

AFRICAN-AMERICAN AFFAIRS COMMISSION PRESS RELEASES.....

STATE OF CONNECTICUT



AFRICAN-AMERICAN AFFAIRS COMMISSION

SEE BELOW..... AAAC PRESS RELEASES

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Press Release

February 8, 2010

Grant Funds Awarded to Programs to Improve College Readiness

Statewide Activities Will Assist Students, Support College Access and Success

The Know How To Go – Connecticut Network announces \$32,375 in awards to college access and success programs

Hartford, CT: The Know How To Go – Connecticut Network will present seven grant awards to community-based organizations and colleges in support of their efforts to encourage students to pursue a college education. The presentations will take place at the Boys and Girls Clubs Hartford (170 Sigourney St., Hartford 06105) on Wednesday, February 10, 2010 at 3:30 PM.

The funds, awarded by Connecticut's KnowHow2GO initiative, are part of a three-year \$140,000 grant from Lumina Foundation for Education to promote college access and success. The purpose of the KnowHow2GO grants is to strengthen the quality of student assistance and outreach efforts to students and families in the middle school grades through college. The organizations receiving the grants submitted proposals seeking funds to continue existing programs or develop additional initiatives.

Selected in a competitive process, the seven programs receiving awards are:

- **Education Connection**, Litchfield, \$5,000
- **The Boys and Girls Clubs**, Hartford \$5,000
- **Eastern Connecticut State University**, Windham, \$5,000
- **Wesleyan University - Public School Collaborative**, Middletown \$5,000

- **University of Bridgeport**, Bridgeport \$5,000
- **Manchester Community College**, Manchester \$4,875
- **North End Action Team**, Middletown \$2,500

Among those expected to attend the ceremonies are representatives of the seven organizations who successfully sought funding, as well as state education officials including Deputy Education Commissioner George Coleman, Assistant Chancellor for Connecticut Community Colleges, Mary Ann Cox , and Commissioner of the Department of Higher Education, Michael Meotti .

Lumina has established a goal of increasing the percentage of American adults with college degrees from 40% to 60% by the year 2025. Under terms of the Lumina grant, the funds are being distributed in Connecticut to organizations that have submitted program plans to:

- Provide direct services to middle-level and high school students, including academic support, career exploration and other supports;
- Provide professional development for program staff, volunteers and/or parents; or
- Provide technical assistance for organizational development to increase the quality, professionalism and sustainability of college access programs

The KnowHow2GO Connecticut Network accepted applications from organizations in November 2009, which was followed by a selection process in accordance with grant program guidelines.

Applications for funding identified goals and expected outcomes, detailed the number of students and others served, and will report on progress as well as the project's impact.

A second round of grant funds will be awarded for the fiscal year beginning on July 1. Applications will be accepted beginning in March 2010.

The KnowHow2GO Connecticut Network executive board includes Ann Gaulin of the State Department of Education, Arthur Poole of the Department of Higher Education,

Glenn Cassis of the African-American Affairs Commission, Hyacinth Douglas-Bailey of the Greater Hartford YMCA, Donna Thompson of the Connecticut Association of Educational Opportunity Programs, Bernard Kavalier of the Connecticut State University System, Gloria Ragosta of the Connecticut Conference of Independent Colleges and David Johnson of Casey Family Services. The funds will be administered by the New England Educational Opportunity Association, under terms of the grant.

For more information contact Glenn Cassis, Executive Director of the African-American Affairs Commission at 860-240-8555 or 860-240-0258. Email glenn.cassis@cga.ct.gov

STATE OF CONNECTICUT



AFRICAN-AMERICAN AFFAIRS COMMISSION

Date: January 29, 2010
From: African-American Affairs Commission
Contact Person: Denise Drummond

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**AFRICAN-AMERICAN AFFAIRS COMMISSION HOSTS
BLACK HISTORY MONTH EVENTS**

The African-American Affairs Commission (AAAC) will host events during the month of February, Black History Month, **at the State Capitol, 210 Capitol Avenue and the Legislative Office Building, 300 Capitol Avenue in the Old Judiciary Room, Hartford, Connecticut. The public is invited and encouraged to attend.**

Black History Month is a national annual observance for remembrance of important people and events in the history of the African diaspora. While the accomplishments of African-Americans should be celebrated all year long, February is the month when we focus on the contributions to American society. “Black History Month allows us to commemorate the accomplishments of African-Americans, not just for African-Americans, but for everyone because most of the accomplishments of African-Americans have not only affected African-Americans, but the nation as a whole.”

The remembrance was originated by historian Carter G. Woodson. In 1925, Carter G. Woodson, an educator and historian began campaigning among schools, journals and black newspapers calling

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for a 'Negro History Week' to be celebrated. This would honor the importance of black achievement and contribution in the United States. He was able to institute this 'Negro History Week' in 1926 during the

second week of February. In 1976, Negro History Week turned into Black History Month which we celebrate today.

