

Street Sights

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RI Poor People's Campaign Delivers Demands to General Assembly Leadership



Poor People's Campaign press conference 2/20/2024. Rhode Island Poor People's Campaign delivered its demands to offices of the leadership of the Rhode Island General Assembly. The visits were part of the campaign's major statewide mobilization of poor and low-wage voters ahead of November's election. Photo: Steve Ahlquist

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Street Sights is the only newspaper and resource guide that serves as a forum for unhoused and formerly unhouse people, advocates, students, state officials and the general public to share accurate and honest information about issues related to homelessness. Our goal is to shed light on a subject not often addressed and to some degree ignored. We aim to provoke discussion and give a voice to voiceless people in our community. We provide a space free of judgement in which we recognize the dignity and worth of each of our sisters and brothers and in doing so empower the group as a whole. We started our paper in 2007 and with the pandemic we closed for 2 years. We have been back with a vengeance since January 2021.



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Street Sights serves as a forum for advocates, homeless, and formerly homeless people, students, state officials, and the general public to share accurate and honest information about issues relating to homelessness. Our goal is to shed light on a subject not often addressed and, to some degree, ignored.

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To submit any articles, photos, artwork, poetry, advertisements, or comments please contact us via Email: streetsights@gmail.com, Phone: 401-499-3596, or Standard Mail: Street Sights 162 Orms Street, Providence, RI 02908. **All Articles are due by the 20th of each month.**

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EDITOR'S NOTE:

Opinion articles represent the opinions of the people who submitted them. We welcome your opinion pieces (up to 300 words). We do not publish material we deem to be racist, sexist or classist. *Street Sights* reserves the right to edit material.

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Press release: The Rhode Island Poor People's Campaign refuses to accept poverty as the fourth leading cause of death in America. The campaign declared that poverty is a policy choice and that the death of 800 people on average in this country constitutes policy murder enacted federally and at state houses of this nation, as the Reverend Carl Jefferson stressed. The Rhode Island campaign, like those in 31 other states, emphasized that people's votes are their demands, demands for living wages and health care for all; voting and women's rights; environmental justice; and a just transition for workers in the war economy to sectors that contribute to the common good.

This Tuesday, the Rhode Island Poor People's Campaign delivered its demands to offices of the leadership of the Rhode Island General Assembly. The visits were part of the campaign's major statewide mobilization of poor and low-wage voters ahead of November's election.

To convey its analysis and agenda, the Rhode Island Poor People's Campaign has made several attempts to set up meetings with General Assembly leadership: House Speaker Joseph Shekarchi (Democrat, District 23, Warwick), House Minority Leader Michael Chipendale (Republican, District 40, Coventry, Foster Glocester), Senate President Dominick Ruggiero (Democrat, District 4, North Providence), and Senate Minority Leader Jessica de la Cruz (Republican, District 23, Burrillville, Glocester). Thus far, the campaign has not succeeded in scheduling any such meetings.

At the Rhode Island State House, impacted people shared how United States iniquities affect their lives. Noel Dandy of Woonsocket, a member of the Coordinating Committee of the Rhode Island Poor People's Campaign, recently was sent to the Rhode Island Psychiatric Hospital for evaluation of his competence in court. Dandy spent more than five months locked away in the hospital. His stay continued a full month after a mental health doctor declared him competent. Dandy summed up

his experience in a message in which he stated: "Poverty, inequality, and systemic racism speak loudly for our justice system. Judges have said 'some are guilty before trial.' It spreads in criminal and civil cases against people of color and the poor."

Organizers Tuesday stressed that it is immoral to accept poverty as the fourth leading cause of death in this country, where this is a policy choice. Already in 2020, in its Waking the Sleeping Giant report, the Poor People's Campaign laid out the facts that show that poor and low-wage people have the power to end policy murder and fundamentally change who represents their interests federally and at statehouses across this nation.

Diamond Madsen, another coordinating committee member, spoke about her ex-husband, Rodney Earl Callies. "He went back and forth between prison and the streets," said Madsen. "He had a tough life but fought tooth and nail to get clean. He tried to do right by his family and by his one daughter, who meant the world to him. He worked hard but still was homeless. And then, last year he got sick and broke his back twice. It turned out that he had stage-four lung cancer. He died in the company of his friends from Mathewson Street Church, which had served as his home."

"In God's eyes we are all wholly and equally loved," said the Reverend Tracey Griffin, Minister of the Community Prayer for the Rhode Island Council of Churches. "My prayer is that our legislators have clarity of conscience to act honestly and fairly, on behalf of ALL the people of Rhode Island independent of their economic status. The time to act is now!"

Members of the Poor People's Campaign: A National Call For Moral Revival participated across the country in simultaneous press conferences, where leaders explained that poor and low-wage voters participate in elections at lower rates not because they have no interest in politics, but because politics has no interest in them.

"The Poor People's Campaign is waking up the sleeping giant of low-wage voters who have been ignored for far too long," said the

Reverend Doctor William Barber II, national co-chair of the Poor People's Campaign and co-chair of the 2024 mobilization. "We declare today that poor and low-wage voters are coming together with religious leaders and moral advocates to say, 'our votes are demands.' We are not voting for personality; our votes are for policy. If candidates want our votes, then they must talk to the very voters they have been leaving behind,"

In 1965, at the end of the Selma to Montgomery March, the Reverend Doctor Martin Luther King, Jr. observed that the greatest fear of the Southern aristocracy was for masses of people to come together across racial lines and form a voting block that could fundamentally shift the economic architecture of this country. On Tuesday, organizers with the Poor People's Campaign vowed to persist in their focus on fusion, to create such a block, and to carry out the nation's urgent, unfinished, and long-overdue business.

Simultaneous press conferences and demand deliveries took place in Alabama, Arizona, California, the District of Columbia, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Maryland, Maine, Michigan, Missouri, Mississippi, Nebraska, North Carolina, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Vermont, Washington, Wisconsin, and West Virginia.

Partners of the Rhode Island Poor People's Campaign include East Bay Citizens for Peace, George Wiley Center, Just Peace Rhode Island, Rhode Island Interfaith Coalition to Reduce Poverty, Mathewson Street United Methodist Church, members of Providence Friends Meeting, No Endless War and Excessive Militarism (NEWEM), Pax Christi Rhode Island, Rhode Island Homeless Advocacy Project (RI-HAP), Rhode Island Housing Justice Organizing Committee, Rhode Island State Council of Churches, Sisters of Mercy Ecology, and the Sisters of Mercy Justice Team.



