

Seed, sow and celebrate with Old Sturbridge Village's Earth Week



STURBRIDGE — Visitors can be assured that this upcoming April Vacation for students and families will be full of activities when they visit Old Sturbridge Village (OSV). The Village will be offering a wide variety of talks, walks, workshops, and activities related to nature, ecology, stewardship, and climate. Guests will have the opportunity to speak with costumed historians about the deep connections between the environment and early 19th-century life and begin the seasonal work of preparing and planting the fields and gardens of Old Sturbridge Village. The week will feature a different theme each day.

Friday, April 23: Trees From Chestnut to Hickory, many tree species played a vital role in the forest ecology and

regional economy of New England in the 1830s. Visit our Cooper shop, Woodland Walk, and sawmill to learn more about these iconic New England plants.

Saturday, April 24: Wild & Cultivated Herbs Guests can meet and speak with costumed historians about wild and cultivated herbs popular in the 19th century, and visit the households to see how these seasonal foods found their way into the rural New England diet.

Sunday, April 25: Stewardship: Native & Non-native Species Many nonnative species are challenging the populations of the native flora of New England. Iconic species such as the American Elm, Hemlock, and Maple all face threats

from invasive plants, fungi, and insects. Learn how you can help protect native plants through one of the many talks given on this day at the Village.

The Village will be open between the hours of 9:30 a.m. and 5 p.m. Tickets are \$28 for adults, \$14 for youth (age four to 17), \$14 for college students, and free for children ages 3 and under. All visitors and members will be required to purchase and/or reserve their tickets online to manage capacity by following current Massachusetts guidelines. Purchase or reserve your tickets and see our current policies at www.osv.org/plan-your-visit/. Please note that certain activities, like cannon demonstrations, are weather-dependent.

TLSD Conference keynote speaker discusses attaining equity in higher education

WORCESTER — Quinsigamond Community College was host to the 2021 Teaching, Learning, and Student Development (TLSD) Conference earlier this month. This year's conference was held virtually with over 1,000 attendees from all 15 Massachusetts Community Colleges in attendance. The main focus of the Conference was the disparities students of color face in the higher education system.

"This is a time where we have reached a crossroad in our nation and as educators we can lead the discussion on systemic racism and bridge the gap that divides our nation," said QCC President Luis G. Pedraja, Ph.D.

The event featured keynote speaker Danette Howard, Ph.D., Senior Vice President & Chief Policy Officer for the Lumina Foundation, and offered attendees 36 breakout sessions, access to teaching resources, as well as live questions and answers periods with speakers and presenters.

"COVID-19 has exposed inequities across our state, and it has been made clear that we in higher education must look in the mirror and be willing to change the way we do business," said Carlos E. Santiago, Massachusetts Commissioner of Higher Education.

Keynote Speaker Dr. Howard has spent the bulk of her career improving and increasing student access and success in postsecondary education. She oversees several of the Lumina Foundation's key strategies to increase Americans' attainment of high-quality postsecondary degrees and credentials, including strategic work in both state and federal policy and efforts to leverage states as the drivers of credential attainment. She also leads the Foundation's Equity First efforts to embed racial equity and justice in all

aspects of Lumina's strategic work and operations.

"Most of us are still reeling from 2020. It seems the ground is still shifting beneath our feet," Dr. Howard said, noting the nation was dealing with two pandemics – the COVID-19 pandemic and the country's reckoning of the sordid history of racism.

During her keynote, Dr. Howard addressed the disproportionate way in which the COVID-19 virus affected communities of color, devastating those already struggling to survive. When the pandemic struck and colleges and universities went to 100 percent virtual learning, inequities in these communities widened, as many students were without broadband access and depended upon smartphone connectivity for access to their courses. She suggested it might be time to consider broadband access, "in the same way we think of electricity and water."

Additionally, with today's students representing 42 percent people of color, 40 percent working full-time, 37 percent non-traditional students 25 years of age or older, and 40 percent attending community college, there is a need for an equity lens to be used in higher education that honors students' lived experiences.

"These students need to be identified and supported," Dr. Howard said.

When it comes to overall educational attainment (associate degree or higher), Massachusetts exceeded the national average (61.6 vs. 51.9 percent), yet it lags behind in short-term credentials, which are of particular benefit to under-privileged and under-served communities.

"What could community colleges be

doing to lean into the need to have short-term credentials?" she posed.

