



**WOONASQUATUCKET RIVER
WATERSHED COUNCIL**

RIFMA Conference - Thursday, May 24, 2023

**Community Leadership in Action with
WRWC's New Voices/Nuevas Voces Program**



Alicia Lehrer – Executive Director

Jenny Mercado – Nuevas Voces Co-Facilitator

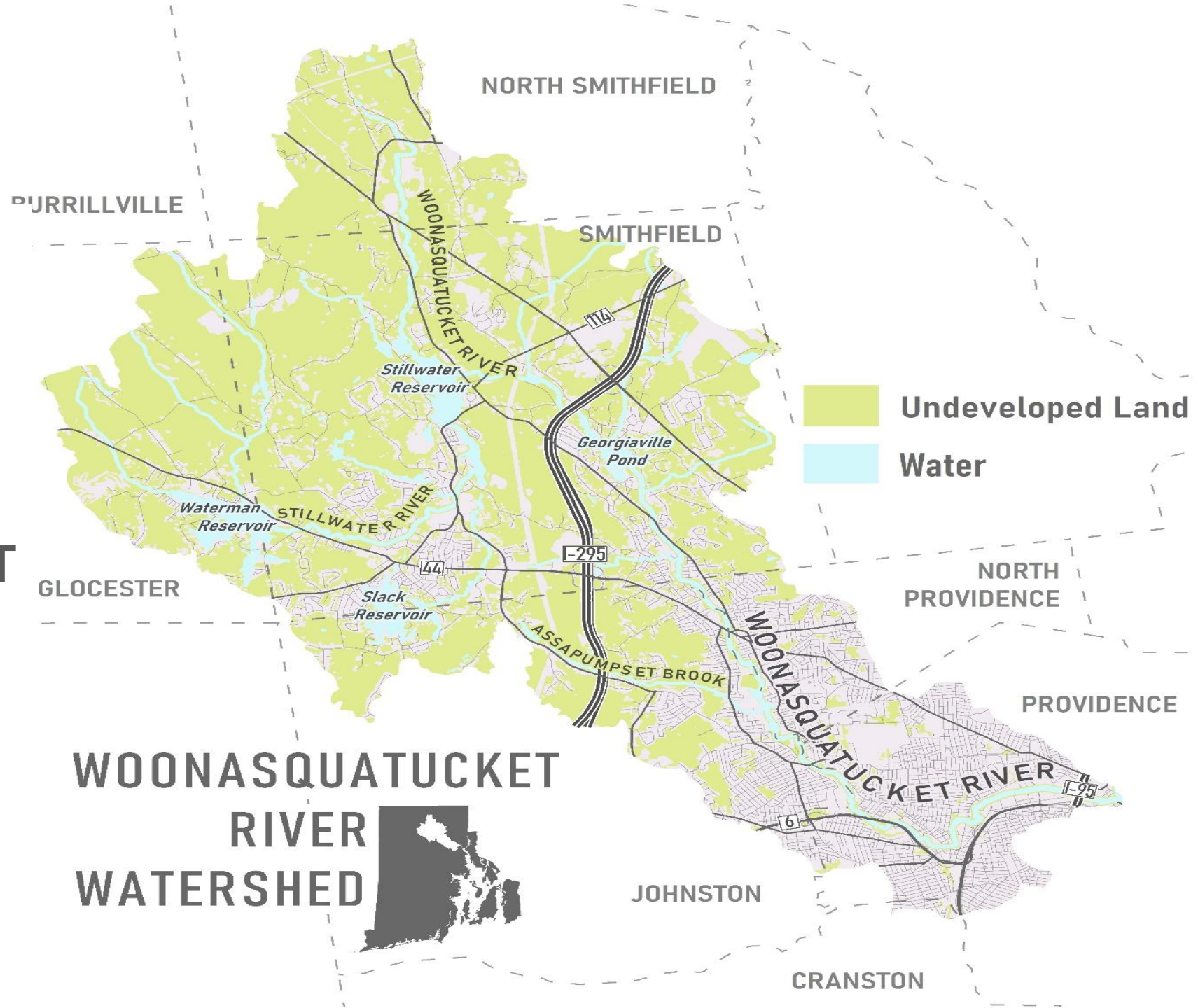


