The Black History Bee provides an opportunity for KUSD students and their families to become familiar with people and events in American history. Discussing the facts below can help to increase our knowledge of African American figures who have achieved great things against great odds, have made important contributions to the culture, thinking, standard of living, or political climate in the United States. Studying this information, and competing in the bee can also help to develop important learning skills including memorization, perseverance, communication, collaboration and sportsmanship. Historical events have been included on the list in order to reinforce our social studies curriculum, and help to put the lives and times of these heroic individuals in context. Titles of children’s books have been provided for teachers and families to enhance the learning.

**Dodge Family:** Elizabeth and Antoine are known to be the first black family to settle in Kenosha. According to family records, Antoine was the son of Henry Dodge, the first Governor of Wisconsin, who was known to have brought slaves with him to Wisconsin and granted them freedom soon after. Antoine fought for the Union Army during the Civil War. He and his wife had 14 children, many who later worked at Simmons Mattress Company. Their grandson, James Martin, was a WWI veteran recognized for his bravery in saving many wounded soldiers while fighting in France.

**Amistad Rebellion** took place in 1839, when a group of Africans who were being illegally imported to Cuba took control of the Spanish ship *Amistad*. The leader of the rebellion, 25–year-old Joseph Cinque tried to sail the ship back to Africa, but the ship’s owner steered it to the United States. Cinque and other Africans on the ship were tried in Connecticut, but with the help of an excellent legal team assembled by the abolitionist movement, they were eventually allowed to return to Africa after former President John Quincy Adams successfully argued their case before the US Supreme Court.

**Harriet Tubman**- called “The Moses of her people”, she helped to bring over 300 slaves to freedom using the Underground Railroad. She helped them escape by traveling from one safe place to another until they reached freedom in the north. She led her own parents to freedom. The Underground Railroad was neither under the ground, nor was it a railroad, but rather a safe passage to freedom with stops at “stations” along the way. She made 19 rescue trips and was never caught. During the Civil War, she served the Union Army as a nurse and spy. In 1978, the U.S. Postal Service issued a stamp in her honor.

*Learn more: Moses : When Harriet Tubman Led Her People to Freedom by Weatherford*

**Underground Railroad in Kenosha**- Two “stations” of the Underground Railroad were located in Library Square in the homes of Reverend Ruben Deming and Joseph Quarles. They took runaway slaves into their homes and smuggled them aboard wheat ships on Lake Michigan bound for Canada. Deming, Quarles, and John Bullen were among the 75 Kenosha men connected to the Liberty Association, an abolitionist organization that cooperated in freeing slaves.

*Learn more: Follow the Drinking Gourd by Winter*

**Frederick Douglas**- fought to improve American society as an activist, writer, outstanding public speaker, and publisher of *The North Star*, an anti-slavery magazine. After his freedom from slavery, he became a leader in the abolitionist movement, and helped convince people that African Americans had the intellectual capacity to become independent citizens. He was such an influential speaker that he convinced Abraham Lincoln to accept black soldiers into the Union Army. After the Civil War, he spoke out for education, land ownership, women’s rights and civil rights for former slaves. He is famous for saying: “Without a struggle there can be no progress.”

*Learn more: Words Set Me Free by Cline-Ransome*
Sojourner Truth—was a very dramatic and effective speaker who traveled across the country giving speeches on slavery and women’s rights. She changed her name from Isabella Baumfree after she escaped from slavery. Her famous speech, “Ain’t I a Woman?” was given at the 1851 Women’s Right’s Convention, though she could not read or write. Abraham Lincoln invited her to the White House.

Fourteenth Amendment (1867) made civil rights legislation permanent in the US Constitution and guaranteed Blacks equal protection under the law. After the Civil War, states were required to ratify the Fourteenth Amendment in order to become part of the Union (United States).

Daniel Hale Williams—In 1893 he became the surgeon who did the world’s first successful heart operation. He opened a hospital in Chicago to provide medical training for black doctors and nurses. He opened over 40 hospitals for black patients since many hospitals only provided help to white patients.

Granville T. Woods—known as “The Black Edison”, this brilliant inventor received over 60 patents for inventions including the telephone transmitter, which the American Bell Company bought the rights to, the electric egg incubator, and the automatic air brake system, which increased railroad safety. Other inventions include the “third rail” that made subway systems possible, and a device for transmitting messages between trains and stations, improving safety and communication.

