Are you passionate about the challenges of today’s diverse America?

Do you hope all Americans will finally understand our nation’s true history?

Are you ready to tell a great — yet almost unknown — human success story 10,000 years in the making?

If so, Kunoopeam! *(Welcome!)* to. . .
THE
New Tomaquag Museum Campus

Cost: $8 million
Opens 2023

A place where you’ll find hope and fresh understanding.
The Tomaquag Museum is different...

SINCE ITS FOUNDING IN 1958, the Tomaquag Museum has been Indigenous-led and –staffed ... one of the oldest in America. This is as real as it gets. Tomaquag's Indigenous-led approach guarantees each visitor has an unforgettable experience.

Our Indigenous guides not only interpret the Tomaquag Museum's many cultural treasures ... they also share their own personal tales of growing up Indigenous in today’s America.

The Tomaquag Museum has exceeded expectations in the eyes of experts for a very long time. In 2016, First Lady Michelle Obama presented the Tomaquag Museum with a National Medal for Museum and Library Service, honoring our unique perspective. The National Medal is the highest award U.S. museums and libraries can receive. Tomaquag is the only museum in Rhode Island so far to earn it.
Why a new museum now?

Because a story this vast needs far more elbow room. And this story urgently needs a safe “forever” home, too. . . .

It’s a story of kindness extended to a single religious refugee in 1636 (Roger Williams) . . . repaid a few decades later (1675) by colonial encroachment, war and genocide.

OUR ARCHITECTS AND ENGINEERS have designed the new Tomaquag Museum Campus to welcome annually at least ten times more visitors.

Tomaquag’s many visiting scholars now work in cramped, makeshift spaces, trying to unravel the full Indigenous story. And Tomaquag educators are ready to do so much more programming, in person and online . . . but they can’t yet.

Parts of Tomaquag’s irreplaceable collection remain in temporary storage, unseen and vulnerable to calamities like fire, flood, vermin and other hazards. Demanding museum standards also require that “Temperature, light, and humidity should be controlled at appropriate and stable levels to ensure the preservation of materials.”

In that regard, there’s real urgency.

Tomaquag can do so much more on this New Campus . . . and we will, with your help.

WHO HAS GRATITUDE IN ABUNDANCE? Indigenous peoples celebrated 13 “thanksgivings” a year, as nature’s bounty unfolded across the seasons. Each Native thanksgiving honored a specific gift from their lands and waters. There was the cranberry thanksgiving, the greencorn thanksgiving, the . . . well, come and learn them all!
From this instructive place, cramped for style in a former chapel...

It’s not about buildings ... although the buildings on this one-of-a-kind campus will matter a lot to research, visitors and the future. Really, it’s about you and other visionaries creating something world-changing, with virtual capabilities that span and inspire the globe ... opening by 2023!

WIND YOUR CLOCK BACK 10,000 YEARS.

Glaciers a half-mile thick have retreated. Eager, inquiring humans move in. They hunt, gather, learn, farm, prosper. They make a place and steward nature’s resources. For 400 generations, Indigenous families thrive sustainably in what is now southern New England: Rhode Island, Connecticut, and Massachusetts.

Then come Europeans. They fish, explore, and trade. They bring smallpox, war and conquest. In the next 300 years, according to one scholar’s count, 93.5% of New England’s Native population will be gone, replaced by 16 generations of European invaders and their slaves (and, yes, Rhode Island had slaves).
Can a museum in Rhode Island have worldwide impact?

That depends on the story it tells ... and what that special story tells visitors about themselves.

CONSIDER THE ANNE FRANK HOUSE in Amsterdam.

It’s not a big place. It was almost demolished in the 1950s ... until a street protest saved it. When it finally opened as a museum in 1960, 9,000 visited. In 2019, 1.3 million toured the museum. The Anne Frank House has already required two major renovations over the years, to accommodate this explosive international interest.

They came to understand, to grieve, to learn, to think, and to teach their children and future generations. Mr. Ronald Leopold, executive director for the last decade, explains the impact this way:

‘The Anne Frank House illustrates how prejudice, racism, and anti-Semitism affect people and society, and what they can ultimately lead to.

‘This year [2019], we have run 6,500 introductory workshops for museum visitors and 1,650 educational workshops for school groups. We hope that a visit to the Anne Frank House provides food for thought and invites reflection in this day and age.’

With your help, Rhode Island also has an amazing worldwide story to tell!
Phase One of the New Tomaquag Museum Campus opens in 2023 ... thanks to your vision and commitment now!

PHASE ONE
The New Museum, with a Native-artisan gift shop and a quick-bite restaurant featuring Native-based dishes in season...

PHASE TWO
Far more scholarly research, Indigenous Artist-in-Residence Studios, eco-responsible native gardens.

THE COST TO OPEN
A modest amount (given the cost of other world-impacting museums): just $8 million in philanthropy.
Where will you encounter and discover this new Indigenous Museum Campus?

**NEARBY.** On 18 acres of rural woodland in the village of Kingston, just down the way from the University of Rhode Island campus, on Ministerial Road. Ministerial is listed as one of America’s Scenic Byways, a 6-mile stretch of soothing rural two-lane between Rt. 1 and Rt. 138. Most important, Ministerial is convenient to anyone visiting Rhode Island ... as 20 million+ visitors did pre-pandemic.

**WAMPUM** Europeans misunderstood much of what they encountered in the “new” world ... including cultural items such as wampum. They thought of it simply as “Indian money,” similar to coins. But the trading and gifting of wampum had far deeper significance ... as you’ll enjoy discovering and sharing with your friends and family!
Rhode Island’s human history predates Roger Williams by as much as 30,000 years, according to archaeologists. In 1676 Indigenous people still sustainably occupied the lands and waters of what is today’s southern New England. The act to abolish the Narragansett Tribe and sale of their lands shows the fate of Rhode Island’s native population by 1880. But the struggle didn’t end...

WOMEN HELD REAL POWER in southern New England’s Native communities. Native women as well as men were sachems (village and tribal leaders). And when a man married, he joined his wife’s community, leaving his own family behind. As a result, spousal abuse was rare. Native women “had greater economic, and spiritual role in their communities than their European counterparts,” a modern scholar explains. “Hereditary status and claims to land were passed down matrilineally—through women.”
Let the wonder and your own deeper understanding begin...

The NEW Tomaquag Museum Campus will offer an unforgettable experience on many levels.

You can visit in person ... or you can visit from anywhere on earth, virtually.

This is the TRUE story ... a PROUD, intense Indigenous story still unknown to most Rhode Islanders ... or to our state’s millions of annual visitors.

Now you’ll know this land and its heritage in a way you’ve never known before.

The world awaits....

Please make the New Tomaquag Museum Campus part of your story, too.

This new museum campus will change the world because of you, AND ... it cannot happen without your belief and courage. This vision depends on you. Thank you.

As much as anything else, bringing this new museum into Rhode Island will be about YOUR values,

YOUR craving for better human understanding,
YOUR unflagging sense of wonder,
YOUR respect for diversity,
YOUR hope for truth, justice and healing,
and YOUR prayer for our planet’s healthier environmental future....
“Our Fathers had plenty of deer and skins, our plains were full of deer, as also our woods, of turkies, and our coves full of fish and fowle. But these English have gotten our land, they with scythes cut down the grass, and with axes fell the trees; their cows and horses eat the grass, and their hogs spoil our clam banks, and we shall all be starved.”

MIANTONOMO,
NARRAGANSETT SACHEM, 1642