

Roxanne Maher

From: Gary St. Vil
Sent: Thursday, March 21, 2024 4:48 PM
To: Amanda Fagan; mwestkott@ledyard.net; lhunter@ledyard.net; Ryan Earley; lhunter@ledyard.net
Cc: Jason S. Hartling; April Brunelle; Naomi Rodriguez; Roxanne Maher; rsnay@ledyard.net; Sally Davidson
Subject: Winners of 2024 Black History Month Contest
Attachments: Winners of 2024 BHM Contest .pdf

Dear Principals,

Thank you for supporting Ledyard's 2024 Black History Month contest and I am delighted to provide the attached list of winners.

Every winner is invited to the Wednesday, March 27, 2024, Town Council Meeting to accept their award. The meeting will be held in the Town Hall Annex at 7:00 pm and the student's family is encouraged to attend.

Respectfully,

Gary St. Vil
Ledyard Town Councilor

Dear Principals,

I am delighted to announce the results of our recent Black History Month poster and essay contest. The following esteemed panel of judges dedicated their time and expertise to the challenging task of selecting the most deserving winners:

- Town Council Chairman, Naomi Rodriguez
- Town Councilor, Gary St. Vil
- Ledyard Police Department SGT. Michael J. McKinney
- Ledyard Board of Education Chairman, Alex Rode
- Ledyard Library Commissioner, Ralph Hightower

Their unwavering commitment ensured a rigorous and impartial assessment of each entry, despite the exceptional quantity and quality of submissions.

I am honored to announce the following students from your schools as the winners in their respective categories:

High School Student Essay Contest:

- 1st Place (tie): Ephraim Medic, Grade 10
- 1st Place (tie): Adrian Beltre, Grade 12
- 1st Place (tie): Mackenzie Hope, Grade 12
- 2nd Place (tie): Sophia Holloway, Grade 10
- 2nd Place (tie): Teagan Caviness
- 3rd Place (tie): Aleecia Helme, Grade 10
- 3rd Place (tie): Roan Fothergill, Grade 11

Middle School Student Essay Contest:

- 1st Place (tie): Annabella Miner, Grade 6
- 1st Place (tie): Elianys Zoe Vazquez Malave, Grade 7
- 2nd Place (tie): Madeline Litwin-Gaccione, Grade 8
- 2nd Place (tie): Anaya Chumpitazi, Grade 7
- 3rd Place: Zixuan Lin, Grade 8

Grade 3-5 Poster Contest:

- 1st Place (tie): Mason Mitsko, Grade 3 - Mrs. Gennells - GHS
- 1st Place (tie): Renaja McLeod, Grade 5 - Mrs. Hills - JWL
- 2nd Place (tie): Olivia Wardell, Grade 3 - Ms. Thomas - GHS
- 2nd Place (tie): Lesley Jean, Grade 5 - Mrs. McVeigh - JWL
- 3rd Place: Emilia King, Grade 5 - Mrs. Hills - JWL

Grade K-2 Poster Contest:

1st Place (tie): Nora Veara, Grade 2 - Ms. Florez - GHS
1st Place (tie): Kaylee West, Grade 2 - Ms. Florez - GHS
2nd Place: Nyarie Torres, Grade 2 - Ms. Florez - GHS
3rd Place: Marcy Gallagher, Grade 2 - Ms. Florez - GHS

Please join me in extending our sincerest congratulations to each of these talented students. Their remarkable achievements serve as a testament to their bright future and deep understanding of the significance of Black History Month.

Furthermore, each winner has been invited to attend the Wednesday, March 27, 2024, Town Council Meeting to accept their award. Your assistance in encouraging the winning students to attend would be greatly appreciated.

Thank you for your steadfast support in fostering an environment where excellence and diversity thrive.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Gary St. Vil". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping "G" and "V".

Gary St. Vil
Ledyard Town Councilor

Roxanne Maher

From: Gary St. Vil
Sent: Saturday, March 23, 2024 12:03 PM
To: Sally Davidson
Cc: Roxanne Maher; Naomi Rodriguez
Subject: Congratulations on Winning the Black History Month Contest !

