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EVENTS

How to celebrate Black History Month 2021 across Phoenix: 8 virtual and in-person events

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For years African Americans in Phoenix could only live in certain parts of the city. Here are landmarks that represent their thriving community.

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In honor of Black History Month, organizations, activists and businesses in metro Phoenix are hosting virtual and in-person events throughout the month that recognize works in arts and music, historical figures and contemporary issues.

This year's theme, chosen by the Association for the Study of African American Life and History, is "The Black Family: Representation, Identity, and Diversity." ASALH will offer virtual programming throughout the month "in observance and celebration of the strengths, struggles, resistance — and the sheer perseverance of the Black family."

Locally, events honoring Black History Month through musical performances, artworks and expert discussions will take place at an art gallery, a bookstore and on Zoom, among other venues in metro Phoenix.

What is Black History Month?

In 1865, the 13th Amendment was ratified, abolishing slavery and involuntary servitude "except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted."

Fifty years later, Carter G. Woodson and minister Jesse E. Moorland founded the Association for the Study of African American Life and History — formerly the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History — in 1915.

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A decade later, he and others created Negro History Week in 1926. The week coincided with Frederick Douglass' and Abraham Lincoln's birthdays on Feb. 20 and Feb. 12, respectively.

According to ASALH, "Rather than focusing on two men, the Black community, (Woodson) believed, should focus on the countless Black men and women who had contributed to the advance of human civilization."

Decades after the first Negro History Week, which subsequently came to be celebrated in cities across the country, "the Association used its influence to institutionalize the shifts from a week to a month and from Negro history to Black history," according to ASALH's website.

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This resulted in President Gerald Ford — and every president thereafter — to proclaim February as Black History Month in 1976, 50 years after the first Negro History Week.

ASU virtual events

ASU will host a variety of in-person and online events for its community in honor of Black History Month.

The following events will be accessible online:

- 3 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 4: "The History of Gospel Music."
- 6 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 4: "The Impact of Black Culture in Music: A Conversation w/ Kosine & Lady Caress."
- 5 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 17: "Deconstructing Disney."
- 12 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 23: "'The Socialization of Blacks and Whites in America' Speaker Presentation."
- 4:30 Wednesday, Feb. 25: "Black Women and The Superwoman Complex."

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For the full schedule and links to each event, visit https://eoss.asu.edu/student-and-cultural-engagement/events/honor-heritage/black-history-month-calendar.

Black History Month at Harkins

Harkins Theatres will show eight films "that highlight inspiring stories and trailblazing roles from the African American community" this month in select theaters.

Movies include:

- "Amistad."
- "Best of Enemies."
- "Dreamgirls."
- "Fences."
- "Hidden Figures."
- "Remember the Titans."
- "Selma."
- "42."

Check the listings for your local cinema to see whether these films are playing.

Details: Screenings daily in February at Harkins Theatres. $5. https://www.harkins.com.

COPA Music Festival

"Arizona's #1 Black History Month Concert" is coming to Maricopa with a line-up that includes jazz, tribute acts and R&B. Willie Clayton headlines the outdoor event, which will also be accessible via livestream on Vimeo for $20, plus processing fees, for those who prefer to stay at home.

The line-up includes:

- Elaine Stepter.
- Feloney Davis.
- Willie Clayton.
- Jermaine Lockhart.
- Gemini.
- Tracy Sanders.

Grandmama's Kitchen Food Truck will have food for sale at the music festival.

According to its COVID-19 guidelines, all guests will have their temperatures checked and are asked to remain at least 6 feet away from other parties. Face coverings are required.

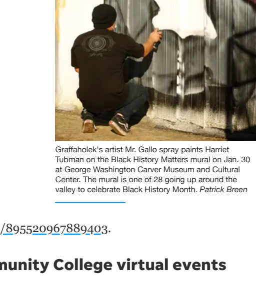
Details: 6 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 20. Copper Sky Recreation Complex, 44345 M.L.K. Jr. Blvd., Maricopa. $20 presale, $20 livestream access, $30 at the gate, free for veterans. 312-539-0592, http://azbb.events/maricopa-az-events.

