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**THE CHARLOTTE MUSEUM OF HISTORY AND THE SILVER STAR COMMUNITY  
LEAD EFFORT  
TO SAVE HISTORIC SILOAM SCHOOL**

***\$600,000 plan would restore and preserve historic school building and create exhibit  
on the history of African Americans in the Charlotte Region***

**CHARLOTTE, N.C., Mar. 13, 2017** – The Charlotte Museum of History announced today it will lead a community effort to restore the historic Siloam School in northeast Charlotte and return it to its original purpose as an educational resource and community gathering space. The school was one of thousands built throughout the South in the early 1900s to educate African Americans. It is on the National Register of Historic Places and is endangered due to its current state of disrepair.

“The goal of the project is to restore the Siloam School and relocate it to the grounds of The Charlotte Museum of History, where it will become an important centerpiece in our efforts to engage the community in our region’s history. One way we interpret this history is by telling the stories of the original peoples who settled this region, including African Americans,” said Kay Peninger, president and CEO of The Charlotte Museum of History. “This school building will provide another tangible connection to that history. Our vision is to bring the community together to accomplish this project, just as the community came together to build the school originally.”

The Museum notes that sources differ as to whether the Siloam School was an official Rosenwald School. It was built in the Rosenwald tradition and used a Rosenwald School floor plan. It also was designated as a Rosenwald School in its National Register of Historic Places nomination form, but it does not appear in the official list of schools that received funding from the Rosenwald School project.



"We cannot say for certain that the Siloam School was an official Rosenwald School, though some sources suggest it was," Penger said. "What we can say is that it was built by the community in the Rosenwald School tradition, and it had a profound impact on the lives of many African American children throughout the South during the Jim Crow era. It should be preserved and honored as such."

The plan to save the school calls for the restored building to house a permanent exhibit on the history of African Americans in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg region, placing that history in a national context. The building also will become part of the Museum's regular tours and will serve as a community resource.

"Silver Star Community Inc. is proud to be partnering with The Charlotte Museum of History on efforts to restore the Siloam School," said Shayvonne Dudley of Silver Star Community. "Our mission is to provide social and cultural opportunities for the community. This project will help us achieve that mission, together with our efforts to preserve the Star St. Matthews Lodge No. 566 in Matthews and the Newell Rosenwald School in Newell, N.C."

The Siloam School project will cost an estimated \$600,000 to complete. The project budget includes moving the building, preparing the new site, restoring the building and up fitting the school with electricity, HVAC and safety systems. The cost also includes creation of a fund to pay for annual operations and maintenance of the building, ensuring its preservation into the future. Development of the history exhibit is included in the cost. A historical marker will be placed at the school's original location.

The school sits on its original site on Mallard Highlands Drive, near the campus of UNC-Charlotte and on the back side of what is now an apartment complex. The apartments, as well as the old school, are owned by Tribute Companies. The company asked the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission to help find someone to take the building so it could be preserved. The Landmarks Commission asked the Museum to spearhead the project.



“This history is too important to be lost,” said Mark Maynard Sr., president & CEO of Tribute Companies. “The school needs to be in the hands of preservation experts who can protect it from future development pressure and restore it for use as a community and educational resource. We are glad that the Landmarks Commission found that preservation partner in The Charlotte Museum of History.”

The effort to save the school is a partnership of The Charlotte Museum of History, Tribute Companies, the Historic Landmarks Commission, Aldersgate Retirement Community and the Silver Star Community Group, which works to save Rosenwald Schools. The effort also is supported by Charlotte City Council member Greg Phipps, who represents District 4, where the Siloam School is located.

“Community involvement will be a key part of this project. We plan for a portion of the permanent exhibit to be community-curated. It will include stories and memories from Rosenwald School students and their families,” Peninger said. “It’s important that we have community input into how we interpret and share these stories.”

### **How to Support the Save Siloam School Effort**

People can support the Save Siloam School project by making a tax deductible donation or attending a special kick-off event at the Museum.

#### **Save Siloam School Event on Saturday, Mar. 25**

The Museum and Silver Star Community will host a special event at 5 p.m. on Saturday, Mar. 25, at the Museum’s campus at 3500 Shamrock Dr. All proceeds will benefit the restoration and preservation of the Siloam School. The event will feature journalist Stephanie Deutsch, author of “You Need a Schoolhouse: Booker T. Washington, Julius Rosenwald and the Building of Schools for the Segregated South,” speaking about the Rosenwald School movement. It will honor Dr. Ronald L. Carter, president of Johnson C. Smith University (JCSU), for his lifelong contributions to education in Charlotte’s African American community. The event also will honor the legacies of the late Dr. George E. and Marie G. Davis. Dr. Davis was the first black professor at JCSU (then known as Biddle



Institute) and later dean of the faculty. He became North Carolina's agent for the Rosenwald Fund, financed by Sears Roebuck president Julius Rosenwald, to build schools for African Americans. Marie G. Davis was a prominent Charlotte public school principal and teacher who is remembered in the naming of Charlotte's Marie G. Davis Elementary. Tickets are \$25 each and may be purchased at [charlottemuseum.org](http://charlottemuseum.org) under the Events tab.

### **Make a Donation**

You can make a tax deductible donation to the Save Siloam School project by sending a check to The Charlotte Museum of History at 3500 Shamrock Drive, Charlotte, NC, 28215. Write Save Siloam School in the memo line. Call [704-568-1774](tel:7045681774) or email [info@charlottemuseum.org](mailto:info@charlottemuseum.org) for more information.

### **History of Rosenwald Schools in Charlotte and North Carolina**

"Mecklenburg County had more Rosenwald Schools than any other county in the nation. Today, few Rosenwald School buildings survive here or elsewhere," the Museum's Peninger said. "The Siloam School is a tangible connection to a very important moment in the history of our nation and of the African American community. These schools provided educational opportunity that was routinely denied to black children in the South, and their creation represents a rare instance of interracial cooperation during the Jim Crow era."

The Rosenwald Schools were the result of a philanthropic partnership between Booker T. Washington; Julius Rosenwald, who was CEO of Sears, Roebuck and Co.; the state and hundreds of local communities. The idea was conceived by Washington and funded by Rosenwald, who offered matching funds to communities that wanted to build schools for black students. The partnership produced more than 5,000 schools in the South in the early 1900s.

In North Carolina, George E. Davis was the Rosenwald agent. His efforts led to 813 Rosenwald schools being built in North Carolina – more than in any other state. Twenty-



six of those schools were built in Mecklenburg County, the most built in a county in North Carolina.

**About The Charlotte Museum of History**

The Charlotte Museum of History engages a broad public audience in the history of the Charlotte region through the stories of its people, places and events in order to promote dialogue and historical perspective. The Museum is the steward of the Hezekiah Alexander House (ca. 1774) and home site, a National Register of Historic Places site and the oldest existing home in Mecklenburg Country. Hezekiah Alexander was a leader in the years that led to the American Revolution and served on the committee that drafted North Carolina's 1776 constitution and bill of rights. For more information, visit [charlottemuseum.org](http://charlottemuseum.org) or follow us on Facebook and Twitter (@CLThistory).

**About Silver Star Community Inc.**

Silver Star Community Inc. is a non-profit organization whose mission is community outreach with a commitment to providing a resource and opportunities of cultural, social, and ethical value. Silver Star has partnered with the community in Newell, N.C. on ongoing efforts to preserve and restore the Newell Rosenwald School and is currently working on efforts to preserve Star St. Matthews Lodge No. 566 in Matthews, a property that recently received historic landmark status. You can follow Silver Star Community Inc. on Facebook @SilverStarCommunityInc.

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