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Contact: Terri Allen

Thelemaque Associates
PO Box 441608
Fort Washington, MD 20744

301-203-0929 fax 301-203-4405
email: thelemaque@aol.com

***Sojourn With Words* Marks an Arts Renaissance Path in Prince George's County**

Oxon Hill Public Library grand reopening celebrations includes innovative new poetry cable program, taking Prince George's County residents on new literary and poetic journey.

It's Wednesday evening at the newly renovated Oxon Hill Public Library, Oxon Hill, in Prince George's County, and business at the library is brisk. Brightly lit and well-stocked bookshelves beckon parents with their children, avid readers, and college students researching papers. Books from all genres grace the newly appointed shelves.

In another area of the spacious and pristine new library, a group of patrons, literary buffs, and poetry enthusiasts gather for an event, ***Sojourn With Words***, marking the rededication and Grand Opening Celebration of the Oxon Hill Public Library. The Sojourner Truth Lecture Hall, an airy new auditorium-esque space holds the crowd.

The occasion also marks the debut of the new CTV poetry program, by the same title, ***Sojourn With Words***, and hosted by poet, **J. Joy Matthews Alford**, founder of Collective Voices and Minister of Poetry at Ebenezer AME Church. Alford is poetically known as Sistah Joy in literary circles. Having authored the popular best seller, ***Lord, I'm Dancin' As Fast As I Can***, Alford has also been hailed as the Poetry Virtuosa of the northeast and is the recipient of the Washington, DC Poet Laureate Award.

The audience quieted as Evelyn Tchiyuka, an Oxon Hill Public Library official introduced the program and **County Executive Jack Johnson** made his way to the podium to the beat of djembe drum played by **Doc Powell**. Johnson's message is upbeat, positive, and encouraging; full of accolades for the efforts of coordinator Alford and her steadfast dedication to the ***Sojourn With Words*** project and to the spoken word. It is also clear in his message; the Prince George's County ***Arts Renaissance*** is going strong and gaining momentum. ***Sojourn With Words*** is another road in helping the county gain national prominence. The program will also help bring more of the arts and artisans to Prince George's County from all over the United States.

The Prince George's County-based poetry initiative, ***Sojourn With Words***, resulted from collaborative energies of CTV, Sistah Joy, and the Prince George's County Public Library System. CAAPA (*Coalition for African Americans in the Performing Arts*), SUN Furniture, Soul Fixin's, and other entities contributed support to the project. The plan is to invite and engage other corporate and private dollars.

Alford's well-orchestrated event also fused together classical smooth jazz by the **The C. Anthony Bush Jazz Ensemble -- C. Anthony Bush**, a selection by tenor **Julian Hipkins**, and poetry presentations by **Andrew Taylor**, a.k.a. **Brenardo**, and herself.

"It is always music to my ears to hear the innovative message and deep caring in the spirit of Brenardo", remarked Mary Ann White of the Prince George's Philharmonic. White serves as the President of the Board of Directors and continued about the spoken word artist stating,

"Brenardo, brings us back to reality in his poetry which is intriguing and yet sad at times. We are reminded of instances in the past that we should not forget but yet use the experience to help improve tomorrow."

Alford describes *Sojourn with Words* as a collective voyage of illuminating literary poetic treasures, taking participants from one place to another. Like the trip African slaves made in this country, on the Underground Railroad, in order to claim their freedom, *Sojourn With Words* hopes to help the audience go to the next level into a new realm of poetic stopovers in enlightenment, encouragement, empowerment, enjoyment, and entertainment.

Programs will be recorded by CTV for future airing on Ch. 76, the Prince George's County local access station and will be presented and recorded at various venues in Prince George's County, including, CTV Studios in Largo, Maryland and The Sojourner Truth Lecture Hall at the Oxon Hill Public Library.

Poets who wish to be featured and patrons of the arts who wish to support the Sojourn With Words should contact Sistah Joy on line at PoetSistahJoy@aol.com and may visit her website at www.sistahjoy.com or www.4caapa.org for more information.