

# **P R O C L A M A T I O N**

## **BLACK HISTORY MONTH**

**FEBRUARY 2023**

**WHEREAS**, the story of Black History Month began in 1915, half a century after the Thirteenth Amendment abolished chattel slavery in the United States, when Harvard-historian Dr. Carter G. Woodson, known as the “Father of Black History,” and the prominent minister Jesse E. Moorland founded the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH) as an organization dedicated to researching and promoting achievements of Black Americans; and

**WHEREAS**, Black history is revered as U.S. history, and essential to understanding the story of our country and the global impact on the Black diaspora. May we all embrace the complexities, challenges, and more importantly the crucial lessons of perseverance that is woven within Black history. Which continue to inspire all marginalized communities in their fight for liberation.

**WHEREAS**, the ASALH continues to organize with the mission to promote, research, preserve, interpret and disseminate information about Black life, history and culture to the global community. The theme for 2023 focuses on Black Resistance. In how Black Americans have resisted historic and ongoing oppression, in all forms. Black resistance, consistently pushes the United States to live up to its ideals of freedom, liberty, and justice for all. Furthermore, as stated by the ASALH, “by resisting Black people have achieved triumphs, successes, and progress as seen in the end of chattel slavery, dismantling of Jim and Jane Crow segregation in the South, increased political representation at all levels of government, desegregation of educational institutions, the passage of Civil Rights Act of 1964, the opening of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History in D.C. and increased and diverse representation of Black experiences in media. Black resistance strategies have served as a model for every other

social movement in the country, thus, the legacy and importance of these actions cannot be understated.” and

**WHEREAS**, although recently, tragic events have elevated the voice of the Black struggle nationally and locally as well, it will take more than a raised voice to bring about the lasting institutional and societal change that is desperately needed in our Village and our country. We encourage all people to recognize and confront issues of anti-racism by standing in the gap at every opportunity and eradicate barriers with fearlessness and determination to improve the lives of Black people; As well, seek to understand the voices and their stories of the Black community here in Oak Park. That our community must be committed to learning, listening, and leading in anti-racist endeavors. May we also be reminded through Black history that progress is not linear but nevertheless progress will come, as we remain fiercely committed through actions.

**WHEREAS**, Oak Park parent, Donna Callender, started “Harambee”, Swahili for “let’s pull together,” with Longfellow School “Parents of African American Children” (PAAC) in 2006, so that their children could connect to their heritage and take pride in expressing it. This year, Black History Month will be commemorated in Oak Park with the Oak Park Public Library, throughout the month of February with virtual events and a special exhibit in the Main Library Idea Box. The Village looks forward to building up programming around Black History as we continue our commitment to racial equity.

**NOW, THEREFORE**, I, Vicki Scaman, President of the Village of Oak Park and Board of Trustees, do hereby proclaim the month of February 2023 to be Black History Month in the Village of Oak Park, and urge all community members to be cognizant of and participate in events arranged for this time, and work fearlessly for our Village to embody anti-racist systems and principles, throughout the year and years to come.

**DATED** this 6<sup>th</sup> day of February 2023.

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Vicki Scaman

Village President

**ATTEST**

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Christina M. Waters

Village Clerk