




Preserving the Path to Equality:

*The Campaign for the  
Banneker School  
Restoration Project*







*Free public education might have been mandated in the United States by the late 1800s but that didn't guarantee equal access or equal quality. In small, segregated African American schools across the country, determined teachers struggled with limited resources to educate generations of children who otherwise would have been totally disenfranchised.*

*One of the first one-room schoolhouses west of the Mississippi built for the sole purpose of educating African American children was the Banneker School in Parkville, Mo. For nearly two decades this small, brick building was a gateway to literacy for African American children in Platte County. The history of the Banneker School is inextricably linked to the history of the Civil Rights movement as a whole and must be preserved.*

### **Banneker, the Man**

The Banneker School honored the accomplishments of a largely self-taught African American scientist and mathematician. Born in 1731, Benjamin Banneker grew up near Baltimore, Md., the son of a former slave and an English woman. Showing remarkable aptitude in history, literature, math and science, Banneker became well known as a clockmaker and astronomer. His ephemerides – tables that charted celestial objects – were published in the late 1700s by a popular almanac and distributed by abolitionists as testament to the intellect of African Americans, which clearly entitled them to freedom and equality.

Many schools are named in honor of Banneker, considered by many historians to be the first African American scientist and a man who personified the benefits of learning for the good of individuals and society.



### **Building the School**

Banneker School opened in 1885 in the shadow of Jim Crow when racially segregated schools were not just the practice but the law in most Southern states, including Missouri. The opening of the school is tied to another educational institution – Park University. Founded in 1875 with the motto “Faith and Work,” Park was a place that combined work and study on a self-sustaining campus. Park students helped construct the Banneker School at 8th and West Streets in Parkville, including masonry work for the school’s bricks.

The Banneker School operated for the next 18 years, but eventually outgrew its small, one-room structure and moved to a larger, two-room schoolhouse nearby. The original school was sold and ultimately fell into disrepair. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the Banneker School today is one of Missouri’s Top 10 Most Endangered Historic Places.



### **Early Preservation Attempts**

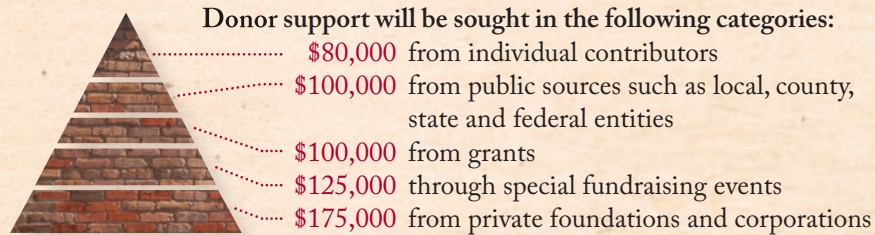
In the early 1980s a group led by Lucille Douglass, a former teacher at Banneker II, purchased the first Banneker School with the intention of preserving it. In 1994 the group deeded the property to the Platte County Historical and Genealogical Society. In 2008 the Banneker Restoration Committee formed a 501c (3) non-profit organization, the Banneker School Foundation and Historic Site, composed of civic leaders and historians. Although small fundraising efforts have been successful, the need for major restoration funds grows increasingly urgent with each passing year.





## About the Campaign

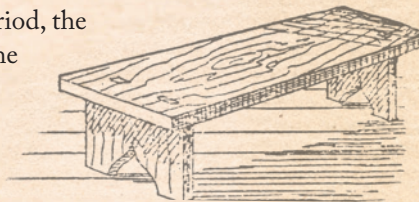
In response to the need to preserve a vital part of American history, the Banneker School Foundation announces a three-year capital campaign, **Preserving the Path to Equality: The Campaign for the Banneker School Restoration Project**. The goal is to raise \$580,000 to restore the school, transform it into a living history museum and create an interpretive center that will feature historical displays and exhibits.



## Lasting Benefits, Tangible and Intangible

Visitors to Banneker School, the Living History Museum and Interpretive Center will experience first-hand the actual school environment in which children were educated.

