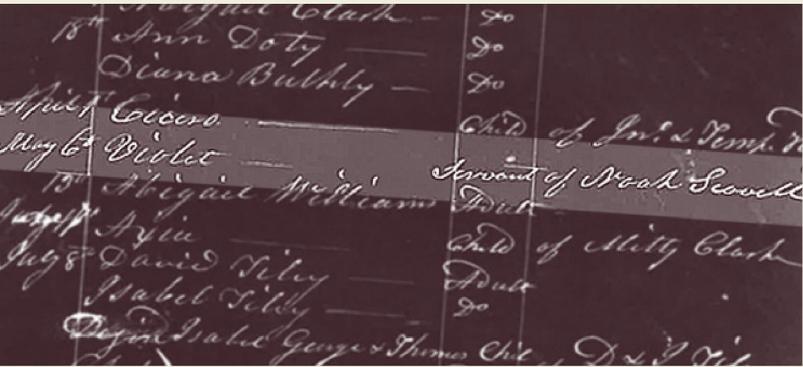
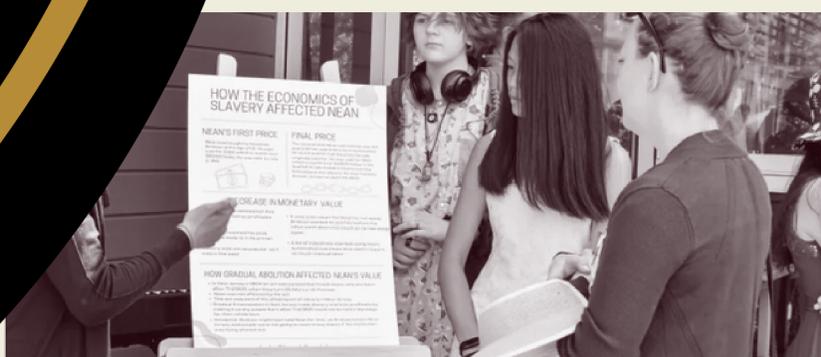


