



**First Congregational Church of Pasadena Grant Report
\$5,500 Grant Received November 2024**

Summary of Grant Funds:

Funds from the First Congregational Church of Pasadena grant to Pasadena Educational Foundation (PEF) were used to support the African American Parent Council (AAPC) in hosting a *Black History Living Museum*. A *Black History Living Museum* is an event where 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade PUSD students research and then depict notable Black historical figures from any time period. Students created presentations while wearing costumes and props and performed original 90-second monologues in character to *museum visitors*. This year 16 PUSD students (listed below) from 8 different schools participated in the event, portraying Black figures from as early as Nat Turner from the early 1800s to present-day stars including Serena Williams and Kamala Harris. The event this year was hosted on May, 13th at the Robinson Recreation Center. PUSD charter school, Rosebud Academy's 27 member choir "Voices of Rosebud" under the direction of Robin Turrentine also performed. Attendance for the event was about 125 people including community members, students, families, principals, teachers, school site and district level administrators, and school board members.

Youth in the Program, Student Name (*Black Figure Portrayed*), School:

1. Paityn (*Rosa Parks*), Longfellow Elementary
2. Ella (*Kamala Harris*), Don Benito
3. Grayson (*Robert Smalls*), Washington Elementary
4. Langston (*Prince Rogers Nelson*), Jackson Elementary **2ND WINNER**
5. Avery (*Nat Turner*) Willard Elementary
6. Minseung (Jack) (*Lonnie Johnson*) McKinley Elementary
7. Wale (*George Washington Carver*), McKinley Elementary
8. Hamidreza (Hamid) (*Martin Luther King Jr.*), McKinley Elementary
9. Maria (*Ruby Bridges*), McKinley Elementary
10. Cassius (*Lonnie George Johnson*), Washington Elementary
11. Kamden (*Walt Butler*), Norma Coombs Elementary
12. Camryn (*Venus Williams*), Hamilton Elementary
13. JoeAnna (*Sojourner Truth*), Longfellow Elementary **1ST WINNER**
14. Verity (*George Washington Carver*), Altadena Elementary **3RD WINNER**
15. Jayna (*Malcolm X*), Altadena Elementary
16. Nora (*Serena Williams*), Hamilton Elementary

Prizes: Judges' votes were tallied and 1st, 2nd, and 3rd prize winners were awarded. The winners each received a prize that included a gift certificate, books, and medals.

- The 1st place winner has the honor of displaying the BHLM trophy at their school until next year's winner is named. A plaque on the trophy is engraved with the winners name and school, each year. In addition the winning school receives a basket of books, generously

donated by our partner, Beverly Tate of Black & Latino Men Read, to help grow their library with more diverse and inclusive selections.

- The 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winners were asked to attend the PUSD Board meeting on May 22, 2025 to share their oral presentations, in costume, during the meeting and to be recognized by the Board. The students' families and teachers were also in attendance.

Effects and Accomplishments of the Grant:

Effects of the program included benefits to the community and the individual students who participated. For the community it was an opportunity to learn more about historical figures in a unique and interactive experience. There were not any formal surveys for *museum-goers* but several PEF staff and parents who attended can attest that the event was well-run and the experience was one-of-a-kind. Also, for the community and City of Pasadena representatives, it was an opportunity to celebrate an impactful PUSD program. Benefits for the students that participated included engaging deeply with African-American history while developing essential research and presentation skills. The students also each received a certificate from the PUSD Superintendent, Dr. Elizabeth Blanco and small gifts in recognition of their presentations and their accomplishments were celebrated at their respective schools.

Challenges/Outlook for Next Year:

There were a few challenges with the program this year. Most notably and impactful was the Eaton Fire. The BLHM was originally planned to have up to 50 participants. With the impact/disruption in school to PUSD students and staff, fewer students were able to participate as preparation takes a few weeks. Plans for next year include expanding outreach to teachers and families with the goal of having a representative from every PUSD elementary school. We would also like to incorporate field trips and experiences to local museums, college libraries, and cultural events. As well as expand our partnerships with Pasadena/Altadena/Sierra Madre non-profit/community organizations.

Other Notables:

- We are proud that BHLHM is a largely student-led event, where the community can witness and celebrate the brilliance of PUSD students. In addition to elementary student participants, a high school PUSD student was hired as the resident photographer. Participants also had the opportunity to co-design their costumes in collaboration with students from John Muir High School's Mustang Design Lab. Materials and services are free to the student. We are always seeking more ways to engage students as leaders in this project. Including as the emcee, and even as vendors.
- This year, we partnered with Jefferson Branch Children's Library to support students in selecting research topics aligned with their interests, and to provide guidance with research, writing, and more, led by Head Librarian Ernesto Covarrubias. Next year, we hope to involve the library's student interns and dedicate a day for high school students to help younger participants assemble their presentation boards and rehearse their speeches.
- AAPC provided participating students with a trifold board for their presentation, as well as art supplies.
- We are intentional in selecting judges from within our Pasadena Community, often from Pasadena City College, city and civic service providers to share the good news on what is

happening within our public schools, and build bridges for continued partnership. Many of our judges participate annually and have remarked that it is one of their favorite events of the year.

- Teacher recognitions were given for teachers who have gone above and beyond to make this experience enriching for students. This year an award was provided to Ms. Fraser Lake as a long time partner, who has incorporated this project into the student's school day, aiding students in their research, helping them to complete their projects and attending every event in support of their students, over the entire span of BHLN's history in the district. We also recognized Ms. Courtney Scrabeck, who is the faculty lead for the Mustang Design Lab, champion for the project and a longtime collaborator.