

SAVE SILOAM SCHOOL PROJECT ANNUAL REPORT 2021



Left: Siloam School as it stands today. Right: Rendering of Siloam School following restoration.

SAVE SILOAM SCHOOL PROJECT – BACKGROUND

The Charlotte Museum of History is leading a \$1,000,000 community fundraising effort to save the historic Siloam School, one of Mecklenburg County’s oldest remaining African American schoolhouses, and one of our last standing Rosenwald-era Schools.

Rosenwald Schools were the product of a partnership between the Jewish American philanthropist Julius Rosenwald, president of Sears, Roebuck, and Company, and the African American leader and educator Booker T. Washington, president of Tuskegee Institute. Thousands of schools like Siloam were built throughout the South in the early 1900s to educate African American children in an era of segregation.

North Carolina had the most Rosenwald Schools of any state in the South, and Mecklenburg had more than any other county in the state. Siloam School is on the National Register of Historic Places but is endangered due to its current state of disrepair. The building, and the stories it tells, are at risk of being lost to time.



Students outside the Rosenwald School at McClintock Presbyterian Church. Photo courtesy of McClintock Presbyterian Church. This is one of the other few remaining Rosenwald schools in Mecklenburg County. Unfortunately, there are no known photographs of Siloam School students, and very little physical evidence remains of this African American church community in northeast Charlotte other than the schoolhouse itself and the Siloam Church cemetery.

The project vision is for the restored building to be moved to the Museum's East Charlotte campus to become an educational space for programming and exhibits that foster dialogue, particularly around racial equity and justice. The Museum also plans to offer K-12 field trips and public tours of the building and to make the space available as a community resource.

2021 Project Accomplishments

PROJECT PLANNING

Led by Fannie Flono, trustee for The Charlotte Museum of History and chair of the Save Siloam School Project Partners committee, and Peter Wasmer, former AFM Project Manager for Mecklenburg County, an independent review panel including Darrel Williams (Neighboring Concepts), John Kincheloe (LS3P), Carrie Frye (Carrie Frye Interior Design), and John Howard (Charlotte Area Transit System) began conducting architect interviews. Jack Thompson (Historic Landmarks Commission) provided crucial expertise and assistance.

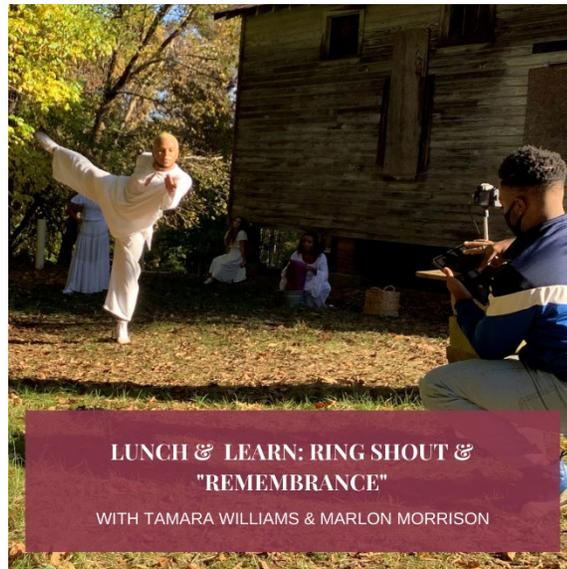
The committee expects to announce the architect selection imminently, with a goal of moving the structure to the Museum before the end of 2022.

2020 MARKETING, OUTREACH, AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Lunch & Learn: Ring Shout & Remembrance

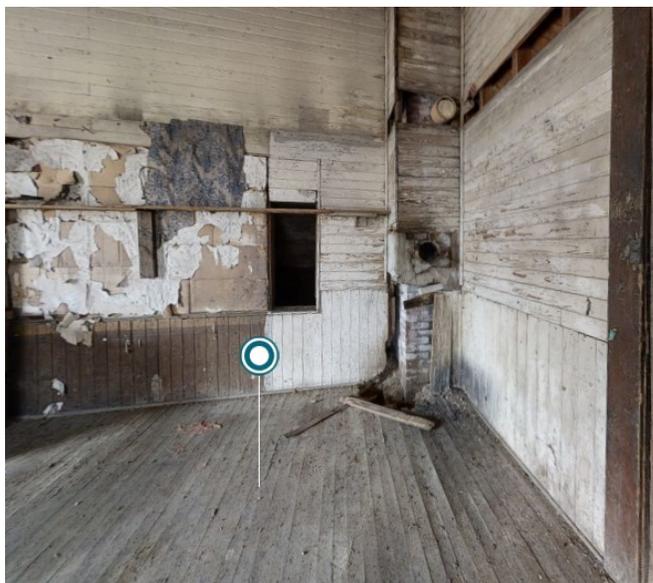
On **February 4**, the Museum hosted a special Black History Month edition of the Lunch & Learn series called **Lunch & Learn: Ring Shout & "Remembrance."**

