



Third Annual Celebration of Black Voices

During the first Celebration of Black Voices in 2021, Upper School Dean of Students and Theatre Arts Director David Glover, Me-Chelle Burkhalter P '22, middle school science and math teacher, and Yolanda Johnson, lower school teacher, sought to expand traditional Black History Month celebrations to highlight and uplift the heritage, achievement, and rampant joy of Black culture in our community and beyond.

This year, Wellington featured the achievements and history of Black Americans with a special emphasis on

Black artists, authors, dancers, and performers who have captured the spirit and voice of the past while transforming how we, the audience, understand different perspectives and historical narratives.

Throughout the month, students from Little Jags to upper school took part in a variety of lessons and activities.

Kindergarten students read books on Black individuals who fought for equality and justice. Then, they participated in thoughtful discussions

PICTURED

Marla Tubuo '29 presented on legendary Black actors who have captured and elevated Black stories

on what they learned and how the people they studied made the world a better place. Students wrote thank you letters to Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King Jr., and Ruby Bridges.

The celebration also featured several opportunities for interdivisional learning. During lower school homeroom morning meetings, older students read books about Black artists to younger students. They also shared information on Black musicians, and lower school students particularly enjoyed Aretha Franklin's resonant voice.

Glover, Burkhalter, and Johnson even included the dining room in this year's Celebration of Black Voices with the help of Desiree Lajoie, food service director. On February 16, Lajoie and her team celebrated Black chefs, particularly celebrity chef Carla Hall, with a delicious and colorful main entree that included tri-colored carrots, chicken, and roasted potatoes.





The month-long celebration culminated with an in-person and livestreamed program that included student performances, question-and-answer sessions, and presentations.

Students in grades 6–11 gathered in the Blanchard Performing Arts Center (BPAC) to watch the engaging and informative celebration of Black musicians, artists, dancers, poets, actors, and writers. Seniors hosted 5th grade students in the Upper School Commons for a shared watch party.

The program poignantly kicked off with Maya Avery’s ’23 performance of “Lift Every Voice and Sing.” Often referred to as “The Black National Anthem,” the song’s lyrics were written by NAACP leader James Weldon Johnson in 1900 to celebrate President Abraham Lincoln’s birthday. The hymn was set to music by Johnson’s brother. Capturing the promise of freedom, the song was later used as a rallying cry during the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s.

In celebration of Black authors, the event featured two Wellington community authors – Terreece Clarke P ’27 and Dia Mixon, middle and upper school Spanish. Clarke and Mixon


answered questions about how they became writers, the writing process, and their favorite authors.

Clarke, a writer, journalist, and best-selling author, published her first book when she could not find a potty-training book with a main character that looked like her daughter. So, she decided to author that book herself. “Kids of color deserve to see themselves in joyous and everyday things,” said Clarke. The process of working with a publisher was challenging, so Clarke self-published “Olivia’s Potty Adventures!”

Mixon, a passionate Spanish teacher, enjoys using children’s books for beginner Spanish students because of their accessibility. However, she noticed a lack of bilingual picture books. The birth of her son produced an urgency to write a book that reflected his background and heritage. Working independently and contracting her own editors and illustrators, Mixon self-published her first book, “One Whole Me.”

The program also included a monologue performed by David Glover and a solo performance by Columbus-based dancer and choreographer Myles Lawson.

Following the formal program, students attended workshops on dance, art, music, and more.

Through curriculum, programming, and events, the third Celebration of Black Voices encouraged students to explore and appreciate Black artistry in all its forms. 

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Top: Kindergarten students wrote thank you letters to Martin Luther King Jr., Ruby Bridges, and Rosa Parks

Below: Myles Lawson, Dia Mixon, Renee Hutchins ’23, Terreece Clarke P ’27, and David Clarke ’27

