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New exhibits celebrate modern-day Naperville

NAPERVILLE, IL — Two new exhibits debuting at Naper Settlement celebrate Naperville’s growing Asian-American communities. “ME=WE: A Community Portrait” and “Come As You Are” highlight the personal objects, traditions, and histories of today’s Napervillians.

The exhibits turn a page for Naper Settlement, launching the museum directly into the 21st century as it collects and interprets Naperville’s history through present day. “Asian-American communities are the fastest growing demographic in our area. This is an opportunity to collect, interpret, and exhibit what has been, for us, a previously untold story,” said Lance Tawzer, director of innovation and experience at Naper Settlement. Over the course of a year and a half, museum staff worked with steering committees and community members to collect oral histories, identify places of significance and objects of importance

A collaboration with award-winning photographer and author Wing Young Huie, “Me=We” features seventeen portraiture subjects depicted throughout the City and with objects of personal significance. Portions of the exhibit will be placed throughout the 13-acre grounds for visitors to explore. The exhibit will also feature a short-form “making of” documentary. “Me=We” is funded by the National Endowment for the Arts.

A deeply personal look at the rich life of Naperville’s Asian Community, “Come As You Are” celebrates the city’s 20th and 21st century Chinese, Japanese, and Indian residents. Featuring oral histories, artifacts, and personal narratives from local residents, the exhibit is funded by the National Endowment of Humanities. Many of the objects on exhibit, such as a rice cooker, an auto rickshaw from India, clothing, books, and music will become part of the museum’s permanent collection.

“Everyone is really excited to be on board. It was a privilege for us to work together to tell these important stories. I like to think of Naper Settlement as the vessel through which personal stories are captured and shared. We are only at the beginning of collecting and interpreting contemporary Naperville history. We all have so much to look forward to!” added Donna Sack, vice president of community engagement and audience.

Both exhibits open May 24 and run through October 31. Naperville residents, members, and children under 4 receive free admission.

About Naper Settlement

Naper Settlement is a nationally accredited, award-winning outdoor museum set on 13 magnificent acres in the heart of Naperville. Located 30 miles from Chicago, the museum is home to 21 historical structures dating back as early as the 1830s. Featuring exhibitions, special events, educational programming and more, Naper Settlement is where history comes to play and the community comes to connect. For more information, visit www.napersettlement.org or call (630) 420-6010.