



Celebrating Black History Month at DEEC

This past February, Dexter classrooms around the District learned about the many global contributions of African Americans and other people of color in honor of Black History Month. At the Dexter Early Elementary Complex (DEEC), Anchor and Beacon staff planned to celebrate Black History from the perspective of young people who have made a positive impact on society. The intention was to encourage students to consider how they can make a difference in the world.

Anchor Elementary has a “Hall of Heroes” near their main entrance, which displays themed rotations of notable and inspirational people. Both Anchor and Beacon also have digital kiosks where they can showcase important information. In February, both the “Hall of Heroes” and the digital kiosks featured information about the following influential young African Americans:

- **Robby Novak aka Kid President**, who wants to spread happiness and make the world more awesome;
- **Wilma Rudolph**, who overcame adversity, got through sickness, then ran for U.S Olympic Team;
- **Mari Copeny** (Little Miss Flint), who met President Obama, told him about the dirty water in Flint and raised money for Flint;
- **Kendall Rae Johnson**, a 6-year-old farmer in Georgia who helps give back to her community (fruits, vegetables, etc.);
- **Nyeeam Hudson aka King Nahh**, a 10-year-old (now 16) motivational speaker who spreads a positive message of self-love and confidence to other kids and parents;
- **Mikaila Ulmer**, who had a dream to save bees. With the help of her family, books, a special lemonade recipe, beekeepers, local diners, and even Shark Tank investors, her dream grew and grew. 10% of proceeds go to the foundation she started, “Healthy Hive Foundation.”

In addition, elementary students learned about Yolanda Renee King (MLK’s granddaughter), poet Amanda Gorman, and all Anchor classrooms have the book “Mae Among the Stars,” inspired by Mae Jemison, the first African-American woman to travel in space. In PE classes, Simone Biles, Patrick Mahomes and other athletes were highlighted throughout the month.

Music played a big part in the Black History Month educational plan. Local musical duo Common Chords performed for DEEC students; they use music and stories to “tear down the walls that divide us, in order to bring us into a common understanding of one another.” At Anchor, 2nd graders studied the many musical contributions of African-American singers, songwriters, composers, arrangers and instrumentalists across several genres. Beacon music classes learned the elements of jazz music by studying the music of Louis Armstrong and Ella Fitzgerald, and how jazz transcends history by studying modern performers. Additionally, 1st and 2nd graders have learned African drumming techniques by learning about African drummer, Babatunde Olatunji. Through the study of the various African and African-American musicians and ensembles, students have learned and experienced how music can bring people together.

Several classrooms researched the young African-American people featured in the Hall of Heroes, creating videos featuring writing, drawing and narration by the students. Below are links to a few of the videos:

Mrs. Korinek's 2nd grade classroom studied Mikaila Ulmer:
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1kgKiGANzTghO4gwFIBm679KqosoWPqeL/view>.

Mrs. Keeler's 2nd grade classroom studied Wilma Rudolph:
<https://watch.screencastify.com/v/b6zaNr01ilpZcBWheuUL>

Ms. Thomas's 2nd grade classroom studied Kendall Rae Johnson:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aS9mPRe3zc>

Mrs. Budd's 2nd grade classroom studied Mari Copeny:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GKeGBPJQRu>

Dexter Schools are dedicated to providing students with diverse points of view in order to increase understanding of the wider world.



Robby Novak - "Kid President"



Mari Copeny - "Little Miss Flint"



Dr. Mae Jemison

