

## **Call for Participants from Mount Vernon Public Library "Through the Years..." Capturing our Lives and Experiences in Mount Vernon, NY Oral History & Black Box Theatre Project**

**Project Kickoff: Saturday, December 5, 2009 from 1:00-5:00PM at the Mount Vernon Public Library**

Are you interested in the history of Mount Vernon, New York? Are you fascinated by acting and theater performance? Then you'll enjoy *"Through the Years..." Capturing our Lives and Experiences in Mount Vernon, NY - Oral History & Black Box Theatre Project* now underway at the Mount Vernon Public Library. Oral history work uses interviewing techniques to research and record the lives, experiences, and activities of ordinary people. The Project starts from the core idea that a community is the result of what people have done. Oral history has the potential to explore people's activity at *all* levels—from acts of kindness between neighbors, to larger scale local movements like tenants' associations.

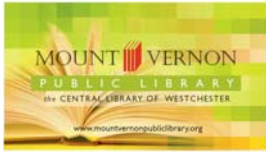
As part of our in-school outreach, youth participants will engage in interviewing members of the community, monologue writing and acting workshops. They will publicly present aspects of the collected stories and life-experiences, in the same vein of the Delaney sister's *Having Our Say*. A multimedia exhibit will be curated and installed in the Library's new art gallery, The Rotunda. Recorded interviews and transcripts will be added to the Library's Virginia McClellan Moskowitz Local History Room collection for preservation and research.

**We also need you, the community, to come on board.** Local involvement is key to creating a successful and sustainable project. This initiative will run from December 2009 to March 2010, at which time it is hoped that the project will continue in community hands.

**The official kickoff for the event is scheduled for Saturday, December 5<sup>th</sup>, from 1:00pm-5:00pm in the MV Library's Grace Green Baker Community Room.** Dr. Larry Spruill (City Historian) will make a presentation on historic families of Mount Vernon. StoryCorp, a public service dedicated to recording our lives for the Library of Congress, will share information on its national initiatives. Mount Vernonite Shirley Vaughn Jackson will read from her children's book entitled "Hot Dogs for the Queen" – a wonderful story about her childhood growing up next door to Eleanor Roosevelt. Materials will be available from American Legacy Magazine, the Westchester Historical Society, St. Paul's Church, and other local genealogical resources. Children's activities and refreshments will be provided.

Between now and Christmas 2009, the Mount Vernon Public Library seeks to bring together a team of 15-20 local people who will participate in a course on oral history methods. The training is free of charge. If this Project is to genuinely capture Mount Vernon's history, it must have community ownership and involvement. *Continued...*

*Mount Vernon Public Library*  
28 South First Avenue, Mount Vernon, NY 10550 ~ phone: 914.668.1840 ~ fax: 914.668.1018  
[www.mountvernonpubliclibrary.org](http://www.mountvernonpubliclibrary.org)



The *"Through the Years..." Capturing our Lives and Experiences in Mount Vernon, NY - Oral History & Black Box Theatre Project* is made possible by the Arts Alive program of ArtsWestchester, with funding from the Decentralization Program of the New York State Council on the Arts, and through the generous support of Target and American Legacy Magazine.

Would you like to find out more? Would you like to get involved? Can you volunteer one hour to interview a senior citizen from our community? Do you have any thoughts, comments, suggestions or questions? Then don't hesitate to email, or pick up the phone and contact: Karen Preuss, Assistant Director of the Mount Vernon Public Library or Donna Jackson, TTY Project Director.

Sincerely,

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**Family. History. Preservation. Performance.**