Dear Zixuan Lin,

I am delighted to inform you that you have been selected as the **3rd Place Essay Contest winner!** Your entry stood out among the many submissions we received, and it is a testament to your dedication and appreciation for Black history.

As a winner, you and your family are invited to attend the Wednesday, March 27, 2024, Town Council Meeting to accept your award. The meeting will be held at 7:00 pm in the Town Hall Annex; please arrive early.

Congratulations on this well-deserved recognition! Your participation in this contest has not only showcased your talent but also contributed to the celebration and understanding of Black history within our community.

Thank you for your enthusiasm and commitment, and we look forward to celebrating with you next Wednesday.

Best regards,

Gary St. Vil Ledyard Town Council

From: Sally Davidson <s davidson@ledyard.net>
Sent: Friday, February 16, 2024 2:45 PM
To: Gary St. Vil <GSvil@ledyardct.org>
Subject: BHM Essay Contest Submission

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Hi Mr. St. Vil,

I'm submitting this essay on behalf of my student, Zixuan Lin. She's in the 8th grade at LMS. Thanks!

--
Sally Davidson
8th Grade Language Arts Teacher
Ledyard Middle School
(860) 464-3188 x 3208

Roxanne Maher

From: Gary St. Vil
Sent: Saturday, March 23, 2024 12:06 PM
To: Sally Davidson
Cc: Roxanne Maher; Naomi Rodriguez
Subject: Congratulations on Winning the Black History Month Contest!

Dear Madeline Litwin-Gaccione,

I am delighted to inform you that you have been selected as the **2nd Place Essay Contest winner!** Your entry stood out among the many submissions we received, and it is a testament to your dedication and appreciation for Black history.

As a winner, you and your family are invited to attend the Wednesday, March 27, 2024, Town Council Meeting to accept your award. The meeting will be held at 7:00 pm in the Town Hall Annex; please arrive early.

Congratulations on this well-deserved recognition! Your participation in this contest has not only showcased your talent but also contributed to the celebration and understanding of Black history within our community.

Thank you for your enthusiasm and commitment, and we look forward to celebrating with you next Wednesday.

Best regards,

Gary St. Vil Ledyard Town Council

From: Sally Davidson <s davidson@ledyard.net>
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2024 8:48 PM
To: Gary St. Vil <GSVil@ledyardct.org>
Subject: BHM Essay Contest Submission

You don't often get email from sdavidson@ledyard.net. [Learn why this is important](#)

Hi Mr. St. Vil,

I'm submitting this essay on behalf of my student, Madeline Litwin-Gaccione. She's in the 8th grade at LMS. Thanks!

--

Sally Davidson
8th Grade Language Arts Teacher
Ledyard Middle School

(860) 464-3188 x 3208

Roxanne Maher

From: Gary St. Vil
Sent: Saturday, March 23, 2024 12:09 PM
To: Rebecca Snay
Cc: Roxanne Maher; Naomi Rodriguez
Subject: Congratulations on Winning the Black History Month Contest!

Dear Anaya Chumpitazi,

I am delighted to inform you that you have been selected as the **2nd Place Essay Contest winner!** Your entry stood out among the many submissions we received, and it is a testament to your dedication and appreciation for Black history.

As a winner, you and your family are invited to attend the Wednesday, March 27, 2024, Town Council Meeting to accept your award. The meeting will be held at 7:00 pm in the Town Hall Annex; please arrive early.

Congratulations on this well-deserved recognition! Your participation in this contest has not only showcased your talent but also contributed to the celebration and understanding of Black history within our community.

Thank you for your enthusiasm and commitment, and we look forward to celebrating with you next Wednesday.

Best regards,

Gary St. Vil Ledyard Town Council

From: Rebecca Snay <rsnay@ledyard.net>
Sent: Wednesday, February 21, 2024 1:09 PM
To: Gary St. Vil <GSVil@ledyardct.org>
Subject: Black History Month Essay Contest

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Name: Anaya Chumpitazi
School: Ledyard Middle School
Grade: 7

Black History Month means to me that we are celebrating all the African American heroes and what they have done for us. We all know who Martin Luther King is. But he wasn't just someone part of the civil rights movement, He protested all over the world talking about How colored people shouldn't be treated any differently than white people. He won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964, and at the time he was the youngest to do it. He tried to prove to everyone that black lives matter, and that is what black history month is all about.