WOONASQUATUCKET RIVER
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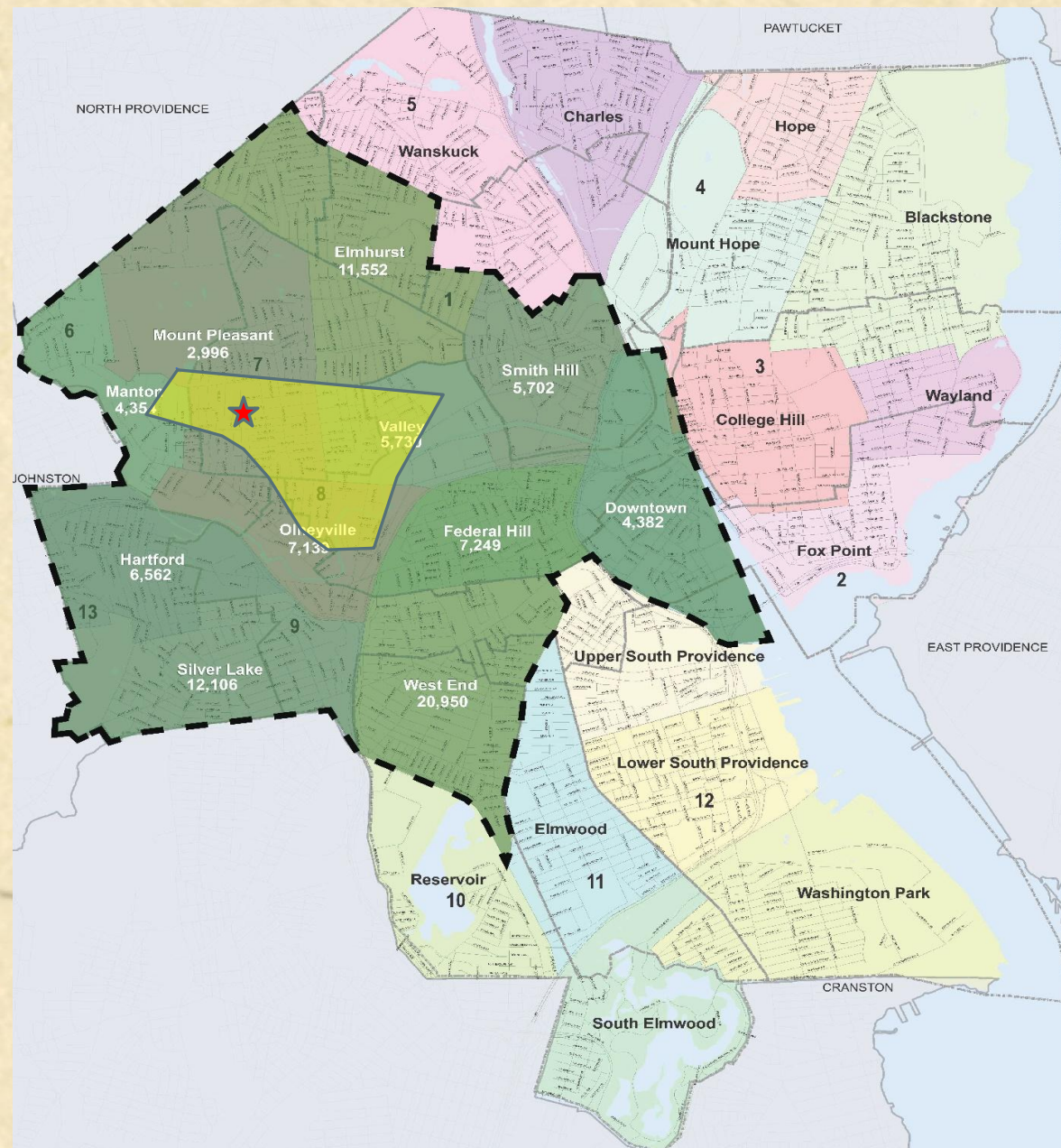
*WRWC Mission:
Create positive environmental, social and economic
change by revitalizing the Woonasquatucket River, its
Greenway and its communities.*

