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JoAnn Bridges Academy Celebrates African American Women in US History

JoAnn Bridges Academy students once again demonstrated their flair for performing and producing. Their most recent creative success centered around American history with emphasis on the contributions of African American women. The Black History Program truly was an Oscar-worthy event.

Throughout the month of February, students participated in learning activities about these women of color. Students read, discussed, completed biographies, and viewed videos about these extraordinary trailblazers from past and present. Using their new knowledge, students designed colorful backdrops and choreographed a production highlighting the women's lives.

The program was performed for JBA parents, mentors, therapists, DJJ representative, and ROP staff. Students opened with a prayer, followed by welcome and pledge. One young woman offered a reading of "What Black History Means to Me" explaining Black History's meaning for all people and explaining the importance of reflecting upon and remembering the many African American women who have shaped modern America.

Spiritual songs and soul stirring praise dances were performed to honor and show respect for the trailblazers' tremendous work, determination and leadership exhibited during extraordinarily difficult times. Students memorized and shared poems such as "Phenomenal Woman" and "I Rise" by Maya Angelou, while giving improv performances during the recitations.

Joann Bridges Academy students closed the program with a segment called JBA Presents: The African American Women Wax Museum. During this part, students became still-life wax figures representing women from history who would come to life with a hand clap. Each wax figure took a turn stepping forward and sharing information about herself. JBA's African American Wax Museum included Dorothy West, American novelist; Nikki Giovanni, poet; Maya Angelou, writer and activist; Lorraine Hansberry, playwright; Katherine Johnson, NASA mathematician; Alice Walker, novelist and Pulitzer Prize winner; Dorothy Vaughan, mathematician and recipient of Congressional Gold Medal; Zora Neale Hurston, anthropologist and filmmaker; Marie Maynard Daly, biochemist; and Mildred Taylor, novelist and Newberry Award winner.
