

## Meet the Man Behind the Mission:

### Calvin Williams, Freedomtainment's Founding Leader

In only a matter of weeks, Freedomtainment, a new nonprofit out of North Omaha will be hosting the inaugural Omaha Freedom Festival on June 19<sup>th</sup>, celebrating the abolition of slavery. Yet when all the festival fun and excitement is said and done, and families can go home proud of their heritage, they will all have one man to thank. That man is Calvin Williams. Though he seeks humble anonymity, hiding as it were behind the proverbial curtain, it is time to give due recognition, to the man who's made all of this possible- the man, behind the mission.



The story of Calvin Williams is not your average American success story. He was born and raised right here in the North Omaha community. "I love North Omaha," says Mr. Williams. "People don't realize it's such a beautiful place. I was born into this community. I have lived my whole life here. I'll probably die here."

That's why he's a man on a mission. A mission to preserve the culture of his native land. A culture unfortunately, rapidly slipping away. "There used to be many African American clubs in the community where I grew up," Mr. Williams says. "Now many African Americans are leaving the community for somewhere else." It's becoming an increasingly important problem. Solution? Spread awareness and educate everyone from locals to tourists on North Omaha cultural heritage before its gone for good.

Mr. Williams is all about taking problems and setbacks and turning them into opportunities. As a young man he often struggled to find his way in life, attempting to finance an intermittent education while touring the states with friends as part of a band. It was then that something changed. A chance encounter with a college instructor who taught him the importance of getting a good education and realizing your inner potential. It was then that Mr. Williams really got to work, finishing up his business studies at Metro Community College. Armed and empowered with a solid foundational education, he found that anything was possible when he put his mind to it.



**"Education changed my life," Mr. Williams now reflects.** "It made me challenge myself, to not doubt myself, to be a leader. That's why its so important to educate and empower others. With a good education you can do anything you want to do."

Mr. Williams began his career working among local nonprofit organizations, including a stint as the marketing project manager for White Rhino Productions, a concert hosting business. Over the years, he hosted such big-name performers as Paul Wall and

Donell Jones. Yet over the course of many encounters with local businesses, one, glaring dilemma stood out to him in all his work.

“How many nonprofits have you heard of in our local (North Omaha) community?” Mr. Williams asks. “Not many. Did you know there are over 30 local nonprofits in just our local area? (The problem is) Nonprofits don’t market themselves. They either don’t have sufficient knowledge or finances and therefore can’t get the word out.”

Once again, it was time for Mr. Williams to take a problem and turn it into an opportunity. It was then that he founded Freedomtainment, a local nonprofit with a mission to connect the North Omaha Community with area business and resource providers to help curb some important needs such as food insecurity, access to health and wellness care while providing safe, family oriented activities.

At first, it was just one man. He had no money. He had to conduct his business in the community college library on a borrowed computer since he had none of his own. Then COVID-19 struck. That could have easily been the end of Freedomtainment. But even one man, with a good education and self-determination, can do anything in the world.



yourself.”

Calvin Williams used the opportunity that COVID afforded to obtain his own devices and set up the company headquarters at his very own North Omaha home. Since then, he has raised over sixty-thousand dollars for the Omaha Freedom Festival, the culmination of a lifetime of dedicated work. “Everybody gets their shot,” Mr. Williams often says. “(What matters is what you do with it) Create that opportunity for

Now, Mr. Williams has his shot. A chance to spread awareness and respect for his life-long community. And not just locally. No stranger to dreaming big, he has his eyes on an even greater goal. Spreading appreciation for his local community and African American history nationwide. “This year’s Omaha Freedom Festival isn’t just one event,” he explains. “This is the mission of a lifetime.”

When asked about this year’s Omaha Freedom Festival, Mr. Williams elaborates. “It means a lot to the African American community. Whereas other local communities have their own massive celebrations to celebrate their heritage, such as Cinco De Mayo (parade), St. Patrick’s Day (parade) and the Maha Music Festival; we have never really had our own that is

recognized on such a large scale in the city of Omaha.” Yet now, by utilizing the tool of empowerment through education, that dream can become a reality.



That is why this mission strikes so close to home. It’s not only his people. It’s his life’s journey too. To help those around him like he himself was helped. And to educate, so eventually they too, can change the world. Without even leaving his home.

**“Douglas county. My Community,” he concludes. “I believe in this mission for real.”**

## BACKGROUND

### About Freedomtainment



Freedomtainment, a new 501(c)3 non-profit was started amidst the pandemic in early 2020 by Tim Anderson and Calvin Williams, long-term residents of North Omaha seeking to celebrate African American culture and share its rich history with the Omaha community thru Education, Empowerment and Entertainment. Its key programs consist of the Omaha Freedom Festival, Critical Hits, North Side State of Mind and Let Freedom Read. [www.Freedomtainment.com](http://www.Freedomtainment.com).

### About Omaha Freedom Festival



The Omaha Freedom Festival is hosted by Freedomtainment, a 501c3 non-profit organization located in North Omaha, Nebraska, and celebrates the national Juneteenth holiday which honors the emancipation of those enslaved in the United States. The Festival extends the NAACP Juneteenth Parade to an all-day family-friendly event at the Malcolm X Memorial Foundation’s outdoor amphitheater. The inaugural Festival will take place on June 19, 2021. [www.OmahaFreedomFestival.com](http://www.OmahaFreedomFestival.com).