



## Mountain Retreats are Back!

We're excited to announce this year's schedule of events and cannot wait to welcome you back to the mountain.



### Healing the Heart Through Writing and Art

March 31-April 2

Facilitated by: Juanita Kirton & Julie Bond Genovese

Go Here For More Info  
<https://kirkridge.org/events/healing-the-heart-through-writing-and-art/>

### SLATE BELT REPUBLICAN ASSOCIATION ANNOUNCEMENT

### THE SLATE BELT REPUBLICAN ASSOCIATION INVITES DEDICATED

### REPUBLICANS INTERESTED IN MAKING A DIFFERENCE AND RUNNING

### FOR LOCAL BOROUGH, TOWNSHIP, OR SCHOOL BOARDS TO OUR MEETING.

WHEN: TUESDAY FEBRUARY 14<sup>TH</sup>, 7:00 PM

WHERE: AT THE TROLLEY SHOPS GARAGE

257 E. CENTRAL AVE.

EAST BANGOR.

WE WELCOME YOU TO BRING YOUR PETITIONS FOR SIGNATURES OR DISTRIBUTION, AND WE WILL BE ABLE TO ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT RUNNING FOR OFFICE.



**Any Republican wanting to support our candidates may join us.**

# NORTHAMPTON COMMUNITY COLLEGE

## Former Ncc Staff Member Returns To Teach A Valuable Lesson In Diversity And Inclusion.

By NCC

BETHLEHEM, PA - Northampton Community College (NCC) retiree, former teacher and administrator, and author, Janice Kenyatta, saw and heard things in the classroom that inspired her to write her children's book, Just As It Is. "The message of self-esteem and loving oneself needs to come from parents. We did that with our girls. It starts at home," says Kenyatta. She had the opportunity to read that book to the children at the Hannig Family Children's Center on Monroe campus and at the Reibman Hall Children's Center on Bethlehem campus this winter.

Teaching high school for 28 years, Kenyatta loved to educate and shape minds. This motivated her and her then husband, Kamau Kenyatta, history professor at NCC, to co-write their first book. In 1996, they wrote "Black Folks Hair," which had several editions thereafter to keep up with the changing times and trends. They found it important to educate people on why Black individuals chemically straighten and change their hair and took a deep dive into the history of the ridicule, assumptions, and insensitivities that led to this practice. Kenyatta took on publicity and book signings, all while still teaching.

Kenyatta decided to embark on her next writing venture when she heard Black girls talking in her classroom. "I listened to them say how they hated their hair, and it was such a curse. That did not sit well with me," Kenyatta said, and she decided to do something that could enact change. So, in 2003, she wrote a children's book for parents to read and teach their kids to embrace and accept their own and others' natural features.

As she wrote, Kenyatta drew from her own experiences as a mother to tell the story. "When my oldest daughter, Aliya, was 7 she wanted locs, a beautiful style worn on natural Black hair, and of course, her younger sister who was 5, Ayanna, wanted what her older sister had. We decided we'd do the locs on both girls, and they loved it." Kenyatta and her ex-husband taught the girls to care for and appreciate their locs and the other things that made them uniquely beautiful, and that cultivated a healthy relationship with their self-image, Kenyatta noticed, as they grew up.

The manuscript she wrote stayed in the attic, forgotten in the chaos of day-to-day life. Kenyatta had two kids, was commuting to teach, and eventually to be the district supervisor, at a New Jersey school while living in the Poconos. Once she felt the commute was too much, she moved on to NCC for 8 years, ending in the internship coordinator role in 2019.

Fast forward to 2021 when she sold her house. As her ex-husband was going through the attic, he found the manuscript and told her how important the story was, even more relevant today.

Kenyatta decided to change a few things to bring it up to this decade, and she self-published the book in October 2022.

In publishing the book, Kenyatta wanted to show diverse kids playing together. She found an illustrator in Texas, Navi Robins, whose designs seemed to mesh with how she wanted her characters to look.

"As an educator and lover of all things learning, my vision was to read and talk to young children about the book." Her very first readings were at the Children's Centers on Bethlehem and Monroe Campuses, and she was elated at how it turned out.

Kenyatta noted that the kids were engaged. "Kids are curious about their differences and asked a lot of great questions. Some of them expressed the differences in their hair from their other classmates like curly, straight or long. All of these expressed observations from the children allowed me to further encourage them that it is a beautiful thing to look different from others!"

"Children are impressionable, and these types of readings with children will show them the importance of loving what they have and appreciating what others have. I am passionate about teaching kids about themselves and others, and I hope I did that while reading on campus."

Kenyatta says the next exciting piece of the puzzle is creating a prototype of a soft cut-and-sew doll with a small locally run toy company in the image of the main character, Abena. She feels this will help children to connect with the characters in the book, finding comfort in their Abena doll.

Interested parties can buy Just As It Is on Amazon linked from her website [www.janicekenyatta.com](http://www.janicekenyatta.com). Kenyatta looks forward to more readings to share her story, including one for a Mom's Group this February. Listen for her interview on The Vera Thomas Show on February 21 at 6:30 p.m.