Street Sights

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ISSUE #143



STREET * SIGHTS • A MONTHLY CONTEST • POETRY SLAM DEADLINE MAY 15TH









Artwork by Han Zheng

Street Sights is accepting all submissions of poetry from all across the State for the June edition. You must be unhoused to enter this Poetry Slam. 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. 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

Continued on Page 3, POETRY SLAM

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

The following article spans 16 pages in the New York Times. Unfortunately, I can't fit it in our paper but I strongly recommend you read it (visit: bit.ly/nythome to read). We will be asking the Providence Journal if they could work with us to do something similar for RI. It speaks of how unhoused people are not considered in the decision-making process of determining what their needs are. This is a huge missing link to helping solve homelessness. We need to demand that our sisters and brothers be brought to the table.

The New York Times, Opinion, February 2024, A LIFE WITHOUT A HOME Voices from the tents, shelters, cars, motels and couches of America. A record number of people across the country are experiencing

homelessness. The federal government's annual tally last year revealed the highest numbers of unsheltered people since the count began in 2007. Politicians and policymakers are grappling with what can be done. But the people who are actually experiencing homelessness are rarely part of the conversation.

Lori Teresa Yearwood, a journalist who lived through years of homelessness, spoke of the ways we discount those without shelter. "Society created a new species of people, and we carefully crafted an image of them: one of broken passivity and victimhood, people in need of constant scrutiny and monitoring," she said in a 2022 speech. "When we shift and widen the perspective of the unhoused, that's when things radically change."

Ms Yearwood collaborated with Times Opinion on this project before her death in September. She understood what many who have not experienced homelessness ignore: that people without shelter have something to say about its like to live inside this country's cobbled-together solutions. That's why we sent reporters and photographers to various parts of the country to meet with people experiencing homelessness in very different ways. We asked them to fill out surveys, take videos, use disposable cameras and have their children share drawings.

Whatever led them to homelessness, the people who spoke to the Times wanted a way out. As the nation debates how to help them. They shared the solutions they wanted to see.

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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.

OUR MISSION

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.

CONTACT US

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.**

ADVERTISE WITH US

Street Sights is the only homeless magazine and resource guide in Rhode Island. Your contribution will help our friends continue to receive updated information. If you have a business or organization and would like to advertise see our prices below (we offer multiple months discount). Please call us at 401-499-3596 if you have any questions. **All ads are due by the 20th of each month**

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If you would like to sponsor an issue please contact us. We welcome donations of any amount. All donations and sponsorships are tax deductible.



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Rhode Island Coalition to End Homelessness Appoints Kimberly Simmons As Executive Director

Simmons' experience and leadership will move the organization forward as we work to end homelessness in Rhode Island.

The Rhode Island Coalition to End Homelessness (the Coalition) announced its selection of Kimberly Simmons as Executive Director of the organization. Kimberly brings nearly three decades of executive leadership experience in housing and homelessness organizations, as well as lived experience of homelessness. Over the past 6 months Ms. Simmons has been serving as Interim Executive Director of the Coalition and will officially take the role as of Monday, March 11, 2024.

"I am grateful for this opportunity with the Rhode Island Coalition to End Homelessness to continue to advocate for and support the most vulnerable throughout our communities," said Kimberly Simmons, executive director of the Coalition. "The Coalition has been committed to educating citizens and decision-makers about the impact of homelessness on all of us. I am excited to help change the way people think about our most at-risk neighbors...our youth, veterans, differently-abled, persons dealing with medical or mental health conditions, elderly, unemployed, LGBTQ+, etc...or you or me. I have spent my entire career seeking pathways to assist underserved populations, impoverished

and economically suffering families, and children, particularly those disproportionately among us. I look forward to serving those same communities in Rhode Island."

I would like to thank the board directors and staff of the Coalition, our Constituent Advisory Committee, our Voices of Homelessness members, and other key stakeholders across the state for their work in getting us here," said Susan Gunter, Board President of the Coalition. "After a thoughtful and collaborative process, we are thrilled to announce the appointment of Kim as our permanent Executive Director. Having had the pleasure to work closely with Kim over the past six months, we are confident that she is the proven leader we need to guide the Coalition moving forward."

As Executive Director for the Coalition, Ms. Simmons will be responsible for creating partnerships and relationships with Homeless Response System direct service providers, persons with lived experience, community stakeholders, policymakers, and elected offices to support unhoused Rhode Islanders. Additionally, her proven track record as a fund-



Kimberly Simmons, newly appointed Executive Director of the Rhode Island Coalition to End Homelessness, brings nearly three decades of leadership in housing advocacy and a profound commitment to supporting the most vulnerable in our communities.

raiser, operations manager, coach, financial steward, and strategic planner will strengthen our capacity and help us as we continue to participate in systems transformation to serve our unhoused neighbors better.

POETRY SLAM, continued from page 1

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 know 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 gives us hope, and as far as I am con-

cerned, 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.

