

History Center photo exhibit features 'Our Community'

Donna Eschenbrenner, Correspondent 1:39 p.m. EST January 28, 2016



(Photo: Provided photo)

The History Center has opened a new photograph exhibit in our main gallery called "Our Community."

This small area will celebrate the varied people, organizations and institutions that make up the rich tapestry that is Tompkins County's population.

Every few months, we will exhibit a new photo display highlighting the diversity of our people past and present, at work and play, and in service to each other. The first organization that we are featuring is Ithaca's Club Essence.

Founded in Ithaca in 1973, Club Essence is a grassroots organization that promotes unity, fellowship and support among African-American women. It awards scholarships to students of color through its fundraising efforts, and in the past, the club supported local students at sports camps and also provided functions for senior citizens.

In a 1999 interview with The Ithaca Journal, then-club secretary Glenda R. Walker said, “I would describe Club Essence more as a family than an organization.”

Financial support for Club Essence currently comes from dues and donations from its membership, but formerly, the club had sponsored fundraising events such as an Ethnic Food Feast and holiday parties. Many of these special events are commemorated in an extensive photo collection in The History Center’s archives.

This Club Essence display can be seen in our new Community section every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. On First Friday Gallery Night, Feb. 5, Martha Smith, current president of Club Essence, will give a presentation on the history of the club and its work in the community. For details on the time of her presentation, visit us at thehistorycenter.net, or call 273-8284, ext. 227.

Donna Eschenbrenner is the archivist at The History Center in Tompkins County