283,757 total population
(27% of RI)

COMMUNITIES IMPACTED BY
WOONASQUATUCKET RIVER WATERSHED COUNCIL



Olneyville, Providence RI



Almost 7,000
people live in
Olneyville

Olneyville, Providence RI

- 60% Hispanic/LatinX, 15% white, 13% Black
- Median household income:
\$30,000-\$40,000 a year
- Main countries of origin –
Guatemala & Dominican Republic
- Also Mexicans, Bolivians,
other Central Americans



Flooding



Olneyville Flood March 2010

Project Goals

- **Cultivate Engaged Climate Resilience**
- **Build Climate Justice Literacy**
- **Develop Leadership Capacity**
- **Frontline Resident Co-Governance**

Initial Surveys

Door to Door Canvassing: Bilingual (Spanish/English) Well Known in the Community (paid \$25/hour)

- **Shirley Fuertes** – Local Community Member, Leader of English for Action, Native Spanish Speaker
- **Virginia Morgan** – PTA Lead Parent at William D’Abate Elementary (neighborhood school)
- **WRWC River Ranger Raz**
 - former Clean Water Action canvasser
 - Wearing WRWC Identifying Clothing
 - Work in pairs with another Ranger on same block



RESULTS

Knowledge/Perceptions on Climate Change

- How much do you know about CC? – **50%** little or nothing
- Is climate changing in OV? – **63%** Yes, 28% Not Sure, 9% No
- If yes, what risks are there in OV?
 - Major Themes Identified:
 - Flooding
 - More Extreme Weather
 - Illness/Flu/Fever
- How likely is a disaster here? – 71% somewhat to very likely
- How severe would the impact be to you? – 75% somewhat to very severe

Are You Ready for the Flood?

The screenshot shows a Vimeo video player interface. At the top left is the Vimeo logo. To its right are navigation links: 'Join' (in a green button), 'Log in', 'Pricing', 'Product' (with a dropdown arrow), and 'Watch' (with a dropdown arrow). A search bar contains the text 'Search videos, people, and more' with a magnifying glass icon. To the right of the search bar is a blue button with a plus sign and the text 'New video'. The video content shows a middle-aged man with a serious expression, wearing a dark polo shirt, standing in an office. The background is slightly blurred, showing office desks and chairs. On the right side of the video frame, there are two icons: a heart (likes) and a clock (history). At the bottom of the video frame, there is a subtitle in Spanish: 'y vi que había agua en todas partes. Totalmente inundada.' Below the video frame is a video player control bar. It includes a play button, a progress bar with a blue fill and a white playhead, a timestamp '02:33', and icons for volume, settings, and full screen.

https://vimeo.com/359888817/6c75fdddfe?fbclid=IwAR3jdSAkxodmMOafzGqU1oWUBH9cai pose5wYT71G7sGX72OX72crqKx4Wo&mc_cid=92c08db8a6&mc_eid=761d977642

New Voices/Nuevas Voces is Born

Recruitment and program development by resident leaders

Delia Rodriguez-Masjoan



- Longtime community immigration rights advocate
- Immigrant from Argentina
- Radio personality
- Total powerhouse

Jennifer Recinos



- Grew up in Olneyville
- Family is from Zacapa, Guatemala
- WRWC River Ranger
- Current WRWC Board Member

New Voices / Nuevas Voces Learning Cohort (2021)



- 20 cohort members originally recruited
- Compensation (\$25 an hour)
- Translation & Interpretation
- Transportation and Childcare for In-person Activities
- Technology & Digital Content Accessibility (Computers and Wi-Fi)

Learning Between Sessions – Neighborhood Canvassing



Environmental Justice Conversations, but also gathering information on community needs

Learning Between Sessions – Green Infrastructure Tour



Learning about GI as a climate adaptation. WRWC's GI work that people have passed and not known

August Graduation – Mayor Elorza, Office of Sustainability, REJC



16 out of 20 completed the program. Received citations from the Mayor.
Met with Office of Sustainability and Racial and Environmental Justice Committee

