

2021-2022

ANNUAL REPORT



A LOOK IN THE REARVIEW MIRROR

PREPARED BY
THE HUMANITIES TRUCK TEAM



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LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

DAN KERR

On August 31st, 2022, we completed our fourth year of the Humanities Truck project and closed out three grant awards from the Henry Luce Foundation, including the initial grant from Luce, which enabled us to design, purchase, and customize the truck.

The world today is dramatically different from the world we lived in when I submitted our initial grant proposal in December 2018. In the first year and a half, the truck project proceeded as expected and had many significant early successes. However, the project was shut down for three months in March of 2020 as the Covid Pandemic spread rapidly in the United States. As a result, there is a clear delineation between the pre-Covid truck project and the post Covid-truck project.

Prior to shutting down our operations, the truck had a record year in 2019-2020 as its programming engaged with 10,222 people in 24 events. One of those events, Adams Morgan Day, had a huge number of people (7,680) go inside the truck and interact with the musical performances on our stage. Adams Morgan Day has not yet recovered since the pandemic and it's unlikely that we will see crowds that size ever again.

By June of 2020, Washington, DC was experiencing mass unemployment and major demonstrations protesting against police brutality and the murder of George Floyd. The Humanities Truck project convened discussions with the Humanities Truck Community Advisory Board, Faculty Fellows, and Faculty Advisory Board. The overall sentiment was that we should neither do nothing (stay shutdown) nor simply do what we were doing before. While some argued we should solely focus on “real” needs – delivering food to people experiencing hunger – others, including myself, argued that the humanities were more important than ever. People needed both food and tools to understand what was going on in the world around them. Furthermore, it became clear that our distinction was a false binary. Ideas are shared around food, Food and food networks play a critical role in community building, especially in communities experiencing different forms of marginalization. People in communities are neither passive recipients of food or knowledge, but active producers, provisioners, and envisioners.

For the next year and a half, we worked tirelessly across the city using the truck to provide significant aid in the form of food, medical supplies, and employment with Latino day laborers, communities impacted by sex work and drug use, people experiencing homelessness, and people facing persistent food insecurity. We developed close partnerships with community groups such as Trabajadores Unidos de Washington, DC, HIPS, DC Central Kitchen, Food for All, and we initiated the Mobilizing Against Homelessness project. We delivered over 2,500 meals, conducted approximately 150 interviews, held numerous community forums, and produced several documentaries. In 2020-2021 we were more active taking the truck out than any other year, going out 53 times. This past year, 2021-2022, we have continued this momentum and increased our number of events to 68.

Project Fellows LJ Sislen, Ludy Grandas, Martinique Free, Aram Sinnreich, Melissa Hawkins, and Rachel Watkins regularly used the truck as the main office provided support for their activities. I brought the truck out for workshops and interviews for the Mobilizing Against Homelessness project. In addition, the truck office organized responsive programming to address community requests to do events such as Working DC, Adams Morgan Day, Celebrate Petworth, the anniversary of the Knickerbocker Disaster, the Lunar New Year, Paul Robeson's Birthday, Pride Festival, Juneteenth, and the anniversary of the Battle of Fort Stevens.

As we wrap up our initial funding, the truck project is flourishing as we work across the city amongst communities that are not typically engaged by museums, universities, and other cultural institutions. We have carved out a vibrant space for the humanities working with people who are typically viewed solely as recipients of social services. By creating spaces for community reflection on street corners, sidewalks, parks, and parking lots, we are not only seeking to democratize the means through which knowledge is produced and acknowledged, we are also seeking to value those who are devalued and embolden those who are disillusioned. This is how I believe we can mobilize for a better world that we come together to co-envision.

In the coming year we will have new challenges as we seek to find ways to make our work sustainable over the long haul. If you are in a position to do so, please support our work in whatever way you can.

Keep on Trucking,
Dan Kerr



MORE ABOUT THE TRUCK

REFLECT

The truck creates a unique space for documenting participatory, cultural and educational experiences in the humanities. It can function as a recording studio for doing oral histories, a digitization station, a workshop space, or a pop-up exhibit gallery.



AMPLIFY

The truck co-curates gathered materials through both our website but also by hosting events out in the larger community space. Together we can collect, create, interpret, and curate stories that can return to the communities they originated from and circulate throughout the metropolitan region

MOBILIZE

Using the truck, we seek to mobilize the humanities and democratize the sharing of knowledge by bringing together scholars at American University with community residents across Washington DC.

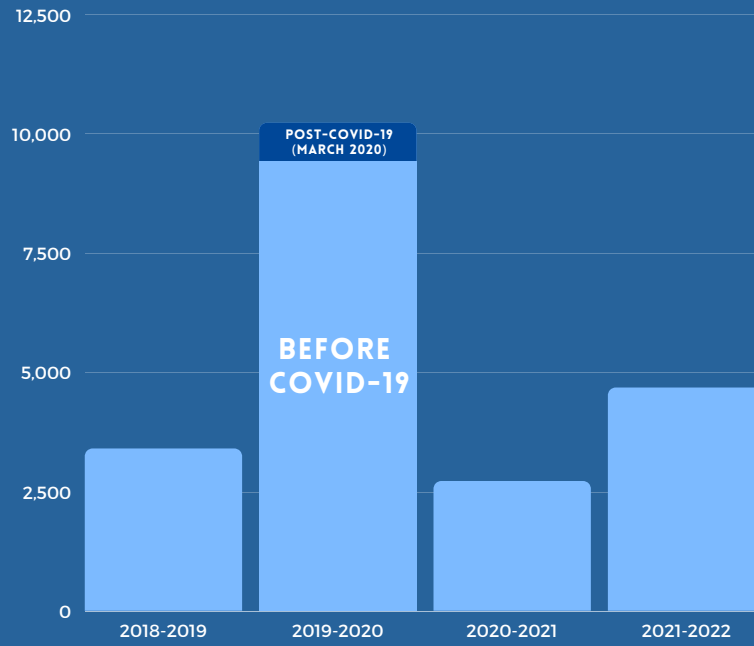


The Humanities Truck is a project through American University, made possible with funding from the Henry Luce Foundation and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