The program featured UNC Charlotte assistant professor of dance Tamara Williams and filmmaker Marlon Morrison and their project showcasing traditional Ring Shout dance. Ring Shout was first practiced by African peoples enslaved in the West Indies and the United States.



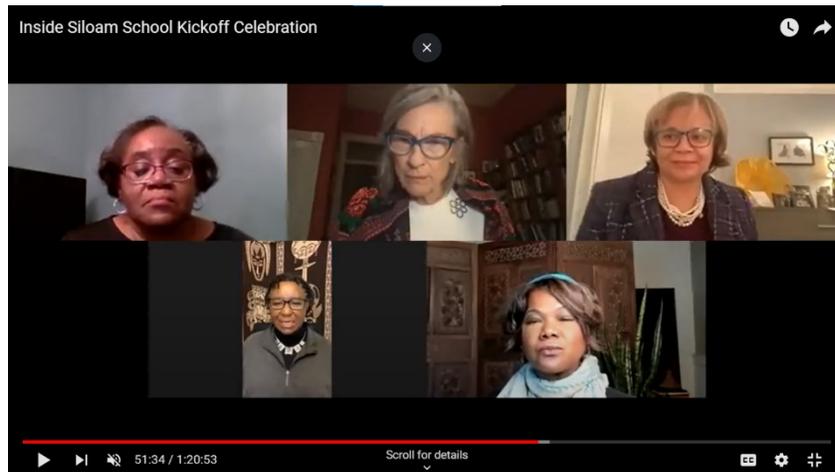
To honor that history, Professor Williams and five of her dance students choreographed a traditional Ring Shout dance to be performed at locations across the city that are important to Charlotte's Black history. These included the banks of the Catawba River, in front of the historic Siloam School, and at the only remaining slave dwelling in Mecklenburg County. Professor Williams and filmmaker Marlon Morrison joined the Museum to talk about the project and their reflections on the traditional dance form.

Inside Siloam School Virtual Program



On **February 18**, the Museum and Save Siloam School Committee hosted **Inside Siloam School**, featuring SSSP committee chair Fannie Flono, Charlotte Mayor Vi Lyles, philanthropist and author Valaida Fullwood, Siloam champion Dr. Rochelle Brandon, and Stephanie Deustch, author of *You Need A Schoolhouse* and member of the Rosenwald Fund National Park Campaign. The program was also the premiere of the 360° virtual tour of Siloam School, by Digital Lasagna, with a companion guidebook featuring photography by Joshua Komer. The guidebook is the core of the Museum's interpretation of the historic school.

Inside Siloam School was supported by Bank of America, Pride Communications, the Brenda H. Tapia Family Foundation, Digital Lasagna, and Stephen Hairgrove.



Save Siloam School Project Chair Fannie Flono, Stephanie Deustch, Mayor Vi Lyles, Dr. Rochelle Brandon, and Valaida Fullwood during “Inside Siloam School”

On **March 30**, Smithsonian Magazine published an online article by Michael J. Solender titled **Inside the Rosenwald Schools**. The article features photographer and author Andrew Feiler, who documented how these educational institutions shaped a generation of Black leaders in his new book, *A Better Life for Their Children*. Siloam School is one of the schools Feiler photographed and included in his book, and the project got a big shout out in the article. A shorter version of the article appeared in the print issue.



SMITHSONIANMAG.COM | March 30, 2021, 9:33 a.m.

Little more than a century ago, deep in America’s rural South, a community-based movement ignited by two unexpected collaborators quietly grew to become so transformative, its influence shaped the educational and economic future of an entire generation of African American families.

Between 1917 and 1932, nearly 5,000 rural schoolhouses, modest one-, two-, and three-teacher buildings known as Rosenwald Schools, came to exclusively serve more than 700,000 black children over four decades. It was through the shared ideals and a partnership between Booker T. Washington, an educator, intellectual and prominent African American thought leader, and Julius Rosenwald, a German-Jewish immigrant who accumulated his wealth as head of the behemoth retailer, Sears, Roebuck & Company, that Rosenwald Schools would come to comprise more than one in five Black schools operating throughout the South by 1928.

