

## **Guest Teacher Judy Dow Visits With HMS**

Seeing our own biases can be a difficult and uncomfortable experience. When talking about biases we mean beliefs, ideologies, social patterns, and social structures that have been directly or indirectly institutionalized as part of who “we” are and how we behave in society.

The construction of individuals in society has long been determined by institutions which have developed laws to maintain order and create a uniform historical narrative. These laws have been socially constructed under patriarchal and racist ideas that have perpetuated inhumane acts of violence and have desensitized our capacities for reflecting on the imbalances of social dynamics. Learning about our biases and how they operate in our social environment is the first step that will lead us to the construction of a much more self-aware and compassionate community.

At Hilltop Montessori School, one of the ways we are working to understand and reflect on our biases is by deconstructing racist and colonial narratives of history. To support this, we are furthering our important connection with Judy Dow, an Abenaki indigenous woman, storyteller, artist, teacher, and scholar. She has been working with our Middle School students for a few years. We are thrilled to be able to further her engagement with us by having her also work with our Lower and Upper Elementary students and teachers. She has wonderful things planned, and has sent ahead artifacts and supplies to facilitate Zoom meetings with the programs. This will be an opportunity for us to deepen our accounts from the voices of indigenous peoples.

Judy's schedule is to meet with:

- Lower Elementary
  - Wednesday, November 4th
- Upper Elementary
  - Wednesday, October, 28th and Wednesday, November 11th
- Middle School
  - Wednesday, November 18th

(All students may want to be sure to attend in-person on these Wednesdays, despite the ½ day)

I would like to share with you an article [Deconstructing the Myths of “The First Thanksgiving”](#) that Judy has kindly shared with us. Teachers and administrators have been reading it as part of our equity, justice, and inclusion bi-weekly meetings. It has been an interesting reframing of the traditional Thanksgiving story for many of our staff.

Yupaichani / Gracias / Thank you!

Marco Yunga Tacuri