The State of Connecticut African-American Affairs Commission is hosting these events providing an opportunity for many organizations to display their contributions and share information. As well as, giving the public a chance to become familiar with these governmental, nonprofit, historic and cultural organizations that have service connections and/or historical significance to the African-American community.

The Quilting Project - Quilts made in the community will be displayed in the Capitol / Legislative Office Building Concourse from February 1 – 12. The quilts represent the importance of community connections. AAAC is collaborating with Carol Washington of Bloomfield, CT.

Artist JoeSam - is a mixed media painter and sculptor. The content of his work is often social and political commentary. His style is characterized by the juxtaposition of diverse, independent, often quite simple elements and his use of bright colors, reflective of his African American heritage. His work will be on display displayed in the Capitol / Legislative Office Building Concourse from February 1 – 12.

A Work in Progress - Non-profit organizations will exhibit themselves in the Legislative Office Building Concourse February 16 – 19. Organizations will display their contributions and share information. Legislators, legislative staff and the public will have the opportunity to become familiar with governmental, NGO's, and cultural organizations that have service connections to the African-American community.

American Red Cross Blood Drive – Due to the disparity of blood donation amongst African-Americans the AAAC and the American Red Cross will hold a Blood Drive at the State Capitol, Old Judiciary Room on Thursday, February 18th from 9:30 – 2:15.

The mission of the agency is to improve and promote the economic development, education, health and political well being of the African-American Community in the State of Connecticut through advocacy, information sharing, cultural awareness, community networking and influencing legislation.

For more information about the upcoming events or the African-American Affairs Commission (AAAC) call (860) 240-8555. -END-

STATE OF CONNECTICUT



AFRICAN-AMERICAN AFFAIRS COMMISSION

Contact: Cheryl Harris Forbes
Public Affairs/Special Projects Coordinator
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Date: July 27, 2009

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NEW COMMISSIONERS NAMED TO AAAC BOARD

HARTFORD – The African American Affairs Commission (AAAC) has two new commissioners; **Stephanie Moore** of Milford and **Diana Washington** of Bridgeport, Connecticut. The appointments were made by Senator John McKinney (28th District). Both will join the board of the 12 year old organization, established by the Connecticut General Assembly to advocate for African- Americans statewide.

Moore, an Ohio native, is a consultant and grant writer for Southern Connecticut State University. Prior to coming to Connecticut she served as a courtroom administrator and area court bailiff for two of Montgomery County's five court judges. In that capacity she directed details of daily court proceedings. Additionally she is active on several boards and with initiatives focusing on education and workforce empowerment.

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New AAAC Commissioners
July 27, 2009
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Washington a development professional for more than 20 years is a community outreach grants coordinator with the office of Congressman Christopher Shays. There her responsibilities include disseminating information on federal, state and local funding opportunities as well as loans and contracts to non-profit and social service organizations and local governments. She is also affiliated with the Human Services Council of Mid-Fairfield and the United Way of Eastern Fairfield County.

Other AAAC Board members are: George Logan of Bridgeport (Chair), Fred Pierre-Louis of Stamford (Vice Chairperson), Alphonse Wright of New Britain, (Treasurer), Ngozi Taffe of Ellington (Secretary), Kristen Clark of Hartford, Brenda DelGado of Hartford, Rosetta Jones of Uncasville and Derrick McBride of Willimantic.

The African-American Affairs Commission is mandated to:

- 1) Review and comment on any proposed state legislation that would affect the African-American population in the state,
- 2) Advise and provide information to the Governor on state policies concerning the African-American communities;
- 3) Advise the Governor concerning the coordination and administration of state programs serving the African-American population;
- 4) Maintain a liaison between the African-American community and governmental entities;
- 5) Encourage African-American representation at all levels including state boards and commissions;
- 6) Secure appropriate recognition of the accomplishments and contributions of the African-American population of the state; and
- 7) Prepare and submit to the Governor an annual report concerning its activities with appropriate recommendations concerning the African-American population in the state.

Additional information regarding the African-American Affairs Commission (AAAC) may be obtained by calling (860) 240-8555 or visiting www.cga.ct.gov/aaac.

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African-American Affairs Commission Mission

To improve and promote the economic development, education, health and political well being of the African-American Community in the State of Connecticut through advocacy, information sharing, cultural awareness, community networking and influencing legislation.

