

# Join Us Jan. 27 to Honor Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. In Event: Creating Dr. King's Beloved Community Through Art & Music

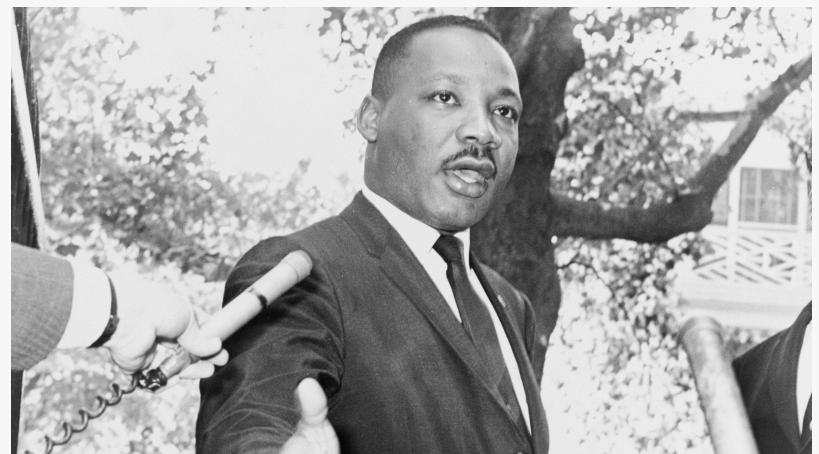
*Livestream on 1/27 at 5:30 PM ET: Creating Dr. King's Beloved Community Through Art & Music will be at Paul Robeson House & Museum with UPenn's MLK Symposium.*

PHILADELPHIA, PA, UNITED STATES, January 16, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Barbara and Edward Netter Center for Community Partnerships, in partnership with the [Paul Robeson House & Museum](#), will present [Creating Dr. King's Beloved Community Through Art & Music](#), a special public program coordinated with the University of Pennsylvania's Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Commemorative Symposium on Social Change. The evening brings together voices in art, music, and community reflection to honor the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

**“**

This event honors Dr. King by bringing people together to share moments of reflection and unity through creative expressions.”

*Dr. Valerie Dorsey Allen,  
University of Pennsylvania*



Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. at a press conference at Gracie Mansion, New York City, 1964, whose vision of the Beloved Community informs the dialogue explored by Creative Repute and fellow panelists during the livestreamed event. Photo by Dick DeMarsico.

Honor with us. On Tuesday evening, from 5:30 to 7:30 PM ET, the public is invited to watch this special event online, in real time. A limited in-person audience will gather at the Paul Robeson House & Museum, and the livestream ensures this meaningful conversation can be experienced broadly in recognition of its cultural and civic importance.

Register to watch online on January 27, at 5:30 PM ET: <https://tinyurl.com/mlk-beloved-community>

Through conversation, music, and cultural expression, the evening will highlight how art and

music remain at the forefront of Dr. King's vision of the Beloved Community, rooted in connection, care, and shared responsibility.

### Art, Culture, and Business in Conversation

This year's program brings culture and creativity into conversation, revealing how storytelling, design, music, and the practice of art shape communities.

Among the featured panelists is [Nile Livingston, Founder and CEO of Creative Repute](#), a Philadelphia-based creative strategy and design firm that helps organizations express values, identity, and purpose through meaningful visual and digital work, including website development. Livingston joins fellow panelists to explore how creativity functions as both expression and responsibility, shaping how organizations, institutions, and communities approach understanding of various topics and common ground.

Joining the conversation is Ryoko Ohara, a Board Certified Music Therapist and Licensed Professional Counselor, whose work bridges psychology, music, and mindfulness. With years of experience supporting individuals and groups through creative therapeutic practices, Ohara brings insight into how music fosters emotional regulation, connection, and well-being.

Also featured is Karen Smith, a Philadelphia-based percussionist, playwright, director, producer, and poet, and a member of the American Federation of Musicians Local 77. Known for her community-centered work, Smith's practice captures rhythm in the lived experiences of people and place, using percussion and performance to create shared moments of expression, healing, and collective reflection.

Together, the three panelists offer distinct yet complementary perspectives, demonstrating how creativity, across multiple disciplines, serves the community as an art of expression and a



Youth and educators at the Barbara and Edward Netter Center for Community Partnerships engaged in shared learning, reflecting themes of connection, care, and responsibility.



Community leaders of University of Pennsylvania's Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. gathered in conversation, reflecting on creativity and civic responsibility.

responsibility in shaping shared experiences.

