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Discovering Amistad Sets Sail For Norwalk's Veterans Park For Norwalk Public Schools Students and the General Public To Explore

Norwalk, Conn. (Aug. 10, 2023) - The Amistad Freedom Schooner, a 129-foot recreation of the historic Amistad ship, will make port at Norwalk's Veterans Park between Sept. 6 and Sept. 16, 2023 for educational programs and public tours. The vessel is operated by Discovering Amistad, a non-profit educational organization, which uses the historic ship to "keep history alive" through its message of freedom, hope and human rights.

The 1839 Amistad Rebellion is a powerful chapter in America's history. It is a story of the resiliency, perseverance and ingenuity of 53 Mende natives who were captured in Sierra Leone, survived the horrific Middle Passage voyage across the Atlantic Ocean, and were illegally sold into slavery in Cuba. Their leadership and survival skills enabled them to fight for their lives above the Amistad schooner and, later, fight for their freedom in the U.S. justice system, bringing to the forefront of American politics the explosive issue of slavery.

Over 800 students from Norwalk Public Schools will benefit from the Amistad interactive curriculum which highlights the Amistad's story and incorporates contemporary lessons of freedom and equity. Some of this education already began with last year's 7th grade students working with trained educators from Discovering Amistad in the classroom.

"As educators, we have a responsibility to teach our students about the events that have shaped our nation's history. The history of the United States is a series of revolts and rebellions - from the American Revolution to the George Floyd Protests of the Summer of 2020. The story of the Amistad Uprising illustrates for our students that even in 1839, there were groups of people protesting to advance social and racial justice," said Stacey Bergin, Education Administrator for Curricula and Professional Development for Norwalk Public Schools.

When the Amistad Freedom Schooner ports in Norwalk, these same students (now 8th graders) will learn about the 1839 Amistad Rebellion with interactive programs dockside and aboard the ship. The instruction will teach these students more of the history of the uprising and connect the story to their individual lived experiences as well as contextualizing it within the history of their own town or neighborhood.

"I am very proud that NPS has provided our 8th graders with the opportunity to learn about the Amistad Uprising, to visit the schooner, and to inspire our students to be Upstanders in the

world,” Bergin said.

The public will also have the opportunity to tour the Amistad Freedom Schooner during the Norwalk Oyster Festival. The tour will cover how and why the recreation was built, the differences it has from the original schooner, and the ship’s purpose today. Visitors will also learn about the Amistad story and how the kidnapped Mende natives were able to plan and launch a successful rebellion against their illegal enslavement.

Outside of the festival, free public tours will be held aboard the Amistad Freedom Schooner at Veterans Park on Wednesday, Sept. 6 and 13, and Thursday, Sept. 7 and 14 from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. Private VIP tours are also available for a separate fee of \$500 per hour. The VIP tours are designed as evening on-board or dockside receptions providing an exclusive tour and interactive experience.

Norwalk Public Schools will provide additional information for the media regarding school visits to the Amistad Freedom Schooner closer to the date.

About Discovering Amistad: Discovering Amistad (DA) is a non-profit educational organization founded in 2016. DA owns and operates the Amistad Freedom Schooner, the 129-foot recreation of the historic ship. The Amistad has become Connecticut’s Flagship, and it is utilized as a platform to “keep history alive” through its message of freedom, hope and human rights.

Discovering Amistad is committed to use the ship as a “floating classroom” to facilitate initiatives that impart inclusive education, generate conscious conversations, and mobilize agents of change. Since our inception, over 18,000 individuals have been reached in the Discovering Amistad array of offerings.

For additional information, please contact pmann-agnew@discoveringamistad.org or visit Discovering Amistad’s website at www.discoveringamistad.org.

About Norwalk Public Schools: At Norwalk Public Schools, our mission is to provide an excellent and equitable education so that all students graduate future-ready as civically responsible, globally engaged and positive contributors to an ever-changing and diverse world. Reflecting our diverse community, NPS families speak 59 different languages and represent 70 different countries.

Serving nearly 12,000 students, Norwalk Public Schools consists of four high schools, four middle schools, 13 elementary schools and one inclusive pre-school. NPS high school programs offer International Baccalaureate diploma and career programs; a renowned global studies magnet school; pathways in healthcare, marine science and digital media; and the opportunity to earn an industry recognized associate’s degree along with a high school diploma. PreK through middle school students can take advantage of magnet programs focused on language, character, marine science, college and career readiness, and visual and performing arts. NPS also prides itself on its neighborhood schools, which build community and offer their own unique educational opportunities.