

TAVIS SMILEY PRESENTS



The African American Imprint

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NATIONAL CONSTITUTION CENTER



THE STORY OF WE, THE PEOPLE.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**NATIONAL CONSTITUTION CENTER PRESENTS
SPECIAL PUBLIC PROGRAMS
IN CONJUNCTION WITH *AMERICA I AM* EXHIBITION**

Philadelphia, PA – Presented in conjunction with the *America I AM: The African American Imprint* exhibition, the National Constitution Center will host a variety of interactive events, encouraging visitors of all ages and from all walks of life to connect in a meaningful way with the story of African American contributions to our nation.

America I AM will make its world debut at the Constitution Center on January 15, 2009, and will run through May 3, 2009.

The schedule of upcoming *America I AM* public programs is as follows:

Celebrating Our Imprint: The Mosaic of American Culture

December 26 through December 31, 2008

12:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

FREE with museum admission

Leading to the opening of the exhibition, visitors are invited to join the National Constitution Center during the holiday season to celebrate the diversity of American culture and to explore “imprints” from around the nation through the music, dance, food, and celebrations of its people, including traditional African crafts and African American ring and clapping games, Latin American samba music, and constitutional haikus and dragon kite crafts from Asia. Visitors can also celebrate the diversity of our country by designing their own tiles to be added to a mosaic representing the broad scope of “We the People.”

-MORE-

ADD ONE/PUBLIC PROGRAMS

A Celebration of Firsts

January 17 and 18, 2009 – 11:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

January 20, 2009 – 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

FREE with museum admission

Visitors can explore the enduring contributions of African Americans to our society as we celebrate the presidential inauguration and swearing-in of the first African American president. There will be special themed Inauguration Day events on January 20th – with the inauguration shown on a large screen outside on Independence Mall – including the chance to take the Oath of Office, watch the ceremony, make presidential seals, and have a photo taken with a cutout of President-elect Obama during an exciting scavenger hunt.

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service

January 19, 2009

10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

FREE

In honor of the life and legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr., the National Constitution Center will participate in a city-wide celebration on Monday, January 19. Visitors of all ages can enjoy activities, including storytelling sessions, talkback boards, crafts, choirs, famous speeches from civil rights activists, and musical and dramatic performances. In the spirit of Dr. King, visitors can also participate in a quilting service project focusing on the plight of the homeless by lending a helping hand to sew blankets, pillows, and quilts. This will provide an opportunity for guests to join in civic service to help the less fortunate, to learn about how quilting has brought communities together, and to continue the great legacy of Dr. King. In addition, visitors can view important artifacts related to Dr. King in the **America I AM** exhibition, including the door key and stool from the Birmingham jail cell that held him when he authored his infamous “Letter from a Birmingham Jail”

From Revolution to Evolution

January 20, 2009

10:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

FREE

In partnership with Art Sanctuary, the Center will present a discussion of the civil rights revolution that led to the evolution of America's current president. The discussion will explore the influence of Martin Luther King, Jr.; President-elect Obama's book, *The Audacity of Hope*; and the connections to the **America I AM** exhibition.

Culture, Custom, and Convention: A Celebration of the African American Influence

February 14, 2009 – 11:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

February 15, 2009 – 12:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

February 16, 2009 – 11:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

FREE with museum admission

-MORE-

ADD TWO/PUBLIC PROGRAMS

To celebrate Black History Month, visitors can learn about the lives of African Americans and the achievements that have helped shape America's promise. Visitors will also have the chance to participate in a special artifact workshop to learn more about the African Americans who lived on the site of the Constitution Center, including James Dexter.

Freedom for All

March 7, 2009

11:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

FREE with museum admission

In honor of Women's History Month, visitors can explore the history of African American women and their struggles for equality. Guests will celebrate the women who broke barriers in politics, science, and rights for all women in a fun and interactive show that will keep visitors guessing.

Voices of Freedom

April 6 through April 18, 2009

11:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

FREE with museum admission

Visitors will enjoy stories and songs as the Center celebrates African American history and the melting pot of American culture through music, dance, and poetry. Daily readings and activities will explore the vast contributions of African American artists.

America I AM Audio Tour

\$2 for members, \$3 for non-members

Visitors can explore the rich and inspiring **America I AM** exhibition through stories, poems, and artifacts as they are guided by its presenter, Tavis Smiley.

Breaking Barriers School Group Package

The *Breaking Barriers Show* will examine the lives of Thurgood Marshall, Bessie Coleman, Jackie Robinson, and other extraordinary African Americans throughout history. The show will give visitors insight into the issues they faced and the rights they secured for all Americans. Students will then be sent on a storytelling adventure as they relive the experiences of African Americans in the 1700s, 1800s and 1900s. These inspiring stories teach students how one's civic actions can affect a nation.

From January 15 through May 3, 2009, the National Constitution Center will host the world debut of **America I AM: *The African American Imprint***, celebrating nearly 500 years of African American contributions to this country. The exhibition will present a historical continuum of pivotal moments in courage, conviction, and creativity that solidifies the undeniable imprint of African Americans across the nation and around the world.

-MORE-

ADD THREE/PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Featuring more than 200 artifacts culled from every period of U.S. history, the exhibit will include objects, texts, religion, music, narration, and media. An interactive component of the exhibition will allow visitors to leave their own video “imprints,” and this collection will grow throughout the life of the exhibition with the potential to become the largest recorded oral history project in U.S. history.

Admission to **America I AM** is \$17.50 for adults, \$15.50 for seniors ages 65 and up, and \$9 for children ages 4-12. Group rates are also available. Admission to the Center’s main exhibition, *The Story of We the People*, including the award-winning theater production “Freedom Rising”, is included. Active military personnel and children ages 3 and under are free. There is no upcharge for school groups to tour **America I AM**. iPod audio tours are also available and cost \$2 for members and \$3 for non-members. For ticket information, call 215.409.6700 or visit www.constitutioncenter.org.

The exhibition is developed in partnership with Tavis Smiley, and organized by Cincinnati Museum Center and Arts and Exhibitions International (AEI). **America I AM** is made possible by Walmart Stores, Inc., which serves as its presenting sponsor. The exhibition is sponsored by Northern Trust and is presented locally by Coca-Cola. CBS 3 is the official media partner for the Center’s showing of **America I AM**.

The National Constitution Center, located at 525 Arch St. on Philadelphia’s Independence Mall, is an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to increasing public understanding of the U.S. Constitution and the ideas and values it represents. The Center serves as a museum, an education center, and a forum for debate on constitutional issues. The museum dramatically tells the story of the Constitution from Revolutionary times to the present through more than 100 interactive, multimedia exhibits, film, photographs, text, sculpture and artifacts, and features a powerful, award-winning theatrical performance, “Freedom Rising”. The Center also houses the Annenberg Center for Education and Outreach, which serves as the hub for national constitutional education. For more information, call 215.409.6700 or visit www.constitutioncenter.org.

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