Organizers of “The Spirit of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr, Surry County Continues The Dream” will focus on youth as the eleventh such annual event is held Jan. 17 at the Mount Airy Museum of Regional History. The free celebration is open to the public and is slated to be held from 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

“Traditionally this is one of our best attended programs,” said Museum Executive Director Matthew Edwards. “This program is almost completely run by volunteers with us providing them a venue. The emphasis on youth this year is a way for the community to honor Dr. Martin Luther King and people who embody the spirit of his legacy.”

Edwards said the volunteers have always delivered a great program. He said light refreshments will be served following the event this year. This year’s celebration will include music, interpretative dance and theatrical performance. He said an awards ceremony is also planned and will honor youth in the community.

“They will be our leaders in the future,” said Program Coordinator LaDonna McCarther, who shares event director duties with her sister, Cheryl Yellow Fawn Scott. “We felt it was important to recognize them. We plan to honor the achievements of youth in a variety of fields such as academics, athletics and community service.” Plans have not yet been finalized, but McCarther said at least several youths would be honored.

She said the theme for the celebration is drawn from the First Epistle of Paul to Timothy, Chapter 4, Verse 12 where the apostle writes “Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.” In addition to the youth honored being given a call to service, the audience will be asked to participate in a blessing of the youth.

The tentative listing of talent included soloists Tracy Greenwood, Donnie Nicholson, Tony Searcy and Elizabeth Martin. Performers will include the VIP Praise Team directed by Marie Nicholson, Janice Thompson performing the Lord’s Prayer in American sign language and the praise team from the Greater Grace Temple Holiness Church of Winston-Salem directed by Mikki Robertson.

Readers for the celebration will include Sanchez Jarvis and Mount Airy Branch Librarian Pat Gwyn. Walter Jarvis and Deon Dood Cook will serve as candle lighters for the ceremonies. Melva Houston Tucker will do sound for the event and Don Robert Smith will serve as videographer.

“We want to give special recognition to all the help we receive from the museum,” said McCarther, who praised the efforts of staffers Amy Snider, Nancy Davis, Matt Edwards and Karen Nealis. “Each year we honor a Surry County individual who has been a good example of keeping Dr. King’s dream going. We will be doing this again this year.” In 2014, Faye Carter and Alfrida Gaines received this honor.