



Supervisor Keith Carson

District 5 News and Updates

Release Date: July 7, 2011



1221 Oak St., Ste 536
Oakland, CA 94612
Tel. 510-272-6695
Fax 510-271-5151
dist5@acgov.org

The Fifth District includes the cities of Albany, Berkeley, Emeryville, Piedmont, and West Oakland, North Oakland, Rockridge, Grand Lake, and portions of the Fruitvale, Manzanita and Dimond District neighborhoods.

Ancestry Project Connects Youth to Family Heritage

“My grandmother will never let me in her attic,” McClymonds High School student Michael Lewis declared as he listened to a presentation about where to find documents to start researching his family history. “She keeps the key on a chain around her neck!”

So began a journey into the past that has brought forth unexpected challenges and deep personal rewards for Michael and other Bay Area youth taking part in the Family Journeys Ancestry Project.

It all started with a vision for a project that would extend beyond Black History Month to strengthen family and community ties through the study of family history. The project kicked off with a panel discussion in February about the Great Migration of Blacks out of the South and the contributions of those migrants to the Bay Area economy and culture.

Alameda County Supervisor Keith Carson initiated the project with the help of volunteers from the African American Genealogical Society of Northern California. Every week since February, staff from Supervisor Carson’s office and volunteers from the Society have met with youth from McClymonds High School in West Oakland and Beyond Emancipation, a program for former foster care youth in Alameda County. Recently they introduced the program to a group of African American young men at the Berkeley Technology Academy.

“I kept on hearing elders in the community say that the younger generations seem disconnected from a sense of family history, that knowledge of your roots and your heritage,”



Genealogical Society member Felicia Addison (above) and Supervisor Carson’s staff member Reginald James (below) assist youth in doing research at the Mormon Temple Family History Center in Oakland.

Ancestry Project...continued on page 3

Free Home Weatherization Program

Is your home leaking energy and money? Get FREE Weatherization Work !

Direct Assistance

- Offered to Income-eligible residents in Alameda County (owners and renters)
- Trained and certified Participating Contractors
- Living in 1 to 4 unit buildings

No Cost

- Thousands of dollars in FREE Weatherization improvements, depending on your income
- Sponsored by the Neighborhood Preservation & Sustainability Department of the Community Development Agency, County of Alameda

Weatherization Program

- Floor/attic insulation; Weatherstripping; CFL bulbs; Heater repairs; Water Heater Blankets; Duct sealing
- Low flow aerators on faucets and shower heads; Test for combustion appliances for safety
- Upgrade Packages, rebates and other Incentives



Contact Neighborhood Preservation and Sustainability at 510.670.6125 or infoweatherization@acgov.org.

For more information, visit: <http://www.acgov.org/cda/nps/weatherization.htm>

This project, program or service is funded in whole or in part by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 in cooperation with the California Department of Community Services and Development.

Seniors News

The Waiting list is now open for the **Sojourner Truth Manor**, a non-profit community for low-income seniors and/or handicapped and disabled individuals located at 6015 Martin Luther King, Jr Way in North Oakland.

For more information, please click here for the flyer in English and Spanish:
http://www.keithcarson.org/STM_WAITLIST.pdf

You may also call (510) 655-4413 or email sotm@cchnc.net



POLICE • COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

It's Time to Organize Your Block Party!

Organize a block party, barbecue, ice cream social, or other outdoor event that brings your neighbors together.

Albany: Tuesday, August 2nd • 6 PM-8 PM

For more information:

<http://www.albanyca.org/index.aspx?page=903>

Berkeley: Tuesday, August 2, 2011 • 3 PM—7 PM

Between Oregon St. & Magee Ave.

For more information:

<http://www.ci.berkeley.ca.us/CalendarEventMain.aspx?calendarEventID=11513>

(510) 981-6674

Oakland: Tuesday, August 2, 2011 • 7 PM—9 PM

For more information and to register online:

<http://www2.oaklandnet.com/nno>

(510) 238-3091

Hunger Does not take a Summer Vacation

The Food Bank is serving 1 in 6 residents of Alameda County – nearly half of them children and teens. Start a traditional barrel drive at your work, school or organization ... or start a [Virtual Food Drive](#) and multiply your donation five-fold by doing our shopping for us.

Call the Food Drive hotline at (510) 635-3663 ext. 318. You can also email ACCFB at fooddrive@accfb.org with questions.

http://www.accfb.org/food_drive.html

Preserve the Good Times. Get Checked Get Treated

African American men comprise 46.9% of the people living with HIV/AIDS in Alameda County. African American women comprise 67.5% of the women living with HIV/AIDS in Alameda County.

Have your free and Confidential HIV screening done today
1-888-8END-HIV

<http://www.officeofaids.org/hivtesting/>

Ancestry project...continued from page 1

Supervisor Carson explained. “A few years ago I had the chance to look into my family history and it gave me a deeper appreciation for what my parents and grandparents went through in their journey out of the South. I wanted youth in Alameda County to have that same chance to connect with a deeper sense of who we are.”