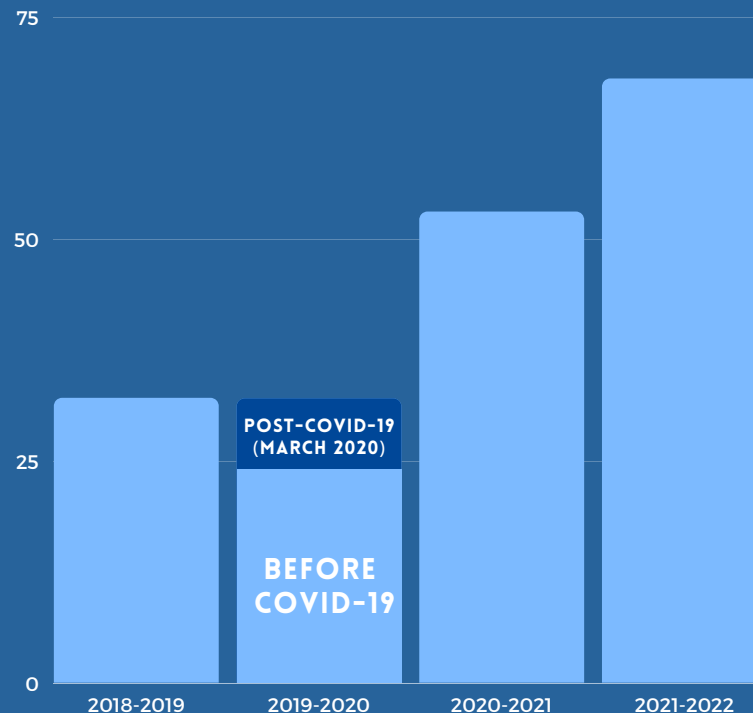
A LOOK AT THE NUMBERS

FROM THE FIRST YEAR UNTIL NOW

PEOPLE ENGAGED BY THE TRUCK



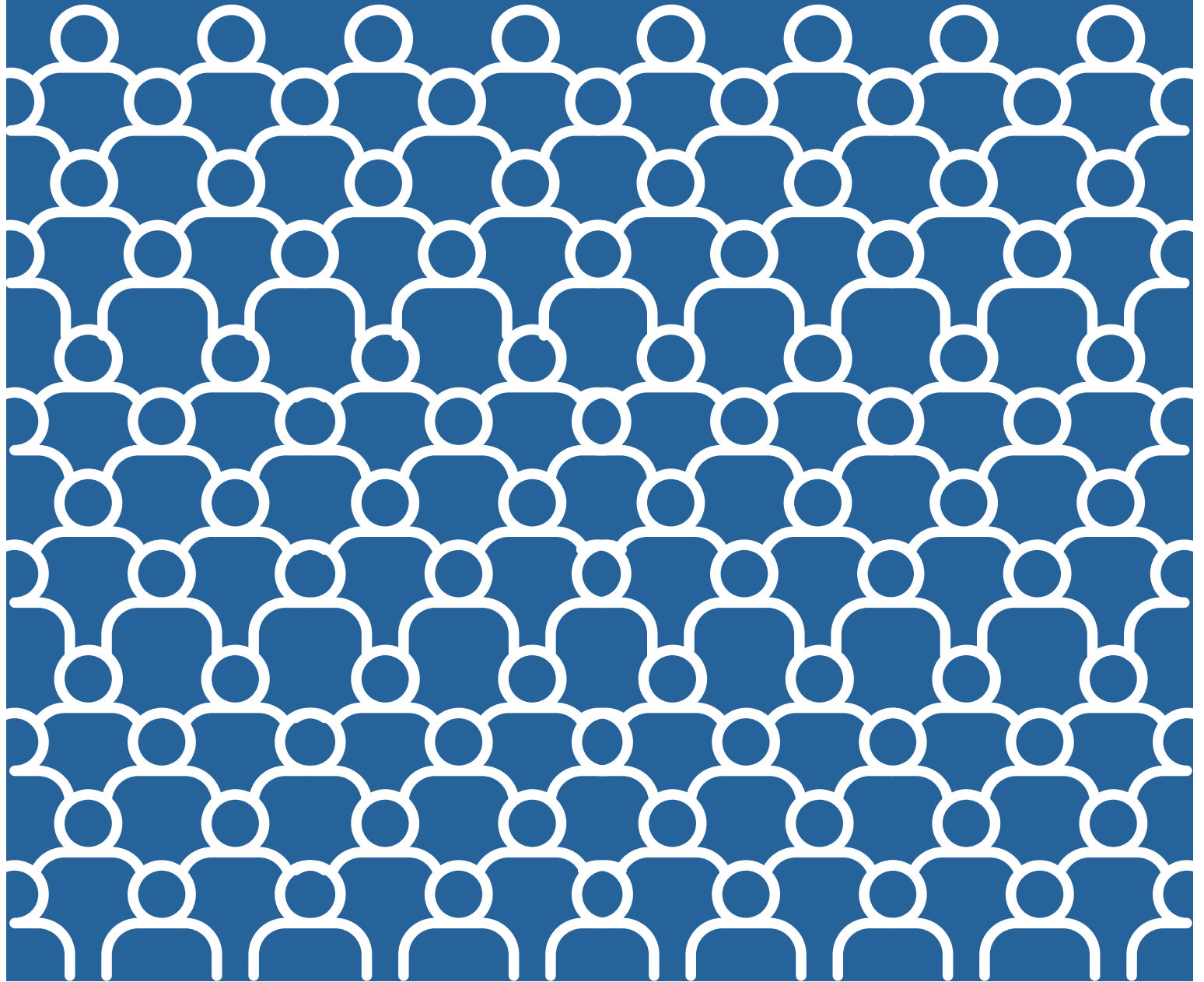
NUMBER OF EVENTS



FOR A GRAND TOTAL OF...

20,970

**PARTICIPANTS OVER 185 EVENTS
IN FOUR YEARS**



WHAT WERE WE UP TO?

68

EVENTS

97

INTERVIEWS

09

EXHIBITS

03

WORKSHOPS

01

VIRTUAL EVENTS



INTRODUCING OUR PROJECT FELLOWS 2021-2022

The Humanities Truck Fellows include a multi-disciplinary array of scholars, both faculty and graduate students, who are committed to the practice of community-based research. The Truck Fellows are committed to an ethically grounded, collaborative research process as they engage communities in the DC metropolitan region. The Truck creates an exciting tool that draws these Fellows together to engage in deeper dialogue with one another in order to help enhance each other's practice.

As a platform, the Humanities Truck is designed to facilitate collaborative community-based research, scholarship, and exhibitions. These collaborations take time and can take many different forms. The Humanities Truck Project Fellowship program provides a year for the Truck Fellows to be able to use the truck to develop these community relationships. Truck Fellows are expected to build a collaborative process that involves community partners in each phase of their projects, from research and documentation, to interpretation, and scholarly creation in the form of accessible exhibitions and performances. Throughout the year, Truck Fellows meet together to reflect upon the effective practices of community-engaged scholarship and also to share the findings of their own projects.

YOUTH STORIES OF CHILDREN OF THE DAY LABORERS IN WASHINGTON, DC

LUDY GRANDAS

This project looks for day laborers' youths to learn of the audiovisual form and tell their own stories utilizing the practical knowledge they acquire in the process.

Through a series of practical audiovisual workshops, these youths will have the opportunity to watch short films, analyze them to learn audiovisual language; they will also engage in screenplay writing so that they can write their own stories for audiovisual form.

Later, they will learn how to use their cell phone cameras to capture captivating video and photo-based on their writing. They will learn of frames, light, takes, and other aspects of video production. Taking what they learn here, they will record both during the workshop and where they live.

Later, using what they have captured, they will engage in an edition workshop and postproduction process. Lastly, they will create posters of each of their pieces to participate in a premier to showcase their audiovisual projects.



Ludy Grandas is a senior professorial lecturer at the Department of World Languages and Cultures. Her teaching focuses primarily on nation and state formation in Latin America, Studies of Culture in Latin America, the Studies of Culture in Hispanic populations in the US, as well as Spanish Language. Her research interests include labor, immigrant labor, cultural studies as practiced in Latin America. For the last few years, she has been collaborating with the Latin American day laborer community in Washington, DC. She has led Community Based Learning Courses which connect AU students to these specific populations.

