

Michael Eure Show – Episode 59: Kickoff to Black History Month

INTRODUCTION: Hello. This is Michael Eure, and I'd like to invite you to the Michael Eure Show, featuring student hosts and very special guests talking about a variety of interesting topics. You can find us on the Eagle Stream YouTube channel.

MICHAEL EURE: Good evening, and welcome to the Michael Eure Show. We have such a great lineup of guests today, and I'm gonna say welcome to Emily Grant from the North Carolina Museum of History, to Alexander Blades, who is a student at Wake Tech, new, and he told me he was Afro-Latino, so that's why I wanted him up here. Jennifer, I'm skipping around, Jennifer, Jenny Aguilera. She's been on the show before. She is a student at Wake Tech, and she is part of our Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Council. But you will hear more from her. And then, we have our two great student co-hosts: Taj Hewitt, and he's getting ready to graduate, and then Damien Johnson. This is his first semester, and he is an engineer, Associate in Engineering major, and has, he's working on an intern. I'm gonna let him tell you more. And he also made all A's [indecipherable]. Congratulations.

So, Jerry, at this time, I want you to, well, Jenny, let's let you talk about DEI. Jenny?

JENNY AGUILERA: Yeah. So, I, my name is Jenny. I am in the DEI. I am in the Success Workgroup along with the Workforce Initiative, work, workgroup. And then, I'm also in SGA. And with DEI, we think it's so important that we talk about Black History Month, other cultural history months, to bring awareness, and especially with marginalized communities, to give our students voices and to give our students a space to feel proud about themselves while they're learning and to, you know, learn. So, I definitely, I'm super-happy to be a part of the DEI work for, like, workgroups and success groups and stuff like that so I can learn more about different cultures and different places. But yeah, I know we have some events coming up, I think, on campus, and I think those can be found on the campus calendar.

EURE: Thank you, Jenny. And, and we're getting ready to leave, Jenny and I. I think Jerry's gonna share a little bit of music for you from a previous Michael Eure Show with Freddie Green. And Freddie Green is gonna be one of the performers at this year's African American Cultural Celebration, which is the statewide kickoff for Black History Month. That's what this show is about. And then, David Kwan, who's a former student of mine who's now at N.C. State working on his master's in aerospace engineering, he has been to the event, he's volunteered at the event, and he's been to the museum several times. And I want people to know that I love

including people like Jenny and David because this event is for everybody. It's not just for African Americans. It's for everybody, and it's a great cultural event.

So, I am gonna say, Jerry, go ahead and play the music. And when it's over, David will be here, and Obelia will be here from the North Carolina Museum of History. Ready, Jerry?

[music playing]

OBELIA EXUM: Oooo.

TAJ HEWITT: Hello. Welcome, welcome. Welcome everybody.

DAMIEN JOHNSON: Welcome to the Michael Eure Show. I think we're missing Kwan, right? He's supposed to also be in here, you know.

HEWITT: But in the meantime, while we're waiting for David ...

JOHNSON: How are you this morning? Yeah, how are you?

EXUM: Can you hear me?

JOHNSON: Yeah, we can hear you.

EXUM: [Indecipherable] I was listening to that saxophone. I just thought, "Oh, my God." That was a soothing sound.

JOHNSON: It was, wasn't it? It was something.

EXUM: I thought, "Oh, my God." It just took me to a place right while I was sitting here. So, yeah, I'm, I'm good. I'm, I'm having a great time. Thank you so much, and so excited to be here.

JOHNSON: Of course. Thank you so much for coming up here and just giving us a little bit of your time today. It's, we're gonna, while we wait for, you know, Mr. Kwan and everything, we can still continue. So, the first thing we're gonna do, everybody, is just do a little bit, a round of introductions. So, a little icebreaker, you know, just to get everybody acquainted.

So, I'll start off. My name is Damien Johnson. Like Mr. Eure said, I'm a student here

at Wake Tech. It's my second semester right now. I am in the Associate in Engineering. I do a START internship. And, to be on topic with what we're talking about today, I actually recently went to, I don't know if I should call it a session, orientation, a, a gathering at the, at the Museum of History, and I got to meet, obviously, Taj. So, I met Miss Grant here. I don't know if I met Blades or not. But I met, you know, obviously, a lot of the staff there and the board members. It was a great time. We had, like, harp music and other stuff. It was amazing. I guess that's really everything about me, so I'll let somebody else go. Taj, you wanna go ahead?

