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## **CITY OF CHARLOTTE PROVIDES \$50,000 TO HELP SAVE HISTORIC SCHOOL**

### ***Funds will help relocate the endangered Siloam School***

**CHARLOTTE, N.C., Jan. 31, 2019** – The Charlotte Museum of History and the City of Charlotte today announced \$50,000 in funding from the city to support the relocation of the historic Siloam School to The Charlotte Museum of History, where it will be restored and preserved as an educational resource and community gathering space.

The school, located in northeast Charlotte, was one of thousands of Rosenwald schools built throughout the segregated South in the early 1900s to educate African-American children. The building is on the National Register of Historic Places and is endangered due to its current state of disrepair.

“Few Rosenwald School buildings survive today, in Charlotte or elsewhere,” said Adria Focht, The Charlotte Museum of History’s president and CEO. “The Siloam School provided educational opportunity that was denied to black children in the South. It represents an important moment in the history of our nation and of the African-American community.”

The plan to save the school calls for the restored building to serve as an educational space for programming and exhibits that foster dialogue about racial cooperation and reconciliation. The museum will offer tours of the building, and the building will serve as a community resource.

“Projects like Save Siloam School are important investments for our city to make,” said Mayor Vi Lyles. “Preserving our historic buildings contributes to Charlotte’s character and culture and helps drive economic growth through history tourism.”



The Siloam School project includes moving the building, preparing the new site, restoring the building and upfitting the school with electricity, HVAC and modern safety systems. The project also includes the creation of a fund to pay for annual operations and building maintenance, as well as the development of a history exhibit about the Siloam School and Rosenwald schools. A historical marker will be placed at the school's original location on Mallard Highlands Drive.

"The story of the Siloam School gives us a window into the lives of Charlotte's African-American families in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century," said Greg Phipps, Charlotte City Council member for District 4, where the Siloam School is located. "By preserving this historic structure, we allow future generations to connect with that history."

"Adaptive reuse of our city's wonderful historic buildings helps Charlotte tell our collective story," said Larken Egleston, the Charlotte City Council representative for District 1. "This relatively small investment in preservation will yield benefits for years to come as the Siloam School becomes a place for the community to learn and connect."

The school currently sits on its original site on Mallard Highlands Drive, near the campus of UNC-Charlotte and on the back side of what is now an apartment complex. The apartments, as well as the old school, are owned by Tribute Companies. The company asked the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission to help find someone to take the building so it could be preserved, and the Landmarks Commission asked the museum to spearhead the project.

The effort to save the Siloam School is a partnership of The Charlotte Museum of History, the City of Charlotte, Tribute Companies, the Historic Landmarks Commission, Aldersgate Retirement Community and the Silver Star Community Inc., which works to save Rosenwald Schools.

### **About Rosenwald Schools and the Siloam School**

In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, educator Dr. Booker T. Washington conceived of a program to build high-quality, free schools for African-American children throughout the segregated

rural South. He enlisted the aid of Julius Rosenwald, president of Sears, Roebuck and Co., to finance the effort, and on Oct. 30, 1917, they created the Julius Rosenwald Fund. The program offered matching funds and architectural plans to communities that wanted to build schools for black students. The partnership produced more than 5,000 schools in the South in the early 1900s – 813 of them in North Carolina. By 1928, one-third of the South’s rural African-American school children and teachers were served by Rosenwald Schools.

It does not appear that the Rosenwald Fund paid for the construction of the Siloam School. It is likely that the local community absorbed the costs to build the school in the Rosenwald tradition and used a Rosenwald School floor plan. During the Jim Crow era, Mecklenburg County had 26 Rosenwald schools for African-American children, more than any other county in America.

#### **How to Support the Save Siloam School Effort**

People can support the Save Siloam School project by making a tax-deductible donation to the project at [charlottemuseum.org/siloam](http://charlottemuseum.org/siloam) or by sending a check to The Charlotte Museum of History at 3500 Shamrock Drive, Charlotte, NC, 28215. Write “Save Siloam School” in the memo line. Call [704-568-1774](tel:704-568-1774) or email [info@charlottemuseum.org](mailto:info@charlottemuseum.org) for more information.

#### **About The Charlotte Museum of History**

The Charlotte Museum of History engages a broad audience in the history of the Charlotte region through the stories of its people, places and events to promote dialogue and historical perspective. The museum is the steward of the Hezekiah Alexander House (ca. 1774) and home site, a site listed on the National Register of Historic Places and the oldest home in Mecklenburg County. To learn more, visit [charlottemuseum.org](http://charlottemuseum.org) and follow the museum on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#).

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