George Washington Carver—developed over 300 products from peanuts including coffee, butter, adhesives, shampoo, face powder, ink, and vinegar. He taught southern farmers that growing crops other than cotton could help improve their farmland. Later he taught at Tuskegee University in Alabama. He was offered jobs from Henry Ford and Thomas Edison, but he chose to stay at Tuskegee and help improve the lives of black farmers.

Scott Joplin—was a great composer and pianist. As a boy in Texas he taught himself to play the piano. He played and composed a style of music known as “ragtime”. He wrote 2 operas and composed over 60 songs including the famous tune, “The Entertainer”.

W.E.B. DuBois—was a gifted scholar, writer, and advocate of human rights who was considered one of the most influential black leaders of his time. He was one of the founders of the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) in 1909.

Matthew Henson—at the age of twelve Henson became a “cabin boy” on a merchant ship, where over the next several years he sailed around the world, educated himself, and became a skilled navigator. As an adult, he traveled to the Arctic and lived with the Inuit who taught him how to build sleds and train dogs. In 1909, Henson and his colleague Robert Perry traveled with Inuit guides in an attempt to reach the North Pole. Because he was sent ahead as a scout when Perry could no longer continue on foot, Henson became the first American to reach the North Pole, and promptly placed a flag there to mark the accomplishment. In 1944, he was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor.

Madame C. J. Walker—while living in St. Louis, she discovered that her hair was beginning to fall out, so she created a mixture that cured her problem. It worked great, so she began selling it door to door. Her business grew and expanded to Denver, Colorado where she became famous for her hair care products. In 1910 she opened a factory in Indianapolis that employed 5,000 black women. She became America’s first black female millionaire.

The Great Migration (1916-1919) of Blacks from southern states like Mississippi, Georgia, Alabama and the Carolinas to northern cities like Pittsburgh, Chicago and Detroit changed entire communities. World War I created a huge demand for unskilled labor, and so the restrictions that prevented northern industries from hiring Black workers was lifted. As a result more than 500,000 people migrated over 3 years.

*Learn more: Only Passing Through: The Story of Sojourner Truth by Rockwell and Christie
*Learn more: What Color is My World? By Abdul-Jabar
*Learn more: In the Garden With Dr. Carver by Grigsby
*Learn more: I, Matthew Henson by Weatherford
*Learn more: Madame C.J. Walker: Self-Made Millionaire by McKissack
*Learn more: This Is the Rope: A Story From the Great Migration by Woodson
Harlem Renaissance began after World War I when Black artists created plays, painting, poetry, music and sculpture that celebrated African American life in the United States. This renaissance reflected the racial pride and self-confidence of urban Blacks in the north, plummeted after the stock market crash of 1929.

*Lear more: Celeste's Harlem Renaissance by Tate

Langston Hughes- was a major figure of the Harlem Renaissance in the 1920's. In the years between his first book in 1926 and his death in 1967, he wrote sixteen books of poems, two novels, three collections of short stories, four volumes of fiction, twenty plays, children's poetry, musicals and operas, three autobiographies. His work celebrates the ordinary black people - the people he most respected. "Montage of a Dream Deferred," published in 1951, was one of his best-known volumes of poetry. In 1960, the NAACP declared him "Poet Laureate of the Negro Race."

*Lear more: Langston Hughes by Hughes

Lake Ivanhoe- In the 1920's, 3 prominent black men from Chicago set out to establish a resort community for a growing elite black society. Jeremiah Brumfield, Frank Anglin, and Bradford Watson purchased an 83-acre site east of Lake Geneva. The resort's huge pavilion and dance floor were filled on opening night with the songs of music great, Cab Calloway. Streets were named for people and events in black history. Sales of lots exceeded expectations and black Chicagomans flocked to Lake Ivanhoe for weekend entertainment. The 1929 stock market crash and Great Depression of the 30's hurt the success of the community. Although Lake Ivanhoe's run as a black-owned resort was short-lived, its legacy lives on.

*Learn more: Garret Morgan: Inventor of the Traffic Light and Gas Mask by Murphy

Duke Ellington- called his music "American Music" rather than jazz, and wrote over 3,000 songs during his lifetime, including "It Don't Mean a Thing if it Ain't Got that Swing" and "Take the A train." His mother surrounded him with dignified people to reinforce good manner and elegance. Though his real name was Edward, his friends nicknamed him "Duke" because of his grace, style of dress, and self-confidence. His band, The Washingtonians, played in Harlem's Cotton Club as well as opera houses in New York, Chicago, and San Francisco. When asked what inspired him, Ellington replied: "My men and my race are the inspiration of my work. I try to catch the character and mood and feeling of my people."

