Seeking Collaboration with Indigenous Sky and Earth Knowledge Experts

Background: The Rochester Museum & Science Center is excited to collaborate with a Native American-led team on a new exhibit project, *Same Sky, Varied Views*. Through this project, we seek to honor Indigenous astronomical heritage in ways appropriate, meaningful, and useful to communities of origin. The all-Indigenous team of content experts and designers will work with technical support from the RMSC project management, collections, and exhibit design and fabrication staff to develop the new exhibit consisting of seven small exhibit cases within the RMSC Strasenburgh Planetarium lobby in Rochester, NY. Two Indigenous Sky and Earth Knowledge Expert consultants will join designer Mindy Magyar (Mi'kmaq descent) and content specialist Jamie Jacobs (Tonawanda Seneca Nation, Turtle Clan) on the project team. Working towards decolonization, the RMSC staff is committed to building mutually beneficial relationships and bringing forth authentic Indigenous voices in this project. To do that, we will share authority for the exhibit with Indigenous partners and make decisions on a consensus basis; listen to and enact changes based on feedback; honor Indigenous standards for sharing (and not sharing) information; credit Indigenous partners for their intellectual property and the wisdom and knowledge of their cultural communities; and compensate Indigenous partners for their time and expertise at a level that they feel is just and equitable.

General exhibit description: *Same Sky, Varied Views* will explore the universal endeavor of sky watching with unique cultural perspectives that highlight its significance for life. A series of multimedia presentations will feature distinct approaches—from the Eastern Woodlands to the shores of the Hawaiian Islands and the Alaskan north—to observing and understanding the natural sky. Developed in collaboration with Indigenous Sky and Earth Knowledge Experts, the exhibit will draw connections between the sky and our lives. Using objects and artwork from the Museum’s collections, Native American scientists, artists, and storytellers will teach visitors about the links between representations of the sky, Indigenous technologies and ecological knowledge, and cosmologies specific to their heritage.

Scope of work and timeline: Each Indigenous Sky and Earth Knowledge Expert consultant will virtually attend team planning meetings, advise on overarching exhibition concepts, and develop content for two small exhibit cases. They will collaborate with team members to select objects for display, create exhibit scripts, and identify other sky watchers, storytellers, and artists who may be interested in participating in the project as needed. The final exhibit presentation is anticipated to include object displays and/or videographic presentations as determined by the Indigenous team working with support from the RMSC team. The expectation is that most of the content development will occur between August 2021-Dec 2021, with final exhibit fabrication and installation occurring in the first quarter of 2022. The project
rate is $5000 to complete project deliverables between August 2021 – January 2022. We anticipate the project will take up to but no more than 50 hours to complete. The number of hours required for the project and specific deliverables can be negotiated as part of the contract process to ensure fair compensation. Project kick-off is anticipated to occur during the week of August 2, 2021.

To apply: Please submit the following to Kathryn Murano Santos, Senior Director of Collections & Exhibitions, at kmurano@rmsc.org by July 30, 2021.
- Resume, CV, or summary of relevant experience
- Brief statement describing your interest in Indigenous astronomical knowledge and/or this project

Questions about the exhibit or role can also be directed to:

Kathryn Murano Santos
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585.697.1929 (work) or 585.739.8987 (cell)