***Siloam School* Exhibit Opens at the Museum during African American Heritage Festival**



Our largest installation in over five years, the *Siloam School* exhibit opened on June 12 during the Museum's annual African American Heritage Festival. Though the Festival had a limited in-person audience due to pandemic precautions, there was a lot of excitement and interest in the new exhibit, which includes new archaeological collection items found at the site, as well as loans from the Special Collections library at UNC Charlotte Atkins Library, the official repository for county records.

The exhibit opening and festival garnered more than 13 media spots in total. A select number are linked below.

- [**Q City Metro**](#)
- [**WBTV On Your Side Tonight segment on 6/8**](#)
- [**WFAE**](#)
- [**WBTV QC@3 - Lauren appeared Live on 6/3**](#)
- [**"Good Day" on Fox 46**](#)
- [**Charlotte Observer Siloam story and exhibit preview on 6/12**](#)

Thanks to the media coverage of the exhibit, both Maxine Barringer and Alfreda Barringer, descendants of Siloam alumni, reached out to the Museum to get involved in the project. Maxine is the daughter of Martha Barringer, a Siloam alumnus, and Alfreda is the granddaughter of Nelson Young on her mother's side. Nelson and Cora Young purchased the schoolhouse and turned it into their family home in the 1950s. Alfreda is now working with the Museum and the Save Siloam School Project Committee to plan a family field trip to the exhibit in early 2022.

On **August 19**, the Museum hosted the first of what we hope are several Community Engagement Sessions about the Save Siloam School Project. Attendees were asked to complete a pre-event survey to gauge their priorities and collect questions for the Museum and committee. Hosted by Fannie Flono and Adria Focht, the program was an introduction to the project and attendees were able to ask questions about the Museum's plans. [The program recording can be watched on YouTube.](#) Some survey highlights are on the following page:

- 75% of respondents are interested in the daily experiences of students at Siloam School and other rural Black schools.
- 69% of respondents are interested in learning about the educators and teachers at Siloam School
- In a free response question about the importance of different subjects, many respondents indicated that they considered it important to ‘connect the dots’ between the challenges faced by Black students and community members during the Jim Crow era when Siloam was built and issues that students face in education today.

The First Siloam School Oral History Interview

In late August, CMH partnered with UNC Charlotte’s J. Murrey Atkins Library to record an oral history interview with Mrs. Martha Barringer, a former Siloam School student and lifelong resident of the Mallard Creek area, now 97 years old. Her daughter, Ms. Maxine Barringer, assisted. The recording will be archived and made available to the public through our partners at Atkins Library. Everett Blackmon, WINNING IMAGES!™ Photography, photographed Mrs. Barringer and the oral history process.



CMH President & CEO Adria Focht interviews Mrs. Martha Barringer at her home. Mrs. Barringer's daughter, Maxine Barringer, and UNCC and CMH representatives sit in the foreground.

More oral histories are planned for the Barringer and Young families, all of which will become part of the Siloam archive at the Museum and at UNC Charlotte’s Atkins Library.

In **September**, Fannie Flono, Alfreda Barringer, Mary Newsom, and Adria Focht met with Charlotte Presbytery contacts Olanda Carr, Jr., and Edna Wigfall Cruté to learn more about Siloam Presbyterian Church and its potential connections to the school.

Following the visit, the working group submitted a research request to the Presbyterian Historical Society in Philadelphia for any information in their archives about the Siloam Church, Siloam Cemetery, or Siloam School in Mecklenburg County, NC, noting that alternate spellings include: Siloam, Silome, and Salome. The committee is now reaching out to descendants who may keep cemetery records and is planning an event to fully document the cemetery with the Mecklenburg Chapter of the DAR.



This picture of the cemetery visit clearly demonstrates the development threats it faces.

After the visit to the Siloam Cemetery, Alfreda Barringer took Museum representatives to the gravesites of Nelson and Cora Young, which are located in the United House of Prayer Cemetery in Charlotte.