HEWITT: Yeah. Yeah, definitely. Alongside Damien, I'm also one of the hosts for the show, and just like him, I was also at the reception at the N.C. Museum of History in December, hosted by, actually, Emily Grant. But it was wonderful, Miss Grant. Thank you for that again.

EMILY GRANT: Sure. So glad you all were there.

HEWITT: Yeah, it was incredible. But, yeah, I'm also student at Wake Tech, and I'm studying agricultural engineering. This is my last semester, and looking forward to this evening with you.

JOHNSON: Definitely.

HEWITT: Alexander?

ALEXANDER BLADES: Hi, I'm Alexander. This is my second semester at Wake Tech. I'm a part-time student because I work full time. I work for the Food Bank of Central and Eastern North Carolina. I am studying for transfer, for, to be a transfer student for Associate in Arts. I eventually want to go to a four-year for HR management. And it's so nice to meet everyone.

JOHNSON: All right. And you're up next, Miss Obelia.

EXUM: Obelia Exum here. All right, graphic designer for the North Carolina Museum of History, a supervisor. And I've been here for quite a while now. So, I, I could go ahead and say at least 25 years-plus. I think I could put that out there. So, it's, it's really been interesting. I've said this before, and I'll see if I can cover it all. We cover here in graphic design branding for the North Carolina Museum of History. We do collateral work. We do signage banners, you name it, and also online work. So, when we're asked to present things for social media, that sort of thing. We create and we crank that work out. So, it's just always exciting to still be here at the

Museum of History, contributing and helping the museum to, putting my part in there that our team does to help the museum to shine even more. Thank you so much.

HEWITT: Yeah.

EXUM: I've got the advisory team. I'm on there as well. So, that's part of it, and that's part of the celebration.

HEWITT: And still staying on you, Miss Obelia. Could you actually explain to us a bit more about the design process that you ...

JOHNSON: Oh. Is he still there? Or has he cut out?

EXUM: Did you say the design process?

JOHNSON: Yeah, I think he was going to, but he might have cut out. Are you still there, Taj?

HEWITT: I am now, but I did.

JOHNSON: Miss Grant, you guys ...

HEWITT: I was just saying ...

JOHNSON: Go ahead.

HEWITT: If you could explain the design process in the AACC board.

EXUM: Just as far as I'm concerned, because I am part of that, part of that committee, being the in-house graphic designer, and I've got Emily listening, so if I miss a step, let me know, Emily. But, usually, when we have board meetings, the board members, and, and I'm sure Emily can cover a lot of that part, typically comes up with the theme. And my part simply is, as I'm attending meetings and, but, just actually enjoying what we're doing as a board in the community, which is really exciting. I typically take an idea back to, to my desk, listening to all the ideas that the board members come up with. We're writing them, writing those ideas down, coming back, saying, "Visually, what does that look like?" And in the format that we usually use for celebrations, in the layout that we have, "What does that look like? What does that feel like?" And listening to how the board members are expressing themselves.

I was actually talking to Emily this evening about hearing a specific look or seeing a specific, hearing what people are saying and then going back to the board saying, “Here are some ideas. Listening to what you’re saying you’re looking for, what we’ve come up here, that I’ve come up with here in graphic design.”

And so, I usually listen, go back to my sketch board. Thanks to, shout-out for the advisory board, the leaders there, because they’re constantly saying, “Here’s what the team said that they’re looking for.” And so, I’m able to just take those words back and actually come up with, so I would say that I typically come up with, say, maybe about three creative concepts at least. And I’ve been known to come up with more than that. Right, Emily?

GRANT: Yes.

EXUM: Yeah, but I usually come up with at least three creative concepts on the subjects that the team is bringing to fruition. And I didn’t talk as much about how they vote what those subjects are, whatever that is, go back to my desk, create a draft of what that could be brand-wise. And I take that back to the team, and the team discusses. They look at it and say, decide which one of these three concepts they would like, and then they suggest some things that they’d, perhaps, like to see tweaked or some things they’d, perhaps, like to see added. And I take that schedule back to my desk and those ideas back, and I, I regenerate, come back up with another look.

HEWITT: So, how long would you say it takes you from ...

EXUM: To actually get all of that done? To get that done?

HEWITT: Um-hmm.