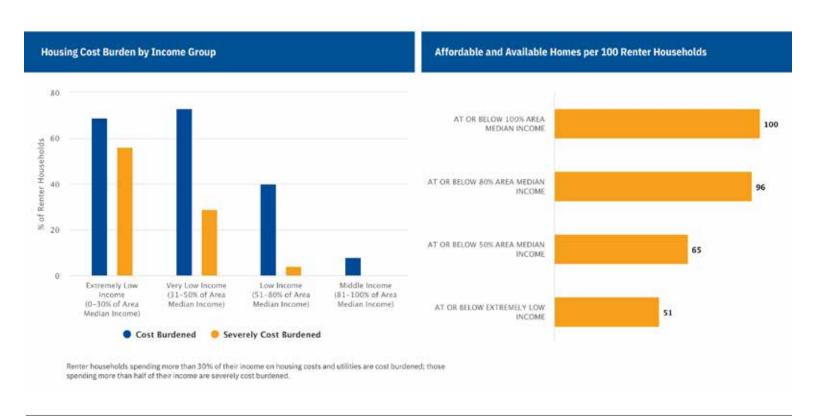
Our Slam Competition will be receiving entries until May 15th.

The five, (5) finalists and the winners will be featured in our June edition of the paper. *Street Sights* is looking forward to showcasing the many talents and abilities of our readers and contributors.

The first subject is about the feeling you have about 'where you are in your life right now.' GOOD LUCK EVERYONE!

- By Pastor Brian & David Eisenberger

Report: Only 51 affordable and available rental homes for every 100 extremely low-income households in Rhode Island



From a Housing Network of Rhode Island press release: A new report by the National Low Income Housing Coalition (NLI-HC) finds that there are 49,468 extremely low-income households in Rhode Island, but a shortage of roughly 24,054 affordable rental homes available to them, leaving only 51 affordable and available rental homes for every 100 extremely low-income households in the state.

The report, The Gap: A Shortage of Affordable Homes, also reveals a national shortage of 7.3 million affordable and available rental homes for extremely low-income renter households - those with incomes at or below the poverty level or 30% of their area median income, whichever is greater - resulting in just 34 affordable and available rental homes for every 100 extremely low-income renter households nationwide.

"Rhode Island's affordable housing challenges are laid clear in the annual Gap report, which demonstrates in data what we're witnessing play out across the state: people are spending a disproportionate share of their income on housing, leaving little left for other needs like food, health care, and other necessities," said Melina Lodge, Executive Director of the Housing Network of Rhode Island. "We must keep acting to

49,468 OR 30% Renter households that are extremely low income

-24,054

Shortage of rental homes affordable and available for extremely low income renters \$31,980

Average income limit for 4person extremely low income household \$57,779

Annual household income needed to afford a two-bedroom rental home at HUD's Fair Market Rent. **56%**

Percent of extremely low income renter households with severe cost burden

make up for decades of underinvestment and restrictive land use policies that have inhibited housing production. This year, there is an opportunity to sustain the momentum gained by recent investments, by authorizing a \$150 million housing bond to produce and preserve affordable homes for low- and moderate-income residents, and expand housing stock for people and communities who most need it."

While rents have stabilized since the pandemic in most markets – and even declined to a small degree in some markets – Providence saw the highest rent increase nationwide at the end of 2023, and the supply of affordable rental housing for extremely low-income households remains deeply inadequate in Rhode Island and nationwide.

In consequence, 56% of extremely low-income renters in Rhode Island are severely housing cost-burdened, spending more than half of their income on housing.

"As our annual Housing Fact Book has noted for years, one out of three Rhode Islanders are housing cost burdened," said Brenda Clement, Executive Director at HousingWorks RI at Roger Williams University. "In our small state that means that either you or someone within your family or community is struggling to keep a roof over their head. The data in The Gap cements that affordability remains out of reach for many

Rhode Islanders, and there continues to be a shortage of available and affordable units for extremely low-income households. While addressing housing issues is complicated, we are confident that with continued funding, resources, and support from local and state officials, that a healthy and affordable home for all Rhode Islanders is achievable."

The report also reveals that most rental markets provide an adequate supply of housing for middle-income renters but that no rental market provides enough homes for extremely low-income renters. Even in housing markets with shortages of affordable and available homes for middle-income renters, the cumulative shortage is largely attributable to the significant unmet housing needs of people with the lowest incomes, who must occupy higher-priced homes in the private market that would otherwise be available to higher-income renters.

The average income limit for four-person extremely low-income households in Rhode Island is \$31,980. The annual household income needed to afford a two-bedroom rental home at Fair Market Rent is \$57,779.

"In January, the Coordinated Entry System received over 11,321 calls from Rhode Islanders seeking shelter and housing from the devastating crisis confronting our state and nation," said Kimberly Simmons, Executive Director of the Rhode Island Coali-

tion to End Homelessness. "This Gap report continues to illuminate what we are all experiencing: housing supply does not meet current demand. When there isn't enough supply, people are left with nowhere to go and often end up living outdoors. At the beginning of February, there were 539 Rhode Islanders experiencing unsheltered homelessness and 830 persons who were awaiting shelter. We must address this gap before the crisis worsens."