THE SANDY SPRING SLAVE MUSEUM-AMERICAN UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP: CURATION, EDUCATION AND ENGAGEMENT

RACHEL WATKINS

The Sandy Spring Slave Museum was founded in 1988, with an interpretive and historical focus on enslaved Blacks who were manumitted by the Quakers in the 1820s and the area's ties to the Underground Railroad. The museum hosts a broad range of programs, individual visitors and school groups. The Humanities Truck and grant funding will be used for resources and programming that support the museum in augmenting its authoritative presence in Olney-Sandy Spring historic preservation and interpretation.

This includes: a) developing and expanding public education and interpretation around free African American families residing in the area since the 1800s; b) developing and expanding interpretation of the community as an important site through which to understand African Diasporas in the US and the Americas and c) developing their preservation infrastructure.

The truck will be a part of annual events hosted by the museum and wider community throughout the year. The truck will also be centered in developing and actualizing programs that support the museum's intent to function as a community archive and community center. Specific truck events will center on collecting oral histories, and facilitating donations of documents, photographs and artifacts/heirlooms by members of the Sandy Spring community.



Rachel Watkins is an associate professor of anthropology at American University. Her work focuses on African American biohistory and social history, histories of US biological anthropology and Black feminist critiques of science. Based on her involvement in the New York African Burial Ground project, she consults with agencies and works with communities to support descendant-community driven historic preservation and interpretation. Her partnership with the Sandy Spring Slave Museum is connected to this work.

OUT OF OUR SHELLS: A CELEBRATION OF HOMEGROWN DC MUSIC

ARAM SINNREICH

“Out of Our Shells” is a year-long project that aims to freely record, promote, and provide a public platform for a range of local musicians working in different styles and genres across the Washington, DC area. Additionally, the aim is to collect their stories and reflections on their creative communities, capturing an oral history of local musical cultures in the nation’s capital.

The project will be undertaken in conjunction with Multiflora Productions, a local world music promotion company, as well as DCTV, the district’s public access television network, creating free, openly licensed, and publicly available archives of the material in the form of a music compilation, a television program, and web-based materials.

The project will also be integrated with a Spring, 2022 course at American University’s School of Communication entitled “Musical Cultures and Industries,” giving students a chance to learn about DC musical culture and to play a role in its celebration and preservation.



Dr. Aram Sinnreich is a media professor, author, and musician. He currently serves as chair of Communication Studies at American University’s School of Communication. Sinnreich’s work focuses on the intersection of culture, law and technology, with an emphasis on subjects such as emerging media and music. He is the author of several books, including *Mashed Up* (2010), *The Piracy Crusade* (2013), *The Essential Guide to Intellectual Property* (2019), and *The Secret Life of Data* (forthcoming, MIT Press). He has also written for publications including *The New York Times*, *Billboard*, *Wired*, *Salon*, and *The Daily Beast*. As a bassist and composer, Sinnreich has played with groups and artists including reggae soul band Dubistry, jazz and R&B band Brave New Girl, acoustic duo Dunia & Aram, post-punk icon Vivien Goldman, hard bop trio The Rooftoppers, UK ska collective The Specialized Project, and Ari-Up, lead singer of legendary punk band The Slits. Sinnreich was a finalist in the 2014 John Lennon Songwriting Contest (with co-authors Dunia Best and Todd Nocera), and a semifinalist in the 2020 Bernard/Ebb Songwriting Awards.

THE BLACK WOMEN'S MOVEMENT TO RECLAIM OUR HEALTH

MARTINIQUE FREE

The Black Women's Movement to Reclaim Our Health Project aims to illustrate, highlight, and analyze efforts of health activists and organizations centered specifically on Black women's health through the use of the Humanities Truck. In partnership with the organizations Black Women's Health Imperative, GirlTrek, and Sippin' T with Nat & Z Podcast Group, we will explore how has health activism on behalf of Black women evolved within the last several decades, what unique ways are Black women's health issues being addressed through activism, how have these efforts translated into policy change, and what does the future hold for these activists and organizations in further elevating Black women into living healthier lives.

We will interview activists who have dedicated their efforts centered around improving the health outcomes of Black women. We will also digitize oral histories of organizations that are committed to providing programming and conducting policy work for the improvement of Black women's health. In addition, we intend to interview community residents to understand how the programming efforts and influencing of policy change by organizations have benefited them personally in creating equitable access to healthcare and other health-promotion resources. Using the Humanities Truck as a platform to celebrate community empowerment and engagement, we intend to create a space to share personal experiences from community members and the work of these advocacy-oriented organizations. By doing this, Black women may convene and share their stories of reclaiming their health and paying homage to the activists/organizations that helped them recenter and prioritize the importance of their well-being.



Martinique Free began community engagement work in her early years and her passion grew from those experiences into community based participatory research while working with the HIV community in Pittsburgh, PA. In addition to the Humanities Truck project centered on Black Women's health, her recent work involves the development of community-based interventions to decrease HIV perinatal transmission and empowering communities using a "bottom-up" stabilization strategy to alleviate poverty in the Manafwa District of Uganda. Dr. Free's other areas of interest include health disparities, reproductive justice and women's health in minority populations, health equity, and understanding cultural relevance as it relates to health promotion and disease prevention. An important component of her teaching responsibilities at American University involves developing courses or incorporating a component centered around community-based learning and in some cases, community engaged research for the Department of Health Studies

DECRIMINALIZING DRUGS, DECRIMINALIZING PEOPLE: STORIES TO END THE DRUG WAR LJ SISLEN

In collaboration with the DC harm reduction organization HIPS, we aim to continue our project that brought open conversation, education, training, and creative engagement to local communities about harm reduction, drugs, overdose, and naloxone. We are strengthening our emphasis on storytelling, oral histories, and the impacts of drug criminalization. We will be centering on the experiences and lives of people impacted by drug criminalization in the District.

This project will serve to assist HIPS' work with the #DecrimPovertyDC coalition and campaign and will contribute to general education about the multifaceted and disruptive impacts of the War on Drugs and drug criminalization.

Focusing on storytelling and oral histories will allow us to highlight the voices of people who use drugs (PWUD) to tell their own stories. It is our ultimate goal to humanize PWUD, who are too often stigmatized, misunderstood, and marginalized. Throughout the project, we will host many creative, fun, collaborative community events to amplify educational information about the importance of harm reduction, decriminalization, and the rationale behind de/criminalization as a public health issue.



LJ graduated in Fall of 2021 with their MA in Public Anthropology and Health Inequity Certificate (HIC). Their undergraduate research at American University examined the experiences and history of people who use drugs in America, including an ethnographic approach to understanding the roles of social narratives and embodiment of recovery from harmful drug use in sober living homes. Their current research examines how power dynamics, policy, and ideology affect drug use, treatment, and recovery narratives, thus affecting access to care and the embodiment of "recovery", health, and well-being with an emphasis on community responses and individuals' lived experiences. In 2019, Laura was also involved in the organization and programming of a large annual community health conference; their responsibilities included speaker selection and the development of novel workshop formats and topics.

CORNER STORE COMMUNITIES IN COVID-19

MELISSA HAWKINS

The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbates the complexities of food inequity. In DC's Wards 7 and 8, there are only three grocery stores. Individuals living in food deserts (limited access to affordable and nutritious food) and food swamps (high-density of stores selling high-calorie fast food, relative to healthier food options) face additional barriers to accessing healthy and affordable food. The goal of Corner Store Communities in COVID-19 is to illustrate the impact of the pandemic on DC residents' food security by interviewing residents about their experiences at community corner stores.