Through artifacts and furnishings from the period, the living history museum will tell the stories of the families whose children attended the school and will remind visitors of the stark difference between educational opportunities for Black and White students.



The site will serve as a central site in Platte County for memorabilia relative to the one-room African American school and preserve a rich, vibrant cultural heritage that thrived despite government-enforced segregation.

The restored school, museum and interactive center will be an important stopping point on the picturesque Northwest Trail, which is already a draw to tourists and outdoor enthusiasts. The Banneker School is, in fact, the only surviving African American one-room school within 400 miles.

Lesson plans and a curriculum will be available for school teachers to use in conjunction with a field trip to the Banneker School Living History Museum and Interpretive Center.



Ultimately, the Banneker School Foundation also plans to solicit private gifts to endow scholarships for teachers and students to pursue continuing education or degrees related to math and science. Through this activity, the Banneker School Living History Museum will truly give back to the community and multiply the lasting impact of Benjamin Banneker.

## What the Campaign Will Accomplish

A successful campaign will support three major phases of this historic project:

**1** Physical restoration of the school building interior and exterior, including restoration or replacement of masonry, framing work, wood flooring, a period-appropriate roof, windows, doors and exterior trim and additions addressing the needs of today's visitors, such as a temperature and humidity controls for the building and ADA-compliant features. Site enhancement will include the installation of sidewalks, stairs and railings and period-appropriate landscaping, including a garden.  
**Goal: \$ 300,000**

**2** Acquisition of the property just west of the Banneker School, which includes two lots. The existing structure, a one-story house, will be gutted, non-load-bearing walls removed, doorways reframed and an ADA-compliant restroom added. An off-street parking space for school buses will be created along with ramps, stairs and landscaping.  
**Goal: \$ 200,000**

**3** Development of displays on the history of the Banneker School and its importance to the community as well as information on the role of the African American one-room schoolhouse in our nation's history.  
**Goal: \$80,000**





## Why Now

Without the preservation of one-room schools such as Banneker, future generations will have no understanding of the scope and depth of segregation nor will they understand the intense passion and desire to learn that African American children had in the face of demoralizing segregation. Restoring the Banneker School will ensure that future generations can learn from the past and celebrate the part that one small Platte County school played in changing American education and society as a whole.

You can be a part of this important effort by making a tax-deductible gift for the benefit of Preserving the Path to Equality:  
The Campaign for the Banneker School Restoration Project.

## Giving Levels

Banneker Buddy (K-12)	\$5
(College)	\$10
Banneker Educator	\$30
Banneker Family	\$100
Banneker Sponsor	\$500
Banneker Founder-Lucille Douglass	\$1,000
Banneker Corporate Educator	\$2,500
Banneker Legacy Partner	\$5,000
Lifetime Benjamin Banneker Partner	\$10,000



For more information,  
please contact:

Banneker School  
Foundation and  
Historic Site  
PO Box 29028  
Parkville, MO 64152



*"In this one-room Banneker School, my ancestors received their education. Banneker has a rich heritage and deserves to be put in the curriculum of African American history."*

— Marva J. Williams, Parkville native,  
slave descendant, alumna of Banneker II

## Gift/Pledge Card

Preserving the Path to Equality: The Campaign for the Banneker School Restoration Project

Title First name Last name

Spouse or additional name for this gift

Address

City State Zip

Phone

Email

Employer

(Many employers have matching gift programs that will enhance contributions from employees and retirees.)

Additional name for this gift

*I/We wish to support Preserving the Path to Equality:  
The Campaign for the Banneker School Restoration  
Project with a gift for the following:*

Total Gift/Pledge

## Payment Information

☐ Check enclosed. Please make payable to  
"Banneker School Restoration Project"

☐ Credit card

Credit card #

Type Expiration date

Cardholder's name

I wish to pledge \$\_\_\_\_\_ a month for a total of \$\_\_\_\_\_  
to support The Campaign for the Banneker School  
Restoration Project.

Detach card and return to:

Banneker School Foundation and Historic Site  
PO Box 29028  
Parkville, MO 64152