

OPINION: Dr Jibreel A Khazan on Gentrification in New Bedford: “Don’t sell your homes”

The following opinion was sent to New Bedford Guide. It is our policy to share opinions regardless of which side of the cultural, historic, or political spectrum. We may or may not agree with the opinions expressed in these articles.

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“Long-time New Bedford resident Dr. Jibreel A.A. Khazan asks the New Bedford community not to sell their homes.

In a conversation following his receiving a Massachusetts Black Excellence Award from State Rep. Tony Cabral’s office Dr. Khazan spoke about the importance of preserving and saving the New Bedford community in Ward 4 from displacement and gentrification. This snippet is part of a cultural memory project entitled “*Um Frenti Unido – Um Prujeto di Memória Kultural*” (A United Front – A Cultural Memory Project).

This project aims to explore how “creative placemaking” is a catalyst for the rapid rent increases leading to the displacement and gentrification of the historic African and Indigenous communities in Acushnet (New Bedford). Moreover, to archive the living memory of the Cape Verdean American community in Acushnet (New Bedford). Historically, Acushnet (New Bedford) is the first American city that Cape Verdeans immigrated to.

Moreover, Cape Verdeans are also the first African people to “voluntarily” emigrate to the United States, post-European colonization. This makes this community uniquely important to African, Cape Verdean, and American history. This cultural memory project will elevate first-person narratives from this historic African immigrant community. It will also explore the cross-cultural relationships and moments of solidarity between the Cape Verdean, African American, Caribbean, Pokanoket, Wampanoag, Nipmuc, Narragansett, and Indigenous communities. The project is being led by La Soul Renaissance.

La Soul Renaissance recently received some funding to support portions of this project from (Mass Development – TDI – Barr Foundation) in the form of an “Art is Everywhere” grant through NB Creative. #DecolonizeAcushnet”