Learn more: Duke Ellington: The Piano Prince & His Orchestra by Pinkney and Whitaker

Marian Anderson- was a famous opera singer in the 1930's. In 1939 she was denied the chance to perform at Constitution Hall in Washington D.C. because she was black. The Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) owned Constitution Hall, and when Eleanor Roosevelt found out that Anderson couldn’t sing there, she resigned from the DAR in protest. Instead, 75,000 people turned out to see Anderson sing on Easter Sunday at the Lincoln Memorial.

*Learn more: When Marian Sang by Munoz Ryan

Jesse Owens- was the son of a sharecropper and grandson of a slave, but winning four gold medals at the 1936 Olympic games has made him one of the best-remembered athletes in history. The games were held in Nazi Germany, where their leader Adolf Hitler believed the German (Aryan) people were the dominant race. During this period of racial hatred and segregation, Owens' victory not only proved Hitler wrong, he also demonstrated that race and nationality did not make one athletic better than another.

*Local connection- After his Olympic victories, Owens was part owner of a Negro League Baseball team from Ohio, the Toledo Crawfords. As a promotion, he often traveled with the team and raced against thoroughbred horse. In 1940, the Crawfords played in Kenosha at the Lakefront Stadium. Owens raced a 50 yard dash against Frank "Uke" Ulicki, a local Harley-Davidson dealer, who was riding a newest Harley. Owens won the race. Uke's Harley Dealership is still open on 60th Street.

*Learn more: Jesse Owens: Fastest Man Alive by Weatherford

Charles Richard Drew- studied the 4 types of human blood and how it could be preserved. He discovered and became an expert on collecting, storing, processing and shipping blood plasma. The idea of a blood bank came from him. His methods helped save the lives of thousands of soldiers during World War II. Later he became the director of the Red Cross blood collection, which helps save the lives of many people.

Learn more: What Color is My World? By Abdul-Jabar
Dorie Miller was a sailor on the battleship West Virginia in Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941 when Japan attacked America. Miller was a mess attendant for the US Navy. During the attack he was ordered to carry wounded sailors to safer locations. Though he was untrained, he took over one of the ship's guns and fired down enemy planes. He was awarded the Navy Cross for his extraordinary courage in battle. His image and the slogan, "Above and Beyond the Call of Duty" were used in a Navy-recruiting poster. Miller was portrayed by actor Cuba Gooding Jr. in the 2001 film Pearl Harbor.

Jackie Robinson was the first black man to play on a Major League Baseball team, but it wasn’t easy. Before being signed by Branch Ricky to the Brooklyn Dodgers in 1945, he played for the Kansas City Monarchs of the Negro National League. Upon entering the majors, he was often treated badly by players and fans. He was named Rookie of the Year, Most Valuable Player, and inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame. His success and personal strength paved the way for other black Americans. Learn more: Teammates by Golenbeck

Rosa Parks was a secretary of the Montgomery chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), and was learning about worker's rights and racial equality when she refused to give up her seat to a white passenger on a Montgomery, Alabama bus. In 1955, it was the law that if there were no seats available on the bus, Blacks had to give up their seats for Whites. Though others had protested this unjust law in the past by refusing to stand, Rosa Parks' actions sparked the Montgomery Bus boycott, which lasted just over 1 year (381 days) until the law was changed. Later, Parks worked with Dr. Martin Luther King and others, and became an international symbol of resistance to racial segregation. *Learn more: Rosa by Giovanni

Thurgood Marshall successfully argued Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas in 1954 by making the case that the segregated schooling (separating students by race) was inherently unequal even despite the conditions in their schools. The ruling required all public schools to admit both Black and White children so that they could learn together. Marshall continued to argue cases in support of desegregation until 1967 when President Lyndon Johnson appointed him as the first African American Supreme Court judge. *Learn more: Linda Brown, You Are Not Alone by Thomas

Muhammad Ali-born Cassius Clay, he won the gold medal in the 1960 Olympics in Rome for boxing. In 1964 he became the heavyweight champion by knocking out rival Sonny Liston. In 1967 he refused, on religious grounds, to register to enter the armed forces and fight in Vietnam, and so he lost his title. He later regained it after beating both Joe Fraizer and George Foreman. Ali lit the Olympic Torch for the 1996 Summer Games in Atlanta, Georgia. Sports Illustrated named him “Sportsman of the Century”. Currently, Muhammad Ali suffers from Parkinson’s disease and has raised over $45 million for his Parkinson Center. Learn more: The Champ by Bolden

