

January 8

## **This Week: Asa Peters, Indigenous Speaker**

We are looking forward to welcoming **Asa Peters** to the ARC stage this Sunday, January 8 at 12:00. Asa is currently working as a research associate at UMass Boston with the Institute of New England Native American Studies and the Asian American Studies program.

He is a member of the Mashpee Wampanoag tribe with roots in the Narragansett tribe, and lives much of his life through the lenses of his communities' histories which inform his priorities and values.

Asa is a music-maker and learner who finds home in Mashpee, MA and Narragansett, RI. He enjoys playing and writing music, spending time outside, and making meaningful memories and bonds with those around him.

We hope you will give a warm reception to this young man who has a fascinating story to share. You are also invited to join us at 1:00 at the Pizza Place where we will enjoy lunch with him.

What to expect on Sunday (A note from Asa):

*In our meeting on Sunday, I will share some thoughts about how racist narratives and power dynamics are produced through the history of the colonial process*

of the United States, and seared into our economic systems and collective ideologies. I will connect the motives of dehumanizing violence in this country from 17th century colonization to contemporary United States imperialism and militarism. Drawing from my perspective and roots in the Mashpee Wampanoag and Narragansett tribes, I'll be sharing these thoughts with a goal of celebrating inter-community solidarity and kinship on a global level, in a way that transcends state identity and national borders. I will try to highlight the balance of working hard in tangible ways in our local context, while also keeping ourselves accountable to and connected with global struggles that often share historic and systematic roots with our local/national issues.



## Last Week

Sounds of "Happy New Year" accompanied by hugs and smiles filled the air at the January 1 peaceful gathering of Westerly ARC on the steps of the post office. Many people stopped by to share this moment as April Dinwoodie brought her Kwanzaa candles and related the beautiful and powerful meaning behind each candle. January 1 was the last day of this seven-day celebration that honors the African American story.

The seven candles (Mishumaa Saba) are red, black and green, which are the Pan-African colors. They represent the seven principles of Kwanzaa - **unity, self-determination, collective work and responsibility, cooperative economics, purpose, creativity and faith.**

April also recapped the many accomplishments of the Westerly ARC community over the past year, and expressed her hope for another year of exciting projects and community events. As the Steering Committee meets to finalize goals and objectives for 2023 many volunteers will be needed to continue the progress and the creativity of the anti-racism coalition. She

expressed gratitude to everyone who worked so hard, spoke out against injustice and continued to persevere against all odds to educate, empower and encourage each other. The good news is we are beginning to see the light of positive change as more people join us, find their voices and gain confidence.

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## Martin Luther King Day Events



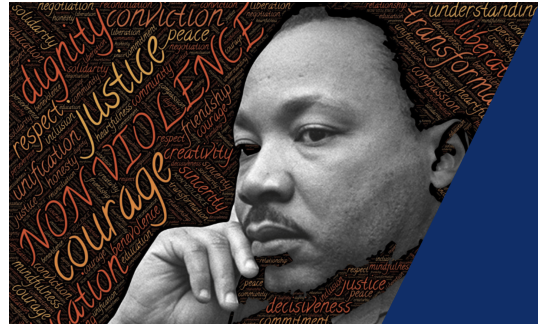
January 10

### Reading of Dr. King's "Letter From Birmingham Jail"

In collaboration with Westerly Area Peace and Justice, we invite you to join us for the annual powerful and moving community reading of Dr. King's "[Letter From Birmingham Jail](#)" at 5:30 pm on Tuesday, January 10th in the Westerly Library Auditorium, 44 Broad St. in Westerly.

About twelve readers will read 5-minute portions of the letter. The event starts promptly at 5:30pm, preceded by music and a slide show of quotes from Dr. King's sermons.

We hope to see you there!



January 10

### Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service

*"I have the audacity to believe that peoples everywhere can have three meals a day for their bodies, education and culture for their minds, and dignity, equality, and freedom for their spirits."*  
(Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.)

To honor Dr. King, Westerly Library & Wilcox Park will be collecting non-perishables to be donated to the Jonnycake Center. Consider donating pasta sauces, diced tomatoes, coffees, teas, crackers, and condiments. All other nonperishables will also be collected. [Look for the collection bin near the Circulation Desk](#) on the first floor from 9:00 AM – 8:00 PM on January 10.

We meet every **Sunday from 11:00–1:00** on the steps of the Westerly Post Office on High Street. Join us anytime!

## Empower

### World Day of Peace January 1, 2023

To ring in the New Year on a note of peace, Westerly Area Peace and Justice gathered around the Peace Pole at Christ Church off Elm Street in Westerly for their annual World Day of Peace ceremony. With about 18 people in attendance the community spent several minutes in silence followed by spoken prayer for an end to war, violence and division.



Inspired by Pope Francis' message for the 56th World Day of Peace those gathered recommitted themselves to live and work for a peaceful world. Many pledged to live nonviolently and recited the [Vow of Nonviolence](#).

