

United Way
of Seneca County

Waterloo, NY 13165
tel 315.539.1135
uwseneca@rochester.rr.com



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Dan Hennessy
United Way of Seneca County
South Seneca Surge After School Program
607-869-9639 x1160 tel
607-869-9553 fax
dhennessy@southseneca.k12.ny.us

Civil Rights Activist to Teach at South Seneca Central School

In July, 1963, LuLu Westbrooks, in the company of other children from the Pentecostal Christian Church of Americus, Georgia, marched, and sang hymns from the ‘Colored folks’ part of town to the white part of town. At the Martin Theatre, they were met by the KKK dominated policemen with fire hoses, police dogs, and nightsticks. The thirteen year-old LuLu was swept to the street by a fire hose. Battered, bruised, and shoeless, she got to her feet to be beaten on the head by a 6’4” policeman. LuLu and 31 other children were then packed into paddy wagons and driven to Leesburg Stockade for 45 days, until a photographer, Danny Lyon, took pictures of them through a cell window. These were sent to a Georgia congressman, who sent them to the U.S. Attorney General, Robert F. Kennedy. Then in turn he sent them to his brother, President John F. Kennedy, who sent in the National Guard on September 6 which resulted in the release of the prisoners.

Ms. Westbrooks-Griffin moved north at age 16 and attended East High School, the University of Rochester and the Eastman School of Music. She now teaches and lectures on the subject of the civil rights movement and her involvement in it at schools and universities nation-wide. She is also the subject of the award-winning documentary,

“LuLu and the Girls of Americus, Georgia 1963.” Beginning March 17th, she will teach a six-week module on her life during that time of upheaval at South Seneca Central School as part of the United Way of Seneca County’s Surge After School Program. She’ll be teaching from curriculum titled “Freedom Is Not Free”, a collaboration of the George Eastman House, International School of Photography and Film, S.U.N.Y. at Brockport Department of English, The Roth Middle School, and Rush-Henrietta School District.

The Surge After-School Program is a grant-funded program that operates in partnership with all four school districts in Seneca County, offering opportunities in the summer and each day school is in session. Surge emphasizes project based learning modules while supporting students in academic and social achievement.