

#3

Jefferson School
AFRICAN AMERICAN HERITAGE CENTER

October 15, 2021
Charlottesville City Council
605 E Main Street
2nd Floor
Charlottesville, VA 22902

Confederate Statues Offer: Robert E. Lee Statue

DEAR CHARLOTTESVILLE CITY COUNCIL,

The Jefferson School African American Heritage Center appreciates this opportunity to submit its offer, "Swords into Plowshares," to the City of Charlottesville. We request possession of the Shrady-Lentelli 1924 monument of Robert E. Lee for the purposes of melting it down and remolding it into a new work of public art that expresses the City's values of inclusivity and racial justice. This transformation will be informed by a collaborative and democratic process of community engagement that prioritizes the voices of descendants of enslaved people, extending the dialogues on race that have occurred locally since 2010. Using this statue's melted bronze material in a new way will be a powerful symbol of social change.

In its recently published "National Monument Audit," the Monument Lab defined monuments as "a statement of power and presence in public." Like many Confederate memorials throughout the country, Charlottesville's Lee statue was erected during the era of Jim Crow, a time when whites wanted to symbolically reinforce power against a flourishing black population.

The Lee statue became an international lightning rod of white supremacy when, in August 2017, neo-Nazi rioters descended on Charlottesville to intimidate our elected government from removing it from the park. The violence that engulfed our city became synonymous with globally-resurgent white nationalism. Heather Heyer was killed, and many were injured, when a Nazi-sympathizer drove his car into a crowd of anti-racist demonstrators.

Recontextualization is not enough. Even taken from its pedestal and removed from its central location in downtown Charlottesville, the social codes engendered by the Lee statue will allow it to remain an icon of violent white supremacy wherever it is placed.

233 4th St NW,
Charlottesville, VA 22903

jeffschoolheritagecenter.org

Transformation is different from destruction: the new piece of art will draw meaning from the fact that it will be formed from the very materials that were once used in the Lee statue. We believe our proposal will create an opportunity to move history forward and leave behind the false notion that such symbols are a fixed part of our community's shared heritage.

The Lee statue has been a singular source of harm to our community. Our proposed process of transformation may not be the right solution for every city that has inherited unwanted symbols of oppression. But it is the right solution for this city and this statue. The Jefferson School's "Swords into Plowshares" proposal offers Charlottesville the chance to transform this trauma into healing and renewal through art.

This offer is valid for 120 days.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



DR. ANDREA DOUGLAS
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
JEFFERSON SCHOOL AFRICAN AMERICAN HERITAGE CENTER

SWORDS INTO PLOWSHARES PROPOSAL

"Swords Into Plowshares" (SIP) proposes to articulate Charlottesville, Virginia's 1924 monument of Robert E. Lee as a new work of public art that expresses the City's values of inclusivity and racial justice. Inspired by the prophetic vision of transforming "swords into plowshares" (Isaiah 2:4), SIP would fund the transportation, disassembly, and melting down of the statue; an extensive community engagement process; and ultimately, the commissioning of an artist-in-residence committed to that engagement to repurpose its bronze for a new piece or pieces of art. Upon completion, SIP would offer the completed artwork to the City for potential installation in a public place.

This proposal is submitted by the Jefferson School African American Heritage Center (JSAAHC), a Charlottesville nonprofit 501c3 organization, with support from the University of Virginia Democracy Initiative's Memory Project, Virginia Humanities, the Open Society Foundations, Descendants of Enslaved Communities at UVA, the Bridge Progressive Arts Initiative, along with other community groups, museums, and educational, arts and philanthropic organizations. This coalition believes that Charlottesville is uniquely positioned to make a bold statement that will recast the national conversation about monuments and public spaces. By selecting "Swords Into Plowshares," the Charlottesville City Council will give our community an opportunity to write a new and innovative chapter in our City's story.

Community input will be key to the artistic transformation of the Lee monument. SIP includes a plan for an extensive community engagement process that builds on earlier successes such as the Dialogue on Race, the Blue Ribbon Commission on Race, Memorials and Public Spaces, and the Memorial to Enslaved Laborers at UVA. In this new conversation, the community will collaborate to define the values that the new work of art should reflect and the criteria of its future placement. The conversation will be especially attentive to the voices of descendants of enslaved people: the same community that, a century ago, was excluded from shaping civic life and public spaces.

In the 20th century, Charlottesville was acclaimed (by those willing to ignore white supremacy's harms) for its collection of commissioned monuments which have recently been removed. In the 21st century, our city will again be distinguished for its leadership in public art--this time by pieces that express commitment to democratic values. SIP will extend the ideas reflected in UVA's highly regarded Memorial to Enslaved Laborers both geographically and thematically. We aspire for SIP to result in a work that receives equal critical acclaim, while giving Charlottesville its own artistic reckoning with our

town's racial politics that is distinct from the university's. SIP would further articulate the conversation about racial politics to address our present moment, connecting the Memorial to Enslaved Laborers's focus on slavery to contemporary struggles for equity and social justice. These monumental works will interact conceptually by embedding different aspects of our community's efforts at historical truth telling directly into the landscape.

Through the project's insistence that its outcomes be community driven, it "is consistent with City Council's core values," as described in the "C'ville Arts and Culture" section of the "Charlottesville City Council Vision - 2025":

Our community has world-class performing, visual, and literary arts reflective of the unique character, culture, and diversity of Charlottesville. Charlottesville cherishes and builds programming around the evolving research and interpretation of our historic heritage and resources."

PROPOSED PLAN & TIMELINE

STATUE REMOVAL & TRANSFORMATION

SIP is prepared to remove the Lee statue from City property immediately. The JSAAHC has consulted with a foundry that has agreed to pick up the Lee statue from its current location and transport it to its facilities, where the statue will be further disassembled and reconstituted as ingots. The ingots will be stored until the time comes to repurpose them as an art medium. A sculpture studio has agreed to pick up the granite from city property and transport it to their facilities. The contractors involved are enthusiastic about participating in such a transformative project.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

In January 2022, JSAAHC plans on inaugurating a six-month series of community dialogues and meetings facilitated by Frank Dukes and colleagues at UVA's Institute for Engagement + Negotiation. Dukes played a key role in mediating the Montpellier Board's recent shift to parity with its descendant community and led community engagement as a member of the design team for UVA's Memorial to Enslaved Laborers. He is well associated with the community as both a resident and the director of UCARE.

The process will consist of an extensive conversation with the community in traditional and non-traditional sites including the Jefferson School, churches, local schools, assisted living facilities, public libraries, cafés, beauty salons, and barber shops. Outreach will also occur virtually to ensure inclusion of community members with limited access to other

sites. For additional information about the community engagement plan, please see Appendix A of this application.

Based on the content of these sessions, we will compile the results of our findings to create a guiding document to be presented to the community by Fall 2022.

ARTIST RESIDENCY

In Winter 2022, we will announce an RFP and craft a jury process which will require interested artists to engage with the community in public forums as well as the guiding document created prior to artists' submission of their proposals. Our goal is for the jury to announce an artist or artists by 2024, the one-hundredth anniversary of the Lee statue's installation. They will be invited to an artist residency hosted at Visible Records, an artist-run gallery and studio space in Charlottesville. Ideally, the new art piece will be completed and installed before the 10-year anniversary of the Summer of Hate in 2027.

MANAGEMENT

Given the complexity and length of this project, SIP's budget includes funding for a project manager. This position will oversee the metal and stone contractors, staff the community engagement process, and interface with donors and the City as the process advances.

FINANCIAL FEASIBILITY & COST TO THE CITY

If the City accepts SIP, the City will not be liable for any costs associated with removal and transformation of the Lee statue. We confirm that the Jefferson School will be liable for all such costs, including transportation. SIP's aim is to offer the resulting transformed work of art to the City, ideally for installation on public land. SIP is willing to cover the cost of installation and welcomes conversation with the City about possible arrangements for land. Should the city accept the eventual donation of the piece of art, there could potentially be some financial obligations commensurate with normal upkeep of art in public spaces. If the City should in the future decline the donation, SIP plans on pursuing other placement options.

From removal to completed work of art, SIP will cost an estimated \$1.1 million. At the time of submission of this application, SIP has raised \$590,000--more than half that amount. Funders include the Memory Project at UVA's Democracy Initiative, Virginia Humanities, and Open Society Foundations. This application packet includes letters confirming

these organizations' pending commitments. Contractors have generously offered to provide services for this project at a discounted rate.

