



WASHINGTON D.C. NEWS

National Portrait Gallery holds inaugural “Our Struggle for Justice: A Day of Action” event

by Reginald Williams
 January 28, 2023



NaKeesha Ceran is the associate director for Teaching for Change, a non-profit organization dedicated to supporting educators and students in pre-kindergarten through grade 12. (Courtesy Photo)

By Reginald Williams,  
Special to the AFRO

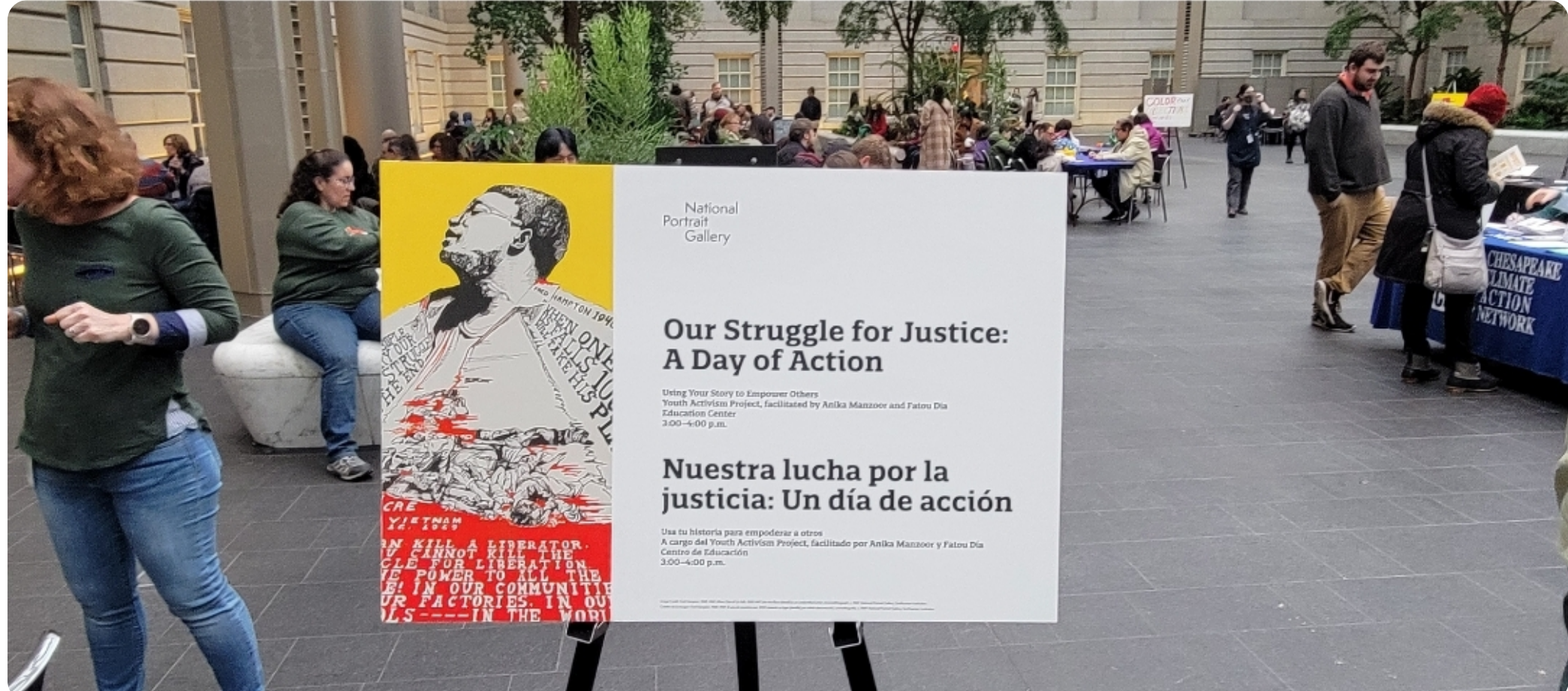
A cadre of social justice organizations recently joined forces to present the inaugural “Our Struggle for Justice: A Day of Action” at the National Portrait Gallery.

According to the National Portrait Gallery, “Our Struggle for Justice is a digital collaboration between the National Portrait Gallery and Capital One that explores activism and social justice through biography.”

The three-hour event included a “Dress for Success” session, a women’s empowerment round table, and a criminal justice reform letter-writing workshop facilitated by Jason D. Fabrikant, interim director of American University’s School of Public Affairs (SPA) Leadership Program and senior professional lecturer with SPA Leadership students. The day also included tours of the Struggle for Justice Gallery and activities meant to encourage youth activism.

Our Struggle for Justice began as a social media campaign initiative in February 2021, using Instagram and Twitter to encourage activism. Members of the collective used the social media platforms to amplify their voices by telling their stories.