"Even with a strong economy and stabilizing rents, homelessness has increased to its highest level ever recorded, and millions of the lowest-income and most marginalized households are at risk," said NLIHC President and CEO Diane Yentel. "We know what works to end housing insecurity and homelessness - what we lack is the political will to invest in these solutions at the scale needed. More than ever, Congress should act quickly to enact bold legislation to ensure rental assistance is universally available, build and preserve homes affordable to people with the lowest incomes, create tools to prevent eviction and homelessness, and strengthen renter protections to keep renters stably housed."



"56% of extremely low-income renters in Rhode Island are severely housing cost-burdened, spending more than half of their income on housing."

The Homeless Bill of Rights needs to be updated: My testimony for the House Judiciary Committee

BY STEVE AHLQUIST

"The state may never adequately house and care for its residents, but at the very least, bad actors representing the state should be prevented from adding to the misery of our unhoused siblings."

I need you to testify. On Wednesday, March 27, starting at 4 pm, the House Judiciary Committee will be meeting in the House Lounge to take up 20 bills concerning housing and homelessness. Most of these bills deserve careful consideration, but I will be testifying on one of them, Representative Jennifer Stewart's H7967, which would "update the Homeless Bill of Rights to add rules governing the interaction with encampments and require fines for non-compliance, require police and public works departments to adopt written policies and procedures to ensure compliance with the requirements of this chapter and include the right to access clean and sanitary conditions."

If this and other important bills on housing and homelessness are going to pass, people need to contact their legislators and insist that they do. Testimony can be emailed to HouseJudiciary@rilegislature.gov, I'll be showing up in person.

Here is my testimony: I am a reporter who has covered the crisis of homelessness in

this state for many years. The current Homeless Bill of Rights has, in my experience, never been all that useful in defending the rights of people experiencing homelessness against the depredations of the state.

State and municipal leaders and members of police departments throughout the state routinely violate both the letter and the spirit of the statute. Judges rarely consider the Bill of Rights when rendering decisions from the bench. When the Bill of Rights is considered at all, it is given little weight. For example, the lawyers on this committee might want to read Judge David Cruise's decision when he ruled in favor of Governor Daniel McKee and allowed the removal of an encampment on State House grounds, ignoring both the State's Homeless Bill of Rights and the original United States Bill of Rights in the process.

But I want to present a less high-profile example, which is emblematic of the common, everyday affronts people experiencing homelessness suffer throughout the state at the hands of state and municipal governments.

On December 4th of last year, I got a message from an outreach worker telling me that two undercover Providence Police Officers went to an encampment and harassed unhoused people, mostly women, living in tents. I interviewed the women at the encampment. For their protection, I am withholding identifying information.

"As I'm walking back to my tent, I see these two guys," said Mary. "They're not in uniform, they have no papers. At the moment they arrived there was no criminal activity going on at all. We were all having a regular morning. We were just waking up. These two male 'officers,' were wearing regular clothes, like a hoodie, jeans, and sneakers. One of them had his gun and badge showing, hanging from his belt."

"They had a badge, but I don't know for sure that it's a real badge," said Kathy. "They told me to come out of the tent and I didn't say anything at first. For the first three times that they said come out of your tent, I didn't say jack shit. And then they literally kicked



Advocates push for amendments to the Homeless Bill of Rights, addressing the rights of those dwelling in encampments, amidst systemic challenges faced by unhoused communities.

Photo By Steve Ahlquist

my tent. Now my tent's already ripped, so they were kicking it where it's ripped, breaking it even more, and said, 'I'm not going to ask again. Come out." And I replied, 'Do you have a warrant?' They said, 'We don't need a warrant. You live in a fucking tent."

The two police officers conducted illegal searches, lined people up outside their tents, and verbally harassed them while "looking for drugs." Can you imagine the outrage if the constituents you cared about were treated that way in their homes?

When I called the offices of Mayor Smiley and the Providence Police Department, they lied and told me that no police officers were at that encampment that morning, going so far as to tell me that I got the story wrong and should make a correction. But they didn't realize that I had more information about the police officers than I put in my piece. I knew the make and model of the car they were driving, and a person I didn't put in the story, who I know very well, could definitively identify the men as cops from their interaction with them at another encampment.

I wrote a second story, asking the obvious question - if these men were not police officers, as the city claimed, why aren't the Mayor and the Providence Police concerned

about two men in the city pretending to be police officers, brandishing badges and guns, and harassing Providence residents?

Around 24 hours later, the City admitted that the two men were police officers, but added that the police officers "had done nothing wrong." They refused to answer questions about the nature of the investigation that brought them to that conclusion.

It was a second lie. I confronted Mayor Smiley at an unrelated press conference and pressed him for details. He and his communications person promised me that they would answer all my questions in an email - which turned out to be a third lie.

The two Providence Police Officers violated the Homeless Bill of Rights, as it exists now. Providence Mayor Brett Smiley and his staff protected these two officers with lies and obfuscation. The people who had their rights violated, unhoused and in need of aid, were victimized by the state, and the current Homeless Bill of Rights provided no relief for them.

In a just society, the police officers would at the very least be enrolled in a refresher course on the importance of our legal rights - if not outright fired - and the city would, at the very least, be fined and sued for egre-

giously violating the rights of people already suffering some of the worst abuses our unforgiving society can throw at them.

