

Papitto Opportunity Connection

November 2022

Together, We Are Stronger

More than 100 of Rhode Island's non-profit organizations gathered recently at the Pawtucket Armory Arts Center for an inspiring day of collaboration as part of the first annual Papitto Opportunity Connection Connector Conference. Designed to strengthen communities and offer support to POC's non-profit partners. The Connector Conference provided an opportunity for organizations to meet and share their ideas, resources, and critical services.

POC would like to recognize and thank these amazing businesses and individuals that helped to make the conference a success including **Victor Capellan, Kwadwo (KoJo) Asare, Michelle Carr and Arnell Milhouse** for sharing their insight and expertise; **Chef Sherry Pocknett** of **Sly Fox Den Too** for a delicious Indigenous feast; **Miguel Allis** of **Hawt Chocolate** for the sweet treats; **RI Philharmonic Music School** for the music of their jazz quartet and **Xander Monge, Lennox Orellana and Erin X. Smithers** for capturing videos and images of this special day of collaboration.



Celebrate Native American Heritage Month

November is Native American Heritage Month, a time to celebrate the rich histories, diverse cultures, and important contributions of our nation's first people.

Take a visit to the [Tomaquag Museum](#) where you can immerse yourself in Indigenous history, culture, and arts. Under the direction of POC advisory board member **Loren Spears**, the Tomaquag Museum is Rhode Island's only museum entirely dedicated to telling the story of the Indigenous peoples of this land. Loren is also the founder of the [Indigenous Empowerment Network](#).

Sample Three Sisters Rice and other delicious Indigenous creations from award-winning Wampanoag Chef Sherry Pocknett's at the [Sly Fox Den Too](#) in Charlestown or stop by [Willie's Place](#) in Wakefield and try mouthwatering Fry Bread.

Chef Sherry Pocknett was recently featured in [Time Magazine](#) for her creative cuisine and to add historical context to the Thanksgiving meal.



Hope & Main Expands to Providence with Help from POC

[Hope & Main](#), Rhode Island's first food incubator, is making big moves into Providence with a Downtown Makers Marketplace and the development of a shared-use kitchen in the city's West End.

The Hope & Main Downtown Makers Marketplace is dedicated to showcasing the enormous talent of Rhode Island's emerging and established culinary creators. This new urban eatery and local market, slated to open in January 2023, will occupy the ground floor of Paolino Properties' 100 Westminster Street, in the heart of the Financial District.

Open for breakfast and lunch, the Downtown Makers Marketplace, will offer hand-crafted and locally sourced made-to-order items, grab-and-go hot and cold foods, corporate catering, plus a curated selection of Hope & Main members' products and prepared foods. It will also feature a coffee, tea and craft beverage bar operated by [Schasteâ](#), a tearoom located on Broadway that is also a Hope & Main member business known for loose leaf tea blends from around the globe.

Since Hope & Main opened less than a decade ago in Warren by Lisa Raiola, the non-profit organization that provides affordable and accessible [shared-use commercial kitchens](#) to local entrepreneurs seeking a place to test drive their ideas, it has launched more than 450 food businesses and helped hundreds of food-preneurs turn their dreams into realities.

Papitto Opportunity Connection is proud to support Hope & Main's newest project, especially since 40 percent of the nonprofit organization's food entrepreneurs are people of color.

"POC believes that the ability to launch a sustainable food business is a vital path to economic mobility, particularly for immigrants and refugees, because it is familiar and feels

attainable,” said Barbara Papitto, founder, Papitto Opportunity Connection. “We want to support these entrepreneurs to make their dreams a reality. Hope & Main lowers the barriers to this complicated journey, and the Downtown Makers Marketplace will offer another innovative channel to promote these small businesses and help them to grow and thrive. We are proud to support this project.”

Below from left: Joe Paolino, Barbara Papitto, Lisa Raiola, and Tony Lopez



Helping Close the Racial Gap for BIPOC Entrepreneurs

Over 80 percent of U.S. employer business are white owned. Black, Indigenous, and People of Color business participation in Rhode Island lags the national average. Roughly 7.4 percent of the state's 21,000 businesses have BIPOC owners, far below their relative population share and nearly half the nation's average. Nationally, 18.3% of all businesses with employees are BIPOC-owned, more than twice the rate for Rhode Island.

Papitto Opportunity Connection and [New Majority Capital Foundation](#) recently announced a transformational program to address this inequity by creating a pipeline to business ownership for underrepresented entrepreneurs and ease the process of acquiring and owning a new business. The BIPOC Entrepreneurship Through Acquisition (BETA) program is designed to create a better financial future for people of color by providing access and increasing the number of businesses owned by people of color across Rhode Island.

BETA helps facilitate business acquisition for entrepreneurs of color seeking to acquire a new business while providing critical training and technical support to ensure success.

Below: New Majority Capital Foundation Board



December Deadline Is Fast Approaching

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.



Education



Skills Training



Entrepreneurship

