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MEDIA ADVISORY

BCRI Celebrates a Joyous Kwanzaa

The Community of Readers Program Returns to The Institute

BIRMINGHAM, AL (December 13, 2021) – This Saturday, the Institute invites you and your family to a free community event to celebrate and learn more about the history and etymology of Kwanzaa! We'll have warm drinks, fun crafts, and great books to share from 10:00 a.m. until noon.

The BCRI Community of Readers Program aims to bridge the gap between literacy and parental involvement by instructing families about better reading habits, promoting local parents' belief in their own capabilities as educational mentors, and using books to enhance the time that families spend together. This weekend, we'll offer a read-along and free copies of *My First Kwanzaa* by Karen Katz and *Seven Spools of Thread* by Angela Shelf Medearis.

Kwanzaa is an annual celebration of African American culture that is held from December 26th to January 1st. Culminating in a communal feast called Karamu, usually held on the 6th day, it was first celebrated in 1966 and based on African harvest festival traditions from various parts of Africa - including West and Southeast Africa. The symbols, observances, and traditions of Kwanzaa were established as a means to help African Americans reconnect with their African ancestry and heritage.

Often mistaken for a religious holiday, Kwanzaa's purpose is to promote unity among African-Americans, as well as an understanding of our cultural roots. The week-long holiday is not meant to replace Christmas, Hanukkah, or other winter holidays. "I'm really looking forward to sharing the tradition of Kwanzaa with Central Alabama this weekend," said Yvette Chapman, founder the Birmingham Chapter of National Hook Up of Black Women.

All are welcome to come and discover the seven principles of Kwanzaa, or Nguzo Saba – the seven principles of African Heritage. We'll observe the Kwanzaa traditions of music and dance, craft musical instruments and offer free books about Kwanzaa book in celebration for you take home and pass down to loved ones for generations.

Those interested in learning more about Community of Readers can visit bcri.org and follow The Institute on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Twitter - @bhamcivilrights.

About BCRI: The Birmingham Civil Rights Institute is a cultural and educational research center that promotes a comprehensive understanding for the significance of The Civil Rights Movement in Birmingham. For nearly 30 years, we have enlightened each generation about civil and human rights. A part of the Birmingham Civil Rights National Monument and an affiliate of the Smithsonian Institution, we stand strong as the cornerstone of the civil rights story, a living memorial with an ongoing mission.