This project brings together scholars, nutrition and health advocates, local corner stores, and community members to document food security challenges and resilience in COVID-19 in DC. In partnership with DC Central Kitchen Healthy Corners Program, we will elevate the voices of Ward 7 and 8 residents to share experiences and challenges accessing food. The Humanities Truck will go to corner stores, we will document the experiences of the residents, share these experiences with other residents, and use the truck as a demonstration space to support nutrition workshops where residents can engage with produce and snacks that are offered in the corner stores. We hope to tell stories of the complexity of hunger, of challenges in COVID-19, of resilience and connection during COVID-19.



Melissa Hawkins is a 15 year resident of DC and an epidemiologist with an interest in translating data to improve community health. Her current research focuses on community-based interventions to reduce chronic conditions, with particular interest in the integration of community health workers (CHWs) to bridge the gap between communities and access to health care services. Recent work has examined the role of CHWs in community-based teams and the effectiveness of CHWs as change agents in improving health equity. She serves as the research director for Healthy Schoolhouse 2.0 intervention study, a 5-year USDA-funded project, to improve nutrition literacy and prevent obesity among elementary school children in Wards 7 and 8 in DC.

CLIMATIZE: HOW DC RIVERFRONT NEIGHBORHOODS ARE LEFT TO THEIR OWN DEVICES


JEFFREY MADISON

A lot has been made in the media lately about how climate change-induced sea-level rise in the Chesapeake Bay is already causing “daytime flooding” of the Tidal Basin on the Potomac River. How that flooding is destroying America’s beloved cherry blossoms lining the Tidal Basin, and how the Jefferson Memorial is also suffering damage, too. The National Park Service has committed millions of dollars and a huge campaign to save the Tidal Basin from climate change flooding.

Before the Potomac River’s daytime flooding gets to the Tidal Basin, though, it overflows the banks of SW DC neighborhoods like Buzzard Point, the SW Waterfront; SE neighborhoods like Anacostia Park, the Navy Yard, and Bellevue. These are predominantly Black and brown neighborhoods where they are largely left to fend for themselves when it comes to building mitigation, adaptation, and resilience strategies in the face of climate change. The aim of the project is twofold: to discover how these communities are adapting and then share their stories of strength, hope, and courage with the rest of DC.



Jeffrey Madison, Director of Technology Services for AUSOC, and an adjunct in SOE. Jeffrey is also co-founder of The Climate, Inc. (<http://www.theclimate.org>) and producer/anchor of its signature program, “The Climate Daily” podcast. Its mission is to highlight positive action climate change news, amplifying diverse and inclusive climate reporting by BIPOC and ADA subject matter experts on crucial Climate Crisis issues. He graduated from Harvard University with a concentration in both Afro-American Studies and Visual & Environmental Studies.



INTRODUCING OUR PROJECT FELLOWS 2022-2023

DOCUMENTING DISPLACEMENT:

The Impacts of the CARE Pilot Program on Washington DC's Unhoused Communities

Shannon Clark and Aaron Howe are both PhD Candidates in the Department of Anthropology and co-founders of the unhoused support collective Remora House, which provides material aid and advocacy for unhoused residents of Washington D.C. Shannon is currently completing her dissertation research on petrochemical manufacturing, regulatory science, and environmental policy in the U.S.

Aaron conducted their dissertation research about Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) and the management of public space with the unhoused community living in the NoMA neighborhood of D.C., and has published several opinion pieces with the Washington Post and StreetSense advocating for the city's unhoused communities and for decreasing the power of undemocratic public-private partnerships that drive gentrification. Together, they do weekly supply distributions at unhoused camps around the city, provide material aid to other unhoused outreach and support groups, help neighbors transition into stable housing, and advocate for the right of unhoused people to live in public spaces.



»» SHANNON CLARK &
AARON HOWE

Since the COVID-19 pandemic hit in March 2020, the New Jersey Avenue and O Street NW (NJ & O) Park became home to 20-30 unhoused people attempting to limit their risk of exposure to the virus running through DC shelters. In early December 2021 the camp was evicted and the park was fenced off for redevelopment. The eviction of the camp was part of the Deputy Mayor's Office of Health and Human Services' newly developed CARE Pilot Program, which is a "housing first" program that housed some residents of D.C.'s largest unhoused camps, while evicting the rest of the residents, and permanently establishing the former unhoused community space as a criminalized no camping zone. There was an array of outcomes for residents of the camp, despite the data put forward by DMHHS that claims that most residents were housed and those that were not had refused services. Some received adequate housing, some a one-year bridge housing funded by the city while they completed the Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) Voucher process, and others were forced to pack up and find a new place to camp. Our project will document how the eviction impacted camp residents, their perceptions of the housing first model used by the Pilot Program, and where they are one year out from the eviction. This will help offer a counter narrative to the one being pushed by DMHHS and provide data that helps better evaluate the impact of the CARE Pilot Program. One of the main focuses of this project will be the impact of displacement - how did being removed from the park and park community impact people's lives?

YOUTH POWER / YOUTH VOICE IN WASHINGTON DC

Jane Palmer has more than a decade of experience working in community-based non-profit organizations with children, youth and adults as a social worker, advocate, community organizer and manager, with an emphasis on the eradication of violence. In addition to her Humanities Truck project with DC Action, she is engaged in community-based research projects with Trans Lifeline and the Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence.

All three projects are grounded in her belief that the people affected by an issue should inform the solutions to that issue. At American University, she is a term associate professor in the School of Public Affairs, the founder of the Community-Based Research Scholars program, and the faculty advisor for the undergraduate certificate in community-based research. She teaches courses on research methods, gender violence, transformative justice, and child & family policy.



»» JANE PALMER

The Youth Power / Youth Voice Humanities Truck project is a collaboration between Jane Palmer and DC Action, whose mission is to make the District of Columbia a place where all young people grow up safe, resilient, powerful and heard. Working through DC Action's network of youth organizations, we intend to use the Humanities Truck as a mechanism to weave individual organizing events and actions into a collective statement about the needs and aspirations of young people across the District. The audio-visual tools of the AU Humanities Truck will help us document the voices of youth to create a citywide youth policy statement and advocacy. With the permission of youth and their parents, the video or audio recordings we collect from participants will contribute to Council Oversight and Budget Hearings and inform the city's policy process. Through this project, DC Council members will hear directly from youth about the issues that impact their daily lives on key policy areas such as arts and culture, sports and entertainment, out-of-school learning, environment, jobs and entrepreneurship, housing stability, health, and community safety.

GRACE & GRAVITY

DC Women Writers

Melissa Scholes Young is the author of the award-winning novels *The Hive* and *Flood* and the chapbooks *Guinea Pig* and *Scrap Metal Baby*. She is a Contributing Editor for *Fiction Writers Review* and Executive Editor of *Grace in Darkness*, *Furious Gravity*, and *From the Attic*, anthologies by women writers. Her work has appeared in the *Atlantic*, *Ms.*, *Washington Post*, *Poets & Writers*, *Ploughshares*, *Literary Hub*, and *Believer Magazine*.

