

# HIGH DESERT MUSEUM

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **High Desert Museum Joins Smithsonian's National Youth Summit on Teen Resistance to Systemic Racism**

*Central Oregon students invited to connect to discuss present-day issues*

**BEND, OREGON** — Central Oregon middle school students, high school students and educators are invited to participate in a virtual event to examine the impact of systemic racism. The event will begin with the National Youth Summit on Teen Resistance to Systemic Racism, an online outreach program organized by the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History in partnership with Smithsonian Affiliations, and will continue into a regional summit.

The virtual regional summit will allow teens to participate in breakout sessions to explore various issues. Each breakout group will be led by a facilitator who shares identity with the group. In addition, a panel of local youth activists will also share how they're engaging in social justice issues at the regional level.

The event is scheduled locally on Friday, October 2, from 10:00 am to 11:30 am PDT. Parents and caregivers may register their youth and teachers may register their classrooms for the webcast at [highdesertmuseum.org/youth-summit](https://highdesertmuseum.org/youth-summit).

The High Desert Museum is coordinating the summit regionally in partnership with Better Together, Central Oregon Community College, The Environmental Center, Planned Parenthood and Oregon State University-Cascades. The Museum is one of 15 Smithsonian Affiliate organizations nationwide hosting regional youth summits with local activists, scholars and youth.

The summit will provide historic context for the actions of 15-year-old Claudette Colvin, a Black student in Montgomery, Alabama, who in 1955 refused to give up her seat on a segregated bus and later testified in the legal case that ended segregated busing in her hometown. Digital platforms and facilitators will be provided for students to convene in a discussion about this history and to examine the power of today's teens.

“We're pleased to be able to bring this opportunity for connection and dialogue to the community,” said High Desert Museum Executive Director Dana Whitelaw, Ph.D. “As a Smithsonian Affiliate, the Museum is poised to bring national leaders in their fields to Central Oregon audiences. We aim for this to be a meaningful experience for local youth seeking to explore topics around social justice.”

The National Youth Summit will feature three talks and discussions with scholars, historians and activists. Beginning with an introduction by Anthea M. Hartig, the Elizabeth MacMillan director of the National Museum of American History, the schedule features a keynote address by Jeanne Theoharis, distinguished professor in political science at Brooklyn College of City University of New York, and a discussion with Smithsonian Secretary Lonnie G. Bunch III and Kimberly Boateng, Washington, D.C., area student leader, on the summit's key question: How can young Americans create a more equitable nation? Sara Mora, national immigrant rights activist, digital creator and organizer, will emcee the event.

Some 4,000 students nationwide are expected to participate in virtual discussions facilitated by their educators, the Smithsonian and Smithsonian Affiliate museums.

The National Youth Summit series was designed by the National Museum of American History to provide students with an opportunity to share their views and debate issues as part of a program that aligns with the National History Standards and Common Core Standards for Speaking and Listening. Since the program was launched in 2011, the National Youth Summit has engaged more than 65,000 live viewers and many more through the archived programs.

The National Youth Summit is made possible by the A. James and Alice B. Clark Foundation and the Patrick F. Taylor Foundation K-12 Learning Endowment and is part of a larger

Smithsonian initiative focused on civic engagement intended to help youth understand the past in order to make sense of the present and to shape a more informed future.

### **About the High Desert Museum:**

THE HIGH DESERT MUSEUM opened in Bend, Oregon in 1982. It brings together wildlife, cultures, art, history and the natural world to convey the wonder of North America's High Desert. The Museum uses indoor and outdoor exhibits, wildlife in natural habitats and living history demonstrations to help people discover and appreciate this diverse region. The Museum is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization accredited by the American Alliance of Museums, is a Smithsonian Affiliate, was a 2018 finalist for the National Medal for Museum and Library Services and is the 2019 recipient of the Western Museums Association's Charles Redd Award for Exhibition Excellence. [highdesertmuseum.org](http://highdesertmuseum.org)

### **About Smithsonian Affiliations**

Established in 1996, Smithsonian Affiliations is a national outreach program that develops long-term collaborative partnerships with museums, educational, and cultural organizations to enrich communities with Smithsonian resources. The long-term goal of Smithsonian Affiliations is to facilitate a two-way relationship among Affiliate organizations and the Smithsonian Institution to increase discovery and inspire lifelong learning in communities across America. More information about the Smithsonian Affiliations program and Affiliate activity is available at [www.affiliations.si.edu](http://www.affiliations.si.edu).

### **About the National Museum of American History**

The National Museum of American History empowers people to create a just and compassionate future by exploring, preserving and sharing the complexity of our past. As the nation's history museum, we challenge ourselves to become the country's most accessible, inclusive, relevant and sustainable public history institution. To fulfill that role, as outlined in our strategic plan, by 2030 the museum will serve an audience that reflects the full racial, class, gender, ethnic and geographic demographics of the United States. Explore the museum's website at [americanhistory.si.edu](http://americanhistory.si.edu). Follow the museum on Twitter and Instagram @amhistorymuseum and on Facebook at @americanhistory.

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