

## Black History Month at Glen Echo Park

*Acknowledging our past, celebrating our present, and looking to the future.*

**GLEN ECHO, MD (February 1, 2025)** – From its [civil rights history](#) to the focus on diversity in [modern-day programming](#), the Glen Echo Park Partnership for Arts and Culture acknowledges and honors the importance of Black culture. The Partnership is excited to celebrate Black History Month and share the incredible work of Black visual and performing artists with the local community.

The Park View Gallery at Glen Echo Park presents a [virtual Artist Talk on Thursday, February 6, at 7:00pm featuring visual artist Marilyn Gates-Davis](#). In conjunction with Gates-Davis' current solo exhibition, [Pieces Of A Dream](#) (January 11- February 16), the talk will be moderated by [The Black Art Today Foundation](#). **Recipient of the 2024 Park View Artist Award at the 53rd Annual Labor Day Art Show**, Gates-Davis was selected for the award by juror Amy Kaslow, owner of Amy Kaslow Gallery, for her painting titled *DC Back in the Day*. In her Juror Statement, Kaslow reflected on *DC Back in the Day*: "What a tableau of the city! The artist captures Washington life at a certain place and time, with the soul of a native. We look forward to seeing an entire gallery filled with canvases that reach into families, neighborhoods, and beyond for a rich exhibition of Marilyn Gates-Davis' work."

Marilyn Gates-Davis is a life-long artist, having painted since she was a child. She typically paints intimate portraits of friends and family members, as well as iconic figures. **To counteract negative stereotypes, she chooses to depict the joy of the Black culture through her paintings.** Gates-Davis' work celebrates the grace, strength, dignity, and love of Black people, often using her art to share personal stories and childhood memories. "Through *Pieces Of A Dream*, I explore the interplay between cherished childhood memories, personal loss, and the symbolic language of dreams," said Gates-Davis. "My goal is to create pieces that invite viewers to reflect on their own subconscious worlds." Park View Gallery is open to the public Monday through Saturday, 10:00am – 6:00pm.

Currently on view in Photoworks Gallery, one of the Park's resident partners' galleries, [Colors of Life](#) (January 10 – March 2), **features the work of artists of The Exposure Group African Americans Photographers Association**. Now in its 8th year, *Colors of Life* celebrates the spectrum of members' photographic genres, subject matters, and life experiences inside and outside of the nation's capital. Photoworks Gallery is open to the public on Saturdays and Sundays from 1:00pm – 4:00pm. On Sunday, February 2, from 3:00pm – 5:00pm, **participating artists Sharon Farmer, Sandy Adams, and Marvin Jones will host an artist talk at Photoworks on the topic, "How Photographers Tell Stories."** From The Exposure Group: "A picture is worth a thousand words. Photographs can tell you a lot about the subject and photographer. Every photo tells a story, every picture immerses us in another world. We can only capture our own experiences, but we can also give other people an insight into those feelings and experiences."

Washington Conservatory of Music (WCM)—one of the Park's resident arts organizations and a nationally accredited music school—presents **a concert in honor of Black History Month** on Saturday, February 15, from

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2:00pm – 3:30pm at St. Columba Episcopal Church in Washington, DC. **Harmony & Heritage: A Black History Month Celebration of Love and Community** will honor the rich heritage and accomplishments of Black Americans and celebrate unity and diversity. In partnership with the Inspire Leadership School, WCM will showcase the power of story, weaving a musical narrative that shows our shared humanity. WCM faculty and community members will perform throughout the afternoon.

Washington Revels—another of the Park’s thirteen resident arts partners—will present several offsite performances by their [Jubilee Voices](#) ensemble. Founded in 2010, **Jubilee Voices is dedicated to preserving African American history and traditions through a unique blend of programming that infuses history with a cappella music, drama, spoken word, and dance.** On Saturday, February 8, from 10:00am - 2:00pm, Jubilee Voices will perform at Martha’s Table for the Opening Ceremonies of an annual [Frederick Douglass Birthday Celebration](#). On Sunday, February 16, at 2:00pm, Washington Revels Jubilee Voices and the Office of Historic Alexandria’s Division of African American History will celebrate African American music, history and culture in a **free concert at the Alexandria History Museum at The Lyceum**. Exploring the themes of freedom, resistance and resilience, from the Civil War through the present day, this concert will include traditional African American spirituals, poetry, dance, stories, and audience participation.

“As Black History Month honors the contributions and accomplishments of Black Americans in all walks of life, we particularly celebrate Black artists,” said Ama Mills-Robertson, Glen Echo Park Partnership’s Chief Program Officer. **“Their unique experiences and perspectives bring an incredible richness and depth to artistic and cultural endeavors – and often a searing truth-telling.** We are proud to present—through our galleries, concerts, and special events—Black artists who remind us of the power of art to educate, inspire, foster community well-being, and challenge established ways of thinking.” [glenechopark.org/blackhistorymonth](http://glenechopark.org/blackhistorymonth)

The Partnership is proud to emphasize diversity in its lineup of exhibitions in the Partnership Galleries throughout each year and has recently featured several accomplished **Black artists and collectives.** Exhibitions in recent years have included: *Stitch by Stitch* a collection of colorful collages of acrylic-painted canvas scraps and ceramic work created by Black and Brown boys from Washington DC’s Wards 7 and 8— specifically, program participants of the DC-based youth arts program Life Pieces To Masterpieces (LPTM); *God is Beautiful & Loves Beauty: Three Muslim Women Artists of the DMV*, an exhibition highlighting and celebrating Muslim diversity through the contributions of three local Muslim women artists, including [Dr. Diana Baird N'Diaye](#); and *WOVEN: Threads of Identity in Abstract Expressionism*, an exhibition featuring artists of the Black Art Today Foundation, showcasing the dynamic and powerful works of contemporary Black women artists who utilize the language of Abstract Expressionism.

**Glen Echo Park played a pivotal role in the Washington, DC area civil rights story.** From its beginnings as a Chautauqua in 1891 and later as a place of amusement in the 1890s, Glen Echo Park only advertised in newspapers with primarily White readership. At the time, the park was not strictly segregated, but visitation by Black individuals and families was not encouraged, and likely discouraged. Restrictions hardened in 1931 with the opening of the Crystal Pool. From that point through the 1950s, the privately-owned amusement park did not admit Black patrons. Thanks to a group of brave protesters—both Black and White—during the summer of 1960, the park was integrated the following year.

*For high resolution images of the civil rights protests at Glen Echo Amusement Park in 1960, contact [jcloud@glenechopark.org](mailto:jcloud@glenechopark.org).*

## **About Glen Echo Park and the Glen Echo Park Partnership for Arts and Culture**

Glen Echo Park is a vibrant arts and cultural center presenting festivals, exhibitions, and dances, as well as children's theater, music programs, nature programs, and art classes to more than 300,000 visitors each year. The Glen Echo Park Partnership for Arts and Culture, a nonprofit organization, oversees these and other activities, including preserving the historic structures in the Park. Glen Echo Park, part of the National Park Service, is located in Glen Echo, Maryland, six miles northwest of Georgetown along the scenic Potomac River palisades. For more information on Glen Echo Park, visit [glenechopark.org](http://glenechopark.org) or follow us on [Facebook](#), and [Instagram](#).

The Glen Echo Park Partnership for Arts and Culture is supported in part by the Maryland State Arts Council ([msac.org](http://msac.org)) and also by funding from the Montgomery County government and the Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County ([creativemoco.com](http://creativemoco.com)). All programs are produced in cooperation with the National Park Service and Montgomery County, Maryland.