She has been the recipient of fellowships from the Bread Loaf Bakeless Camargo Foundation, the Center for Mark Twain Studies, and the Virginia Center for Creative Arts. Born and raised in Hannibal, Missouri, she is a professor in the Department of Literature at American University and serves as Director of Undergraduate Creative Writing.



»»» MELISSA SCHOLES YOUNG

The Grace & Gravity Project was established in 2004 as a space to publish and to support the creative work of women writers in the D.C. area. We've published hundreds of writers in nine print volumes, including the award-winning books *Furious Gravity* and *Grace in Darkness*, and our online series, *From the Attic*. We partner with Politics & Prose Bookstore, Loyalty Books, and The Inner Loop Reading Series. With support from American University, Editor and Professor Melissa Scholes Young, has paired the Grace & Gravity Project with a craft class entitled *Literary Editing & Publishing* where graduate and undergraduate students learn by doing in a literary lab. With the help of the Humanities Truck Fellowship, we'll be creating a podcast of author, artist, and bookseller interviews, showcasing student book trailers, and visiting local independent bookstores with a pop-up of digital assets for the national Independent Bookstore Day as a launch for our tenth volume, *Grace in Love*.

GUIDE TO INDIGENOUS DC

Elizabeth Rule is an enrolled citizen in the Chickasaw Nation) and an Assistant Professor of Critical Race, Gender, and Culture Studies at American University. Rule's Critical Indigenous Studies research has been featured in the Washington Post, Matter of Fact with Soledad O'Brien, The Atlantic, Newsy, and NPR. She has also released articles in American Quarterly and the American Indian Culture and Research Journal, and has two forthcoming monographs.

The first, *Indigenous DC: Native Peoples and the Nation's Capital* (in production, Georgetown University Press), analyzes historical and contemporary sites of Indigenous importance in Washington, DC. Rule's second book project, *Reproducing Resistance: Gendered Violence and Indigenous Nationhood*, links reproductive justice and the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women; this work received the Association for the Study of Law, Culture, and the Humanities' Julien Mezey Award in 2020. Rule is the creator of the *Guide to Indigenous DC* (2019), *Guide to Indigenous Baltimore* (2021), and *Guide to Indigenous Maryland* (2022) digital map and mobile applications. Rule's work has received support from the Henry Luce Foundation, MIT Solve, Ford Foundation, Center for Black, Brown, and Queer Studies, and more.



»» ELIZABETH RULE

Through the Humanities Truck Fellowship, the *Guide to Indigenous DC* will engage in community partnerships to collect and present oral histories that correlate to the sites of Indigenous significance included in the *Guide to Indigenous DC* mobile app and digital mapping project. These oral histories will be conducted with Indigenous members of the DC community and DC-based subject material experts, and will prioritize the collection of Indigenous knowledge. The project team will furthermore create an exhibit within the Humanities Truck to be shared with public audiences around Washington, DC, including on the National Mall.

THE POWER OF PLAY

Alison Chrisler is a Professorial Lecturer in the Department of Health Studies. Dr. Chrisler is a Certified Child Life Specialist with over a decade of experience in community-engaged research and evaluation. Dr. Chrisler's research and evaluation expertise focuses on working with children, youth, and families that are often overlooked, with a special emphasis on community-based interventions that enhance the wellbeing of community members and reduce health disparities.

She is currently a Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Faculty Fellow developing a measure to capture critical thinking among public health undergraduate student. Additionally, Dr. Chrisler currently serves as the Executive Editor of The Journal of Child Life.



»»» ALISON CHRISLER

Loneliness and social isolation among seniors (ages 65 and older) is a well-documented health disparity in the United States and can often lead to reports of depression and poor ratings of quality of life. Intergenerational playgroups are a way to foster community connectedness and reduce social isolation, loneliness, and ageism by bringing together seniors and families with children who are birth to five years old. Play is universal and provides a commonality between diverse groups of people. The goal of the proposed project is to bring awareness to the lived experiences of DC's aging community which are often overlooked and go unheard. Additionally, the project will highlight an intergenerational playgroup as an innovative community activity that promotes the health and wellbeing of seniors, as well as build community and reduce ageism among young families

REMNANT REFLECTIONS:

Dress Codes and Hair Policies in DC Schools

Carletta S. Hurt is an educator, producer, and youth advocate. An adjunct professor in the School of Communications, she is passionate about all things Black girls and women. Her award-winning documentary, *Clothed Minds*, was a catalyst for this project as she works to amplify the voices of Black girls in education and beyond. She also produced *NOISE*, a short about a young black male teen's struggle with mental health, and the award-winning short, *The Catcher*, based on her experiences as a school counselor supporting homeless students.

This Georgia native comes from family of activists, entrepreneurs, and creatives. Her desire to tell stories started when she became a Teen Reporter for her local paper, *The Macon Telegraph and News*. Since that time, she published over three dozen articles and produced nearly two dozen media projects. A self-proclaimed SUDOKU champion, wordsmith at *Scrabble and Words with Friends*, she has worked as a teacher, administrator, and currently works as a school counselor in Washington, DC. Hurt is pursuing her doctoral degree and is a mother to the most amazing little person, William.



»»» CARLETTA HURT

Remnant Reflections has two components: a documentary series and a podcast series. The documentary series will consist of three short films that will feature a Black girl exploring the impact of dress/hair code violations and/or infractions around dress at school, two experts (one of which will be included in each series), a community advocate, and school administrator. The podcast series is a collection of the interviews and focus groups to provide another media of expression and education around this issue. Each of the three girls will host and curate their episode in the series. Both the documentary and podcast will cover two critical areas that make these policies biased and steeped in racial injustice - culture and economics, as well as one of the major effects is psychological trauma. Remnant Reflections will engage subjects and the overall community in the larger conversation which is the oversexualization and adultification of Black girls under the guise of school policy. Within the context of the DC culture, the project will explore through the stories of these Black girls how that adds another layer of stress as they work to stay true to themselves while attempting to navigate school and family. Remnant Reflections: Dress Codes and Hair Policies in DC Schools will capture more stories to spark and continue conversations about the hyper-policing of Black girls and women in America starting with an institution central to society - School.

PROJECT DIRECTOR

Dan Ker: Mobilizing Against Homelessness

When he dreamed of being a truck driver as a child, Kerr never envisioned himself driving the Humanities Truck. But who knew how much fun that could be? Working alongside other visionaries at American University, Kerr, an associate professor of history at AU, spearheaded and now directs the Humanities Truck Project. He is an active community and oral historian committed to the democratization of knowledge production.

He is the Past President of the Oral History Association and directs American University's Public History program. Since his earliest work with the Cleveland Homeless History Project, he has sought out ways to bring the oral histories he has collected back to the communities they originated from. Through community workshops, participants in his projects have collectively reflected upon and interpreted the gathered stories. He is currently working on the Mobilizing Against Homelessness project, which seeks to document and amplify the voices, perspectives, and analysis of those currently experiencing homelessness.



