

The James L. Kingsland Cultural Hub

In 1969 the first black family moved to Valparaiso, Indiana. While the move was historic and the intentions of the all the individuals connected were heroic, there was one thing missing then that was still absent in 2016. The entity that is missing is a cultural hub. In Valparaiso it is easy for people of color to feel isolated, singled out and not affirmed by the normalized culture in the city. Similar to someone living in an uninhabited location, people of color find it difficult to find and connect to all of their cultural needs in Valparaiso.

While Valparaiso presents as a welcoming and hospitable place to live socially, work and raise a family, there are often hidden barriers to this lifestyle that people of color experience on a daily basis. Whether it is a culturally relevant church that also connects theologically or even something as simple as a place to get your hair styled; Valpo is absent of the common needs that many take for granted. While those needs are varied and in some ways nondescript to the average person, when you multiply those needs with feelings of isolation, derogation, and implicit micro-aggressions Valparaiso turns into a wilderness for people of color.

The History of Valparaiso as a "sundown town" and being institutionally unwelcoming to people of color has made it impossible for a critical mass of people of color to develop and incubate churches, businesses and other cultural hubs that the rest of us take for granted. In this current age of modernity, not having a cultural hub for people of color, acts a huge, neon billboard always flashing, "YOU ARE NOT WELCOME HERE," and "WE WILL NOT INVEST IN YOU." For Valparaiso to achieve its goal of being a welcoming and inclusive city, it is vital for it to have culturally representative spaces that thrive and affirm culture.

Vision: The vision is to create space for an intentional-organic cultural hub to be created. Three goals are at the center of this cultural hub.

- Create and maintain a space that normalized black culture in Valparaiso.
- Act as an incubator for other expressions of black culture including but not limited to Church, businesses, and social expressions.
- Create and maintain welcoming communication with the black community.

Process: For this process to work and realize the vision stated above, it is important that the entity is driven and conceptualized by black people. This is not an attempt to be separatist but to allow natural growth and maturation of black-centric ideas and forms of cultural representation. Project Neighbors has agreed to sponsor the Cultural Hub, and to provide administrative support and legal compliance, but all programs and expenditures are decided by the leadership of the Cultural Hub.

Donations to the James L Kingsland Cultural Hub can be made here:

<http://projectneighbors.org/donations/>

Then Click on the "James L. Kingsland Cultural Hub" Donate Button, Fill in the amount of your donation , make it monthly if you are able to provide ongoing support; and click on the drop down arrow where it says "Optional: Use this donation for" and click on the "James I. Kingsland. "then complete your donation. Thank you.

The Facebook page for the Cultural Hub is here: <https://www.facebook.com/pg/ValpoCHub>