



January 15

This Week: Honoring Martin Luther King, Jr.

We will take time this week to honor the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The music of **Geoff Kaufman** will help us to reflect on this important day. There will also be an opportunity to participate in an activity using quotes from Dr. King.

We hope you can join us anytime between 11:00 and 1:00 on the post office steps.



Last Week

What an honor it was to listen to and learn from **Asa Peters**, our guest speaker last week. Asa, a research associate and member of the Mashpee Wampanoag tribe, spoke of the violence that has repeatedly been “seared in” to the American story since the 1600s. Asa provided many examples, such as the violence of Bacon’s Rebellion, which led to the strengthening of a race-based caste system in order to keep white indentured servants from aligning with Blacks who were enslaved. The othering of Native Americans in imagery of the time, the exploitation of immigrants throughout our nation’s history, the violent ideology of the US military, and the dehumanization of “enemies” are further examples that Asa expounded upon.

After a captivating look at this history, Asa concluded by relating the ideas he presented to our work at Westerly ARC. He offered a four-hundred-year perspective of the importance of fighting for justice for all and how justice cannot be compartmentalized for specific groups or in certain places. Those in attendance last week are sure to be reflecting on Asa’s words for some time. We are grateful for his visit and look forward to seeing him in Westerly again.

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

Empower

Letter from Birmingham Jail

On Tuesday, January 10, about forty people gathered at the Westerly Library to listen to Dr. Martin Luther King's "[Letter from Birmingham Jail](#)" read aloud. It was written as a response to eight white religious leaders who criticized Dr. King for participating in peaceful protests in April of 1963. It was moving to sit and listen to the stirring words which are just as applicable today as they were sixty years ago. Thank you to Westerly Area Peace and Justice and Pam McDonald for organizing this event.



I have almost reached the regrettable conclusion that the Negro's great stumbling block in his stride toward freedom is not the White Citizen's Counciler or the Ku Klux Klanner, but the white moderate, who is more devoted to "order" than to justice; who prefers a negative peace which is the absence of tension to a positive peace which is the presence of justice; who constantly says: "I agree with you in the goal you seek, but I cannot agree with your methods of direct action." (Letter from Birmingham Jail)



January 26

Town Meeting Hosted by Senator Victoria Gu

Come discuss local issues with our newly elected Senator Victoria Gu on Thursday, January 26 from 6:00-7:30 at the Town Hall. This is a great opportunity to let your voice be heard.

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 18 School Committee Meeting, 5:00

January 23 Town Council Meeting, 5:30

February 1 School Committee Meeting, 5:00

February 13 Town Council Meeting, 5:30

February 15 School Committee Meeting, 5:00

February 27 Town Council Meeting, 5:30

Here is the link to meeting schedules and agendas:

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

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.



Act

[View our Calendar](#)

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



Share

[Spread the news!](#)



Donate

[ARC advocate Amanda](#)



Show Up

[Stop by one of our](#)

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!

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.

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



RHODE ISLAND BLACK STORYTELLERS PRESENTS:

FUNDA FEST 25 JANUARY 14-29, 2023
A SANKOFA CELEBRATION OF BLACK STORYTELLING

HARRIET TUBMAN

A one-woman presentation by
JANICE CURTIS GREENE

Wednesday, January 25
South Kingstown High School
215 Columbia St, Wakefield, RI 02879
6 - 7:30 p.m.

In anticipation of
the PBS documentary
**HARRIET TUBMAN
VISIONS OF FREEDOM**

Airing February 12 at 9 p.m.
on WSBE Rhode Island PBS

fundafest.org

Rhode Island PBS logo, Rhode Island Black Storytellers logo, and RIBS logo (Rhode Island Black Storytellers in collaboration with Beloved Community Advisory Board of South Kingstown).

Harriet Tubman

As part of this month's [Funda Fest 25](#), a Sankofa celebration of Black storytelling, come see a one-woman performance of Harriet Tubman in anticipation of the upcoming PBS documentary.

Wednesday, January 25, 6-7:30 pm, South Kingstown High School

Click below for information on all of the Funda Fest events.

Funda Fest Events



The art of the denial: How racism deniers obscure the reality of racism, minimizing its significance

This brief [article from the Boston Globe](#) is a great summary of eight ways that racism is often denied. It

also included strategies for recognizing and responding to racism denial. Where have you encountered racism denial and how have you dealt with it? Let us know your thoughts.

Image: Examples of racism denial. Alex LaSalvia

Culture Calendar

January 16 – Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day

Every third Monday of January, the United States observes a holiday to honor the life and legacy of Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. In 1994

Congress passed a bill to dedicate the national holiday as a national day of service. The King Holiday and Service Act was introduced by Congressman John Lewis and Senator Harris Wofford, both of whom had worked alongside Dr. King in civil rights activism. Since then, it has become a day to remember Dr. King's work and, as importantly, to continue on the path towards justice he paved for us. ([PBS](#))



Here is a [StoryCorps interview with Tom Houck](#), who dropped out of high school to join the fight for civil rights and ended up working with Dr. King. Here is a list of resources from [Learning for Justice](#) relating to Dr. Martin Luther King.

January 17 – **National Day of Racial Healing**

Racial healing restores individuals and communities to wholeness. Racial healing repairs the damage caused by racism. It facilitates trust, builds authentic relationships and bridges divides. Racial healing is at the heart of racial equity – the people work that leads to community, organizational and systems transformation. ([National Day of Racial Healing](#))

See the link above for ideas of how you can participate!

Up Next

Calendar of Events	
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
January 26	Town Meeting hosted by Senator Victoria Gu, 6:00–7:30 pm, Town Hall
February 1	School Committee Meeting, 5:00 pm
February 13	Town Council Meeting, 5:30 pm
February 15	School Committee Meeting, 5:00 pm



Westerly Anti-Racism Coalition

Join our weekly gatherings

Sundays 11-1

Downtown Westerly Post Office steps

westerlyarc@gmail.com

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