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## **EXPLORE HISTORIC AFRICAN AMERICAN SCHOOL VIRTUALLY AND HELP SAVE THE SILOAM SCHOOL**

***Event made possible with \$10,000 donation from Bank of America***

**CHARLOTTE, N.C., Jan. 26, 2021** – The Charlotte Museum of History will host a virtual experience starting Feb. 18 to allow people inside the historic and endangered Siloam School and to help the community learn more about this important historic site. A local African American community built the school in rural northeast Charlotte in the early 1920s to give their children a quality education despite segregation.

Thanks to generous donations – \$10,000 from Bank of America and \$5,000 from PRIDE Communications – 100 percent of every ticket purchased supports the Save Siloam School Project.

### **360-degree virtual tour**

The virtual tour takes place Feb. 18-28 and lets people explore the historic school through a 360-degree virtual tour and digital guidebook.

### **Live streamed kick-off event on Feb. 18 at 6 p.m.**

In addition to the virtual tour, ticket holders can learn more about the historical importance of the Siloam School and the community project to save it during a live streamed kick-off event on Feb. 18 at 6 p.m.

The event features author Stephanie Deutsch and local project champions for the Save Siloam School Project, including:

- Charlotte Mayor Vi Lyles,
- Chair of the Save Siloam School Project Fannie Flono, retired editor at *The Charlotte Observer* and author of “Thriving in the Shadows: The Black Experience in Charlotte and Mecklenburg County,”

- Dr. Rochelle Brandon, a Charlotte physician whose grandmother attended a Rosenwald School in Mecklenburg County, and
- Writer and public speaker Valaida Fullwood, author of “Giving Back: A Tribute to Generations of African American Philanthropists” and co-founder of the New Generation of African American Philanthropists, a Charlotte giving circle.

Featured speaker Stephanie Deutsch is author of “You Need a Schoolhouse: Booker T. Washington, Julius Rosenwald and the Building of Schools for the Segregated South.” She will discuss the lasting legacy of the Rosenwald School Fund throughout the American South. The Rosenwald fund was a project of Booker T. Washington and Julius Rosenwald, who worked together in early 20<sup>th</sup> century America to build more than 5,000 schools that provided a quality education to Black students.

“The Siloam School is an important piece of our community’s history,” shared Charlotte Market President Charles Bowman. “Bank of America is proud to support saving this culturally significant building. The school’s preservation ensures it will remain an icon that represents resilience and opportunity for future generations to come.”

“Due to its severe state of disrepair, we are unable to safely bring the public inside the Siloam School right now,” said Adria Focht, president and CEO of The Charlotte Museum of History. “We’re excited that this virtual event will let people experience this historic treasure and begin envisioning the amazing cultural resource it will be once it’s restored. Saving the Siloam School is an important step for our community as we work to bring more equity to historic preservation and to deal with the legacy and persistence of difficult aspects of our history, including segregation, discrimination and injustice. Honestly exploring these topics is necessary to build a stronger future for our community.”

### **How to go**

Tickets are \$25 at [charlottemuseum.org/events](https://www.charlottemuseum.org/events) and include a 360-degree virtual tour of the historic Siloam School, a digital guidebook describing the key architectural features and historical importance of the school, and access to the live streamed kick-off event on



Thursday, Feb. 18, at 6 p.m. featuring author Stephanie Deutsch. 100 percent of every ticket sold will support the Save Siloam School Project.

### **About the Save Siloam School Project**

To date the community has raised more than \$355,000 toward the \$1 million needed to restore the school and turn it into a permanent community resource devoted to history education and programming, including exhibits about racial justice and equity. When restored, the Siloam School will be the only preserved Rosenwald school in Mecklenburg County devoted to history education and history programming.

The Save Siloam School Project includes moving the building, preparing the new site, restoring the structure and upfitting the school with electricity, HVAC and modern safety systems. The museum also plans to give tours of the building, to install exhibits related to the history of racial segregation and discrimination and to make the space available as a community resource. A historical marker will be placed at the school's original location.

The effort to save the Siloam School is a partnership of The Charlotte Museum of History, Mecklenburg County, the City of Charlotte, Tribute Companies, the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission, Aldersgate Retirement Community and Silver Star Community Inc. Silver Star has worked to save Rosenwald Schools in Mecklenburg County for years and was the earliest champion for preserving the Siloam School.

See the [latest on the Save Siloam School Project here.](#)

### **About Rosenwald Schools and the Siloam School**

The Siloam School was one of thousands of Rosenwald schools 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 endangered due to disrepair.

The school building currently sits on its original site, near an apartment complex close to UNC-Charlotte. Tribute Companies owns the apartments, as well as the old school.



In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, educator Dr. Booker T. Washington conceived of a program to build high-quality, free schools for African American children throughout the segregated rural South. He enlisted the aid of Julius Rosenwald, president of Sears, Roebuck and Co., to finance the effort, and on Oct. 30, 1917, they created the Julius Rosenwald Fund.

The program offered matching funds and architectural plans 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 – 813 of them in North Carolina. By 1928, one-third of the South's rural African American school children and teachers were served by Rosenwald Schools. Mecklenburg County had 26 Rosenwald schools.

It does not appear that the Rosenwald Fund paid for the construction of the Siloam School. It is likely that the local community absorbed the costs to build the school in the Rosenwald tradition, using a Rosenwald School floor plan.

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

People can support the Save Siloam School Project with a tax-deductible donation at [charlottemuseum.org/siloam](http://charlottemuseum.org/siloam).

### **About The Charlotte Museum of History**

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. Visit [charlottemuseum.org](http://charlottemuseum.org) and follow the museum on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#). The museum is an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

### **About Bank of America**

At Bank of America, we're guided by a common purpose to help make financial lives better, through the power of every connection. We're delivering on this through responsible growth with a focus on our environmental, social and governance (ESG) leadership. ESG is embedded across our eight lines of business and reflects how we help fuel the global economy, build trust and credibility, and represent a company that people want to work for, invest in and do business with. It's demonstrated in the inclusive and supportive workplace we create for our employees, the responsible products and services we offer our clients, and the impact we make around the world in helping local economies thrive. An important part of this work is forming strong partnerships with nonprofits and advocacy groups, such as community, consumer and environmental organizations, to bring together our collective networks and expertise to achieve greater impact. Learn more at [about.bankofamerica.com](http://about.bankofamerica.com), and connect with us on Twitter ([@BofA\\_News](#)). For more Bank of America news, including dividend announcements and other important information, visit the [Bank of America newsroom](#) and [register for news email alerts](#).

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