EXUM: Oh, yeah. Yeah, I really throw my heart into my work, and I love to say I throw my heart into it. And I try to come up with the richest ideas that really evoke a certain experience, a feeling, to getting out from the board and this mu, museum what we’d like to present. The reason I threw that in there, someone recently told me that my work is also like real artist work. And I said, “Oh, that’s interesting. I never thought about it that way.” They said, “I see you can sow some soul and spirit into it.” And I said, “That’s really what I am.” So, I have to cut it short a lot of times when I’m doing graphic design because that’s gotta be just sharp, neat, clean, conceptual and easy to reprint, reformat, different shapes, sizes.

So, all of that, all of that is to say, I guess, just in the conceptual side, maybe there's a long period in there, sort of. But I said, coming up with the sketches in the very beginning, that may be, if I had eight hours to put on that and just took three ideas in the very beginning, I may spend that long. But I'll throw out there, say, maybe six hours to, to, to create those concepts and come back to the team. So, maybe the second stage, six to eight hours. It just takes me a while to get it done, and that's just the preliminary, or the beginning, because I really like to put some heartfelt, you're gonna have to feel something when you look at these sketches of these ideas.

JOHNSON: You know, I'm sure, when the event comes up, we are definitely going to, you know, feel something once we look at them. Thank you so much Miss Obelia. That was great, and definitely, like, it takes a lot of trial, a lot of error and a lot of, like, perspective and thought that goes into it just to make sure you have the right thing. So, thank you so much.

EXUM: I should do it in three, but I was being honest.

JOHNSON: I get it. You guys, if you have any questions or anything like that, don't forget, you can always drop them in chat for Miss Obelia or anybody else up here. So, moving on, I want to talk to Miss Grant if that's OK with her. Could you please go through, you know, the process of coming up with, like, a theme for an event like this?

GRANT: Sure.

JOHNSON: And, you know, a schedule of events that you have planned, because it seems like, between you and Miss Obelia, there's a lot that has to go into it in terms of timing and working.

GRANT: It's a lot, yeah. Thanks, thanks for having us on and kind of getting the behind-the-scenes about how these events are created. You know, I tell people they are one-day events, but we really, it takes 364 days for our 300, for our one-day event to happen. We actually, as y'all mentioned, we have an advisory board of about 15 to 20 members, and they serve typically three-year terms. They're just from a whole host of places and experiences across the state. Your own Michael Eure has been on the committee for several seasons, as has Obelia. So, we have [indecipherable] from different parts of the state. They meet every month year round. So, really, as soon as one event wraps up, we meet the next month, in February, evaluate how it went. We start talking about, we start talking about the next year.

HEWITT: Busy.

GRANT: And, and I think that is what makes the event so rich is because it, there's a lot of thought that goes into it, a lot of discussion about, "Where are we in this moment?"

What are the issues that people are thinking about or are worried about are impacting our communities? And who are those people that are creating creative change? Who are the artists that have been doing what they've been doing in the traditional sense?" They're upholding historical traditions that we wanna make sure we maintain, as well as here are those movers and shakers, young [indecipherable] that are really making a difference and, and changing how we see ourselves and how we move in the world. And those are those are some of the really, as Obelia has talked about the richness of her design, that's really how we come up with a theme, is people starting by listening to their own communities, thinking about the, the people that they interact with, what, what people are talking about, people they've seen throughout the year that we really want to incorporate into this particular year.

So, this year, I think is uniquely special. I mean, they're all, we laugh because, at the end of every event, we go, "We can never top that one." But the next year, and we're like, "Well, we could never top that one." The incredible talent that is in our state, and I'm always just awed and, and proud, really. I know it sounds cliché to be from North Carolina each year when we showcase, whether it's music or dance or authors or spoken word or organizations or nonprofits, chefs and medical professionals. What I love about this event, it's a little bit of everything, and this year, I started to say, is, is kind of special because we haven't been able to be in person since 2020. And I think this celebration – we call this a celebration, we don't, we don't call it a festival – but it's, I think, it's truly a celebration of our resiliency, our creativity, our, our, the, our community, and, and we're, I think, we're excited. We're a little nervous, I think, to, to be together physically, but I think people are really excited about the opportunity to, to feel that energy that is created by community.

And this year's theme, I didn't, I should have said that, is, is Pathways to Freedom and to, and we have a subtext, To Learn to Vote, to Build. And those were really the themes that were coming up in discussion, in people looking back, at that idea of Sankofa, you know, looking back in order to look forward, and really continuing to highlight that we're really, we're not free until everybody's free. And there's a lot of different expressions and feelings about what freedom is and, and, and the avenues and pathways to get to that freedom. And what's kept bubbling up is, you know, we, there's a lot that's happened in the world for most people, personally and locally,

nationally, since the last time we were in person. And I think there was a lot of discussion about how do we hold on to those pathways and continue to work toward freedom for all. And the ones that kept coming up were education, our ability and access to voting, and, and also just construction, the, the legacy of both literal construction of, of, of people in our past who built the structures and systems that we're currently in and how do we build that community and those, continue those pathways for, for folks in the future.

