

WESTPORT COUNTRY PLAYHOUSE

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NEWS RELEASE

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TEAM Westport, Westport Country Playhouse, and Westport/Weston Interfaith Council Present Martin Luther King Day Celebration Free and Open to Public in Westport

The 11th Annual Martin Luther King Day Celebration, featuring keynote speaker Professor Tricia Rose of Brown University, will be on Sunday, January 15, at 3 p.m., at Westport Country Playhouse. Free-of-charge and open to the public, the celebration is presented in partnership with TEAM Westport, Westport Country Playhouse, and the Westport/Weston Interfaith Council. Seating is unreserved. Complimentary refreshments will be served in the Playhouse lobby after the presentation.

Rev. Ed Horne of United Methodist Church of Westport and Weston, chair of the Celebration's organizing committee, said, "In a year of increased conflict and violence, and at a time of an alarming growth in hateful speech and actions across our divided nation, people of good will and all faiths need to come together to listen and learn from one another and to stand together in our commitment to building the 'beloved community' that Dr. King envisioned."

Keynote speaker Dr. Tricia Rose is the Brown University Chancellor's Professor of Africana Studies, Associate Dean of the Faculty, and Director of the Center for the Study of Race and Ethnicity in America. Professor Rose is an internationally respected scholar of post-civil rights era black U.S. culture, popular music, social issues, gender, and sexuality. She is most well known for her groundbreaking and award-winning book on the emergence of hip hop culture "Black Noise: Rap Music and Black Culture in Contemporary America" which spawned a new field of study in academia. She is currently working on a project called "How Structural Racism Works."

Raised in New York City, Professor Rose spent her childhood in Harlem and the Bronx. She graduated from Yale with a BA in Sociology and then received her Ph.D. from Brown in American Studies. In addition to her duties at Brown, Professor Rose sits on the Boards of the Nathan Cummings Foundation, Color of Change, and Black Girls Rock, Inc.

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Dr. Rose engages with scholarly and general audiences on a wide range of issues relating to race in America and has been featured on PBS, MSNBC, CNN, NPR, and other national and local media outlets. During her address, she will cover key issues surrounding race in the current political environment from the perspective of Dr. King's philosophy and insights. The address will be followed by moderated audience Q&A.

The Men's Community Gospel Chorus of Norwalk, led by Greg Detroy, will provide choral music. Students from Trumbull's Regional Center for the Arts will present a spoken-word piece, "A World That Listens," based on Dr. King's "Letter from Birmingham Jail."

As part of the afternoon program, there will be introductions and remarks by Rev. Horne and Harold Bailey, chair of TEAM Westport and board member of Westport Country Playhouse.

The Westport/Weston Family YMCA will provide childcare and activities in the Lucille Lortel White Barn, Sheffer Studio, adjacent to the theater.

For more information, call the Westport Country Playhouse box office at (203) 227-4177, toll-free at 1-888-927-7529. Westport Country Playhouse is located at 25 Powers Court, off Route 1, Westport.

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