Witness STONES Project™

West Hartford Community
JUNETEENTH Celebration

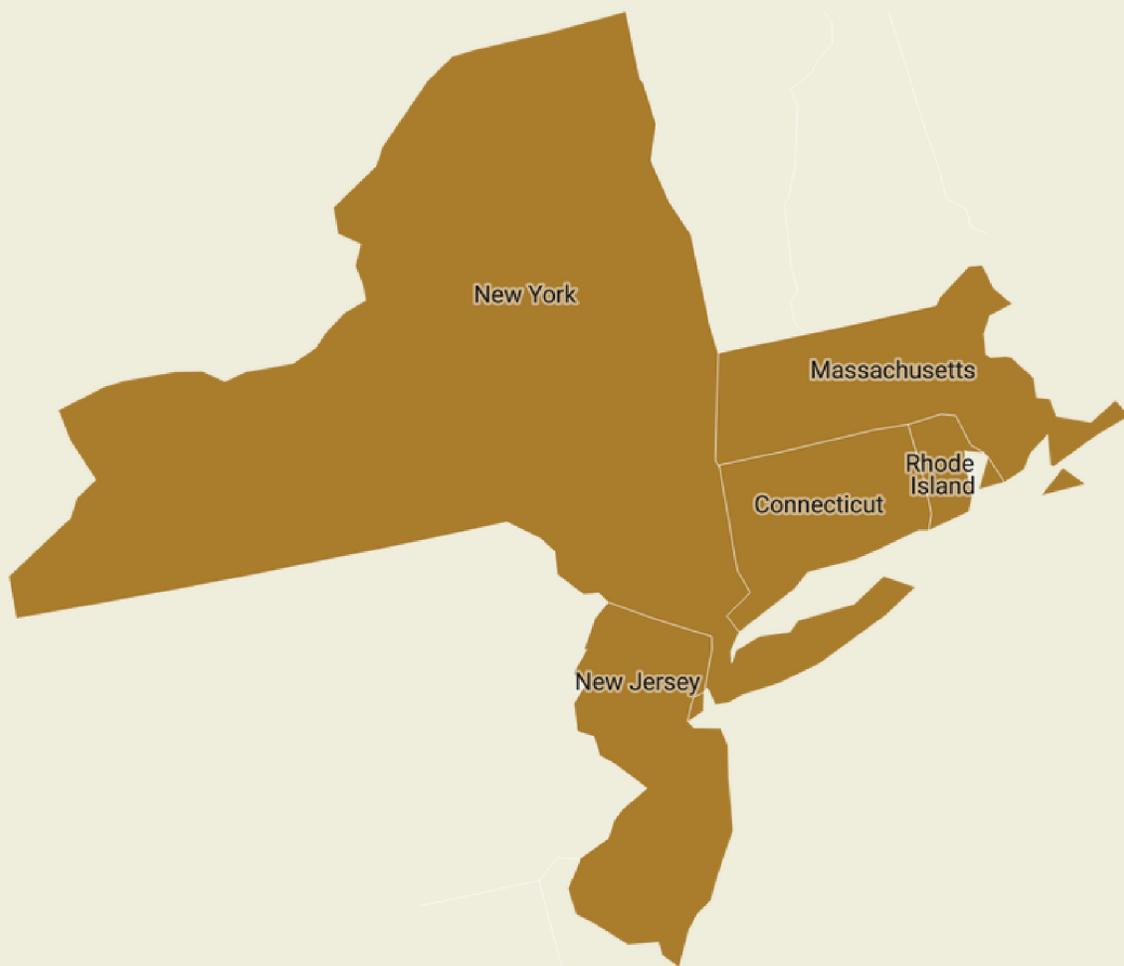


2023

Annual
Report

OUR PROJECT

The Witness Stones Project™ provides archival research, professional teacher development, a classroom curriculum, and public programming to help students and communities discover and chronicle the local history of slavery. The final component of the work in each community is the placement of Witness Stone™ memorials that honor enslaved individuals where they lived, worked, or worshiped. We have partnered with schools, churches, museums, and civic institutions across five states.



A Message from Our Board Chair

On behalf of the Witness Stones Project, I extend our heartfelt gratitude for your generous support and unwavering commitment to our mission of restoring the history and honoring the humanity of the enslaved individuals who helped build our communities. We believe that acknowledging and remembering the painful chapters of our history is not only an act of justice but also a crucial step toward healing and reconciliation.

Over the past year, we have achieved significant milestones. Our students have recovered the stories of forgotten lives, ensuring that their names and experiences are no longer lost to time. Witness Stones, those powerful symbols of remembrance, have been installed in public spaces, serving as permanent reminders of the humanity and resilience of those who suffered.

Your generous donations provide crucial funding for our research efforts, installations, educational programs, and outreach initiatives. They enable us to collaborate with local schools, community organizations, and historical institutions to expand our reach and deepen our influence.

But our work is far from complete. As we move forward, we must broaden our horizons, reach new communities, and amplify our impact. This is where your continued support becomes instrumental. Your past contributions have enabled us to make a tangible difference in the lives of students, schools, and communities. With your renewed partnership, we can achieve even more.

By supporting the Witness Stones Project you are not just contributing to the preservation of history; you are actively participating in the creation of a more just and equitable society. Your commitment sends a powerful message that the lives of those who were enslaved and oppressed matter, and their stories deserve to be heard. Together, we can foster empathy, understanding, and dialogue, building bridges that span across generations and communities.

As we present this year's annual report, we invite you to reflect on the accomplishments we have achieved together. Witness the impact that your generosity has made possible. But let us also look ahead with hope and determination.

There is still much work to be done, and we cannot do it without you.

Patricia Wilson Pheanious
Witness Stones Project Chair





OUR IMPACT

The Witness Stones Project aims to bring attention to the history of slavery with the goal of fostering a deeper understanding of the past and its impact on the present. By researching and commemorating the lives of enslaved individuals, the Project seeks to create meaningful connections between history, memory, and contemporary conversations about race and equality.

Historical Research

The Project conducts research to identify individuals who were enslaved in specific communities, delving into archival records, census data, wills, and other historical documents. We have memorialized more than 170 enslaved men, women, and children. The Project is a member of the Northeast Slavery Records Collaborative. The Collaborative develops and maintains the online searchable Northeast Slavery Records Index. The Index identifies records of enslavement, including records that identify individual enslaved persons and enslavers.

Educational Initiatives

The Project develops educational resources, curriculum materials, and workshops for students and educators to incorporate the history of slavery into their learning experiences. More than 11,000 students have taken part. We have worked with the Connecticut Council for the Social Studies and the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education to enrich school curricula.

Community Engagement

The Project engages with local communities to raise awareness about the history of slavery and promote discussions around racial equality and justice. We have partnered with more than 100 schools, museums, churches and civic organizations. We have participated in lectures, discussions, and collaborations with other educational initiatives such as the Slave Dwelling Project, the Indigo Arts Alliance, and the Atlantic Black Box Project.

Public Awareness

The Project installs Witness Stones™ to honor enslaved individuals where they lived, worked, or worshiped. These stones serve as tangible reminders of the past and encouragements to work toward a more just and equitable future. Over the past year, we hosted 21 public installation ceremonies and our work has been included in 32 media stories including 10 television and radio features.

Praise for the Project



“Faculty, students and participants should be commended for their research, artistry, musicianship and presentations. I thank all for giving such a memorable service which was deeply appreciated and will not be forgotten.”

—**Descendant Dallas Chester Allen, Jr.**

“This is the perfect program for what we would like to promote at the State Department of Education.”

—**Connecticut Department of Education Social Studies Coordinator
Stephen Armstrong**

“This [installation ceremony] is such a beautiful event for us not just to embrace our history, but to do it in such a way that it brings hope and promise to our future.”

—**Connecticut House Republican Leader Vincent Candelora**

“A project like the Witness Stones Project is something that I am tremendously grateful for as I understand who we were and who we are now as truly diverse people, drawing strength from that diversity.”

—**Rye, New York, Mayor Josh Cohn**

“I applaud the Witness Stones Project and its partners for bringing together the community to learn, to heal, and to grow.”