### Vow of Nonviolence



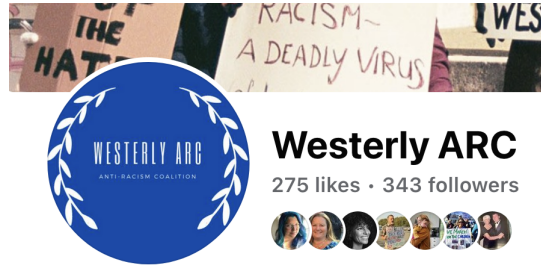
### Swearing-In Ceremony for State Senator Victoria Gu

On Tuesday, January 3 several members of ARC attended the historic occasion of the swearing-in of Victoria Gu, who, along with Linda L. Ujifusa of Portsmouth, are the first two Asian Americans to win seats in the General Assembly. The swearing-in ceremony took place in the Senate

Chambers of the Rhode Island State House in Providence. Congratulations, Victoria!

## Like, Subscribe, Comment, Share!

The ARC Steering Committee has been meeting to revise our goals for 2023. We look forward to sharing more about our work and how you can be involved.



In the meantime, one of the most important actions you can take is to engage with us on social media. Like, subscribe, share, and comment on our posts on [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#) in order to spread the word about the positive impact ARC is having on our community. Make this your first [New Year's resolution](#) and start now! Thank you.



## Town Meetings

Westerly ARC encourages those who can to attend Westerly Town Council and School Committee meetings. Your presence and involvement is an important way to show our elected officials that creating a more equitable and inclusive town and school system must always be a priority.



**January 9** Town Council Meeting, 5:30

**January 18** School Committee Meeting, 5:00

**January 23** Town Council Meeting, 5:30

Here is the link to meeting schedules and agendas:

<https://clerkshq.com/westerly-ri>

## Act

Here are a few ongoing ways you can support the work of Westerly ARC.

[View our Calendar](#)



## Share

Spread the news!

**Forward this newsletter to at least one person**

you think might be interested in it. Ask them to sign up for our newsletter on the [Westerly ARC website](#).

Don't forget to like, subscribe, comment, and share on our social media posts!



## Donate

ARC advocate Amanda Dunn continues to collect toiletries, personal care items, and non-perishable food to distribute to our community. Please bring your donations to Amanda at our Sunday rallies. Your kindness and generosity are greatly appreciated.



## Show Up

Stop by one of our weekly gatherings, join one of the events listed in this newsletter, attend a town meeting, etc.

*"We must always take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented."*

— Elie Wiesel

# In case you missed it . . .

Take a moment to read our Year in Review, noting the many accomplishments of our community in 2022.

2022 Year in Review

## Educate



### **A Statue of Henrietta Lacks Will Replace a Monument to Robert E. Lee**

A recent *New York Times* article highlights the importance of honoring long-overlooked historical figures, particularly those from marginalized groups.

Henrietta Lacks, an African American woman who died of cervical cancer at age 31 over seventy years ago,

unknowingly contributed to over 75,000 medical studies and in turn has had an enormous positive impact on many generations. How did she do this?

[Read the article](#) to learn more of this fascinating story and reflect on what other stories are missing from our history. ([PDF version](#))

Image: A photograph of Henrietta Lacks displayed at the Science Museum's photography studio in London. Credit...Lauren Fleishman for The New York Times

## Culture Calendar

### Poverty in America Awareness Month

January is Poverty in America Awareness month. According to the [Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services](#), "The poverty rate in 2021 was

12.8%, an increase from the 11.4% rate recorded in 2020. American Indian/Alaskan Native individuals were the most impacted (25.9%), followed by Black Americans (21.7%), Hispanic Americans (17.6%), Asian/Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders (10.2%), and White Americans (9.5%)."

Consider taking action to fight poverty, such as donating to one of our local food banks, the [WARM Center](#), or other organizations that assist those who are impacted by poverty.

"Most have formed preconceived notions of the poor as being lazy, mentally ill, disheveled, drug addicted; however, a day in the shoes of someone living in the clutches of poverty would provide a better understanding of their world. There are millions of working poor who may not be homeless but fall at or below the poverty line and are a crisis away from being without a home and basic necessities." ([Selina Johnson, Birmingham Public Library](#))



## Up Next

Calendar of Events	
January 8	Asa Peters, Indigenous Speaker, Sunday gathering on the post office steps, 11:00-1:00
January 9	Town Council Meeting, 5:30 pm
January 10	<a href="#">Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service</a> , Westerly Library, 9:00 am - 8:00 pm
January 10	Community reading of "Letter from Birmingham Jail," <a href="#">Westerly</a>



	<a href="#">Public Library</a> , 5:30 pm
January 15	A celebration of Martin Luther King Day, Sunday gathering on the post office steps, 11:00–1:00
January 18	School Committee Meeting, 5:00 pm
January 23	Town Council Meeting, 5:30 pm



### **Westerly Anti-Racism Coalition**

Join our weekly gatherings

Sundays 11-1

Downtown Westerly Post Office steps

westerlyarc@gmail.com

You received this email because you signed up on our website or at one of our events.



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