I can't even imagine how much people were getting hurt because people were being so racist towards them, treating them like they are trash, Like they don't even matter. Well black lives do matter, Because we are all human, We shouldn't be treated differently just because we are different if you know what I'm saying. The world wouldn't be the same if we all had the same features, if we all were the same person. Life would be so boring, but Everyone matters.

No one is greater than the other person/ Everyone should be treated the same. No one should be treated differently just because they look different or act different. Everyone should be treated the same. We are no different than the other person. We're unique just the way we are. Just the way God made us.

--

Rebecca Snay
6th and 7th Grade Language Arts
Ledyard Middle School

Roxanne Maher

From: Gary St. Vil
Sent: Saturday, March 23, 2024 12:12 PM
To: Rebecca Snay
Cc: Roxanne Maher; Naomi Rodriguez
Subject: Congratulations on Winning the Black History Month Contest!

Dear Elianys Zoe Vazquez Malave,

I am delighted to inform you that you have been selected as the **1st Place Essay Contest winner!** Your entry stood out among the many submissions we received, and it is a testament to your dedication and appreciation for Black history.

As a winner, you and your family are invited to attend the Wednesday, March 27, 2024, Town Council Meeting to accept your award. The meeting will be held at 7:00 pm in the Town Hall Annex; please arrive early.

Congratulations on this well-deserved recognition! Your participation in this contest has not only showcased your talent but also contributed to the celebration and understanding of Black history within our community.

Thank you for your enthusiasm and commitment, and we look forward to celebrating with you next Wednesday.

Best regards,

Gary St. Vil Ledyard Town Council

From: Rebecca Snay <rsnay@ledyard.net>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 7:16 AM
To: Gary St. Vil <GSVil@ledyardct.org>
Subject: Black History Month Essay Contest

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Name: Elianys Zoe Vazquez Malave
School: Ledyard Middle School
Grade: 7

Black History Month is an annual celebration to honor all African Americans. The father of Black History Month is Carter G Woodson. Carter G Woodson was an author and an American historian. Some other Black History Month influential people were creative people like Gordon Park and Don Cornelius and social justice Fighters such as Bayard Rustin and Dorothy Height and an influential politician and Publisher was Robert Sengstacke Abbott. African American history icons like Ruby Bridges and Claudette

Colvin, Harriet Tubman, and Maya Angelou. One of the biggest icons is Dr Martin Luther King Jr who fought for equal rights for black Americans during the 1950s and '60s and was assassinated.

But, what does Black History Month mean to me? Black History Month for me is a month to remember all these incredible people like Rosa Parks, Malcolm X, Dr Martin Luther King, and Carter G Woodson and many more. Black History Month to me is a month where African Americans are celebrated for their beauty and their talent and to remember those who have come before them. For those influential people who may rest in peace. But these famous African Americans who are still around too. For the singers, the authors, the activists. The Poets. The artists. The musicians for a singer like Lizzo or SZA. Michelle Obama, Barack Obama, Whoopi Goldberg, And Yolanda Renee King. and we got some famous sports players too like LeBron James. Kobe, who died tragically. We all remember these people and recognize the ones that are still with us. There are yet more to rise. We all have to remember the sacrifices these people made not only for their race but worldwide, for you, for you, for you, for me, for us - Kwame Alexander. We have to remember to treat everybody equally, and not to judge or assume first because everybody deserves respect and kindness no matter what. "Every great dream starts with a dreamer"- Harriet Tubman.

Why do I love the Month? I love Black History Month because it has so many holidays in it! But also because it's a reminder of our dark history..... But the great history that came after those dark, deep, times. February 1st holds significance because that was the date Abraham Lincoln signed the 13th Amendment outlawing slavery in 1865. And on June 30, 1948, President Harry Truman signed a bill declaring February 1st as the first official National Freedom Day in the United States. All these reminders give us an idea of the world that came before.