## Event Details

Date & Time: Tuesday, January 27, 2026, from 5:30-7:30 PM ET

Location: Paul Robeson House & Museum, 4949-4951 Walnut Street, Philadelphia, PA 19139

## Program Participants & Affiliations

### Welcome

- Ira Harkavy, Founder and Director, Barbara and Edward Netter Center for Community Partnerships, University of Pennsylvania, West Philadelphia Cultural Alliance Board Chair
- Azsherae Gary, Interim Executive Director, West Philadelphia Cultural Alliance/ Paul Robeson House & Museum
- Dr. Valerie Dorsey Allen, LSW, DSW, Director, African American Resource Center, University of Pennsylvania

### Moderator

- Herman Beavers, Professor of English and Africana Studies, University of Pennsylvania

### Panelists

- Nile Livingston, Founder and CEO of Creative Repute
- Ryoko Ohara, MT-BC, LPC, Board Certified Music Therapist and Licensed Professional Counselor
- Karen Smith, Percussionist, Playwright, Director, Producer, and Poet; Member, AFM Local 77

### Opening Prayer

- Joe Nock, Chaplain, Philadelphia Police Department; Pastor, Second Antioch Baptist Church

### Drum Performance

- Zumbi Soweto, Tyehimba African Drum Ensemble



Nile Livingston of Creative Repute engages in creative discussion with team member Tara Rose O'Connor, reflecting how dialogue and collaboration shape the firm's design and leadership work.



The Paul Robeson House & Museum in West Philadelphia, host site for Creating Dr. King's Beloved Community Through Art & Music. Photo by G. Widman for Visit Philadelphia®.

## Special Presentation

- K. Rose Samuel, Founder and Director, The Justice-oriented Youth (JoY) Education Lab, Drexel University

## Closing Remarks

- Isaiah Walker, Executive Director, YESPhilly, West Philadelphia Cultural Alliance Board Member

## The Significance of This Gathering

Rooted in a nationally recognized symposium and set within a place rich with cultural history, Creating Dr. King's Beloved Community Through Art & Music brings the past and present into conversation. Held at the Paul Robeson House & Museum, the evening draws inspiration from Robeson's life as an artist and humanitarian, reminding us how creative expression continues to connect people across communities.

By incorporating perspectives from creative organizations, scholars, artists, and community leaders, the program demonstrates how creativity continues to shape civic life, institutional worth, and collective care, extending Dr. King's vision into the present day.

## Media Invitation & Coverage Coordination

Members of the media are warmly invited to request coverage access in advance to attend the event in person on a limited basis or to engage with the event through the live online broadcast. The program is designed to support thoughtful coverage across print, digital, broadcast, and cultural media platforms.

Coverage opportunities may include:

- Coordinated on-site photography, audio, and video recording
- Written and recorded interviews with panelists and organizers
- Coverage of live musical performances and ceremonial elements
- Feature stories and post-event recaps highlighting the intersection of art, culture, and community leadership

All media attendance, interviews, and recording requests should be coordinated ahead of time to ensure appropriate availability, access, and support.

## Media & Press Inquiries:

- Isabel Sampson-Mapp, Associate Director, Barbara and Edward Netter Center for Community Partnerships, University of Pennsylvania

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- Azsherae Gary, West Philadelphia Cultural Alliance/Paul Robeson House & Museum

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## About the Organizations

The West Philadelphia Cultural Alliance (WPCA) manages the Paul Robeson House & Museum. The WPCA, founded in 1984, serves as an arts and cultural institution that brings together artists, visitors, and organizations nationally and internationally by fostering partnerships, visibility, and community-centered programming. The Paul Robeson House & Museum serves as a cultural anchor in West Philadelphia, preserving and advancing the legacy of Paul Robeson, an artist, scholar, athlete, lawyer, and humanitarian whose work demonstrated the unifying power of culture and voice.

The Barbara and Edward Netter Center for Community Partnerships strengthens university-community collaboration through education, civic engagement, and shared learning, fostering meaningful partnerships across Philadelphia and beyond.

Creative Repute is a design, strategy, and web agency that helps organizations articulate identity, purpose, and values through visual storytelling, digital experiences, and thoughtful design.

The University of Pennsylvania's Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Commemorative Symposium on Social Change, coordinated by the African American Resource Center, convenes scholars, artists, and community leaders to honor Dr. King's vision through dialogue, reflection, and cultural expression.

#### About the Voices & Disciplines Represented

Creating Dr. King's Beloved Community Through Art & Music brings together leaders whose work spans education, creative business, independent arts, music therapy, faith leadership, and community-based research. Together, these voices reflect a cross-sector approach to Dr. King's vision of the Beloved Community, one that honors legacy while engaging contemporary practice across art, education, business, and civic life.

#### Media Contact

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