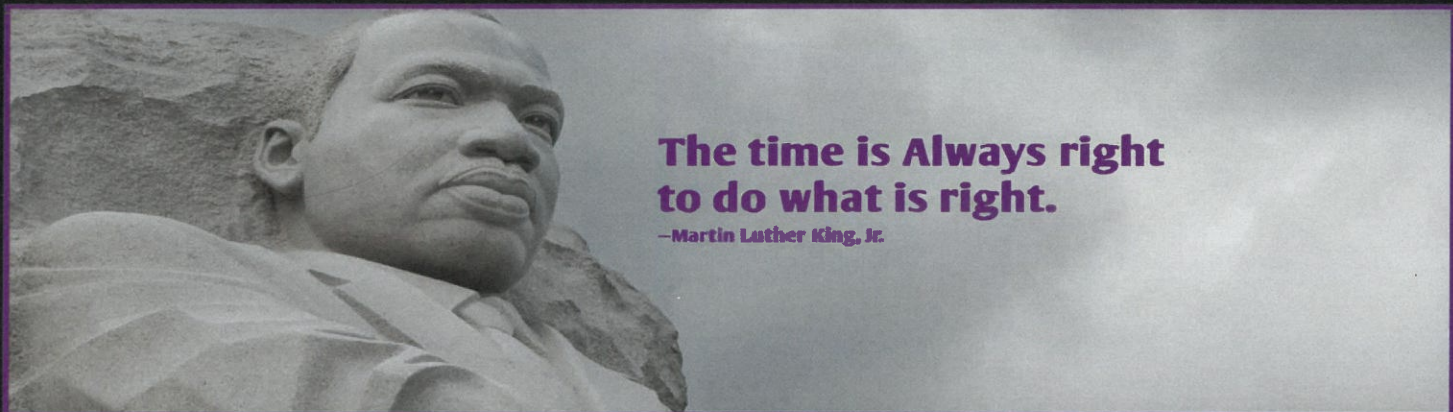


45TH *Annual Celebration*



**The time is Always right
to do what is right.**
—Martin Luther King, Jr.

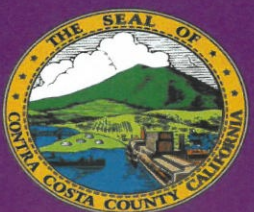
The Future Belongs to

ALL Together

Empathy Kindness
Inclusion Respect
Connection Equity
Understanding Integrity

Belonging Empowerment
Respect

Tuesday
January 17, 2023
11:00 AM



1025 Escobar Street,
1st floor
Martinez, CA 94553

Welcome and Introduction

John Gioia
Board Chair

Federal D. Glover
Vice-Chair

Entertainment

Grown Women Dance Collective

Liberty High School Chamber Singers & Diva Quartet

Spoken Word Performers:

Camille Miller

TJ Sykes

Keynote Speaker

Honorable Tony Thurmond

California State Superintendent of Public Instruction

Humanitarian of the Year Awards

2023 Humanitarian Cheryl Sudduth

2023 Student Humanitarian Ava Freeman

Closing Comments

Lori A. Cruz

MLK Committee Chair

Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors

District 1

John Gioia
Chair

District 5

Federal D. Glover
Vice-Chair

District 2

Candace Andersen

District 3

Diane Burgis

District 4

Ken Carlson

2022 Committee Members

Colleen Awad

Andrea Bivens

Manny Bowlby

Lisa Chow

Lori A. Cruz, Chair

Lissette Davis

Gayle Israel

T'ni Jackson

Glenn Kimball

Vincent Manuel

Jennifer Quallick

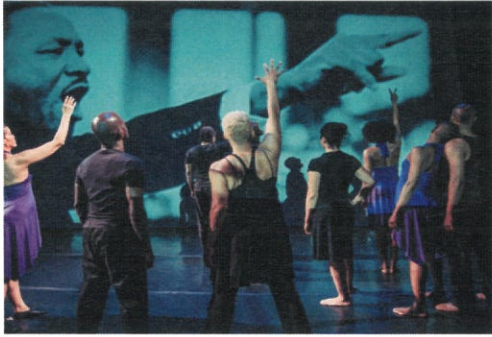
Edgar J. Rosales

Chris Verdugo

Derrick West

Antoine Wilson

Shannon Winston



GROWN WOMEN DANCE COLLECTIVE

Grown Women Dance Collective, established in 2009, creates cross-cultural, intergenerational, and cross-class connections by encouraging dialogue, empowering thought and action, and building cross-racial

alliances through concert dance and wellness programs. The group is comprised of retired dancers from world renowned companies, including Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Cleo Parker Robinson, and Dance Theatre of Harlem. The performances challenge stereotypes and create artwork that is relevant, accessible, and inspiring to diverse and under-resourced audiences.