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AFRICAN-AMERICAN AFFAIRS COMMISSION

Contact: Cheryl Harris Forbes
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(860) 240-8444 (fax)

Date: June 19, 2009

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**AFRICAN AMERICAN AFFAIRS COMMISSION
HOSTS NEW ENGLAND SLAVE TRADERS'
DESCENDANT FOR APOLOGY**

HARTFORD – The State of Connecticut African American Affairs Commission (AAAC) was a key player in bringing the issue of the State formally recognizing its role in slavery. On June 26, 2009 at 10:00 a.m. in Room 2D of the Legislative Office Building, 300 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, CT, the State of Connecticut African American Affairs Commission (AAAC) will lay out recommendations it says should follow the passage of **House Joint Resolution 1: *Resolution Expressing The Profound Regret Of The Connecticut General Assembly For The History Of Wrongs Inflicted Upon Black Citizens By Means Of Slavery, Exploitation And Legalized Racial Segregation, And Calling On All Citizens To Take Part In Acts Of Racial Reconciliation.*** **Katrina Brown will be present.**

It is hoped that **House Joint Resolution 1**, (viewed by critics as a mostly ceremonial act), will have impact on how people relate to one another. **Specifically the General Assembly's resolution**

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AAAC/ SLAVERY APOLOGY

June 19, 2009

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urges educational, religious, civic, and business entities to acknowledge and learn from Connecticut's past, including as a leading state in the abolition efforts to promote racial equality and reconciliation; and

calls on residents to recommit their state, communities and themselves to work daily to promote equality, as proclaimed in the Declaration of Independence; treat all people with respect and eliminate racial prejudices and injustices.

Racial reconciliation is a task to which Katrina Brown has dedicated her life. **Brown is a descendant of the DeWolfe family (of Rhode Island,) one of New England's most prominent slave trading families. Her documentary "Traces of the Trade" chronicles the practices and effects of the family business.** Brown uses the film to acknowledge the past and pave the way for greater mutual respect and understanding.

"This information has practical applications" says AAAC Executive Director Glenn Cassis. "Systemic barriers are based in history and culture. We need to understand our history and change institutional practices so that the greatest number of people can achieve their highest potential."

Brown will include excerpts from the documentary in her presentation. Event participants will receive suggestions about how to use the film to open the discussion about difficult topics such as race, class and privilege. Other invited speakers include Representative Kenneth Green (1st District), members of the Black & Hispanic Caucus, Cynthia Jennings- Civil Rights Attorney, Scot X. Esdaile - NAACP President, Jay Stewart - University of Hartford Associate Professor, George Logan - AAAC Chair, and representatives from the Anti-Defamation League.

To learn more about the African American Affairs Commission go to www.cga.ct.gov/aaac.

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STATE OF CONNECTICUT



AFRICAN-AMERICAN AFFAIRS COMMISSION

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(860) 240-8444 (fax)

Date: April 9, 2009

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

AAAC CONVENES AFRICAN AMERICAN ADVOCACY DAY AT STATE CAPITOL

HARTFORD – On April 22, 2009, at 10:00 a.m., in Room 2D of the Legislative Office Building, the State of Connecticut African American Affairs Commission (AAAC), interested individuals, as well as African-American community and faith-based organizations will meet with legislators to talk about the impact of current and proposed legislation impacting some of the state’s most at-risk populations. African-American Advocacy Day will begin with an overview on the status of African-Americans statewide, and presentations from legislative leaders. The Legislative Office Building is located at 300 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, CT 06106. The event will continue until 3:30 p.m.

All members of the Connecticut General Assembly and State Constitutional Officers have been invited. AAAC Executive Director Glenn Cassis states, “African American Advocacy Day is an opportunity for people and organizations in service to our community to become involved in advocating for equity and justice. Everyone, regardless of racial or ethnic background is welcomed in this battle to achieve a greater common good.”

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AAAC ADVOCACY DAY – 4-22-09

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4-9-09

The African- American Affairs Commission will present a workshop on civic engagement and legislative advocacy and provide information about several legislative initiatives and proposals related to healthcare and human services, education, juvenile and criminal justice, as well as business and economic development.

The public will be able to meet with and/or make appointments with legislators to discuss their concerns.

Discussion will include but not limited to:

HEALTH

Budget Line Item - Funding HIV Prevention Services

The restoration of \$2.5 million in funding for *HIV prevention programs within the State Department of Public Health' budget*

EDUCATION

SB 633 – An act establishing a mentoring program for certain high school and college students

To promote academic achievement in minority and at risk males/ youth.

HOUSING

HB – 6378 An act concerning relief for families facing foreclosure

JUVENILE JUSTICE

Raised Bill – 6575 An act concerning revisions to provisions raising the age of juvenile jurisdiction

This bill seeks to amend provisions related to the inclusion of youths sixteen and seventeen years of age within the juvenile court with respect to certain criminal matters.

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AAAC ADVOCACY DAY – 4-22-09

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CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Senate Bill – 6581 An act concerning the enhanced penalty for the sale or possession of drugs near schools, day care centers and public housing projects

This bill seeks to eliminate disparities in sentencing as it relates to drug possession .

BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Raised Bill – 1035 An act concerning equal access to opportunities for subcontractors

SB – 880 An act concerning trade with Africa

This bill seeks to study programs initiated, conducted and coordinated by the Department of Economic and Community Development that promote and assist Connecticut businesses with regard to trade with African countries.

CIVIL RIGHTS

HJ – 00001 Resolution expressing the profound regret of the Connecticut General Assembly for the history of wrongs committed on Black citizens etc.

This bill offers a formal apology for slavery and its resulting disparities across a spectrum of socio-economic issues.

“It is our intention that Advocacy Day will begin the process of helping many more residents become involved in the political process and empowered to make positive changes on behalf of their communities,” said Cassis. “This is only the beginning”.

For more information about African-American Advocacy Day call (860) 240-8555. To learn more about the African American Affairs Commission go to www.cga.ct.gov/aaac.

-END-

African-American Affairs Commission Mission

To improve and promote the economic development, education, health and political well being of the African-American Community in the State of Connecticut through advocacy, information sharing, cultural awareness, community networking and influencing legislation.

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AFRICAN-AMERICAN AFFAIRS COMMISSION

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Date: January 5, 2009

TROUBLE THE WATER STIRS DISCUSSION ON CT EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

HARTFORD – If disaster struck Connecticut would its residents know what to do? That’s one of the issues the State of Connecticut African American Affairs Commission will help audience members navigate at its screening and discussion of *Trouble the Water*. The documentary which chronicles what happened as a result of Hurricane Katrina is the winner of Sundance Film Festival’s Grand Jury Prize for Best Documentary of 2008. It will be shown on **January 9, 2009, at 7:00 p.m. at Real ArtWays, 56 Arbor St., Hartford, CT**. The film and panel discussion are open to the public. **Tickets are \$9 with a limited number of discounted seats available by calling (860) 240-8555.**

Showing the film and talking about it is part of the AAAC’s effort to bring awareness and information to the public. “As Americans we believe our government will take care of all its citizens in times of disasters. Factor poverty and race into the equation and we begin to see where government falls short. That’s why *Trouble the Water* is so powerful. It allows us an insider’s view of what happened in New Orleans and prompts us to begin to think about how to protect ourselves, families, and communities here in Connecticut,” says AAAC Executive Director, Glenn Cassis.

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Discussion panelist include: **West Hartford Fire Chief William H. Austin, University of Connecticut Dean and Professor of Social Work Salome Raheim, Hartford Hospital Bioterrorism Program**

Manager Sandra C. Brown and Branch Chief Operations – Department of Public Health and State Homeland Security Advisory Council Member, Leonard H. Guericia, Jr.

TROUBLE THE WATER

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William H. Austin has served as West Hartford Fire Chief since December 1996. He is the immediate past Chairman of the Capitol Region Emergency Planning Committee (CREPC) in Hartford, and a member of the Connecticut Emergency Management and Homeland Security Coordinating Council. Mr. Austin has more than 35 years of experience in fire, emergency medical and emergency management services and holds a Masters Degree in Security Studies (Defense and Homeland Security) from the United States Navy Postgraduate School, and a Masters Degree in Public Administration from Troy State University. He is a graduate of the Executive Fire Officer Program at the National Fire Academy, the University of Maryland National Staff and Command Course, and the Resident Program for Senior Executives in State and Local Government of the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. Additionally, he is Chairperson of the Connecticut Statewide Citizen Corps Council, and serves as President of the Capitol Region Fire Chiefs' Association.

Salome Raheim, Ph.D is Dean of UCONN's School of Social Work. She is known internationally for her efforts addressing privilege and oppression, and has provided consultation and training on issues of cultural competence to educational institutions, human service agencies and businesses in Australia, England, Guatemala, Mexico, South Africa and the United States.

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Sandra C. Brown, MPA, JD. serves as the Bioterrorism Program Manager for Hartford Hospital's Center for Emergency Medical Preparedness (CEMP) and has done so for 7 years. She oversees the training and planning activities of a program which serves as a resource for 15 hospitals in Connecticut Department of Emergency Management & Homeland Security (DEMHS) Regions 3 and 4. CEMP activities include training and exercise planning utilizing the Hospital Incident Command System; compliance with the National Incident Management System (NIMS); Regional Disaster Planning with

other hospitals, community health centers and EMS providers; and education for hospital staff and families regarding planning for a Pandemic Influenza.

TROUBLE THE WATER

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Leonard H. Guercia, Jr is a licensed paramedic who has been in pre-hospital care for more than 20 years with 17 concurrent years in law enforcement.

Mr. Guercia began his career as a volunteer fire fighter in 1983. He currently holds the position of Operations Branch Chief for the Department of Public Health.

As Branch Chief, Mr. Guercia is responsible for the administration, coordination, operation and oversight of three functional units; the Office of Public Health Preparedness, Office of Emergency Medical Services and Information Technology. Part of his responsibilities include the licensing and certification of Connecticut's emergency medical personnel and ambulance providers along with oversight of the CDC Bioterrorism Cooperative Agreement and coordination of hospital disaster response.