—**Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro**

“My students were real historians who restored history and gave honor and humanity to a woman forgotten.... Worth every minute and something I want to do again and again in my classroom.”

—**Ridgefield Middle School teacher Keira Kowalczyk**

“The humanizing of these individuals is so important and powerful.
I am so thankful for the Witness Stones Project.”

—**New York State Senator Shelley Mayer**

“The best way to understand our history is to make sure our history tells the full story of America.”

—**New York State Assemblyman Steven Otis**

“Partnering with the Witness Stones is a great, concrete first step in telling these people’s stories.”

—**St. Matthew’s Episcopal Church Rector the Reverend Marissa Rohrbach**

“A group of teachers and students in Connecticut began the Witness Stones Project.... Ultimately it is those small, neighborhood-, community-, and city-based initiatives that make the most impact and have the most potential to change minds, to change hearts, to change our understanding of ourselves.”

—**Bestselling author of *How the Word Is Passed* Clint Smith in *The Atlantic***

“The Witness Stones Project has been one of the most extraordinary projects I have ever worked on.... We were doing things that actual historians do. That feeling is something I hadn’t experienced before.”

—**Foote School student Cordelia Thompson**

“The work that the Witness Stones Project is doing is critical.”

—**Executive Director of the Connecticut Democracy Center Sally Whipple**

“Learning about the fact that there were slaves in West Hartford, an area that I have been in my whole life, is profound. As an African American living in West Hartford, Peleg’s story struck me deeply.”

—**Kingswood Oxford student Isais Wooden**

OUR GROWTH



Project Partners – \$10,000

Central Connecticut State University
National Endowment for the Humanities

Community Partners – \$5000

Connecticut Humanities
Essex Meadows
Christopher and Courtney Murphy
William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund

Patrons – \$1000

Philip and Marcia Giudice
Guilford Foundation
Guilford Rotary Club
Maura Keane
Terry and Sandy Kensler
Patricia Wilson Pheanious
St. John's Episcopal Church
Carl and Grace Zimmer

Advocates – \$500

ACT II Thrift Shop
Cathi Bosco
Candace Bradley
Kevin and Lindsay Danckwerth
Chad and Claire Ellis
David Knapp
Edward and Susan Ruddock
Ellen Saegaert
Shoreline Unitarian Universalist Church
Marfy Goodspeed and Richard Zimmer

Family Supporters – \$100

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Doris Uzanas
Meghan Waldron
Keith Wilson
Tracey Wilson
Robert Wolff
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Individual Supporters – \$50 \$15 for Seniors & Students

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Ellen Musikant
Rennie Negron
Paul and Estelle Nussbaum
Dieter and Veronica Soell
Theta Chapter of Alpha Kappa State in
memory of Robert Pheanious
Christina Turiano-Sander
Deb Walsh
Charlotte White
Robin Whitney

*The preceding list reflects donations received from
January 1, 2022 through July 31, 2023.*

Support

The Witness Stones Project provides archival research, teacher training, classroom materials, and public memorials. Philanthropic support allows us to meet the demand for the Project in every interested community, regardless of the local resources.

A **Project Partner** gift helps fund a lesser-resourced school's participation in the Project. In Connecticut, for example, we use the funds to reach schools in Alliance and Priority School Districts.

A **Community Partner** gift fully funds a Witness Stones Fellow for a semester. Our Fellows perform the critical work of archival research and digitization for the Northeast Slavery Records Index.

A **Patron** gift fully funds the fabrication and public installation of a Witness Stone.

Advocate, Family, and Individual gifts help us demonstrate the broad base of support for the Project in our communities.

Please use the enclosed envelope, scan the QR code, or visit WitnessStonesProject.org/support to make a tax-deductible donation. If you would like more information about supporting the Project, please contact our Executive Director, Dennis Culliton, at Dennis@WitnessStonesProject.org



Bring the Witness Stones Project to Your Community

We invite you to be a part of this transformative initiative. The Project works with public and private schools, museums, churches, civic organizations, or any community group that is interested in exploring the local history of slavery. If you are interested in bringing us to your community, please contact our Executive Director, Dennis Culliton, at Dennis@WitnessStonesProject.org.

The Witness Stones Project, Inc. is committed to financial transparency. The Project is incorporated in Connecticut and is designated a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation. Audited financial statements are available at WitnessStonesProject.org, [GuideStar.org](https://www.GuideStar.org), and upon request.



Our Team



Patricia Wilson Pheanious
Chair of the Board of Directors



Rita Coté
Board Secretary



Grace Farrell Zimmer
Board Treasurer



Lauren Cutuli
Board Director



Sylvia Gafford-Alexander
Board Director



Shariya Molegoda
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Courtney Murphy King
Board Director



Ted Ruddock
Board Director



Joy Burns
Director of Outreach



Dennis Culliton
Co-Founder &
Executive Director



Liz Lightfoot
Director of Operations



Donna Dufresne
Advisor



Julie Hughes
Advisor



Nicole Thomas
Advisor



Teresa Vega
Advisor



Ruth Mercedes
Fellow



Brayton Price
Fellow



WitnessStonesProject.org



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