



Michigan Humanities Council

Bridging Communities and Ideas

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - November 21, 2005

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\$90,500 AWARDED FOR HUMANITIES PROJECTS

Award Recipients Include Grand Rapids Museum, Grand Traverse Heritage Center, MSU Press, Library of Michigan Foundation, Michigan 4-H Foundation

(LANSING)-----The Michigan Humanities Council (MHC) announces it has awarded five grants totaling \$90,500, as part of the Council's *We the People* grant program. The program is designed to fund projects that recognize significant events and themes in American history and culture that were grounded in Michigan. The organizations awarded grants include three based in the Lansing area -- the Michigan State University Press, the Library of Michigan Foundation, and the Michigan 4-H Foundation -- as well as the Public Museum of Grand Rapids and the Grand Traverse Heritage Center in Traverse City.

"These programs are all excellent public humanities programs," stated Jan Fedewa, executive director of the Michigan Humanities Council. "The Michigan Humanities Council is pleased to fund these programs which will encourage community dialogue about ethnicity, history, and culture in Michigan communities."

We the People is a National Endowment for the Humanities initiative supporting projects that explore significant events and themes in our nation's history and asks these lessons be shared with all Americans. The Michigan Humanities Council (MHC) has developed its own *We the People* program to focus on historical and cultural programs with Michigan themes. Following are five projects funded through the *We the People* program:

The Michigan State University Press (East Lansing) has been awarded \$20,000 for "Discovering the Peoples of Michigan." MSU will collaborate with the Michigan Museums Association (MMA) to bring authors with various ethnic backgrounds to make presentations of their research and books in 10 museums across Michigan in 2006. Tentative locations being considered by the MMA to host presentations include: Bay County Historical Museum (Bay City), Besser Museum (Alpena), Clarke Library at Central Michigan University (Mt. Pleasant), Colonial Michilimackinac (Mackinac City), Ella Sharp Museum (Jackson), Kalamazoo Valley Museum (Kalamazoo), Marquette County Historical Museum (Marquette), Public Museum of Grand Rapids, Port Huron Museum, and the Rochester Hills Museum. Programs will begin in February 2006; a final selection of dates, times and locations will be announced at a later date on the Michigan Humanities Council website, www.michiganhumanities.org.

The Library of Michigan Foundation (Lansing) has been awarded \$27,000 for the 2006 Michigan Notable Books Program. The program builds on the successful 2005 Michigan Notable Books Program with a focus on 20 books by Michigan authors with an official launch of "A Night of Notables" on May 6, 2006, at the State Library. Author discussions, readings, book signings, and a statewide road tour to 48 libraries will coincide with various festivals and events across the state.

The Michigan 4-H Foundation (East Lansing) has been awarded \$11,600 for "Telling Our Story: A Model for Youth Engagement & Skill Building in Community Organizations." This project will provide materials, training, and mentoring for community-based organizations to help record and tell their own histories, strengthen youth engagement in their organizations, and build youth skills in leadership, historical research, communication, multi-media technology, and community service. The project will involve 50 youth and adults in a "Telling Our Story" workshop in spring 2006. Eight multi-generational and community-based organizations will be recruited for the project.

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The Grand Traverse Heritage Center (Traverse City) has been awarded \$11,900 to produce “Summer Stock Theater and the Cherry County Playhouse.” The primary goal of the project is to educate the public about the history of summer stock theaters and in particular the Cherry County Playhouse and Northern Michigan theatres. The project will include a temporary exhibit to open on May 15, 2006, a youth theater mini-camp directed by Traverse City Children’s Theater, a lecture on the history of the Summer Stock Theater, and weekend performances by Riverside Shakespeare at the Heritage Center.

The Public Museum of Grand Rapids has been awarded \$20,000 for “We the People... of Grand Rapids.” The project will include a year-long series of public programs about Grand Rapids ethnic history, including a book discussion and public forum, a participatory poetry reading workshop by ethnic community members, creating Cultural Immersion kits consisting of ethnic clothing and artifacts, and ethnic programming coordinated with the Grand Rapids Area Council for the Humanities, Grand Rapids Chamber of Commerce, Grand Rapids Sister Cities Commission, and higher education scholars. The events will be highlighted by a major multicultural event in fall 2006, the “Grand Rapids Cultural Kaleidoscope: A Globe Trotting Experience.” This project builds on a previous MHC-funded project, “Newcomers: The People of this Place” in which K-12 curricular materials were developed to help learn about the personal struggles, journeys, and accomplishments of the migrants and immigrants who settled in Western Michigan.

The Michigan Humanities Council, founded in 1974, is the state’s independent, non-profit affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities. For additional information on the Michigan Humanities Council, please visit: www.michiganhumanities.org or call 517-372-7770.

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