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"Museum of Oppression" Returns to EIU Campus

Jan-22-2009

Making its eighth appearance on the campus of Eastern Illinois University, "Beyond Words: Museum of Oppression" continues to provide insight into the issue of oppression through a self-guided historical and experimental walking tour.

Sponsored by Eastern's Office of University Housing and Dining Services, this three-day event will be open to the community. Participants are invited to walk through a series of sensory experiences presented through the written word, audio, video and staged displays to gain a realistic perspective of what marginalized groups have faced in our society.

Admission to the museum, located in the Grand Ballroom of the MLK Jr. Union, is free and open to the public. Doors will be open from 7 to 9 p.m. Monday, Jan. 26; 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 27; and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 28. Each tour usually takes 30 to 35 minutes to complete.

A new exhibit to the museum this year, the Human Race Machine, is a computer program that allows visitors to view on a monitor what they would look like as one of six different races (<http://www.humanracemachine.com>). University Housing and Dining Services is co-sponsoring this exhibit with the EIU chapters of the National Residence Hall Honorary and the Residence Hall Association. This exhibit will be open daily during the regular operating hours of the museum, and will also be available from 7:30 a.m. to 11 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 29, in the MLK Jr. Union's Alumni Lounge (second floor, east wing).

Also this year, adding to the museum's experience, is a series of free presentations, all taking place at 7 p.m. in the Grand Ballroom.

Lisa Rogers Taylor from EIU's School of Family and Consumer Sciences will present the keynote address Monday. Her talk will introduce the museum and its theme, "Break Through to Change."

Michael Stewart, founder and director of Liwalo na Liwe Foundation Inc., will present "Street Children in Iringa, Tanzania: Problems and Solutions" on Tuesday. Stewart, an alumnus of the University of Illinois, will discuss the street children crisis in Iringa, Tanzania, and his efforts to raise awareness and facilitate solutions to this problem. The speaker will make specific references to his film, "Watoto wa Mitaani," and non-profit organization, the Liwalo na Liwe Foundation. The presentation will conclude with the organization's views on progressive education and a summary of its boarding school projects in Africa and North America.

On Wednesday, "The House We Live In," an exhibition piece and documentary shown in conjunction with the Human Race Machine, will be presented by the University Housing and Dining Services' Committee for Social Justice and Diversity Education. "Race may be a biological myth, but racism gives a different group vastly different life chances. Forty years after the Civil Rights Movement, the playing field is still not level and colorblind' policies only perpetuate inequality." This documentary will address this issue and discuss how these ideas may continue to shape the world's future.

For information on "Beyond Words: Museum of Oppression," contact Quiana Stone at 217-581-7689 or at qmstone@eiu.edu.