Steve Ahlquist is a progressive reporter based in Providence, RI

RI Transit Riders is Opposed to Moving the Hub to New Location

RI Transit Riders is opposed to moving the hub to the location that's rumored to have been selected: the so-called "Siberian hub" near Point Street and next to I-95. Here's our statement:



RI Transit Riders strongly opposes the proposed contract on the RIPTA Board's January 30 agenda to spend \$16.9 million on the initial design for a project built around a completely unnecessary new bus hub. When RIPTA is facing imminent service cuts, unable to pay enough to attract bus drivers, and expecting an even worse fiscal cliff in the next two years, it is financially irresponsible to undertake an expensive move to a new bus hub in a clearly worse location than the current one.

The proposed Preliminary Services Agreement, at \$16.9 million, will use almost all the remaining bond money that was approved in 2014 by voters, who had been told it would be used to fund "enhancements and renovations to mass transit hub infrastructure throughout the state..." We don't believe this project meets those standards as promised to voters. The proposal doesn't enhance RIPTA's infrastructure any more than it renovates Kennedy Plaza. These funds could instead be used as promised to improve mass transit; we can't afford to squander the money.

Although Kennedy Plaza has problems, they could be solved for far less cost than building a new hub. Providing enhanced security, better lighting, landscaping, traffic signalization and signage, and revitalizing the terminal building would be a relatively cheap improvement, much better than the current hub-relocation proposal.

In 2017 the City of Providence had a robust public process that resulted in a broad consensus on how to reduce the footprint of the bus hub while keeping it in Kennedy Plaza, making the Plaza a better public space. That plan was derailed by adjacent real estate owners who saw the state's central bus hub, with its riders who are often low-income or people of color, as a detriment to their property values.

They wanted to have the hub moved away somewhere at public expense, showing no concern for what the bus system needs. Since then, we have seen various badly-thought-out plans for relocating the hub which never take riders' needs seriously. And this contract is designed so that the optimum Kennedy Plaza location would not even be considered. It's no way to spend public money, and it seems to violate civil rights.

The proposed Agreement does not name a site for the hub, but state leaders have been pointing to a remote location on I-195 land near Clifford St. Almost no bus riders have their destinations near that site, and it's bad for bus routing too. No key routes, such as the Downtown Transit Corridor and R-Line, go by this site. Rerouting them will significantly slow trips and increase RIPTA's costs.

When Gov. McKee recently mentioned how bad it would be to put the hub out "in Siberia", he was, in a way, voicing what is wrong with the I-195 site he's supported.

The damage to taxpayers goes even further: this costly \$16.9 million design contract covers only a small fraction of what relocating the hub would actually cost overall, as has long been acknowledged. Should we spend more and more just to create an unwanted "Siberian" hub? It should be an unacceptable procedure to make such a major decision as moving the Kennedy Plaza hub, which has huge financial and operational implications, without consulting the public and those who actually use the bus.

A good transit system not only enables people to travel but also helps address pollution, congestion, climate emissions, road safety, and housing needs, as well as keeping more of our energy dollars within the state's economy. A safe, well-sited central bus hub, which Kennedy Plaza is, can help RIPTA live up to its potential to do all that. Surely we should not spend a lot of money to move the hub to an inconvenient location that could cripple an already struggling system for the foreseeable future.

Starting March 1, the Photo ID office in KP will be open M-W and F from 7:30 to noon, and from 1 to 3:30. Thursdays, RIPTA will be making Community Site Visits to other places throughout the state. The RIPTA board has approved an agreement with developers to begin planning a new transit hub for downtown Providence.

Operation First Step

An Innovative Shelter for People on the Road to Stable Housing

**By Irene Glasser, Ph.D. and Yune Jee Bang,
Environmental Studies Student, Brown University**

This past month, we had the pleasure of sitting down with Gabrielle Beaudoin, the Manager of Operation First Step of the House of Hope. Operation First Step is a shelter for individuals who have been homeless and need a safe place to live while searching for permanent housing.

Operation First Step consists of a 12-person men's shelter in Providence and a six-person women's shelter in North Providence. We spoke with Ms. Beaudoin at the Operation First Step men's shelter, which is located in a multi-family house in a quiet residential neighborhood.

The men live in two- or three-bedroom apartments within the house. Each apartment has individual bedrooms as well as a shared bathroom, kitchen, and living room. The guests of Operation First Step stay until they find permanent and affordable housing. Ms. Beaudoin's philosophy is to treat people with dignity and respect and she strives to create a safe place for residents.

A prerequisite of the program is that the prospective guest has at least two months of sobriety before entering. Since Operation First Step is not staffed 24 hours per day, each person is independent. They are usually working on gaining employment, gaining access to financial support programs, continuing their education, or addressing other barriers that have kept them from being stably housed.

Ryan Ward, a guest of Operation First Step, generously offered to share his story with us. One day, as Mr. Ward was sitting in the library where he spent many of his days while living in shelters and doubled up with friends, he met an outreach worker from Better Lives RI who listened to his story. The outreach worker thought that Operation First Step might be a good place for Mr. Ward to live until he found permanent housing, and Mr. Ward was soon accepted into the program. According to Mr. Ward, Operation First Step has saved his life. Mr. Ward also said that the sobriety requirement creates an environment which makes staying sober easier, since this is a commonly shared goal.

It has now been almost a year since Mr. Ward has been living at Operation First Step. He has embarked on a career of helping other people who are unhoused. Mr. Ward began by taking a six-week course in Peer Mentoring, taught by House

of Hope. He then interned at House of Hope's Shower to Empower program. Mr. Ward now has a full-time job, with good benefits, at another nonprofit organization that shelters and helps people experiencing homelessness. Mr. Ward says, "I feel that I was born to do this kind of work." His life experience makes him uniquely equipped to help people in similar situations, and he even has lasting connections which show others he is trustworthy.

When we asked Ms. Beaudoin about the challenges that Operation First Step faces, she said that the program lacks sufficient funding to make it the most robust program it could be. She also said that, if there was sufficient funding, there could be many more programs similar to Operation First Step throughout RI. Additionally, as the only full-time staffer, there is often more work to be done than she has time for.

