



Bad circumstances sometimes lead to good results. That's the case with the cancellation of the last Eugene Marathon. While many runners lost the opportunity to run the race, the organizers of the Marathon, working with community leaders, developed an alternative which can reach many more people and have components for exercise, education and fund raising. Strides for Social Justice is a smartphone app that allows anyone to take a walking, running, or bike tour of a series of sites important to the local Black community, get some

exercise, and contribute to organizations that support social justice.

Becky Radliff, Director of Event Operations for the Eugene Marathon, Delissa Meashintubby, the Executive Director of Volunteers in Medicine, and Eric Richardson, the Executive Director of the local chapter of the NAACP discussed the new app, how it was developed and what they hope to accomplish at the April 1 Springfield City club program.

The app is available on the app stores for both Android and iOS phones. It offers four routes, with exercise and information at each stop along the route. The routes now available include a downtown route, a south Eugene route, and West Eugene route and a Westmoreland route, each chosen because along that route there are some sites important to the history of the black community in Eugene. The designers are also considering adding routes for Skinner's Butte and the University of Oregon. At the moment the app is available only in English, but the designers are considering developing a Spanish version.



In response to a question, Mr. Richardson said that a Springfield route might be developed, but he noted that given its different history of racial relations and tension, a Springfield route might create both the challenge and the opportunity to have more difficult conversations.

Mr. Richardson touched on a difficult question during the question and answer period. He was asked about the reality the name of his organization, and of other organizations like the UNCF, when fully spelled out contain racist tropes. Pointing toward the recent movement to remove symbols of a racist past, he said he is divided about removing monuments. He added it is important to not forget our history but to learn both the good and bad in our history. "We do not want to have amnesia; we need to have analysis and reflection and learn from our past for the future."

Ms. Radliff says that they have already received inquiries from across the nation on how other localities might create similar efforts to combine physical activity and education. Hopefully, she said, it will spear to many other communities as they develop ways to study their own history. More information about the app, and the organization's plans for the future can be found at their website:

www.stridesforsocialjustice.org

