

# JAN-FEB

"IN THE RECORDS OF WEST AFRICAN HISTORY, "GRIOT" (PRONOUNCED GREE-OH) WAS THE HONORED NAME BESTOWED UPON WISE AND KNOWLEDGEABLE STORY TELLERS ENTRUSTED WITH THE TASK OF DOCUMENTING TRIBAL HISTORIES AND GENEALOGIES.

**THIS ISSUE FEATURES:  
BLACK HISTORY MONTH EVENTS  
MLK DAY  
RAMS ON ICE  
KEYNOTE SPEAKERS  
BSA STEP SHOW  
AND MORE....**

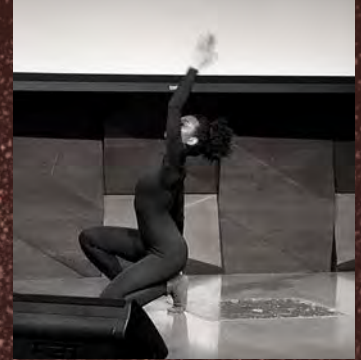
the  
**GRIOT**



**BLACK/AFRICAN AMERICAN  
CULTURAL CENTER  
COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY**

# BLACK HISTORY MONTH KICKOFF

WRITTEN BY: DJ CHAPA & KERRIANA TATUM



Colorado State University's Black/African American Cultural Center is celebrating Black History Month with more than 30 events, featuring a range of keynote presentations and other interactive activities. The first event to jump-start the month was the annual "Black History Month Kickoff!" This event was surely one to ignite and capture the theme of unity. This year's theme was "Ubuntu", meaning "I Am Because We Are;" in simpler terms "humanity." Ubuntu is a Nguni Bantu.

The Kickoff launched the month's theme and presented Ubuntu to the community, taking place on the evening of Friday, Jan. 31 at the Lory Student Center Theatre. The event included spoken word,

dancing, singing, and other performances. It also presented live statues, played by students, that represented iconic people of the past who will tell the stories of those they are dressed as. Thank you to Michaelah Cole, DJ Chapa, Melissa Edwards, Arisson Stanfield, Shayleen Moses, Ezi Ohaya, Joseph Adeowo, Mia Adkins, Drew Hurdorn, Desmond Evans, and Jaylen Spires. Shout out to 102.9 Radio Station, the first hip-hop exclusive station in Northern Colorado.

More than just a fun celebration, the first event of Ubuntu was about coming together to share and reflect on the past and future as a Black Community. What a great way to start the month!





**THIS BLACK HISTORY MONTH, THE B/AACC OFFICE PARTNERED WITH THE ASSOCIATED STUDENTS OF COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY TO BRING A TEMPORARY ICE RINK TO CSU, IN AN EVENT CALLED, "RAMS ON ICE!". THE 30 BY 40 FOOT SYNTHETIC ICE RINK WAS ERECTED IN THE LORV STUDENT CENTER PLAZA AND OPEN TO ALL STUDENTS, FREE OF CHARGE, FROM 13 - 14 FEBRUARY. THE INSTALLATION NOT ONLY SERVED TO BRING STUDENTS TOGETHER FOR SOME UNIQUE AND SLIPPERY FUN, BUT TO EDUCATE THEM ABOUT IMPORTANT BLACK FIGURES THROUGHOUT HISTORY AS WELL.**

**ALTHOUGH WEATHER HINDERED MASS PARTICIPATION THE FIRST DAY, FRIDAY'S TURNOUT WAS MORE THAN EXPECTED AS THERE WERE PLENTY OF PEOPLE LACING UP THEIR SKATES TO GLIDE AROUND FOR 10 MINUTES OR SO BETWEEN CLASSES. THE EVENT WAS HEIGHTENED BY MUSIC PROVIDED BY AFRICANS UNITED WHO WERE TABLING IN THE PLAZA DURING THE SAME TIME.**

**ALL IN ALL, THE EVENT WAS A HIT! WITH PLENTY OF FAMILIAR FACES FROM BOTH THE B/AACC AND ASCSU, THE ENERGY WAS KEPT HIGH AS PEOPLE WERE ENCOURAGED TO SHOW OFF THEIR BLADING SKILLS OR TRY SOMETHING NEW.**

