

## LOCAL

# 'A little noise:' Hundreds gather to experience Dartmouth powwow

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DARTMOUTH — Robert Petersrose from his kneeling position before a large piece of bark, leaning against a tree at Round the Bend Farm Saturday morning, to critique his work.

"WE STILL LIVE HERE," it read.

"This is so that people realize and they realize we have a future, too," Peters, a Mashpee Wampanoag, said. "You need to make a little noise to let people know."

That was what the organizers of the farm's first Wampanoag Experience Powwow hoped to accomplish.

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## Continuing presence

The powwow, to which native and non-native alike were invited, centered on the idea of their continued presence in the area.

"We are very fortunate in that we can still be here," Annawon Weeden, event coordinator and master of ceremonies, told the hundred or so already present in his opening remarks. "We can still eat our traditional food."

Several vendors selling indigenous art, foods, and other products were also present for the event.

The center of attention was the wetu on the property, which had a display of Wampanoag blankets and several pelts within.

"We had multiple places where we lived [historically]," Weeden said, adding that Wampanoag communities would live near the coast during summers and further inland in winters.

Olga Parker, a Sandwich resident and immigrant from the Dominican Republic, told *The Standard-Times* in Spanish that such events are spiritual for her.

"The only thing I can tell you is that I love these experiences to the point where I feel like I am one of them," Parker said. "I entered the wetu and I felt so relaxed, as if I belonged."

## Dartmouth High mascot

Though not at the center of conversation, the significance of holding a powwow in the same town where the Dartmouth High School Indian mascot recently survived a plebiscite was not lost on many attendees.

"There's been a lot of talk around the Indian logo in Dartmouth," Van Laarhoven said. "One of the things that came out of the deep — and sometimes beautiful — conversations around this and both sides agree, we need more education."

**Logo stays:** Dartmouth School Committee votes to keep controversial name, logo

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One of those who argued against the Dartmouth mascot at an April meeting, was Brad Lopes, a member of the Aquinnah Wampanoag, who attended the powwow.

"I'm excited to see this here," Lopes said. "It's an opportunity for us to come talk.

"[The debate] was hurtful for a lot of people," he continued. "But there's always an opportunity to heal."

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