End of Year 1 & Next Steps

Transferring Power:

- Two NV Graduates Facilitate 2022 NV Cohort
- NV Graduate Appointed to Represent Olneyville in Providence Human Relations Commission
- Grads Recruited Future Cohorts
- NV Grad is WRWC Environmental Educator
- WRWC Board & Staff Actively Soliciting Membership from NV Grads

Nuevas Voces Co-Facilitators

Maria Jose Gutierrez

- Moved from Bolivia 2021
- Professional nature tour guide and French teacher in Bolivia
- Amazing designer of interactive programming
- Currently learning English but still only fluent in Spanish



Jenny Mercado

- Nicaraguan, lived in RI for over 10 years
- Emergency Room CNA at Hasbro Children's Hospital
- Bilingual
- Mother of twins
- Directing Nicaraguan organization to help new residents find services

Nuevas Voces 2023 – 25 People Enrolled!!!



¿Qué es Nuevas Voces?/ What is New Voices

Misión:

CREAR CONCIENCIA AMBIENTAL PROPORCIONANDO CONOCIMIENTO HISTÓRICO, CIENTÍFICO Y AMBIENTAL DE NUESTRA COMUNIDAD PARA ENTENDER Y TOMAR ACCIONES PARA SU PROTECCIÓN Y CONSERVACIÓN PARA QUE LAS GENERACIONES VENIDERAS PUEDAN SEGUIR DISFRUTANDO DE SU MEDIO AMBIENTE

Objetivos

1. Fomentar la conciencia sobre los problemas ambientales locales.
2. Comodidad para discutir temas ambientales.
3. Construir conexiones comunitarias a largo plazo.
4. Desarrollo de habilidades y oportunidades de liderazgo.

Mission:

CREATE ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS BY PROVIDING HISTORICAL, SCIENTIFIC & ENVIRONMENTAL KNOWLEDGE OF OUR COMMUNITY IN ORDER TO UNDERSTAND AND TAKE ACTION FOR ITS PROTECTION AND PRESERVATION SO THAT THE GENERATIONS TO COME CAN CONTINUE TO ENJOY THEIR ENVIRONMENT.

Objectives

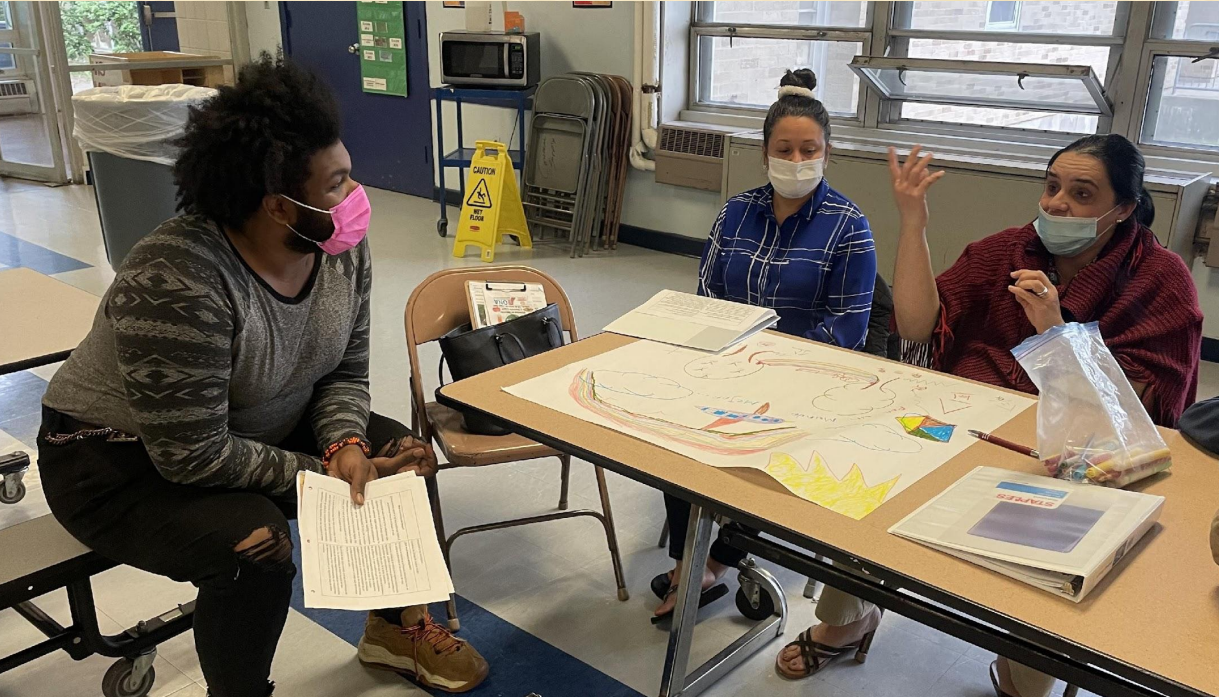
1. Foster consciousness around local environmental issues.
2. Comfortability discussing environmental issues.
3. Build long term community connections.
4. Development leadership skills and opportunities.