In addition, Mr. Guercia is the Commissioner's Designee on the State Homeland Security Advisory Council, and the manager for the Mobile Field Hospital Project and the New England Disaster Training Center.

Trouble the Water features footage captured by Kimberly Rivers Roberts, an aspiring rapper and resident of New Orleans Lower Ninth Ward who had recently purchased a Sony camcorder in August 2005 shortly before Hurricane Katrina hit.

Joe Leydon's October 31, 2008 review of the film in *The Houston Chronicle*, describes Rivers-Roberts' plight as follows:

Like too many other residents of their predominantly African-American neighborhood, Kimberly and her husband, Scott Roberts, lacked the wherewithal to evacuate, so they stayed put. At first, Kimberly was happy to play the part of "interviewer," pointing her camcorder at relatives and neighbors while asking how they would ride the storm. But then the rains came. Kimberly and Scott, along with a handful of others, wound up warily watching from their attic while waters from breached levees flooded the streets - to the point of submerging stop signs - outside their home. And throughout it all, Kimberly continued to operate her camcorder, instinctively capturing indelible images that are the heart of a powerful new movie aptly titled *Trouble the Water*.

For more information call the African American Affairs Commission at (860) 240-8555.

E-N-D

STATE OF CONNECTICUT



AFRICAN-AMERICAN AFFAIRS COMMISSION

Contact: Cheryl Harris Forbes
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Date: October 14, 2008

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**AFRICAN-AMERICAN AFFAIRS COMMISSION HOSTS
ST. JOSEPH COLLEGE PRESIDENT
DR. PAMELA TROTMAN REID**

HARTFORD – The African-American Affairs Commission (AAAC) will host a reception for Dr. Pamela Trotman Reid on Wednesday, **October 22, 2008 at 5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m., at the State Capitol, Old Judiciary Room, and 210 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, Connecticut. The public is invited to attend, however reservations by telephone are required at (860) 240-8555. SPACE IS LIMITED.**

AAAC Executive Director Glenn Cassis stated the reception marks a significant event, not only in the life of St. Joseph College, but in the course of Connecticut history. Dr. Reid is the first African- American president of the 76 year-old institution.

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**AAAC Hosts St. Joseph College President
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Pamela Trotman Reid, Ph.D., was appointed as the eighth President of Saint Joseph College in January, 2008. With her guidance, and commitment to increased enrollment and educational opportunity, St. Joseph College's freshman class is the largest in its history. Throughout her career, Dr. Reid has worked with faculty and administrative colleagues alike to enhance academic quality and promote diversity. Dr. Reid's has a national reputation for promoting partnerships with community colleges, service organizations and public schools.

She has also been an advocate of global education, working to establish international connections with universities in China, India and Russia.

Dr. Reid came to Saint Joseph College from the position of Provost and Executive Vice President for Roosevelt University in Chicago. She served in several leadership roles at the City University of New York's Graduate Center including Interim Provost and Senior Vice President, Associate Provost and Dean for Academic Affairs as well as Professor of Psychology. Dr. Reid also was formerly the Head of the Department of Psychology at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga and Director of the Office for Social and Ethical Responsibility at the American Psychological Association.

“We want to give the public the opportunity to meet and speak with Dr. Reid and to hear her perspectives on education. It is our hope that this event will bring people together, stimulate thought, and align resources for possible collaboration.” Part of the Commission’s mandate is to “secure appropriate recognition of the accomplishments and contributions of the African –American population of the state. The mission of the agency is to improve and promote the economic development, education, health and political well being of the African-American Community in the State of Connecticut

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**AAAC Hosts St. Joseph College President
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through advocacy, information sharing, cultural awareness, community networking and influencing legislation.

For more information about the reception or the African-American Affairs Commission (AAAC) call (860) 240-8555.

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STATE OF CONNECTICUT



AFRICAN-AMERICAN AFFAIRS COMMISSION

Contact: Cheryl Harris Forbes
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Date: September 24, 2008

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

AFRICAN-AMERICAN AFFAIRS COMMISSION HOSTS

FBI CIVIL RIGHTS FORUM

HARTFORD – The African American Affairs Commission (AAAC) will host a civil rights information forum on **October 1, 2008 at 5:00 p.m., at the Legislative Office Building, 300 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, Connecticut.** The event will focus on the efforts and activities of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) related to its civil rights and hate crimes programs. A question and answer period will follow. **The public is invited.**

According to AAAC Executive Director Glenn Cassis, the forum is a natural fit. “We’re committed to sharing information and resources about issues at the heart of the African -American community. Unfortunately, we are aware of a number of incidences involving civil rights violations and an increase in the number of hate crimes. It’s important for people to know where they can go for help.”

