



## ***Spring Forward Together: Small Steps, Stronger Community***

Spring has a way of reminding us that new beginnings don't have to be loud they can begin with small, steady steps: a fresh idea, a reopened door, a kind check-in, or a renewed commitment to wellness. As the days grow brighter, we're sharing updates, celebrations, and opportunities to connect so that, together, we can keep building hope, strengthening community, and helping recovery take root.

This season, we're leaning into gentle rhythms, extra grace, and practical supports that help us stay grounded. That might look like prioritizing rest, getting outside for a few moments of fresh air, reconnecting with supportive people, or simply giving ourselves permission to move at a steadier pace while our bodies and minds adjust. Wellness is rarely about perfection it's about consistency, compassion, and the courage to keep showing up.

Alongside these personal shifts, we're also celebrating the ways our community continues to grow stronger together. Through shared resources, open conversations, and meaningful partnerships, we're expanding opportunities for learning, connection, and recovery support. Every story shared, every event attended, and every moment of encouragement offered helps create a space where people feel seen, supported, and empowered.

This time of year, also brings the shift to daylight saving time. When we "spring forward" and adjust our clocks, many of us feel it in real ways sleep can be lighter, mornings can feel harder, and changes in routine can impact mood, focus, and stress levels. For people living with mental health or substance use challenges (and for caregivers, too), that one-hour change can be especially disruptive. As we adjust to the time change and settle into longer, brighter days, a few small steps can help support our well-being.

# Wellness Tip of the Month: Adjusting to the Time Change

The shift to daylight saving time can affect sleep, mood, and energy levels. Here are a few gentle ways to support your well-being during this transition:

- Try going to bed 10–15 minutes earlier for a few days to help your body adjust.
- Spend time outdoors during daylight hours to help regulate your internal clock.
- Maintain consistent meal and sleep routines when possible.
- Practice small moments of self-care—deep breathing, stretching, or quiet reflection.
- Check in with yourself and others; a simple conversation can make a big difference.

Small adjustments can support healthier rhythms and help you feel more balanced during seasonal changes.

## Creative Expression for Wellness

*Participants explored creativity and mindfulness through arts and crafts during a recent activity.*



As part of our program activities this month, participants took time to slow down and engage in a creative mindfulness exercise through arts and crafts. Using simple materials and their own imagination, they created pieces that reflected their thoughts, feelings, and personal journeys.

Creative expression can be a powerful tool for wellness. Activities like artmaking give participants a chance to relax, focus on the present moment, and express themselves in ways that words sometimes cannot.

Moments like these remind us of that building skills and working toward goals also includes caring for our mental and emotional well-being. The artwork created during this activity reflects creativity, reflection, and the unique perspectives each participant brings to our community.

## ***Success Stories: Milestones Worth Celebrating***

Every success story reflects more than a finished program—it reflects courage, consistency, and the choice to keep moving forward. This month, we're celebrating individuals who reached important milestones through TEECH, along with alumni who continue to build stability, support one another, and create positive change in their families and communities. We're honored to share these moments of progress and to recognize the strength it takes to show up, do the work, and keep going.



## Greetings

My name is Levelle Gaston.

My first day at Teech I found it difficult because I didn't know what to expect, but talking to Mr. Buford, assured me that the program will show me a different way how I see the world. Mr. Buford, Dr. White help me transition to become a better me coming from prison. My mind opened, learn patience, to become as you say elevated. Teech had mold me, shape me, and prepared me to shape my future the way I see it. I truly thank the Teech foundation for believing in me. So I take this blessing and use the tools Mr. Buford, Dr. White, Mr. Buford and the rest of the staff. Thank you for everything and now I'm a graduate and an "Alumni" of the Teech foundation.

My name is Levelle Gaston and Teech change my life for the better!

