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## OSV offers free kids' admission, Martin Luther King day event

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STURBRIDGE— Old Sturbridge Village (OSV) is offering free admission for children in January — a \$7 value per child.

Through Jan. 31, all kids age 17 and under get free admission to the village when accompanied by an adult. This offer does not apply to educational groups of 10 or more.

For the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday on Jan. 17, storyteller and museum educator Tammy Denease will present "Honoring a Slave Heroine: The Mumbet Story" as part of the Martin Luther King Jr. Day MLK Day) activities at OSV. For details: 800-SEE-1830; [www.osv.org](http://www.osv.org).

The "Mumbet" performance is based on the true story of Elizabeth "Mumbet" Freeman, a young slave woman who won her freedom in court in 1781, citing language in the Massachusetts constitution: "all men are born free and equal." Mumbet's case was a precursor to the 1783 decision that ended slavery in Massachusetts.

Other activities on MLK Day and throughout the month include ice skating — bring your own skates, sledding on 1830s-style sleds and sleigh rides, snow permitting.

After enjoying the museum's outdoor winter activities, visitors can warm up indoors beside one of the village's many cozy fireplaces and take part in hands-on crafts and activities. Children can also spend time "pretending" in OSV's popular "KidStory" indoor play area.

In character as former slave Mumbet, storyteller Denease tells the story of a fascinating woman whose story has been forgotten, but whose courage had an enormous impact on the lives of millions.

Mumbet spent 30 years as a slave in the household of Colonel John Ashley of Sheffield, Massachusetts, before hiring a lawyer, Theodore Sedgwick, and successfully suing for her freedom in court. Once free, she took the name Elizabeth Freeman, and was employed by the Sedgwick family as a nurse, healer and midwife.

Elizabeth "Mumbet" Freeman once said, "Anytime while I was a slave, if one minute's freedom had been offered to me, and I was told I would die at the end of that minute, I would have taken it, just to stand on God's green earth a free woman."

Storyteller Denease grew up in Mississippi listening to stories told by her own great-grandmother, a former slave who lived to the age of 125.

"It's amazing to me that living now, nearly 150 years after the Emancipation Proclamation that I personally knew — and loved dearly — someone who survived slavery," Denease says. "I draw on my great-grandmother's own life story for inspiration when portraying Mumbet."

In addition to the Mumbet story, Old Sturbridge Village will also present a portrayal of famous suffragist and anti-slavery orator Abby Kelley Foster, whose Worcester farm became a stop on the Underground Railroad.

All MLK Jr. Day programs at Old Sturbridge Village are included in the cost of admission to the museum. With more than 40 restored buildings — farmhouses, mills, meetinghouses, and craft shops — on more than 200 acres of fields and woods, Old Sturbridge Village is one of the country's oldest and largest living history museums.

Located just off the Massachusetts Turnpike and Routes 1-84 and 20 in Sturbridge the village is open year-round, but hours vary seasonally. Winter hours are Wed. to Sun. 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. — with the village open on all Monday holidays. Beginning April 2, the village will be open seven days a week.

Children age 17 and under receive free admission through Jan. 31. Normal admission is: \$20 for adults; \$18 for seniors; \$7 for children ages 3-17; children under 3 are admitted free. Each admission includes a free second-day visit within 10 days.

For details, visit [www.osv.org](http://www.osv.org) or call 800-SEE-1830.

### Upcoming events at Old Sturbridge Village:

- Antique iceskate exhibit through Feb. 6. Old Sturbridge Village will display a collection of its own vintage ice skates, along with examples on loan from the extensive collection of Karen Cameron, co-founder of the Antique Ice Skate Club. Cameron, partnering with OSV staff, is planning a series of programs on antique ice skates and the history of ice skating to coincide with the museum's winter programs in January and February. Members of the Antique Ice Skate Club will gather at the Village on Feb. 5. Learn more about the Antique Ice Skate Club at [www.antiqice skateclub.com](http://www.antiqice skateclub.com). For details: 800-733-1830; or visit [www.osv.org](http://www.osv.org).
- Native American winter traditions Jan. 22 and 23. Explore Native American winter traditions including snowshoeing, storytelling and winter fashions. Stop by the millpond to witness a traditional ice harvest and see the long lost art of ice cutting. For details: 800-733-1830; or visit [www.osv.org](http://www.osv.org).
- Fire & Ice Days Jan. 29 and 30. Old Sturbridge Village embraces the joys of an old fashioned winter with a "Fire and Ice" celebration, complete with ice skating, sledding on vintage 1830s sleds, and horse-drawn sleigh rides.

Visitors can watch the Mill Pond ice harvested with vintage ice-cutting tools and learn how early New Englanders cut blocks of ice and shipped them around the world before the invention of electrical refrigeration. Afterwards, guests can warm up with hot cider, stories, songs and fireside tales at the Bullard Tavern. For details: 800-733-1830; [www.osv.org](http://www.osv.org).

- Antique sleigh rally on Feb. 5. A genuine New England Sleigh Rally in the fields of the Freeman Farm. See horse-drawn sleighs in action, including cutters and bobsleighs, as they compete for awards. For details: 800-733-1830; or visit [www.osv.org](http://www.osv.org).



Mumbet portrayed by OSV museum educator Tammy Denease.

Photo courtesy of Old Sturbridge Village



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