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Delaware Students Challenged to Explore History in National History Contest

Delaware Historical Society sponsoring the 2016 National History Day Competition.

Wilmington, DE — Students from across Delaware will once again gather to compete in the annual **National History Day in Delaware State Contest** sponsored by the **Delaware Historical Society**. Often likened to the “science fair” of history education, this year’s state contest will be held at Delaware Technical Community College in Stanton, DE on **Saturday, April 23, 2016**. National History Day in Delaware is a powerful educational tool that assists educators by cultivating an interest in history, developing research skills, building presentation skills, and helping students achieve success among other benefits. The competition in Delaware has been sponsored by the Delaware Historical Society for nearly twenty years.

The aim of National History Day in Delaware is to engage students in grades 6-12 in discovery and interpretation of historical resources. Encouraged and guided by teachers, students choose a historical topic related to an annual theme and conduct extensive research using libraries, archives, museums, oral history interviews, and websites. This year’s theme, *Exploration, Encounter, Exchange*, invites students to look across time, space and geography to find examples in history of when people took a risk and made a change.

After analyzing and interpreting their primary and secondary sources and drawing conclusions about their topic's significance in history, students work creatively and collaboratively to produce scholarly projects in the form of dramatic performance, imaginative exhibit, multimedia documentary, scholarly paper, or website.

Students first compete at the school level before moving forward to the state contest. Each year more than half a million students participate nationwide, including hundreds of Delaware students in the statewide contest held each spring. The winners from the state contests then advance to a national competition at the University of Maryland in College Park, MD, which will take place **June 12-16** this year.

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“I choose to have my students participate in National History Day in Delaware,” said Erin Sullivan, Social Studies teacher at Cab Calloway School of the Arts. “It allows students to engage in a project that requires significant historical research while giving them tremendous independence in terms of their topic and product. My students are inspired, and I have been impressed with the number of students who were able to interview historians and visit historical sites to conduct research. The opportunity for authentic learning will benefit them long after the contest is over.”

Sixty-seven students participated in the school wide contest at Cab Calloway School of the Arts and approximately twenty are expected to compete in the state level contest.

With the Delaware History Museum and the Center for African American Heritage slated to open later this year, the Delaware Historical Society is looking to expand the statewide program and increase the school and student participation rate for next year. To learn more about National History Day in Delaware, contact the state coordinator, Rebecca Fay at rfay@dehistory.org or 302-655-7161 and visit dehistory.org/national-history-day. For more information about National History Day, visit www.nhd.org.

About the Delaware Historical Society:

The Delaware Historical Society owns and operates the Delaware History Museum; a nationally recognized Research Library; Old Town Hall; Willingtown Square, four 18th-century houses surrounding a picturesque urban courtyard located in Wilmington; as well as the Read House & Gardens located in historic New Castle, recognized as an “American Treasure” by the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the National Park Service; and The Center for African American Heritage, which will be included as part of the expansion of the Delaware History Museum, to reopen later in 2016. For more information on the Delaware Historical Society, call (302) 655-7161 or visit dehistory.org.

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