# SUCCESS LETTER

3/19/26

LARRY

HARVEY

MY EXPERIENCE AT TEECH HAS BEEN VERY BENEFICIAL TO MY RECOVERY. IT HAS ALLOWED ME THE OPPORTUNITY TO DEVELOPE A DIFFRENT MINDSET. IT ALSO HAS GIVEN ME THE CHANCE TO LEARN AND CREATE NEW LIFE SKILLS, SUCH AS ACTIVE LISTING, BUDGETING, SELF-CARE AND SELF-AWARENESS THESE ARE PRODUCTIVE AND USEFUL SKILLS THAT I CAN CARRY WITH ME THROUGH MY JOURNEY THROUGH LIFE AND APPLY THEM TO MY EVERYDAY LIFE. TEECH HAS ALSO GIVEN ME THE FREEDOM TO REDIRECT MY ATTENTION AND ENERGY IN A MORE POSITIVE WAY IT HAS GIVEN ME MORE CONFIDENCE TO MOVE PAST MY ~~FAIL~~ FAILURES AND EMBRACE THEM AS STEPPING STONES TO A MORE HELPFUL AND BALANCED LIFE. BEFORE TEECH I WAS REALLY UNSURE ABOUT ALOT OF THINGS IN MY LIFE BUT DR. WHITE AND THE STAFF OF TEECH HAVE GIVEN ME THE CONFIDENCE AND THE SELF-ESTEEM THAT MY DREAMS AND ASPIRATIONS ARE ATRAINABLE

P.S  
THANK YOU TO DR.  
White !! AND THE  
entire T.E.E.C.H  
STAFF.

# ***Celebrating This Month's Graduates***

We're proud to celebrate the individuals completing the TEECH program this month. Your commitment, perseverance, and willingness to keep showing up—even when the journey isn't easy—are truly worth recognizing.

Each milestone represents more than completing a program; it reflects resilience, growth, and the courage to invest in your future. Your dedication inspires our entire community, and we are honored to have walked alongside you on this path.

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Congratulations to this month's graduates. We look forward to seeing the many ways you continue to grow, lead, and create positive change in your lives and communities.





Recovery Services, Community Organization, Recovery Support Services

Recovery Services are available to individuals who are seeking recovery services. For more information, please contact us at (312) 539-5263 or (224) 406-3798.



Recovery Services

Community Organization

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Community Organization services are available to individuals who are seeking recovery services. For more information, please contact us at (312) 539-5263 or (224) 406-3798.

**Community**  
**Be In The World**  
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Recovery Support Services

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BEHAVIOR HEALTH SERVICES  
RECOVERY SUPPORT SERVICES  
RECOVERY COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION  
RECOVERY ORIENTED SYSTEMS OF CARE

(312) 539-5263  
OR  
(224) 406-3798

WWW.TEECHFUNDATION1.ORG









## ***Community Connections: Events & Collaborations***

This month, TEECH had several opportunities to be out in the community connecting with partners, attending events, and building relationships that support the work we do every day. These moments allow us to share our mission, learn from others, and strengthen the network of support that helps individuals and families move forward.

Our collaborations with community organizations, service providers, and local partners continue to create meaningful opportunities for participants. Whether it's sharing resources, participating in community conversations, or supporting events that promote wellness and opportunity, these partnerships help expand access to support services that include recovery support, mental health resources, workforce development, and pathways that help reduce recidivism.

This work is about more than programs t's about breaking cycles, restoring hope, and creating pathways to stability for individuals and families in our communities.



We're also excited to share that TEECH has officially begun building connections within the school system, creating new opportunities to reach young people and introduce programs that support mental health awareness, life skills, and future workforce pathways. This step marks an important milestone as we continue expanding our work and deepening our impact in the community.

Being present in the community allows us to listen, learn, and grow. Each event and collaboration helps strengthen relationships and reminds us that supporting recovery, mental health, and opportunity is strongest when we work together.

Below are a few highlights from this month's events and collaboration moments that show what's possible when we work together.

Maria Charter School



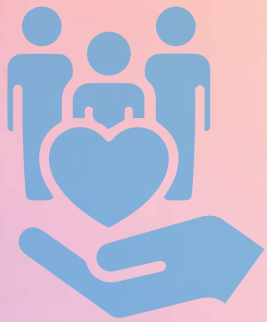




# **TEECH Alumni and Participants attending Lite House Resource Fair**



# ***Narcan Training***



## ***Community Impact: Making a Difference Together***

Behind every event and partnership is the same goal: strengthening individuals, families, and neighborhoods. Through workforce readiness training, peer support, and resource navigation, TEECH continues working to expand opportunity and remove barriers to stability and employment.