LIBERTY HIGH SCHOOL

Liberty High School Chamber Singers hails from Liberty High School in Brentwood and is led by Director Laura Carreon (lower right). The Liberty High School Choral Department upholds a legacy of excellent musical



performance and a welcoming environment, placing them among the top programs in the state. This achievement is attributable to the helpful parents, teachers, and community as well as the disciplined pupils and welcoming, well-organized



learning environment. Along with teaching the fundamentals of vocal music, music theory, and vocal production, singing in a choir also instills discipline, cooperation, life skills, professionalism, and an appreciation for all kinds of art and music.

Diva Quartet is also from Liberty High School. The Diva Quartet is made up of Emma Eaton, Adamaris Lopez, Ella Bracken, and Victoria Blandon.

CAMILLE MILLER

Camille Miller is a poet, storyteller, and two-time District Champion Toastmaster. She has been a featured poet at Valona Deli, Frank Bette Center for the Arts, First Tuesday Poetry and Poetry Express. As a featured storyteller, Camille has shared her engaging stories with audiences at Delta Word Weavers, Contra Costa Tale Spinners, Storytellers Association of California, churches, and detention centers. It has been said that her whacky expressions and quick wit have brought joy to those around her. Camille spends her days peeking in bushes and climbing over clouds in the endless pursuit of the next great story.



TJ SYKES

TJ Sykes is a Richmond CA native. He is a poet, author and entrepreneur. He published his first book entitled “*Section 8*” in 2018. He started a candied walnut business by the name of Divine Treats in 2020 and started his guided meditation journey in 2021. TJ has worked with systems impacted youth in Vallejo, Richmond and Oakland.

2023 MLK Student Humanitarian AVA FREEMAN



Ava Freeman is a senior at Acalanes High School in Lafayette, CA where she is president of her school's Black Student Union, as well as a head of the Diversity Board in student government. Ava is a voice of change regarding equity work, and consistently pushes for broader education beyond the Eurocentric narrative and argues for broader education across cultures. In BSU, she involved nearly all the Black students at her school with engaging meetings while also organizing district events to foster community. Furthermore, during her time in high school Ava spoke at district-wide school board meetings to pressure administration to increase equity lessons and expand culturally affirming education. Also, Ava hosted multiple guest speaker events with activist and rower, Arshay Cooper, while leading the organizational efforts to expand the annual summit for Black students in the Acalanes School District. On the Diversity Board, she is instrumental in planning inclusion initiatives like Black History Month, Latinx Heritage Month, while building unity across cultures. In addition, Ava is a leader in district-wide equity lessons that have reached students across the Lamorinda area. Beyond Acalanes, she spent time educating elementary and middle school students to help build the tools to discuss race and equity. Lastly, Ava volunteers in her community, from tutoring to bake sales. In her free time, Ava likes to paint, read, exercise, and spend time with family and friends.

