Blackstorytelling League of Rochester, New York

Affiliate Report to NABS

2016

**“ If you don’t know the trees you may be lost in the forest, but if you don’t know the stories, you may be lost in life.” Siberian Elder**

The Blackstorytelling League of Rochester, New York continues to work diligently to uphold the legacy of promoting and perpetuating the Art of Blackstorytelling. We’ve closed another year leaving an impact throughout Rochester communities. We have spread the love of storytelling to various organizations. We continue to educate, enlighten and entertain schools, Day Care Centers, Churches, Senior Citizen homes, Business Organizations, Libraries and Club organizations.

**BLR EVENTS 2016**

**October**- BLR 22nd Annual Storytelling Festival- Intergenerational Stories of Wisdom For Today was held on October 22, 2016 at Central Library of Rochester Theme: What the World Needs Now: Purpose- We dedicated and reflected on this event to remember four young black men taken to soon in a drive by shooting at the Boys and Girls Club, and an innocent young man killed at a hotel party.

The stories told this evening were selected to give people hope, knowledge and the understanding that life is precious and the world is cheated when the opportunity of inspiring gift of one of Gods children is taken to soon by senseless killings. We honored two outstanding Black Brothers with the James and Bessie Hamm Awarded for their contribution to our community. Mr. Arkee Allen- Principle of PUC Charter School and Mr. Scott- Business Man (Event Attendance count -60)

**Akwaaba**: The Heritage Associates, Inc. along with BLR members Presented Fannie Lou Hammer asks: Is This America at Memorial AME Zion Church on October 28, 2016 (Witness the life, struggles and triumphs of this courageous civil rights activist as she asks questions and takes actions still relevant today.)

**December-** BLR Family sharing the real reason for Christmas dinner at D’Mangu

Performance for New Life Fellowship’s Church meeting organized and requested from Ruth Wiley (Attendance count 85-90) on December 12th

**January**- BLR published our first book entitled KWANZZA- Members contributed to the success of this publication with stories that related to the Seven Principles of Nugzo Saba

We have been honored to be invited back to the Brighton Library for the past four years. We share Songs, Poems and Stories that the children and their parents are active participants in about a King that changed the world. (Attendance count 50)

**February**-On February 12th, Dr. Davis Anderson and BLR President Gwendolyn Glenn presented stories at Colgate Divinity School after an invitation from Pastor Rickey Harvey. The theme Black Family/Blackness Restored- Special quest Revered Doc Sharon Hunter from Chicago, Ill (Event Attendance -80)

Storyteller Robin Nowell told stories on February 24th at the Irondequoit Library. [Event Attendance 25]

Presentations were given to different groups within the Hillside Organization for Black History Month. Request by Mr. Dwayne Williams. Members Delores Simmons, Eunice White, Shirley Scott, Carolyn Edwards and Robert Snead shared various genre of stories and Biographies of Famous African Americans who have made outstanding contributions to the world. (Attendance count 150 students)

Ms. De’Lores Simmons portrayed the life of Madam CJ Walker at the Memorial Art Gallery. Participants were educated through a question and answers session after her performance. This event had many programs going on at this time and the venue was packed. (Madam CJ walker’s event9- Attendance- 50)

Dr. David Anderson and De’Lores Simmons performed at the University of Rochester for Black History Month (Attendance 60)

**March-** Dr. David Anderson was honored as a Rochester Legend

BLR President Gwendolyn Glenn shared biblical stories about the Goodness of God to youths from Faith, Hope and Charity Church on Columbia Ave in Rochester. Great participation from the children. (Attendance count 25)

Dr. Anderson was honored at the One Hundred Fifty Ancestors Reception at City Hall on March 31, 2016

**April**- President Gwendolyn Glenn and Carolyn Edwards presented stories to Young ladies at Aenon Baptist Church Girl Scouts. Stories were shared that encouraged these young women to embrace their beautiful blackness and to never let anyone block their destination.

[Attendance count 50]

On April 16, 2016 we presented Family Stories: Looking Back and Reaching Forward at out Springtime Storytelling Luncheon Featuring Daughters of Creative Sounds from Buffalo, New York. Stories were shared that related to our ancestors struggles and looking forward to a change in our world. Youth teller Kyla Scott recited a speech by Fredrick Douglas (Granddaughter of President G. Glenn), Keng Taylor and Alisa Flowers told a story and played beautiful music on her violin. This event was held at the Staybridge Hotel and attendance was more than we had sold tickets for. We had to add tables and (Attendance was 75)

**August:** The story telling family celebrated our BLR family gathering at the home of Mr. and Mrs. David Anderson. We shared good food, much love, stories and a closer connection as members with a mission.

This year we welcomed five new Storytellers to the BLR family.

* Renee Jenkins
* Keng Taylor-Youth Teller and Renee’s grandson
* Minister Damond Wilson
* Robert DeLain
* Norrine Coleman

There were two changes among officers- New Treasurer- Robin Nowell and Secretary Gail Livingston

**Goals:**

* Increase membership- Greet and meet night through Stories
* Improve and change Website
* Complete our 2nd anthology book
* Dedicate last hour of business meeting to sharing stories and polishing the craft
* Recruit more members for youth group, complete both handbooks- Youth Handbook , New Member Handbook
* Focus on doing better in regard to advertisement of events
* More collaboration with other organizations
* Classes on Grant writing
* Future plans to provide workshops to Rochester City School District Teachers- Using Storytelling to Improve Literacy Learning and Why Storytelling in the Classroom Matters

**BLR MEMBERSHIP**

David and Ruth Anderson

Syliva Barker

Norrine Coleman

Robert DeLain

Gwendolyn Glenn-President

Renee Jenkins

Gail Livingston-Secretary

Robin Nowell

Venora Rogers

Shirley Scott

De’Lores Simmons

Barbara Stevens

Eunice White

Damond Wilson

Respectfully Submitted by

President Gwendolyn Glenn