The AAAC’s mission is to “improve and promote the economic development, education, health and political well being of the African-American Community in the State of

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AAAC Host FBI Forum
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Connecticut through advocacy, information sharing, cultural awareness, community networking and influencing legislation.”

The FBI is specifically charged with investigating all allegations of (1) federal civil rights violations which include racial and religious discrimination, (2) use of excessive force or misconduct by law enforcement officials and others, (3) involuntary servitude and slavery, (4) violence against reproductive health facilities, (5) the Voting Rights Act of 1965, (6) the Civil Rights Act of 1964, (7) the Equal Credit Opportunity Act, and the (8) Civil Rights of Institutionalized Persons Act.

While the highest number of complaints received by the FBI involve claims of excessive use of force by law enforcement personnel, the second most common FBI investigated violations involve hate crimes, including threats against persons or their property because of race, religion, or ethnicity. Generally investigations involve racially motivated physical assaults, homicides, verbal or written threats, or desecration of property.

Special Agents Walter W. Grattan and Kimberly K. Mertz will present. Both agents are from the FBI's New Haven Division. During his 25 year career Agent Grattan worked on a variety of criminal matters including violent crime, kidnappings, child pornography, and white collar crime. Most recently, Grattan worked on several high profile public corruption matters and supervised the multi-agency task force that investigated and prosecuted corruption within the Hartford Police Department and is currently supervising the recent police corruption case involving the New Haven Police Department.

Agent Mertz is the Special Agent in charge of the New Haven Division. Formerly she was Chief of the FBI's Washington, D.C. Public Corruption Unit, and Special Agent in Charge of the Honolulu Division. She is also a member of the California Bar Association.

For more information about the forum or the African-American Affairs Commission (AAAC) call (860) 240-8555.

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STATE OF CONNECTICUT



AFRICAN-AMERICAN AFFAIRS COMMISSION

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(860) 240-8444 (fax)

Date: February 4, 2008

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PUBLIC INVITED TO HIGH SCHOOL REFORM DISCUSSION WITH EDUCATION COMMISSIONER

HARTFORD – The African-American Affairs Commission invites the public to attend its monthly board meeting on Wednesday, February 6, 2008 at 5:00 p.m. to learn about new recommendations for high school graduation. The session with Dr. Mark McQuillan, Commissioner of the State of Connecticut Department of Education, will be held in Room 1B of the Legislative Office Building, 310 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, CT.

The high school reform proposal seeks to address several educational issues including:

- 1) the increased percentages of Connecticut's high school graduates who require remedial coursework upon entry to college
- 2) the low purchasing power of a high school degree,
- 3) the increased number of students dropping out of high school and enrolling in adult education programs,
- 4) the lack of significant improvement by Connecticut high school students on national tests since 2002.

The reform proposal offers three themes: Rigor, Engagement, and 21st Century Learning. Dr. McQuillan and his staff will take questions and comments from the public.

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African-American Affairs Commission Mission

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(860) 240-8444 (fax)

Date: January 7, 2008

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

AAAC BLACK HISTORY EXHIBIT TO FEATURE FEMALE FILMMAKERS' WORK

HARTFORD – The State of Connecticut African-American Affairs Commission will present *BLACK WOMEN BEHIND THE LENS* in celebration of Black History Month. The exhibit of 23 movie posters from the *Separate Cinema Archive*® will highlight selections and feature the richness of African-American female cinematic contributions.

***BLACK WOMEN BEHIND THE LENS* will be on display from February 1-14, 2008 at the State Capitol/ Legislative Office Building Concourse, 210 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, Connecticut 06106. Public viewing is available from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.**

BEHIND THE LENS is part of the Separate Cinema Archive ®, the most extensive private collection of African-American film memorabilia in the world.

AAAC Executive Director Glenn Cassis notes the exhibit recognizes the pioneering role of African American female filmmakers. “Their creations and activity continue to impact the motion picture industry, diversity in American cultural perspectives and ultimately history. What these filmmakers have done, and continue to do, is to break stereotypes and glass ceilings.”

The presentation celebrates the uncompromising cinematic labors of love created by a brave group of African American women committed to speaking truth to power while offering criticism of the stereotypical images of black women found in mainstream media. Their films address the challenges encountered and eventually overcome by themselves and their community.

Some of the films in the exhibit have been directed or produced by recognizable names include:

Oprah Winfrey, Queen Latifah, Halle Berry, Maya Angelou, and Debbie Allen. Many more are obscure, like **Tressie Souders** who directed the film *A Woman's Error* in 1922. Among the contemporary directors and titles are **Darnell Martin's** 1994 Columbia Pictures' release, *I Like it Like That* (the first major studio movie directed by an African-American woman) and *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (ABC, 2005), **Julie Dash's** *Daughters of the Dust* (Kino International, 1992), **Gina Prince Bythwood's** *Love & Basketball* (New Line Cinema, 2000), and **Euzhan Palcy's** *Sugar Cane Alley* (Orion Pictures 1984). In 1989, Palcy broke gender and color barriers when she directed MGM's *A Dry White Season* (the story of the 1976 Soweto Massacre in South Africa), making her the first woman of African descent to direct a major studio film.