2023 MLK Humanitarian CHERLY SUDDUTH



Mamá. Activist. Mentor. Community Leader. Organizer. disAbilities Rights Advocate. Justice Guerrera/Justice Warrior. Sudduth. Ms. Sudduth is a Senior Government Contracts & Compliance Professional, International Negotiator, Mediator, and Compliance Officer, with nearly 30 years of business and legal experience, serving in a broad array of senior management roles in the commercial, private & public sectors. A University of Illinois alum (Cellular & Molecular Biology and Biochemistry), she is a committed environmental scientist. Serving as an elected Director on the West County Wastewater District Board since 2018, she currently serves as Board President and as (Acting) Chair of the affiliated West County Agency (City of Richmond joint partnership). Ms. Sudduth has written, supported and advanced legislation that has changed the lives of working class and impoverished people in our region and throughout the state, travelling regularly to Sacramento & Washington D.C. to advocate passage of bills that promote equity and access to just educational systems, economic dignity, healthcare benefits, a values-based budget, second-chances, and true environmental justice. As a member of Climate Leaders, 350 Bay Area & 350 Contra Costa & several other environmental groups, including a community monitoring group for the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD), she strongly advocated for and helped pass the nation's most health-protective air regulations & greenhouse gas reduction measures. Additionally, her diligence in seeking solutions to community issues has shown successful direct political and policy advocacy for the unseen, the unheard, the uncounted...by building coalitions, steering committees, and working with advocacy groups. Ms. Sudduth has received numerous awards and honors for her community work including her unwavering commitment to environmental justice and empowerment of our communities and volunteers regularly for Women in STEM, Girls in Science, fundraising activities benefiting Sickle Cell Anemia research, and meets regularly with State and Federal Legislators as a community advisor to discuss regional, state and national issues and provide viable frontline solutions from the voices of our community. Ms. Sudduth works to empower our young people through mentoring and coaching 2200+ youth over 25+ years.



THE HONORABLE TONY THURMOND

Tony Thurmond was sworn in as the 28th California State Superintendent of Public Instruction in January 2019 and was re-elected in 2022 to his second term. He is the first Afro-Latino and the second African-American to serve as California's Superintendent of Public Instruction since the position was established in 1851.

Superintendent Thurmond is an educator, social worker, and public school parent who has served the people of California for more than 15 years in elected office and has strong Contra Costa roots. Previously, he served on the Richmond City Council, West Contra Costa Unified School Board, and in the California State Assembly representing parts of Alameda and Contra Costa counties. He volunteered at the RYSE Youth Center in Richmond while on the school board and got his start in community service in our County by serving on the Contra Costa Family and Children's Trust Committee as an appointee of Supervisor Gioia.

Like many of California's public school students, Superintendent Thurmond came from humble beginnings. His mother was an immigrant from Panama who came to San Jose, California, to be a teacher. His father was a soldier who didn't return to his family after the Vietnam War. Thurmond met his father for the first time when he was an adult. After his mother died when he was six, Thurmond and his brother were raised by a cousin who they had never met.

Superintendent Thurmond's family relied on public assistance programs and great public schools to get out of poverty, and public school education allowed him to attend Temple University, where he became student body president. He went on to earn dual master's degrees in Law and Social Policy, and in Social Work from Bryn Mawr College and began a career dedicated to service.

Much of Superintendent Thurmond's social service work has focused on improving the services provided to foster youth and directing programs that provide job training to at-risk youth. He also led programs to provide help for individuals with developmental disabilities. He has 12 years of direct experience in education, teaching life skills classes, after-school programs, and career training.

Over the course of Thurmond's tenure since being sworn in as State Superintendent, he has championed and created many historic initiatives on behalf of California's students.

Superintendent Thurmond lives in Richmond, where he raised his two daughters who both attended local public schools. They are his inspiration and a constant reminder about the promise of our neighborhood schools and the strong future that every child deserves.

Past Recipients of the Humanitarian of the Year Award

2022—Gigi Crowder
2021—Velma Wilson
2020—Tamisha Torres-Walker
2019—Reverend Donnell R. Jones
2018—Phil Arnold
2017—James Noe
2016—Terri Porter
2015—Bishop Edwina Perez-Santiago
2014—Sister Ann Weltz
2013—Doug Stewart
2012—Lorraine Sain
2011—Laura Johnson

Past Recipients of the Student Humanitarian of the Year Award

2022—Kaia Morgan
2021—Kimyatta Newby
2020—Christina Mazzi
2019—Yassna Ahmadi
2018—Sienna Camille Terry
2017—Paige Godvin
2016—Davis Bullock
2015—Tyler Page
2014—Anand Kannappan
2013—Casey Leonard
2012—Andrew Gonzales
2011—Mario Alvarado

"Love is the only force capable of transforming an enemy into a friend."—*Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.*

SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR SUPPORTERS

County Administrator's Office
Office of Communications & Media and Contra Costa TV

