

The Shenandoah Valley Chapter of Coming to the Table
And the Warren-Page County, Va. NAACP Branch
Co-Sponsor Black History Month Celebration at the Belle Grove Plantation

February 4, 2017

More than 100 attendees packed into the room adjacent to the kitchen once staffed by slaves in the lower level of the [Belle Grove Plantation](#) to celebrate Black History Month. The February 4th event provided a rich opportunity for the community, comprised of an equal number of Blacks and Whites who traveled from as far south as Lexington, Virginia to the Northern Shenandoah Valley, to come to the Table and uncover and acknowledge the history of race indigenous to Virginia.



Will Hairston and Judith James, co-Chairs of the [Shenandoah Valley Chapter](#) of Coming to the Table, presided over the program co-hosted by the executive officers of the [Warren-Page County NAACP Branch](#). Shannon Moeck, Park Ranger for the Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Park Service, conducted an engaging and interactive presentation, ***“Kneading in Silence: A Glimpse into the Life of Judah the Enslaved Cook”***. Kristin Laise, Executive Director of the Belle Grove Plantation, provided an historical overview of the plantation’s origin and facilitated a tour.

Among the many accolades received, we were most heartened by comments made by many African Americans who, in summary, indicated “we are impressed by the cooperation and collaboration of the white administrators and presenters of both the Belle Grove Plantation and the Cedar Creek National Park Service. They are clearly dedicated to change!” Others commented on the recurring message throughout the program – “acknowledging, learning about and facing history openly, honestly and together as ‘one’ people.”

The importance of Coming to the Table partnering with the NAACP to promote racial healing and action has opened doors for both organizations and invited people whose hearts were open, but who might not have come otherwise.

Together, we stand!

Will Hairston and Judith James, co-Chairs,
Shenandoah Valley Chapter, CTTT

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