I will end with this: The story I told above is sadly common. Human rights violations, big and small, are a daily part of being unhoused in Rhode Island. The state may never adequately house and care for its residents, but at the very least, bad actors representing the state should be prevented from adding to the misery of our unhoused siblings.

The Homeless Bill of Rights needs teeth. The small fines for violating the human rights of unhoused people in this bill might have added up to \$10,000 for the City of Providence - if this bill had been law on that day. It's a small amount of money - and I would love it to be more - but it is real money. It's an assessment of guilt against a system that will only care when it has to - and it validates the humanity of people who are too often treated as less than human and beneath the contempt of elected officials such as Rhode Island Governor Daniel McKee and Providence Mayor Brett Smiley.

If our rights as human beings mean anything to the members of this committee, you will pass this bill.



Rest In Peace, Stan Kapelewski, our Founder.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE YOUR WRITING ON THE WALL?

Submit your poems or artwork by: **Email:** streetsights@gmail.com **Regular mail:** Janice Luongo c/o Street Sights, 162 Orms Street 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

Homeless Adventures

By RockenRobin

Part one

I was homeless from the day I was born. All due to others' scorn. I can not blame anyone for my storms. People try to scare you by telling you they will curse you. I was cursed the day I was born. Named after a boy whose dreams I did destroy? All because I wasn't a boy.

Treated like an outsider, a piece of property not somebody. It wasn't due to no money. My brothers had their own hell, something they will never get to tell.

They both passed and I wished they could have held fast. That they could have followed their dreams. And never had to hear the screams.

I was the middle child but called the demon child. Who my parents or who I thought were them.

This part is still foggy. Did not like the way I looked and hated my smile. We were all slaves in a way my parents had the final say.

For years I lived in total hell abused, battered and belittled by those who supposedly loved me.

So glad I'm finally free. So much feels so far from me. I think strange things have always been my reality.

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Her Is She And She Is Me

Ms April Rogers AKA April Lahai AKA April Pearson

She has been homeless
She has been a nanny
She had her legal parental rights taken years ago
Due to her mental health issues at the time

She is a united states veteran
She has no love from her 5 birth children or
immediate family
She uses resources in the community to socialize
And remain well

She has been rich she has been poor

Her heart is big and she is spiritual She is grateful humble and blessed Her is me I am she

Wash Over Me

By Imelda Zapata Garcia

Tlaloc, pour your love over my parched face, erase disgrace torrential flow, is what I beg, for you to drown the God forsaken place with force I beseech, you cleanse man's sin, leave no trace rain your bolts upon the scourge, it is your mighty drench I embrace soak away the dust and must left upon my mask It is you alone, can wash over me to complete the task send your Spate upon all souls washing dread of ancestral sin douse, force fiercely, out the pain within in man's greatest stories, you have proven to be one to do just that you flooded plains, soaked mountain tops, left dry no spat Come now Tlaloc, I await your vengeance on my tired frown soak the sullen sultriness for good one great deluge on me please, I beg thee, fill this one fantasy vainly drop, vehemently vigor on us those who strip the soil of soul of innocence profound

World

By Mrs Ruth Doyle

Have you ever looked Up to the sky, To see the birds as They fly by.

Or had a look Into the sea. Where the fishes Swim so gracefully.

There are so Many wonders The world has to show, Just look around then Soon you will know.

The children that play Dogs who run free, And even the flowers With the old oak tree.

And as the day Turns into night, The stars appear They shine so bright.

I often wonder in Under a week, God made this world It is so unique.

The Tree Of Life

By Laura Hughes

The tree of life always stands in all of its glorious beauty. Encompassing all of the sands of time is it's wonderful duty.

No matter the time of day, whether the sun rises or sets. As the wind makes it sway, the more wondrous it gets.

Its roots and branches stand

Keeping it in place throughout

Even when life seems to go wrong, it always remains in its prime.

As humans we can always learn from the illustrious tree of life. As all of our faith and hopes burn inside of us throughout any strife...

Awareness—No Home

By Veronica Mata

All alone nowhere to go All I have is a blanket and coat, usually my clothes soaked I sit here cloaked, People passing by I watch them go by in the most usual way never a hello

Nothing to say I sit back and my tears falling as I cry What happened what have I done why has this life begun As I place my body underneath my shawl of just being cold where there is no sun using a snowbank as a bed a backpack a pillow to lay my head

A piece of bread I had saved from yesterday's meal it had quite the appeal it was something my stomach empty it feels I am cold an alone something known I have no home no place to sleep, not safe crying for some time, darkness creeps Please someone it is a crime

Passing me by all the time I want to do is cry how can you not help only deny, give me a smile a hello a time of day I promise my best to say thankyou an bless you good day

My Appearance may be different is because I have not one schillin to buy, a good pair of socks a coat a tie I am an afterthought to some it's where I come from a street of cold is people not aware some die

Life of those around of Some who do not care

How does one know the heart we lead if we do not help to feed nor home the need are that much of the greed we see Awareness of how one can be

Homeless in the darkness and cold from young to the very old Needs your help in this very Winters cold send blankets a coffee or lunch be what God has told you please feed my bunch

Your love will shine if you help what is mine your heart will be inclined to show an give to all who need you so they shall live and who are mine

Cold or warm no matter when or where homeless can be in a storm need to be found always sitting on a ground character of the mind is kind

Give from your heart to anyone your city can find alone or in despair show those people you care an you don't mind give yourself to them an please give them anything you can spare Love is you please give



If You Don't know, Now You Know By Pastor Brian Archibald

Homeless Seniors... No Help, No Hope, No Home. What's the Solution?

