

Media Contact: Zack Loehle, Communications Manager
Arabia Mountain Heritage Area Alliance
p: 678-699-2768 | e: zack@arabiaalliance.org



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Sept. 11, 2020

History Worth Preserving: The Future of the Historic Bruce Street School

Community Survey to Determine Future Use of Historic Site

LITHONIA, Ga. – Community members are being asked to weigh in on the future of the Bruce Street School ruins, the remnants of the first public school in DeKalb County for Black students. Also known as the Old School Building, the ruins are located next to the future site of the East DeKalb Community and Senior Center, all within Lithonia's historic Bruce Street community. The Arabia Mountain Heritage Area Alliance, in partnership with the City of Lithonia and DeKalb County government, seeks community input on the future of the site through a [survey](#). The results of the [survey](#) will determine in what way the historic site is preserved – whether as an artifact, a public gathering place, or something else entirely. An important part of the Arabia Mountain National Heritage Area, the Old School Building ruins make up an essential piece of the history of this nationally significant landscape just outside of Atlanta.

The Bruce Street School dates back to the 1930's, when the trustees of what was then the Yellow River School, the local school for Black students, bought land on Bruce Street and began raising money to build a new school. The current school structure dates back to 1938. Renamed the Lithonia Negro School, the school began to receive support from the DeKalb County government. The first graduating high school class (around 1943) included three pupils. By 1968, when the Bruce Street School was closed, there were over a dozen elementary and eight high school classrooms. The Old School Building ruins still speak to the power and resilience of Lithonia's Black community. Now, people have an opportunity to determine how this space can become part of the community once again.

Working with DeKalb County and City of Lithonia governments, the Arabia Mountain Heritage Area Alliance (the nonprofit partner of the Arabia Mountain National Heritage Area) has created a [survey](#) for community members to fill out. The results of this survey will help determine what happens with the school ruins. Options include a communal gathering space, a historic marker, and more. "The Bruce Street School is a critical part of the history of Lithonia and the entire National Heritage Area," said Revonda Cosby, Executive Director of the Arabia Alliance. The survey will allow community members to "share your memories, your memorabilia, the stories and the things that you love most about this place – and help us give it its new vision... We are very excited to work with the City of Lithonia, DeKalb County and the community at large as we reactivate this historic space," Cosby continued.

For more information about the project, please visit <https://arabiaalliance.org/brucestreet> and fill out the [survey](#). A presentation about the scope and possibilities of the project [can be found here](#).

- more -



The current status of the Bruce Street School ruins, prior to historic preservation efforts. The Arabia Alliance, the City of Lithonia and DeKalb County are collaborating to ensure the preservation of these historic school remnants.

###

About Arabia Alliance

The Arabia Mountain Heritage Area Alliance is dedicated to protecting, connecting and sharing the powerful history, rich culture and engaging landscapes of the Arabia Mountain National Heritage Area (AMNHA) for the benefit and enjoyment of all. The staff and volunteer board of the Arabia Alliance work with partners across the AMNHA to ensure that everyone can benefit from the cultural and natural resources of the National Heritage Area. For more information, visit www.arabiaalliance.org.