



Daniel G. Roberts Award for Excellence in Public Historical Archaeology: Archaeology in the Community

Thomas Cuthbertson

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Archaeology in the Community (AITC) is a 501c3 nonprofit archaeology education organization based in Washington, D.C., founded in 2009 by Dr. Alexandra Jones (Fig. 1). Dr. Jones founded the organization as a way to introduce archaeology to the youth in the neighborhood in which she grew up and make archaeology more accessible in general, especially to those communities historically excluded from participating in the field, which has remained foundational to AITC's mission. AITC has committed to operating as an antiracist organization, with all members of the staff participating in antiracism training as well as funding student participation in antiracism training.

AITC has operated an annual five- to six-week Young Archaeologists' Club, introducing children aged 7–12 years to the interdisciplinary practice of archaeology starting in 2014. The program introduces students to STEM topics as well as some of the specific topics, challenges, and advantages of archaeology. Each program offers lessons on different topics, each with a hands-on activity, and a field trip to a museum or nearby archaeological site. The



Fig. 1 Archaeology in the Community staff. (Image courtesy of Archaeology in the Community, 2023.)

program is offered free to all students and funded through various grants and money raised by AITC. When confronted with the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, AITC staff was able to adapt to virtual programming using video conferencing and preparing and sending boxes to all students containing the materials needed to participate in the planned activities (Fig. 2). AITC also partnered with the Peabody Museum of Archaeology

T. Cuthbertson (✉)
Archaeology in the Community, 2231 14th Street NE,
Washington, DC 20018, U.S.A.
e-mail: thomas@archaeologyincommunity.com

and Ethnology to provide a virtual tour to students including discussions of artifacts using augmented-reality manipulables. The goal of the program is to introduce as many specializations and methods of inquiry in archaeology as possible to find a niche in which each student can find interest.

The Estate Little Princess Archaeology Project on St. Croix was a collaboration among archaeologists from several universities, the Society of Black Archaeologists, AITC, the Smithsonian's Slave Wrecks Project, and Diving with a Purpose, that ran from 2017 to 2023. As part of this project, Dr. Jones developed and taught a field school for local high

school students, the goal of which was to provide the local youth with an otherwise rare entry point into the field of archaeology. This program not only gave the local students an opportunity to participate in documenting their own history (Fig. 3), but also gives them an advantage in the marine and heritage tourism industries when they enter the workforce, which are among the island's greatest economic drivers. This community engagement is demonstrative of AITC's commitment to community engagement and participation in projects that demonstrate the capability of archaeology to contribute to the communities in which projects take place, rather than being an



Fig. 2 Instructors Tom Cuthbertson and Sidney Pickens preparing for the transition of the Young Archaeologists Club Kits to a virtual format. (Photo by Alexandra Jones, 2020.)



Fig. 3 Students from the Boys and Girls Club in Frederiksted excavate at Estate Little Princess, St. Croix (O'Connor 2018). (Photo by Linda Morland, 2018.)

exclusively extractive and destructive practice. For further reading, see Dunnivant et al. (2018).

The Teacher LEARN Archaeology training program was developed through a partnership between AITC and the Montpelier Foundation (Fig. 4). It is a week-long program in which teachers are housed on site at Montpelier, work alongside archaeologists, and participate in daily workshops to integrate archaeology as a tool in their classrooms. Scholarships are available to help defer the cost of participation. While on its surface this program is a relatively simple premise, out of all the programs in which AITC participates this is likely the farthest reaching. Each teacher that completes this program and brings archaeology into their classroom then introduces all their students to the concept, increasing the reach of the program exponentially.

Another annual event hosted by AITC is the Day of Archaeology Festival held in the early summer (Fig. 5). The event has been held at the Dumbar-ton House in Georgetown, Washington, D.C., and is sponsored by local organizations and businesses. The event features archaeology organizations and projects from around the area, as well as music,

food trucks, and children's activities. Regular exhibitors have included the District of Columbia State Historic Preservation Office, the Fairfield Foundation, the Montpelier Foundation, Alexandria Archaeology, Society for American Archaeology, and Archaeological Institute of America. While the event was put on hiatus during the pandemic for public health reasons, it returned in June 2022 and regularly attracts individuals and families from the area, as well as tourists visiting the DC area. In June 2024 the Day of Archaeology festival will kick off celebrations for DC's first ever Archaeology Month.

AITC has operated with a skeleton crew, consisting mostly of volunteers, led by Dr. Jones since she founded the organization and has only recently started adding regular staff. It has been and continues to be successful in raising the visibility and accessibility of archaeology because its mission is easy to believe in. It is an exemplar for building community around archaeology and helping to direct projects toward community engagement and away from the extractive practices that have been the hallmark of archaeological practice up to the present.



Fig. 4 LEARN Teacher program participants in 2019. (Image courtesy of Archaeology in the Community.)

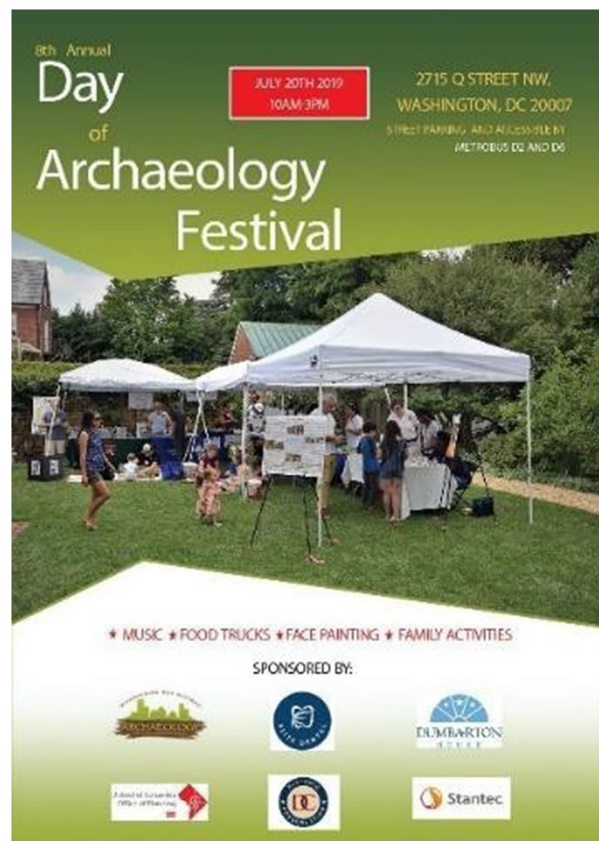


Fig. 5 Day of Archaeology Festival advertisement, 2019. (Image courtesy of Archaeology in the Community.)

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