Each month, we see that impact in participants gaining new skills, the encouragement shared within our alumni community, and the partners who help connect people to housing, employment, and supportive services.

None of this work happens in isolation. It is made possible through the collaboration of community partners, employers, supporters, and alumni who believe in the power of second chances and new opportunities.

Together, we are helping individuals move forward with confidence, build stronger foundations for their futures, and create lasting change within their communities.

# ***Alumni Spotlight: Returning Citizens***

Graduating from TEECH is just the beginning. Our alumni remain connected, continuing to support and uplift one another long after the program ends.

The TEECH alumni community regularly steps in to help peers with job leads and readiness, housing navigation, resource referrals, and the everyday encouragement that makes a real difference during times of transition. These connections reflect the strength of a community built on shared experience, trust, and mutual support.

We're also proud to announce the launch of our Returning Citizens Alumni Group—a space designed specifically for alumni impacted by incarceration. This group creates opportunities to build community, share resources, and strengthen reentry supports through peer mentorship, encouragement, and connection.

If you're interested in supporting our alumni with employment opportunities, housing resources, mentorship, or other partnerships, we'd love to connect.

(224) 406-3798

[drkwhite@teechfoundation.net](mailto:drkwhite@teechfoundation.net)

Together, we can continue expanding pathways to stability, opportunity, and success.

## ***New Season, New Skills: Supporting Workers 50+***

TEECH is honored to be selected by NCBA – Live longer to support adults 50 and over on Chicago's Far South Side. Through this partnership, we will provide job-skills training and job-readiness support designed to assist seniors strengthen confidence, build stability, and pursue new employment opportunities. Many older adults bring valuable experience, wisdom, and dedication to the workforce, yet often face unique barriers when seeking employment. This initiative reflects our ongoing commitment to expanding opportunity and ensuring that individuals at every stage of life have access to the tools, resources, and support needed to thrive.

We are excited to welcome participants into this program and continue building pathways to meaningful employment and long-term stability.

***Mitigating Overdose Risk Van*** continues to serve Chicago's Far South Side. Access to life-saving tools should be close to home. Through ongoing outreach, the Mitigating Overdose Risk Van helps bring harm-reduction supplies, overdose prevention education, and connections to local resources directly to residents across the Far South Side. Efforts like this are possible because of the community partners, volunteers, and supporters who work alongside us making it easier for individuals and families to find support, reduce risk, and take the next step toward stability and recovery.

# Upcoming Events: Be The Change



This month, we invite you to step forward and be part of a movement that ignites hope, builds connections, and empowers every member of our community. Our upcoming events aren't just dates on a calendar—they are opportunities to learn, grow, and transform together.

By joining us for hands-on workshops, skill-building training sessions, vibrant community meetings, and impactful outreach programs, you'll gain more than just information. You'll walk away with practical tools, new perspectives, and meaningful relationships. Whether you're seeking personal growth, professional development, or ways to contribute your talents, collaborate with others, or make a lasting difference, there's something here for everyone.

- TBD – Returning Citizens Reunification Partner with Grace Temple MBC
- TBD – Resource Fair partnered with Kate's Detective Services

## ***Each Event Is Designed To Offer You:***

- Valuable resources to support your journey—whether you're returning to the community, seeking new opportunities, or looking for guidance.
- Practical skills you can use right away, from job readiness and wellness strategies to leadership and advocacy.
- A supportive network of peers, mentors, and community leaders who are committed to your success.
- The chance to be part of a supportive community and play an active role in shaping our neighborhood's future.

Don't let these moments pass you by. Stay tuned to your email and our social media channels for the latest updates and details. Your participation is the spark that fuels positive change—your presence, your voice, and your energy matter.

We can't wait to see you there, working side by side to create a brighter future for all.

# ***Become A Certified Recovery Congregation:***

## ***Illinois Faith @ Recovery Collaborative***

### ***Celebrating Recovery Champions:***

While there were no Certified Recovery Congregation designations in March, we are excited to share what's ahead. In April, we anticipate celebrating April House of Refuge Ministry International as a Certified Recovery Congregation—our first online church to be certified. This upcoming milestone reflects the growing momentum of the recovery movement within faith communities.