Another area Dr. Howard addressed as a way toward equity is assisting the thousands of adult learners who started college but never finished. In Massachusetts alone, 636,015 people have some college credit but no degree.

"How do we put a strategy and plan in place to target this population?" she asked.

In 2020, the Lumina Foundation recognized Massachusetts as one of five

states that have demonstrated a commitment to improve higher education attainment for students of color.

"The nation is watching Massachusetts with great interest to see what you do with equity," Dr. Howard said, adding, "Justice is achieved when the underlying policies, practices and root causes of inequitable outcomes are eliminated."

For more information about QCC, contact Josh Martin, Director of Institutional Communications at 508-854-7513 or jmartin@qcc.mass.edu.

REALTOR® Association brings in food donations for Net of Compassion



WORCESTER — The REALTOR® Association of Central Massachusetts (RACM) held a food drive for the nonprofit Net of Compassion in Worcester. The drive, led by RACM's Community Action Committee, collected over a thousand non-perishable food items. The items included: bagged rice, canned beans, chicken broth, canned vegetables, cereals, juice, pasta, and soups.

The REALTOR® Association of Central Massachusetts is proud to support two housing-related charities each year. This year, the Community Action Committee is working with Abby's House in Worcester, and Net of Compassion in Worcester. For more information on future drives to support our 2021 Charities of Choice, visit our Facebook: www.facebook.com/RealtorAssociationofCentralMass/

Net of Compassion is a faith-based collaborative effort providing essential support services to people in need. Every week Net of Compassion brings a hot meal, clothing, recovery supports, and an encouraging word to hundreds of people struggling with addiction and homelessness. To learn more about the nonprofit, please visit their website at www.netofcompassion.org. You can also find their Amazon Wish list here: www.netofcompassion.org/wish-list.html.

Right now, Net of Compassion is in search of a propane source. A portable shower was recently donated to the organization, and they need the propane to produce hot water for the showers to be used by people in need. Please reach out to Net of Compassion if you can help.

The REALTOR® Association of Central Massachusetts has been proudly serving its members of the Greater Worcester and Central Massachusetts areas since 1923. The Association assists more than 1,800 real estate professionals, providing the services and resources necessary for a successful career as a REALTOR®. Association members are involved in residential and commercial real estate as brokers, salespeople, property managers, appraisers, counselors and others engaged in all aspects of the real estate industry.

The term "REALTOR®" is a registered, collective membership mark that identifies members as a professional who subscribes to a strict Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice set forth by the National Association of REALTORS®.

Petco Love awards grant to Here Today Adopted Tomorrow Animal Sanctuary



BRIMFIELD — Here Today Adopted Tomorrow Animal Sanctuary (HTAT) announced today a \$3,500 grant investment from the newly named, Petco Love, to support their lifesaving work for animals in local communities.

Petco Love is a nonprofit leading change for pets nationally by harnessing the power of love to make communities and pet families closer, stronger, and healthier. Since their founding in 1999 as the Petco Foundation, they've empowered organizations with nearly \$300 million invested to date in adoption and other lifesaving efforts. And, they've helped find loving homes for more than 6.5 million pets in partnership with Petco and more than 4,000 organizations, like ours, nationwide.

"Today, Petco Love announces an

investment in Here Today Adopted Tomorrow and hundreds of other organizations as part of our commitment to create a future in which no pet is unnecessary euthanized," said Susanne Kogut, President of Petco Love. "Our local investments are only one component. This month, we will also launch the first of our national tools to empower all animal lovers to drive lifesaving change right alongside us."

"Petco Love's grant investment will help us provide pet owners in need with food, supplies, and access to basic veterinary care. The past year has made clear to us that our work doesn't begin or end at the shelter door," said Rachael Max, Executive Director and Board President of Here Today Adopted Tomorrow Animal Sanctuary. "As a community organization, we need to be there for animals and the people who care about them when they need extra support. This grant will help ensure that pets and loving families stay together."

Here Today Adopted Tomorrow Animal Sanctuary is a nonprofit organization dedicated to keeping pets with families, serving Brimfield and the surrounding community. Since 2011, HTAT has helped over 3,000 cats through adoption and spay/neuter services. HTAT also offers several community assistance programs, such as low-cost spay/neuter services, microchip clinics, free behavioral help, a Pet Food Pantry, and an emergency foster program.

For more information about Here Today Adopted Tomorrow, visit heretodayadoptedtomorrow.org.

Got Space?
we do.

Contact Your Sales Representative Today.

508-764-4325