»»» DAN KERR

The Mobilizing Against Homelessness project seeks to document and amplify the voices, perspectives, and analysis of those currently experiencing homelessness. The project is built on a deep collaborative model. A team of formerly unhoused researchers has learned the arts of oral history interviewing through a series of workshops led by Dan Kerr, Past President of the Oral History Association. Together they co-created a template of questions that they are using to guide their interviews with people who are currently experiencing homelessness. The long form interviews seek to elicit reflections on the causes of homelessness and to prompt in depth discussions on strategies to address homelessness. The project is rooted in the understanding that those who are currently experiencing homelessness should play a leadership role in developing a critical analysis of homelessness and giving direction, shape and rise to a movement that seeks to end homelessness.



GRADUATE FELLOWS 2021-2022



The Humanities Truck graduate fellows run the behind-the-scenes operations in the office, from designing the exhibits to archiving the exhibits. The graduate fellows also facilitate the faculty fellows' year-long projects by helping them to imagine and realize the potential of the Truck.

MORGAN CARROLL

PROJECT LEAD

Morgan Carroll is a second-year graduate student in Public Anthropology. They received their bachelors in psychology from Sewanee: The University of the South and a masters in social work from the University of South Carolina.

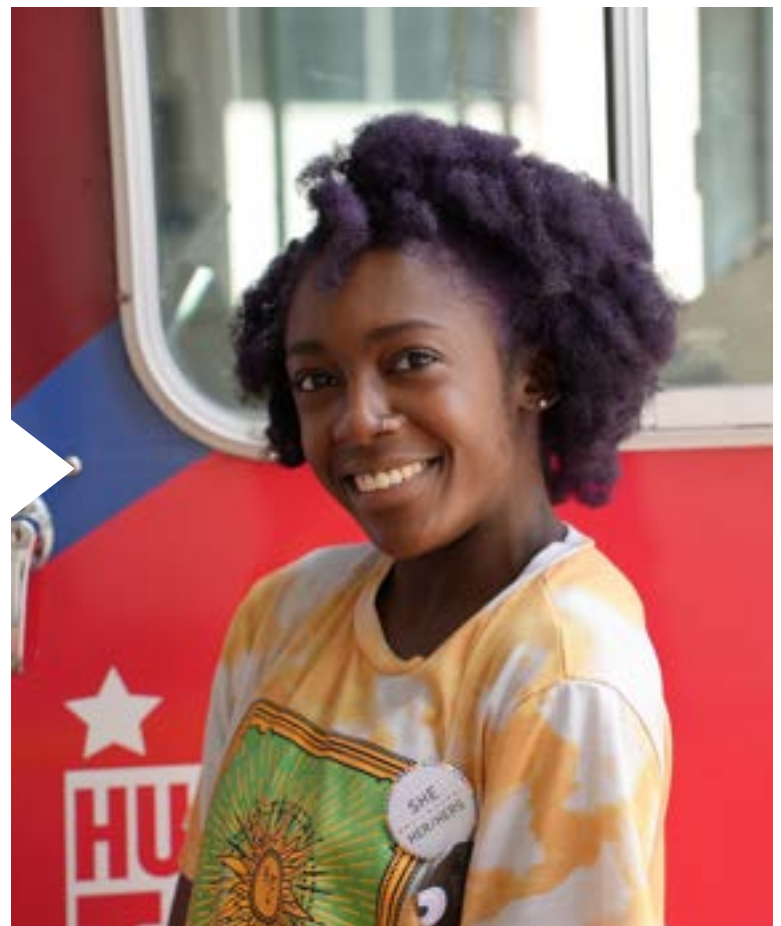
Her academic interests include food culture and tradition, rural queer communities, geopolitics and Appalachia. She currently researches food justice efforts in DC, including ways to mitigate food waste on the household level.



SHERRELL DALEY

Sherrell is a second-year MA Public History student at American University. She is from Brooklyn, New York and received her bachelor's degree in History at Allegheny College.

She is interested in U.S. History and Urban history. I and is passionate about public history and how historians can make museums more accessible and enjoyable for everyone, not just the select few.



CORINNE DAVENPORT

Corinne Davenport is a first-year graduate student in American University's Public History MA program. She received a bachelor's degree from Sarah Lawrence College, majoring in history with a minor in film production.

Their main academic interest is nationalism and community formation, and they hope to further study localized queer communities and sports fan culture's connections to group identity and exclusion. They also love producing and watching documentaries on local organizations, communities, and histories.



CHANTAL JIMENEZ

Chantal Jimenez is a first year public History Graduate student. They received their bachelors in Spanish with a minor in Communications from the University of Texas at Austin.

Their research interests include Latin American Studies, Historic Preservation, Translation Studies, Bilingualism and Language Acquisition, Sociolinguistics, Latino/Latin American Media, Community Outreach in Public Humanities, Accessibility and Representation in Public Humanities



KAI WALTHER

Kai is an MA student in Public History. Their research interests include memory and identity in the former Eastern bloc states, history as a tool of social activism, and formations of race and gender through time and space. As an undergraduate they contributed research for and helped plan the Humanities Truck's 2019 Pride event and conducted oral histories with former DC AIDS activists for a faculty fellow. They look forward to continuing to build relationships with and learning from community partners in the DMV.



ALEXIS ZILEN

Alexis is a graduate of the MA Public History program at American University as of May 2022. She received her BA in History and Anthropology with a concentration in Public History from Gettysburg College. Her academic interests include museum studies, cultural history, and gender history. Alexis is passionate about pursuing social justice initiatives through the humanities. Her research will document and interpret the stories of people experiencing homelessness throughout Washington.



CAROLINE MORALES

Caroline Morales is a first-year MA student in the Public History program. She received her BA in History and Education from Principia College in 2017. Her background is in elementary and museum education. She is dedicated to community building and engagement in history for all ages.



KATY SHENK

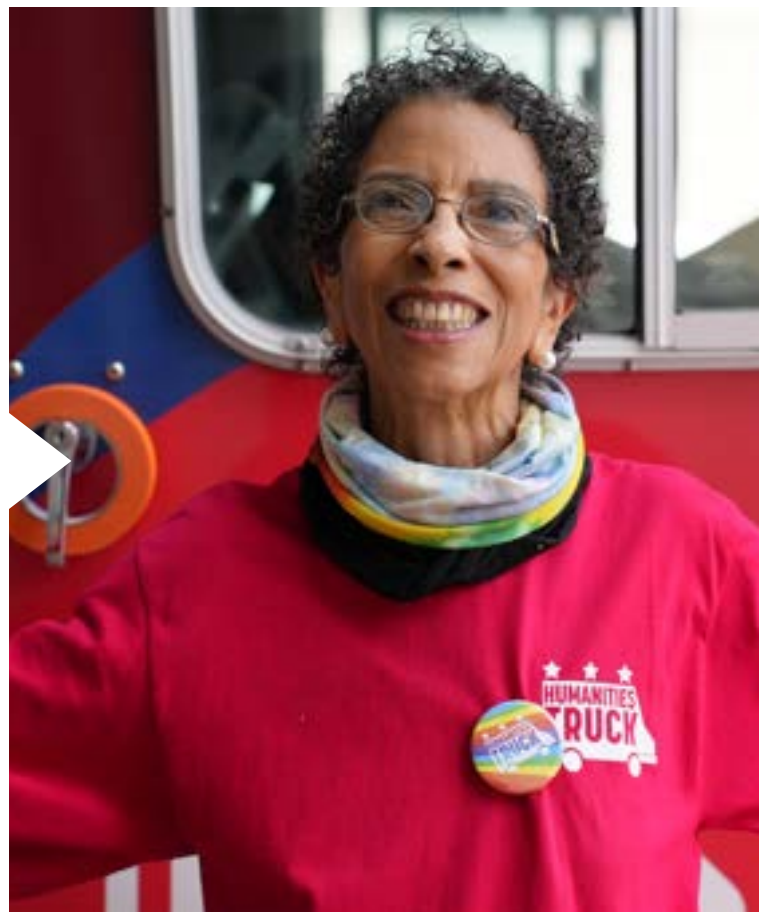
Katy Shenk is a graduate student in the MA Public History program. She received her BA in History from Washington College, where she discovered a passion for working with oral and community history. Her other research interests include commemoration, memory, identity, and digital humanities. Katy is looking forward to supporting the work of the Truck and building relationships with new and current community partners.



