

Alton NAACP releases bi-annual report

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ALTON - Andy Hightower, president of the Alton branch of the NAACP has released their bi-annual report. Details can be found below.

1. The Alton Branch NAACP's 37th Annual Commemoration of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was held on January 15th at Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church. This year's theme was "Stand up and be Counted, The Best is yet to come.

Rev. Reginald A. Burrell, Tabernacle Missionary Baptist was the featured speaker. Program Expediter was the Rev. Sheila Goins of Morning Star Missionary Baptist Church. The event was attended by several community leaders as well as elected and appointed officials, including Teresa Haley, Illinois State NAACP President and Mayor of Alton, Brant Walker. Also in attendance were County Chairman, Kurt Prenzler, County Auditor, Rick Faccin, County Treasurer, Chris Slusser and County Board, Michael "Doc" Holliday.

The 2017-2018 Officers and Executive Committee were introduced to the community during the program. We were pleased to be graced with musical selections from the very talented, Riverbend Community Choir. Special thanks to Pastor, John Buford and Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church for hosting us.

2. The Alton Branch NAACP's 49th Annual Freedom Fund Dinner was held on May 6, 2017 at 6:00 pm at the Atrium/Best Western Premiere Hotel. The theme for this year's event was "Unity, in Times, Like These." Approximately 300 were in attendance and 79 program advertisements were purchased.

The program was emceed by Mr. Bobby Collins Sr. and the featured speaker was the Illinois State NAACP President, Teresa Haley. Mayor Brant Walker, Elder Marcus Harrison, Michael "Doc" Holliday, Abe Lee Barham and Pastor Diane Connors-Williams participated in the program.

This year we recognized "Unsung Heroes in our Community." Anne Johnson received the Educator Award, Reverend Donald Tolbert received the Community Inspiration Award, and YouthBuild received the Education Award. We will continue to recognize "Unsung Heroes in our Community" during the NAACP Freedom Fund Banquet.

Mr. James Gray was presented with an Appreciation Plaque for his 26 years of service as President of the Alton Branch NAACP. Mrs. Lisa Lovett, Mrs. Rosie Brown and Mrs. Lynne Marburger presented \$1,000 scholarships to Kiara Hardimon and Shantal Terrell. Argosy sponsored this year's scholarship. Alonzo Johnson delivered the Membership Appeal and Fred Walker provided the entertainment.

The 2017 Freedom Fund Banquet Committee, Chaired by Mrs. Lisa Lovett, and all of the Sub-committees did an outstanding job. Thanks to Abe Lee Barham, Rosetta Brown, Stephanie Elliot, Dorothy Hysten-Gray, Marcus Harrison, Charlotte Hightower, Michael "Doc" Holliday, Lisa Lovett, Antonio Stephens, Doris Williams and the Alton High School's Minority Excellence Students for a job well done.

3. The NAACP Back to School-Stay in School Program will be August 12, 2017 at the James Killion Park at Salu. Program will began at 10:00 am. Kristie Baumgartner and Rosetta Brown are co-chairing the event. We will continue partnering with Simmons, Hanley and Conroy as they have agreed to sponsor this year's program.

The program will continue distributing backpacks and school supplies to different grade levels. The grade levels are K-2, 3-5, 6- 8 and 9-12. Hot dogs, chips and drinks will be provided. Various informational booths will be set up throughout the park. As always, because of the generosity of the community, everything is free.

4. The NAACP is co-sponsoring the Future All-Stars Summer Basketball League. We are grateful that Alton Housing Authority, Alton Park and Recreation, Alton Police Department and Alton School District are co-sponsoring the league this year.

The program was developed for young men ages 16-up. Larry Smith is coordinating the program and Arlentina Thomas is the table official. Terry Mitchell is the head referee and works alongside Bobby Collins Jr., Rodney Raglin, Dana Taylor, Fred Chandler and Dewayne Williams.

5. The NAACP Annual Christmas Shopping Spree and Shoe Shopping will be held in December. The program cost approximately \$6,000 annually and we are hopeful that we can identify a sponsor in the near future.

Community Outreach:

1. Met with International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Local 649 in Alton and IBEW Local 309 in Collinsville. These meetings were held to discuss increasing the number of African Americans accepted into the Apprentice Program. Future meetings are planned. 1. Met with International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Local 649 in Alton and IBEW Local 309 in Collinsville. These meetings were held to discuss increasing the number of African Americans accepted into the Apprentice Program. Future meetings are planned.

2. Met with representatives from the Alton Salvation Army to discuss vacancies on their Board. After attending a recent Board meeting at the Salvation Army and meeting with

Board Chair, Kevin Botterbush we will work closer with the Salvation Army in their effort to meet the needs of the clients they serve.

3. Attended several meetings with the Madison County Leadership Council. This organization consists of African American representatives throughout the County. A major goal of the Madison County Leadership Council is to improve Police/Community relations throughout the County.

4. Continue to meet with Mayor Walker and his staff in our effort to achieve "Unity In Times Like These." We appreciate Kim Clark, Michael Haynes and Jake Simmons for their support during the past six months.

5. Met with Lance Callis and John Simmons to discuss issues and concerns of the Alton Branch NAACP. Continue to meet with James Gray, Ed Hightower and Doc Holliday on issues that impact the Alton community.

6. Continue to meet with Mark Cappel and his staff at the Alton School District. Mark and his staff has been very supportive. We look forward to working closely with the Alton School District as we continue our efforts of having a positive impact on the lives of community youth.

7. We are pleased to have Bobby Collins Sr. join us as Treasurer and Shirley Boyd, Debra Caldwell-Bradley and Charlotte Hightower join our Executive Committee.