NV Program Sessions

Total of 8 Sessions (Monthly)

1. History and identity of the neighborhood, relationship to the river and history of Providence
2. Understand climate change and environmental hazards
3. Emergency Preparedness – Code Red & Emergency Kits
4. Environmental Justice – Meaning, Where we Fit
5. Political System – Meeting our Reps
6. Community Organizing
7. Next Steps for Leaders
8. Graduation

Interactive and Collaborative Pedagogy



Example: Environmental Justice

- Guest speaker REJC
 - Very image-based presentations
- Small group discussion- “Asthma in Community”
- Shareback
- Info on Clinics & Services

Interpreter- translates for English-speaking guests

Stipend Payment System

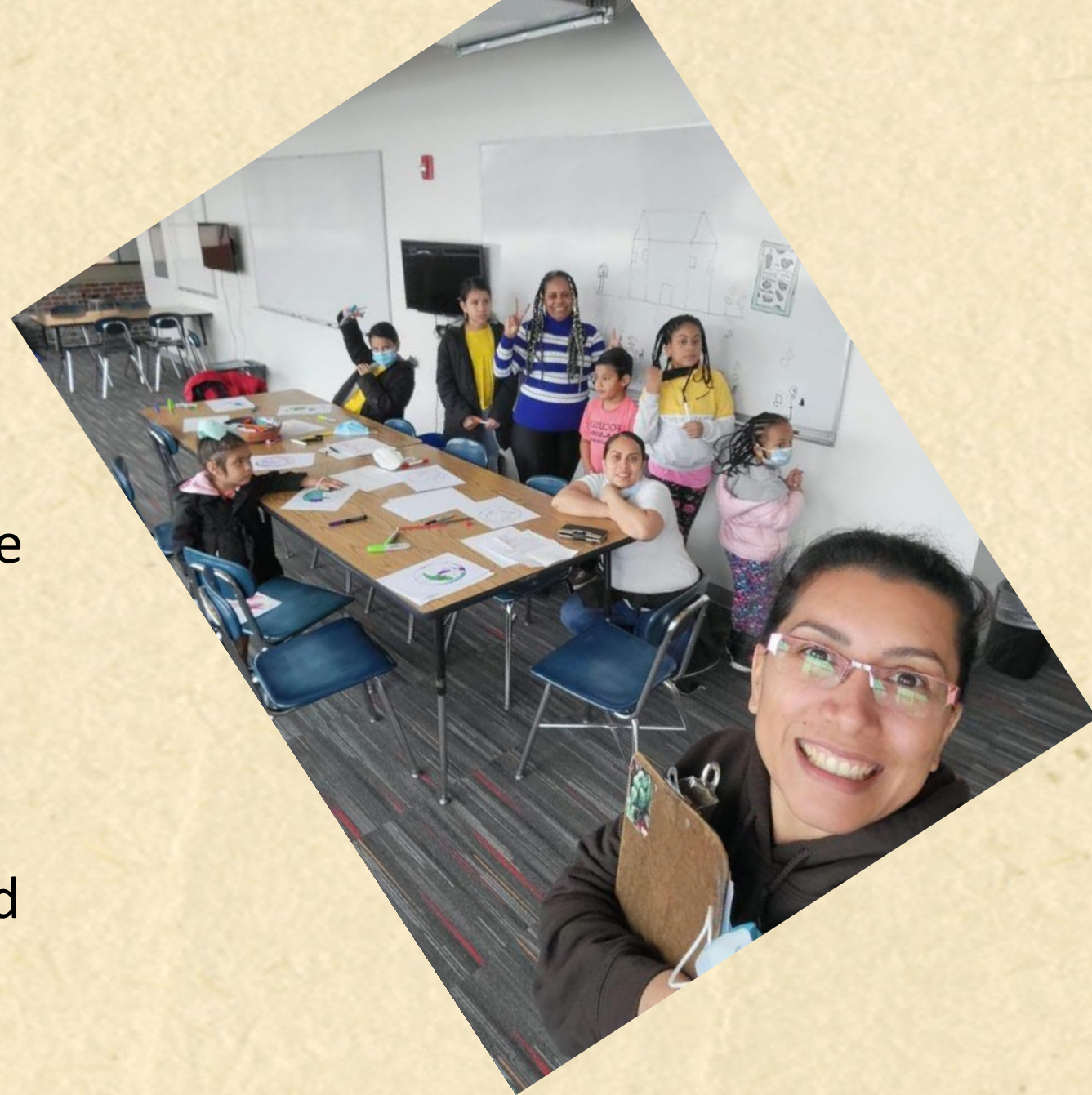
- \$25 an hour stipends
- Payment system needs to be explained clearly!
- Choice between Visa Gift Card and Check
- Sensitivity around documentation status, \$600 tax limit
- Make sure everyone has all the info needed to make their decision!