COMMUNITY FELLOW

ANGIE WHITEHURST

Angelyn (Angie) Whitehurst, is a native Washingtonian and active community who advocates for the homeless, the residents of the city, and for the country. She is a writer, poet, artist, actor, and film producer who also volunteers, serves on the Board for the DC Peace Team, and is a regular contributor to Street Sense Media and other local newspapers. Angie brings a plethora of experience having worked for the local government, federal government, and overseas.



COMMUNITY ADVISORY BOARD

Members of the Humanities Truck's Advisory Board provide valuable insight on the ways the Truck can more effectively engage with communities across the DMV region. They also assist in selecting Fellows and in strategizing for the project's financial sustainability.



KIMBERLY SPRINGLE
CHARLES SUMNER SCHOOL
MUSEUM & ARCHIVES



NAIMA JEFFERSON
SHEPARD PARK CITIZENS
ASSOCIATION



NOEL LOPEZ
CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGIST,
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE



KERRIE COTTEN WILLIAMS
DC PUBLIC LIBRARY



NANCY SHIA
COMMUNITY
PHOTOGRAPHER



SAMIR MEGHELLI
SMITHSONIAN ANACOSTIA
COMMUNITY MUSEUM

HUMANITIES TRUCK COMMITTEE

The Humanities Truck Committee is comprised of individuals from the American University community, and consults with Truck staff on the selection of Fellows and more.



MJ RYMSZA-PAWLOWSKA
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR,
HISTORY



LESLIE NELLIS
ASSOCIATE ARCHIVIST,
UNIVERSITY LIBRARY



XIMENA VARELA
DIRECTOR, ARTS
MANAGEMENT PROGRAM



ROB ALBRO
RESEARCH ASSOCIATE
PROFESSOR, LATIN
AMERICAN & LATINO
STUDIES



JANE PALMER
PROFESSORIAL LECTURER,
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE,
LAW, & CRIMINOLOGY



JULIANA MARTINEZ
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR,
WORLD LANGUAGES &
CULTURE



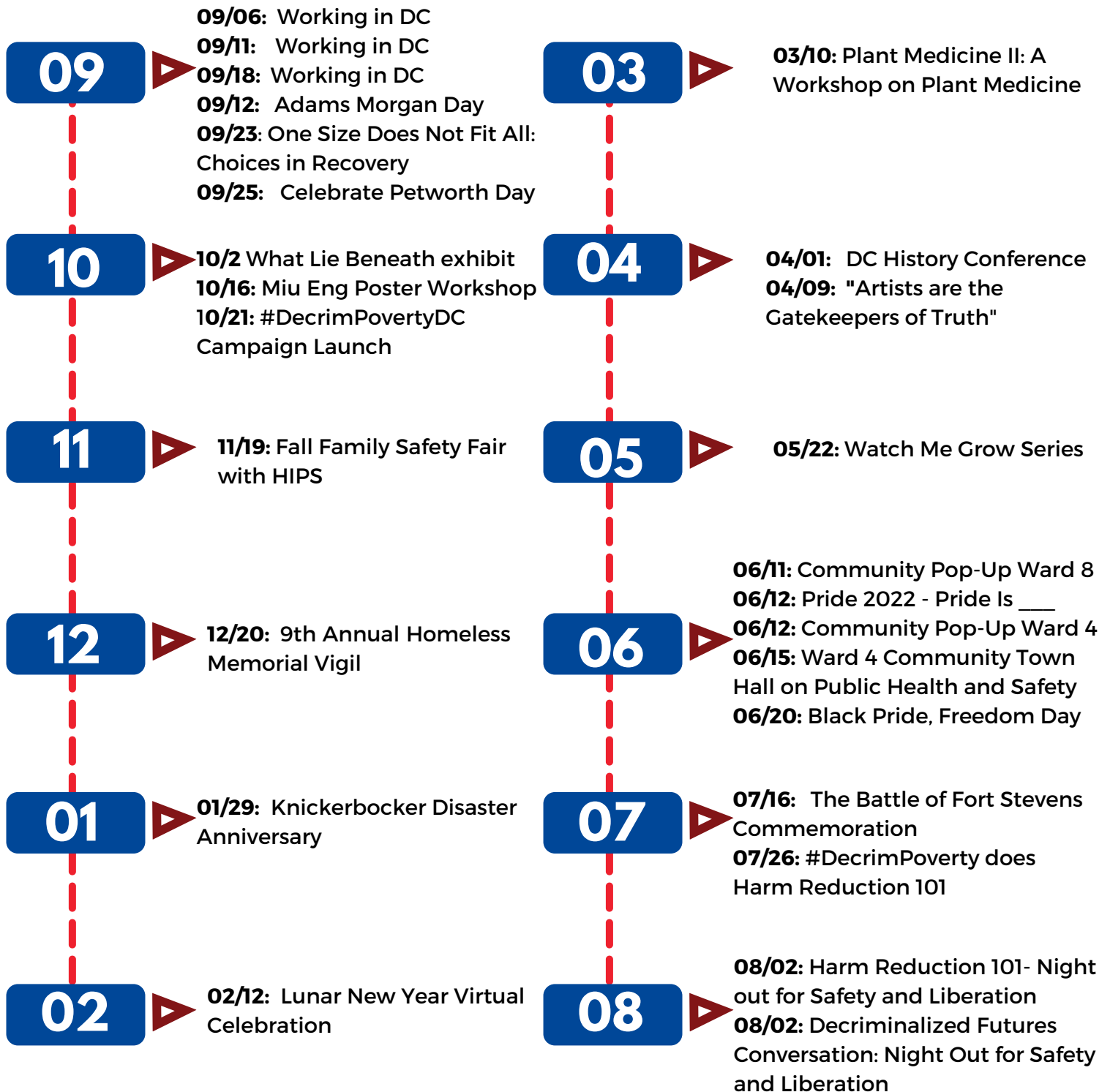
EVENT AND PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS



The years since covid-19's initial appearance presented unique challenges. Despite these challenges, the humanities truck team found creative and innovative ways to (re)connect with the DC community, both virtually and in person. The following are a few highlights of our projects and events from 2021-2022.

TRUCK EVENTS & PROJECTS

SEPTEMBER 2021-AUGUST 2022



This List is Not Exhaustive

Working in DC - September 8,11, & 18th, 2021

The Humanities Truck made its first public appearance of the year at "Working in DC", a public performance of the musical "Working" that explored concepts of labor and life. The Truck, situated in front of the AFL-CIO building, exhibited Ludy Grandas' exhibit and documentary "Jornaleros: Manos Invisibles" that tells the story of immigrant day laborers in DC. The Humanities Truck team interviewed participants about the labor, including that which might not traditionally count as labor, that each person was proud of.