“We wanted to encourage activism and tell the story of activism through portraiture,” explained Irina Rubenstein, education specialist at the Portrait Gallery. “We have an exhibition called The Struggle for Justice, and it features leaders of the civil rights movement—different leaders of justice and social justice causes. We wanted to spark activism among young people, but really amongst everyone.”



“Our Struggle for Justice: A Day of Action,” was recently held at the National Portrait Gallery on Jan 22. (Courtesy Photo)

Sponsored by Capital One, the Day of Action partnered with nine organizations, including Teaching for Change, a pre-kindergarten through 12th-grade educational non-profit organization based in the District. One of their programs, D.C. Area Educators for Social Justice, supports and provides resources for those educators teaching outside the traditional textbook.

“Here in the D.C. area, we facilitate working groups in early childhood, elementary, and middle and high school groups, bringing educators from D.C., Maryland, and Virginia together to connect on curriculum,” explained NaKeesha Ceran, associate director for Teaching for Change. “We need people to support educators who won’t back down from teaching (the) truth.”

Art played a substantial role in the overall event.

“Art is activism. Portraiture is powerful. And knowledge is empowerment,” Rubenstein explained. The event, emceed by The HEALACIST HipHopMomma Princess Best, included art pop-ups with local artists and music provided by DJ Adrian Loving.

Reginald Williams, the author of “A Marginalized Voice: Devalued, Dismissed, Disenfranchised & Demonized” writes on Black men and Holistic Health concerns. Please email bookreggie@reginaldwilliams.org or visit amvonlinestore.com for more information.

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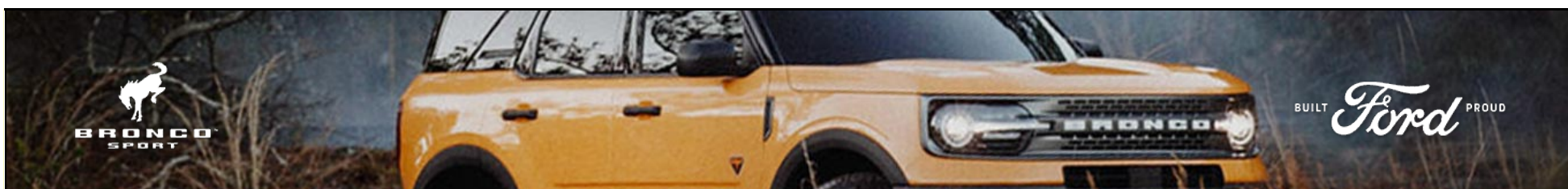
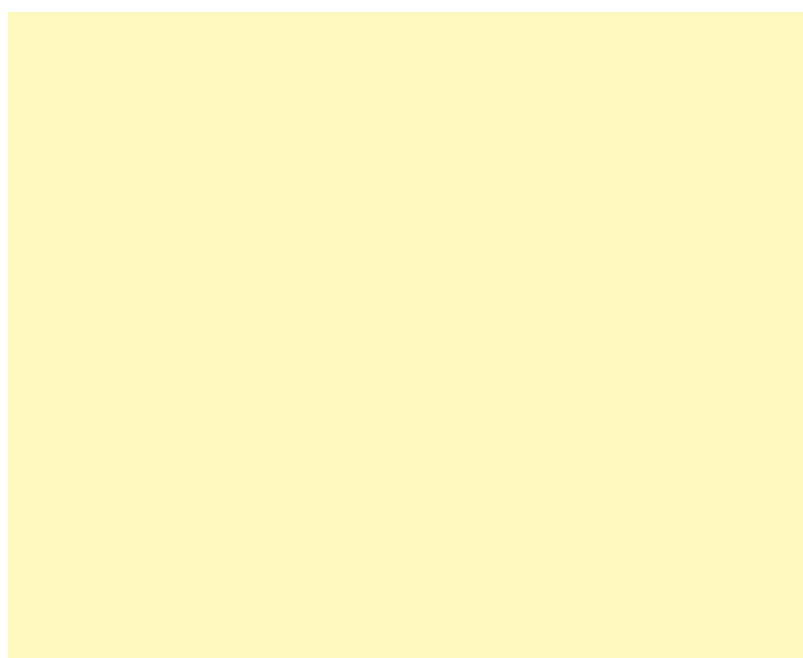
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The AFRO knows what it’s like to endure challenging times. John H. Murphy, Sr., a former enslaved man founded the AFRO in 1892 with \$200 from his wife, Martha Howard Murphy. Together they created a platform to offer images and stories of hope to advance their community. The AFRO provides readers with good news about the Black community not otherwise found.

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