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PRESS RELEASE

May 23, 2012

TRACY AFRICAN AMERICAN ASSOCIATION GRANTS ACADEMIC SCHOLARSHIPS TO 13 TRACY-AREA STUDENTS

Scholars to be Recognized at 18th Annual Juneteenth Festival Celebration Saturday, June 9, 2012 | Lincoln Park, Tracy, CA

TRACY, CA – Tracy African American Association, LLC. (TAAA) places special emphasis on youth mentorship and education, and gears nearly all of its events and activities toward fundraising to benefit its **Wayne Nelson Academic Scholarship Program**. Annually, the organization provides scholarships—named for late TAAA member and education advocate Wayne Nelson—to enrich educational opportunities for college-bound students who are graduating from Tracy, CA high schools. Scholarships are awarded to high school seniors who apply, meet specific academic requirements, and who are entering an accredited college or university on a full-time basis.

TAAA announced today the names of 13 Tracy high school scholarship recipients—11 who will receive awards in the name of Wayne Nelson for their respective academic achievements; one selected to receive the TAAA President's Achievement Scholarship for most improved academic performance; and one to receive an award named for donors Leon and Marni Churchill in recognition of the student's academic excellence. TAAA president Howard Baker said, "We are grateful to all of the people who supported our fundraising efforts throughout the year, especially the individual citizens who personally made contributions to the 2012 scholarship fund. Scholarship awards will be presented to the students during TAAA's 18th annual Juneteenth celebration—"Juneteenth Family Reunion in the Park," from 10:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. Saturday, June 9th at Lincoln Park (East St. and N. Eaton Ave.).

2012 WAYNE NELSON ACADEMIC SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

Merrill West High School: Mahogany Brown, Alexander Ekwueme, Aaliyah Goodie, Lorenzo Hughes, Brittany Wood
Tracy High School: Elsa Berhane, Paris Crump, Arianna Grimes
John C. Kimball High School: Sean Duberry-Gooch, Tayler Wills
Millennium High School: Essence White

2012 TAAA PRESIDENT'S ACHIEVEMENT SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT

Ripon Christian High School: Michael Perrilliat

2012 LEON AND MARNI CHURCHILL SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT

Merrill West High School: Ariana Phillips

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When speaking about the importance of higher education, TAAA Education Chairperson Paul Hall said, "I am greatly impressed with this year's applicants and their stated career paths. I implore all students to start planning in middle school so that they can begin to take classes in preparation for high school and college."

TAAA is grateful to its leading sponsors: City of Tracy, Health Plan of San Joaquin, Jackson Rancheria Casino & Hotel, McDonald's, San Joaquin Delta College and Wells Fargo, as well as other generous Juneteenth festival contributors that include AAA of Northern CA, Imara Mortgage & Realty, Tracy Disposal Services, Wal-Mart and Sutter Tracy Community Hospital.

JUNETEENTH observes that on June 19, 1865 slaves in Galveston, Texas learned that the Civil War had ended and they were now free. (Note: This announcement came two and a half years after President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, which had become official January 1, 1863). Upon hearing the news, the slaves celebrated in jubilation with song, dance and food. Since that time, slave descendents throughout the United States have carried on the celebratory tradition.

TAAA will once again observe and celebrate learning of the end of slavery by hosting its annual festival in the park. This year, in addition to the park celebration, TAAA will also commemorate Juneteenth by hosting "An Intimate Evening with Howard Hewett," a chic evening affair that features an intimate concert by the award-winning artist at the Grand Theatre Center for the Arts at 7:00 p.m. on Friday, June 8th.

The June 9th park event will provide activities and entertainment for all ages, including a vast food variety, arts & craft vendors, kid's corner, and free health screenings. Local talents will perform; a DJ will provide "family reunion" musical selections; and attendees may exhibit their respective entertainment skills performing karaoke on stage.

ABOUT TRACY AFRICAN AMERICAN ASSOCIATION, LLC:

The Tracy African American Association (TAAA) is a non-profit organization established in 1994 by a group of concerned professionals seeking to form ties among African Americans and other members of the Tracy Community. Its mission is to unite people of all ages and backgrounds through sponsorships and contributions to educational, cultural and social programs that foster awareness, diversity, and a cooperative environment that unite the Tracy Community. Membership is open to individuals who share and embrace the TAAA mission. www.TAAA.net

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