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OVER \$120,000 IN GRANTS AWARDED TO 14 HUMANITIES INITIATIVES

Secretary of State Nellie Gorbea joined the Rhode Island Council for the Humanities on Wednesday to celebrate statewide humanities

PROVIDENCE, RI -- In celebration of Rhode Island's humanities community and the role the humanities play in civic engagement, **Secretary of State Nellie Gorbea** joined staff and board members from the **Rhode Island Council for the Humanities** to announce the Council's Major Grants on Wednesday, April 20. Hosted by the **Rhode Island Historical Society** at the Aldrich House in Providence, about 65 community, civic, and cultural leaders gathered as the Rhode Island Council for the Humanities announced a total of \$124,015 in new awards to 14 organizations in support of humanities projects across the state.

Secretary of State Nellie Gorbea welcomed attendees and congratulated the grantees, stating, "It is critically important to participate in our democracy, but in order to be a really well-rounded citizen and resident of a community, we have to be able to celebrate our heritage – be it one that goes back hundreds of years or one that's more recent. What I love about today's grant recipients is that they do that. They really show the diversity, the wealth, and the asset that is Rhode Island."

Among the recipients, **Everett: Company, Stage & School** was awarded \$10,000 in support of *2016 Freedom Café Series*, public forums that bring together scholars, artists, community experts, and the public to examine issues related to mass incarceration and the structural, systemic, and human sides of the criminal justice system. "The Humanities Council has helped us develop relationships with institutions like Brown University, Bryant University, and Roger Williams University so that we are able to access scholars and researchers who are working on these issues. They've come and presented at our Freedom Cafes, connecting with new audiences for their work and sharing their expertise with us. It has fed and become integral to our whole process," Executive Director **Aaron Jungels** remarked. "The Council has also supported documentation and ways to make our work available to a much wider audience."

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 \$7.7 million in grants to support more than 650 organizations throughout the state of Rhode Island, as well as independent researchers, filmmakers, scholars, and oral historians.

Please see the full list of funded projects below. For more information, contact Adrian Moore Trask at adrian@rihumanities.org or (401) 273-2250 x204.

2016 MAJOR GRANT AWARDS

Public Projects

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

Everett: Company, Stage & School, \$10,000 to *2016 Freedom Cafe Series*. Funds support a series of public forums that bring together scholars, artists, community experts, and the public to examine issues related to mass incarceration and the structural, systemic, and human sides of the criminal justice system.

Little Compton Historical Society, \$12,000 to *If Jane Should Want To Be Sold: Stories of Slavery, Indenture, and Freedom in Little Compton, RI*. Funds support a series of public programs exploring the stories of the 250 men, women, and children of African, Native American, and English descent who were enslaved or forcibly indentured in Little Compton from 1676 to 1820.

The Manton Avenue Project, \$12,000 to *Afterschool Playwriting for Young People in Olneyville*. Funds support after school playwriting courses for underserved youth ages 8-18 in Providence's Olneyville neighborhood. Using humanities themes as a framework and local experts as guides, youth develop plays that express their understandings of the human experience in their community.

New Urban Arts, \$5,000 to *Scholar Support for Summer Art Internships*. Funds deepen the integration of the arts and humanities in the Summer Art Internships Program by creating a summer scholar position to develop humanities themes, shape curricula, and foster connections between program participants and local cultural resources and institutions.

newportFILM, \$11,250 to *newportFILM OUTDOORS Summer 2016*. Funds support the 7th annual outdoor documentary film series, held weekly in the summer at venues across Aquidneck Island. The project aims to deepen public engagement with the films' humanities themes through moderated post-film Q&A sessions, a blog series, and further readings and resources.

Opera Providence, \$8,900 to *Do Lord Remember Me: The Black Church in Rhode Island*. Funds support a multi-platform program on the complex history of Black churches in Rhode Island, exploring their formation and function as the community's moral compass, town hall, and developer of artists, thinkers, and doers.

Orlando R. Smith Trust, \$7,070 to *South County Sampler Initiative*. Funds support a digital humanities project and public programs led by South County historical, cultural, and higher education institutions and the national Sampler Archive Project to document, interpret, and celebrate historic needlework samplers and girlhood embroideries.

Providence Children's Film Festival, \$12,000 to *PCFF Film Hub Development*. Funds deepen and amplify PCFF's Film Hub, which connects the community with a database of curated, international films and educational resources in order to promote digital literacy, worldly perspectives, and youth film programming in schools, homes, and libraries across Rhode Island.

Providence Children's Museum, \$12,000 to *Connecting Children to the Humanities: Exhibit Components for Ages 4-11*. Funds support major renovations to the *Coming to Rhode Island* exhibit, which engages

children in exploring themes of tolerance, diversity, and inclusion through stories of immigration to Rhode Island and illustrates for adults the connection between play and the development of foundational humanities skills.

Providence Public Library / The Hi-Fi Collaborative, \$4,000 to *Stories of Histories; Stories of Spaces*. Funds support a series of public conversations with authors, scholars, librarians, and historians, exploring the intersections of history and fiction, interdisciplinary approaches to writing, and how space inspires and shapes narrative.

DOCUMENTARY FILM

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

Institute for the Study and Practice of Nonviolence, \$12,000 to *The Rhode Island Hip Hop Project*. Funds support the production and post-production phases of a documentary film by Ana Gonzalez and Jeffrey Matteis exploring the history, culture, music, and art of Rhode Island's hip hop community at the intersections of race, class, gender, and generation.

OpenDoors, \$5,000 to *9 Yards Documentary*. Funds support the development phase of a documentary film following the progress of 15 formerly-incarcerated participants of the 9 Yards Program, a resource-intensive reentry program that focuses on building self-efficacy and ending the cycle of crime and incarceration.

K-12 CIVIC EDUCATION

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

Blackstone Academy Charter School, \$8090 to *Upstanders in the RI Community*. Funds support an interdisciplinary humanities project that engages 10th grade students in a culminating project in American History. Students select a current issue and pair academic research and hands-on internships at local nonprofits to make an impact on challenges in Rhode Island communities.

The Preservation Society of Newport County, \$4,705 to *Edible Schoolyard at Green Animals*. Funds support the development phase of a K-12 historic foodways program at Green Animals Topiary Garden in Portsmouth, exploring the connections between food and horticulture practices, culture, health, and the environment.

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