So, that was a really long answer. I'm not good at the sound bite, you figured out. But, and, yeah, so that's, that's what we start with, and then we share those ideas with, Obelia's the graphic designer, and she tries to create a visual image of these sometimes really abstract ideas. And I should say we also just really like to have a good time.

EXUM: Yeah.

GRANT: Part of it is, ultimately, it's the liberation, right? So, we, we tell people this is unlike any event that you've been to because it really is meant to make you move. You know, there's, it's part entertainment, it's part education, it's part creative energy, it's part, like, learning and scholarship. It's a little bit symposium, it's a little bit art-craft fair.

JOHNSON: It's a bit of everything, in a sense.

GRANT: It's a bit of everything, yeah.

JOHNSON: Honestly, and that sounds like a great, you know, perspective and way for people to jump in and participate as well, kind of learn some more about the event that's going on and the topic that's behind it, about themselves, too. It seems like you guys put a lot of work into it, so I hope that people can kind of, you know, reap the benefits.

Taj, I think I'm going to hand it over to you if you have anything else you wanna say as well.

HEWITT: Yeah. And I also wanted to ask you, Miss Emily, who would you say is actually invited to this event? You know, who would be, who would benefit from attending this event?

GRANT: Everybody. It doesn't matter your age, your background, if you're from North Carolina or not. If you, I mean, history is, it's all of our history, right?

HEWITT: That's what I was hoping.

GRANT: So, you see yourself in it, and we hope that you see something new and different that you just really didn't realize before.

JOHNSON: Yeah.

HEWITT: Exactly. I ...

JOHNSON: Go ahead. Yeah, go ahead. You're fine.

HEWITT: I'm thinking about all this, all these lovely things that is gonna be happening at the event. I just wanted to ask Mr. Alexander Blades, I know that you work with your branch of the, at the food bank. I just wanted to ask, what exactly do you do to, to help include people in the community?

BLADES: Well, currently, we're actually, I'm currently working on a community event calendar. So, we would send some of our employees out to the field, to different cultural events and celebrations and things like that, to get to know the community. So, that way they can trust us more, and it's easier to distribute food. Definitely making sure that I'm reaching out to some of our old clients – I used to be a benefits outreach specialist – and trying to encourage them to come. And I will be there as well with my friends, and later that night, I'm going to the Black theater performance at Raleigh Little Theatre. I just wanted to drop that in there. This, but I'm definitely excited to attend the event, and thank you, Emily and Obelia, for setting this up. It's amazing.

HEWITT: Damien?

JOHNSON: Oh, yes, of course. I think that we've gone through all the questions, from what it sounds like. It's about time for a quick break. So, if you guys have any more questions, you, of course, can drop them in the chat. We're, like I said, we're gonna go for a quick break, and then we're gonna also get a video of the Care Center going on. So, that should come up once Jerry says it's ready.

[Care Center promotional video plays]

JOHNSON: All right, that was great. Make sure you guys drop in and go to the Care Center. We're also gonna have the, if somebody were to drop the N.C. museum link so that we can have it in the chat for everybody.

HEWITT: And so, that way, we can actually show the, the schedule and ...

EXUM: Hey, what's going on?

JOHNSON: We kind of want that. We need that now.

GRANT: Yeah, so do you want me to kind of talk it through?

HEWITT: [Indecipherable]

GRANT: You can get on our website. It's ncmuseumofhistory.org. You can look under programs and events and festivals, and that'll take you to this link. When you get to the AACC, you'll see, scrolling down at the very bottom, there are links to parking, the schedule, how to volunteer, who are sponsors are, who helps us put it on, all those kinds of things. So, probably that, what you really want to know, though, is the, is the presentation one. So, if you click on the presentations and the schedule, that gives you a rundown of everything that's going on. And people say, "When's the best time to come, and what about?" And I say, "Come early. Stay late." Look at the program before you come, because there's a lot going on and nothing repeats. So, if there's somebody that you really wanna see that's doing a timed presentation and you don't wanna miss it, it really helps if you go over the schedule first. See what looks good to you, and plan your schedule around the, those folks that you want to engage with, because it's, if you, if they're talking at 10, and you think, "Oh, I'll catch them the next go-around," they, there's only, there's so much going on.