Adams Morgan Day 2021

In September 2021, The humanities truck attended the 42nd annual Adams Morgan day. The truck showed local photographer Nancy Shia's photography exhibit titled "Adams Morgan: Once and Now, Human need or Developers greed?" which uses photographs of Adams Morgan in the 1970s juxtaposed with current photos of the neighborhood to explore themes of development and gentrification. We interviewed event-goers about changes in Adams Morgan over time.



Celebrate Petworth Day 2021

This year at Celebrate Petworth, a festival that celebrates the people and history of the neighborhood, we introduced an all new activity. In collaboration with festival goers, we created a collage that explored how, where, and why people celebrate in Petworth. To the event we brought with us a unique computer set up, which allowed participants to text photos of their celebrations to the Humanities Truck. We printed their photos and participants added them to the collage with their own captions - giving meaning to their celebrations.



DC Homeless Memorial - December 20, 2018

On December 20, 2021, the Humanities Truck joined with the People for Fairness Coalition (PFC) to provide programming for the 9th Annual Homeless Memorial Vigil on Freedom Plaza. PFP led 100s of marchers from Luther Place Memorial Plaza to Freedom Plaza, where they were met by the Humanities Truck. The truck project provided a stage and open mic for those who were at the vigil. We provided hot coffee, tea, and served delicious hot chocolate generously donated by SPAGnVOLA. We presented the film **Street Reporter**, directed by Humanities Truck project Fellow Laura Waters Hinson, and featuring Sheila White and Reggie Black. Both White and Black conduct interviews for the Mobilizing Against Homelessness Project.



Virtual Lunar New Year with the 1882 Foundation

With the arrival of the Delta and Omicron variants of COVID-19, the city found itself locking down again. This created a brief pause regarding in person events, including our Lunar New Year's celebration with the 1882 Foundation. Nonetheless, we used this opportunity to engage virtually by creating a live-updated digital collage. We collected submissions through a dedicated form on our website and live updated the collage with stories about the year of the tiger and participants favorite Lunar New Years myths, traditions, and folklore.



"As we all sit down together to enjoy dishes of delicious Lunar New Year delicacies, there is always some joking about liking the cilantro or not.

There is no in-between vote! It is heartening to see the bright green leaves in the cold of winter and the flavor it adds to a dish is special.

There is also some difference in its name in Chinese (Mandarin): 香菜 or 芫荽.
Bon appetite!"



"The Moy Family Association in Washington, DC is a strong and active member of the community. We are proud of our traditions and cultural heritage. Every year we look forward to the DC Lunar New Year Celebration and Parade! We proudly honor our heritage by marching together.

Many Moys are also US Military Veterans serving in every branch. We honored those who served in WWII who received the Congressional Gold Medal.

In the Year of the Tiger, we are excited and grateful to spend time with our Clan of wonderful family and friends!"



"On the Eve of the Lunar New Year, our families and extended families came together for a festive dinner my house.

I cooked 8 dishes. Eight is a lucky number. Traditional dishes usually include meat dishes, a whole fish, and noodles or some sort. We passed out red envelopes with lucky money for the kids, in my case adult children who are unmarried.

The New Year Eve dinner represent the closing of 2021 and next weekend we will have another dinner including a bigger bunch with my siblings families to celebrate the beginning of 2022."

Knickerbocker Theater Disaster Memorial

On an aptly snowy day on January 29th, we joined the community in honoring the 100th anniversary of the Knickerbocker Theatre Disaster. The truck hosted an exhibit, curated by Nancy Shia, which included historic photos and documents. The memorial took place on the former site of the Knickerbocker Theater, which is currently Adams Morgan Plaza. Developers have threatened to eliminate this community gathering space to make way for luxury condominiums.



DC History Conference: Downtown Displaced - April 1, 2021

The Downtown Displaced project involved a collaboration between the Humanities Truck and the Street Sense Media Filmmakers Cooperative. In the Spring of 2019, we conducted eight workshops as we co-researched, co-interpreted and co-curated the project, which ultimately became the "Downtown Displaced: A Case Study of Gentrification in Mount Vernon Square, 1840-Present" exhibit. This spring the truck delivered the exhibit to the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library, which sits at the center of what had once been the city's Downtown Urban Renewal area. During the exhibit we conducted interviews focusing on past memories of downtown DC.



"Artists are the Gatekeepers of Truth: A Celebration of the 124th Birthday of Paul Robeson" ft. Uzikee Nelson - April 9th, 2022

In April, we joined activists and artists in Petworth to celebrate the 125th Anniversary of the birth of Paul Robeson, a prominent activist, thinker, athlete, and artist. The event took place at Paul Robeson Park by local artist Uzikee Nelson's sculpture titled, "Here I Stand." The sculpture honors the life and legacy of Paul Robeson. While at the event, The Humanities Truck team asked attendees to explore how they engage with the themes of community, art, activism, and culture. Participants listened to speakers, shared their perspectives on a reflection wall on the side of the truck, created souvenir buttons made from self drawn and pre-printed designs, and celebrated the lives of Paul Robeson and Uzikee Nelson.



Pride Is__ at Capital Pride Parade - June 12, 2022

Taking inspiration from our successful model at Celebrate Petworth 2021, "Pride Is__" utilized a multi-method approach to garner community participation. With the help of local photographer Nancy Shia, we gathered images that told the stories of Pride of the past. We also reached out in advance to friends of the truck for contributions to the Pride of the present and Pride of the future sections. These images were on display for passers-by and for participants to use as inspiration for their contribution to the collage. At the Pride festival, the community was asked to contribute their own photos that reflected on recent Prides across the country, present day photos that exemplified Pride, and photos that reflected on what participants hope Pride will be in the future. These photos were printed and then given to participants to be posted on the truck with their own captions.



Black Pride, Freedom Day: A Day For Celebration and Remembrance of Black Liberation and Black Excellence - Juneteenth 2022

To commemorate Juneteenth, the Humanities Truck came out to U street in D.C for the first annual Juneteenth Parade on Monday June 20th, 2022. The truck was parked by the African American Civil War Museum in Northwest D.C. Similar to Celebrate Petworth and Pride Is___, this event called for participants to create a community collage that celebrated Freedom Day and Black Culture. With the theme Black Pride, we remembered both black struggles and triumphs, as well as hope for the future. We took portraits of willing event goers that were then printed to be put on the community collage. After taking their portraits, visitors chose a panel heading resonated with them, such as " I AM", " Emancipation Means ..." "Pride Is...". Participants were then able to put their photos on a poster of their choice, and write a caption of their choosing.



The Battle of Fort Stevens Commemoration - July 17, 2022

In partnership with the Alliance to Preserve the Civil War Defenses of Washington and the National Park Service, the Humanities Truck was welcomed to the 158th anniversary event for the Anniversary Battle of Fort Stevens. The Humanities Truck featured an exhibition curated by local historian Marvin Tupper Jones and helped document several reenactments of prominent stories from the event.





SELECT EXHIBITS FROM 2021-2022

