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Contact:

Mary Beth Navarro, 704-576-1858

MECKLENBURG COUNTY PROVIDES \$125,000 TO SAVE HISTORIC SCHOOL

CHARLOTTE, N.C., Dec. 10, 2019 – The Charlotte Museum of History and Mecklenburg County today announced \$125,000 in county funding to support preservation of the historic Siloam School, a Jim Crow-era schoolhouse for African American children in northeast Charlotte. This funding is in addition to \$50,000 the City of Charlotte provided in January 2019, bringing total funding for the project from all sources to \$185,000.

“This latest infusion of capital from Mecklenburg County brings us one step closer to our goal of relocating the Siloam School to The Charlotte Museum of History campus and preserving the building and its story for future generations,” said Adria Focht, president and CEO of The Charlotte Museum of History. “The Siloam School represents important Charlotte and national history that should not be lost.”

The Siloam School 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 disrepair.

“This school holds history that we need to understand in order to move forward, including the story of segregation and unequal access to education in our community. The preserved Siloam School will be a place for the people of Mecklenburg County to engage in discussions around some of these issues that are still affecting us today, including inequity,” said George Dunlap, chairman of the Mecklenburg County Board of Commissioners and representative for District 3, where the Siloam School is located.

The Save Siloam School Project is a community partnership, spearheaded by the museum. The project includes moving the building, preparing the new site, restoring the structure 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.

"Our vision is for the restored building to become an educational space for programs and exhibits that foster dialogue, particularly around racial cooperation and reconciliation," said Fannie Flono, trustee for The Charlotte Museum of History and chair of the Save Siloam School Project committee. "The museum also plans to give tours of the building and to make the space available as a community resource."

"The Siloam School was a place of learning born out of hope and hard work in the face adversity," said Susan B. Harden, Mecklenburg County commissioner for District 5. "When the building is restored, it will once again be a place for education, this time for all the people of Mecklenburg County. That seems like a fitting second chapter for the school, one we hope the school's founders would be proud of."

The school building currently sits on its original site on Mallard Highlands Drive, near the campus of UNC-Charlotte and behind an apartment complex. The apartments, as well as the old school, are owned by Tribute Companies.

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

About Rosenwald Schools and the Siloam School

In the early 20th 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 it 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 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 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 and follow the museum on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#).

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