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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

COMMUNITY LEADERS DISCUSS POLICE BRUTALITY AND TRAUMA IN THE BLACK COMMUNITY

A panel of community leaders discuss police brutality & mental health as a part of Karamu House's first episode of its new series, "Freedom After Juneteenth," which premieres on Thursday, August 20, 2020 at 7PM EST/4PM PST on social media and streaming platforms.

(Cleveland, Ohio)—Karamu House brings together local community leaders in a moderated panel to discuss one of the pandemics facing Black America: police brutality. In Cleveland, while the use of deadly force by police is [reported](#) to be down 80 percent, it does not erase the recent memory of some of the City's high-profile murders: unarmed, 12-year-old Tamir Rice in 2014, and Timothy Russell and Malissa Williams in 2016 (killed by police after 137 bullets entered their vehicle). In fact, a [recent poll](#) shows that only 36 percent of Black Americans trust law enforcement, in comparison to 77 percent of White Americans (and 69 percent of Americans overall).

Following the artistic response portion of the first episode of Karamu House's new series, "Freedom After Juneteenth," a moderated panel of community leaders discusses police brutality and the resulting trauma and mental health issues that exist within Black America. Moderated by Aseelah Shareef, Director of Operations and Community Engagement at Karamu House, the panel includes: Sheila Mason, Chief of Police for the Village of Woodmere and President of the Greater Cleveland Chapter of NOBLE (The National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives); Archie Green, mental health advocate and founder of Peel Dem Layers Back; and, Habeebah Rasheed Grimes, Chief Executive Officer of Positive Education Program (PEP).

Panelists also begin to explore and discuss how the arts have a unique ability to heal and can be used as a powerful tool for sensitive, or even ostracized, topics like mental health. Panelist Archie Green, a local mental health advocate who uses music as a vehicle to bring awareness through his initiative, Peel Dem Layers Back, says, "America's fear requirement of Black children creates Black adult trauma, yet less than one-third of African American adults who need mental health care receives it."

The first episode of "Freedom After Juneteenth" premieres on Thursday, August 20, 2020 at 7PM EST/4 PM PST on social media, including [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#), and select streaming platforms, including [Vimeo](#), Roku and Fire TV. The "Freedom After Juneteenth" series is presented through the generous support of Bank of America.

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About Karamu House

Recognized as the oldest African American performing arts institute in the nation, Karamu House is listed on the U.S. National Register of Historic Places and featured in the Smithsonian's African American Museum. Legendary artists including Langston Hughes, Ruby Dee, Robert Guillaume, Ron O'Neal, Bill Cobbs, James Pickens, Jr., Vanessa Bell Calloway and Imani Hakim have been associated with the 105-year old "place of joyful gathering" (the meaning of "Karamu" in Swahili.)

Today, Karamu is a beating heart for the entire community, regardless of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identification, or age. Core programs include socially relevant and professional quality theatre; arts education programming for all ages; and community programming, such as comedy, live jazz, and spoken word performances, that invites participation and engagement, reflection, and a re-commitment to cultural values. For more information, visit www.karamuhouse.org.