MUSEUM OF BOULDER

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Leading the curriculum work at the BOE is Board president, Terri Stroh, who has a background in museum education. She said the plan is to focus on curriculum for high school and fourth grade, with fourth grade as the year students learn Colorado history.

“We want all students to say Black history is Colorado history,” she said. “We want students to appreciate it as part of a bigger history.”

The museum recently held a tour of its current VOCES VIVAS exhibit—recognizing the same exhibit space that will be used for the Proclaiming Black History exhibit—followed by an introductory curriculum meeting for Boulder Valley School District representatives. Also joining the meeting were other community partners, including the Carnegie Library.

“I hope all you will see yourselves and your students reflected in this exhibit,” Reed said as she talked about the project.

Boulder Valley Equity Coordinator Amy Nelson outlined the museum to include student voices, along with sharing the work of local organizations with the museum. The Denver Council and the Centaurus staff were excited and pushed for a new exhibit.

Boulder Valley plans to offer the ethnic studies classes at Centaurus in the spring. The students asked for an exhibit that represents different identities, histories, and cultures, including LGQI perspectives, Reed said. High also offers an elective this year for a class that focuses on the trans-Atlantic slave trade and its impact on modern day race relations.

“[Part of the] students’ [stature] is that they need representation, because they have not been seen before,” Nelson said. “They want to be heard.”

She added that students also want to know that they belong and are successful.

Oral histories to be featured

Emily Zinn, the museum’s education director and Proclaiming Black History project manager, said the museum spent a year listening to community members to see if they, too, would be willing to provide resources to the community to tell their own stories.

“We want to elevate their voices in an institutional level.”

For the project, the museum includes the exhibits, the Carnegie Library, the NAACP Boulder County, the University of Colorado Boulder, Second Baptist Church and local artists and entrepreneurs.

Along with project staff members, there’s a seven-person advisory council. Undergraduate and graduate students also will assist with the project.

To supplement the grant, the museum is looking to attract additional funds. "Our students, they need this. It affects them and has for a really long time,” said Ricks.

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As a high school freshman, one part of the museum’s focus is highlighting people who lived in Lafayette. The museum recently opened the new Voces Vivias exhibit — currently on exhibit — which documented and collected oral histories by the museum.

One person she’s really proud of is the first Black mayor of Boulder, Penfield Jr. He also was part of the museum's exhibit.

As a high school freshman, Robinson said, “for the first time, we have the opportunity to tell our stories comprehensively.”

Robinson, the project’s oral history liaison and NAACP Boulder County representative, said she’s most excited about recording oral histories for the project, with a list of 135 possible candidates and volunteers. "We’re trying to find as many as we can to give us a different lens.”

The museum also hired an educational coordinator, said Ricks, to help community members get involved.

“[We were born here],” she said. “We lived here. We worked here. We died here.”

One person she’s really proud of is Black astronaut Jessica Watkins, a former student who worked here. Watkins is one of the first Black women in space.

“This was a really wonderful experience,” she said. “I got to incorporate the community's local history. She highlighted many of the stories that were shared, forgotten or not shared by elders who lived through that time. She highlighted the pain and the role of the community."}

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