



## **tonies® Celebrate Black British History Month with New Groundbreaking Tonie Release**

**20<sup>th</sup> September, 2023** - tonies® the leading audio platform for kids – are delighted to announce the launch of a new *Cultural Tales: Black British Tales* Tonie, ahead of Black History Month this October. Little listeners are taken on an educational adventure with the inquisitive eight-year-old CJ and her family as they discuss Black British history, culture and traditions, in a truly celebratory Tonie which explores the valuable contribution Black British communities have made to the UK. CJ's character is played by Taiya Samuel, who stars in CBeebies' hit TV show, *JoJo & Gran Gran*. Taiya was named best young performer at the most recent BAFTAs for Children & Young People.

CJ is a London-born Black British girl on a fact-finding mission to learn all about her family's experiences living in Britain. CJ's paternal grandmother is of African descent and came to the UK from Zimbabwe to train as a nurse, while her mother's family originally arrived from Trinidad as part of the Windrush generation to help rebuild post-war Britain. The narration takes the form of conversations with family and friends, covering a wide spectrum of topics including the history of Black people in Britain – from Stone Age, Roman, Tudor and Windrush ages – to discussions around the food, clothing and culture from CJ's dual Caribbean and African heritage, Notting Hill Carnival, and the important role Black British people have played in our music and sporting industries.

Packed with fascinating historical facts, conversations cover the amazing achievements of many notable Black historical figures, including the pioneering nurse Mary Seacole, King Henry IIV's trumpeter John Blanke, and Jimmy Peters, the first Black person to play rugby union over 100 years ago. The experiences of the Windrush generations are also discussed in a poignant moment, as we mark the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first landing of HMT Empire Windrush. The Black community's important role in World War II and the NHS are also celebrated in a truly educational Tonie that is a must-have for every child.

Rhian Hawkins, Head of UK Brand at tonies®, says: *"The release of the Cultural Tales: Black British Tales Tonie is a very special moment for us as a brand. Representation in the toy industry is incredibly important, not only for black children and children of colour but for the broad spectrum of UK children, to encourage understanding and appreciation of our richly diverse communities that make Britain such a wonderful place to live. Working closely with Black Lives Matter Licensing, we hope to have created a Tonie that explores the topic of race and diversity in a positive and sensitive manner, while honouring the huge contribution the many generations of Black British communities have made to our society."*

The Black Lives Matter Licensing team comments: *"This project has been of absolute importance to work on, and we have enjoyed working closely with the tonies® team – from the design of CJ's figurine, right through to content strategy – to ensure the final project is truly authentic from top to bottom. The dedication of the team has been impeccable. They were able to dive through a very deep journey of Black British culture and history that is inclusive of all sides of the Black British community, and to have a full understanding of all the rich and*

*diverse cultures – comprising of a majority African and Caribbean descent, diasporas and mixed-race heritage – that make the Black British community such an asset to British society.*

*“It is important to us that tonies® little listeners can start having these stories from a young age in an open, authentic, and factual form, solidifying what it really means to be Black British. We didn’t want to shy away from the issues that black children face and wanted to ensure that the hard, historical facts are not lost, while also celebrating the achievements of our Black British communities, including homegrown Black British music and successes in sports. Having black writers and a black cast to help us deliver the content in this strategic format has been tremendously profound too. We hope our young audience will enjoy this Tonie and parents can continue to have these meaningful conversations and educational talks at home.”*

The *Cultural Tales: Black British Tales* Tonie retails for £14.99 and is available from [www.tonies.com](http://www.tonies.com) and selected retailers.

For further information, samples and images, please contact Melissa at tonies® Press Office:  
[melissa@fusecommunications.co.uk](mailto:melissa@fusecommunications.co.uk)