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News Release

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NMCC to Host African-American Read-In on February 13

Aroostook County –Northern Maine Community College will be joining with schools, churches, libraries and other organizations across the county in hosting a Read-In to celebrate Black History Month as well as to promote literacy. The public is invited to attend the NMCC event, which will take place at noon on Monday, February 13, in the College library.

This marks the third year that NMCC faculty and students are taking part in an African-American Read-In. This year's Read-In topic is "Slave Narratives." The readings will focus on accounts of what life was like during and after slavery.

"Slave narratives are powerful because they capture first-hand the cruelties, struggles, and triumphs experienced by slaves," explained Jennifer Graham, NMCC English instructor and coordinator of the Read-In. "The narratives are vital historical accounts that provide a snapshot of what life was like for slaves. The stories are important as pieces of literature as well. They form one of the most far-reaching and influential traditions in African-American literature and culture."

Graham has worked collaboratively again this year with NMCC's assistant dean of learning resources, Gail Roy, to host the event. "Over the past three years, the library has expanded the collection of African-American authors and literature," said Roy. "Each year we create a display to highlight new authors. The display will be in the library throughout the month of February, and we encourage everyone to browse the selections and learn more about the writers and their work."

The Read-In event is sponsored by the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) and by its Black Caucus. It has been endorsed by the International Reading Association. Over a million readers of all ethnic groups from 49 states, the West Indies, and African countries have participated since read-in events first began in 1990. The goal is to make the celebration of African-American literature a traditional part of Black History Month activities.

At the conclusion of this year's Read-In Graham and Roy will be submitting details of the NMCC event to NCTE so that it will be included in national statistics regarding this year's African American Read-In results.

"The African-American Read-In is an event I look forward to every year," said Graham. "It gives students, staff, and faculty a chance to come together and listen to, learn about, and enjoy African-American literature. The event is a great way to celebrate Black History Month."

Anyone interested in reading at the event should contact Jennifer Graham via email at njgraham@nmcc.edu or by phone at 768-2890 no later than Thursday, February 9. All are welcome and encouraged to come listen to the readings.

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