

The Eubie Blake National Jazz Institute and Cultural Center Celebrates Annual Kwanzaa Festival with Baltimore Community

BALTIMORE – The Eubie Blake National Jazz Institute and Cultural Center hosts its annual Kwanzaa celebration of reflection and recommitment toward preserving the wellbeing and wholeness of the community and world in a program of traditional seasonal meditations through artistic expression and visualization on Saturday, December 27, 2008 from 7 to 9 p.m. at the center located at 847 N. Howard Street. The family-inspired festival is free and open to the public with donations of canned goods and other non-perishable food items, which will assist community food banks, meet the demand during the winter.

The observance showcases live jazz, singer-songwriter Joey Odoms, an African marketplace, open microphone poetry, fashions by Murrell Alexander, and dance interpretations from the Community Dancers of Dance Baltimore and The Imani Dancers. A special tribute to Ruby Glover in song, poetry, and dance will be a part of the celebration.

Kwanzaa, created by Maulana Karenga, introduces and reinforces seven basic values of African culture that contribute to building and sustaining family, community and culture among African American people, as well as people in the diaspora. The values commonly referred to as the Nguzo Saba, which is Swahili for seven principles, are at the heart of the origin and meaning of the celebration.

The principles Karenga established include umoja (unity) to strive for and maintain unity in the family, community, nation and race; kujichagulia (self-determination) to define ourselves, name ourselves, create for ourselves and speak for ourselves; ujima (collective work and responsibility) to build and maintain our community together and make our brother's and sister's problems our problems and to solve them together; ujamaa (cooperative economics) to build and maintain our own stores, shops and other businesses and to profit from them together; nia (purpose) to make our collective vocation the building and developing of our community in order to restore our people to their traditional greatness; kuumba (creativity) to do always as much as we can, in the way we can, in order to leave our community more beautiful and beneficial than we inherited it; imani (faith) to believe with all our heart in our people, our parents, our teachers, our leaders and the righteousness and victory of our struggle.

The Eubie Blake National Jazz Institute and Cultural Center is open Wednesday, Thursday and Friday from 11:00 a.m. to 6 p.m., and Saturday from 11 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

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For more than three decades, the Eubie Blake National Jazz Institute and Cultural Center has sought to bring creative expression and urban consciousness to Baltimore through visual and performing arts education and development opportunities for children, youth and adults in our community.