A problem that many of the guests face is that they run out of the SNAP benefits by the middle of the month and have to depend on food donations to Operation First Step which consist mainly of canned goods. Operation First Step is currently creating educational resources with specialized advice on how to make the most nutritious and satisfying meals with the resources that are typically available. Another common problem is the lack of reliable transportation in order to get to work or interviews. The program would be helped if they had a van, which would also help with carrying groceries back from the supermarket.

Ms. Beaudoin estimates a 99% success rate of Operation First Step. She says that people who move onto permanent housing from the program stay continuously housed and do not return to homelessness. A key to the success of Operation First Step is that the guests are helped to apply to all of the housing in RI for which they might be eligible from "day one" of living at Operation First Step. Supporting residents in securing permanent housing is Ms. Beaudoin's major priority.

Another key to success is that Ms. Beaudoin continues to follow the progress of the guests who move onto their own housing and, to the extent that she can, offers on-going support.



*Professor Irene Glasser, Ph.D,
is a writer for Street Sights RI*

Journey to Redemption

Navigating the Path of Faith and Recovery

By James Logan

In the quietude of my evenings, as the sun dips below the horizon and the world around me settles into a soft, tranquil silence, I often find myself ensnared in a web of contemplation. These moments of solitude invite a profound introspection, a journey into the depths of my soul, where questions about my existence—my feelings, thoughts, and actions that echo with resounding intensity. This internal dialogue harks back to a transformative period in my life, a time when therapy offered me the keys to understanding the intricate dance between my inner world and outward behavior. A simple yet powerful mantra, “Catch it, check it, and change it” became a beacon of enlightenment illuminating the path to self-awareness and growth.

Reflecting on this journey evokes a profound connection with Apostle Paul’s candid discourse in Romans 7, “For I do not understand my own actions (I am baffled and bewildered by them). I do not practice what I want to do, but I am doing the very thing I hate (and yielding to my human nature, my worldliness—my sinful capacity) Where he articulates the quintessential human struggle. The battle between our desires and our actions, the dichotomy of our essence. This resonance is not merely a reflection but a testament to the universality of our shared experiences, a bridge across time and space, linking my story with those of the past.

Once, I harbored the belief that goodness in thought and deed was the pantheon of life’s purpose. Yet, the winding road of recovery unveiled a harsher truth. The seeds of downfall are often planted far from the scene of their blooming. This insight came not as a gentle whisper but as a tempest, uprooting my complacency and revealing the precariousness of my footing. The journey of self-discovery, I learned, is akin to navigating a dense forest, where the distinction between motion and progress blurs, and the path forward is obscured by the underbrush of past habits and shadows of doubt.

The narrative of my life took an unexpected detour when a reunion with an old friend spiraled into a confrontation with my dormant demons. This encounter, seemingly innocuous at the outset, unraveled the delicate fabric of my sobriety, leading me down a perilous path I had once vowed never to tread again. The zenith of this descent was marked by a harrowing incident, an overdose that left my friend teetering on the brink of eternity.

This moment, shrouded in despair served as a divine clarion call, a stark reminder of the fragility of life and the omnipresence of a higher power guiding me through the darkest hours.

The aftermath of this ordeal was a period of profound introspection and spiritual awakening. I perceived it as a divine intervention, a merciful redirection back to a path of righteousness and purpose. This experience, heartrending yet transformative, deepened my faith and reshaped my understanding of God’s providence. It was as though I had been wandering in the wilderness, blind to the direction of my journey, only to be led back to the promised land by an unseen hand.

Embracing this renewed faith, I likened my experience to that of the Israelites, whose journey through desolation and adversity was a testament to divine guidance and perseverance. This parallel not only illuminated my path but also instilled in me a sense of purpose, a conviction that my trials were not in vain but were stepping stones toward a destiny ordained by the divine.

As I stand at this crossroads of renewal and redemption, the words of Proverbs 3:5-6 resonate with a newfound clarity, serving as a compass for my journey: “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.” This scripture encapsulates the essence of my journey, a pilgrimage of faith, learning, and humility. A testament to the power of surrendering to God’s will, which guides me through the labyrinth of life’s complexities and uncertainties.

To my brothers and sisters still out there in the struggle, I hope that my season of transformation will remind you that the journey of faith is not a solitary endeavor but a communal voyage. To be enriched by the story and to experience the one who will walk before you, behind you, and the one who will walk beside you. As you tread this path, I hope you carry the wisdom of the past, the lessons of the present, and the hope for the future, ever mindful of the divine presence that guides your steps toward the horizon of the promised land just as I have done. God bless you.



By Larmie Coleman

My name is Larmie Coleman, I am 39 years of age and I was born and raised here in the South Side of Providence, Rhode Island. For years I made wrong choices and fell into homelessness and started running the streets and living a life of crime to be able to make money and take care of my responsibilities. After years in and out of the prison system, I decided to change my life around and build up the community I once tore down! I wanted better for myself so I started taking action to be a better man and overall human being. I dedicated myself to self-love and learned how to become a disciplined man, a man of honor and integrity, with high morals, and great values.

The last time I was incarcerated (2019) was a blessing in disguise because it sat me down and gave me time to think about my future and come up with a plan for my life! Before getting locked up I had worked with two great people, Remi Jones, CEO of Remi TV and my videographer mentor Stanley Bois owner of Hot In RI (media) here in Providence, RI (2017-2019). I love helping others

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so I help promote and market their brands, pro-bono to develop my marketing skills and was blessed to be on such a great journey learning business and meeting famous people along the way.

While working backstage doing camera work for Remi Jones' first celebrity interviews, my dream came true while filming my first celebrity crush Mya, who is a famous R&B singer with the hit single called "Best of Me" featuring Rap icon Jay-Z. After a year or so of filming interviews with famous artists, my dealings in the streets caught up with me and I had to turn myself in after being caught with 20 grams of dope a year prior.

While in jail self-improvement and studying business were my main goals and with nothing but time to think in jail, I realized I was very good at branding & marketing and decided I would build my own brand. One night in jail I had a dream of the name of what my company would be. A voice said to me "It's time for YOU NOW"! I woke up out of my sleep and said, "That's it"! Upon my release, I put into action my plan and The U.nowversity became an LLC that helps small businesses with marketing plans and strategies and helps bring more eyes on their products and services and ultimately brings them more revenue.