And if you really wanna get there, we start at 10:30 with a big opening kickoff. We have a procession up the mall. It's led by the Tryon Palace junkanoo drummers to represent the past. If you've never seen them, you realize you need to check that out. And then, it's followed, well, our USCT re-enactors, the U.S. Colored Troops re-enactors, representing also our past and African Americans who fought for their freedom in the Civil War. There are fat, flag bearers and the junkanoo drummers, and then, representing the present and the future, this year, we've got the Goldsboro Marching Cougars high school marching band, and they're going to be tearing it up at the mall. And they'll, we'll follow in behind them. They'll march into the, the, the lobby. We'll have opening remarks by that chair of the statewide African American

Heritage Commission, and Dorothea Taylor will be singing “Lift Every Voice and Sing.” We always start out with the national Black anthem. And we’ve got a QR code link to those times in the program. So, there’s no excuse for not knowing the words and following that along, and there’s, that link also takes you to the history of that song and how it was written, who wrote it and, and, and the meaning behind the words.

So, once that happens, then the crowd will be released to all these various sections of the museum and classrooms. So, you can go to the auditorium. There’s a great lineup of folks there. You can stay in the lobby. There’s a smaller lobby stage with performances and musicians and everything from, I think you all mentioned Winifred Garrett, who’s a harpist, to Corey Leak, who’s a vocalist, to Freddie Green, who was the saxophonist you heard at the beginning of this, at the beginning of the show, to Dwight Hawkins, who plays everything from the saw to washboard-bass to the spoons, the saw, all kinds of traditional instruments. And he’ll be featuring traditional blues. We’ve got Shelton Poe in the auditorium, who’s on the Music Maker label. We have the North Carolina Association of Black Storytellers that will be telling stories for 45 minutes all, from all, storytellers from across the state. We have Solo Works, which is a fabulous modern dance group who will be performing. And I was talking to her today, and she’s, she said, “I’ve added a new piece, and there’s going to be somebody with an electric violin that’s going to need to plug in, and I’ll be doing some narration during the piece.” So, I’m really looking forward to, to that.

And then, if music isn't really where you're at, you can stop in the literature and the spoken word section. And there's, everything from Carmen Cauthen talking about historic Raleigh and her research on Black neighborhoods. That's going to be really interesting. We've got children's book authors. We've got illustrators. We've got panels on everything from children's board books that, like Michelle Lanier wrote a book, to Judy Allen Johnson, who just published a new children's book on Arthur Ashe. So, there's really something, you know, for everybody. If you're into literature and the spoken word, we've got poet Khalisa Rae is gonna be leading a poetry session with folks.

So, if that's not enough for you, you can head downstairs to another, the education room. There's a whole section on history, enterprise and film, and there's everything from an interview with Sam Lathan, who played with James Brown and with The Monitors, and he's he, he's not, he'll tell you, he's like, “I don't play drums anymore.” But he used to really throw it down. He's got some great, great, great stories, and it's just a, a unique opportunity to be able to, to see him in person. We have Kendrick ransom and Turquoise Vasquez. They're going to be talking about their Golden

Organic Farm and how they've worked really hard to maintain land that's been in their family for generations, to tap into their agricultural roots and how they can serve communities and be economically viable to work with and handling food deserts and filling in that gap. So, that's a really great session to join in. We've got things that are talking about Uniontown in Beaufort, when it was Union-occupied from the beginning of the Civil War, and all of the activities and freedom-seeking that was going on there. We also have a session, Cash Michaels is gonna be talking about the impact of Black newspapers and how important that voice has been and continues to be in really providing a deeper, richer picture than just mainstream media.

We've got exhibits. There's a whole section, historic Halifax has a temporary exhibit on freedom-seekers and the Underground Railroad in their area, and that will just be up for the day. The North Carolina Heritage, African American Heritage Commission has an exhibit called "From Africa to the Carolinas," talking about those connections and traditions that were brought over during slavery and the impact on the Carolinas in particular, and that will only be up for that one day. You won't wanna miss that. And there's a classroom on education where you can learn about a lot of people know about our HBCUs, that North Carolina has the largest number of HBCUs in the country, and, but a lot of people don't know about a lot of these smaller institutions like the Laurinburg Institute, the Peabody Academy, how education on every level has been and continues to be really critical in those pathways to freedom for folks. And we'll have a session on that. It's, that, that session actually has two components. You can go to one or both, but definitely get connected to Bishop McDuffie and Brookshire Harris, as they are talking about how to keep Black education really vital moving forward.

