

San Diego celebrates Malcolm X Day

written by Gloria Verdieu

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The Sixth Annual Malcolm X Day Celebration was held on May 20 at San Diego's

Malcolm X Library, commemorating the 98th birthday of ancestor El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz.

Kim Phillips-Pea, lead organizer, stood by her commitment to continue hosting an annual celebration emphasizing the importance of commemorating Malcolm X Day and educating the community, especially our youth, by dispelling the myths and untruths about Malcolm X.

The theme for 2023 was “Do for Self” - not in a narcissistic way, but by way of self-care and self-love so that we are able to care for and love others.

The program began with drumming through audience participation, followed by libations led by JohnnieRenee Nelson, honoring our ancestors’ past, present, and future.

Phillips-Pea pulled together individuals from many organizations, local, national, and international, and throughout the San Diego community, to form a program that addressed the concerns and challenges we face in this difficult time.

As the library’s performance annex filled, District 4 Council President pro tem Monica Montgomery, who is on the task force to study and develop reparation proposals for African Americans, spoke on the importance of honoring the legacy of Malcolm X. Next came Baye Kesbamera, member of the International Elders Advisory Board for the 8th Pan African Congress (PAC), who spoke about San Diego’s history of struggle.

Among the many community and organizational speakers was Brother Lee from the Nation of Islam (NOI), who spoke on mental health and wellness; a representative of the United Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), who read a statement on the legacy of Malcolm X; and a representative of the Friends of Malcolm X Library, who spoke about the library’s history.

Cultural performances included students of Dennis Newsome, instructor in the Afro-Brazilian martial art of Capoeira, followed by an intermission where healthy food was served, and everyone had time to break bread, socialize, and browse the community vendor tables circling the room.

The program ended with a panel discussion with Professor Matsemela Odom, international president of International People's Democratic Uhuru Movement (InPDUM) and Black is Back Coalition; Dahryan Muhammad, member of African Liberation Day 2023; and Sartteka Nefer, community activist.

Everyone was encouraged to read the "Autobiography of Malcolm X" and read his speeches, particularly those given after his trips abroad in 1964.

Everyone was invited to the African Liberation Day Rally and Conference to be held on the weekend of May 27-28 in San Diego.

