

Martha's Vineyard Museum Hosts A Conversation With The Cottagers

Special Panel Discussion Celebrates The Cottagers' 70 Year Legacy of Service

OAK BLUFFS, MA, UNITED STATES, June 4, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- As part of its 70th Anniversary Celebration and in anticipation of the grand reopening and ribbon cutting of its historic headquarters, Cottagers' Corner, The Cottagers, Inc. will partner with the

Martha's Vineyard Museum to present "100 Black Women Serving the Vineyard for 70 Years," a special panel discussion exploring the organization's remarkable history, enduring values, and lasting impact on the Martha's Vineyard community. The event will take place on Thursday, June 11, 2026, from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at the Martha's Vineyard Museum.



The Cottagers, Incorporated Celebrate A Proud Heritage

Moderated by Cottager Linda Moffat, the conversation will feature members of The Cottagers reflecting on the organization's origins, evolution, and the legacy it continues to build through service, philanthropy, cultural preservation, and community engagement.

Founded in 1956 by Thelma Garland Smith and a small group of African American female homeowners on Martha's Vineyard, the organization was born from a moment that transformed criticism into purpose. When Smith overheard a disparaging remark questioning the contributions of Black summer residents to Island life, she and a handful of friends responded not with resentment, but with resolve. Viewing the criticism as a call to action, they set out to make a meaningful difference in the community—launching a legacy of service and leadership that continues seventy years later.

Each woman contributed \$10, and together they presented a \$300 donation to Martha's Vineyard Hospital. That simple act of generosity became the foundation of what would grow into one of the Island's most enduring philanthropic organizations. For seventy years, The Cottagers have remained committed to their mission of promoting cultural pride while supporting charitable, educational, and community service projects that improve the quality of life throughout Martha's Vineyard.

Today, The Cottagers is an organization of 100 African American women whose influence can be felt across the Island. Through charitable giving, scholarships, community outreach, and children's initiatives, the organization has invested in opportunities that strengthen individuals, families, and neighborhoods. Its fundraising efforts have supported more than 40 nonprofit organizations and community causes focused on education, healthcare, housing, food security, public safety, arts and culture, and social services.

The panel discussion will also highlight the significance of Cottagers' Corner, the organization's iconic 154-year-old headquarters located at 57 Pequot Avenue in Oak Bluffs. Once serving as the town's fire station, town hall, and local jail, the building became home to The Cottagers in 1968 and has since served as a beloved community hub. Following an extensive restoration, the building will officially reopen on June 24, 2026, marking a major milestone in both the organization's history and its future.

"Seventy years ago, a small group of women transformed a criticism into a commitment to serve," said Patricia R. Bush, current president of the organization. "The panel's conversation is an opportunity to reflect on the women who built this organization, the lives that have been touched through its work, and the responsibility we share to carry that legacy forward. As we prepare to reopen Cottagers' Corner, we celebrate not only our history, but the future impact we hope to make together."

The event will take place just days before Juneteenth and will offer attendees an opportunity to connect with a living history of resilience, leadership, generosity, and collective action. Through historical insights, personal stories, and reflections, the discussion will illuminate how generations of women working together have helped strengthen Martha's Vineyard and create opportunities for others.

The Cottagers' longstanding partnerships with organizations such as Harbor Homes, Island Grown Initiative, Martha's Vineyard Hospital, Habitat for Humanity, the Martha's Vineyard Museum, local schools, and numerous community nonprofits demonstrate the organization's belief that meaningful change is built through collaboration, compassion, and shared purpose.

Event Details

What: 100 Black Women Serving the Vineyard for 70 Years – Panel Discussion

When: June 11, 2026 | 5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

Where: Martha's Vineyard Museum – 151 Lagoon Pond Road, Vineyard Haven, MA 02568

Presented By: The Cottagers, Inc. and Martha's Vineyard Museum

Program: Panel Discussion (5:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.) followed by a reception with wine and light refreshments (6:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.)

Tickets: MVM Members: \$20; Non-Members: \$30

###

About The Cottagers, Inc.

The Cottagers, Inc., is a 501(c)(3) volunteer and multigenerational service organization comprised of 100 African American female homeowners on Martha's Vineyard. The organization's mission is to support charitable, educational and community service projects that improve the quality of life on the Island and promote cultural pride. For seventy years, the organization through its philanthropy has helped to sustain charities and programs that are on the front line in saving lives, restoring dignity and opening doors to new horizons. Visit: www.thecottagersincofmv.org.

McGhee Osse

The Cottagers, Inc.

+1 312-497-8515

[email us here](#)

Visit us on social media:

[Facebook](#)

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/917349771>

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2026 Newsmatics Inc. All Right Reserved.