



Weekly Newsletter

29 Jan 2023



Artwork by Cookie Rivera

[Visit Our Website](#)

"For evil to flourish, it only requires good men to do nothing."

– [Simon Wiesenthal](#)

Embrace

Westerly ARC expresses our deepest sorrow over the loss of life in recent mass shootings in California. We mourn for those killed in the Asian community of Monterey Park and the migrant farmworker community in Half Moon Bay. In our work towards

justice and peace, we recognize that we are all connected. May the victims and their beloved communities find peace as they learn to cope with their loss.



January 29

This Week

Join us on Sunday to hear updates about the Westerly Schools equity audit and how you can help support it. The audit is an excellent opportunity to learn how we can create a school system that better meets the needs of all students. A

more equitable school system is better for everyone! See below for more information about the equity audit.

Artwork by Cookie Rivera



Last Week

It was another great week of building community on the steps of the post office. Members of the **Westerly Police Department**, including Chief Paul Gingerella, joined ARC supporters in conversation on the relatively mild January day. It was great to see familiar regulars and to catch up with others who had returned after a long absence. The conversations continued until well past 1:00,

indicating that this was a much needed opportunity to just be with each other.
As always, thank you to all for your participation!

Looking Ahead

Black History Month is coming in February. Look for resources and programming related to this important month. Send us your ideas for programming and any resources you would like to share!

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

Empower

We Need Your Help: Support the Equity Audit

The Westerly School Committee approved an equity audit last September with strong support from many who wrote to or spoke at school committee meetings during the approval process. Now that the audit has started, there have been many negative comments and misinformation posted on social media from residents and at least one school committee member.

Reasonable questions about the process related to the equity audit are expected, however, the tone and language used in many of the questions offer clear evidence that many in our town are simply not comfortable or equipped to have healthy conversations about systemic inequities and unconscious bias that harm marginalized and underrepresented groups. With this in mind, it is critically important for all of us to speak out against negativity and misinformation. *We urge all of our readers to post your support for the equity audit online.* Now more than ever, we must speak out against lies and attacks directed at ARC and the equity audit so that we can ensure a successful process that allows us to grow.

A few points to consider:

- Equity is not a zero-sum game. Improving equity within the school district benefits *all* students.

- Listening to students and families from marginalized groups can only help us better understand their experience.
- Mocking the idea of a focus group for marginalized students and families harms the process and sends a message to these families that their stories do not matter.
- If the equity audit (a very common approach across the US) can help us improve our schools, why wouldn't we support it?

We simply don't know what we don't know and a sound and structured approach can be the gateway to understanding where we are in our schools as a starting place.

ARC will share more discussion points in the coming weeks. **Remember to post your support for the equity audit!**



ESSAY CONTEST
HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH
MARCH 2023

Essay Contest: Honoring Women's History Month

Open to **9th grade students** in social studies classes from Chariho, Exeter-West Greenwich, Narragansett,

North Kingstown, Prout, South Kingstown, and Westerly High Schools, and 9th grade Home School students. **\$100 award to top winner in each high school.** [Click here to read the contest details.](#) Spread the word!

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.



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

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*

Educate

Rise in Antisemitism



According to the Anti-Defamation League's (ADL) audit, antisemitic incidents reached an all-time high in 2021. (Figures from the 2022 audit are not yet available, but projections indicate the same level, if not higher, than those in 2021). Since the ADL began compiling annual data in 1979, in 2021 total antisemitic

incidents of assault, harassment, and vandalism were at an all-time high, representing a 34% increase over the prior year.

Last week, we directed you to a resource published in *The Boston Globe* to recognize and counter race deniers. This week we direct you to the ADL's ["Antisemitism Uncovered: A Guide to Old Myths in a New Era."](#)

"While antisemitism obviously harms and worries Jews, we must also be mindful that it threatens democracy and is an indicator of the health of a society as a whole, of a society's capacity to think reasonably and behave humanely. Antisemitism attacks Jews specifically, but it is the body politic that is ultimately impoverished by it."

Thank you to ARC supporter Geoffrey Serra for sharing this resource.

[Videos of Police Brutality](#)

As our country reels from the latest videos of police brutality, this article from Anti-Racism Daily reminds us to be aware of the negative impact that these videos can have on viewers and on the need to create meaningful change: [The Harm in Circulating Graphic Videos of Police Brutality](#). Consider how you will take action to end police brutality in the light of the **Tyre Nichols** of Memphis, **Jason Means** of Toledo, and many others whose lives were taken at the hands of police.

RHODE ISLAND BLACK STORYTELLERS PRESENTS:



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

In collaboration with
Beloved Community Advisory Board of South Kingstown

Funda Fest 25

Several tellers from South Kingstown’s Jonnycake Storytelling Festival, including Len Cabral and Valerie Tutson, formed the RI Black Storytellers in the late 90s, beginning FUNDA FEST in 1998. And now FUNDA is celebrating its 25th Anniversary with an extra weekend of storytelling events and **three FREE storytelling events** in South Kingstown. All are open to the public.

Brazilian-American storyteller Antonio Rocha

- UUCSC Sunday Service, **January 29, 2023, 10 AM**

A pass for all festival events and tickets for individual concerts/events, running January 14-29, 2023 can be purchased at fundafest.org. All ticketed shows are offered both in-person and live streamed.

Funda Fest Events

Culture Calendar

January 27 – [International Holocaust Remembrance Day](#)

The United Nations General Assembly designated January 27—the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau—as International Holocaust Remembrance Day.



On this annual day of commemoration, the UN urges every member state to honor the six million Jewish victims of the Holocaust and millions of other victims of Nazism and to develop educational programs to help prevent future genocides. ([United States Holocaust Memorial Museum](#))

January - [Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month](#)

January is known as Human Trafficking Awareness Month. It is a key time for us all as individuals to educate ourselves about human trafficking and crucially to learn to spot the signs of trafficking. It is also a time for us to take these messages to our workplaces, our churches, our schools, our representatives and everywhere else. ([Hope for Justice](#))

Up Next

Calendar of Events	
February 1	School Committee Meeting, 5:00 pm
February 13	Town Council Meeting, 5:30 pm
February 15	School Committee Meeting, 5:00 pm
February 27	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.



[Unsubscribe](#)