We have a section on food, health and beauty. We've got James Beard finalist Greg Collier, who, for the lucky folks that went to the reception, got a little taste of his work and how he uses food as his expression of North Carolina history and culture. They'll be doing a cooking demonstration. We'll also have chef Eric Marshall, who will be here. So, some, some really nationally known chefs talking about their own story and how food helps tell our, our, all of our stories. And then, in health, we've got someone who's talking about African American doulas. We have someone who is sharing her story, her family story about the impact of sickle cell anemia and how that has changed her individual family stories and how to help others in confronting that particular disease.

And if you don't want to sit in a session, you can wander around all day long. We'll have basket maker Neil Thomas, who's a Heritage Award winner. We'll have Warren Goodson, who is a woodcarver and a painter. We have a whole host of painters, a

hatmaker, wire artist, all sorts of folks that you can engage with. And if you bring your, your pocketbook, you can purchase some things to take home, or you can join in on one of the hands-on crafts. We've got tissue paper hat making. We've got dinkie stamp making. And all that is going on, and it's all free.

And then, I haven't even talked about the information tables, but then there, there's, you know, there's all sorts of information tables and agencies where you can find out, You Can Vote is going to be there helping register people to vote. I don't know what, what have I left out? Obelia, help me out. There will be food vendors on the mall. There's a Black farm, Black farmers mini-market. Julius Tillery will be here with BlackCotton, and we've got the Cupcake Fairy. He's bringing their truck. We've got [indecipherable]. We've got Lee's Kitchen with Jamaican food that you can purchase and so stay for lunch.

Come early, like I said. Join the procession, grab some food on the mall, check out the farmers market, buy a cupcake. Come back, sit in on some sessions, but just come and enjoy.

HEWITT: Well, thank you so much Miss Emily for explaining this, this, this long schedule. That was like ...

JOHNSON: It's all so helpful.

GRANT: Take a breath now, right?

JOHNSON: Yeah.

HEWITT: It's a lot for a person to digest, person to digest, pun intended.

JOHNSON: I think that there's stuff for, literally, everybody. You guys, you need to, after that, you guys definitely need to go. We have some questions in the chat that I know you guys have been taking up for us. Taj, take us home.

HEWITT: And also, to our viewers at home, remember that, if you need to go to that link, it's just in the chat. So, you could just scroll up in the chat, and you'll find the link to everything that Miss Emily was just talking about. And so, right now, we are going to move into some questions from the chat.

The first one being from Mr. Rasheed Graham, and the, we know that the Museum of History has this event going on, is gonna happen, and many other events for the

year. But he's asking, "Being new to N.C., I continue to find it amazing that the museums here in Raleigh are free. Aside from state/federal funding, where does the financial support come from? Angel donors, perhaps?"

GRANT: That's really, that's really a great question. Thank you for your question, Rasheed, because, yes, this is free to the public, but it is not free to put on. I'm usually pretty transparent about finances. It usually takes about \$50,000 to put this on, \$50,000 to \$60,000. And we really depend on, yes, we are blessed. We are really, really fortunate in the state of North Carolina that, a long time ago, our legislature decided that they would fund the North Carolina Museum of Art, the North Carolina Museum of History and the North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences and that those would be museums for the people. That being said, we, the, the state money keeps the doors open and the light bill paid. But anything that is programmatic, like festivals like this, require private funding and sponsorships and grants. And we are so fortunate that the Raleigh Arts Commission, we apply for a grant from them each year. This year, we've gotten support from the North Carolina Black Alliance, from PNC, from WakeMed, from AARP, from Publix, from Bridgestone, from M&F Bank, from Smithfield Chicken and BBQ, from [indecipherable] Healthcare, from United Therapeutics from Rufty Homes, from Curry Healthcare and from Oasis. So, those are just a few of the sponsors.

And, and the, and we really welcome sponsorship, that donations really range from a couple hundred dollars all the way up to \$15,000, \$20,000 based on, you know, certain folks often like to, you know, maybe the health agencies would like to support what we're doing focused around health. And we've had, you know, writers groups who would like to contribute specifically to literature and spoken word. And a lot of the larger corporations like PNC are just happy to be a part and sponsor the event in general. We also are very lucky that we have some relationships with businesses who give us a lot of in-kind, either advertising or discounts on printed materials, things like that. And that's really what makes it, that's really what makes it possible is, is, I feel like the, the public radio station, but, you know, for participants like you and, you know, businesses who have come down to the event.