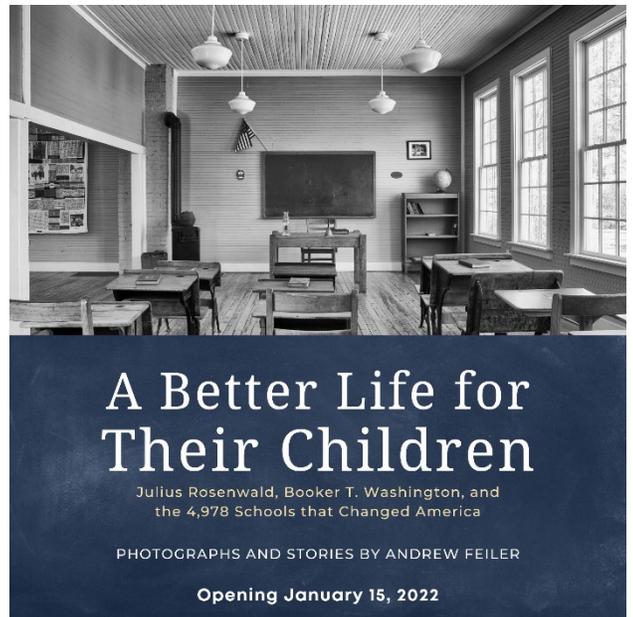
Siloam School and the August interview with Martha Barringer were featured in the **November issue of Pride Magazine** (hyperlinked on the following page).



Also in November, Siloam School was featured in an “On Your Side Tonight with Jamie Boll” segment on WBTV: [Saving the 100-year-old Siloam School building in Charlotte](#). The piece features Dr. Rochelle Brandon and highlights the need for intersectional preservation and the importance of understanding racial inequity in preservation and education.

In **December**, UNCC Chancellor Sharon Gaber and Vice Chancellor for Diversity and Inclusion and Chief Diversity officer Dr. Brandon Wolfe visited Siloam School with SSSP Chair Fannie Flono, CMH staff Adria Focht and Lauren Wallace, UNCC Library partners Tina Wright and Adreonna Bennett, and former County Commissioner and UNCC professor Susan Harden, who organized the meeting.

The Museum publicly announced the upcoming photography exhibit: **A Better Life for Their Children: Julius Rosenwald, Booker T. Washington, and the 4,978 Schools that Changed America. Photographs & Stories by Andrew Feiler** opening January 15. Siloam School is one of the schools Feiler photographed and included in his book, which accompanies the exhibit. After its run at the Museum, the exhibit will travel to the National Civil Rights Museum at the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, Tennessee. The exhibit’s run at CMH is supported by grants from AT&T Foundation, PRIDE Magazine and North Carolina Humanities, an affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities.



2021 SAVE SILOAM SCHOOL PROJECT FUNDRAISING EFFORTS

After the *Inside Siloam School* event in February, more than **\$6,030** in donations were made to the project, including a \$5000 donation from the Eric & Nancy Johnson Family Fund.

Truist Foundation awarded our **\$5,400** grant application to support presenting *Inside Siloam School* as a new field trip opportunity from Feb 18 – Dec 31, 2021. CMH offered free access to Mecklenburg County schools and homeschoolers (up to 120 classroom connections, for grades 5-12) to *Inside Siloam School* virtual field trips, including the 360Tour, digital guidebook, and supplemental videos as curriculum content; as well as a 1-hour interactive conversation with an Education Specialist to introduce local students to Siloam School and the ongoing history of school segregation in Mecklenburg County.

In July, **Mecklenburg County** allocated **\$15,000** towards the Siloam School – *each year for the next 10 years*, a total commitment of \$150,000. The funds are targeted in the county budget as an arts and culture investment to help reduce racial disparities through inclusive and diverse storytelling.

At the same time, **City of Charlotte** pledged **\$10,000** towards the architectural services needed to move Siloam School in FY22.

Former head of the Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools Foundation, **Sandra Wilcox Conway**, donated **\$75,000** towards the project.

The Museum again submitted a Letter of Intent for the 2021 African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund, asking for \$75,000. We were not selected and will wait to resubmit in 2023 once the selected architect has completed a more in-depth budget and timeline.

Combined with previous pledges and in-kind commitments, the Museum has officially raised more than two-thirds of our \$1 million goal, with over \$671,402 of cash, in-kind, and pledged commitments raised as of December 29, 2021.

SAVE SILOAM SCHOOL PROJECT BUDGET

The Save Siloam School Project is expected to cost at least \$1,000,000 and includes moving the building to the Museum's East Charlotte campus, preparing the new site, restoring the structure, and upfitting the school with electricity, HVAC, and modern safety and security systems. The project budget also includes the development of a history exhibit and initial educational programming and plans for the creation of a building maintenance endowment. This preliminary project budget has evolved as planning has advanced, and the architectural firm selected for the project will help to further refine these figures in early 2022.