THE JEFFERSON SCHOOL AFRICAN AMERICAN HERITAGE CENTER

The JSAAHC is qualified to receive the statue under Virginia Code §15.2-953, which states: "A locality may make like gifts and donations to any and all public and private nonprofit organizations and agencies engaged in commemorating historical events." The JSAAHC is a nonprofit 501c3 founded in 2013, whose mission is to honor and preserve the rich heritage and legacy of the African-American community of Charlottesville-Albemarle, Virginia and to promote a greater appreciation for, and understanding of, the contributions of African Americans and peoples of the Diaspora locally, nationally and globally.

The JSAAHC is the most appropriate recipient of the Lee statue. It has played a key role in Charlottesville's years-long process of re-envisioning public spaces. In 2011, JSAAHC helped to develop the Dialogue on Race's Vinegar Hill monument jury process that led to the selection of internationally known artist Mel Edwards. From 2013-2018 Dr. Douglas served on the University of Virginia's President's Commission on Slavery and was a member of the jury that selected the design team that designed UVA's Memorial to Enslaved Laborers. She presently serves as co-chair of the University's Commission on the Age of Segregation.

In 2016, she was appointed a commissioner of Blue Ribbon Commission (BRC) on Race, Memorials, and Public Spaces, which held public hearings for six months about Confederate monuments, many of which took place at the JSAAHC.

Dr. Douglas and the JSAAHC have experience owning, maintaining, and displaying historic artifacts. The JSAAHC maintains a museum exhibit and gallery space on its premises, which it stewards according to American Alliance of Museum guidelines. Dr. Douglas holds a Ph.D. in Art History and possesses twenty years of experience as a museum curator, including seven years at UVA's Fralin Museum of Art. She has served on numerous sculpture juries in Washington D.C., including the Katzen Art Center at American University. It is fitting to have African American leadership for this culminating disposition phase of our community's painful journey with these symbols of white supremacy. It behooves the City Council to select the Jefferson School -- the only local institution, and the sole African American organization to have applied.

CONTACT INFORMATION

As the JSAAHC's Executive Director, Dr. Andrea Douglas is authorized to negotiate this offer on behalf of the Jefferson School. Her contact information is:

Dr. Andrea Douglas

434-260-8724

director@jeffschoolheritagecenter.org

APPENDIX 1: SWORD INTO PLOWSHARES: A COMMUNITY-LED PROCESS

The JSAAHC wishes to acquire the Shrady-Lentelli 1924 monument of Robert E. Lee in order to transform it into material to be used by community members and artists in the creation of sculpture that affirms 21st century Charlottesville's inclusive values. We propose to engage Charlottesville residents in a participatory process that centers the voices of our descendant community and that also helps define the criteria for placement of this art in public areas. We are inspired by the prophetic vision of transforming "Swords Into Plowshares" (Isaiah 2:4).

The development of the new art will be driven by an intensive community engagement process. This engagement will follow principles of equitable collaboration. Key elements of equitable collaboration include:



Trauma-Informed – Focus on relationships, and prepare and support people in ways that prevent, minimize, or mitigate trauma



Inclusive – Reach all segments of a community, and account for racial, ethnic, gender, class and other dynamics as keys for meaningful participation



Responsive – Acknowledge and respond to community questions, needs, concerns and ideas in timely and meaningful ways



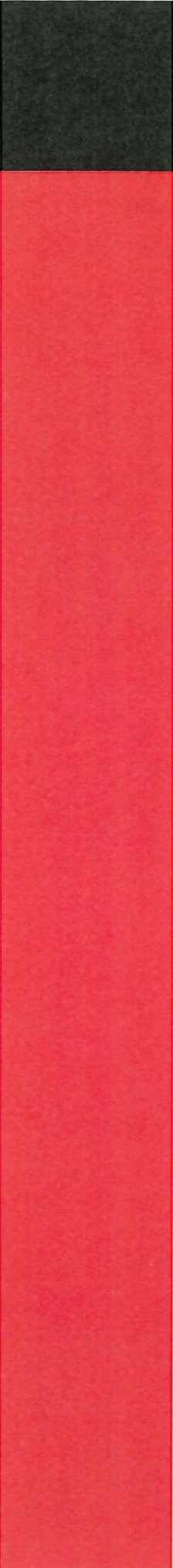
Truth-Seeking – Invite honest, complete histories, even when such histories may be painful to hear and to understand



Deliberative – Foster brave spaces where participants honestly and openly confront past and present, for learning, growing, and shared civic thinking



Adaptive – Develop appropriate goals and process for current circumstances, while adjusting as circumstances change



The engagement will be facilitated by the Institute for Engagement at UVA (IEN), drawing on lessons learned from earlier successful engagement on issues involving racialized history, including the Dialogue on Race, the Blue Ribbon Commission on Race, Memorials and Public Spaces, and the community-based design process for UVA's Memorial to Enslaved Laborers (MEL). The latter was led by IEN as a member of MEL's design team.

SIP WILL DESIGN A COMPREHENSIVE OUTREACH PLAN BY:

- ★ Actively inviting ideas from all populations, while centering the needs, concerns and ideas of the descendant community;
- ★ Holding bi-weekly, in-person gatherings at the locations throughout the City. These may include, but not be limited to, the Jefferson School, Charlottesville High School, Burley Middle School, assisted living facilities, public libraries, cafés, beauty salons, barber shops, and places of worship;
- ★ Ensuring that all meetings are widely promoted, independently facilitated by trained facilitators, have clear purposes and agendas, and produce accessible summaries following the meetings;
- ★ Allowing also for remote participation through Zoom meetings.

THE PROCESS WILL ENCOURAGE DIVERSE PARTICIPATION BY:

- ★ Creating an ongoing community advisory body. This would be a diverse, representative group of community members who agree to participate throughout the engagement process to represent community views, to guide and support community engagement, to solicit ideas from their community connections, and to consider the public good even as they may advocate for particular outcomes;
- ★ Recruiting "community ambassadors" to increase the outreach to community groups, especially those who are unlikely to attend community meetings (whether virtual or in person);
- ★ Working in partnership with City Schools, to broaden the range of involvement to include children and youth.

THE PROCESS WILL SHAPE THE RESULTING ART:

- ★ The themes and conclusions developed in the community engagement process will be written up in a report by the fall of 2022. The artist selected for the commission will be required to base their proposal on that report and develop their own additional engagement work.



APPENDIX 2

SWORD INTO PLOWSHARES: LETTERS OF SUPPORT

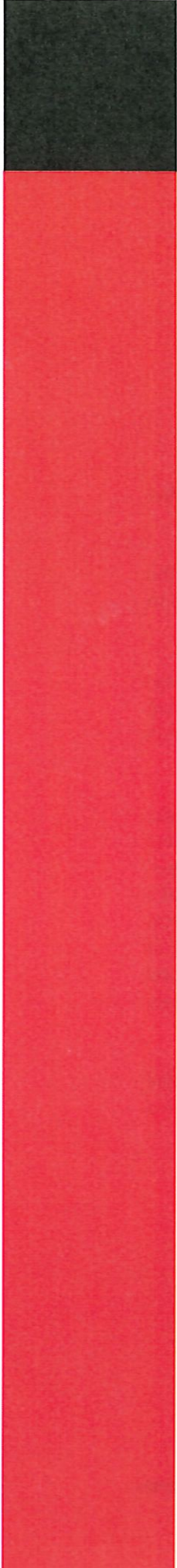
The following organizations and Individuals have submitted letters of support on behalf of "Swords Into Plowshares," which are included in this appendix:

DONORS TO THE PROJECT

- ★ The Memory Project at UVA's Democracy Initiative
- ★ Virginia Humanities
- ★ Open Society Foundations

SUPPORTERS OF THE PROJECT

- ★ The Descendants of Enslaved Communities at the University of Virginia
- ★ Blue Ribbon Commission Members
- ★ The Bridge Progressive Arts Initiative
- ★ Visible Records
- ★ Equal Justice Initiative
- ★ Congregate Charlottesville
- ★ Charlottesville Clergy Collective
- ★ Sally Hudson, Delegate 57th District
- ★ Melody Barnes, Former Director, White House Domestic Policy Council
- ★ Virginia Student Power Network
- ★ Charlottesville Black Arts Collective
- ★ The Valentine Museum
- ★ Black History Museum and Cultural Center of Virginia
- ★ Casa Alma - Charlottesville Catholic Worker Community
- ★ Indivisible Charlottesville

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- ★ Charlottesville Democratic Socialists of America
 - ★ Hate Free Schools Coalition of Albemarle County
 - ★ Second Street Gallery
 - ★ New City Arts Initiative
 - ★ Beloved Community Cville
 - ★ Prolyfyck Run Crew
 - ★ Rev. Dorthey Piatt-Esguerra, Westminster Presbyterian Church
 - ★ Niya Bates, descendant of Monticello's enslaved community
 - ★ Gayle Jessup White, descendant of Monticello's enslaved community
 - ★ Elizabeth Birdsall, descendant of enslavers



October 15, 2021

Charlottesville City Council
605 East Main Street
Charlottesville, VA 22902

Dear Members of the Charlottesville City Council,

The past few years have been so challenging for Charlottesville that, at times, we lose sight of all that we've accomplished.