I have spent the majority of my life either homeless, on the brink of homelessness, (like I am now) or living in some kind of shelter. It is only by the grace of God that I have what I have right now, and the sad part about it is that I am one missed rent payment, one angry fit from my landlord, or one ugly situation that can happen in the neighborhood that I live in away from being homeless again.

As I thought about this, I began to think about all of the seniors that I have seen over the years here in Rhode Island who are destitute. They have a serious lack of resources. Almost no transportation options to get them to the places that they need to be, in safety. Their meal options are limited to soup kitchens and whatever they happen to come across during the course of the day if they're lucky.

Having to survive on a minimal disability check or social security, and having to worry about having the little that they do have taken from them because they end up getting robbed, or hustled out of that which they have been blessed to receive. Having to survive in a jungle of unhealthy environments with people who are much younger and don't have the respect for their elders that some of us had when we were younger, and nothing is being done about it.

The state is providing programs for the younger generations to get help getting educated and finding jobs. They provide options for those with mental health issues, and assist those who are dealing with addiction in their lives, but that elderly man or woman who has spent their lives being productive, contributing to society? Most of whom have never had a problem with the law, or with drugs. They are being left hung out to dry until they die. It's become impossible for them to afford the rent, because of the prices that are being charged for rents these days. There aren't enough senior facilities to house or service the growing number of Seniors living in our state.

In 2021, the State of Rhode Island had in the area of 713 seniors estimated to be homeless that ranged from the age of sixty-two and older. That's just homeless. This does not include those who are housed in permanent shelters, who by the way have to sleep on mats and cots, and have nowhere to store their belongings. Have no capacity to cook or take care of their personal things. Have to live on a time clock that tells them that they have to get up and get out, (rain, snow or otherwise).

A system that tells them that if they do not report back exactly by a certain time, they won't have a bed that night. It doesn't matter whether they have had a decent meal or not. Too bad. They have to deal with the hustle and bustle of a younger generation who, as I stated earlier in my article, don't care, or have the respect that we used to have, and many of them, (not all of them) just don't care anymore. The worst part about that is that from what I have researched, the number since twenty-twenty-one has nearly doubled.

My question is... When is this going to change? What are our city and state officials going to do about it? Are they going to continue to ignore the problem that is right in front of their faces and just wish the problem to go away by way of death or convalescent incarceration? Hell, why not just simply employ

the Soylent Green effect and just kill us all off to make room for the next gen. I don't mean to sound brash, but I feel like the realities of this situation with our seniors needs to be acknowledged by those in control, and dealt with expeditiously. Seniors are not second-class citizens.

We are the men and women who have forged a way and a future for those who are coming after us. Don't we owe them at least a modicum of respect? Don't we deserve to be able to spend the time that we have left living with whatever dignity that we have left? There are some underlying issues here that need to be dealt with, and I believe that it starts at city hall and goes all the way to the state house. God only knows that there are a lot of things that are being worked on with the homeless community at large. All I am saying is that we need to take time and show respect for the community of people who aren't as able to do for themselves, the things that they used to do when they were younger.

There are those in our younger generations that are able-bodied, and some don't even want to better themselves. Then there are those who want to do right and are struggling, but the fact of the matter is that there is a silent suffering community of men and women who are going through life without being noticed, and it's time that we woke up and did something about it. To Mayor Smiley, and Governor McKee, I would like to say that it's time. It's time to remember those who don't have the voices that they need to help support them. It's time to take notice of those who came before us and helped to build this wonderful state that we call home. It's time to make a change for our seniors...

... If you don't know, now you know.



Soul Purpose By Shelley Turner-Riley

You Did That On Purpose!

It was probably a matter of time before this subject would come up. Over the years I have heard or said it-or thought it, at least. We are usually suspicious, believing something could have, should have been avoided...

One definition of "purpose" is: "The reason for which something is done or created, or for which something exists." Some synonyms are "motive" and "intent." For example we know that in court, intent is judged; the motive seldom matters.

There continues to be ongoing discussions about events and situations which leave questions about how and why something happened. We want to know. The goal here is to acknowledge those things done "on purpose" for the benefit of others, the goals we have, and plans for a secure future. What would that look like to us?

We can look at things that can cause us to wonder: Stars, animals, plants, and to beautiful places in this world we may never visit. It is God's Creation, which we read about in Genesis. It says that "God spoke... for six days, and something happened. As a believer in "Divine Design", I am led to see God Himself as "intentional." Even about us. "And God saw that it was very good." That is us.

My words are not preaching, but to testify about that which shapes our lives and beliefs. Has what we have heard about God at some time challenged who and what God is? I.e. is He real? How does He see us? What does He want from us? Is He even "The Good Guy"? We hear many voices in life.