SAVE SILOAM SCHOOL PROJECT

Preliminary Project Budget

Marketing & Development	\$50,000.00
Administration	\$50,000.00
Program Management	\$100,000.00
Relocation of Building	\$50,000.00

Restoration of Building (Labor)	\$150,000.00
Restoration of Building (Materials)	\$100,000.00
New Site Preparation	\$50,000.00
Initial Exhibition / Programming	\$100,000.00
<u>Building Maintenance Endowment</u>	<u>\$350,000.00</u>
TOTAL	\$1,000,000.00

SAVE SILOAM SCHOOL FUNDRAISING SUMMARY

Total Project Budget Estimate: \$1,000,000.00

Total Gross Income (Cash-In-Hand) as of 12/29/2021: \$365,402.74

Individual Contributions:	\$105,247.74
Corporate Contributions:	\$81,550.00
Foundations, Other:	\$3,605.00
Public/Government Funds:	\$175,000.00

Total Expenses as of 12/29/2021: \$18,384.54

Total Net Income (Cash In-Hand): \$347,018.20

The total amount raised for the Save Siloam School Project as of 12/29/2021, including pledged contributions of at least \$191,000, as well as in-kind support of at least \$115,000, is **\$671,402.74** – that's **more than 2/3 way to our goal of \$1 million!**

PROJECT PARTNERS AND CHAMPIONS

The effort to save the Siloam School is a partnership of The Charlotte Museum of History, Mecklenburg County, the City of Charlotte, the Historic Landmarks Commission, Aldersgate Retirement Community, the Silver Star Community Inc., Tribute Companies, and a growing number of community organizations and individuals as listed below.

2021 Save Siloam School Project Partners: Fannie Flono (chair), Fred Alexander, Lu-Ann Barry (SpiceLAB Media), Everett Blackmon (Winning Images! Photography), Dr. Rochelle Brandon, Janet Brooks, Jeanie Cottingham, Dee Dixon (Pride Communications), Shayvonne Dudley, Commissioner George Dunlap, Dr. Hugh Dussek, Maxine Eaves, Jett Edwards, Councilman Larken Egleston, Adria Focht, Stewart Gray, Belinda Grier, Dr. Tom Hanchett, Susan Harden, Boris Henderson (Aldersgate), Jerry Hollis, John Howard, Angel Johnston, Shirell Joyner, John Kincheloe, Tiffani Lewis, Ting Li (Pixelatoms), Dan Morrill, Mary Newsom, Len Norman, Councilman Greg Phipps, Eric Ridler, Tracy Ryals, Michael Solender, Queen Thompson, Brigitte Tinsley, Tiffany Walker, Lauren Wallace, Peter Wasmer, and Tony Womble.



In 2021, the Save Siloam School Project Partners routinely met by Zoom.

This committee meets regularly on the second Wednesday of every other month from 5:30 pm to 7:00 pm via Zoom or in person when possible at The Charlotte Museum of History. The next meeting is scheduled for January 12, 2022.

Save Siloam School Project Champions serve as critical community ambassadors of the Save Siloam School Project. Champions share their talents by providing our organization with their professional expertise; their diverse knowledge of constituent perspectives; their

connections to local, state or national resources, colleagues or peers; their philanthropic support or other forms of needed assistance.

2021 Save Siloam School Project Champions: Kobi Brinson, Commissioner George Dunlap, Maxine Eaves, Councilman Larken Egleston, Anthony Foxx, Valaida Fullwood, Harvey Gantt, Arthur Griffin, Susan Harden, John Howard, Commissioner Mark Jerrell, Mayor Vi Lyles, Darrel Williams, and Councilman Greg Phipps.

SAVE THE DATES FOR UPCOMING EVENTS IN 2022:

January 15: *A Better Life for Their Children: Julius Rosenwald, Booker T. Washington, and the 4,978 Schools that Changed America. Photographs & Stories by Andrew Feiler* exhibit opening

This photography exhibit tells the story of one of the most significant moments in the history of philanthropy and education in the rural South – the Rosenwald Schools program. Of the original 4,978 schools built with the support of the Fund, only about 500 survive and many are threatened by decay and neglect. A photographer and fifth-generation Georgian, Andrew Feiler drove more than 25,000 miles across the South to document this important history. That work became *A Better Life for Their Children*, a book of photographs, stories, and essays published in early 2021, and this accompanying exhibit.

February 26: African American Heritage Festival, the annual free family event honoring Charlotte’s Black history and culture, with living history interpretations, art and dance, and presentations from community partners.

Thank you for supporting the Save Siloam School Project!