



*Historic*  
**SOTTERLEY**  
CIRCA 1703

Fall/Winter 2021 Sotterley Family Newsletter

## The Long View

As the end of the year is always a time for reflection, and while recognizing the many challenges, we also know how fortunate we have been and we count our many blessings. This has never been more the case for Sotterley, and at a time when the ongoing pandemic continues to affect Sotterley and the world around us, we still have managed to make great strides in our mission. This has only been possible because of YOU – our incredible members, volunteers, and supporters.

We remain committed to service to our community and to being an agent for positive change. This has been demonstrated over the past year in so many ways: the ever-increasing participation in our incredible programming where people form a better understanding of our shared past and our world today; 20,000 pounds of produce donated through our Growing for Good; school children returning to the site to experience exceptional field trips; and our ever-expanding Descendants' Project.

I look forward to the year ahead, and am excited about the programming our staff has worked so hard to plan. Although we have hurdles yet to overcome as we seek the funding needed to continue to preserve the site and carry out our mission, because of you – our dedicated supporters - we will continue the forward motion you have allowed us to achieve. This National Historic Landmark and UNESCO Site of Memory is not only irreplaceable, but has a critically important role in our community, state, and nation. With your generous dedication and support, we will continue to be a force for good together.

On behalf of the Board and staff, I wish each and every one of you a wonderful and peaceful holiday season and thank you from the bottom of my heart.

Jan Briscoe  
President, Board of Trustees



## Sotterley Receives Leadership Award

We are honored to announce that Historic Sotterley has been awarded the 2021 Free Press Prize for Leadership by Underground Railroad Free Press for our Common Ground Initiative and our Descendant's Project.

It means so much that we have been recognized as leaders for the work we have accomplished together in recent years. We remain dedicated to our work: bringing together our community and our descendants to provide education and resources that can foster conversations among us, promote healing, and effect social change. Thank you to Underground Railroad Free Press for recognizing our efforts.



Underground Railroad Free Press

# Preserving our Stories & Education without Boundaries



## Sotterley Partnerships with Purpose

In October 2021, Sotterley descendants, Gwen Bankins, Angela Wilson, Donald Barber, Janice Briscoe, Gina Gilliam, and Elizabeth Cropp, and staff member, Jeanne Pirtle, participated in The Slave Dwelling Conference: Changing the Narrative. The Slave Dwelling Project was approached by the Howard County Lynching and Reconciliation, Inc., dedicated to uncovering and telling the stories of those who were victims of the violence. They requested a public viewing and discussion of the session, The Peaceful Transfer of Power: Understanding and Overcoming Resistance to Inclusive Perspectives in History. This event took place on December 9, 2021. To request a public viewing, contact our partners at The Slave Dwelling Project.

Sotterley Descendants Gwen Bankins and Angela Wilson also took an active role in the recent Commemorative to Enslaved Peoples of Southern Maryland, The Sacred Journey, Re-making Our Lives Anew, at St. Mary's College of Maryland, on November 13, 2021. Both descendants were on the Panel of Remembrance and Relevance and presented their thoughts to the audience. The presentation was followed by a Procession of Dignity, that traveled throughout the campus to the Commemorative site and to the water's edge. As a UNESCO Slave Route Site of Memory, Sotterley joins our friends and partners at St. Mary's College of Maryland to continue the important work of research and remembrance.



## Students Return to Sotterley

After a year and half of eerie silence, the site started showing signs of what life was like pre-pandemic as school groups started to return. Starting in summer, homeschool groups from across Maryland visited. By late September, the St. Mary's County ELMS environmental programming was in full swing, bringing with it groups of 2nd and 5th graders to our site. The sounds of children talking and laughing as they raced through the gardens in search of butterflies and bees were back. It brought life and energy back to the site. The education team didn't spend the pandemic filled with despair. We used the time to engage our local public schools, private schools, and homeschool co-ops letting them know that we are a resource and we developed virtual content including virtual field trips. In mid-October we were excited to host one of our largest public school field trips to date when the entire 5th grade class from Lexington Park Elementary School came to Historic Sotterley for a day of hands-on learning. They completed the Slavery to Freedom program plus phase 1 of their science project, which focused on testing the salinity of the creek water. Students, teachers, and chaperones listened to Sotterley board member, Gwen Bankins, share her family's history and her journey to becoming involved with the site. In addition to the ed team, staff members also came out and spent the day sharing their knowledge of Sotterley's history with students. It was an amazing experience. When spring returns, we anticipate having more school groups join us.





