

# Food, history meet at 1st Indigenous Peoples Day

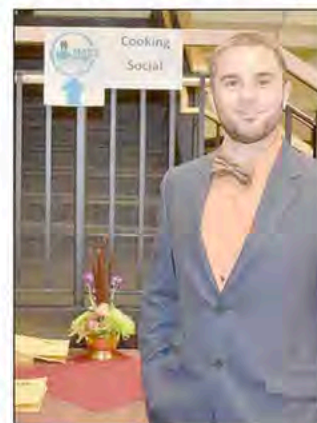
By Shelby Macri  
smacri@turley.com

The motto of the Greater Holyoke Council for Human Understanding is “Know your faith, live your faith, and recognize the faith of others.” They achieve their motto by hosting multiple events honoring other cultures and educating communities on those cultures.

One of those events was the first-ever indigenous people’s celebration in Holyoke, which was held last Thursday evening, Oct. 24.

The council has events throughout the year; starting in January to honor Martin Luther King Jr., then in April or May to honor survivors of the holocaust. Member Jeffery Anderson-Burgos recently joined the council in March and proposed the idea to have an event in the fall.

The reasoning to honor indigenous people for the new



Left, retired history professor George Ashley gave a talk about the pre-colonial Native Americans who lived in New England. Center, student Nicole Ortiz in front of her food station. Right, Council for Human Understanding member Jeffery Anderson-Burgos greets attendees at the Indigenous Peoples Day event on Oct. 24.

*Photos by Shelby Macri*

event was simple, Anderson-Burgos said: “There’s been a really wonderful push around the country to utilize the month of October to honor the contributions and the history of indigenous peoples around the country.”

He used this to inspire the celebration of indigenous people and emphasized that this event was separate from the celebration of Christopher Columbus.

Anderson-Burgos said “This is by no means a way to

replace Columbus Day, it’s a way to honor the culture and community of indigenous people.”

The last piece was to find a place to host the event. The

**See INDIGENOUS, page 11**

## **INDIGENOUS**, from page 1

council connected with Professor Warren Leigh at the HCC MGM Culinary Arts Institute.

Leigh and his students determined what foods to make and serve for the event.

They were able to come up with many different plates of food that are culturally diverse.

Leigh said, "When coming up with the ideas for the food, we incorporated things that are naturally grown here to represent cultures from somewhere else." Leigh and his students were able to rep-

resent the Polish community with pierogis and kielbasa, the French community with salmon croquette, and the Puerto Rican community with plantain French fries. They created many unique dishes that rightfully represented a culture, this aspect of the event brought people together to discuss the food in groups.

The council's president, Aaron Vega, said "When we thought of how to do this event and how to honor indigenous people in the community, we figured food was the best way to bring people together."

The featured speaker at the event was George Ashley, a retired professor of history and anthropology, who taught at

HCC for more than 35 years. He taught a survey about the Native American Indian peoples of North America, and a course about the native peoples of southern New England. Dr. Ashley presented a 500 year history of the regional indigenous communities that were prior to European settlement. He provided maps of the area that illustrated where the boundaries of the villages in New England approximately were at that time. Ashley went into detail about the history of indigenous people and expressed the importance of understanding how they lived at the time.

"What we know about them, we only know from archeology," Ashley

said. "And unfortunately archeology gives a very good idea about a few things, but not really the things we're most interested in. It's very hard to find out what people thought or what kind of family system they had. What their life was like."

Although we may not be able to find out that exact information, we have much more information on other aspects of the history of indigenous peoples. Ashley shared his knowledge on the history and said some of the best records from that time came from a man in the fur trade, who canoed up and down the Connecticut River and connected with the villages along it.