Community Action Program (HRCAP) at the Driving Healthy Lifestyles community event on **Tuesday, February 20, 2018** from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. HRCAP, in partnership with BB&T Bank and other community organizations, will showcase programs and services that highlight financial wellness, housing resources and health and fitness initiatives. The

event will feature the BB&T Bus Tour, providing on-the-spot bank accounts and financial resources; a mini-job fair; workshops on budgeting, housing and nutrition; community vendors; free tax preparation; free health screenings; and much more. For more information on this event, please contact **Ms. Terri Francis** at 643.4086.



Go Red For Women® 2018

Go Red for Women is an American Heart Association (AHA) campaign to raise awareness about heart disease and save lives. According to the AHA's latest data:

- Cardiovascular diseases and stroke cause 1 in 3 women's deaths each year, killing approximately one woman every 80 seconds.
- An estimated 44 million women in the United States are affected by

cardiovascular diseases.

- 90 percent of women have one or more risk factors for heart disease or stroke.
- Women have a higher lifetime risk of stroke than men.
- Fewer women than men survive their first heart attack.
- Cardiovascular diseases are the leading cause of death for African American women, killing over 48,000 annually.
- Cardiovascular diseases are the leading cause of death for Hispanic women, killing nearly 21,000 annually.

Join the Newport News Redevelopment and Housing Authority on **Thursday, February 22, 2018** for their Go Red for Women Lunch N' Learn at Downing Gross Cultural Arts Center (2410 Wickham Avenue) from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Enjoy conversation, food, raffle and door prizes, and give aways. And, don't forget to wear something red!

The event is free, but you must reserve a seat by contacting **Ms. Channele Price** at 928-3680.

Mural Honoring Civil Rights Leader W. Hale Thompson

In recognition of Black History Month and in support of the City's Choice Neighborhoods Initiative, Mayor McKinley L. Price, D.D.S. and City Council are unveiling a mural honoring local civil rights leader and attorney W. Hale Thompson on **Saturday, February 10, at 11:00 a.m.** The mural is being installed at 611 25th Street, the Esquire Barber Shop. Barber shop owner Vernard Lynch purchased the building from Mrs. Thompson following the death of Attorney Thompson, and has generously offered his building to host the mural. The event is free and open to the public.

W. Hale Thompson (1914-1966), a local African American attorney, successfully pushed to integrate the Newport News Public Library System. See "Did You Know?" on page 2 of this newsletter for more information.

The mural is being created by Newport News native and artist Asa Jackson. Jackson, who grew up in the Southeast Community, also designed the Ella Fitzgerald mural which adorns the Jefferson Brookville Apartment building at Jefferson Avenue and 26th Street.

What we are working on this month...

Neighborhood Leadership Series:

The planning team is looking for Choice Neighborhood residents and other stakeholders interested in participating in the second round of the Neighborhood Leadership Series (NLS II). This eight week course provides participants with improved knowledge and understanding of our City government and how residents can become more involved. The goal is

to build more effective neighborhood advocates and community leaders. If you are interested in participating, please contact Britta Ayers or Brian Pierce at the Planning Department (757.926.8761) by March 1, 2018.

Advanced Leadership Training:

We are reaching out to our first class of NLS I graduates to invite them to participate in NLS II. This advanced

training will focus on equipping neighborhood leaders with the tools necessary to sustain their involvement and commitment.

Draft Transformation Plan:

Stay tuned for a joint task force meeting in the coming weeks to review comments received from the Department of Housing and Urban Development on the Draft Transformation Plan.