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Ashley House to Celebrate 'Mumbet Day'

11:39AM / Wednesday, August 04, 2010

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SHEFFIELD, Mass. — The Ashley House will be the location for a day-long celebration of Elizabeth Freeman, also known as Mumbet, who successfully sued for her freedom from slavery in 1781.

Events will take place Saturday, Aug. 21 and include book signings with authors of recent books about Elizabeth Freeman, a living history performance with Tammy D. Richardson, music with Otha Day, and dancing by Youth Alive! There also will be a Walk for Freedom to re-enact Mumbet's walk from the Ashley House, where she was enslaved, to the Sedgwick House, where she made her stand for freedom, and a dinner later in the evening. The celebration will be co-hosted by The Trustees of Reservations and the African American Heritage Trail.

The day's schedule is as follows:

Noon: Free house tours and book signings with the authors of "One Minute a Free Woman" and the authors of "A Free Woman on God's Earth."

1 and 1:30 p.m.: Performances by storyteller Tammy D. Richardson, portraying sketches from Mumbet's life.

2 p.m.: Ceremony honoring Mumbet with speakers and performances, including remarks from Gwendolyn Van Sant of Multicultural Bridge. Also featured in the ceremony will be a dance performance by Youth Alive!, an arts program based in Pittsfield, along with music making with drum and rhythm event Facilitator Otha Day that will involve the entire audience in celebrating the spirit of the day.



Photo courtesy Trustees of Reservations.
Tammy D. Richardson as Mumbet.

www.AfricanAmericanTrail.org.

3:30 p.m.: Walk for Freedom will begin to re-enact the four-mile walk that Mumbet took from the Ashley House to the Sedgwick House. The walk is a benefit for the Elizabeth Freeman Center, a nonprofit organization based in Pittsfield that provides services and counseling to Berkshire County victims of domestic violence. To pledge for the walk, visit www.crowfliespress.com or call 413-528-3856.

5:30 p.m.: Dinner held at the Marketplace Café. The admission to the dinner is \$30, which will include dinner for four and a copy of "A Free Woman on God's Earth," a children's book about Mumbet by Jana Laiz and Ann-Elizabeth Barnes. All proceeds from the walk and the dinner will benefit the Elizabeth Freeman Center and are organized by Crow Flies Press.

The Ashley House is a property of The Trustees of Reservations and an anchor site on the African American Heritage Trail. It is located at 117 Cooper Hill Road. For more information about the open house and ceremony, visit www.TheTrustees.org or call 413-298-3239. For more information about The African American Heritage Trail, visit



Elizabeth Freeman, painted by Susan Ridley Sedgwick, circa 1812.

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