Ruby Bridges-In 1960 a federal judge ordered that Ruby, a six year old, be allowed to enter first grade at Frantz Elementary, an all white school, in New Orleans. Angry mobs tried to prevent her from entering, so President Dwight Eisenhower ordered that armed federal marshals escort her. Ruby’s teacher, Mrs. Henry, said that Ruby often prayed for forgiveness for the people who harassed her. *Learn more: The Story of Ruby Bridges by Cole

Gwendolyn Brooks became a popular poet at a very young age when her poems began to appear in popular magazines. A Chicago native, she received many awards for her writing including the Pulitzer Prize, The Lifetime Achievement Award from the National Endowments for the Arts, and she was inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame. Learn more: Make a Joyful Sound (poems for children by African American Poets) by Brooks and Greenfield

Martin Luther King was born in Atlanta, Georgia, attended Morehouse College, and was later ordained a Baptist minister. He studied the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi, who practiced nonviolent action, and used his methods to fight against racism. On August 28, 1963, he led the famous “March on Washington D.C.” which drew over 250,000 people. “I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character” is a line from the famous “I Have a Dream” speech, which he delivered on that day. In 1964, he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his work as a leader of the Civil Rights Movement. President Ronald Reagan signed the national holiday celebrating his birthday into law in 1986. *Learn more: Child of the Civil Rights Movement by Shelton
Sidney Poitier - was the first black actor to win an Oscar award for his role in the 1963 film “Lilies of the Field”. He is best known for his portrayal of a black doctor who plans to marry a white woman in “Guess Who's Coming to Dinner?”, a movie that was the first to deal with such a social situation, starring Katherine Hepburn and Spencer Tracy.

Aretha Franklin - a singer, known as the “Queen of Soul”, is also a diva of pop music. Well-known for her 1967 hit “Respect”, Franklin sold millions of albums and won 15 Grammy Awards. In 1987, she became the first female performer inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. In 2009 she sang, “America the Beautiful” at President Obama’s Inauguration.

Arthur Ashe - a well-respected tennis player, he was the first black winner of a major men’s singles championship, the U.S. Open, in 1968. He won both the Davis Cup and Wimbledon singles against the #1 player, Jimmy Connors. He was also an author, writing A Hard Road to Glory, about the history of African Americans in sports.

Maya Angelou gave birth to her son Guy a few weeks after her high school graduation. As a young single mother, she supported her son by working as a waitress and cook, however her talent and passion for music, dance, performance, and poetry would soon take her to great places. She is best known for her book “I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings” one in a series of six autobiographies which focus on her childhood and early adult experiences during the Great Depression. In addition to her contributions as an artist and writer, Maya Angelou was active in the Civil Rights Movement and worked with both Malcolm X and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Learn more: Poetry for Young People: Maya Angelou by Wilson

Nancy Hicks Maynard was outraged as a teenager by the media’s distorted depiction of her neighborhood. She began her journalism career while she was going to college, and was hired by the New York Time when she was 21. Maynard became the first president of the Robert C. Maynard Institute for Journalism Education, which has trained thousands of journalists to accurately and fairly portray all segments of our society.

Guion Bluford - became the first African American astronaut in space. In 1983 he blasted off into outer space on the space shuttle “Challenger”. This was the first mission with both a night launch and landing, and it lasted six days. The crew was launching a weather satellite. He was trained to fly in the Air Force and flew combat missions in Vietnam. Before his retirement, he logged over 688 hours in space.

Learn more: 28 Days: Moments in Black History that Changed the World by Smith

Ben Carson - His mother told him, “The doors of the world are open to people who can read.” He graduated from Yale University and the University of Michigan Medical School. His interest in the brain and in surgery led him to a career as a neurosurgeon. He dedicated his life to healing children. In 1984 at the age of 33 he became the director of pediatric surgery at Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, Maryland. He became internationally known as the surgeon who successfully separated conjoined twins joined at the head, a surgery that lasted 24 hours. Carson is currently seeking the republican nomination for the 2016 presidential election.

