



Navigating History Towards a Better Future

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Hartford to Host Month-long *Amistad Journey to Freedom* in September

July 26, 2021 – New Haven, CT – The fabled tall ship *Amistad* – the flagship of Connecticut - will cruise up the Connecticut River to Hartford in September to dock at Riverfront Recapture's Mortensen Riverfront Plaza for a month-long series of community events, ecumenical services and educational programs. Thousands of students from five capital-area school districts will participate in *the Amistad Journey to Freedom* to learn the Amistad Story and its connection to current events of today. A free welcoming event is planned for September 9th at 4 pm.

"We're thrilled to welcome the *Amistad* to Hartford for a month of educational programs for our students and the region as a whole," said Hartford Mayor Luke Bronin. "The *Amistad* is a powerful reminder of the darkest aspects of our history, as well as a memorial to the enormous courage of those who fought against oppression and injustice — and a symbol of our nation's capacity to make progress. This is an important opportunity to learn about the *Amistad* and all that it represents for us today, and I want to thank the Discovering Amistad team and all of their partners for their work to put together a powerful series of events and educational opportunities."

The Amistad Journey to Freedom will commemorate the 1839 trial at Connecticut's Old State House of 53 natives from Sierra Leone who were kidnapped and illegally sold into slavery. These men and children fought for their lives and their freedom aboard the *Amistad*. The trial, which found those involved in the Amistad Uprising not guilty, marked an early victory for Black and White abolitionists and led to the eventual return of the captives to their native land. A Walk to Freedom on the anniversary of the trial will take place on September 17 from the Old State House to the *Amistad*. All are invited to participate.

"The quest for freedom and the achievement of social and racial justice continues today," said Len Miller, Chair of Discovering Amistad, the educational organization which owns The Amistad. "We are grateful that so many communities will be participating in the educational programs and events."

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Discovering Amistad's team of educators, assisted by Student Educators from Eastern Connecticut State University, will spend a month teaching at middle and high schools in Hartford, Farmington, Windsor, Bloomfield and East Hartford. Students from these districts will be brought together at a Symposium to discuss what they learned and to learn from each other. Community and Educational leaders will be invited to attend and to participate in future collaborations.

Funding for the Amistad Journey to Freedom has been provided by NBC/Telemundo CT.

"NBC CT and Telemundo CT are proud to support the mission of Discovering Amistad and their plans to share the Amistad Journey to Freedom month-long program with Hartford," said Diane Hannes, President and General Manager of NBC Connecticut and Telemundo Connecticut. "As a winner of our Project Innovation grant, we are thrilled that we can support this outstanding initiative that highlights the importance of diversity and inclusion across our state."

Leading community organizations are working with Discovering Amistad to plan and host a series of events scheduled to celebrate the *Amistad Journey to Freedom*. The partner organizations include Riverfront Recapture, Connecticut's Old State House, the Farmington Historical Society, Catholic Charities Archdiocese of Hartford, the Hartford Public Library, The Amistad Center for Art and Culture, the Harriet Beecher Stowe Center, Urban Hope Refuge, the Amistad United Church of Christ, Connecticut Science Center and the Connecticut Women's Hall of Fame.

"The first Amistad Trial unfolded in our courtroom," said Sally Whipple, Executive Director of Connecticut's Old State House. "With *The Amistad* in Hartford, people will have a rare opportunity to experience two important parts of the story and reflect deeply on its meaning in our lives today."

For more information on the *Amistad Journey to Freedom*, contact Paula Mann-Agnew, Executive Director of Discovering Amistad - pmann-agnew@discoveringamistad.org or Mara Siladi maras314@gmail.com.

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