Why do we need to learn about it more? We usually spend about a day learning about Black History which is never enough time. During February we should learn what great things happened that day, for the whole month. But it's also an important piece of history that many people would enjoy learning about.

--

Rebecca Snay
6th and 7th Grade Language Arts
Ledyard Middle School

Roxanne Maher

From: Gary St. Vil
Sent: Saturday, March 23, 2024 12:15 PM
To: Roxanne Maher; Naomi Rodriguez
Subject: Fw: Congratulations on Winning the Black History Month Contest!

fyi

From: Gary St. Vil <GSVil@ledyardct.org>
Sent: Saturday, March 23, 2024 12:14 PM
To: Rebecca Snay <rsnay@ledyard.net>
Subject: Congratulations on Winning the Black History Month Contest!

Dear Annabella Miner,

I am delighted to inform you that you have been selected as the **1st Place Essay Contest winner!** Your entry stood out among the many submissions we received, and it is a testament to your dedication and appreciation for Black history.

As a winner, you and your family are invited to attend the Wednesday, March 27, 2024, Town Council Meeting to accept your award. The meeting will be held at 7:00 pm in the Town Hall Annex; please arrive early.

Congratulations on this well-deserved recognition! Your participation in this contest has not only showcased your talent but also contributed to the celebration and understanding of Black history within our community.

Thank you for your enthusiasm and commitment, and we look forward to celebrating with you next Wednesday.

Best regards,

Gary St. Vil Ledyard Town Council

From: Rebecca Snay <rsnay@ledyard.net>
Sent: Wednesday, February 21, 2024 1:21 PM
To: Gary St. Vil <GSVil@ledyardct.org>
Subject: Black History Month Essay Contest

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Student: Annabella Miner

School: Ledyard Middle School

Grade: 6

Black History Month means respecting and embracing ourselves, each other, and our differences.

It means celebrating the colored men and women that are historically famous and recognizable, and the ones who may not be famous.

It means respecting them for who they are, not how they seem to be to the wrong people.

It means celebrating who we are and celebrating our differences and our flaws.

Because our flaws are what make us unique, not weird or strange.

We are all beautiful in our best ways, and black history month is the time to recognize that.

It is not the time, and it is never the time to put things on yourself, or be unkind to yourself and think you are strange and weird just because you are different.

It is a good thing to be different.

Our differences matter, and our differences are what make us who we are.

If we were not all different, then the whole world would be a zombie apocalypse.

(Well, not literally, but you know what I mean!)

We do NOT want that!

So black History Month is celebrating the colored people in the world, and supporting them for who they are, how they act, and who they would like to be in the future, and celebrating differences in all of us.

That is what black history month means to me.

--

Rebecca Snay
6th and 7th Grade Language Arts
Ledyard Middle School

Roxanne Maher

From: Gary St. Vil
Sent: Saturday, March 23, 2024 12:20 PM
To: medic@ledyard.net
Cc: Roxanne Maher; Naomi Rodriguez
Subject: Congratulations on Winning the Black History Month Contest!
Attachments: Black History Month.pdf

Dear Ephraim Medic,

I am delighted to inform you that you have been selected as the **1st Place Essay Contest winner!** Your entry stood out among the many submissions we received, and it is a testament to your dedication and appreciation for Black history.

As a winner, you and your family are invited to attend the Wednesday, March 27, 2024, Town Council Meeting to accept your award. The meeting will be held at 7:00 pm in the Town Hall Annex; please arrive early.

Congratulations on this well-deserved recognition! Your participation in this contest has not only showcased your talent but also contributed to the celebration and understanding of Black history within our community.

Thank you for your enthusiasm and commitment, and we look forward to celebrating with you next Wednesday.