Fast forward "Heat The Streets" is a charitable event and is a product of my upbringing as a child. I always watched my mom help those in need and she always gave

the clothes off her back and fed and even housed people who were in need. Little did I know that I would be destined to be on the frontline of helping individuals and families out on our streets.

Heat The Streets Winter Drive was influenced when a friend of mine, the late Leonardo TILLET, a beloved and influential photographer in our community, asked for volunteers to help him pass out coats to the homeless on our streets a few years back (2016). I joined him in giving out coats that winter, which gave me a great sense of humbleness and gratitude to step up and help those stuck in a bad situation.

A year later in an unfortunate turn of events he passed away. In order to keep his name and loving energy and giving spirit alive, I came up with "Heat The Streets" (2018) to continue the great work that Ignites my Passion to help the less fortunate.

This year The U.nowversity LLC has partnered with fiscal sponsor Rosa Parks Resource Center (501C3) for our 5th installment of Heat The Streets. Helping others is truly our passion and we can't wait to help more people in need each year! My information is below. Please feel free to reach out or contact me with resources to help more people in our state or if you want to volunteer and be a part of a great cause, below is our donation link. If you're genuinely compassionate please donate, any amount will help and will be greatly appreciated.



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*Rest In Peace, Stan Kapelewski,
our Founder.*

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Providence, RI 02908.

You must include your name,
email address or phone number.

**All articles and poems
are due by the 20th
of each month**

As The Turtle Crawls

By David Eisenberger

She was so beautiful and he was so afraid

This one here adored her but couldn't say the words
Having an idea and maybe this might get her attention
Especially slow with words there he found a turtle

There he wrote a love poem on the shell to express
that unlike me, that turtle was loved and adored by her
Right then she looked at me & laughed (I felt like a fool!)
That turtle just slowly crawled and found a place in her heart
Let me say that he did better than me for I was humiliated
Especially when she loved that turtle more than me

Can't forget that moment, for now it's now 35 years later
Remembering the words I wrote on that very day
A poem that was the first of the many that I've written
When I think about that now, I couldn't believe I did that
Love for the tongue-tied was a difficult way to live
So I'll think each time as the turtle crawls, hopefully he's found love

Will You Be My Friend

By Jim Goulet

Homeless and angry at the whole human race,
I search the cold streets for a friendly face.
Will you be my friend?
Abandoned by family and friends, I struggle
hard to make ends meet.
Will you be my friend?
Drowning my sorrows with booze, I wind up
singing the blues.
Will you be my friend?
Kicked out of the shelter by day, How can I
possibly find my way?
Will you be my friend?

A Single Tear

By Shauna Belcher

I keep it in
Won't let it go
I feel it build up and stir
Water builds in my eyes
Like an ocean full of the rains cries
I tilt my head back,
And let the tears back in.
Fears of letting it go, my biggest sin
The swarms of mental darkness begin
I keep it in
I hear the hate
I hear the wicked
Won't let it go
The light leaves, the darkness appears
I feel it burn, feel it burn, feel it sear
I can't keep it in, give in to the fear
I let it drop
A Single Tear

Pain Of My Addiction

By Terry Souza

Powerless, weak and unable to cope
All I wanna do is stop using dope
I can't stop the tears that fall like rain'
No one understands me no wonder there's pain.

Out on the streets and nowhere to go
Filled with anger, more pain and sorrow

Mistakes I did make so don't blame my heart
Yes I need help so don't tear me a apart.

All my life all I did was try to fit in
Day after day as my life grew dim
Drugs and alcohol were my only escape
Intoxicated with poison more pain and more hate
Cunning and evil this disease will be
Taking everything away from me
I asked God to heal me and fix me His way
On my knees as I prayed day after day
No one really knows what caused my affliction

But I hope you understand the pain of my addiction.

Awake In My Sunshine

By Stephen C. Evans

A vision of beauty appears forth from me and dances with sunshine.
Each day as I arise the spirit of love unites happiness with soul.
A feeling of gratitude encompasses my role of a creator of life.
For the whole world to see the beauty of my world; the beauty
which is she.
For drenched in a blessing am I God's gift. For he sent me a child to
give my life a lift.
And as mourning brings sorrow and sunshine eases pain, my flower
of hope will be remembered by name.
Angie my sunshine, it is all about you. God's gift in his presence.

Guardians of Solitude

By Rainer Maria Rilke

Love consists in this: that two solitudes
border and protect and salute one another.
For one human being to love one another:
that is perhaps the most difficult of our
tasks. I hold this to be the highest task of a
bond between two people: that we should
stand guard over the solitude of the other.

Walk On Bye

By Raw Diamond

Cracked earth
With aged lines
Wrinkled skin
Heals touch the clay
Blistered lips and chapped feet
Vaseline smooths and then
The body burns
Scorched
Insides at night
A taste straggles
With another shot of scotch
Bang bang make it quick
Open up my chess
Hiccups burn my breast
Inebriated in the summer
I'm a happy chappy
Blowing winds
In a bubble
Gum
Ooh so numb
I lost my train of thought
Can't keep a straight line
When I walk
Hop stop
Scotch
I - poor man
Takes another shot
And falls
Asleep
Dead beat
Drooling over
Your feet
Under the midday summer sun
As you walk out the office
For a cuppa and some lunch
While a vagabond
Takes the punch
Cos he can't finish
The bread line
On your marks
Get set
Gun
Shot
Every day
I get
Dead
Beat
Bruised and batted
My shirt is loose
Unbuttoned
With a draw string
Hung to dry
At the noose
Hangman
Can you spell
BE ing
I'm just like
Human
But my tears get dirty
And yours stay dry
Like my tongue stuck
To my pallet
My firewood
My home
On the side
Walk
On
Bye



STREET SIGHTS ART & POETRY SLAM

By Pastor Brian Archibald

Street Sights is inviting all Poets to step up to the plate and express their skills. We're offering an opportunity for all Poets to do their thing and see who is the best that the State of Rhode Island has to offer!

