

Papitto Opportunity Connection

October 2022

Big Plans For Big Change

Imagine you're a 17-year-old high school student and after a full day of classes, instead of hanging out with your friends after school, you're heading to meetings with community leaders.

Rather than streaming Netflix© and making TikTok© video with her friends, Mariam Kaba, a junior at the Woonsocket Area Career and Technical Center, and the first ever winner of the [Transform Rhode Island Scholarship \(TRIS\)](#), heads to the newly opened [Woonsocket Education Center](#). There, she meets frequently with community leaders to develop a plan to implement her idea designed to create real change in communities of color.

Mariam is working side-by-side with [Leadership Rhode Island \(LRI\)](#), the nationally recognized leadership development organization, recently selected by Papitto Opportunity Connection to help Mariam implement her transformative idea which includes restoring communities, career exploration, financial literacy, and job skills training support as well as mental health resources for young people of color.

Mariam is working closely with LRI's experienced team to co-lead the project's strategy and development alongside local community partners to help make the Woonsocket teen's idea come to life.

Below in a gray sweatshirt: Mariam Kaba winner of the 2022 Transform Rhode Island Scholarship Award, along with members of the Leadership Rhode Island team.



A Fitting Tribute

Art, at its very core, should be about starting a conversation. Edward Bannister, an artist, philanthropist and intellectual in the late 19th century, fostered conversation through his life's work. The African American artist forced people to think and created real change in a time when that was rare for a Black person. He was an inspiration.

Papitto Opportunity Connection is proud to partner with the [Providence Art Club](#) and support the Bannister Project that commissioned a life-size bronze statue by artist Gage Prentiss that will be placed in Providence's Market Square. Once again Bannister will be at the center of conversation and education about art and Rhode Island's difficult history with its African-Heritage and Indigenous communities.

Bannister was the first African-American to win a national art award —First Prize at the 1876 Philadelphia Exposition. Originally withheld due to his African heritage, but with the support of his fellow artists, Bannister's talent prevailed. He not only received the award, but went on to help build Providence into a New England cultural center and would become a driving force in establishing the Providence Art Club, now the second oldest art club in the country.



Support & Strengthen Our Communities

We know non-profit organizations that provide critical programs and services are often stretched too thin and don't have the resources they need to grow and expand. We know more often than not many organizations could use a little help.

To address this need, POC has engaged consultants Victor Capellan and Kwadwo (Kojo) Asare to provide guidance and support to POC funded non-profits and strengthen communities.



Capellan is an experienced leader with a demonstrated history of working with communities to make a lasting impact via education reform, social justice advocacy, and coalition building. A strategic and innovative professional, who served as the Superintendent of Central Falls



Asare, a native of Ghana, West Africa, is a financial professional and accounting professor at Bryant University. A Certified Public Accountant (CPA) with extensive business experience, Asare holds the distinction of earning the first-ever PhD at Bentley University in Waltham, MA. He will offer financial

Schools and senior advisor to the Rhode Island Commissioner of Education, Capellan will provide organizational support to POC funded non-profits.

guidance to POC funded organizations.

Mark Your Calendars!

Twice a year, Papitto Opportunity Connection asks 501(C)3 non-profit organizations to present unique, new programmatic ideas that will create significant change to empower success for Rhode Island's communities of color.

Organizations considering applying for POC funding should ensure that the program they are putting forward aligns with POC's mission of supporting programs to advance **education, job skills training and entrepreneurship.**

All requests must be submitted through the portal on the POC website, which will be open between December 1-15, 2022.

Click [here](#) to learn more and to submit your proposal.

