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EMCC hosts Black History Month event

Submitted by Glenn Gullickson on Wed, 02/22/2017 - 12:00am

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 with the theme to Change Share

Described as a “learning day with fun cultural activities,” the communitywide festival will be from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday at Ceremonial Plaza at Estrella Mountain Community College, 3000 N. Dysart Road, Avondale.

The event’s theme grew out of the change in leadership as the presidency transitioned from Barack Obama, the nation’s first black president, to Donald Trump, according to event organizer Linda Cutright.

While the change has caused some backlash from the African-American community, Cutright said it’s important to use change to make things better.

“I want the community to come together,” she said. “At the conclusion of the event, I want people to feel positive about change.”

During the event, college students will speak about responding to change, she said.

Cutright, who works as an adviser at EMCC, said she helped establish Black History Month celebrations in Avondale in 1988.

The festival, which attracts 500 to 700 people, moved to EMCC 18 years ago, with the goal of promoting African-American culture, contributions and community, Cutright said.

“The event helps our young people feel good about themselves,” she said.

Student singers will kick off the event with the national anthem and “Lift Every Voice and Sing,” often referred to as the black national anthem.

A local minister will also perform a blessing, and speakers include Avondale Mayor Kenneth Weise and EMCC officials.

Entertainment throughout the day will be headlined by the Aaron Nelson Band, a Valley-based variety band.

Also performing will be gospel, hip-hop, jazz and Motown-style musicians.

Additional entertainment includes a poetry reading, steel drumming, an appearance by a praise team, an exhibition of Brazilian martial arts and activities for children.

Food vendors will offer barbecue, a fish fry, Indian fry bread and Jamaican jerk chicken.

To observe EMCC’s 25th anniversary, the first 100 people at the festival will get free hot dogs or hot links.

High schools have been invited to participate, which Cutright said serves as a recruitment tool for the college.

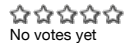
The festival is organized by the Southwest Black History Committee, with a group of 10 to 15 people, including former educators and students, Cutright said.

For information, call 623-935-8827.

Glenn Gullickson can be reached at ggullickson@westvalleyview.com (<mailto:ggullickson@westvalleyview.com>).



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