

National Park to offer Youth Leadership Program

Local middle and high school students will once again have the opportunity to acquire new skills, learn about National Parks, and give back to the New Bedford community this spring. New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park continues its support of New Bedford's young people with its Youth Leadership Academy, or YLA. Youth Leadership Academy (YLA) is a free and immersive 3-month program for community members in Grade 5-12 from the Greater New Bedford area. This program offers experiential learning and volunteer opportunities for the youth of New Bedford.

The free program will offer these middle and high school students the opportunity to travel to a nearby National Park, volunteer at a hunger relief program, as well as learn about Frederick Douglass and what he accomplished while in New Bedford. Their culminating event will take place on June 14, AHA! Night, when they make a presentation about their experiences and share what they've learned in New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park's theater.

The park will be working with local artist and teacher Lauren Savoia to run the program this spring.

Lauren Savoia is best known for her implementation of 21st century art education programs, and for creating both bronze sculptures and mixed media paintings. As an accomplished artist, art educator, program coordinator, and researcher, Ms. Savoia's passion for serving her community through art is self-evident. Ms. Savoia studied at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, earned a Bachelors of Fine Arts in 2006, and is completed her Masters of Art Education degree in 2017.

Ms. Savoia is a certified art educator in both public schools and community-based organizations, working hard to promote the arts by creating collaborative and interdisciplinary opportunities across diverse communities.

She actively promotes art partnership programs that she designs and implements. Ms. Savoia is a leader and an advocate for the arts through fostering 21st century curriculum geared towards innovative ideas, and contemporary approaches to learning.

New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park was established by Congress in 1996 to help preserve and interpret America's nineteenth century whaling industry. The park, which encompasses a 13-block National Historic Landmark District, is the only National Park Service area addressing the history of the whaling industry and its influence on the economic, social, and environmental history of the United States. The visitor center is wheelchair-accessible, and is free of charge. For more information, call the visitor center at 508-996-4095, go to www.nps.gov/nebe or visit the park's Facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/NBWNHP>. Everyone finds their park in a different way. Discover yours at FindYourPark.com