*Rams on Ice!*

WRITTEN BY: ETHAN HARRIS



WRITTEN BY: TAYA CHAPMAN

BLACK HISTORY MONTH SPEAKER

# HABEN GIRMA: DISMANTLING STEREOTYPES AROUND DISABILITY

On February 25th, Haben Girma came to CSU and through her keynote she brought inspiration and education to attendees, all while dismantling stereotypes regarding disability. Haben Girma is the first Harvard Law graduate who is deaf and blind. In her keynote, Haben Girma combated stereotypes that deaf and blind people face. Girma associates disability with civil rights and says the shame and stigma around the word 'disability' is the problem. She speaks about how most barriers are created by society and they do not exist until people place it there. She accompanies this message with clips of her participating in activities such as salsa dancing and surfing. Haben states its not geography that creates justice, but people that create justice. In addition to breaking barriers for deaf and blind people, Haben also gave tips on how people can be more inclusive to people with these identities; for example, adding captioning to videos can be

utilized by anyone not just deaf people, screen readers for blind people, and supporting assistive devices such as braille keyboards are just a few examples of inclusive action. Haben Girma states inclusion is a choice and when you choose to include you impact others. During the Q & A session, Haben Girma utilized a device that connects a braille keyboard to an alphabetical keyboard, and as one person types on the alphabetical keyboard Haben is able to read what they're typing in braille. Haben Girma's keynote was fascinating because I was inspired by the statements she made and the barriers she had overcome through personal stories. Overall, Haben Girma's keynote influenced us to rethink the term disability and the barriers that may come from it and how we can be more inclusive to those with disabilities.

BLACK STUDENT ALLIANCE PRESENTS:

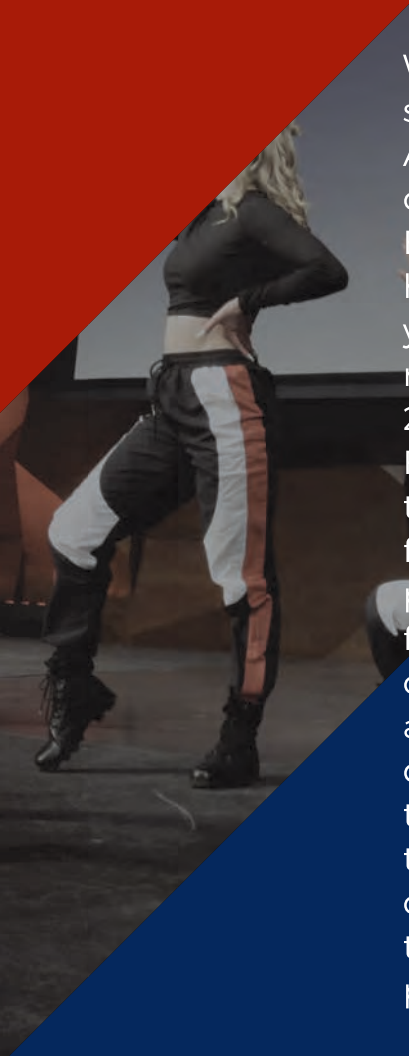
# HIP-HOP EXPLOSION STEP SHOW



WRITTEN BY: MIA ADKINS

With another year comes another successful show! Black student Alliance has once again showed out with their annual Hip-Hop Explosion Step Show. As this show has been carried out for many years, they did not disappoint and neither did their participants. With 2020's theme, "Journey to the Future," it was up to participants to take the crowd back to the future. Using influence from the past and technologies of the future, the participants battled it out to wow the judges. From appearance and precision, to difficulty and originality, it was up to the participants to execute their show efficiently to win the cash prize. However, it did not end there. For an additional cash prize, participants had the opportunity