## Maryland Farm and Harvest Showcases Sotterley

This fall Maryland Public Television to film a segment for their show Maryland Farm and Harvest. The piece will feature our farm and our Growing for Good program, but it will also address how Historic Sotterley honestly interprets our shared past and our work with our incredible Descendants.

Mark your calendars for January 18th when the segment will air! Don't worry if you miss the premiere, however, because once the segment has aired it will be made available to watch online and share.



## John O'Rourke Receives Preservation Maryland Award

John O'Rourke served as Sotterley's Restoration Manager for over two decades and was the project manager for many of our important restoration efforts over the years – most recently that of the Red Room and Hallway in the Manor House. This fall John was awarded the Best of Maryland Artisan Award by Preservation Maryland for his work not only at Historic Sotterley, but his many years of dedication to preserving our history throughout the state.

## Looking Ahead with Anticipation!

Just as we are thankful for the 2021 programs and events we were able to host and participate in, we are very excited to be finalizing our plans for 2022 – it's going to be an exciting year!

Our commitment to our community will continue in many ways. We will host more Airport Farmers Markets held at the St Mary's County Airport which showcases local vendors. The 9th year for our Growing for Good program will kick off with our Potato Planting Day in March, and we will continue growing a variety of produce for donation to our local food bank and food pantries. Shrieks of delight and wonderment will be heard in the spring and fall when school children return to Sotterley to explore our history and natural environment, and our education team has plans to provide new virtual resources to teachers and students. Summer family fun is on the horizon with Family Friendly Fridays and Bug-A-Palooza.

We know how much the community has loved our free Common Ground and Speaker Series events, and in 2022 we will be rebranding these events under one umbrella. Look for Sotterley Presents: "People and Perspectives" to be held on Wednesday evenings throughout the year. We already have great presenters lined up such as Joe McGill and Chris Haley! We also have a Common Ground symposium scheduled for April, and an in-person UNESCO Day of Remembrance highlighting a special project (TBA!) in August. Add to the mix great events such as our Gala, Ghosts and NovemBEER. And of course, we are looking forward to opening for tours in May where we can share Sotterley's history and stories.

# Honor Roll of Donors

## The Heartbeat of Sotterley - Our Incredible Supporters

This list embodies the heartbeat of Sotterley: You! We know that there are many wonderful causes and organizations that call for your support, but by making the decision to support Sotterley you provide the gift and the means to change lives, shape perspectives, and allows us to be a force of good in our community. We are honored that you consider Sotterley worthy and significant.

*This list represents individuals, businesses, organizations, and granting agencies who gave cash contributions, in-kind services and goods, and employee matching gifts in FY2021 (July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021.)*

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## And a Thank You to all of our volunteers!

Sotterley's volunteers continue to make special donations of their time - which for non-profits is just as valuable as the generous funds we receive. Thank you for the hours spent as docents, shopkeepers, gardeners, events crew, and farmers. You help our mission move forward throughout the year and we could not do it without you.





# Upcoming Events

This is just a sneak peek at the events we have coming in 2022! Please keep an eye on our website for more information and new additions. Mark your calendars!

## January

26th - *Sotterley Presents: People and Perspectives* - Joseph McGill

## February

9th - *Sotterley Presents: People and Perspectives* - UCAC Panel

24th - Agnes Kane Callum Day

## March

16th - *Sotterley Presents: People and Perspectives* - Chris Haley

19th - Potato Planting for Growing for Good

Date TBA - St. Mary's County History Day

## April

23rd & 24th - Garden Guild Plant Sale & Exchange

29th & 30th - Common Ground Symposium

## Event Rebranding

Our Wednesday night Common Ground and Speaker Series webinars were a huge hit this past year, and we're excited to bring you more in 2022, but this time under one broader umbrella. Starting in January, you can find our speaker events under "*Sotterley Presents: People and Perspectives*". This title will include Common Ground programming as well as broader topics that relate to our mission. Common Ground programming and projects are being sponsored in FY2022 with grants from Maryland Humanities and the Maryland Heritage Area Authority.



# Our Thanks to A Community That Cares

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## Thank you for Attending

So many of you attended our various fundraising events this year. These events are a blast, but they are also incredibly important for funding our mission each year. Thank you for joining us, and know that your support will allow us to continue our work in 2022 as we build a better community together!

