

Uncovering Stories and Traditions at John Hope Settlement House

By Reza Corinne Clifton

Starting in the year 2020, John Hope Settlement House will be due, by some accounts, to begin celebrating 100 years of existence and service. That is 100 years of visioning and implementing that was begun by African Americans – here in Providence, Rhode Island. It is 100 years of partnerships and perseverance and 100 years of individual and collective stories. How do we uncover the stories, and what is the power in knowing them? We don't know until they are told, but I am here to dig them out and to document the next 100.

I've been looking at this side of history for almost half my life, first as a curious adolescent who read about the Civil Rights movement for recreation, and later as a college student who researched about, wrote on and eventually earned a degree in African and African American Studies from the University of Rhode Island. As a working adult, I've stayed true to the process and habit of finding and amplifying the voices of people and communities who are generally underrepresented in traditional historical accounts or missing from conversations defining and enumerating leaders. I am excited to now do this with John Hope Settlement House.

For me, working as the Media and Communications Coordinator at John Hope will be much more than a public relations job. In fact, I will be more akin to a storyteller than anything else – in search of and distributing the truths and traditions of community. My intentions are to uncover and share the tales of unity, service, and enlightenment that are buried in John Hope's past, present in today's work, and already promised to the families they serve tomorrow. See some of these stories on the John Hope Settlement Blog at www.johnhopesettlement.wordpress.com.

Reza Corinne Clifton joined John Hope Settlement House in May 2010 as the Media and Communications Coordinator/Consultant for the agency. Clifton is an award-winning writer and producer who has been recognized for multimedia projects that appear on her flagship blog, RezaRitesRi.com. She has also been highlighted for work as health editor of a regional women's magazine, and for leadership as a young professional and community organizer in Providence, Rhode Island.

Clifton is the co-founder and editor of UrbanHealthWatch.net, a blog managed by the Urban League of Rhode Island and funded by the RI Department of Health and the CDC. Clifton is also a public speaker and trainer who has presented nationally and locally on the topics of cultural trends in the African Diaspora and global community, health disparities and health equity, new media trends and techniques, and diversity in the media

Clifton is also a music DJ and producer with WRIU, 90.3 FM, a community- and student-run radio station based out of the University of Rhode Island, and a blogger who covers diversity, music, travel, health and women – on VenusSings.com, IsisStorm.com, and RIFuture.org. To reach Clifton at John Hope, email communications@johnhope.org. To learn more about her, visit RezaRitesRi.com.