

CHARLOTTE PROJECT TO SAVE HISTORIC BLACK SCHOOL MEETS \$1 MILLION GOAL

***\$500,000 gift from The Gambrell Foundation brings total raised to \$1.2 million,
meaning historic Siloam School can now be moved and preserved***

CHARLOTTE, N.C., Nov. 1, 2022 – With a new gift of \$500,000 from The Gambrell Foundation, the Charlotte Museum of History has raised \$1.2 million to save the historic Siloam School, exceeding its original \$1 million goal. A local Black community, centered on the Siloam Church in northeast Charlotte, built the school in the early 1920s to give their children a quality education despite segregation.

“Thanks to this incredibly generous gift from The Gambrell Foundation, the Save Siloam School Project can now move forward with restoring this important piece of Charlotte history,” said Terri L. White, president & CEO of the Charlotte Museum of History, which leads the community-based effort to save the school. “This project is a testament to what the Charlotte community can do when we stand together to save our history. A special thanks goes out to Silver Star Community Inc., a nonprofit that works tirelessly to save Black historic spaces. They were the original force behind the Save Siloam School Project, and without their efforts, the Siloam School may have faded into obscurity.”

As part of the project, the museum will move the historic school building to its eight-acre campus in east Charlotte. The restored space will become a community resource and a center for history education, including exhibits about the 20th-century Black experience and the region’s history of racial discrimination and injustice. The Siloam School will be the only Rosenwald-designed school in Mecklenburg County devoted to history programming.

“When we learned about the Save Siloam School Project, we knew it was something The Gambrell Foundation had to get behind,” said Sally Gambrell Bridgford, president of The Gambrell Foundation. “Preserving these sacred spaces is vital to ensuring that future generations know the true history of our community. I truly believe that being able to do things like see the actual school, stand on the floors, and touch the walls will transform the way visitors experience our history of segregation and inequality. We’re honored that our grant, along with so many other donors, can help make that happen.”

The Gambrell Foundation gift caps off a multi-year fundraising effort that generated many individual gifts, along with major cash gifts and in-kind donations from Mecklenburg County, Lowe's, Tribute Companies, Sandra Wilcox Conway, the City of Charlotte, Porter Durham, Bank of America, Hoffman Mechanical and Walmart. The museum also would like to thank Aldersgate for its long-standing support of the museum and its programs.

About the Siloam School

The Siloam School was one of thousands of Rosenwald-era schools that local communities built throughout the segregated South in the early 1900s to educate African American children. The building is on the National Register of Historic Places and is critically endangered due to disrepair. It currently sits on its original site, near an apartment complex close to UNC Charlotte.

Historical documents suggest that the Rosenwald Fund did not provide any matching funds for the construction of the Siloam School. Instead, it is likely that the local community absorbed the costs to build the school in the Rosenwald tradition, using a Rosenwald school building plan.

The Rosenwald schools program offered matching funds and architectural plans to communities that wanted to build schools for Black students in the early 20th century throughout the segregated rural South. The program produced more than 5,000 schools – 813 of them in North Carolina. By 1928, Rosenwald schools served one-third of the South's rural African American children. Mecklenburg County had 26 Rosenwald schools; only seven remain today.

[Find more about the Save Siloam School Project here.](#)

The Charlotte Museum of History exists to save and share the Charlotte region's history, helping create a better understanding of the past and inspiring dialogue about the future. The museum is the steward of the [1774 Hezekiah Alexander Rock House and homesite](#), which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is the oldest home in Mecklenburg County. The museum is the future home of the [historic Siloam School](#). Visit charlottemuseum.org and follow the museum on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#). The museum is an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

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