By pursuing this milestone, congregations make a bold and meaningful commitment to advancing mental health and recovery support. These efforts affirm the value of multiple pathways to recovery and help ensure individuals and families are met with compassion, dignity, and choice as they navigate their personal journeys toward healing. Churches are doing more than opening their doors—they are creating safe, informed, and stigma-free spaces where recovery can take root, grow, and be sustained.

Faith institutions play a critical role in community health. In recognition of that role, we continue to offer comprehensive training and technical support to help congregations become Recovery Certified. Through this process, churches receive practical tools, educational resources, and ongoing guidance to connect individuals to recovery services and to build long-term, community-centered support systems. The momentum is undeniable—many churches across Illinois are already certified, and even more are eager to join.

Congregations that become Certified Recovery Congregations are eligible for additional training opportunities, printed materials and recovery resources, participation in advisory and collaborative groups, local support program development toolkits, and ongoing technical assistance from the Center for Community Engagement. All training and supplies are provided at no cost.

If your congregation is ready to make a lasting difference, we invite you to join this transformative movement. To learn more about free training and resources, please contact Rev. Dr. Karen White at (224) 406-3798 or [drkwhite@teechfoundation.net](mailto:drkwhite@teechfoundation.net). Together, we can continue building a strong, compassionate network of faith communities that empower recovery, foster inclusion, and create a brighter, healthier future for all.



## ***What You Should Know***

Chicago's Far South Side holds a powerful and often underrecognized place in American history. Home to Pullman—the nation's first planned industrial community—it became a cornerstone of Black labor leadership and economic advancement, particularly through the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, the first Black-led union to gain national recognition. Neighborhoods such as Pullman, Roseland, and West Pullman emerged as centers where Black families built stable middle-class lives, producing generations of educators, healthcare professionals, union leaders, and faith leaders who sustained community institutions through decades of change. Today, the Far South Side stands as a symbol of resilience, civic pride, and lasting contribution, representing a vital chapter in Chicago's—and the nation's—Black history.

### ***Empower the Mission: Stand with TEECH and FSSRI***

The need in our community continues to grow—and so does our unwavering commitment to serve. To keep our vital programs running and expand our reach, we are calling on you—our community—for urgent support. Your donation is more than a gift; it is an investment in hope, healing, and opportunity for those who rely on our services.

***We gratefully accept all forms of support—not just financial gifts, but also donations of goods, services, and time. Whether you contribute funds, essential supplies, professional expertise, or volunteer hours, every act of generosity strengthens our mission and directly benefits those we serve.***

### ***Your Gift Makes a Tangible Difference***

Because of supporters like you, we're able to:

- Host drives for unhoused individuals, providing essential supplies and support.
- Organize back-to-school drives, ensuring children start the year with confidence.
- Distribute winter coats and warm clothing to families in need.
- Facilitate family reunification events, strengthening community bonds.
- Hold job and health fairs, connecting people with opportunities and resources.
- Offer trainings and technical assistance to empower individuals and organizations.
- Provide ongoing community support, ensuring help is available when needed.
- Launch new initiatives to address emerging needs in our neighborhoods.

Each gift—no matter the size or form—helps us build a stronger, more compassionate community where everyone can flourish.

As we move forward, let's celebrate the impact your support is making and discover new ways to uplift our neighbors and create lasting change. Every contribution—monetary, material, or through service—empowers us to build a community where everyone has the chance to succeed.

## ***How to Give***



- Online: <http://www.teechfoundation1.org>
- Zelle: [drkwhite@teechfoundation.net](mailto:drkwhite@teechfoundation.net)
- Mail: TEECH, 1750 W. 103rd St, Chicago, Illinois 60643

If you would like to donate goods, offer services, or volunteer your time, please contact us directly (224) 406-3798 or visit our website ([www.teechfoundaton1.org](http://www.teechfoundaton1.org)) for more information on how you can make a difference.

## ***Essential Community Resources and Information: Strengthening Our Community Together***

Access to reliable information and supportive services is vital for the well-being of our community—especially during times of change and uncertainty. Whether you're looking for health care, legal guidance, emergency assistance, recovery support, or help meeting basic needs, there are trusted resources available. We've gathered the contacts below to make it easier to find the right support at the right time. If you're not sure where to start, 211 can help connect you to local services; 988 is available 24/7 for mental health crisis support; and 911 should be used for immediate, life-threatening emergencies. No matter the situation, you deserve help that is respectful, confidential, and judgment-free.