We have been willing to struggle as a community to identify and challenge white supremacy. During the 2017 Summer of Hate, residents of our city courageously stood up to hatred by exercising our rights to free speech and free assembly.

We keep showing up to do the work, despite our historic and on-going difficulties. We've held numerous public forums (many of them hosted by the Jefferson School African American Heritage Center) during which we've shone a spotlight onto this difficult history. We've learned a lot from one another--often in public.

One of the defining themes of these gatherings has been that as long as there has been white supremacy, Black people have been challenging it. In our town, the current reckoning with Confederate monuments has been powered by African American leaders--from Zyanna Bryant's bold 2016 petition, to Don Gathers' and John Edwin Mason's steady guidance of the Blue Ribbon Commission, to Dr. Andrea Douglas's innovative "Swords Into Plowshares" proposal. UVA's Memory Project is a proud supporter of SIP and has agreed to financially support this worthy effort. SIP has earned the endorsement of Descendants of Enslaved Communities, Charlottesville Black Arts Collective, the Black History Museum and Cultural Center of Virginia, and Black clergy. It is also being given critical support by Alvin Starks of the Open Society U.S. Equality Team.

With this proposal, you have been invited to support Black leadership. Should you accept it, Charlottesville will have another accomplishment of which to be proud. In 2017, the entire world witnessed our trauma and, more importantly, our resistance. The world is watching what we do now with these statues.

Be brave.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jalane Schmidt". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jalane" being more prominent than the last name "Schmidt".

Dr. Jalane Schmidt

Director, Memory Project at UVA's Democracy Initiative



ARTS & SCIENCES

Democracy Initiative

Bond House | 600 Brandon Ave | Charlottesville, VA 22903

democracyinitiative.virginia.edu



October 13, 2021

Charlottesville City Council
605 E Main Street
2nd Floor
Charlottesville, VA 22902

To Members of City Council,

On behalf of Virginia Humanities, the commonwealth's humanities council, I write today to express my enthusiastic support for the Jefferson School African American Heritage Center's "Swords Into Plowshares" proposal. Charlottesville is uniquely positioned to make a bold and innovative statement about Confederate monuments that has the potential to recast the national conversation about race, history, and public spaces.

The JSAAHC is the only local applicant that has requested to receive the statue; it is also the only African-American organization. By proposing to transform the statue of Robert E. Lee into something new that more accurately reflects Charlottesville's democratic values, "Swords into Plowshares" will take our city's painful history and turn it into an opportunity for healing. It is proposing to do this entire project at no cost to the city. What is more, if this proposal is accepted by the city, Virginia Humanities has already agreed to financially support the community engagement aspects of the project.

The community engagement process and artistic transformation it proposes will pay special attention to voices in the African American community, which were systematically excluded from the conversation about public space when the statue was erected in 1924. The JSAAHC has the credibility and experience to carry this out. It has been a leader in city discussions about systemic racism for years. "Swords Into Plowshares" represents a creative culmination of the 2016 recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Commission.

As members of the Charlottesville community with a statewide mission, Virginia Humanities hopes you give JSAAHC the opportunity to lead in this effort to shape a new narrative of and for this great city, and that it becomes a model to which other communities across the nation might look as a model for racial healing. If you have need for further comment, please feel free to reach out to me.

Sincerely,

Matthew Gibson
Executive Director
Virginia Humanities
946 Grady Ave., Ste 100
Charlottesville, Va. 22903
434.924.4531 | mgibson@virginia.edu

OPEN SOCIETY FOUNDATIONS

October 8, 2021

Dear Members of Charlottesville City Council:

The Open Society Foundations (OSF) offers our recommendation of the Jefferson School African American Heritage Center's "Swords into Plowshares" proposal for the future of the city's Robert E. Lee statue. As you may know, Open Society Foundations is one of the largest human rights philanthropies in the world and we are committed towards building vibrant and inclusive democracies by securing justice, equality, accountability and fairness for all. We understand the critical work of public monuments in the United States as part of a larger reparative justice and racial equity strategy that allows us to make amends with our complex American history by expressing authentic truth-based narratives that accurately depict our evolving democracy.

Communities around the nation—and the world—are confronting what it means to break with past legacies of oppression. The "Monument Audit" recently published by the Mellon-funded Monument Lab found that many U.S. monuments "erase, deny, or belittle the historical experience of those who have not had the civic power or privilege to build them." At the Open Society Foundations, we believe that the process of reimagining monuments and public spaces is a crucial part of weaving a more inclusive and democratic society. The Jefferson School African-American Heritage Center's innovative "Swords into Plowshares" proposal would set a new bar in this regard, transformation the conversation by developing a process that turns something painful into an opportunity for growth.

The state of Virginia has emerged as an important and critical watermark in the national debate on monuments, race and belonging in society. As you know well, in 2017 the "Unite the Right Rally" in Charlottesville was centered on the contention surrounding the Lee monument and this sparked a tidal wave of deeply meaningful debates on race and contemporary culture while also creating new reforms on the role of public symbols in America culture. Recently, OSF proudly supported the new Emancipation and Freedom monument in Richmond and in 2019 we awarded community activist Free Egunfemi a Soros Equality Fellow to support her work on commemorative justice in Charlottesville. As part of our groundbreaking work on race in 2020, OSF created a monument justice initiative to support innovative memorial interventions that foster new ideas on historical accuracy and racial justice to inspire hope for an inclusive multiracial democracy.

The Open Society Foundations offers our letter of recommendation for "Swords into Plowshares," as we are currently pending a grant for their work. If you have questions or concerns, please contact me directly at alvin.starks@opensocietyfoundations.org.

Best regards,

Alvin Starks
Director – Equality, OSUS
Open Society Foundations

Descendants of Enslaved Communities at the University of Virginia



October 14, 2021

Charlottesville City Council
605 E. Main Street
2nd Floor
Charlottesville, VA 22902

Dear City Council:

In September, **The Descendants of Enslaved Communities (DEC) at the University of Virginia** celebrated its first anniversary as an independent nonprofit organization which serves as a collective voice of all descendants of enslaved and free Black communities who labored at the University of Virginia through research, education, and preservation. Our privileged partnership with the Jefferson School of African American Heritage Center (JSAAHC) is a key component to building our membership. The DEC would like to register its enthusiastic support for the JSAAHC's "Swords into Plowshares" proposal. Charlottesville is uniquely positioned to make a bold and innovative statement about Confederate monuments that has the potential to recast the national conversation about race, history, and public spaces.

The JSAAHC is the only local applicant that has requested to receive the statute; it is also the only African-American organization. By proposing to transform the Lee statute into something new that more accurately reflects Charlottesville's democratic values, "Swords into Plowshares" will take our city's painful history and turn it into an opportunity for healing. It is proposing to do this entire project at no cost to the city.

The community engagement process and artistic transformation it proposes will pay special attention to voices in the African-American community, which were systematically excluded from the conversation about public space when the statute was erected in 1924. The JSAAHC has the credibility and experience to carry this out. It has been a leader in city discussions about systemic racism for years. "Swords Into Plowshares" represent a creative culmination of the 2016 recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Commission.

As members of the Charlottesville community, we hope you give us the opportunity to participate in shaping the narrative about our city.