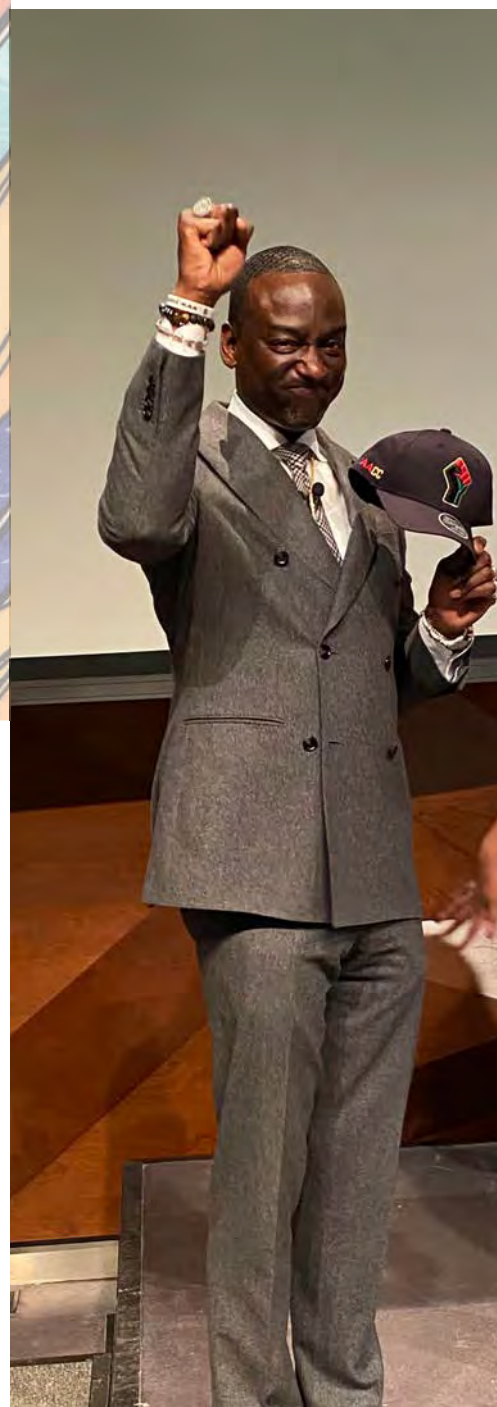
to show off their skills in the stroll off round which was gauged by the crowd. Participating in both, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., and Pi Lambda Chi Latina Sorority Inc put on a show that will never be forgotten. After rhythmic stepping took the stage, along with some powerful imagery, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. took both 1st in the Step Show and overall winner in the stroll off round. Coming in a close second was Pi Lambda Chi Latina Sorority Inc. The annual Hip-Hop Explosion Step Show is an event we all look forward to in Black History Month and we hope to see you in 2021 with the same energy!



# DR. YUSEF SALAAM

WRITTEN BY: JOURNEY TAYLOR

This year we were honored to have Dr. Yusef Salaam as one of our amazing keynote speakers for Black History Month. Dr. Salaam is one of the exonerated Central Park Five. The Central Park 5 include five young men of color who were wrongfully convicted for the rape and murder of a female jogger in New York. Later on, this case and the injustice surrounding it was captured in the award-winning documentary film, *The Central Park Five*, (2014) and a Netflix limited series *When They See Us* (2019). Both depict the travesty and unacceptable injustice that these men faced and shines a light on just how important it is to remain educated of our rights. To be able to watch the series and then hear the inspirational words of Dr. Salaam in person was truly a privilege. He reminded us that one instance does not have to define our lives in a negative way but can push us to make positive change.





# SOKA DANCE NIGHT

WRITTEN BY: ALIZAYNA WALTON

On Thursday, February 13th, Jordan Khalfani hosted a vibrant dance party filled with caribbean vibes and whine dancing. Jordan is a freshman at Colorado State University, she enjoys dancing and can easily persuade others to join her. As participants began to walk into the

ballroom, Jordan began playing some of her favorite tunes to get everyone in the dancing mood. Students and staff were able to release some tension and have fun learning to move their hips in a controlled, circular motion. We lined up to learn the moves and practiced while following Jordan in a dance circle. Everyone learned some sweet moves to a lit playlist featuring popular whine dance songs. At the end, the group was delighted to show off moves they previously knew and had just learned within the session. Everyone had a blast and we all could say it was an exciting work out for the evening.



# Thoughts of MLK Day as a Transfer Student

WRITTEN BY: LAMAR ARRINGTON

I woke up this day not knowing what to expect. This was the first time I have ever experienced an organized Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration. Admittedly little nervous about being able to fully engage with those also prepared for the day planned ahead, I wondered if this would just be more culture shock as a transfer student at CSU. As I woke up, clearing my mind of expectations and taking in sunlight, I had nothing but good thoughts for January 20th, 2020. With no expectation or knowledge, I journeyed to Colorado State University Campus early that morning to help provide service. As one of the participants, we began the day with a toiletry drive, partnering with Homeward Alliance, the Senior Center, and the Black/African American Cultural Center.