### ***Emergency Help & Crisis Support***

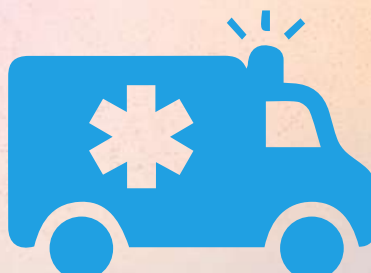
When safety or stability is at risk, knowing where to turn can make all the difference. The following national and local hotlines offer immediate assistance, advocacy, and confidential support for individuals and families experiencing crisis, violence, or distress. These organizations are staffed by trained professionals who can provide guidance, resources, and a listening ear — 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

### ***Emergency Assistance***

911 is for life-threatening emergencies (police, fire, medical).

311 is for non-emergency local government services (potholes, trash pickup, noise complaints).

211 is for community and social services (housing, food, mental health, financial aid).



# **Support & Advocacy**



988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline — 988 — 24/7 support for suicidal thoughts or emotional distress  
National Domestic Violence Hotline — 1-800-799-7233 — Help for domestic violence survivors  
Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline — 1-800-422-4453 — Crisis intervention and child abuse prevention  
The Trevor Project — 1-866-488-7386 — LGBTQ+ youth crisis and suicide prevention  
RAINN Sexual Assault Hotline — 1-800-656-4673 — Support for sexual assault survivors  
National Runaway Safe line — 1-800-786-2929 — Help for youth at risk of running away or homelessness  
HUD Housing Counseling — 1-800-569-4287 — Guidance on housing stability and foreclosure prevention

## ***Housing & Shelter Support***

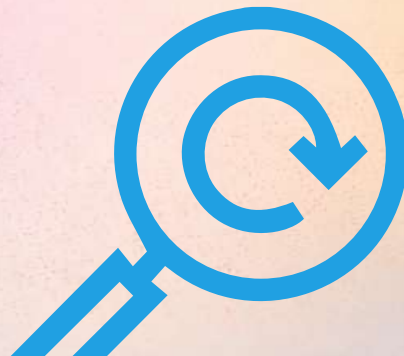
If you need a safe place to stay or are at risk of losing housing, start with 211 for up-to-date shelter availability and local referrals (including family shelters, youth shelters, and warming/cooling centers). If you are fleeing domestic violence, call the National Domestic Violence Hotline (listed above) for safety planning and confidential shelter connections.

## ***Food & Basic Needs***

For help with groceries, meals, diapers, or hygiene supplies, 211 can connect you to nearby food pantries and community meal programs. You can also ask about help applying for benefits such as SNAP or WIC, and other emergency supports (utilities assistance, transportation help, and clothing resources).

## ***Legal, Reentry & ID Support***

If you need legal guidance (housing, family, benefits), help replacing an ID, or support navigating reentry after incarceration, start with 211 for trusted local referrals. Many communities also offer free or low-cost legal clinics and record relief support (expungement/sealing) that can remove barriers to employment and housing.  
Tip: When possible, call ahead to confirm hours and eligibility. If you have documents (ID, proof of address, benefit letters), bring copies. Don't hesitate to ask if case management is available having one consistent point of contact can make it easier to navigate multiple services.