The adults have been guiding the youth through a strange new world of pedigree charts, handwritten census records, yellowing obituaries and military draft cards. Each document presents a clue leading the youth farther back into their own family history. The group has already taken one trip to the Family History Center at the Mormon Temple in Oakland and is planning another trip for early May.

At first, most approached the project with a degree of trepidation. Like Michael, many youth assumed their relatives would be reluctant to open up the attic and talk about the past. And some adults have been reticent to shine a light on uncomfortable truths and tightly guarded family secrets.

“You have to be creative,” says Nicka Smith, who has been researching her ancestors for the past few years. “Sometimes you have to be a little nosy to get the information you need.” Felicia Addison, a fellow Genealogical Society member, agrees. “The thing is not to give up,” she told the youth. “It is your birthright and this is your journey. You deserve to know.”

Some participants from Beyond Emancipation have lost touch with siblings or parents while in the system. Their main goal for the project is to rekindle those lost connections. And some of the school-aged youth are facing similar issues. The absence of biological fathers in the daily lives of some of the Berkeley Tech students colors their feelings about family and belonging. Teacher Lamont Snaer works with the young men on self esteem and emotional health through journaling and in-class discussions. The ancestry project was a logical extension of that curriculum, Snaer said, and he was excited to bring the project to his class.

With the help of supportive adult mentors and the Genealogical Society members, the youth have gotten up the nerve to make that first phone call to an auntie or grandparent. And some have been pleasantly surprised.



Volunteer Nicka Smith presents a slideshow about her family's history to former foster care youth.

Michael’s grandmother ended up handing over the keys to the attic. Together, she and Michael found a treasure trove of obituaries and birth certificates. Now his grandmother won’t stop telling him family stories. A few weeks after his trip to the attic, Michael and his classmates shared family photos they had unearthed in their research. Laughter filled the room as he showed a photograph of himself at the age of four posing with his father and uncle.

Carolann Perales, a participant in the Beyond Emancipation program, has found relatives on the 1860 census and has become so hooked on the research that she is tracing her family roots all the way back to England.

“I don’t think of myself as just coming from the Lower Bottoms [a neighborhood in West Oakland] anymore,” said Tyisha Stills, a spirited 9th grader in the Culture Keepers program. “I am bigger than that.” When starting the online research, she recalled: “At first I was scared. And then I started typing names in the computer and I was on fire. I learned my great-grandmother was from Louisiana!”



Culture Keepers youth listen to a presentation about tracing family history and interviewing relatives.



Michael Lewis (foreground) and fellow Culture Keepers youth present the ancestry project to the McClymonds School community.



Reginald James from Supervisor Carson’s office shows the youth at Beyond Emancipation how to use a Flip camera to video tape interviews with family members.

The Family Journeys Ancestry Project will continue through the month of May and will culminate in an event in early June showcasing the stories, pictures and video interviews collected by the youth. For more information about the project, please visit www.keithcarson.org or call (510) 272-6695.



Oakland City Councilmember Pat Kernighan, Mayor Jean Quan, Supervisor Keith Carson and community volunteers worked at the Morcom Rose Garden off Grand Ave. in Oakland during the City's Earth Day celebration.



Supervisor Caron's staff person Hannah Greene and volunteers from Friends of Sausal Creek and Student Conservation Association alumni cleared out invasive species in Sausal Creek during Earth Day activities.



Free Compost!

Alameda County Public Works is proud to offer free compost to non-profit organizations for community improvement projects such as community and school gardens! The Public Works Department keeps a running list of interested organizations and as the compost becomes available they make arrangements to have it delivered to the community groups. Please contact Amy Shrago at (510) 272-6685 or Amy.Shrago@acgov.org in Supervisor Caron's office to have your organization added to the list.

EARTH DAY ACTIVITIES 2011

Free Summer Meals Program in Oakland

Summer time! Some school children have been waiting all year-long for the summer sun and for school to get out. But many children in our community who depend on free and reduced-price meals during the school year lack access to nutritious food during the year.

From June 20 to August 19, the City of Oakland and the Oakland Unified School District are offering the Free Summer Meal Program. Over 100 recreation centers, churches and community organizations are sites.



Supervisor Caron's staff joined employees from Clark Construction and students from the Athenian School in a Rebuilding Together Oakland project to rehabilitate the home of a senior citizen in West Oakland.



<http://www.rtoakland.org/>

Subscribe to our News and Updates!

http://www.acgov.org/form_app/board/district5/involved.jsp

For more information visit:
www.KeithCarson.org

A complete list can be found on the City of Oakland's website:

<http://www2.oaklandnet.com/oakca/groups/dhs/documents/marketingmaterial/oak029762.pdf>