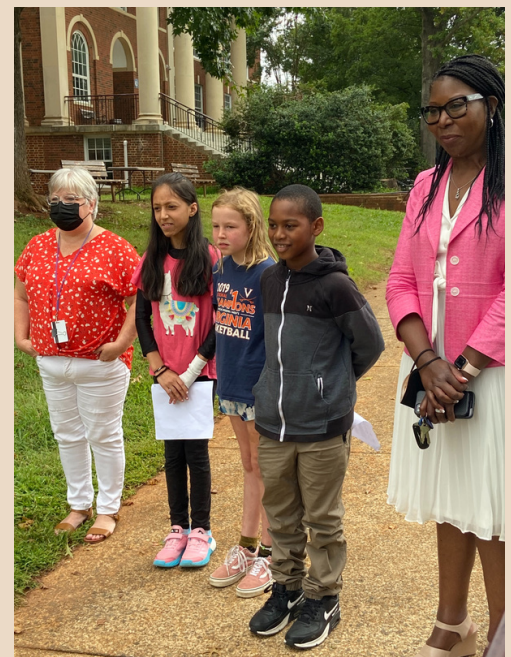


Charlottesville Twelve Day: Honoring A Lasting Legacy

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On Tuesday, September 8, 1959, nine elementary students and three high schoolers integrated Charlottesville City public schools. The students' steps on the first day of classes carried not only the weight of their books, but also the promise of an end to "massive resistance," which had been instituted the year prior by Virginia's governor. Rather than have Black and white students learn side by side, City schools were ordered closed.

In the fall of 2019, Charlottesville City Schools Superintendent Rosa Atkins read a proclamation to commemorate the 60th anniversary of that historic day and honor the courage and determination of the students and their parents. As a year-round visual legacy to the twelve young people who paved the way for today's Black students to attend school alongside their peers, Cultivate Charlottesville youth food justice interns designed a sundial to be installed at each City Schoolyard Garden (CSG) site.



→ Last year, Cultivate hosted an event at Vinegar Theatre with the four surviving members of the Charlottesville Twelve and Mr. Alex-Zan's mother as the finished sundials were revealed. And this year, we are thrilled to have sundials in the ground at schools around Charlottesville! (Did you know that you should install a sundial at noon on April 15, June 15, September 1 or December 24 when solar time and clock time match up?)

On Thursday, September 8, sixty-three years after the Charlottesville Twelve embarked on their first day of integrated education, we gathered at the Clark garden to see the sundial and reflect on the legacy of Charles “Alex-Zan” Alexander, Raymond Dixon, Regina Dixon, Maurice Henry, French Jackson, Don Martin, John Martin, Marvin Townsend, William Townsend, Sandra Wicks, Roland T. Woodfolk and Ronald E. Woodfolk.

Three students, who now attend, Walker returned to their alma mater to present letters they wrote to the Charlottesville Twelve as part of social studies last year at Clark. Each upper elementary student read their letter directly to Mr. Alex-Zan—who was an elementary student when he helped to integrate Venable.

