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The Grand Rapids Public Museum to Host *Innovators: Celebrating Black History*

Innovators Program Kicks-Off Black History Month Celebrations With February Events Lineup and Community Engagement

Grand Rapids, MI - The Grand Rapids Public Museum (GRPM) The Grand Rapids Public Museum (GRPM) kicks off Black History Month celebrations this weekend with *Innovators: Celebrating Black History*. This one-day program takes place on Saturday, February 1 at the GRPM and showcases innovative Black-led initiatives impacting local, national, and global communities. Visitors will also explore historically significant artifacts from the GRPM collections, all invented by Black leaders.

Community partners will share information, prototypes, products, creations, ideas, and more with Museum guests. Partners include: Grand River Makerspace, Downtown Grand Rapids, Inc., Young Money Finances, Black Impact Collaborative, STEM Greenhouse, and Grand Rapids Black Nurses Association.

“We are excited to continue this great program celebrating Black innovators throughout history, both locally and nationally, as well as the great work local leaders are doing here in West Michigan,” said Rob Schuitema, Director of Public Programs at the Grand Rapids Public Museum, “It’s an honor to host many returning community partners and welcome new collaborations this year.”

Museum guests may also experience the temporary display: *Booker T. Washington Visits Grand Rapids* in the *Streets of Old Grand Rapids*. This display showcases magic lantern slides featuring 69 photographs of The Tuskegee Institute, now Tuskegee University. The Museum will showcase these rare slides along with period photography equipment during February in the *Streets of Old Grand Rapids*, inside the central window of the Voigt Herpolsheimer Co. section of the exhibit.

The Museum will again partner with Warner Norcross + Judd LLP and Grand Rapids Public Schools to showcase entries from their *Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Social Justice Legacy Contest*. Open to all sixth-grade GRPS scholars, entries from various GRPS schools will be displayed on the first floor of the GRPM near the *A is for Autos* exhibit.

These celebrations kick off the Museum’s STEAM month, with programming through February. *Innovators: Celebrating Black History* is free with GRPM admission. Admission tickets are available at tickets.grpm.org.

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Grand Rapids Public Museum

The Grand Rapids Public Museum is a 170-year-old, publicly-owned institution home to more than 250,000 unique artifacts that tell the history of Kent County and beyond. Funded in part by Kent County taxpayers through a 10-year millage (2016), the Grand Rapids Public Museum offers three floors of exhibits, the region's only planetarium, extensive educational offerings, and protection of The Mounds, a National Historic Landmark. The Grand Rapids Public Museum is accredited by the American Alliance of Museums, with its primary location in downtown Grand Rapids, MI at 272 Pearl Street, NW. For additional information including hours of operation, admission fees, Kent County discounts, and exhibit/event listings, visit grpm.org.