

## CELEBRATING BLACK HISTORY MONTH WITH FRIENDS IN THE COMMUNITY

Taking to heart the direction for this year of Victory in the Community, members of New Jersey Region joined with members of the community in Montclair, N.J., to celebrate Black History Month (February) at a senior residence in the town. By the end of the program, about half of the seniors in the audience were on their feet dancing and having a great time.

Highlights of the event included Ron Bascombe, a minister at St. Paul's Baptist Church in town, who read his own poems; songs and poems performed by SGI-USA members; and the African Drummers, four SGI-USA members who poured their hearts into dances that told of the journey from enslavement to liberation and the joy that comes after harvest.

Finally, Marie Ruth Wargnye, a native of Cameroon, sang an original song, "La Fleur de Lotus" (The Lotus Flower), and performed a dance. When she invited people to join her, many did, swaying to the upbeat sounds. It was all smiles as the program ended and the seniors and participants mingled and had refreshments. Everyone agreed it was a joyful event. Both the performers who had worked so hard putting the program together and the seniors who enjoyed it so much felt they had a lot to celebrate.

— *STEVE PIONTEK*

Burlington District members in South Jersey (Philadelphia Region) celebrated Black History Month at their February discussion meeting. They presented 40 centuries of black history and culture as a study of "Heroes in Hardship," who overcame overwhelming odds to accomplish milestones in the United States and throughout the world. In particular, the African drum has served as an instrument for communication and celebration and remains as the heartbeat of African music. Members (right) demonstrated various African instruments. At the close of the meeting, instruments were distributed to everyone present to join in an African musical finale.

— *JUDY and SAM BLANGO*