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Superintendent of Orange public schools closes out Black History Month

As part of the "Courage to Make a Difference" series, the Orange Housing Authority had its final program on Wednesday, Feb. 25, at Washington Manor Housing Complex. The audience included nearly 100 individuals ranging from teenagers to the elderly, marking Black History Month.

Dr. Walter McNeil Jr., executive director of the Orange Housing Authority, opened the event with remarks and recited, "The Negro and Education," a poem by Lena Mason, which he learned from his grandmother.

Washington Manor's Tenant Association shared an original piece titled "Black Women Are." The residents discussed the misconceptions and troubles that often accompany women of color. "This is for the sisters that forget just how regal and fabulous they are," Linda Bell, a former councilwoman, exclaimed.

The keynote speaker was Ronald Lee, superintendent of Orange public schools, calling on the younger generation to stand up.

"The problem is, the younger generation never had to struggle much," Lee said. "I tell our female students all the time that they hold the power."

All February, the residents of Washington Manor listened to participants read excerpts by notable African-Americans and were able to receive messages from countless guest speakers throughout the Housing Authority's month-long Black History Month celebrations. Guest speakers included: Housing and Urban Development's Public Housing Revitalization specialist Cephas Ward, Orange Mayor Dwayne Warren, Orange Housing Authority Chairman Coram Rimes and Orange Housing Authority commissioners Ernest Williams and Betty McLeod.



Ronald Lee, superintendent of Orange public schools, speaks to more than 100 people at Washington Manor Housing Complex as part of the 'Courage to Make a Difference' series on Wednesday, Feb. 25, where he was the keynote speaker.