



Greetings University of Michigan Community,

When we recount moments of change on our path to a more just and equitable world, often we hold up courageous acts of protest, or of speaking out. But there is another kind of act worth marking, just as courageous, just as purposeful, though quieter: the act of creating a haven in a community, a space of support, the kind that will endure, and inspire new acts of caring and justice. This year we celebrate the 50th anniversary of just such a remarkable vision: The Multicultural Lounge Program at the University of Michigan.

These lounges were born of student activism during the Black Action Movements (BAM) of the 1970s — by which we mean, born out of responses to injustice, out of turmoil, out of a vision for the campus that we should be. Because of those students, Housing created lounges unlike any others in the residence halls, dedicated to specific cultures and individuals. But these were no museums: the lounges were meant to be alive, to provide students of color with places to meet, to be safe, to share aspirations and find solidarity.

And from that first lounge, the Abeng in East Quad, the program has grown to sixteen across campus. Many are still vitally connected to the student organizations that advocated for their creation, and these “legacy” groups find in their lounge a home for meetings and programming. Today, under the guidance of Housing Diversity and Inclusion, and with the help of our student Diversity Peer Educators, Multicultural Lounge Community Assistants, and the hall multicultural councils, the lounges have widened their embrace, welcoming residents of all social identities, to study, to collaborate, and simply to be in community with one another.

The work we celebrate this year began in 1971, and is not stopping. Since 2014, Michigan Housing has been dedicated to the renovation of these lounges, work that can only truly be accomplished with student inspired ideas. Visit any of the lounges renovated so far in this program, and you will see what beautiful and moving things can be done, when the university’s expertise works in the service of student vision.

So on behalf of Michigan Housing, I want to invite you to join us in honoring the 50-year legacy of the Multicultural and Minority Lounges. Beginning soon, and over the entire year of 2021, we will be hosting programming where University community members and stakeholders can engage in celebration and reconnect with what makes these spaces so special. I hope you can find a way to participate — because when we celebrate the lounges, we are sustaining the lounges, and nurturing that original extraordinary vision.

You are encouraged to be on the lookout for more exciting information to come,
Rick Gibson, Director of Michigan Housing
<https://housing.umich.edu/multicultural-lounges-and-spaces/>

As a way of celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the Multicultural Lounge Program, we are asking the University of Michigan community to share some of their favorite memories spent in the lounges.

To share a memory, please fill out the form linked below.

[50th Multicultural Lounge Anniversary - Multicultural Lounge Memories](#)