Thank you,

Bertha French
Bertha French, Co-Chairs

DeTeasa Gathers

DeTeasa Gathers, Co-Chairs of the Descendants of Enslaved Communities at the University of Virginia

Charlottesville City Council
605 E Main Street
2nd Floor
Charlottesville, VA 22902

Dear Members of City Council,

In 2016, we joined together to sit through 17 meetings of the City's Blue Ribbon Commission on Race, Memorials and Public Spaces (BRC) as appointed members of that Commission. Except for three meetings devoted entirely to public engagement, each meeting began and ended with public comment.

It was extraordinarily disappointing to hear so many totally false histories being presented to us during that time. Many of those involved Lee - "he liberated his own slaves" (reality: he fought the terms of his father-in-law's will that mandated their freedom as soon as possible, a case he lost in court), "he welcomed African Americans to his church in the months following Appomatox" (reality: he was lauded for his defiance of a Black man who dared to attend his church), he was fighting over state's rights, not slavery (reality: the only state's right in dispute was the right to enslave), "he was a paragon of honor" (reality: he allowed his soldiers to kidnap and enslave free Blacks during his campaign in Maryland and Pennsylvania).

The Lee statue, its ceremonies of dedication, its veneration by generations of whites blinded by the poison of white supremacy - all of these served as the worst form of idolatry. It is not enough simply to remove it from its former location. It must never again be allowed to stain ours or any other community's soul. By supporting the Jefferson School African American Heritage Center's "Swords Into Plowshares" proposal, Charlottesville will begin making amends for a century of complicity in that false worship.

Please help complete the work of the BRC and of so many who have said "no more" to white supremacy in our public spaces. The JSAAHC will engage our community in a thoughtful, inclusive process to transform this emblem of harm into one of hope and healing. Please make it possible to do so.

Signed,

Don Gathers, former chair
John Mason, former vice-chair
Andrea Douglas
Frank Dukes
Jane Smith



October 7, 2021

Charlottesville City Council
605 E Main Street
2nd Floor
Charlottesville, VA 22902

Dear City Council,

On behalf of the entire staff and board of The Bridge Progressive Arts Initiative, I am writing to indicate our unanimous support for the Jefferson School African American Heritage Center's *Swords Into Plowshares* proposal. The thoughtful and deliberate approach they've outlined stands in stark contrast to all others as the only proposal to offer a bright vision and inclusive process for public engagement, education, and transformation of the monument.

The Bridge Progressive Arts Initiative applauds the city's September 2021 Solicitation of Offers for statue acquisition guidelines which necessitates "the rejection of the Jim Crow-era narratives." Where the erection of the Robert E. Lee monument served to advance the prevailing racist and exclusionary narratives of the early 20th century, the *Swords Into Plowshares* proposal will champion a more compassionate, inclusive, and democratic possibility. As a city, we now have a sobering understanding of how public monuments, art, and symbols have a unique power to invoke and imprint narratives and ideals. Those which are associated with Charlottesville's Robert E. Lee monument must no longer endure. With this proposal, our city is gifted a rare opportunity to take a bold step toward dismantling and replacing those abiding narratives and ideals. Thanks to the thoughtful leadership and ambition of the JSAAHC, Charlottesville is now uniquely poised to transform our own narrative while inspiring a national conversation about race, history, and the role of art in public spaces.

The JSAAHC is the only local applicant that has requested to receive the statue. It is also the only African-American organization. The Jefferson School executive director Dr. Andrea Douglas is well qualified to steward this project, having served as a member of the City of Charlottesville's 2016 Blue Ribbon Commission on Race, Memorials and Public Spaces, and having served on the selection jury for the award-winning UVA Memorial to Enslaved Laborers. The JSAAHC's long standing commitment to providing appropriate context and education for Charlottesville's Jim Crow-era relics precedes the removal of the statue. For these reasons, The Bridge Progressive Arts Initiative trusts them, and only them, with the acquisition. Furthermore, we believe that the appropriate course of action for all other applicants upon learning of the *Swords Into Plowshares* proposal would be to graciously withdraw their applications.

To conclude, I would like to reiterate our utmost confidence in the JSAAHC's ability to thoroughly and thoughtfully carry out the *Swords Into Plowshares* proposal. We believe it is the only proposal worth consideration and we enthusiastically commit the support of our organization to their efforts in any capacity we may be able to serve.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Alan Goffinski". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Alan Goffinski, Executive Director

The Bridge Progressive Arts Initiative

VISIBLE / RECORDS

October 14, 2021

Morgan Ashcom & Kendall King
Directors of Programming for Visible Records
1740 Broadway St.
Charlottesville, VA 22902

Charlottesville City Council
605 E Main Street
2nd Floor
Charlottesville, VA 22902

Dear City Council,

On behalf of Visible Records, we are writing to express our enthusiastic support for the Jefferson School African American Heritage Center's "Swords Into Plowshares" proposal. Charlottesville is uniquely positioned to make a bold and innovative statement about Confederate monuments that has the potential to recast the national conversation about race, history, public artwork, and public spaces.

Artists across the nation are working to deconstruct Lost Cause narratives and transform our public spaces, and broader culture. "Swords Into Plowshares" provides Charlottesville with an incredible opportunity to engage in this national conversation and turn our previously white supremacist monument into a symbol that represents our community's values, our aspirations for a better future, and a truthful acknowledgement of our past. Artists regularly engage in a process of shifting societal values, and in this they run parallel to the work our community's activists have been engaging in for decades. "Swords Into Plowshares" provides an opportunity for these two groups to work together and create a site of communal healing.

We believe that this transformation must be Black-led, and that there is no better organization than the Jefferson School and Dr. Andrea Douglas to be trusted with this monumental project. Dr. Douglas is an established art historian and community leader, making her the ideal candidate to spearhead this transformative proposal.

We are a new artist-run studio space and gallery in the Belmont/Carlton neighborhood with a mission to prioritize affordability of studios, establish artist residency opportunities for Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) and low-income artists, and build partnerships with BIPOC organizations and community organizers. We believe "Swords Into Plowshares" directly aligns with our mission and values, and we are excited to support by providing studio space for the artist residency, as well as access to our facilities for community events.

Thank you, Morgan Ashcom & Kendall King



October 14, 2021

Charlottesville City Council
605 E Main Street
2nd Floor
Charlottesville, VA 22902

Dear City Council,

The Equal Justice Initiative (EJI) is writing to express our enthusiastic support for the Jefferson School African American Heritage Center's "Swords Into Plowshares" proposal. Charlottesville is uniquely positioned to make a bold and innovative statement about Confederate monuments that has the potential to recast the national conversation about race, history, and public spaces.

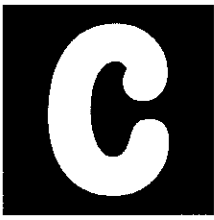
The JSAAHC is the only local applicant that has requested to receive the statue; it is also the only African-American organization. By proposing to transform the Lee statue into something new that more accurately reflects Charlottesville's democratic values, "Swords into Plowshares" will take the city's painful history and turn it into an opportunity for healing. It is proposing to do this entire project at no cost to the city.

The community engagement process and artistic transformation it proposes will pay special attention to voices in the African American community, which were systematically excluded from the conversation about public space when the statue was erected in 1924. The JSAAHC has the credibility and experience to carry this out. It has been a leader in city discussions about systemic racism for years. "Swords Into Plowshares" represents a creative culmination of the 2016 recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Commission.

EJI had the privilege of working with JSAAHC and Charlottesville community members as part of the Community Remembrance Project to document and memorialize the 1898 lynching of John Henry James. Throughout that process, JSAAHC worked to engage the Charlottesville community in meaningful education and reflection. We encourage you to grant them the opportunity to do so again in shaping the narrative about Charlottesville.

Thank you,

Equal Justice Initiative



October 9, 2021

Dear City Council,

Congregate Charlottesville is writing to express our enthusiastic support for the Jefferson School African American Heritage Center's "Swords Into Plowshares" proposal.

Charlottesville is uniquely positioned to make a bold and innovative statement about Confederate monuments that has the potential to recast the national conversation about race, history, and public spaces.

The JSAAHC is the only local applicant that has requested to receive the statue; it is also the only African American organization. By proposing to transform the Lee statue into something new that more accurately reflects Charlottesville's democratic values, "Swords into Plowshares" will take our city's painful history and turn it into an opportunity for healing. It is proposing to carry out this entire project at no cost to the city.