Starting in the month of April, *Street Sights* is accepting all submissions of poetry from all across the State for the May edition. We are giving all those who are interested the chance to 'Strut Your Stuff'. Show us what you got! I personally hear all kinds of talent that comes from our area that never gets the chance to be recognized for one reason or the other. Well, now is your opportunity to show everyone what you can do.

The rules are easy. No submissions will be accepted if they are vulgar, or sexually explicit. In other words, no F-bombs or pornographic material guys. Each Month there will be a subject for the next month's slam that will be given ahead of time and your submission must be written within the parameters of that subject.

Every month we will pick five submissions, according to the clarity of the piece, originality of expression, and whether or not your poem falls within the parameters that were given to you for that month. The prize? Yeah, I know you were waiting for that. The prize for each Poetry winner is going to be a First, Second, and Third place gift card, and an interview with the paper about your submission, (What gave you the idea? How did you go about writing your piece? And what kind of positive message does your piece give to the community?).

The voices and talents of the people in this community, whether you have been bound in addiction, have mental health issues, are homeless, in prison, or are dealing with any other types of situations, or circumstances that need to be voiced. This can only be done by those of us who have been there and knows what it feels like to have experienced these things. They need to be expressed to let others who are where we may have been, or still are, that they are not alone. It is our way to be there for one another in a creative way. To give back to others, the things that we have been given to keep us strong and encouraged.

There is strength in the community. There is strength in knowing that there is nothing that we can't do, if we put our minds to it, put our hearts in it, and work together. Just because we are where we are, or that we come from where we have come from, doesn't mean that we can't rise out of the ashes. It doesn't mean that we can't be better and grow. It doesn't mean that we have to stay stuck where we are. We have not been given a spirit of fear, but of love and a sound mind.

Personally, I feel that we are all capable. We just have to look inside and find the things that mean something to us. That inspires us. That give us hope, and as far as I am concerned, you, the readers, and writers of this paper, are the voices that give these things not only to yourselves, but to everyone who picks up a copy of *Street Sights* and reads it.

The first of our Slam Competitions will be receiving entries until April 15th. The five finalists and the winners will be featured in our May edition of the paper. We look forward to showcasing the many talents and abilities of our readers and contributors. GOOD LUCK EVERYONE! By the way, I do take coffee bribes! Just kidding, (I like donuts). The first subject is about the feeling you have about 'where you are in your life right now.' Good Luck!

Here's a little something to start you off...

When I look around my city, what do I see?
Hundreds of people who look just like me,
Homeless and hungry, addicted to drugs,
Hoping and praying for someone to show them love,
Searching for spaces where they can find peace,
Little creature comforts that can give them relief,
A coffee house, or library to shelter from the cold,
A hot meal, and a smile, so they don't feel alone,
A place to get clean to feel better about themselves,
So they don't feel like statistics, stacked on a shelf,
All colors, races, and creeds, with all kinds of needs,
Who struggle every day, just to be freed,
To be seen, to be understood and believed,
People just like me,
City scenes.

Dying and Rising with Christ

By Pastor Linda Forsberg

Every year in the middle of Lent we have the story from the Gospel of John 11: Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead. There are only three occasions where Jesus raises someone from death: the twelve year old daughter of Jairus, the synagogue leader, the young son of the widow of Nain, and Lazarus. In each of these cases, Jesus raises one who died an untimely death, who died before they had lived a full life.

Bible scholars believe that in raising Lazarus from death, Jesus was also foreshadowing his own resurrection, and was giving us a “foretaste of the feast to come.” Bible scholars also believe that Jesus’ raising Lazarus from death was the very last straw for Jesus’ opponents. Raising Lazarus was pushing the envelope too far, was forcing the hand of Jesus’ opponents who now HAD TO stop this Jesus, or so they thought, by putting him to death, to keep him from causing any more trouble. Knowing this, Jesus raised Lazarus anyway. That is because Jesus is all about Life.

“I came that you would have life, Life to the fullest.” (John 10:10).

Still today Jesus is about raising people up. Jesus raises us up in two ways. First, Jesus raises us up in our baptisms. We read: “Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ, have been baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with Christ through baptism into death, IN ORDER THAT, just as Christ was raised from the dead, through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. For if we have been united with Christ in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with Christ in a resurrection like his.” (Romans 6: 4-5) We use this reading from Romans on two occasions: when we are baptized, and when we die. It is especially powerful when we baptize adults into the Christian faith. If you would like to be baptized, please let me know. Whenever I baptize an adult, we first have a time of instruction.

During this time of instruction, the adult ALWAYS shares with me the fact that s/he deeply desires to DIE to her/his old way of life, to DIE to her/his past, and to RISE to that newness and fullness of life that Christ desires for each of us. Martin Luther said, “Every morning, when you wash your face, remember your baptism.” In other words, each day, when we remember our baptism, we are given the gift of a new beginning. Each day we can start our lives anew!

The second time we read Romans 6, is at the time of our death. At the beginning of the Christian Memorial service, we stand at the back of the church beside the casket, before the opening procession. In other words, not only does Christ raise us to a new and full life in our baptisms, but also at the time of our death, when Christ raises us into eternal life. Do you ever think about what happened to Lazarus after Jesus raised him from death? How did that change the way he lived his life? I certainly hope that he lived the rest of his life more fully, more deeply because Christ raised him up.

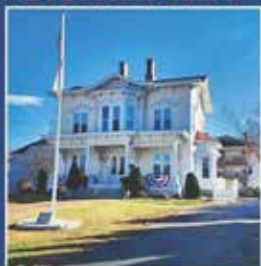
This Easter, as we celebrate the resurrection of our Beloved Savior Jesus Christ, we also celebrate the fact that Jesus’ resurrection means that we too are raised, in two ways. We are raised in our baptisms, which is why historically adult converts to our Christian faith have always been baptized at the Easter Vigil, passing over, on the Eve of Easter, with Christ, from death to new and resurrected life. As Christians, we are called to live in this Easter Life, to live each and every day, remembering that through our baptisms, we, like Lazarus, have been raised to new life. But we also have great comfort knowing that when we breathe our final breath, we too will rise with Christ, in a resurrection like his!

May we live as Easter people, and someday, may we die as Easter people, knowing that “whether we live or whether we die, we belong to Christ.” (Romans 14: 8). In Christ, OUR resurrection, and OUR Life.