This triggers memories of many years ago, during my first year in college, an English course focused on Existentialism. It was so depressing. At the time I did not know Scripture well, word for word. That and other things like movies for a while pointed to "Life has no meaning". Or that God is one who must be "appeased." In other words, as a term some would use, life is a "Crapshoot." Movies were like that too, for a while. (Talk about leaving a bad taste in one's mouth?)

I had not yet read Viktor Frankl's book, "Man's Search for Meaning." Ironically it was when I returned to school years later (to a program at Salve Regina) and turned in a paper on this man, a psychiatrist who not only survived but thrived after being a prisoner of the Nazis. He was raised in a Jewish family; Though God is not mentioned

in the book, it seems Frankl grew up in the traditions and faith of his family. His theme is "purpose "—believing everyone has one. He had the conviction that those who know they have a purpose will seldom commit suicide.

Does "purpose" exist in other areas of Creation? Look around; bees have a "job"; It is shown that many animals have become "Service" or "Support" dogs, cats, monkeys, goats, horses, pigs, and birds. It was discovered that some of them exist with the mindset of being useful—having a job, task, and PUR-POSE. We humans can digest what this does for us.

Years ago a friend showed me a small passage in the Bible which is still a blessing in times of need and crisis. God has intentions for us, We are called to His loving character.

"For I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, to prosper you, and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek Me and find Me when you seek Me with all your heart." Jeremiah 29:11-13

Grace and Peace, for your search and future.

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.

Beneath the Bridge: A Reflection of Resilience By James Logan



In the shadow of life's vast bridge, I found solace in its sheltering embrace. The sturdy concrete that held countless travelers above echoed the weight of a world I yearned to join. Gazing upward, the light seemed like a distant star in a firmament I could see but not touch.

Each day, the sun traced paths I could not walk, casting beams that fractured against the edges of my concrete haven. They painted patterns of what could be on the water's surface, a canvas of light and darkness intermingling, the duality of my existence.

This underpass was not just a place of refuge but a classroom of the soul, where every resonant footstep above became a lesson in perseverance, every muffled echo a lecture on the tenacity of hope. And so, I learned to listen, not just to the cacophony of the world but to the quiet voice within that promised, "Your time will come."

Years have passed like the river that flowed beside me, relentless and unyielding. Yet, like the river, I found my way around obstacles, through narrow passageways, and over the rough terrain of circumstance.

Now, as I stand on the cusp of a horizon wide and inviting, I am not the person who once found shelter under the bridge. The struggles that once seemed like unscalable walls have become the steps I climbed to see the world from a new height.

The bridge, once a ceiling, has transformed into a launch pad from which I soar. The lessons of the river — adaptability, resilience, and the power of persistent movement — are the wings upon which I rise.

From down under to flying free, my story is not one of overcoming, but of becoming. It is a testament to the truth that our present station is not our final destination, but a temporary post from which we gather strength for the journey ahead.

The bridge will always be a part of my landscape, not as a dark patch of past hardship, but as a beautiful arch in the tapestry of my life, under which one phase of my journey began, and from which I now fly toward new beginnings. This evolution mirrors the essence of 2 Corinthians 5:17, where it is said, 'Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!' Just as the bridge represents a pivotal

point in my journey, this verse reassures me that my past does not define me; rather, it is the starting point from which I embrace my new identity, renewed and reborn in the light of my experiences. It is a testament to the transformative power of renewal, reminding us that we are continuously evolving, leaving behind the old and soaring into the new with hope and resilience.

To all my brothers and sisters still in the struggle, I pray for you in this moment, let's cherish the resilience within us, drawing strength from the promise that "those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint" (Isaiah 40:31). Hold this truth close to your heart: our current trials are merely steppingstones, sculpting us into embodiments of perseverance and courage. Let us rise, embodying the spirit of eagles, soaring towards the horizons of our unwritten tomorrows with faith as our compass and unwavering courage as our wings.

With love and solidarity, may we all embrace the light of dawn, ever resilient, ever hopeful, and forever united in our journey toward new beginnings. God Bless!



What Difference Does Easter Make in Your Life? By Pastor Linda Forsberg, Missioner of the Church Beyond the Walls

The mystic Meister Eckhart wrote, "What difference does it make that Jesus Christ was born all those years ago in Bethlehem, if he is not also born in your life and mine today?" To give it an Easter twist, we could ask ourselves, "What difference does it make that Jesus Christ rose from the dead 2000 years ago if he does not also raise us up to live in a new way as Easter people today?" What difference DOES Jesus' resurrection make in your life? Do you live in a different way because of it?

I do. I absolutely do. My favorite stories in the Bible are the stories at the end of the four Gospels, which take place after Jesus' resurrection. In all these stories Jesus appears to his closest friends and disciples, and at first, they do not recognize him. Then he says or does something and "their eyes are opened," and they DO! Mary Magdalene is weeping outside the tomb, and she thinks he is the gardener until he speaks her name! Then she realizes it is Jesus. Cleopas and Susanna were walking on the road to Emmaus, and he came along beside them and joined their conversation. It wasn't until the end of the day when they sat at the table, and he took the bread, blessed it, broke it, and gave it to them (sounds like the Eucharist, doesn't it?). We read, "Then their eyes were opened"... and later they told the others "how they recognized him in the breaking of the bread."