The community engagement process and artistic transformation the project proposes will pay special attention to voices in the African American community, voices that were systematically disregarded and excluded from the conversation about public space when the statue was erected in 1924. The JSAAHC has the credibility and experience to carry this out. It has been a leader in city discussions about systemic racism for years. "Swords Into Plowshares" represents a creative culmination of the 2016 recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Commission.

As members of the Charlottesville community, we hope you give us the opportunity to participate in shaping the narrative about our city by accepting the JSAAHC's important and potentially transformative proposal.

Thank you,

Congregate Charlottesville
Christina Rivera
Rebekah Menning
Jordan Leahy
CO-PRESIDENTS



105 Lankford Ave.
Charlottesville, VA 22903
www.cvilleclergycollective.org
email@cvilleclergycollective.org

October 14, 2021

Dear City Council,

We, the undersigned members of the Charlottesville Clergy Collective, are writing to express our enthusiastic support for the Jefferson School African American Heritage Center's "Swords Into Plowshares" proposal. Charlottesville is uniquely positioned to make a bold and innovative statement about Confederate monuments that has the potential to recast the national conversation about race, history, and public spaces.

The JSAAHC is the only local applicant that has requested to receive the statue; it is also the only African-American organization. By proposing to transform the Lee statue into something new that more accurately reflects Charlottesville's democratic values, "Swords into Plowshares" will take our city's painful history and turn it into an opportunity for healing. It is proposing to do this entire project at no cost to the city.

The community engagement process and artistic transformation it proposes will pay special attention to voices in the African American community, which were systematically excluded from the conversation about public space when the statue was erected in 1924. The JSAAHC has the credibility and experience to carry this out. It has been a leader in city discussions about systemic racism for years. "Swords Into Plowshares" represents a creative culmination of the 2016 recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Commission.

As members of the Charlottesville community, we hope you give us the opportunity to participate in shaping the narrative about our city.

Thank you,

Rev. Dr. Alvin Edwards, Pastor, Mt. Zion First African Baptist Church
Sarah A. Kelley, Apostle, Faith, Hope and Love Int'l Healing and Deliverance Center
Devin Coles, Pastor of Amazing Changes Ministries, member of the Charlottesville Clergy Collective
Sharon Beckman-Brindley, Insight Meditation Community of Charlottesville
Rev. Dr. Eugene Locke, Parish Associate, Westminster Presbyterian
Rabbi Tom Gutherz, Rabbi, Congregation Beth Israel
Gail Hyder Wiley, Elder, Westminster Presbyterian Church
Rev. Dr. Linda Olson Peebles, Interim Lead Minister, Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Charlottesville
Rev. Dorothy Piatt-Esguerra, Associate Pastor for University and Social Justice Mission, Westminster Presbyterian Church

Steve Johnson, Pastor, Oak Chapel Baptist Church
Rev. Alexander B. Joyner, Pastor, First United Methodist Church, Charlottesville
Rev. Susan Steinberg, PC (USA)
Rev. Sandra Wisco, ret. Pastor in the ELCA
Gary Hatter, ruling elder, Olivet Presbyterian Church
Elizabeth Shillue, Quaker, Charlottesville Friends Meeting
Rev. Robert Lewis, Pastor, Hinton Avenue United Methodist Church
Rev. Ellen Longmoore, Retired UVA Chaplain, Interfaith minister
Rev. Dr. Jim Bundy, retired pastor, United Church of Christ
Rev. Maren Hange, Pastor, Charlottesville Mennonite Church
Rabia Povich, Cheraga, Inayatiyya Sufi Community fo Charlottesville
Rev. Alexandra McGee, MDiv, BCC Chaplain; Unitarian Universalist
Susan Kaufman, Insight Meditation Community of Charlottesville
Rev. Dr. Michael Cheuk, Secretary, Charlottesville Clergy Collective



SALLY LINDQUIST HUDSON

POST OFFICE BOX 2375
CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA 22902
FIFTY-SEVENTH DISTRICT

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
HOUSE OF DELEGATES
RICHMOND

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS:

FINANCE
AGRICULTURE, CHESAPEAKE AND
NATURAL RESOURCES
COMMUNICATIONS, TECHNOLOGY AND
INNOVATION

October 14, 2021

Charlottesville City Council
605 E. Main Street, 2nd Floor
Charlottesville, VA 22902

Dear Councilors,

I am writing to add my voice to the many Charlottesville residents who support the "Swords Into Plowshares" proposal from the Jefferson School African American Heritage Center. As a legislator who worked to reform the laws which have so long delayed this process, I can think of no better institution to lead our community in this next phase.

I trust there are several applicants for the City's monuments that can safely transport the statues from one site to another. Only the Jefferson School is prepared to meet our community's needs for an honest reckoning with these relics and their painful history, both recent and long-running.

JSAAHC is the only local applicant and the only African-American led institution that has applied to receive the statues. Its Executive Director, Dr. Andrea Douglas, has unmatched credentials for this project, including 20 years working as a museum curator and service on both the City's 2016 Blue Ribbon Commission and UVA's Commission on Slavery. She has proven leadership in shepherding transformative public art projects, including the Memorial to Enslaved Laborers at UVA. For many years — and especially these last five under the national spotlight — JSAAHC has educated the Charlottesville community about the Lost Cause mythology that gave rise to these statues and how it permeates every corner of the world we inhabit today.

Simply put, our community could not have navigated these last five years without JSAAHC's leadership. We have achieved broad consensus that the statues must be removed because of their steadfast work. Now is the time to trust those same leaders to guide us in this next era of our journey.

Sincerely,

Sally Hudson

Charlottesville City Council
605 East Main Street, 2nd Floor
Charlottesville, Virginia 22902

October 15, 2021

Dear Members of the Charlottesville City Council,

I write to express my strong support for the Jefferson School African American Heritage Center's Swords Into Plowshares proposal.

For the past three years, I've traveled from my home in Richmond, Virginia to the University of Virginia – a commute between two cities that defiantly clung to the iconography of the Lost Cause prominently displayed in their public squares. As we know, the monuments were erected in the late 19th and 20th centuries as some in the South conjured a gilded new memory of its past and used every means possible to shape its culture, economy, policies and public narrative to carry that sentiment into the future. But places change when people change them and Charlottesville – like Richmond -- is changing. What better way to express Charlottesville's values of inclusivity and racial justice than a work of public art widely supported by the diverse community in which it will stand.


The Swords Into Plowshares (SIP) project reflects the best of the Charlottesville community. First, the artistic and physical transformation of the monument of Robert E. Lee would be informed by a community engagement process that ensures the public work of art produced reflects Charlottesville's values and those who live here. The art will be an extension of the conversation unfolding throughout Central Virginia and the nation regarding how to invite and listen to marginalized voices. The planned community engagement process would model the inclusive and democratic decision making that was absent from our public sphere when Confederate memorials were erected in the 1920s. By proposing to listen to community members, especially to the voices of descendants of enslaved people, SIP will follow in the path of other local cultural heritage sites including Monticello and Montpelier. Both presidential homes have invited significant input from the region's African American community as they work to create more historically accurate exhibitions.

The Jefferson School has the experience and credibility to lead this project, including the public engagement process. Its successful track record includes convening the Charlottesville community in public conversations about race and history, and in this instance, Dr. Frank Dukes will guide the work. Dr. Dukes is the former director of the Institute for Environmental Negotiation at the University of Virginia, and he also helped guide the community engagement process that led to UVA's Memorial to Enslaved Laborers.

Second, the final work of art would build dialogue with other significant work in the area, including the Memorial to Enslaved Laborers and the Rumors of War statue and the newly installed Emancipation and Freedom Monument in Richmond. More broadly, it would be an important contribution to the national and global conversation about what cities can do with unwanted symbols of oppression.

Finally, the community engagement process encourages the healthy civic culture needed to create a city in which everyone can thrive. As Harwood Institute for Public Innovation President Rich Harwood has written, "A weak civic culture undermines the best intentions and the most rigorous of analyses and plans. For change to happen, trust and community ownership must form, people need to engage with one another, and we need to create the right underlying conditions and capabilities for change to take root and spread." In this instance, both the community engagement process and the final work of art will be a powerful repudiation of the legacies of Jim Crow in our public square, as well as a down payment on the promise of a thriving Charlottesville.

