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COMMUNITY ACCESS UNLIMITED TO HOST NATIONAL AFRICAN AMERICAN READ-IN EVENT

Feb. 25 event will bring together social and educational groups and members of the community to celebrate literacy as a significant part of Black History Month

Elizabeth, NJ – February 10, 2012 – The youth members and staff of Community Access Unlimited (CAU) will host a Read-In Saturday, Feb. 25, as part of the 23rd National African American Read-In celebration designed to make literacy a significant part of Black History Month.

The Read-In will be held at 11:00 a.m. at CAU's facility at 80 West Grand Street in Elizabeth. The event is open to the public and anyone wishing to read or simply listen is invited.

CAU provides support services to people with disabilities and at-risk youth that enable members to live independently within the community. As part of that effort CAU provides at-risk youth with life skills training, including literacy training. A large segment of CAU's youth members are African American.

"I thought the national Read-In effort was an ideal tool for us to celebrate Black History Month while also integrating our concentration on literacy as a life skill that our members need to continually strengthen," said Wanda Watson, clinical director for CAU's Transitional Opportunities Program for its youth members.

"We always want to instill that spirit of reading and literacy. We also want our members to broaden their horizons and what better way to do that than through the inspiring words of African American writers."

CAU is partnering with teachers from Elizabeth High School; local college sororities; Prevention Links, a nonprofit dedicated to fostering communities through education, collaboration and linkages to resources; and other groups to support and promote the event.

The National African American Read-In was started in 1990 by the Black Caucus of the National Council of Teachers of English and has since been endorsed by the International Reading Association. More than a million readers from the United States, West Indies and Africa have participated.

Read-In hosts are selected for their interest, experience and knowledge in organizing groups, selecting appropriate reading materials and promoting literacy.

Participants who would like to read at the CAU event simply are asked to select something short written by an African American author.

"People are invited to bring something they'd like to share with the audience or to just join us and listen," Watson said.

About CAU

Community Access Unlimited (CAU), celebrating its 33rd anniversary in 2012, supports people with special needs in achieving real lives in the community. CAU provides support and gives a voice to adults and youth who traditionally have had little support and no voice in society. CAU helps people with housing, life skills, employment, money management, socialization and civic activities. CAU also supports opportunities for advocacy through training in assertiveness, decision-making and civil rights. CAU serves more than 5,000 individuals each year. For more information about CAU and its services, contact us by phone at 908.354.3040, online at www.caunj.org or by mail at 80 West Grand Street, Elizabeth, NJ 07202.