Pastor Linda Forsberg
is the Missioner of the
Church Beyond the Walls

Transitional Housing for Female Veterans and Veteran Families



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*Veterans must meet VA Grant Per Diem housing eligibility requirements and comply with program rules and procedures. Temporary financial rental assistance and some legal services may have additional eligibility requirements.



Soul Purpose By Shelley Turner-Riley

Beam Me Up... Somebody! (Please?)

After I came up with this title and theme, I realized Easter Sunday is the last day of this month. Yet it does not “conflict” with the title. Being an “original” Trekkie, I cannot count how many times I have heard a Captain give in order to beam someone “aboard.” Persons were transported with very little effort, while we viewers wondered if it would be “in time” to escape.

There is little doubt that the idea of a ship’s Holodeck was conceived by those who dreamed of being whisked away to a different place, time or situation. There are many famous books of fantasy/science fiction that take the readers on journeys to imaginary kingdoms, planets, dimensions etc. For example, mine began with the Wizard of Oz. In the book, Dorothy’s journey is not a dream. Neverland and Peter Pan were made popular by Disney, and other versions. C. S. Lewis wrote memorable nonfiction, as well as *The Chronicles of Narnia*, *The Great Divorce*, and his science fiction trilogy, which is an allegory of biblical themes.

Remember the Calgon commercial? It is probably on YouTube. The woman, in the midst of work or housekeeping would cry out, “Calgon, take me away!” There are numerous examples of people wanting to be removed from one place to another; sometimes it is to “Any place but here.”

How many of you are remembering a place or time of having that thought? It may simply be the need for a vacation; for the school year to be over. To be in Florida or on a tropical island during a harsh winter. For others, it is finding a shelter, for one who is homeless or abused; A young person who is being trafficked; a war veteran, with all that surrounds him or her in battle. The list could take up half of this article, and I include those in any such situation.

We sang a song in summer camp, many years ago; I googled some of the words. The song is “We are going on a Bear Hunt.” It is one of those echo dynamics—others repeat what the leader says, while clapping etc. “We” encounter: Tall grass, a river, mud and a cave. Everyone makes some kind of “squish squish” sound to represent the object. (Guess who is in the cave). The chorus is the most memorable part for everything on the journey: “We can’t go over it. We can’t go under it. We can’t go around it. We’re just gonna have to go through it (or some variation around ‘through’).” It is interesting that in the song, the way of escape is actually going back through the places they encountered (But that is for a different article).

There are still no available transporters or holodecks. There is a well-known statement: “The only way out is through.” You mean, there is a lesson in that song? What inspired it? Perhaps it included a long and painful process, even healing. During the season of Lent, and perhaps in the middle of some crisis or trauma, we may find comfort and inspiration from places like Scripture, filled with the testimonies of those who have been “led through” valleys, a wilderness or even a Red Sea. (There are two incidents in the Bible of persons being lifted off the earth into heaven—Enoch and Elijah. Jesus’ Ascension is reported in Acts to have been witnessed by many.) We may gain hope from the story of one who has survived—even thrived—from a shared situation.

Before Easter Sunday we are reminded of Holy Thursday or Good Friday. What was happening on that Saturday? We cannot skip over them. The true purpose and joy of Easter would be lost. In the Gospels, we read of how Jesus’ prayer was that there was another way than the Cross. Yet He surrendered His will, to that of love, despite the cost. He stood silent before Pilate, instead of taking any path away from crucifixion. Since then so many of His followers have been led to imprisonment or death for their faith in Him. There are those who die for many causes and in battles.

Perhaps one definition of a “Hero” is one who chooses not to run even in the face of one’s fear. The Apostle Paul and others endured beatings, prison, and death. Yet Paul wrote what is referred to as the Epistle of joy. He states, “... I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do all things through Him who gives me strength,” *Philippians 4: 12,13*.

Inspiration for that paragraph is a current example: The articles by James Logan in the last couple of issues of *Street Sights* really moved me (and my 93 year old mother, who has a subscription), He is not writing about being “taken out of” being homeless. His voice is that of the “heart of flesh” I have mentioned in Ezekiel. His faith and joy, like that of others, can exist among trials, sadness, uncertainty and other things of life that throw us “off balance.” Thank you, James, for your testimony. It is one of gratitude and hope, for all.

There are some occasions this month which may at least bring us smiles and some warm memories: (And maybe make us glad to be “Earthbound”?): Daylight Savings--more light at night! St, Patrick’s Day--corned beef and cabbage! The first day of Spring! Blossoms! Easter Sunday—Hope.

Grace and Peace.

A Familiar Sight

By Mike Fink

My neighbors right across the street threw a block party and it proved to be quite a blast! Our hostess is a ceramic artist and everything in each room and on all walls is lovely, alluring, surprising. Her mate is a retired poetry scholar and he is likewise gracious as he mixes our mimosas, half orange juice but demi-prosecco bubbly.

I held forth about my life among the homeless. How I got a job ages ago in the geriatric ward of lost souls here in R.I. The shelter janitor was wordless—hadn't spoken a single word to break his silence.... until I came along. He softly greeted me to the surprise of others among the staff of guardians overlooking

the homeless spirits, some in wheelchairs and others trapped in their separate cells and yelling. Well, I was endeavoring to make a speech to the various guests at this hospitable holiday gathering. I yelled out the bygone curses I could recall and how in my youth I might "entertain" at evenings for more youthful and hopeful circles by citing and reciting the strange curses I had learned by heart and rote.

Those few weeks inspired my respect for, and fascination with, the destiny that brought together a society with scarcely a literal roof over their heads. Oh, nowadays, homeless huts are once again a familiar sight. Right across the road from a busy bus station I daily

see simple tents with trash in front, not lawns, and I marvel at the survival that for a person of my decades recalls for me the memories of the Great Depression.

In those days the unemployed were a common sight, and once again we are witness to the plight of persons of whom the Bard (Shakespeare, of course) might say, "There's a divinity that shapes our ends, rough hew them how we may." or even, likewise from Hamlet, to his more straightforward friend Horatio: "There are more things in heaven or hell than are dreamed of in your philosophy." I guess I'll leave it at that for now.