Sincerely,



Melody C. Barnes
Former Director, White House Domestic Policy Council (2009-2012)

Ibby Han

Co-Executive Director, Virginia Student Power Network
220 Hull St #200, Richmond, VA 2322
ihan@newvirginiamajority.org



October 13th, 2021

Charlottesville City Council
605 E Main Street
2nd Floor
Charlottesville, VA 22902

Dear City Council,

The Virginia Student Power Network is writing to express our support for the Jefferson School African American Heritage Center's "Swords Into Plowshares" proposal. VSPN's leadership, members, and alumni were deeply involved in counterprotesting white supremacists in the shadow of the Charlottesville Lee monument, and that impact continues today.

We believe that JSAAHC's proposal is the most transformative and community-centered option. The JSAAHC is the only applicant that is local to Charlottesville, African-American led, and will engage the community in a rigorous and thoughtful way. Allowing the monument to be exhibited elsewhere in its original form would be a profound disappointment and a disservice to the community members who have continuously challenged our city to address its painful history of racism and its symbols of white supremacy such as the Lee monument. Removing the monument was a critical first step; Charlottesville now has the opportunity to distinguish itself by reimagining the statue with reclamation and liberation as the central driving values.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ibby Han". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Ibby" being more prominent than the last name "Han".

Ibby Han
Charlottesville City resident

October 13, 2021

Charlottesville City Council
605 E Main Street
2nd Floor
Charlottesville, VA 22902

Dear City Council,

The **Charlottesville Black Arts Collective** supports the Jefferson School African American Heritage Center's "Swords Into Plowshares" plan for the Lee statue.

It's important to have public art that expresses inclusion. The Lee statue never did, and it never will, wherever it's placed next. A smelter is the best place for it. Our city would be better served by using its bronze for something new that takes our community in a forward direction.

With its exhibitions and programming, the Jefferson School has been a champion of African American art in Charlottesville. The Jefferson School is a trusted organization in our community, and its executive director, Dr. Andrea Douglas, is an art historian. We trust Dr. Douglas to lead this innovative "Swords Into Plowshares" process.

Transforming trauma into beautiful art is a powerful idea, one that deserves to become reality.

We urge you to select the Jefferson School.

Sincerely,

cvilleblackartscollective@gmail.com

The Charlottesville Black Arts Collective



1015 East Clay Street
Richmond, VA 23219-1527

804.649.0711 p
804.643.3510 f
www.thevalentine.org

October 12, 2021

Charlottesville City Council
605 E Main Street
2nd Floor
Charlottesville, VA 22902

Dear City Council:

This is a transformative moment for Virginia. Our local histories and legacy artworks are on the world stage. Each community should embrace its role in deciding at the local level what it values and how to best share those ideals through a public process. As municipalities around the Commonwealth are wrestling with how to handle the future of now-removed monuments to white supremacy and racial oppression, it is critical to remember that each of the public artworks has a specific story connected to local place. Just as their creation began at the community level, so should their end.

The Valentine Museum is a local history organization currently involved in the discussions surrounding the disposition of Richmond's Lost Cause monuments and statues, and we fully support the selection of a local history organization in Charlottesville overseeing the final disposition of Charlottesville's Lost Cause monuments.

The Jefferson School African American Heritage Center has a successful history of actively interpreting Charlottesville's Lost Cause statues. The JSAAHC also thoughtfully engages with the community to reshape the narratives around race, public art, and memory. While Charlottesville reassesses its own civic values projected through public artworks, the JSAAHC is uniquely positioned to uplift the voices of the city's African American community through its established relationships and significant community engagement. In their public programming, the JSAAHC has been and will continue "clearly and unambiguously indicating the rejection of the Jim Crow-era narratives" that prevailed when Charlottesville residents originally erected the statues. Charlottesville is seeking a "real transformation of both space and narrative" that can be provided by the city's own Jefferson School African American Heritage Center.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'William J. Martin'.

William J. Martin
Director, The Valentine





October 15, 2021

Charlottesville City Council
605 E Main Street, 2nd Floor
Charlottesville, VA 22902

Dear Council Members,

On behalf of the Black History Museum & Cultural Center of Virginia (BHMVA) I write in strong support of the Jefferson School African American Heritage Center's *Swords Into Plowshares* (SIP) proposal. As an organization dedicated to deepening understanding of African American history and culture across the Commonwealth, we believe SIP will make a vital contribution to our collective effort to strengthen and diversify opportunities for meaningful community engagement with issues central in our public life.

As you know, public art associated with the "Lost Cause" myth played a vital role in buttressing the "Jim Crow" apartheid system. We believe the SIP project represents a critical step for Central Virginia that, along with steps being taken by other sites and especially those of conscience, widens the corridor of opportunity for community members seeking to participate in the redress of the legacy of disfranchisement; the burdens of which we all still bear.

Moreover, in our view, the Jefferson School is uniquely qualified to lead the Charlottesville community in public conversations about race and history and brings the practical experience, wisdom, and empathy so essential to this unique undertaking.

We support the SIP project not simply because it is vital on its own merits, but because we believe it represents an extraordinary opportunity to leverage and scale aligned efforts in communities across Central Virginia and indeed the Commonwealth. For example, the BHMVA is hosting an exhibition titled "Unsay Their Names" a photo log of Richmond's transformation from June 8th to November 11th, 2020. The exhibition juxtaposes the "Say Their Names" social movement, while the photographs capture Confederate monuments during the period of social unrest that led to their removal. Taken together, these types of projects create opportunities for regional collaboration that can yield quantifiable economic benefits for our entire region.

SIP would expand civic dialogue already catalyzed by other significant works of art and initiative in the region, including the Memorial to Enslaved Laborers at the University of Virginia; the Rumors of War statue and the newly installed Emancipation and Freedom Monument in Richmond; as well as ongoing efforts at Montpelier and Monticello. Finally, SIP project would place your community at the center of the global conversation regarding ways in which cities can leverage their arts and culture infrastructure to help policymakers manage the complex public policy dimensions the accompany unwanted symbols of oppression. For these and many other reasons we hope and strongly urge that you approve this proposal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Marland Buckner", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Marland Buckner
Interim Executive Director



Charlottesville's Catholic Worker community
911 Nassau Street, Charlottesville, VA 22902
434-202-2221 • cvillecw@gmail.com • casa-alma.org

Charlottesville City Council
605 E Main Street
2nd Floor
Charlottesville, VA 22902

October 9, 2021

Dear Members of the Charlottesville City Council,

On behalf of Casa Alma, I am writing to express our enthusiastic support for the Jefferson School African American Heritage Center's "Swords Into Plowshares" proposal. Charlottesville is uniquely positioned to make a bold and innovative statement about Confederate monuments that has the potential to recast the national conversation about race, history, and public spaces.

As a Catholic Worker community, Casa Alma is rooted in the tradition of creative nonviolence and action for repair and justice. We believe that JSAAHC's "Swords into Plowshares" represents the very best of this tradition - by transforming tools of oppression into tools for community liberation. We urge you to support JSAAHC's re-purposing of the statue to create art that energizes and moves our community forward.

The JSAAHC is the only local applicant that has requested to receive the statue; it is also the only African-American organization. By proposing to transform the Lee statue into something new that more accurately reflects Charlottesville's democratic values, "Swords into Plowshares" will take our city's painful history and turn it into an opportunity for healing. It is proposing to do this entire project at no cost to the city.

The community engagement process and artistic transformation it proposes will pay special attention to voices in the African American community, which were systematically excluded from the conversation about public space when the statue was erected in 1924. The JSAAHC has the credibility and experience to carry this out. It has been a leader in city discussions about systemic racism for years. "Swords Into Plowshares" represents a creative culmination of the 2016 recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Commission.

As members of the Charlottesville community, we hope you give us the opportunity to participate in shaping the narrative about our city.

Thank you,

Laura Snyder Brown, MSW
Casa Alma co-founder and Director

INDIVISIBLE CHARLOTTESVILLE



October 10, 2021

Charlottesville City Council
605 E Main Street
2nd Floor
Charlottesville, VA 22902

Dear City Council,

Indivisible Charlottesville is writing to express our warm support for the Jefferson School African American Heritage Center's "Swords into Plowshares" proposal. As an organization that values democracy and community engagement, we believe this project engages trusted leaders and organizations who will guide a much-needed process of symbolic transformation and meaningful community conversation. Charlottesville is uniquely positioned to make a powerful and timely statement about Confederate statues that will advance the dialogue on race, inclusion, and public space.