For forty days Jesus keeps showing up, appearing to them "on the road," when they are out fishing, when they are gathered together, sad, grieving, and afraid. He keeps showing up, in the midst of the ordinary happenings of their lives. He keeps showing them his scars in his hands, his side, so they will "see," so they will "get it," that it is really him. Different in some ways, yes, but still him. Where did Jesus "show up" in your life today? Did you recognize him? Were your eyes open? Your heart? Your mind?

At the Church Beyond the Walls, an outdoor Street Church that meets every Saturday in Burnside Park at 2 PM, Jesus shows up, week after week. Every week, before we go down to the park, we pray, "That we will see the face of God, of Christ, in all we encounter, and that we will also reflect the

face of Christ to all we encounter." Then we go to Burnside Park for worship, followed by our community meal, and our time of fellowship, being together as a beloved community in Burnside Park. At the end of the day, we come back to put our supplies away, and we have our closing time of prayer. We ask each other, "Where did you see Christ today?" Everyone in the group has a different answer. But we all saw him, we all experienced him, we all knew he was with us.

Jesus always "shows up." We might not recognize him at first. But then he says or does something, and our eyes, hearts, minds are opened, and we see him. We see him in the "breaking of the bread" of the Eucharist, and in the food we share together afterwards. We see him in the genuine caring we have for one another. We see him in the generosity we share with one another, in the word of encouragement, or strength, comfort, or hope.

Years ago when we surveyed our CBW community, we asked people, "What does the Church Beyond the Walls mean to you?" The answer we got over and over again was: "You are the one thing in my life I know I can count on because you just keep showing up."

So, yes, Easter makes a huge difference in my life, and I hope it does in yours too. Easter absolutely makes me live my life in a different way. No matter how bad things get, Easter makes me lean toward Hope. I hope because we have a God who keeps showing up. Not just in huge grandiose moments, but in the little ordinary moments. Like when we run out of food, and someone comes late, and someone else says, "Here, I'll share with you." That's where I see the face of God. In you. In this act of kindness and in that hand reaching out. In that face of compassion, and those words of strength and encouragement.

I pray that this Easter you experience a resurrection too, a transformation of your heart, of your mind, to see the many places where Jesus, where God, keeps showing up, as we, the body of Christ, the Beloved Community, keep showing up for each other. Christ is risen. He is risen indeed. Now let us rise up, in Christ, OUR resurrection, and our Life.

Everyone is invited to join us at The Church Beyond the Walls, an outdoor Street Church that meets every Saturday in Burnside Park at 2 PM.

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.

NUTRITION CROSSWORD UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND **PUZZLE** The abbreviation of benefits to provide supplemental assistance to your food bill. Eligibility and benefit amounts for food assistance is dependent on _____, expenses, resources, and number of people in the household. MyPlate has five food groups: fruits, _____, grains, dairy, and protein. Department of Human ___ _ in RI provides services including SNAP benefits, Child Care Assistance Program, energy assitance programs, and more. Go to dhs.ri.gov to The Eat Well, Be Well program offers .50 cents back on every SNAP dollar spent on fresh fruits and vegetables. Participating stores are Stop & Shop and _____ locations in Rl. For more, go to eatwellbewellri.com. To check the status of my SNAP application or 6 recertification, I can use the self-service options by calling 1-855-MY-____ and selecting option #2. You should eat at least two cups of fruit and ____ cups of vegetables daily. Proper nutrition and _____ are part of a healthy lifestyle. Answers: J. SNAP; 2. income; 5. vegetables; 4. Services; 5. Walmart; 6. RIDHS; 7. three; 8. exercise

This material was funded by USDA's 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.