# ***You Are Not Alone—Help and Hope Are***

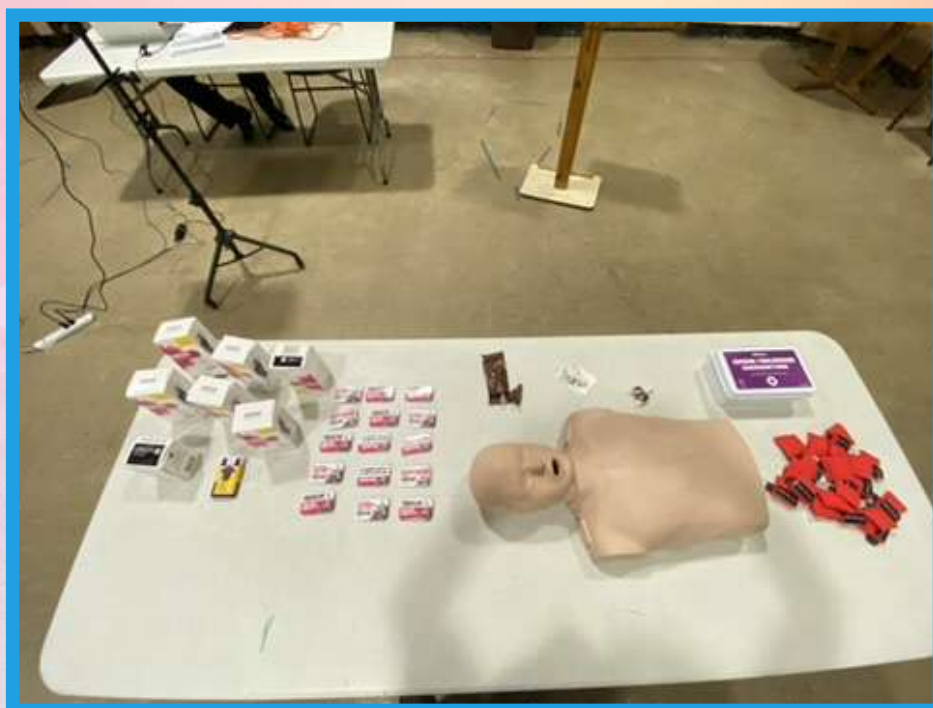
## ***Always Within Reach***

Struggling with substance use can feel overwhelming, but no one must face it alone. The Illinois Helpline for Opioids and Other Substances is a lifeline for anyone seeking support, guidance, or resources. This service is available every hour of every day—call 833-FINDHELP (833-234-6343) or text "HELP" to 833234 for immediate, confidential assistance. Whether you're reaching out for yourself or someone you care about, compassionate experts are ready to listen, connect you to vital resources, and walk with you on your recovery journey. There is no cost, no judgment, and no wrong time to ask for help.

But support doesn't stop there. TEECH is on the front lines, working tirelessly to make our neighborhoods safer and stronger. By installing Narcan machines throughout our communities, TEECH is putting life-saving tools directly into the hands of everyday people—empowering all of us to act quickly in the face of an opioid overdose and save lives. Our commitment goes beyond distribution: we offer free Narcan and hands-on training sessions so that everyone, regardless of background or experience, can be prepared to make a difference.

If you need Narcan or want to become a trained responder, reach out to TEECH at (224) 406-3798. All training and supplies are provided at no cost. Together, we are building a network of hope, resilience, and action—one that ensures no one in our community is left behind.

Let's stand together, support one another, and create a future where recovery is always possible and help is always here. Ended the Year with lifesaving Training – Narcan with CPR.





## ***Call to Action: Act Now to Make a Difference Together***

Every day, overdoses, addiction, recidivism, and mental health challenges touch the lives of individuals and families across our community. These are not distant issues—they are urgent realities that demand our collective strength, compassion, and action. Now is the time for us to unite, to break the silence, and to stand shoulder to shoulder in support of those who are struggling. When we come together as a community, we create a powerful network of hope and resilience. By collaborating—whether through volunteering, attending training sessions, spreading awareness, or simply offering a listening ear—we ensure that no one must face these challenges alone. Every act of kindness, every moment of support, and every shared resource brings us closer to a future where everyone can thrive. Your involvement is not just valuable—it is essential. Each person who steps forward helps build a stronger, more resilient community. Whether you have lived experience, professional expertise, or simply a caring heart, your contribution matters. Reach out, get involved, and be part of the change. Together, we can save lives, uplift our neighbors, and empower our community to overcome even the toughest obstacles. Let's work hand in hand to build a legacy of hope, healing, and opportunity. The time to act is now—join us, and let's make a lasting impact, together.

# References

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), NIOSH Science Blog: “Here Comes the Sun! Tips to Adapt to Daylight Saving Time” (Mar 8, 2022). URL: <https://blogs.cdc.gov/niosh-science-blog/2022/03/08/dst/>
- National Park Service — Pullman National Historical Park (historical overview)
- Smithsonian Institution / National Museum of African American History and Culture — Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters (historical overview)