It is important that this process be steered locally. The JSAAHC is the only Charlottesville-based applicant that has requested to receive the statue. It is also the only proposal from an organization led by and for the African-American community, and the project involves no cost to the city. By seeking to transform the Lee statue into something new that more accurately reflects Charlottesville's democratic values, "Swords into Plowshares" will take our city's painful history and turn it into an opportunity for progress and healing.

"Swords into Plowshares" represents a creative culmination of the 2016 recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Commission. The community engagement process and artistic vision it proposes will intentionally honor voices in the African American community, which were wrongfully excluded from previous conversations about public space. The JSAAHC is an optimal choice to lead this project given its reputation and expertise at the intersections of art, history, and public discourse.

As members of the Charlottesville community, we hope you provide the JSAAHC the opportunity to guide us through this process of reshaping the narrative of our city.

Thank you,

Indivisible Charlottesville

10/12/21

Charlottesville City Council
605 E Main Street
2nd Floor
Charlottesville, VA 22902

Dear City Council,

The Steering Committee of the Charlottesville chapter of the Democratic Socialists of America is writing to express support for the Jefferson School African American Heritage Center's "Swords Into Plowshares" proposal. Charlottesville is uniquely positioned to make a bold statement about Confederate monuments, which has the potential to recast the national conversation about race, history, and public spaces.

The JSAAHC is the only local applicant that has requested to receive the statue; it is also the only African-American organization. By proposing to transform the Lee statue into something new, the JSAAHC is offering to facilitate a much-needed community conversation about reimagining our public space, in accordance with our democratic values. "Swords into Plowshares" will take our city's painful history and turn it into an opportunity for healing. It is proposing to do this entire project at no cost to the city.

The community engagement process and artistic transformation it proposes will pay special attention to voices in the African-American community, which were systematically excluded from the conversation about public space when the statue was erected in 1924. The JSAAHC has the credibility and experience to carry this out. It has been a leader in city discussions about systemic racism for years. "Swords Into Plowshares" represents a creative culmination of the 2016 recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Commission.

As members of the Charlottesville community, we strongly encourage you to give residents the opportunity to shape the narrative about our city through this novel proposal.

With a world to win,

The Steering Committee of Charlottesville DSA

October 9, 2021

Charlottesville City Council
605 E Main Street
2nd Floor
Charlottesville, VA 22902

Dear City Council,

Hate-Free Schools Coalition of Albemarle County (HFSC) is proud to support the Jefferson School African American Heritage Center's (JSAAHC) "Swords Into Plowshares" proposal. Since 2017, HFSC has helped to align and cultivate community awareness and action to dismantle elements of white supremacy within our public school systems in both Charlottesville City and Albemarle County.

As a driving force in this community, the JSAAHC is ideally positioned to lead an innovative effort to transform the narrative locally and nationally on the topic of race, history, and public spaces. The JSAAHC is the only local applicant AND the only African-American organization to request to receive the statue. This is fitting and we should not squander this opportunity to empower and amplify the work of turning our complicated and painful history into an opportunity for community engagement and healing through true transformation.

"Swords into Plowshares" is a concept in which military weapons or technologies are converted for peaceful civilian applications. The community engagement process and artistic transformation proposed by the JSAAHC will uplift the voices of the African-American community here in Charlottesville--voices that have been (and still are) systematically excluded and discredited.

The JSAAHC has the credibility, integrity, and expertise to successfully navigate this opportunity. The organization has been a leader in driving education, discussion, and analysis of systemic racism for many years and their proposal will be at no cost to the city.

As members of the Charlottesville community, we hope you give the JSAAHC and the community this opportunity to participate in shaping the narrative about our city in a meaningful and transformative way.

Thank you,

Hate-Free Schools Coalition of Albemarle County



October 9, 2021

Charlottesville City Council
605 E. Main Street
2nd Floor
Charlottesville, VA 22902

Dear City Council,

Second Street Gallery (SSG) is writing to express its enthusiastic support for the Jefferson School African American Heritage Center's (JSAAHC) "Swords Into Plowshares" proposal. As a community-based arts organization, SSG sees the incredible value of this proposal to turn the Lee statue into a public work and engage our community in much-needed conversation about transforming our public spaces.

The JSAAHC, led by Dr. Andrea Douglas, is the only local applicant that has requested to receive the statue; it is also the only African-American organization. Dr. Douglas is an art historian with 20 years experience as a museum curator, including at the UVA Fralin Museum of Art. She served on the UVA President's Commission on Slavery, and on the jury that selected the design and artist for the recently inaugurated, award-winning UVA Memorial to Enslaved Laborers. Since its inception, the JSAAHC has gained years of experience leading our discussions about systemic racism; there is no organization better equipped to undertake this effort.

We feel it is a win-win for the City to allow the community to take charge of disposing of and transforming this monument, and of the process of reconsidering public space. By accepting the JSAAHC's proposal, Charlottesville would distinguish itself by creating liberation-themed art with materials repurposed from a statue that represents so much painful history.

SSG's primary mission is to enliven Virginia through access to the best in contemporary art and artists and to inspire new ways of thinking, seeing, and doing. We see this as a momentous opportunity to attract visitors to Charlottesville to converse about art, and as a chance for our community to serve as a transformative spark of inspiration in the national conversation about monuments. We respectfully urge the City to accept the JSAAHC's proposal without hesitation.

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in shaping the narrative about our city.

Sincerely,

Lia Norton
President, Board of Directors
Second Street Gallery

Kristen Chiacchia
Executive Director and Chief Curator
Second Street Gallery



Charlottesville City Council
605 E Main Street
2nd Floor
Charlottesville, VA 22902

Dear City Council,

I am writing to express my enthusiastic support for the Jefferson School African American Heritage Center's "Swords Into Plowshares" proposal.

Arts and cultural strategies that prioritize racial equity in Charlottesville need to consider both the form (what is produced) and the process by which they are created (by whom, for whom, and how). The JSAAHC is the only local applicant and the only African-American organization that has requested to receive the statue. By proposing to transform the statue into something new through a community-based process using the statue's original materials, "Swords into Plowshares" provides a platform for the community that worked towards the statue's removal to actively participate in physically transforming it into people-powered public art, rather than a symbol of crumbling mythologies rooted in white supremacy.

"Swords into Plowshares" gives Charlottesville residents a powerful, public way to lead the national conversation about race, history, and public spaces through a public art process led by JSAAHC, an organization with demonstrated experience in this kind of community engagement, having recently successfully navigated a public art engagement process with the UVA Memorial to Enslaved Laborers. The community engagement process and artistic transformation it proposes will pay special attention to voices in the African American community, which were systematically excluded from the conversation about public space when the statue was erected in 1924. As a leader in city discussions about systemic racism for years, the JSAAHC has the credibility and experience to carry this out.

"Swords Into Plowshares" follows the 2016 recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Commission: "The Confederate statues belong in no public space unless their history as symbols of white supremacy is revealed and their respective parks transformed in ways that promote freedom and equity in our community."

As a member of the Charlottesville community, I eagerly support this opportunity for Charlottesville residents to shape the narrative about our city.

Thank you,

Maureen Brondyke
Executive Director, *New City Arts Initiative*



Charlottesville City Council
605 E Main Street
2nd Floor
Charlottesville, VA 22902

October 12, 2021

Dear City Council,

I'm Elizabeth Shillue with Beloved Community Cville and I'm writing to express my hope that City Council will support the Jefferson School African American Heritage Center's "Swords Into Plowshares" proposal. I believe that this initiative will create an opening for our community to delve into a creative project that has the potential to bring us together and increase interest in our public history. We're in need of something which will cultivate healing and help our city develop a new sense of identity after the trauma of Aug 12th. And I believe that the process outlined in their proposal is just the thing.

By proposing to transform the Lee statue into something new that more accurately reflects Charlottesville's democratic values, "Swords into Plowshares" will take our city's painful history and turn it into an opportunity for healing. It is proposing to do this entire project at no cost to the city. Plus I believe that it's really significant that the community engagement process will pay special attention to voices in the African American community, which were systematically excluded from the conversation about public space when the statue was erected in 1924.

