October 6, 2024 Summary of SCSJC Quarterly meeting

The South County Social Justice Coalition held their fourth quarterly meeting of the year on October 6, 2024 at Kingston Congregational Church. About 20 people attended to hear an informative presentation by Loren Spears, Executive Director of the Tomaquag Museum and Research Center and Michele Berard, Consultant and Campaign Manager.

The group was greeted by Rev. Jan Gregory-Charpentier, pastor of Kingston Congregational Church, and Joanne Haynes, board member of the SCSJC board. Joanne highlighted that a new reflection section has been added to the weekly newsletter and encouraged members to submit social justice reflections or comments for this section.

Loren shared with us the amazing educational work that is being done at the museum to bring the Narragansett Nation to life both historically and currently. The Tomaquag Museum is the only indigenous-led Native American museum, which makes it unique to provide an authentic experience. The current museum and educational facilities in Exeter are too small to respond to the increasing requests coming in for workshops and professional development sessions, as their history and remarkable resilience is revealed at last.

Loren shared the available details of a new facility to be built on the southwest corner of the University of Rhode Island (URI) Campus in Kingston, RI. located right on Rt. 138 with easy accessibility to Rt. 1 and Interstate 95. This facility is projected to provide educational programs and experiences to serve up to 150,000 patrons a year, and a $6.2M annual impact on the local economy. The new Tomaquag Museum will be funded by federal, state, and private grants, and the required matching funds need to access them.

$2M of the $10M funds allocated in Ballot Issue #5 have been earmarked for the new museum. Loren encouraged a YES vote on this Cultural Arts and The Economy Grant Program that is on the ballot this November 5. The $11M matching funds, required to access the grants that have been awarded will be raised in a major fundraising campaign to be kicked off soon.

For more information about this exciting project visit the Campaign for Tomaquag website. .

Rev. Jan Gregory-Charpentier also invited the community to a **2024 Land Acknowledgement** learning event and workshop tol be held at Kingston Congregational Church on Saturday, **October 12, 2024, 9:00 AM -2 PM.** She also highlighted the next in a series of social justice related concerts to be held at Kingston Congregational Church: Bobby Jo Valentine, **Wednesday, October 23, 2024, 7 PM**.

The next quarterly meeting will be January 5, 2025. If your organization would like to host or present at the January meeting, please contact us.

Submitted by Joanne Haynes