



**Suffolk Center on the
Holocaust, Diversity and
Human Understanding, Inc.**

Media Release

**For Immediate Release
Contact: Steven Schrier 631-451-4700**

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**CHDHU UNVEILS “SLAVERY TO FREEDOM” EXHIBIT WITH
“SLAVERY ON LONG ISLAND” PROGRAM**

“A broad discussion on the lasting impact of Slavery on Long Island and the nation is long overdue,” according to Steve Schrier, Executive Director of, the Suffolk Center on the Holocaust, Diversity & Human Understanding, Inc. (CHDHU). The organization’s Center and Exhibition Gallery, which is currently based in the Huntington Library on the Selden Campus of Suffolk County Community College, has secured a collection that will provide Long Islanders the opportunity to enhance their understanding on the Transatlantic Slave Trade, Slavery on Long Island, the abolitionist movement and the Underground Railroad. Schrier said, “Even with legislation mandating the teaching of slavery in NYS’s elementary schools, a curriculum has yet to be implemented and the topic remains largely a “hidden history””. CHDHU’s “From Slavery to Freedom Exhibit” and program use a collection of original artifacts, books, documents, slave narratives, legal documents, photographs, films and newspaper articles to shed light on the subject and encourage additional research and study. The Collection was donated by SCCC alumnus Susan McGrath and her husband Michael, Jacqueline and Andrew Liput, donors also of the CHDHU’s Holocaust Collection, Dr. M. Vicki Wacksman, Chairperson of CHDHU Board of Directors and her husband, Sheldon, and Giving Something Back on LI, Inc.

The inaugural showing of the Collection will take place at 7 pm on February 27th in the Captree Commons Building on the Grant Campus of Suffolk Community College in Brentwood. The Exhibit will include a Community Reception and program celebrating Black History Month. The Program will feature a keynote address by Carl Westmoreland, the curator of the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center in Cincinnati, and a performance of spirituals by Melodee Savage with musical director Steve Salerno. Congressman Tim Bishop will also make a presentation

An educational program focusing on “Slavery on Long Island” will be offered on February 28th, 9:30 A.M. - 1:30 P.M. in the Sagtikos Building at the SCCC campus in Brentwood. The program will feature a commentary by Carl Westmoreland and a panel discussion on “Slavery on Long Island.” The panel will include Dorothy Reed, Assistant Professor of Journalism at Long Island University, Dr. Floris Cash, Chair of the Department of Africana Studies, Stony Brook University, Kathleen Velsor, Director of the Underground Railroad Teaching Partnership, SUNY Old Westbury, and John Staudt, Department of History, Hofstra University and Executive Director of the Theodore Roosevelt Association. The

program will also include excerpts from the film, “Unchained Memories,” a performance of spirituals by Melodee Savage, and dramatic readings of slave poetry by Renee Joshua Porter.

Commenting on the goals and objectives of the Exhibit and program, Dr. M. Vicki Wacksman, chairperson of CHDHU, said the opening of “The ‘From Slavery to Freedom’ Exhibit is an historic event in Suffolk County and the Exhibit is destined to become a significant resource for the community and educators. In addition to its historical significance, the exhibit and materials provide a timely reminder that the affects of slavery linger in our society and we must be vigilant in our efforts to eradicate all behavior that deprives individuals of their essential humanity.”