

**The Metuchen Edison Area Branch of the NAACP
NJ Office of Faith Based Initiatives
MLK, Jr. Commemorative Commission
presents....**

Juneteenth 2009

“Harriet Tubman”
Living History Experience



**Starring Millicent Sparks
Thursday, June 11, 2009
7:00 pm – 9 pm
Edison Job Corps Academy
500 Plainfield Ave.
Edison, NJ**

The event is free and open to the public

Reverently called “Moses” by the hundreds of enslaved Africans she helped and the thousands of others she inspired, **Harriet Tubman** (c 1820-1913) became the most famous “conductor” of the Underground Railroad to aid enslaved Africans escaping to free states or Canada. During a ten-year span, she made 19 trips into the South and escorted over 300 of her charges to freedom. And, as she once proudly pointed out to Frederick Douglass, she “never lost a single passenger.” During the Civil War, Tubman served as a nurse, scout, and spy for the Union army. She also took part in a military campaign that resulted in the rescue of 756 enslaved Africans and destroyed thousands of dollars worth of enemy property. Harriet Tubman's life was a monument to courage and determination that continues to stand out in American history.

“Ms. Sparks’ beautifully wrought portrayals of Harriet Tubman provide her audiences with an excellent example of how the public can be educated about the past through a depiction of a historical figure’s life and times. Informed by a careful examination of the scholarly literature on Tubman, her interpretation of Tubman is a model of authenticity. It blends accounts of special events in Tubman’s life with an acute sense of Tubman’s personal qualities. Ms. Sparks’ faithful rendering of Tubman approximates the rhythmic southern speech style (vernacular) identified with American slaves. Also enhancing the educational appeal of her portrayal is Ms. Sparks’ performance of 19th century freedom songs (Negro Spirituals) that were sung by Tubman, often as coded messages designed to facilitate the guiding of her fugitive charges northward. Ms. Sparks customarily concludes her performances of Harriet Tubman by responding in character to questions about Tubman, the Underground Railroad, and the Civil War.”

Giles R. Wright
The Late Director of Afro-American History
New Jersey Historical Commission