BLACK WOMEN BEHIND THE LENS provides a wonderful opportunity to spotlight and celebrate the personal and professional victories of a community. Recording African and African-American likenesses and stories on film is not only important for current entertainment value, but for preserving our history and experience for future generations" said Cassis.

For more information regarding *BLACK WOMEN BEHIND THE LENS*, contact Cheryl Harris Forbes, Public Affairs/Special Projects Coordinator at the State of Connecticut African-American Affairs Commission at (860) 240-8555.

STATE OF CONNECTICUT



AFRICAN-AMERICAN AFFAIRS COMMISSION

**Contact: Cheryl Harris Forbes
Public Affairs/Special Projects Coordinator**

(860) 240-0251 (phone)
(860) 240-8444 (fax)

Date: December 24, 2007

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**AFRICAN-AMERICAN AFFAIRS COMMISSION
PUBLIC AFFAIRS PROGRAM LAUNCHED STATEWIDE**

HARTFORD – The State of Connecticut African American Affairs Commission (AAAC) cable access program, AAAC Update will now be broadcast in more than 60 cities and towns statewide. *AAAC Update* is a half-hour public affairs program that focuses on issues of interest to Connecticut residents with emphasis on policy implications and affects in the state’s African American community.

AAAC Executive Director Glenn Cassis says, he believes the cable program is effective at bridging the information gap. “*AAAC Update* allows us to get news about issues and resources to lot of people. We can begin dialog on topics people are concerned about and bring in professionals who share their expertise and offer approaches to problems. So far we’re finding this is an interactive process. The response we’re getting is definitely positive. Viewers call our office for more information.”

AAAC Update can be seen on the following cable stations:

AAAC Update Broadcast Schedule

Cablevision Norwalk, CT (203) 750-5774	Wednesdays 6:30 p.m.	Channel 77
Charter Communications North Windham, CT (860) 456-8500	Tuesdays 7:00 p.m.	Channel 14
Citizens Television New Haven CT (203) 562-2288	Monday 5:00 p.m.	Channel 26

Comcast Seymour, CT 203-736-2692	Wednesday 6:00 p.m.	Channel 10
Hartford Cable Access Hartford, CT (860) 524-8621	Tuesdays 7:00 p.m.	Channel 21
Metrocast Communications Waterford, CT (860-442-8525	Wednesday 7:00 p.m.	Channel 24
Nutmeg TV Community Television Plainville, CT 860-793-2552	Sundays 8:00 p.m.	Channel 21
Soundview Community Media Bridgeport, CT 203-345-0100	Monday 9:00 p.m. & Wednesday 7:00 p.m.	Channel 79
Win-TV Windsor, CT 860-688-2626	Thursday 6:30 p.m.	Channel 5
West Hartford Community Television (860) 561-1260	Fridays 7:00 p.m. (May change monthly, call to check program schedule)	Channel 5

Scheduled program topics include: minority participation in business and economic development, public education and the achievement gap, homeownership, the Freedom of Information Act and public advocacy, health disparities, crime prevention and prison overcrowding, as well as at-risk youth and the importance of mentoring.

Primary among the AAAC's legislative mandates are its responsibilities to:

- 1) Review and comment on any proposed state legislation that would affect the African-American population in the State

- 2) Encourage African American representation at all level including state boards and commissions;
- 3) Advise and provide information to the Governor on state policies concerning the African-American communities
- 4) Advise the Governor concerning the coordination and administration of state programs serving the African – American population; and
- 5) Maintain a liaison between the African American community and all governmental entities.

Additional information regarding the African-American Affairs Commission (AAAC) may be obtained by calling (860) 240-8555.

STATE OF CONNECTICUT



AFRICAN-AMERICAN AFFAIRS COMMISSION

Contact: Cheryl Harris Forbes
Public Affairs/Special Projects Coordinator
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(860) 240-8444 (fax)

Date: November 2, 2007

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

National Kidney Foundation of CT and AAAC

Unveil Public Education Campaign
First-of-its-Kind Initiative Focuses on At-Risk Minority Population

The **National Kidney Foundation of Connecticut (NKF)** launched their highly anticipated and first-of-its-kind Urban Outreach Public Education Campaign targeted at the minority community across Connecticut.

According to the National Kidney Foundation of Connecticut, the prevalence and incidence rates of kidney disease among African Americans, Hispanics, Pacific Islanders, and Native Americans are significantly greater than among Caucasians. In fact, African Americans constitute about 33 percent of all patients treated for kidney failure in the United States, but only about 13 percent of the overall U.S. population.

