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## Arabia Alliance To Host Juneteenth Storytelling Festival at Bruce Street on 6/15

*The Juneteenth Festival at the Historic Bruce Street School in Lithonia will include oral histories and storytelling from the school's students.*

**Lithonia, GA** – Enjoy history come alive through storytelling. The Arabia Mountain Heritage Area Alliance is thrilled to announce a Juneteenth Storytelling Festival at Lithonia's [Historic Bruce Street School](#), the first public school for Black students in DeKalb County. On Thursday, June 15<sup>th</sup> from noon to 3pm, join Arabia Alliance staff and Bruce Street School alum and attenders for a day filled with storytelling, oral histories, and Soul food.

"Story telling is one of the connective tissues within the Arabia Alliance community," said Revonda Cosby, Executive Director of the Arabia Mountain Heritage Area Alliance. "Hearing history is life changing and remembering history is our duty. I cannot wait to hear the stories and be part of the team that brings them to life."

The history of the Bruce Street School's grassroots education goes back to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The old stone school building that remains today stands as a legacy of African American education in DeKalb County and the power of community. This granite structure dates back to the 1930s 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 for a new schoolhouse. The school closed in 1955 when the Georgia legislature, in an attempt to avoid desegregation mandated by Brown vs. Board of Education, built "equalization schools" throughout Georgia. The pupils moved across the street to the "new" Bruce Street School that still stands today. After it was closed, the stone school suffered a fire and crumbled from neglect.

Students who attended the Bruce Street School 70 years ago are still alive today, and they remember their days at the old school. Their stories need to be heard and recorded. Come out to Lithonia on June 15<sup>th</sup> to take part in the recording and retelling of living history and to ask questions of the last students of this historic school site.

The Arabia Alliance is currently in the midst of a Capital Campaign fundraiser to raise \$100,000 from the community. This money will help prepare the Bruce Street School ruins for a larger transformation into a multi-use amphitheater and events space with a community garden, food forest, and more. That revitalization will also mean preserving this site's history for generations to come. For more information or to donate, [click here](#).

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### **About the Arabia Alliance**

The Arabia Mountain Heritage Area Alliance is dedicated to protecting, connecting and sharing the unique 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](http://www.arabiaalliance.org).