Downtown Phoenix Black History Month murals

More than 80 influential Black pioneers will be honored in 28 new murals across Central Phoenix. The Black Mural Project, founded by community activist Gizette Knight, features both famous and "unsung heroes," including Malcolm X, the original Tuskegee Airman, Huey P. Newton and Jackie "Moms" Mabley.

Hotel San Carlos and Carley's Bistro are two locations that will receive new murals. The largest of the paintings, honoring George Washington Carver, Frederick Douglass and Harriet Tubman, will be located at the George Washington Carver Museum.

Details: Various locations. Free.



Graffaholek's artist Mr. Gallo spray paints Harriet Tubman on the Black History Matters mural on Jan. 30 at George Washington Carver Museum and Cultural Center. The mural is one of 28 going up around the valley to celebrate Black History Month. *Patrick Breen*

https://www.facebook.com/events/895520967889403.

Estrella Mountain Community College virtual events

For Black History Month, Estrella Mountain Community College will host more than a dozen free virtual events throughout the month that feature panels, history lessons, discussions of contemporary issues and community resources.

Some of the events include:

- 11:30 a.m. Tuesday, Feb. 2: "10 Things You Probably Did Not Know That Africa, Africans, and Black People Gave to the Americas."
- 1 p.m. Friday, Feb. 5: "Taking a Look at Black History."
- 12 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 9: "ABCs of Racism."
- 1 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 10: "Introducing the West Valley NAACP."
- 11 a.m. Tuesday, Feb. 16: "Trauma in the Black Community."
- 12 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 18: "Crown Act: The Official Guide to Natural Hair Discrimination Law."
- 11 a.m. Monday, Feb. 22: "Book Talks: Black Fatigue."
- 10 a.m. Thursday, Feb. 25: "What to do when stopped by the police."
- 12 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 25: Black Business Forum.
- 1 p.m. Friday, Feb. 26: "Black History and Achievement Month: Wrap-Up & Mini Talent Showcase."

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For the full schedule, visit https://www.estrellamountain.edu/students/black-history-month-events-calendar.

Details: Various dates. Free. 623-935-8488, https://www.estrellamountain.edu/students/black-history-month-events-calendar.

First annual Black History Event at Grassrootz Bookstore

Grassrootz Bookstore and Juice Bar is "celebrating Black excellence by showcasing local vendors, (artists), musicians, poets and activists/speakers" on Saturday, Feb. 20, according to its Facebook event.

Details: 12-6 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 20. Grassrootz Books and Juice Bar, 1145 E. Washington St., Phoenix. Free. 480-442-0293, https://grassrootzbookstore.com.

'I NEED TO TALK ABOUT THIS': Arizona's Black Instagrammers get real about systemic racism

Langston Hughes Project virtual concert experience

The Ron McCurdy Quartet will perform Langston Hughes' 12-part epic poem, "Ask Your Mama: Twelve Moods for Jazz" in a concert that is accessible online. The virtual event is hosted by Scottsdale Community College, Chandler-Gilbert Community College and Mesa Community College.

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According to the event's website, "This concert performance links the words and music of Hughes' poetry to topical images of Ask Your Mama's people, places, and events, as well as to the visual artists Langston Hughes admired or collaborated with over the course of his career."

Those interested can register to join on Scottsdale Community College's website; the concert will be available to watch live and on-demand afterwards.

Details: 5:30-7 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 10. Free. https://www.scottsdalecc.edu/news/2021/celebrating-black-history-month-langston-hughes-project.

West Valley Arts Council presents 'IMPRINT: African Americans in the Arts'

West Valley Arts in Surprise presents "IMPRINT: African Americans in the Arts" "in observance of Black History Month and recognition of the contributions African American artists have made in our community and the greater culture," according to its website.

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The exhibition, which "(sparks) thoughtful and captivating dialogue through visual and interactive concepts," will be on show at the Arts HQ Gallery through March 5.

Works from the following Arizona artists are included in "IMPRINT:"

- Joe Willie Smith.
- Alvin Galloway.
- Phalen Booker.
- Wanda King.
- Kathi Williams.
- John Neville.
- Gedion Nyanhongo.

Details: 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Wednesday-Friday, through March 5. 16126 N. Civic Center Plaza, Surprise. 623-584-2626, https://westvalleyarts.org.

Arts and Culture reporter Elizabeth Montgomery contributed to this article.

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