CONTACT US AT STREETSIGHTS@GMAIL.COM

RHODE ISLAND MEAL SITES

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

Providence Area Meal Sites

Northern RI / Blackstone Valley

Newport County

4 pm - 5 pm Closed first Sun. of the month Food Pantry every Wednesday 9 am - Noon Providence Rescue Mission Epiphany Soup Kitchen @ St. Stephen's Church 2:30 pm - 4 pm 4 pm - 5:15 pm doors open at 3:30 pm **Providence Rescue Mission** 5 pm Victory Assembly of God Providence Rescue Mission 5 pm 3:45 pm - 5 pm Providence Rescue Mission Providence Rescue Mission Impact Center/Assembly 5 pm Reaching for the Fringe 5 pm - 6 pm Last Thurs. of the month Providence Rescue Mission City Meal Site, Inc. 4 pm - 5 pm of God 5:30 pm - 7:30 pm St Charles Church Better Lives RI 4:00 pm - 5:30 pm Salvation Army DINNER 5 pm - 6:30 pm St Patrick's 5 pm Judy's Kindness Kitchen at Crossroads (Sept to June) 10:30 am -11:00 am 11 am - 12:30 pm closed first Sat of month St Anthony Parish 1st and 3rd Sunday 12:30 - 1 pm Good Neighbors 10am - 1pm Good Neighbors 10am - 1pm Good Neighbors 10am - 1pm **Amos House** 11 am - 12:30 pm McAuley House 11:15 - 1 pm McAuley House 11:15 - 1 pm McAuley House 11:15 - 1 pm Good Neighbors 10am - 1pm **Amos House** 11 am - 12:30 pm McAuley House 11:15 - 1 pm McAuley House 11:15 - 1 pm Good Neighbors 10am - 1pm **Amos House** 11 am - 12:30 pm Amos House 11 am - 12:30 pm **Amos House** 11 am - 12:30 pm LUNCH Amos House Mathewson Fellowship Breakfast Service: 8 am - 9 am followed by Camp-style Family Breaffast 9:15 am - 10:30 am Church of the Master Meal site 15 Valley St 9 am - 10 am (Opens at 7 am) BREAKFAST McAuley House 8 am - 9:30 pm McAuley House 8 am - 9:30 pm McAuley House 8 am - 9:30 pm 8 am - 9:30 pm 8 am - 9:30 pm Amos House 7 am - 8 am Amos House 7 am - 8 am Amos House 7 am - 8 am **AcAuley House** Amos House 7 am - 8 am Amos House 7 am - 8 am McAuley House **YADNUS YADNOM YADS**BUT **MEDNESDAY YAGSAUHT FRIDAY YAGRUTAS**

	YAMNII2 YAMI	NOM	YADZIII	WEDNESDAY	YAGZGIIHT	FPIDAY	YACITITAS
DINNER	Heip the Homeless RI 5 pm - 6 pm (Pawtucket) when local shelter is closed Matthew 25 Center hosted by The River UMC 4 - 7 pm	Pawtucket Soup Kitchen 5:00 pm - 5:30 pm	Pawrtucket Soup Kitchen 5:00 pm - 5:30 pm Feed My Sheep 4:30 pm - 5:30 pm 3rd, 4th, 5th Tuesday only	Matthew 25 Center hosted by The River UMC 4 pm 7 pm Pawrucket Soup Kitchen 5:00 pm - 5:30 pm	Pawtucket Soup Kitchen 5:00 pm - 5:30 pm St. Lukes Episcopal 5 pm 1st, 3rd Thursday	Pawtucket Soup Kitchen 5:00 pm - 5:30 pm	Park Place United Church 4 pm -5 pm
LUNCH	Help the Homeless RI 12 pm - 1 pm (Bouley Field) Help the Homeless RI 1 pm - 2 pm (Pawducket- when winter shelter is open) St. Mary Anticohian Orthodox Church 12:30 pm - 1 pm (third Sunday of the month only) St George's Episcopal Church 2 pm - 3 pm	New Beginnings 11:30 am - 12:45 pm 24 Hamler Ave Woonsocket (rear entrance) Jeanne Michon 356-4066	St John The Baptist 11:30 am - 12:45 pm doors open at 9:30 am New Beginnings 11:30 am - 12:45 pm 2t Hands they Woonsocket (rear entrance) Jeanne Michon 366-4066	New Beginnings 11:30 am - 12:45 pm 24 Hamlet Ave Woonsocket (rear entrance) Jeanne Michon 356:4066	New Beginnings 113.5 am 12.45 pm 24 Hanlet Ave Woonsocket (rear entrance) Jeanne Michon 356-4066 St. Luke's Episcopal 11 am - 12 pm 2nd, 4th Thursday		Matthew 25 Center 11 am - 2 pm
BREAKFAST		Pawtucket Soup Kitchen 7:30 am - 8:00 am	Pawtucket Soup Kitchen 7:30 am - 8:00 am	Pawtucket Soup Kitchen 7:30 am - 8:00 am	Pawtucket Soup Kitchen 7:30 am - 8:00 am	Pawtucket Soup Kitchen 7:30 am - 8:00 am	Pawtucket Soup Kitchen 10:30 am - 11:00 am
	YADNUS	YAGNOM	YAGSƏUT	MEDNESDAY	YAGSAUHT	YAQIЯЭ	YAGRUTAS

12 pm every 2nd & 3rd Wednesday each month

United Baptist

MLK Center 7:30 am - 9 am

MLK Center 11:30 am - 1 pm

MLK Center 7:30 am - 9 am

Emmanuel Episcopal 5 pm first Tuesday every month

MLK Center 11:30 am - 1 pm

MLK Center 7:30 am - 9 am

Trinity Church 5 pm every 4th & 5th Monday each month

St. Joseph's 11:30 am - 1 pm

MLK Center 7:30 am - 9 am

Salvation Army 4 pm - 4:45 pm

DINNER

LUNCH

BREAKFAST

PLEASE NOTIFY STREET SIGHTS IF YOU WOULD LIKE YOUR INFORMATION ADDED.

Providence Rescue Mission 5 pm

St Edward Kitchen 12 - 1pm (2nd & 4th Sat starting 10/18)

Closed July and August Contact: Joyce Kennedy 353-1476

Church beyond the Walls

2 pm

Community Baptist

Salvation Army 4 pm - 4:45 pm

MLK Center 7:30 am - 9 am

CONTACT US AT STREETSIGHTS@GMAIL.COM