



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NEARLY \$130,000 IN GRANTS AWARDED TO 14 HUMANITIES INITIATIVES

Senator Jack Reed and William Adams, Chair of the National Endowment for the Humanities, joined the Rhode Island Council for the Humanities on Monday to celebrate Rhode Island's humanities community

PROVIDENCE, RI -- In an effort to help build stronger communities and boost economic growth and education through the public humanities, **Dr. William Adams, the Chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH)**, joined **U.S. Senator Jack Reed** and staff and board members from the **Rhode Island Council for the Humanities** to announce the Council's Major Grants. Community, civic, and cultural leaders gathered on Monday, April 13 at the Providence Public Library as the Rhode Island Council for the Humanities announced nearly \$130,000 in new awards to 14 organizations in support of humanities projects across the state.

Among the recipients, **Providence Children's Film Festival** was awarded \$12,000 in support of *PCFF Online Film Directory*. This online film directory will showcase films shown at the Festival and provide resources year-round for Rhode Island's libraries, classrooms, families, and communities. "The PCFF On-Line Directory will work to increase awareness of the value of screen media education, digital and film literacy, and improve the capacity of school and public librarians to plan community screenings and implement high-quality film literacy programs for both children and families," Executive Director **Anisa Raouf** remarked. "Funding from the Rhode Island Council for the Humanities leverages other funding, acts as a stamp of approval and encourages the economic vitality that our Festival brings to local restaurants, cafes, shops, hotels and other businesses."

Senator Reed and NEH Chairman Adams congratulated the grantees and remarked on the value of these local initiatives and the need for continued humanities funding across the state and nationwide. The vitality of Rhode Island's humanities community was a common theme throughout the remarks on Monday. "This is the story of Rhode Island's cultural institutions right now—recognizing the value of our history and engaging communities in bold and innovative ways," said Rhode Island Council for the Humanities Executive Director, **Elizabeth Francis**. "The Humanities Council seeds, supports, and strengthens these efforts. Each grant expresses the creativity and innovation of public humanities in Rhode Island, and contributes to vitality and progress in our neighborhoods, schools, and cultural sites."

Rhode Island has a long and proud history of promoting the humanities in public life. Former U.S. Senator Claiborne Pell (D-RI) was one of the primary sponsors of the National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities Act of 1965, which created NEH. As a senior member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, Senator Reed is a leading Congressional champion of federal support for the arts and humanities.

The Rhode Island Council for the Humanities seeds, supports, and strengthens public history, cultural heritage, civic education, and community engagement by and for all Rhode Islanders. Since 1973, the Council has provided over \$7.4 million in grants to support more than 550 organizations throughout the state of Rhode Island, as well as independent researchers, filmmakers, scholars, and oral historians.

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2015 MAJOR GRANT AWARDS

Public Project Grants

In support of organizations and projects that enrich and enliven the life of our state through public humanities programs.

FirstWorks, \$13,000 to *Art Activating Community: Urban Bush Women in Rhode Island*. Funds support public humanities events contextualizing performances by the Urban Bush Women, whose socially conscious dance has inspired neighborhood change and challenged stereotypes for over 30 years. Audiences will explore movement traditions of the African Diaspora and their relevance to modern-day issues addressed by Black music and dance.

Little Compton Historical Society, \$10,000 to *The Stories Houses Tell*. Funds support a special exhibition, as well as public programming, that provide a new and non-traditional examination of Little Compton's broadly defined set of historic houses, including the Native American weetus, seventeenth-century stone-enders, and the barracks of soldiers stationed at Fort Church during World War II.

Opera Providence, \$8,245 to *Stages of Freedom: Black Performing Arts in Rhode Island*. Funds support public programs and an exhibition exploring how Rhode Island's performing arts have served as a gateway to African American freedom, personal expression, independence, cultural identity, self-determination, and community dialogue.

Providence Athenaeum, \$12,410 to *Open Sesame: Collaboration in the Athenaeum's Collections*. Funds support the integration of the Athenaeum's cultural partner-driven programs with the collections-based library functions. Enriching and connecting Salon programs with the library's resources will strengthen relationships with and across partnership organizations, promote inquiry and research, and cultivate new and diverse audiences.

Providence Children's Film Festival, \$12,000 to *PCFF Online Film Directory*. Funds support the launch of an online film directory showcasing the curated films shown at the Providence Children's Film Festival and provide complementary educational information and resources to the community. Year-round, these resources will be available to Rhode Island's libraries, classrooms, and families in order to advance digital media literacy.

Providence Preservation Society, \$6,470 to *Endangered Places, Emerging Stories*. Funds support a symposium and series of tours exploring the history and demographic shifts of Providence's neighborhoods and the various relationships between preservation, social equality, and sense of place.

RI Latino Arts, \$6,900 to *Nuestras Raíces: Foto Historias*. Funds support a project to train elementary school youth in South Providence, Pawtucket, and Central Falls to collect oral histories and photographs

from their Latino communities. Large-scale photographs and quotations will be displayed in neighborhoods to foster a sense of history, heritage, community, and place.

RiverzEdge Arts, \$10,000 to *Stories of Access/Stories of Denial: Civil Rights to Civic Engagement in Northern RI*. Funds support a project that engages youth with mentors in interpretation and storytelling to explore and illuminate untold narratives among communities of color in the Blackstone River Valley from the 1960's to the present day.

WaterFire Providence, \$5,500 to *We Did Start the Fire: The Burning of the Gaspee & RI's Role in Sparking the American Revolution*. Funds support public humanities events that use site, narrative, spectacle, and the history of the Gaspee Incident to build engagement, understanding, and passion for Rhode Island's unique past.

Civic Education Grants

In support of projects that enhance the humanities components of K-12 education and cultivate the civic leaders of future generations.

Fusionworks, \$10,000 to *The Rhode Island Immigrant Story - Historical and Personal Journeys of Rhode Island families*. Funds support Fusionworks residencies at five schools in Pawtucket, Woonsocket, and Cranston. Dance educators will partner with social studies and history teachers to guide students in a cross-disciplinary exploration of immigration in the United States.

Historic New England, \$8,500 to *Education Programs at Arnold House*. Funds support engaging and place-based learning activities and field trips for underserved students from elementary and middle schools in the Blackstone Valley, Providence, and Warwick regions to visit the Arnold House, a historic home in Lincoln, where they will be immersed in local history at an authentic 17th century site.

Living History, \$9,273 to *Iron Man*. Funds support a hands-on project engaging high school students from the MET School in learning about the technical, economic, and cultural impact of 18th-century iron making at the Nathanael Greene Homestead in Coventry. Students will participate in an archaeological dig, design interpretive materials, and act as guides and peer-educators for 6th grade school visits.

Rhode Island Historical Society, \$4,657 to *Rhode Island History Digital Textbook*. Funds support the development of the first unit of a Rhode Island history digital textbook: a free, publically accessible, online resource for grades 7-12 that aligns with the grade span expectations for social studies in Rhode Island.

Documentary Film Grants

In support of documentary films that preserve Rhode Island's stories and bring its history to life.

Documentary Education Resources, \$13,000 to *Councilwoman*. Funds support the production and post-production phase of a documentary film by Margo Guernsey. The film focuses on Carmen Castillo, a Dominican hotel housekeeper and mother, who sits on the Providence City Council. A story about civic participation and democracy, the film follows Castillo as she learns the ropes of political office —and eventually— the bid for reelection.

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