



American Women of African Heritage, Inc.

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INSIDE AWAH

American Women of African Heritage, Inc.

INSIDE AWAH The Newsletter of American Women of African Heritage, Inc.

MISSION STATEMENT

AWAH's mission is the empowerment of women and girls of African ancestry, and the enrichment of their lives and the lives of others within the African American community of Westchester County.



Standing: Suzanne Clary, Francine Shorts, Helen Williams, Bentley Patterson, Barbara L. Edwards, JoAnn Dudley, & Dawna Michelle Fields Sitting: Gwen Cort, Benilde Little, Quincy T. Mills, Paula Williams Madison & Eddie Mae Barnes

AWAH's Annual Literary Celebration

For the second consecutive year, American Women of African Heritage, Inc. (AWAH) hosted a Literary Celebration on Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. The event showcased three African American authors whose dynamic narratives contribute to our rich history and culture.

throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. He is currently working on a second book tentatively entitled, *The Wages of Resistance: Financing the Black Freedom movement*.

An enthusiastic audience attended the event, held at the John Jay Heritage Center in Rye, NY, and took part in a lively Q&A session with the authors following their presentations. Westchester luminary, Barbara Edwards, served as mistress-of-ceremonies.

The Literary Celebration is one of the programs sponsored by AWAH, a not-for-profit organization, where part of its mission is to empower women and girls, celebrate African American culture and promote understanding among diverse peoples. Francine Shorts is president of AWAH. Gwen Cort and Eddie Mae Barnes co-chaired the Literary Celebration event.

All donations are tax deductible to the fullest extent of IRS regulations. Please make your check payable to AWAH, Inc. and in the memo section indicate "AWAH Manor Fund".

Mail donations to:
AWAH Manor Fund
PO Box 376
White Plains, NY 10603

Contributions deductible to the extent permitted by law. AWAH is a 501 (c) (3) corporation.

AWAH Officers

- Francine Shorts, President
- Gloria Welcome, Vice President
- Gwenette Cort, Recording Secretary
- Roda Simmons, Corresponding Secretary
- Katrena Shipp, Treasurer
- Pattie Wade-Dozier, Financial Secretary
- Thelma Gordon, Archivist
- Toni Cox-Burns, President Emerita

- | | |
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Honorary Member
Dr. Olivia Hooker

Website: www.AWAH.org Like us on Facebook

The Literary Celebration Committee
in Collaboration with
American Women of African Heritage, Inc.

*Save the Date
for a*

LITERARY CELEBRATION
Featuring African American Authors

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
Monday, January 16, 2017
2-5pm

Jay Heritage Center • 210 Boston Post Road • Rye, NY 10580



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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Greetings:

This past June marked AWAH's 15th year as an organization!

Elected as President for a second term, I am honored and committed to working with our members and moving us toward the fulfillment of our vision.

"When you've worked hard and done well, and walked through that doorway of opportunity...you do not slam it shut behind you...you reach back and you give other folks the same chances that helped you succeed."

The words of our First Lady, Michelle Obama, send a clear and resounding message that we are our sister's keeper!

We are living in a time of such political, economical, and racial discord that the only way to survive with hope is to care for each other. There is little need to look beyond our own neighborhoods to see that work is required to help feed those who are hungry, give shelter to those who are homeless, and ensure jobs for the unemployed.

How does an organization such as AWAH maintain its viability in the midst of the troubling circumstances around our world and immediate community? First, by **believing** that we can help make positive changes and improvements; second, by remaining faithful to our mission and **doing** the work that is required.

We ask that you join us as we continue to work toward realizing our vision, identifying a place with a door that will be open and welcoming to women and girls, with a host of programs, resources, and cultural activities, benefitting the community at large.

On behalf of the members of AWAH, we thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

Francine T. Shorts, President

Programs 2016

O.R.A.L.S. (Oral Reading and Listening/Learning Skills) had a consistent group of about fourteen 4th and 5th grade students attending weekly sessions at The Thomas H. Slater Center after school program in White Plains. The students were challenged to learn map and vocabulary skills and were introduced to African American inventors. In addition to learning poems written by the more familiar Langston Hughes and Dr. Maya Angelou, students were introduced by AWAH volunteers to the less familiar poets: David Mandessi Diop and Lolita Cuevas.

We were so impressed and proud when one of our 4th graders, Jhonley, was inspired to write his own poem, "My

Home, My Home". It was to be cherished. His writing encouraged another student to write a poem dedicated to her late grandfather whom she had never met.

At the end-of-year reception for the students and parents, AWAH contributed to the menu. Each student received a U.S. poster map and a U.S. bingo game as gifts.

Our Knit Pics program was on hiatus and will resume in the Fall 2016.

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Year in Review

Let's take a look at some of our accomplishments in 2016:

- We partnered with STSI and other sister organizations in the Black Women and the Girl Child Conference;
- Designed and updated our AWAH website;
- Presented our Second Chance Award Scholarship to a deserving student of WCC;
- Participated in and benefitted from the Lord & Taylor, Shop Smart – Do Good event;
- Hosted a very successful Literary Celebration at The Jay Heritage Center;
- Attended an Annual Retreat where members actually constructed models and shared ideas to better realize our vision of AWAH Manor;
- Toured a piece of property that was available for sale to get our collective juices flowing toward the mind-set of acquiring AWAH Manor;
- Completed another successful year of O.R.A.L.S. with youngsters from the White Plains Youth Bureau.



SPOTLIGHT ON: *Tameeka MacDonald*

Second Chance Award Goes to Tameeka MacDonald



From Left to Right: Sheela Aspinall, Tameeka McDonald, Francine Shorts, Toni Cox-Burns

For the eighth consecutive year, AWAH presented its Second Chance Award to a Westchester Community College student at a ceremony attended by a capacity

audience. This annual scholarship is awarded to a female student who, after a break in her schooling, is returning to college. The Second Chance Award supports AWAH's mission to empower women and girls of African ancestry. The 2015-2016 Second Chance Award went to Tameeka MacDonald who, enrolled as a student of Liberal Arts-Behavioral Sciences, plans to pursue a career in Psychology and Human Services.

The Awards Ceremony, always a celebratory occasion, was well attended by students, parents, and donors. Members of AWAH, including Toni Cox-Burns, President Emerita, presented the award. Ms. MacDonald, the award recipient, whose beautiful smile conveyed her appreciation, also expressed in writing her sincere gratitude to AWAH.