As members of the Charlottesville community, we hope you give us the opportunity to participate in shaping the narrative about our city. There's a strong desire to work towards creating the Beloved Community in Cville and this initiative seems in alignment with that goal. The backing of this effort is likely to be something you'll be proud of someday when looking upon your legacy as a public servant.

With appreciation for all you do,

Elizabeth

Elizabeth Shillue
Beloved Community Cville
belovedcommunitycville.com

"Our goal is to create a beloved community and this will require a qualitative change in our souls as well as a quantitative change in our lives." Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.



October 13, 2021

Dear Charlottesville City Council,

Prolyfyck Run Crew is a Black-led, racially diverse group of community members who Run These Streets in Charlottesville.

As we've grown in fitness and discipline, we have also grown our friendships across racial lines. We encourage everyone to do their best and commit ourselves to improving our community. In Charlottesville, not everyone has always felt like they belong. Our goal is to create a space where everyone feels welcome.

As national issues of racial justice get more attention, we speak up and support organizations in our community that are doing the work of bringing us together.

We start and end our morning runs at the Jefferson School. We appreciate what the Jefferson School does to lift up African American history and culture and present that in Charlottesville. Dr. Andrea Douglas is a leader in the community. What the Jefferson School aims to do with the Lee statue can help our city to heal by making space for everyone. That's why we support it.

We hope that the City Council will too.

Signed,

William Jones, III
James Dowell
Dr. Wes Bellamy

Co-Founders, Prolyfyck Run Crew

(Rev.) Dorothy Piatt-Esguerra
Westminster Presbyterian Church
400 Rugby Rd.
Charlottesville, VA 22903

dpiatt@westminsterva.org

October 13, 2021

Charlottesville City Council
605 E. Main Street
2nd Floor
Charlottesville, VA 22902

Dear City Council,

I am writing to express enthusiastic support for the Jefferson School African American Heritage Center's "Swords Into Plowshares" proposal. Charlottesville is uniquely positioned to make a bold and innovative statement about Confederate monuments that has the potential to recast the national conversation about race, history, and public spaces.

Having moved here after serving churches in Nashville and Ann Arbor, I was relatively unfamiliar with Charlottesville before its name became a hashtag in 2017. In the relatively short time I have lived here, it has been apparent to me that the city's national reputation belies many citizens', leaders', and community groups' tireless work to advocate and organize for policies that promote justice and equity for all citizens. In fact, efforts by several community leaders and UVA officials to reinvestigate painful parts of city's past with courage, integrity, honesty, and humility, to celebrate the positive work that has been and continues to be done, and to imagine a future that empowers the flourishing of all make this an inspiring place to live.

Now, the ability to literally recast the Lee statue constitutes an opportunity to show all Charlottesville residents what kind of future we hope to create. Moreover, it constitutes an opportunity to demonstrate to the rest of the nation that the Unite the Right Rally does not tell the full story of this city.

The JSAAHC is the only local applicant that has requested to receive the statue; it is also the only African-American organization. By proposing to transform the Lee statue into something new that more accurately reflects Charlottesville's democratic values, "Swords into Plowshares" will take our city's painful history and turn it into an opportunity for healing. It is proposing to do this entire project at no cost to the city.

The community engagement process and artistic transformation it proposes will pay special attention to voices in the African American community, which were systematically excluded from the conversation about public space when the statue was erected in 1924. The JSAAHC has the credibility and experience to carry this out. It has been a leader in city discussions about systemic racism for years. "Swords Into Plowshares" represents a creative culmination of the 2016 recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Commission.

As an invested member of the Charlottesville community, I hope you give us the opportunity to participate in shaping the narrative about our city.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Dorothy Piatt-Esquerre".

(Rev.) Dorothy Piatt-Esquerre

Associate Pastor for University and Social Justice Mission
Westminster Presbyterian Church

October 13, 2021

Charlottesville City Council
605 E Main Street
2nd Floor
Charlottesville, VA 22902

Dear City Council,

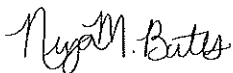
I am writing to express my whole-hearted support for the Jefferson School African American Heritage Center's "Swords Into Plowshares" proposal. Charlottesville has the platform to recast national conversations about race, history, and public spaces through bold and innovative approaches to our Confederate monuments.

There are few things more powerful or evocative than the power of place. The JSAAHC is the only local applicant that has requested to receive the statue; it is also the only Black-led organization. By proposing to transform the Lee statue into something new that more accurately reflects Charlottesville's community values, "Swords into Plowshares" will take our city's painful and divisive history and turn it into an opportunity for healing and reunion at the source. The JSAAHC is proposing to do their entire project at no cost to the city.

The community engagement process and artistic transformation it proposes will pay special attention to voices in the African American community, which were systematically excluded from the conversation about public space when the statue was erected in 1924. The JSAAHC has the credibility and experience to execute their plan. It has been a leader in city discussions about systemic racism for years. "Swords Into Plowshares" represents a creative culmination of the 2016 recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Commission.

As a native daughter of Charlottesville and Albemarle's Black communities, I hope you will give the JSAAHC the opportunity to unite our community around reshaping the narrative of our hometown.

Thank you,



Niya Bates

Board Member, Jefferson School African American Heritage Center

Charlottesville City Council
605 E Main Street
2nd Floor
Charlottesville, VA 22902

Dear City Council:

I am Gayle Jessup White, a descendant of Monticello's enslaved community and author of "Reclamation: Sally Hemings, Thomas Jefferson, and a Descendant's Search for Her Family's Lasting Legacy." I also serve on several community-based boards and committees, and am a member of historical, civic, and descendant organizations. However, I am proudly writing to you on my own behalf in support of the Jefferson School African American Heritage Center's "Swords into Plowshares" proposal.

Since 2017, Charlottesville has been in the national spotlight. With the "Swords into Plowshares" initiative, the city would have the opportunity to make a bold and innovative statement about Confederate monuments, with the potential to again influence the national conversation on race, history, and public spaces.

The JSAAHC is the only local applicant, and the only African American organization, that has requested to receive the Lee statue. Repurposing the statue, that for 100 years caused many people so much pain would offer our city a chance to mend and to heal.

Engagement from the African American community in the project would be paramount, as Blacks were intentionally excluded from the conversation about public space when the statue was erected in 1924. The JSAAHC has the experience and the community's trust to successfully complete the "Swords into Plowshares" initiative, having for years been at the forefront of discussions about systemic racism.

As a member of the Charlottesville community and of the Descendant community, I urge you to support the goal of JSAAHC to participate in diversifying our public spaces, to help heal our communities, and to continue shaping our city's narrative.

Thank you,

Gayle Jessup White

Elizabeth C Birdsall
3020 Ridge Road
Charlottesville, VA 22901
ecbirdsall@gmail.com

Charlottesville City Council
605 E Main Street, 2nd Floor
Charlottesville, VA 22902

Dear City Council,

I am directly descended from the Jones family of Social Hall, built at 109 East Jefferson Street in 1814, and inhabited by the Jones family and those they enslaved until, some years later, a decline in family fortunes forced its sale. Six decades after emancipation, descendants of the many Jones children born at Social Hall were instrumental to Richmond's efforts to concretize a Lost Cause narrative by erecting statues similar to the one of Robert E Lee and Traveler that in 1924 took up residence opposite their ancestral home in Charlottesville. I am writing to thank the council for its persistence in ensuring the removal of this emblem to our nation's, and indeed my family's, shame, and also to express my enthusiastic support for the Jefferson School African American Heritage Center's "Swords Into Plowshares" proposal.

My position on this project is informed not only as a descendent of the enslaving family that built Social Hall and advanced Lost Cause narratives well in to my generation, but also as a trained art historian who has published on the topic of how identities are both shaped and represented by and in artwork. As such, I am professionally, personally as well as patriotically invested in this particular statue's removal. I also am well-qualified to trust the JSAAHC as the best organization to powerfully and productively rebuild the object's narrative. By transforming the Lee statue into an artwork that reflects Charlottesville's and my family's contemporary democratic values, "Swords into Plowshares" will take our city's (and my family's) painful history and turn it into an opportunity for both healing and meaning making.

Thank you,

Elizabeth C. Birdsall