Help Us Help Others

FOR SALE: Homeless Calendar of Newport RI (first of its kind). Prayer for the Homeless CD Rev Walter Smothers & McKinney Shelter Singers. For copies of both call the Housing Hotline 401-846-4896 or stop by at 40 Dr. Marcus Wheatland Blvd.



May is Mental Health Month 2024 State House Date Announced



Join MHARI at the State House on May 1, at 1 PM in the State Room (2nd floor) to kick off May is Mental Health Month.

Millions of Americans and thousands of residents of Rhode Island are living with mental illness. Each May, MHARI, and individuals, agencies, and organizations across the State and the country, observe Mental Health month. We do so to fight stigma, provide support, educate the public and advocate for policies that support people with mental illness and their families.



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Tuesdays & Thursdays 4pm - 8pm

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- February 10, 2024
- March 16, 2024
- April 06, 2024

Where:



460 PINE STREET
PROVIDENCE, RI 02907
(401) 272-0220, EXT 200

TO FILE YOUR RETURN YOU WILL NEED:

- ORIGINAL SOCIAL SECURITY CARDS OR ITIN DOCUMENTATION FOR YOU AND ALL DEPENDENTS ON THE RETURN
- PROOF OF IDENTIFICATION
- DATE OF BIRTH OF ALL ON THE RETURN
- FOR DIRECT DEPOSIT, A CHECK AND /OR SAVINGS ACCOUNT NUMBER WITH THE BANK ROUTING NUMBER.
- ALL 2023 W2S, 1099S, OR OTHER TAX DOCUMENTATION YOU RECEIVE
- ALL CHILD CARE RELATED EXPENSES FOR 2023

For more information, visit

www.amoshouse.com/freetaxprep



Providence HOUSING CLINIC

Housing Clinic returns in a **new location*** beginning **Thursday November 16th!**

If you require wheelchair-accessible assistance, please call to make an appointment at another local site

Are you fleeing or homeless due to domestic or sexual violence and need housing options?

Are you a survivor in need of additional services to maintain stability?

Visit our Drop-In Center for survivors of Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault & Human Trafficking at 1570 Westminster Street, Providence, RI 02909 on Thursdays from 9am - 1pm and speak to our staff about housing options.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT 401-808-6889



Healthy Eating Tips

Fruits & Vegetables

Eat a variety of colors of fruits and vegetables to get fiber, vitamins, and minerals. Doing this may help your body work better and avoid getting sick.

Protein Choices & Healthy Fats

Include lean protein sources like poultry, fish, tofu, and beans in your diet. Limit red and processed meats such as bacon, ham, or deli meats.

Balanced Meals

Aim for balanced meals that include a variety of food groups: vegetables, fruits, lean proteins, whole grains, and low-fat or non fat dairy foods.

Plan Ahead

Try your best to plan your meals and snacks in advance. Planning ahead may help you make healthier choices and avoid spending money on less nutritious options.



This material was funded by USDA Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program - SNAP. This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

PAWTUCKET:

Holy Family Parish
195 Walcott Street (401)724-9190

Salvation Army Pawtucket Corps' Food
Pantry 102 High Street (401)723-9533

St. John the Baptist Food Pantry
69 Quincy Avenue (401)722-9054

Living Hope Assembly of God
100 Broadway (401)723-2039

Woodlawn Baptist Church
337 Lonsdale Avenue (401)724-6390

Blackstone Valley Emergency Food Center
75 Benefit Street (401)724-7170

St. Matthew Trinity Lutheran Food Pantry
690 Newport Avenue (401)723-5632

WARWICK:

Westbay CAP Market Place 211
Buttonwoods Avenue (401)732-4660 ext.140

Cornerstone Church Food Pantry
1990 Elmwood Avenue (401)781-6121

St. Rita's Church Pantry
722 Oakland Beach Avenue (401)738-1800

PROVIDENCE:

John Hope Settlement House Pantry
7 Thomas Whitten Way (401)421-6993

Our Lady of the Rosary
Food Pantry Wed Sat
17 Traverse Street (401)453-0174

SVDP St. Raymond's Church
1240 North Main Street (401) 351-4224

St. Edward Food & Wellness Center
1001 Branch Avenue (401)621-3827

Camp Street Ministries Food Pantry
190 1/2 Camp Street (401)421-5474

Mt. Hope Neighborhood Association
199 Camp Street (401)521-8830

SVDP Holy Name of Jesus Food Pantry
99 Camp Street (401)277-9053

Community Food Share First Unitarian
Church 1 Benevolent Street (401)457-7149

Community Action Partnership of Prov
Interim House 49 Trenton Street
(401)831-4570

Providence Assembly of God Pantry
353 Elmwood Avenue (401)461-7210

St. Charles Pantry SVDP
178 Dexter Street (401)273-1108

Interfaith Food Ministry
95 Hathaway Ctr #61 (401)461-1773

Salvation Army Providence Corps' Food
Pantry 386 Broad Street (401)831-1119
Dinner 4- 5pm

South Providence Neighborhood Ministries
747 Broad Street (401)461-7509

West End Community Center Pantry
109 Bucklin Street (401)781-4242

Assumption of the BVM Church
791 Potters Avenue (401)941-1248

Operation Compassion Church of God
297 Elmwood Avenue (401)275-2326

Louis and Goldie Chester Full Plate Kosher
Pantry 100 Niantic Avenue (401)621-5374

St. Peter & St. Andrew Food Pantry
70 Pemberton Street (401)272-9649

Gospel Tabernacle Outreach Pantry
45 Oakland Avenue (401)454-0988

Church of God Shalom
145 Chad Brown Street (401)421-5112

Pantry Rudolph Tavares Community Center
263 Chad Brown Street (401)455-3890

Federal Hill House Pantry
9 Courtland Street (401)421-4722

PICA Olneyville Food Center
261 Manton Avenue (401)521-5639

SVDP St. Anthony's Church
549 Plainfield Street (401)943-2300

Silver Lake Community Center
529 Plainfield Street (401)944-8300

St. Thomas Church
65 Fruit Hill Avenue (401)272-7118

CRANSTON:

Edgewood Pawtuxet Food Closet:
Transfiguration Church
1665 Broad Street (401)461-3142

Haitian Baptist Church of Rhode Island
12 Lincoln Avenue (401)944-1440

SVDP Emergency Food Center
181 Princess Avenue (401)946-5291

NORTH PROVIDENCE:

Tri-Town Community Action Agency
33 Maple Avenue (401)519-1916

Allendale Baptist Church
545 Woonasquatucket Avenue (401)231-7669

EAST PROVIDENCE:

East Bay Community Action Program
Pantry 100 Bullocks Point Avenue (401)437-
1000

JOHNSTON:

St. Robert's Food Closet
1804 Atwood Avenue (401)231-4987

St. Rocco's Food Pantry
926 Atwood Avenue (401)743-3983

RIVERSIDE:

Good Neighbors
55 Turner Avenue (401)433-0045

BE SURE TO CALL IN ADVANCE
FOR ANY INFORMATION AND
APPOINTMENTS AS SOME THINGS
ON THIS LIST MAY BE OUT OF DATE

PLEASE NOTIFY STREET SIGHTS IF YOU WOULD LIKE YOUR INFORMATION ADDED.
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RHODE ISLAND MEAL SITES

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Providence Area Meal Sites

Northern RI / Blackstone Valley

Newport County

BREAKFAST	LUNCH	DINNER
SUNDAY	Mathewson Fellowship Breakfast Service 8 am - 9 am followed by Camp-style Family Breakfast 9:15 am - 10:30 am	Salvation Army 4 pm - 5 pm Closed first Sun. of the month Food Pantry every Wednesday 9 am - Noon Providence Rescue Mission 5 pm
MONDAY	Amos House 11 am - 12:30 pm McAuley House 11:15 - 1 pm Good Neighbors 10am - 1pm	St. Patrick's 4 pm - 5:15 pm doors open at 3:30 pm Providence Rescue Mission 5 pm Reaching for the Fringe 5 pm - 6:30 pm
TUESDAY	Amos House 11 am - 12:30 pm McAuley House 11:15 - 1 pm Good Neighbors 10am - 1pm	City Meal Site, Inc. 4 pm - 5 pm Providence Rescue Mission 5 pm
WEDNESDAY	Amos House 11 am - 12:30 pm McAuley House 11:15 - 1 pm Good Neighbors 10am - 1pm	Impact Center/Assembly of God 5:30 pm - 7:30 pm Providence Rescue Mission 5 pm
THURSDAY	Amos House 11 am - 12:30 pm McAuley House 11:15 - 1 pm Good Neighbors 10am - 1pm	St. Charles Church 3:45 pm - 5 pm Providence Rescue Mission 5 pm Victory Assembly of God 5 pm - 6 pm Last Thurs. of the month
FRIDAY	Amos House 11 am - 12:30 pm McAuley House 11:15 - 1 pm Good Neighbors 10am - 1pm	Better Lives RI 4:00 pm - 5:30 pm Providence Rescue Mission 5 pm
SATURDAY	Church of the Master Meal site 15 Valley St is closed for the Summer Will reopen September 10th Amos House 11 am - 12:30 pm closed first Sat of month Church beyond the Walls 2 pm St Edward Kitchen 12 - 1pm (2nd & 4th Sat starting 10/18)	Epiphany Soup Kitchen @ St. Stephen's Church 2:30 pm - 4 pm Providence Rescue Mission 5 pm

BREAKFAST	LUNCH	DINNER	
SUNDAY	Pawtucket Soup Kitchen 7:30 am - 8:00 am	Help the Homeless RI 12 pm - 1pm (Bouley Field) Help the Homeless RI 1 pm - 2 pm (Pawtucket - when winter shelter is open) St. Mary Antiochian Orthodox Church 12:30 pm - 1 pm (third Sunday of the month only) St George's Episcopal Church 2 pm - 3 pm	Help the Homeless RI 5 pm - 6 pm (Pawtucket) when local shelter is closed Matthew 25 Center hosted by The River UMC 4 - 7 pm
MONDAY	Pawtucket Soup Kitchen 7:30 am - 8:00 am	New Beginnings 11:30 am - 12:45 pm	Pawtucket Soup Kitchen 5:00 pm - 5:30 pm
TUESDAY	Pawtucket Soup Kitchen 7:30 am - 8:00 am	St John The Baptist 11:30 am - 12:45 pm doors open at 9:30 am New Beginnings 11:30 am - 12:45 pm	Pawtucket Soup Kitchen 5:00 pm - 5:30 pm Feed My Sheep 4:30 pm - 5:30 pm 3rd, 4th, 5th Tuesday only
WEDNESDAY	Pawtucket Soup Kitchen 7:30 am - 8:00 am	New Beginnings 11:30 am - 12:45 pm	Matthew 25 Center hosted by The River UMC 4 pm - 7 pm Pawtucket Soup Kitchen 5:00 pm - 5:30 pm
THURSDAY	Pawtucket Soup Kitchen 7:30 am - 8:00 am	New Beginnings 11:30 am - 12:45 pm St. Luke's Episcopal 11 am - 12 pm 2nd, 4th Thursday	Pawtucket Soup Kitchen 5:00 pm - 5:30 pm St. Luke's Episcopal 5 pm 1st, 3rd Thursday
FRIDAY	Pawtucket Soup Kitchen 7:30 am - 8:00 am	Pawtucket Soup Kitchen 10:30 am - 11:00 am	Pawtucket Soup Kitchen 5:00 pm - 5:30 pm
SATURDAY	Pawtucket Soup Kitchen 10:30 am - 11:00 am	Matthew 25 Center 11 am - 2 pm	Park Place United Church 4 pm - 5 pm

BREAKFAST	LUNCH	DINNER	
SUNDAY		Salvation Army 4 pm - 4:45 pm	
MONDAY	MLK Center 7:30 am - 9 am	St. Joseph's 11:30 am - 1 pm	Trinity Church 5 pm every 4th & 5th Monday each month
TUESDAY	MLK Center 7:30 am - 9 am	MLK Center 11:30 am - 1 pm	Emmanuel Episcopal 5 pm first Tuesday every month
WEDNESDAY	MLK Center 7:30 am - 9 am	United Baptist 12 pm every 2nd & 3rd Wednesday each month	
THURSDAY	MLK Center 7:30 am - 9 am	MLK Center 11:30 am - 1 pm	
FRIDAY	MLK Center 7:30 am - 9 am		Salvation Army 4 pm - 4:45 pm
SATURDAY			Community Baptist 4:30

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