“The numbers are staggering,” said Kim Hathaway, Chief Executive Officer of the National Kidney Foundation of Connecticut. “This campaign was designed to educate minorities across the state, and familiarize these communities with the NKF, and provide information about the impact of kidney disease.”

In joint kick-off press conferences in Hartford and Bridgeport early last month with Speaker of the House James Amann (118th District), Glenn Cassis, Executive Director of the **State of Connecticut African-American Affairs Commission (AAAC)** said, “The Commission is proud to partner with the Kidney Foundation of Connecticut to help educate African-Americans and the minority community about the importance of prevention, early detection, and treatment of kidney disease.”

The advertising campaign includes radio, transit, posters and a public relations program. Most importantly the NKF will be traveling throughout the state to educate the minority population about their increased risk of kidney disease. Information about kidney disease will also be available on the African-American Affairs Commission’s website at www.cga.ct.gov/aaac/resources.php.

“The goal of the program is to educate the minority population of their risk factors for kidney disease,” said Terri Smith, Director of the Urban Outreach Program at the National Kidney Foundation of CT. “Minorities are three to five times more likely to be struck by kidney disease than non-minorities. Improving how we educate the minority population may help shrink the healthcare gap currently separating whites and minorities when it comes to chronic kidney disease. Armed with knowledge of the disease and the high risk factors and implications for the families touched by this disease empowers people, enabling them to make better choices about their health”

Speaker James Amann, whose wife Terri is the recipient of a kidney transplant said “I commend the NKF for recognizing this as an epidemic and taking steps to do something about it.” For his part, Amann has committed \$100,000 of State funding to help the campaign and reach NKF’s goal of educating minority residents in Connecticut.

About NKF of Connecticut

The NKF is the only voluntary health agency dedicated exclusively to the eradication of kidney and urinary tract diseases. Supported entirely by donations from individuals, corporations and foundations, the NKF of Connecticut funds medical research in the fields of nephrology (kidney disease),

transplantation and urology, and provides education and support services to patients, transplant recipients and their families and to kidney health professional in Connecticut. With the aid of funds raised statewide through various programs, the NKF helps thousands of people across Connecticut, including more than 3,000 dialysis patients and an estimated 600 residents currently waiting for kidney transplants. The NKF has been given a four star rating from Charity Navigator, the largest charity evaluator in America. For more information, please visit www.kidneyct.org.

The African-American Affairs Commission Mission:

To improve and promote the economic development, education, health and political well being of the African-American Community in the State of Connecticut through advocacy, information sharing, cultural awareness, community networking and influencing legislation. For more information, visit www.cga.ct.gov/aaac or call (860) 240-8555.

STATE OF CONNECTICUT



AFRICAN-AMERICAN AFFAIRS COMMISSION

Contact: Cheryl Harris Forbes
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Date: October 16, 2007

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**AAAC and KNOW HOW TO GO COMMITTEE
STEER STUDENTS TO COLLEGE & CASH**

The State of Connecticut African-American Affairs Commission and the College Ready Connecticut Advisory Committee announce that Connecticut now joins 20 other states in the Know How To Go

national campaign. **Know How To Go's** goal is to educate students about steps they need to take to make their college dreams come true. **Know How To Go** targets low-income students in grades 7 – 12, and students who are likely to be the first in their family to pursue post-secondary education.

The campaign is a national collaboration between Lumina Foundation for Education, the American Council on Education, and the Ad Council.

Know How To Go uses the Internet website, www.knowhow2go.org , to inform students and parents of the four basic steps to go to college: 1.) Be a Pain – in a good way, 2.) Push Yourself and Don't Stop, 3.) Find the Right Fit and 4.) Put Your Hands on Some Cash.

GET HELP GETTING THE CASH

Know How To Go – Connecticut will help students take a crucial step to find the money they need to finance their education. On **February 10, 2008, from 1:30 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.**, Know How To Go – Connecticut will sponsor **College Goal Sunday**. **The purpose of the event will be to assist high school seniors to complete their Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form. The FAFSA form is mandatory for Federal student financial aid.**

Simultaneous sessions will be held at Capital Community College (Hartford.), Gateway Community College (New Haven), Housatonic Community College (Bridgeport), Norwalk Community College and Wesleyan University (Middletown/Meriden).

With leadership support from Governor M. Jodi Rell, the State of Connecticut Departments of Education, Higher Education and several agencies, non-profit organizations and associations, Connecticut students will be able to become well informed about how to go to college. Radio and television public service announcements will be broadcast. Middle and high schools will receive **Know How To Go** brochures and posters to distribute to students, teachers and families.

The State of Connecticut African-American Affairs Commission is a major supporter of the **Know How To Go** initiative. For more information contact Glenn Cassis, AAAC (860)-240-8555 or Ann Gaulin, State Department of Education (860) 713-6769 or visit www.knowhow2go.org.