

DC Urban Technology's ICT and ME Series: Unity at the Shaw Community Ministry

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A series on local urban people and their information communication technology (ICT) experiences!

On February 20, 2010, I visited the Celebrate Heritage Program at [Shaw Community Ministry](#) (SCM) in Northwest Washington, D.C. Please click through the slideshow below to enjoy the images of this festive and informational event. It was truly the epitome of community unity. Thanks to simple digital technology, we are in a better position to document the richness and strengths of our community.

Just two blocks from my office on 9th Street NW, I often take a walk over to 7th Street where the Shaw Community Ministry (SCM) is located. On this particular Saturday morning, my walk was inspired by an invitation from the Executive Director, Anne Troy, and the Program Director, Koquice Spencer. I had been advised to wear a black shirt and pants to the event, which was held in the newly renovated SCM's community space. I was also persuaded to read the instructions and arrive prepared to operate an old Samsung digital recorder owned by this non-profit.

As, I trekked over the snow-covered pavement, I remember thinking, I hope this is not a typical event to appease African Americans during the month of February. Now that I'm in my late forties, I feel wise enough to enjoy my African American history every day of the year. So I entered the center with low expectations. But at the festive sight of community unity, I was soon catapulted into full-scale participation.

I was greeted by residents, embraced by the staff and cordially introduced to other community members. I met Susan Nelson, Lynda Mack and Julie Holm, who all volunteered to help serve food. I noticed residents volunteering to move furniture and others offering to remove trash, assisting with rearranging the television, or connecting the Wii game system (I have a greater appreciation for this technology now that I witnessed the joy that it ignited.)



The event attracted 87 community leaders and members, including Alexander M. Padro, Commissioner of the Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC) 2C01, Reverend Dr. Kwame Osei Reed from United Church of Christ, and Lawrence Robertson from Readernomics. Ms. Audrey Hendricks, Coordinator of the Buddy Program, was commended for her performance making the mentor (Buddy) program an on-going success.

Reverend Amanda Hopkins and the [Little River United Church of Christ](#) (LRUCC) youth group, who were invited to attend by SCM, cheered and danced with the Shaw family. Peoples United Church of Christ member, Diane Kern was in attendance and was commended for the Spectrum program and their continual youth partnership with Shaw Community Ministry.

Once I was advised that the dance performance would start, I replaced the old Samsung recorder with my own Sony DVD recorder. This event was truly worth capturing using the best technology. From the time I started recording or capturing images, the visualizations showed that everyone was enjoying themselves.

The children of the Shaw community performed with grace, confidence and determination. These young individuals used a timeline approach to speak about African American experiences. Many recalled from memory the precious ancestral knowledge they learned either in school or at the center. Although a few utilized index cards, the audience was supportive and responsive with applause and praise.

Anne Ellis embraced the crowds' attention as she followed the children's presentation with stories of the Underground Railroad. The audience expressed their appreciation for Mrs. Ellis's wisdom by allowing her to depart the make-shift stage area to the sound of applause. The stage filled quickly again with dancers who were eager to be led by the Wii technology. They all had fun dancing to Wii's "Just Dance". The females did an incredible "Praise" dance number and a Wii version of "Who Let the Dogs

Out” almost convinced me to put down the camera and participate.

It was such a great event that Ms. Troy informed me that John Ellis, the President of the SCM Board, asked, “Can we make this an annual event?”

On behalf of the wonderful staff, including Koquice, Pudding, Peaches, Rayshona, and Gwen, and the parents and the teens, I would like to support the request for this event to be repeated annually.

In addition, thank you all for bring unity to our Shaw community.

Please share your comments in support of Shaw Community Ministry programs. Or send an email to patrick@metamorfs.com for more information on how you can get involved to support SCM.

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Author



Patrick Walker is an Examiner from Washington DC. You can see Patrick's articles at: "<http://www.Examiner.com/x-16291-DC--Urban-Technology-Examiner>"