



Ciudad de Historias/City of Stories

For immediate release

22 March 2022

<http://www.holyokelibrary.org/historycityofstories.asp>

The Holyoke History Room of the Holyoke Public Library has received a \$15,600 grant from the Expand Mass Stories initiative of Mass Humanities, with funding made possible by the Mass Cultural Council. It is one of 22 organizations across the state to receive a grant under the new program, which supports projects aimed at creating more inclusive histories of the people and ideas that shape the Commonwealth.

The History Room will use the grant to re-design and expand a set of virtual walking tours that it piloted during the pandemic to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Holyoke Public Library. The new set of tours, entitled *Ciudad de Historias/City of Stories*, aims to combine traditional features of a virtual walking tour—capsule histories of selected historic buildings—with stories from residents of the three selected neighborhoods: The Flats, South Holyoke, and Downtown/Churchill. Each neighborhood walk will feature sites significant in Holyoke’s early history alongside sites and stories related to the local Puerto Rican diaspora. Project Coordinator Alex Santiago, who relocated to Holyoke after Hurricane Maria and became the first student to graduate from HCC’s Latinx Studies program, will be gathering some of these stories and translating text. She is particularly interested in stories of everyday life and community life in Holyoke. Anyone interested in finding out more about participating should use the email or contact form listed below.

The project will also draw on the Library’s historical collections for images, news items, and family history materials collected during the History Room’s *Nuestros Senderos* project. The final tours will be viewable on mobile devices and will contain still images, bilingual text, audio, and video. A supplementary grant from Holyoke’s Local Cultural Council will provide for QR code signage for the tours.

Those who express interest in getting involved will be invited to a spring workshop at the Holyoke Public Library on community history and story-sharing led by scholar-activist Diana Sierra Becerra.



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The History Room is collaborating with Holyoke Media for technical support and with Nueva Esperanza, which also received a MassHumanities grant to further develop its *El Corazón/Heart of Holyoke* walking tours.

The *Ciudad de Historias/City of Stories* tours will begin to roll out in the fall of 2022. Anyone interested in participating or finding out more should use the interest form at:

<http://www.holyokelibrary.org/historycityofstories.asp>

Or call Alex Santiago or Eileen Crosby at the Holyoke History Room (413) 420-8107

Or email ciudadhistorias@holyokelibrary.org

Follow the project's progress on Instagram @**ciudadhistoriasholyoke**