And another way people give is volunteering. We have, the Deltas always come out in force and help us, you know, manage staffing, all the craft activities, helping people find their way over three floors of activities in a somewhat confusing building. We have folks that help with hospitality and just all kinds of things. So, we're, it really is, I tell people, it's a community event in every in every possible way, from the advisory board to the volunteers, I mean, to folks like y'all. You know, we really

appreciate you inviting us on this show and helping us get the word out so that people are able to take advantage of it.

JOHNSON: Of course. Thank you so much for being here. You answered a lot of our questions. And just to reiterate, you guys, make sure you really show up that day. We wanna see everybody there. I think it's gonna be great.

There are some comments that we do have left that you kind of went over. Yeah, where they just say thank you, of course, like that. I think you also answered about the volunteers as well. So, you guys can come out there, you can volunteer later on as well.

GRANT: Yeah, absolutely. When, when they were scrolling through the website, so you get on the website and get on the event page and you scroll all the way down, one of the boxes is a volunteer box. So, you can still volunteer. I'll be, you know, putting that schedule and getting that information out early next week. But even if you decide at the last second, you know, the day before, whatever, you know, we can, we can make you a name tag. We love to, we love to put people behind the tables and get people involved because I, I think Obelia would agree with me, once you come once, you get it, you know. And it's every year, it's every year. It's a different lineup every year. It's, again, it just speaks to the incredible, incredible diversity of talent that we have in the state. It's just that, I challenge you to come and not, and not be engaged and learn something and just feel, feel really good when you leave.

HEWITT: Yeah. Yeah, definitely. I'm sure everyone that decides to show up on the day will have a, a very good time. You know, it's just six-plus hours of pure joy.

JOHNSON: It's, it's gonna be great. I know it is. I guess it's about time to do some of these closing statements. We can start off with Miss Grant since you just finished. I know you've been talking a lot, you probably wanna stop. So, we'll start with you. Just give a short, little closing statement to everybody that you might want them to know, either about you or about the event. And then we can keep moving on through all of us.

GRANT: Thanks for coming. This is the, the 22nd annual. I hope, with folks like y'all, as Obelia and I age out, that you will make sure that the legacy continues and that y'all, y'all step up, get involved and, and make it your own.

HEWITT: Well, we will. We will. So, Miss Obelia next. You're muted.

GRANT: On mute.

JOHNSON: I was going to say I can't hear you.

HEWITT: She's so excited she forgot to unmute.

JOHNSON: She's working on it.

EXUM: Yeah, I said I loved that statement, you all. And I realized as I was talking about graphic design, I said I forgot that part about formatting for self-roll printing in social media, that type of thing. I do wanna add that in there, all the formats I have to create for that. I really richly, as long as I've been here, I just, I really believe that the AACC, being part of that celebration is just such a rich history. Even when Emily was reading it just then, I just started getting, I just started getting so excited. I love the fact that it just covers the state, you know, all of what we do. Our history is all about just the state of North Carolina. So, I'm I'm gonna add that I, I love Emily's statement. As we age out, the younger people are coming forth and just taking this torch and making it even greater than what it is.

And just my last thought here, every meeting I go to, when it comes to AACC, I always tell Emily, I say, "Oh, I only have a few minutes," you know, and I get in there and present graphic design that we talk about. Then, I'll tell Emily, "Oh, I'll just stay for the whole event because it's so rich and there's so much given from the community and so many, just an array of people out there that we're telling stories and histories about. So, to me, it is by far one of the, the, not just the riches when it comes down to heritage, it's such a wonderful, a joy of, not only community, but just a celebration to go on for the state of North Carolina. I thoroughly enjoy it. I enjoy the graphic design, being that graphic designer and being a part of that as well. Thank you.

JOHNSON: Of course. Thank you. Mr. Blades.

BLADES: Sorry, can you hear me?

JOHNSON: Yes, we can.

BLADES: Thank you. Sorry. I'm definitely very excited to attend this event, and it's really encouraging to see, especially this is my second semester at Wake Tech, that you're passionate about, like, supporting these types of events, with sharing these.

And, you know, the food bank is definitely looking to align itself with more DEI events, more cultural events like this. So, thank you so much for inviting me on the show.