Best regards,

Gary St. Vil Ledyard Town Council

From: Ephraim Medic (via Google Docs) <drive-shares-noreply@google.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 2:57 PM
To: Gary St. Vil <GSVil@ledyardct.org>
Subject: Black History Month

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Ephraim Medic attached a document

Ephraim Medic (medice@ledyard.net) has attached the following document: [Learn more](#)



Black History Month

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Understanding the Significance of Black History Month in People's Lives. Ephraim Medic Sophomore of Ledyard High School

Black History Month stands as a beacon of remembrance, celebration, and education, illuminating the lives of African American in our society. As an individual, Black History Month holds profound significance, serving as a reminder of resilience, triumph, and the ongoing pursuit of equality.

To me, Black History Month is more than just a designated timeframe to honor historical figures and pivotal moments; it's an opportunity to reflect on the enduring legacy of the Black community. It's a time to acknowledge the struggles and triumphs towards social justice and equality. Black History Month engulfs a collective narrative of strength and cultural heritage that resonates across generations.

At its core, Black History Month serves as a catalyst for critical conversations about race, and systemic inequalities. It prompts society to confront uncomfortable truths and reckon with the legacy of slavery, segregation, and discrimination. It compels individuals to confront their biases and actively engage in the fight against racial injustice.

Moreover, Black History Month is a celebration of resilience and cultural pride. It honors the countless unsung heroes who courageously fought for freedom, equality, and civil rights. From Harriet Tubman's daring escapes on the Underground Railroad to Martin Luther King Jr.'s impassioned pleas for justice, Black History Month immortalizes the courage and determination of those who paved the way for progress.

Furthermore, Black History Month serves as a platform for amplifying Black voices and narratives that have historically been silenced. It provides an opportunity to uplift Black activists whose contributions have enriched every facet of society. It's a reminder that Black history is not confined to the past but is an ongoing narrative that continues to shape our present and future.

As a society, Black History Month challenges us to confront the whitewashing of history and recognize the interconnectedness of all cultures and communities. It encourages us to embrace diversity and celebrate our differences on a personal level.

Black History Month holds immense significance as a time to reflect on my own identity, heritage, and place in the world. It's a reminder of the sacrifices made by previous generations, and it's a call to action by honoring their legacy.

In conclusion, Black History Month is a time of reflection, celebration, and education. It's a reminder of the resilience of the Black community and a call to confront injustice in our lives and strive for a more equitable society. Black History Month is not just a commemoration of the past but a push into our future uplifting all of us to embrace who we are.

Roxanne Maher

From: Gary St. Vil
Sent: Saturday, March 23, 2024 12:22 PM
To: hopem@ledyard.net
Cc: Roxanne Maher; Naomi Rodriguez
Subject: Congratulations on Winning the Black History Month Contest!

Dear Mackenzie Hope,

I am delighted to inform you that you have been selected as the **1st Place Essay Contest winner!** Your entry stood out among the many submissions we received, and it is a testament to your dedication and appreciation for Black history.

As a winner, you and your family are invited to attend the Wednesday, March 27, 2024, Town Council Meeting to accept your award. The meeting will be held at 7:00 pm in the Town Hall Annex; please arrive early.

Congratulations on this well-deserved recognition! Your participation in this contest has not only showcased your talent but also contributed to the celebration and understanding of Black history within our community.

Thank you for your enthusiasm and commitment, and we look forward to celebrating with you next Wednesday.

Best regards,

Gary St. Vil Ledyard Town Council

From: Mackenzie Hope (via Google Docs) <drive-shares-dm-noreply@google.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 21, 2024 4:25 PM
To: Gary St. Vil <GSVil@ledyardct.org>
Subject: Document shared with you: "Black History Month Essay Final Draft for Ledyard Town Council Essay Contest Due 2/23/2024"

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Mackenzie Hope shared a document

Mackenzie Hope (hopem@ledyard.net) added you as an editor. Verify your email to securely make edits to this document. You will need to verify your email every 7 days.

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[Black History Month Essay Final Draft for Ledyard Town Council Essay Contest Due 2/23/2024](#)

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Roxanne Maher

From: Gary St. Vil
Sent: Saturday, March 23, 2024 12:26 PM
To: beltref@ledyard.net
Cc: Roxanne Maher; Naomi Rodriguez
Subject: Congratulations on Winning the Black History Month Contest!

