

From: BeLoved <belovedasheville@gmail.com>
Sent: 2/13/2022 10:05:44 PM
To: Brenda <bmillis@ashevillenc.gov>
Cc:
Subject: Celebrate Racial Equity!

[View this email in your browser](#)



Celebrating Black History & Black Futures Every Day!

At BeLoved, we work to celebrate Black History and Black Futures every day in our relationships and in our work! And we are actively working to do racial equity and racial healing work in our community. As people who believe in community, we know that we need each other.

We want to share with you more about our work in Asheville and some ways that you can DO racial equity right now in real and concrete ways in our local community.



Do Racial Equity!
Support a Track at Memorial Stadium!



For over a decade, neighbors in the East End/Valley Street neighborhood, have been asking for a public track to be added to their neighborhood park at Memorial Stadium. This neighborhood was one devastated by urban renewal, just one vestige of systemic racism that tore neighborhoods apart taking homes, land, and businesses from African American people and families in Asheville.

For decades, African Americans in Asheville have seen promises made and then broken by the City. Asking for this track and seeing it put into the Asheville City Parks and Recreation plans in 2009 and drawn in 2012 only to see lack of funding erode that dream. Recently, the City of Asheville passed a Parks and Recreation bond. Hopes again rose only to see the plan

for a track there get dropped to make improvements to the stadium to draw more tourists.

It is time for the City to keep its promises. Access to safe spaces for recreation can impact health disparities for our African American community. Being able to have neighborhood access to a track means the ability to exercise which supports heart health, prevents diabetes, lowers blood pressure, and stress levels among many other health benefits.

Renee White, President of the East End/Valley Street Neighborhood Association recently said, "How are you going to sit down and talk about reparations, when you are continuing to do harm in our Black neighborhoods and think that it's OK? If you're trying to help us, how are you going to help us and harm us at the same time?"

We ask you to join us as we support the East End/Valley Street Neighbors in calling on City Council to set aside American Rescue Plan funds to build the track and support our neighbors. This is a clear and concrete way to support racial and health equity.

<https://actionnetwork.org/letters/do-racial-equity-support-a-track-at-memorial-stadium>

Honoring a Queen

One of our deep honors is to have had Queen Mother as a part of our BeLoved family. She loved us deep, wide, and long. And oh how we loved her! She laughed with us and cried with us and sang with us. We ate together and my how she loved to create in the BeLoved kitchen. She would stand and you knew she was going to impart wisdom. And she loved our community unconditionally. In November, Queen joined the ancestors and passed from this life into the next. We continue to celebrate her life and her legacy and all the ways her imprint was made on the heart of our community.

Every week she would help us call on the ancestors. And she always say, "Call on the ancestor you need!" Well now we are calling on you, dear Queen. Help us to love! Help us to continue to show up with and for each other!

Here are words that we shared to honor her at her funeral!

Ode to a Queen

Revelation unveils this

There was a woman clothed with the sun

Clothed

with the

Sun

We see you

Portent in the heavens

We found you here

Walking these dusty earth roads with us

Stars in your hair, moon at your feet

Who dreamed your ancestors dreams into being

Your prayers piercing heaven

Your shoulders bearing the weight of generations

Lion of Judah she is your Lioness

Undaunted with courage

Anger smoldering a just fire

Tear down every cage



Speak down every wall

Free every captive

Lift every child

Let liberation come

I met you when the candles burned black, green, and red

On celebrations last night

Imani

And you were Imani walking

FAITH

You believed

You believed in God and us

You believed in God plus us

You believed in God in us, in God through us, in God despite of us,

in God lifting us under our feet

And up above our heads.

You believed.

You believed until everything else burned off

And you became PURE LOVE

1000 times infinity memories swirl in my mind and heart

Hugs tight and joy boundless

Creatively reflecting the Creator's™s artistry

And then this day

Marching against lynchings ancient and modern

A young woman charged with reading Nina's song

Anguish overwhelming her voice, hot tears streaming

She dropped the page the word's reality too much to bear

You grabbed her shoulders holding that pain

You picked up the paper and the mantle

Read without even a quiver

Your strength blazed Re-membering what was forgotten

And stunned everyone

Ain't gonna let NOBODY TURN ME AROUND you shouted

And you never did

You marched on til victory was won

Well done good and faithful one! We say: Well done!

You grew plant medicine at your door

Breaking the ancient okra open

Rubbing it across your legs, your arms, your face, your heart

Seed of your people held in the ancient heart of Africa.

You walked the neighborhood searching for poke salad

And every lost child even in a grown body

Who was not lost at all but had forgot, 'til you, what love felt like

They say the poke is poison unless you know how to cook it

But you, you could take poison and turn it into life

Turn it into flavor (put your whole foot up in it)

Turn it into balm

Yes, there is a Balm in Gilead

Yes there is a Balm in Gilead

Yes!

Bitter the road you trod too often

Bitter the rod yet you

You with your bare hands

Bent that rod into a shepherd's crook

To bear your children along

You who were Queen

Took the mantle, claiming what God had told you in prayer so long ago

All God's children are your children

You are Mother. You are Queen.

In your hands

In your hands blessing

In your hands healing

In your hands love

Oh to be held by THOSE hands

You poured out the waters of libation

You watered the ground

Stomped for the ancestors

Crying out PRAISE before the rocks EVEN had a chance

And you sprinkled all the gathered, salt of the earth

Calling those maligned and cursed

BLESSED

I remember the day you pushed my babies in their stroller across the Edmund Pettus Bridge

Yelling FIRE FIRE lest the crowds brimming with liberation crush the next generation

In their eager attempts to get free

No one is free unless we all are

You needed not rabbit, nor wand, nor hat to designate your magic

You carried magic in your soul, in your blood, in your bones, in the soles of your feet, dripping from your lips

Black girl magic personified

You jazzed June, July, and Black August

We always found you dancing

Unafraid, undeterred

You were God's own

And you chose us

And we will never be the same!

So if someone ever stops you in the streets

to ask:

Have you ever met PURE LOVE?

You can say

Great God almighty

YES!

We love you Queen!

Support African American Children!



You are invited to do racial equity! We are raising funds to share books with African American children where they see themselves reflected. These books are celebratory with African American characters, history, and themes. We want to support access to STEM tools and recreational equipment. You are invited to do racial equity! Your support will also help BeLoved make and share local black history cards and pins with area children!

We will share these with local African American children and Asheville Peak Academy, a public charter school, committed to closing the achievement gap for African American students in Asheville.

Thank you for DOING RACIAL EQUITY and supporting children in a very concrete way!

Happy Valentine's Day!!
We love and appreciate ALL of you EVERY SINGLE DAY!!



Copyright (C) 2022 BeLoved Asheville. All rights reserved.

You are receiving this email because you signed up for our newsletter on belovedasheville.com

Our mailing address is:

BeLoved Asheville

PO Box 6386

Asheville, NC 28816

[Add us to your address book](#)

Want to change how you receive these emails?

You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe](#)

