



African American History Month was officially designated as an annual celebration and acknowledgement of the African American community's accomplishments and history in 1976.

The month has its origins dating back to 1926, when the second week of February was devoted to African American history to run parallel with the birthdays of Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass.

Each year, Ednekqwa Lang, educational aide at The Children's Home Upper School, devotes a project dedicated to African American History month that she works on with her students on The Children's Home's main campus.

"The strength and teaching power of African American history is that it cannot, and should not, be forgotten," said Lang. "This month we honor African American Culture ranging from experiences, struggles and achievements throughout history into the modern day. The theme is Traveling Through Black History. We are celebrating representation, identity, and diversity."

An entire wall at Upper School has been devoted to this project. Lang and her students spent several days researching prominent and history-changing African Americans and placing their photos in car cutouts. Each person represented has their photo and a powerful quote placed inside the vehicles, which are positioned along the wall to represent travelling through history.

Ms. Lang has done an exceptional job fusing history with current events while generating dialogue in her classroom," said Stanley Stone, associate principal at The Children's Home Upper School.

"She's taken on this project every year since joining us and has always excelled ensuring we never forget what's a painful past for many Americans. I'm glad she's with us and using her talents to tell these important stories to our students."

Lang says the historical nature of African American History month is a catalyst for teaching the lessons of the past while keeping a hopeful eye toward a community of equity and inclusion.

"Projects like this encourage dialogue, provide avenues for learning and exploration, and teach what are sometimes hard lessons."

"The struggles by people of color in America are still very real and a current topic of conversation. There are few better places than a place designed for learning to initiate these talks, learn from our past, and apply lessons for our future," said Lang.

This project is more than just an exercise in learning," said Pam McKie, chief operating officer. "Ednekqwa has harnessed a medium to teach the lessons of the past while ensuring we continue the discourse about the topics of diversity and inclusion in real-time. This is why classrooms exist. I am very much enjoying her Traveling Through Black History exhibit and am grateful for her innovative approach."



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