Learn more: Gifted Hands, Kids Edition by Lewis

Mary Lou Mahone dedicated her life to helping the people of Kenosha. She volunteered many hours working for equal rights and a good quality of life for all children. As a native Kenoshan, Mary Lou Mahone worked hard for Kenosha’s poor children, improving their education. She was the first African-American PTA president in Kenosha and the first African American to run for the Kenosha Unified School District No. 1 Board of Education. Mahone was also an original founder of the Boys and Girls Club of Kenosha. In recognition of her work for children and education, Mary Lou Mahone Middle School was named in her honor. She died on June 8, 1999.

Mae Jemison - born in 1956 in Chicago, she was the first black woman to travel in space on the space shuttle Endeavor. After graduating from Stanford University and Cornell University, she joined the NASA space program in 1987. She later became an instructor at Dartmouth University in New Hampshire.

Learn more: The Girl Who Could Dance in Outer Space by Cointreau
Colin Powell- became the first black U.S. Secretary of State in 2001, formerly the Chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, the highest military post in the U.S. This four-star general played a leading role in the Desert Storm operations in the Persian Gulf.

Condoleezza Rice- her name comes from the musical term, con dolcezza, which in Italian means, “with sweetness”. Rice began to learn French, music, figure skating and ballet at the age of three. She started college at age 15, and received her Ph.D. in political science from the University of Denver when she was 26. In 2005, she was sworn in as the US Secretary of State, and became the second African American in this position following Colin Powell. In 2001 she was appointed to be the National Security Advisor by President George W. Bush. After leaving the White House she returned to her work as a professor at Stanford University.

Oprah Winfrey- a popular television personality, she got her first big break hosting the talk show “AM Chicago” later renamed “The Oprah Winfrey Show” in 1985. Her intelligence, honesty, and engaging personality attracted a wide audience. Projects such as Oprah’s Book Club and The Angel Network have been effective in promoting literacy and philanthropy. Her show ended in 2011, the same year she launched the television station OWN, the Oprah Winfrey Network. She is the first black woman to obtain billionaire status.

Ursula Burns- is the CEO of Xerox and the first black woman to head a Fortune 500 company. Making over $13 million per year, she holds a bachelor’s degree and a master’s degree in Mechanical Engineering. She focuses much of her time on organizations that help minorities and women gain education and self-respect. She is currently ranked #17 on the Fortune list of most powerful women.

Misty Copeland- popular ballet dancer became the first African American to dance the lead in both Swan Lake and the Nutcracker. She was named principal dancer for her dance company, The American Ballet Theatre, meaning she is the highest-ranking dancer. In 2015 she was named one of Time Magazine’s 100 Most Influential People. She has endorsement deals with American Express and Under Armour, and she is a member of Obama’s Council on Fitness, Sports, & Nutrition.

Bryan Stevenson- This graduate of Harvard Law School is the founder the Equal Justice Initiative in 1989, He may be best known for challenging racial discrimination in the criminal justice system. Lawyer and social justice activist, he speaks publicly to educate people about injustice and inequality and has a TED Talk about the need to talk about injustice. He is the author of the best-selling book, Just Mercy.

Audra McDonald- singer and actress, this six-time Tony Award winner has starred in Broadway productions of Ragtime, Porgy and Bess, Carousel, and A Raisin in the Sun. She studied classical voice at the famous Juilliard School. She has recorded 5 solo albums and appeared in the live televised version of “Sound of Music”.

Cory Booker- is currently a US Senator for the state of New Jersey. Highly educated, Booker played football and graduated from Stanford University. He was awarded the Rhodes Scholarship to study at Oxford University and later graduated from Yale Law School. As the former mayor of Newark, New Jersey, he connected with citizens through his extensive use of Twitter and other forms of social media.

Loretta Lynch- was appointed to US Attorney General in 2015 by President Obama when the position was vacated by Eric Holder. The Attorney General is the head of the US Department of Justice and is the chief lawyer for the US government. She graduated from Harvard Law School and is the first African-American woman to hold this position.

Barack Obama- is the 44th President of the United States, and won his campaign against John McCain in the 2008 election. Formerly a US Senator for Illinois, he was born in Hawaii and lived in Indonesia, and graduated from Columbia University and Harvard Law School. In 2009, President Obama was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize “for his extraordinary efforts to strengthen international diplomacy and cooperation between peoples”. He was re-elected for a second term in 2012 after beating Mitt Romney. The major issue he is currently facing is the implementation of the Affordable Care Act, also known as Obamacare. Learn more: Of Thee I Sing: A Letter to My Daughters by Obama