Dear Adrian Beltre,

I am delighted to inform you that you have been selected as the **1st Place Essay Contest winner!** Your entry stood out among the many submissions we received, and it is a testament to your dedication and appreciation for Black history.

As a winner, you and your family are invited to attend the Wednesday, March 27, 2024, Town Council Meeting to accept your award. The meeting will be held at 7:00 pm in the Town Hall Annex; please arrive early.

Congratulations on this well-deserved recognition! Your participation in this contest has not only showcased your talent but also contributed to the celebration and understanding of Black history within our community.

Thank you for your enthusiasm and commitment, and we look forward to celebrating with you next Wednesday.

Best regards,

Gary St. Vil Ledyard Town Council

From: Felix Beltre (via Google Docs) <drive-shares-dm-noreply@google.com>

Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2024 10:53 PM

To: Gary St. Vil <GSVil@ledyardct.org>

Subject: Document shared with you: "Black History Month"

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Felix Beltre shared a document

Felix Beltre (beltref@ledyard.net) added you as a viewer. Verify your email to securely view this document. You will need to verify your email every 7 days. [Learn more](#)



Black History Month

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Roxanne Maher

From: Gary St. Vil
Sent: Saturday, March 23, 2024 12:33 PM
To: Amanda Fagan
Cc: Naomi Rodriguez; Roxanne Maher
Subject: Congratulations on Winning the Black History Month Contest!

Dear **Teagan Caviness**,

I am delighted to inform you that you have been selected as a **2nd Place Essay Contest winner!** Your entry stood out among the many submissions we received, and it is a testament to your dedication and appreciation for Black history.

As a winner, you and your family are invited to attend the Wednesday, March 27, 2024, Town Council Meeting to accept your award. The meeting will be held at 7:00 pm in the Town Hall Annex; please arrive early.

Congratulations on this well-deserved recognition! Your participation in this contest has not only showcased your talent but also contributed to the celebration and understanding of Black history within our community.

Thank you for your enthusiasm and commitment, and we look forward to celebrating with you next Wednesday.

Best regards,

Gary St. Vil Ledyard Town Council

From: Amanda Fagan <afagan@ledyard.net>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 3:19 PM
To: Gary St. Vil <GSVil@ledyardct.org>; Naomi Rodriguez <NaomiR@ledyardct.org>
Subject: Black History Month essays

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Good afternoon, Councilors-

Attached please find eight entries for the Town Council-sponsored Black History Month essay contest.

Several of these kiddos indicated they had submitted via email to Mr. St. Vil, but just to be safe, I am re-submitting all of them after my conversation with the Chairwoman this afternoon.

Thank you for sponsoring this contest and for supporting different opportunities for our students' voices to be heard!

I appreciate you both.

Sincerely,
Amanda Fagan

Amanda O. Fagan
Principal, Ledyard High School
24 Gallup Hill Road
Ledyard, CT 06339
(860) 464-9600 x2100

Roxanne Maher

From: Gary St. Vil
Sent: Saturday, March 23, 2024 12:35 PM
To: Aleecia Helme
Cc: Roxanne Maher; Naomi Rodriguez
Subject: Congratulations on Winning the Black History Month Contest!

Dear Aleecia Helme,

I am delighted to inform you that you have been selected as a **3rd Place Essay Contest winner!** Your entry stood out among the many submissions we received, and it is a testament to your dedication and appreciation for Black history.

As a winner, you and your family are invited to attend the Wednesday, March 27, 2024, Town Council Meeting to accept your award. The meeting will be held at 7:00 pm in the Town Hall Annex; please arrive early.

Congratulations on this well-deserved recognition! Your participation in this contest has not only showcased your talent but also contributed to the celebration and understanding of Black history within our community.

Thank you for your enthusiasm and commitment, and we look forward to celebrating with you next Wednesday.

Best regards,

Gary St. Vil Ledyard Town Council

From: Aleecia Helme <helmea@ledyard.net>
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2024 10:33 AM
To: Gary St. Vil <GSVil@ledyardct.org>
Subject: What does Black History Month mean to me

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Black History