		1025
DATE _____		
PAY TO THE ORDER OF _____	\$ _____	
		DOLLARS  Security Features Included. Details on Back.
MEMO _____		
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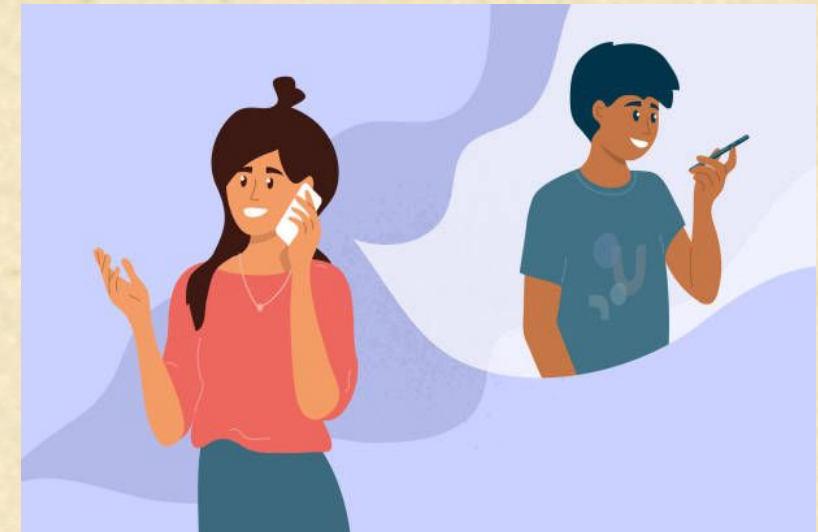
Childcare

- In-person meetings require childcare!
- We put out a call to former NV participants and family members the week prior to every session
- Childcare is compensated at \$25 an hour, through gift card or check stipend system
- Bring art supplies, games, water, and snacks!



