

SAAACAM

San Antonio African American
Community Archive and Museum

PRESS RELEASE

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SAAACAM Unveils New Journaling Project

SAN ANTONIO -- As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to take first place in our collective consciousness, a local historical group has found a way to combine lessons in history with a bit of reflection. Turns out writing is the key.

The San Antonio African American Community Archive and Museum (SAAACAM) has announced a project, Telling My Story Through Journaling, that addresses therapy/self-care and the city's history and cultural heritage, said Project Coordinator and SAAACAM Board Officer, Mrs. Sallie Frederick.

Health professionals have recognized writing as a means of therapy, allowing the writer to relax. Journaling is also creative and a way to express one's self. For those who wish to indulge their interest in local African American history, this project is a way of preserving the heritage of this proud city, writing about memories of being a San Antonian, the community they know and people and places that make it so special.

"They may journal in journals, note pads, spirals, etc., with pens, markers, etc.," Frederick said. "They can scan the work or copy it to send in. Or they may do their journal

entries on a computer, tablet, etc. and upload it to the website. They may also record or video their entries. When they submit, each entry will be added separately. We are not asking for their entire journal. Just an entry they wish to share.”

Getting started is as simple as visiting <https://saaacam.org/tell-your-story/>. People can begin telling their stories right away.

“The project is open to adults and children,” Frederick said. “Even small children can draw pictures and have adults write captions.” She even suggested two potential writing prompts to get you started, such as: “I remember when…” or “My story of the COVID-19 Pandemic of 2020.”

“We also invite you to share your family history through journaling,” she said.

Frederick says SAAACAM hosts such events as monthly open houses and history harvests that are free and open to the general public, which encourage people to share their recollections and offer their oral history for posterity. These events are held several times throughout the year at SAAACAM’s physical at 430 N. Cherry Street at the historic Sutton Family Homestead, birthplace of legends like Percy Ellis Sutton, Owner of the Apollo Theatre in Harlem and G.J. Sutton, Texas State Representative. However, people do not have to wait for these to opportunities to resume in person before deciding to contribute to SAAACAM’s digital archive and museum. “The time is now as many find they are home more and looking for things to do,” Frederick added.

She personally appreciates the value of projects like journaling. “I journal, and I have done workshops on journaling for children and adults.”

She added: “As I was writing my stories about the pandemic, I thought this would be a great resource for parents to use at home with their children and for people in general as they cope with this unusual time we are living in.”

She said the project “will be on the website until all of the pandemic Stay at Home orders have been lifted and we get the open house events going again.”

SAAACAM hosts other activities such as its annual Fiesta Family Blues Festival, which has been moved to November 13, 2020. More about this event like how to purchase a ticket, sponsor the event or to purchase an official SAAACAM 2020 Fiesta Pin, is available at <https://saaacam.org/2020-fiesta-family-blues-festival/>.

SAAACAM President and Board Chair La Juana “LJ” Chambers Lawson welcomes people to learn more about the community-based digital archive and museum as it has recently been awarded Texas Digital Library’s Trailblazer award. She often expresses her pride in the work that SAAACAM has done and continues to do with the archive and museum’s constituents centered and at the forefront of all programming and strategic planning. Another great achievement, LJ remarked, was SAAACAM’s recent involvement, alongside community educators, activists and leaders nationally recognized and respected, in bringing an empowering African American Studies (AAS) ethnic course to high school students throughout the state of Texas. She shared that she is looking forward to engaging educators and academic institutions interested in fulfilling exploratory and participatory learning components of the AAS ethnic course with the active engagement of SAAACAM’s historians and teachers.

SAAACAM Executive Director Deborah Omowale Jarmon urges anyone interested in exploring San Antonio history to consider what SAAACAM has to offer.

“SAAACAM is uncovering the untold African American history that reaches back to the early days of the Spanish colonists and the Texas Republic,” she said. “Formed to collect, maintain, disseminate, and interpret authentic African American artifacts related to San Antonio history in a community-based digital archive, the organization’s goal is to reclaim San Antonio’s Black history.”

SAAACAM’s physical location is at the Sutton Family homestead, 430 N. Cherry Street. Private tours and events are available. It can host up to 50 people and can provide exhibit(s) and programming to suit all ages at your meeting location or at partner locations, accommodating up to 300 persons indoors and an unlimited number outdoors.

To learn more, visit SAAACAM online at: <https://saaacam.org/> or give SAAACAM a call at (210) 724-3350.