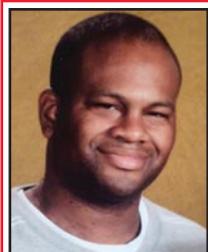


# COMMUNITY

## COMMUNITY BEAT



*Ken Harris is a former Special Police Officer and Corrections Officer. He is a graduate of STCC. Follow him at [shadowedu.blogspot.com](http://shadowedu.blogspot.com) [pvpeduc.wixsite.com/arts](https://pvpeduc.wixsite.com/arts)*

## The Springfield Cultural Partnership

By Ken Harris

I see the many tentacles of outreach by the Springfield Cultural Partnership (SCP) in a positive light as a sound, viable effort in increasing local arts and cultural expressions that benefit our community.

So far, an array of artistic programs promoted or sponsored by SCP have included events such as Painted Pianos, Art Stops, Utility Box Murals, and Fresh Paint Springfield which, along with many other offerings, serve to enhance the economic base of downtown while providing opportunities for local artists to showcase their talents.

Karen Finn, the Executive Director of SCP, the 501(c)3 parent organization of the Springfield Central Cultural District (SCCD), has been instrumental in her busy role of spreading the word concerning local resources, overseeing activities, and working in collaboration with local artists, the community, and legislative

bodies to highlight Springfield's cultural attractions.

To even fathom the magnitude of Karen's responsibilities with respect to SCP, consider the Springfield Cultural District with its 50 member organizations representing artists, culture, and businesses. SCCD is only one of 45 designated cultural districts in the commonwealth of Massachusetts. These districts were formed to display attractions such as art, music, theatre, dining, historic architecture, and more.

Karen is not just a spokesperson for SCP in the organization's ongoing mission to sort, gather, and help spread the word about the vast number of events and projects, she also works with the city's Office of Planning and Economic Development and local officials to emphasize the significance of arts and culture in making Springfield vibrant and attractive with appealing, walkable streetscapes, fine galleries, and cultural landmarks. Her energy and time are also spent in advocating for arts and seeking funding for SCCD programs by way of ongoing grant writing, member retention, and part-

nerships with local businesses.

When I inquired about performing at the Art Stop 2019 last May with my various puppets, I learned that event was just a fragment of what is offered on a yearly basis. Karen and the SCP are continuously organizing, planning, and implementing a yearly calendar of community engagement events in the cultural district.

Even before Karen and her family moved to the Springfield area in June of 2018, she already saw the potential in the city for economic growth with the fusion of artistic capabilities from local artists. She knew SCCD was a terrific way to unify the community and shape the city's cultural identity.

The Springfield Central Cultural District was founded in 2014 and with Karen's leadership, community pro-

grams have been established to strengthen, inspire, and engage the community. The organization strives to create and continue a creative economy through individual expression which is essential for cultivating cultures and arts. With Karen's previous work background in advocating, she plans to proceed with getting the word out about SCCD and how it not only promotes Springfield's Arts and Cultural events, but also plays a vital role in creating and sustaining a powerful and creative economy.

For more information about the SCCD and to get involved, check out its website at <http://springfieldculture.org/takeaction>.

Follow me at <https://pvpeduc.wixsite.com/arts>

## CONGRATULATIONS



*NCCJ Annual Human Relations Award Honorees were Glenn Welch, Delcie Bean, IV, Susan Goldsmith, Youth Honorees Ian Cole Baird and Analua Alencar Moreira, Ethel Griffin and Jose L. Claudio.*

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