Communication

- **WhatsApp, phone calls, and texts are the best way to communicate information to participants**
- **Bilingual paper flyers handed out at in-person events with information about events/opportunities**



Residents/WRWC – Relationship with Environment



Re-establishing living relationships with the environment that have been disrupted because of migration people chose in hopes of a better life

Next Level Programming – Climate Combat Champions/Campeones

- **Develop Climate Mitigation Understanding**
- **Frontline Resident Co-Governance in Siting and Designing Projects to Combat Climate Issues**

Campeones de Combate Climático

Mark Pereira
WRWC Civil Engineer
Presents Overview of
Restoration/Resilience
Projects

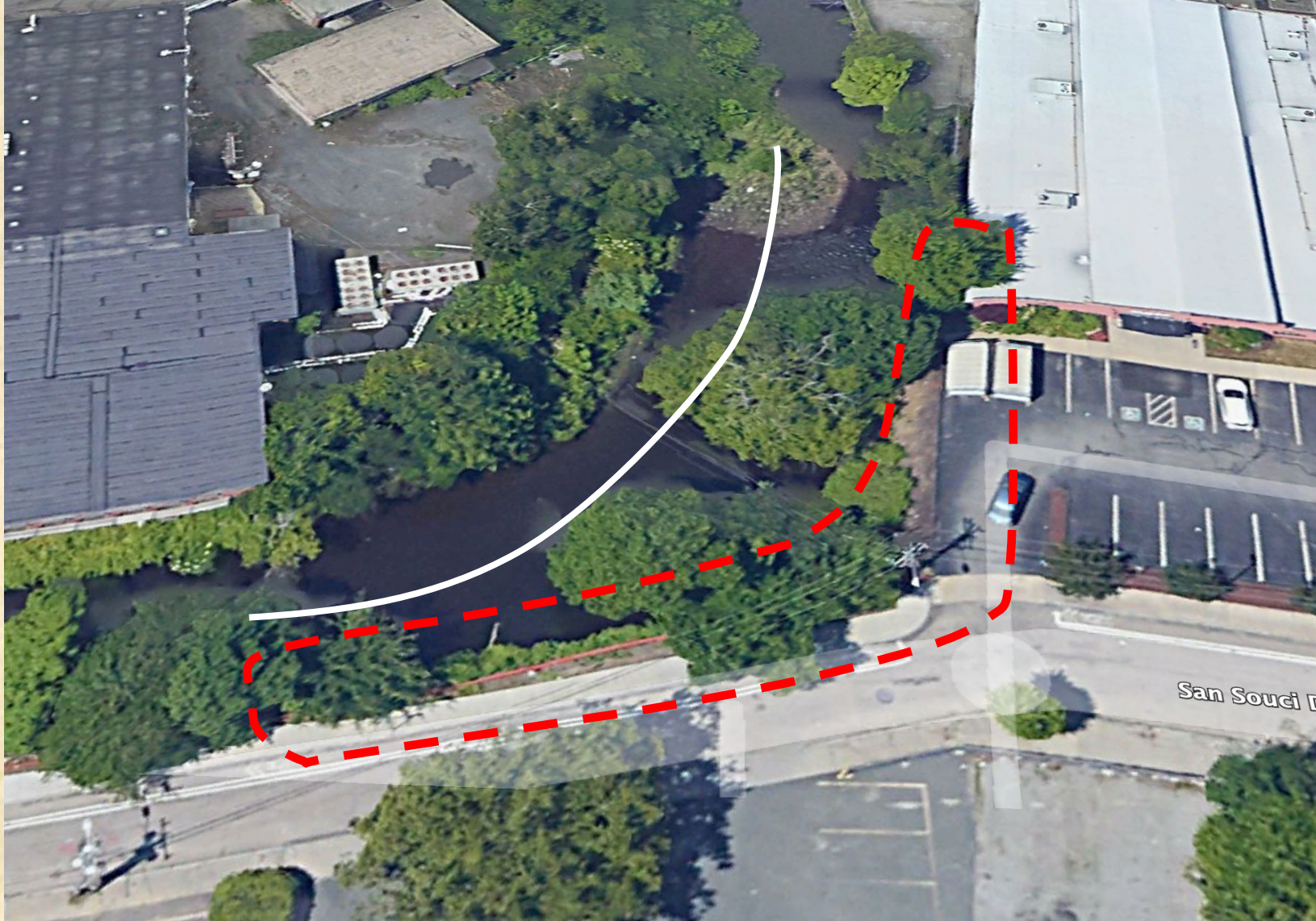
March 8, 2023 Start



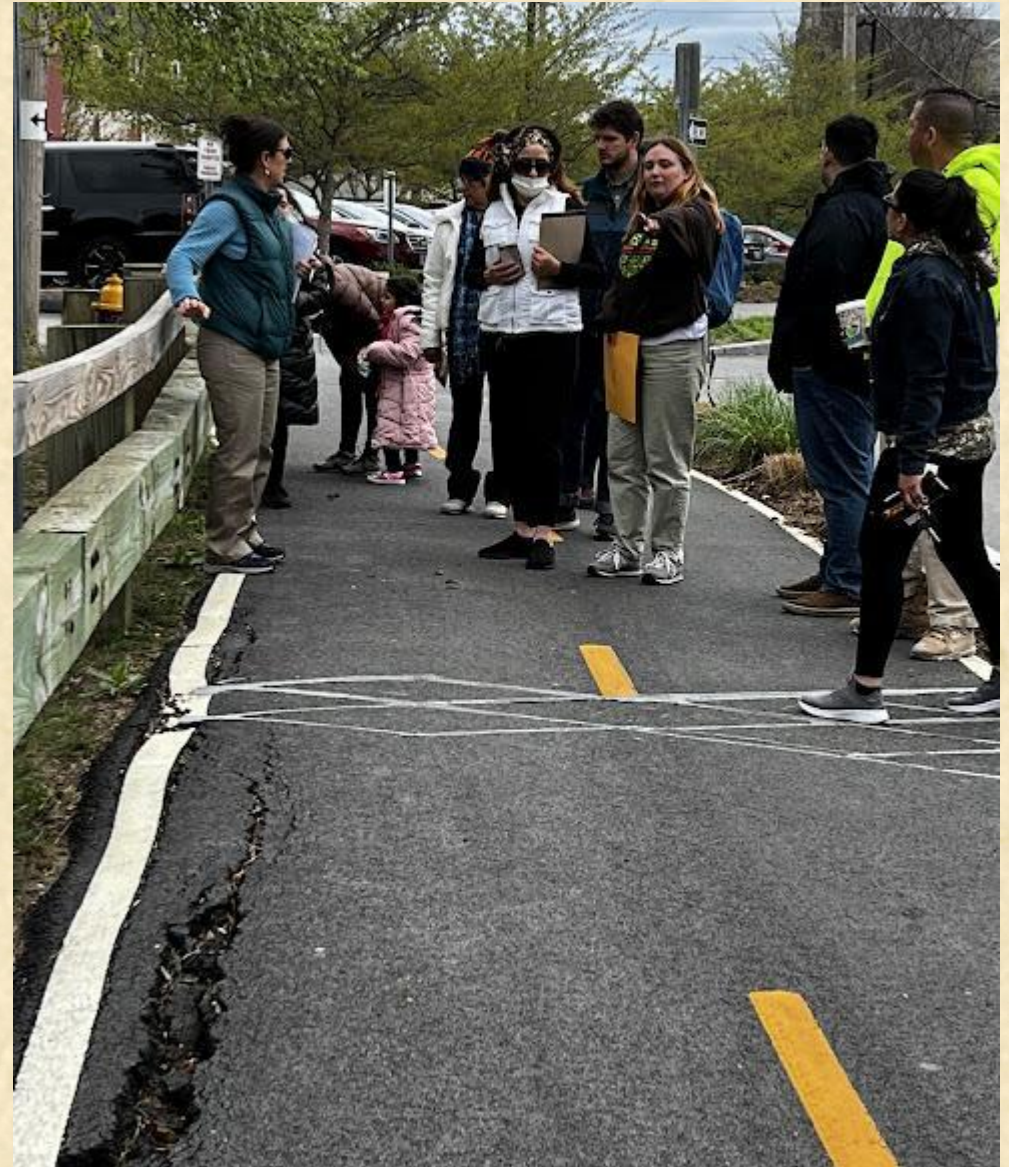
San Souci Drive -Campeones Field Visit Completed Project



San Souci Drive
Providence, RI



Kickoff Meeting Streambank Restoration Project





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THANK YOU

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