

## **African American Historical Society of South Central Pennsylvania hopes to recruit volunteer Walking Tour Coordinator**

### **For Immediate release:**

The African American Historical Society of South Central Pennsylvania is hoping to recruit a new volunteer tour coordinator with interest in sharing the community heritage of the local African American experience.

AAHSSCPA has been conducting walking tours of the historic City of Lancaster since 2016. Research for these tours and the implementation of the program has been accomplished with volunteer support. These tours have focused on people and events associated with the Underground Railroad and the establishment of African American faith communities. The sites and stories also include those from the African American experience here during the post-Civil War period, with advances into the early 20th century toward social and economic equality through homeownership and establishment of businesses owned by people of African descent. These tours – visiting about 10 sites over the course of 90 minutes to two hours -- are conducted on the first Saturdays of each month from May until November.

In 2023, while continuing the tours of Downtown sites, AAHSSPCA launched a separate tour program: Walking Tours of Historic Southeast Lancaster. These tours focus on the Southeast Quadrant of the City that has generally been referred to as the Seventh Ward. A multi-ethnic community from its beginnings in the 18th century, the neighborhood was impacted by the Post World War II out-migration of many White families. The neighborhood's social, political and physical make up was further disrupted by the mass demolition activities of the federal government's Urban Renewal Program during the 1960s and 70s. Over several years, that program demolished hundreds of buildings and divided/scattered some 900 households. As a result, the community became vulnerable to an increase in drug use, crime, unemployment and poverty, ushering in mass incarceration and gentrification. Despite these impacts, the Southeast Lancaster community remains a vital part of the City's makeup. Many sites and stories of compelling human interest and personal achievement are featured on these tours. At this time, there are 10 sites on the tour. The walk takes about 90 minutes. Tours are led by conductors with deep roots in the neighborhood and are conducted on the second Saturday of each month from May until November.

The Tour Coordinator will be responsible for:

1. Being present at the locations where the tours start, welcoming guests and arranging conductors with tour groups: Downtown – City of Lancaster Visitor Center on Penn Square, and for the Southeast tour, Crispus Attucks Community Center, 404 S Duke Street.
2. Recruiting additional volunteers as conductors and site hosts. Conductors are volunteers who lead groups – generally a maximum of 10-12 persons but often less -- from site to site and tell stories along the way. Site Hosts are volunteers who are stationed at some of the sites and who share the history of that site. Ideally, there should be a site host at each historic location, but

that is not possible due to the number of sites.

3. Contacting conductors and sites hosts via email at least a week before a tour day to make sure volunteers are able and ready to help with an upcoming tour, and to assign them to various tour shifts. Two tours are conducted on each day: 11 AM and 2 PM.
4. In collaboration with the AAHS Board members, generating promotional material about 6 weeks to a month before a tour season for distribution and use online and in print by news media and social media platforms.
5. Prepare a brief written monthly report to the AAHS Board of the previous month's tour activities: numbers of people attending, income and expenditures. Tour Coordinator is encouraged to attend monthly meetings and present the monthly report verbally to those attending.
6. Support the efforts of AAHS Board Treasurer and City of Lancaster staff who hold the lead responsibilities for financial transactions and accounting.