With the help of the SDPS offices, hundreds of items were donated. Those who were available to serve joined in packaging the toiletries for Homeward Alliance and the Senior Center to distribute over 300 bags to those in the community. With the day getting off to a great start, we all gathered with a diverse crowd in Old Town Square for a March back to Colorado State University Campus. Lead in song by Adrian Jones, the hearts of those who heard were instantly opened to next hear the strong, encouraging words of Malik Burton. Following the heartfelt song and the Powerful words that "We Shall Overcome" we were lead in a March back to Colorado State University that carried us into our Dr. Martin Luther King Jr Day Celebration.





What a strong and Encouraging Celebration it was. Emceed by our 2019 Homecoming winner Dejuan Chapa, he introduced the winner of the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. spoken Word contest and recent Colorado State University graduate, Xavier Hadley. Xavier took the stage to lead us through his winning spoken word performance. We then heard another song by Debbie Williams before the introduction of Dr. Ryan Ross. As Dr. Ryan Ross's keynote, we enjoyed the luxury of getting "Stirred Up" with help of his son. Following the keynote Shayleen Moses blessed us with a beautiful and free spirited dance.

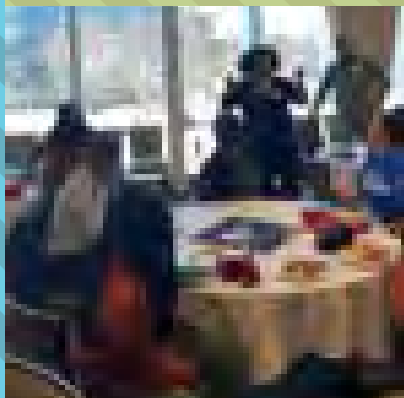
Shayleen's dance recognized and payed homage to the struggle and it served as a gentle but powerful reminder that the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. should not only be preserved but manifested to become more than a dream but a reality! This day left me appreciative of the things our ancestors have accomplished and fought for and encouraged me to have more faith in the power that I hold as a person of color. What a birthday celebration for the Great Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and oh how wonderful the cake was to end the day!



# Black History Month Lunches



*Black Faculty/Staff  
&  
Student Luncheon*



*Lunch at the Foundry*



*Aspen Grille*

THERE WERE MANY LUNCHESES HELD TO HONOR BLACK HISTORY MONTH THIS YEAR, WITH SOME SPECIALIZED CUISINE TO REPRESENT BLACK CULTURE THROUGH FOOD AND GATHERING!

# Real Talk Quotes

"I don't use the word around anyone that I wouldn't want to around me."

"You can't define blackness by struggle."

"Sometime there's only a certain black that's appreciated."

"How do we build community amongst each other without getting stuck in the context of student orgs."

"As a black community we put restraint upon ourselves..."

"I can finally say that the fight of loving my skin is over after find my black community here at CSU."

"My journey was not where I wanted to end up but it where I needed to be."

"You can't define Blackness by skin color."

"A relationship can be unhealthy when you are trying to feel a void."

# Lawrence Ross - Keynote Speaker



Lawrence Ross brought a captivating message about racism and bias to CSU's campus. With hundreds of attendees in the room, Ross encouraged accountability from our white counterparts as he went through explaining racism on college campuses. Ross provided a lot of historical context about institutional racism, and dove into fraternity/sorority life being a hub for racist actions.

Discussing schools around the nation, Ross provided powerful commentary on the many ways college campuses have played a pivotal role in exclusion of people of color, Black students specifically, and women. Through powerful representation through slides and images, Ross spoke to the tension of white peers in the room, ending his message with ways to be more accountable for racism when we see it, and when it is subtle.

# BEING BLACK & SERIES . .



BEING BLACK &...

BABY BOOMER

GENERATION X

MILLENNIAL

GENERATION Z

# Black Student Activist Conference



The first ever Black Student Activist Conference took place on Saturday, February 1, 2020. The conference was set in stone in response to many of the injustices that took place on campus this past semester and before. The conference was aimed to provide new perspectives about student activism with blackness at the forefront. It also provided space for reflection and opportunity to build connections with Faculty and Staff, students, and student from other institutions.

Universities in attendance were Colorado State University, University of Northern Colorado, Metropolitan State University, and University of Denver. It was a great time for all attendee's overall and a great opportunity to be a part of contemporary history.



# Susan Rice Keynote Speaker



To highlight the global engagement of CSU in the modern world, former UN Ambassador Susan Rice will present a keynote conversation with NPR correspondent Greg Myhre at 6 p.m., Feb. 11, in the Lory Student Center Ballroom.

# B/AACC GOES ABROAD







# Dearfield to Denver: Day Trip