HEWITT: And thank you so much for coming, Mr. Blades. And also, to our viewers at home, we just want to say that Elizabeth City State and N.C. A&T students will also be partners with the museum virtually. And then, also the Michael Eure Show might decide to show up to opening ceremonies and perhaps do some interviews at the same time. And then, ECSU is also broadcasting live on their radio station. So, so many things going on at once. Just want to give you guys all the information so you can pick and choose what works best for you.

Yeah, it was, it was incredible having you guys on, so much wonderful information from both Miss Emily, both Miss Obelia and [indecipherable]. You know, as Miss Emily was saying, everyone is welcome to this event. Just show up on the day. There's so much to offer. There's food, you know, just come. That's all you need to do.

Once again, my name is Taj Hewitt. I'm alongside my co-host Damien Johnson.

JOHNSON: It's nice to meet everybody. Thank you all for being here. I don't wanna steal all of you guys' time. So, we are at about 50 minutes or so. If there's any more questions in the chat, please feel free to drop them. We'll probably stay open till, a few more minutes.

As I'm reading through the, the comments right now, everybody seems really excited, though. That's so nice to hear. I think you're gonna have a great show-out over there. I know I'm definitely gonna, you know, make it a stance and appear by.

HEWITT: And definitely, I mean, we at least got 20 people from the show to, that will show.

GRANT: Awesome.

HEWITT: I can guarantee it.

GRANT: Yeah.

JOHNSON: I kinda want to go, Taj, is there, like, an event that you're kind of looking forward to? I think one that I'm really looking forward to is the, the storytelling. I don't know why, but I'm really interested in going to that.

HEWITT: Yeah. Yeah.

JOHNSON: Watching that, seeing how it plays out, because I wanna know how much you can truly evoke from [indecipherable].

HEWITT: Yeah. I agree. I agree. The storytelling and just the music in general, because I remember being at the reception at the, the harp that was being played there was just absolutely breathtaking, you know. Sometimes, it was so melodic you forgot you were there, and it was just a tune playing in your head. So, the storytelling, the music ...

JOHNSON: I'm going to be going to that electric violin, I think that's [indecipherable].

BLADES: I'm looking forward to that.

JOHNSON: You're looking forward to that, too?.

GRANT: Well, I will tell y'all, too, there is the very last, I didn't, I didn't mention this. There's, there's always, I know that you're thinking, "What did she not mention?" We're closing out the auditorium, we usually close out the auditorium with a big band, and, this year, I'm, I'm kind of interested because I've never, I've only heard snippets of this band. But this is their first, it's their first show here at, at the museum, and it's, they're called Mark Sylvie and the Wandering Disciples. And they play every kind of music I think I've ever heard. It's like the, but it's not, they're not a cover band. So, they told me one time that really, if you do your homework, that all music is Black music. So, I'm, and then I know they're gonna be talking a little bit about that, about playing different styles of music. They're all playing their own compositions. It's all their own music. They're not, they're not covering other people's, but they're going to be explaining kind of this concept and helping people like hear components and different styles of music. So, I'm really looking forward to that.

I tell people we've had, this event has given voice to folks that kind of, you know, go, grow up and, like, do big things. Like, we have the Carolina Chocolate Drops before anybody knew who the Carolina Chocolate Drops were. We had Rissi Palmer on the stage when she was really young, before she, people knew who Rissi Palmer was. We had Tyler, you know, the, the violin player that went on America's Got Talent. We

had him here. So I, I, I think, I'm thinking maybe this band will be the next. I'm very curious to see if they'll be the next one that gets, that gets more fame and fortune after the, after they played the Museum of History.

JOHNSON: I definitely hope so. That sounds really interesting. I'm, I'm kind of curious to see because I can see how they're gonna, you know, start putting the pieces together, for sure.

GRANT: Right.

JOHNSON: Definitely.

GRANT: Right.

HEWITT: So, we, yeah, we basically ...

JOHNSON: That's, that's everything, right? We've covered it. Does any, do any of the panelists have a question for anybody else, perhaps? I'm trying to see, perhaps, if we might have more questions in the comments. But if not, we can go ahead and close it out. I don't want to steal any more time from, you know, any of you guys. Thank you all so much for being here. It was just amazing.

GRANT: Yeah. Really appreciate it. And we'll see you on the 28th.

JOHNSON: Of course. We'll see you soon.

GRANT: All right.

JOHNSON: You have a good one.

GRANT: You, too. Take care.

JOHNSON: Of course. Of course.

HEWITT: Thank you.