



# Poor People's United Fund

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Boston's Spare Change Community

Fall 2013



*“Compassion, my friends, is not a simpering slogan or a lachrymose litany of smiley faces. It is, I suggest, a discipline-one that demands action based on the idea of suffering together.” (Kip Tiernan)*

*Dear Sisters and Brothers,*

Being people of faith ain't easy for sure. Because it means we keep on going no matter how bad things may look. Kip's message is clear about that.

Just when you think things couldn't possibly get any worse and you think you couldn't get any madder.... We at PPUF are full of fury! Under the radar of all the noise of Obama's problematic website and Red Sox fever ... comes a wallop from our MA legislators in the form of "An Act to Foster Economic Independence".

One of its new policies would require photographs on the card people use to purchase food. The ACLU says "Requiring recipients of cash benefits and food stamps (SNAP) to use EBT cards with their photographs on them would stigmatize people who receive government assistance, single out poor shoppers for scrutiny by store clerks, run afoul of federal regulations requiring equal treatment for SNAP recipients, burden businesses, and waste taxpayer money."

Another of its policies would require proof applicants are actively seeking a job before getting any cash assistance. Advocates report that anyone applying for cash assistance would automatically be turned down the first time they apply. Then the applicant would have to wait 3 months before applying again gathering proof of a job search during that period. How are people to survive during those 3 months?

We don't have Newt to blame or Mitt or Bill Weld for this one...slamming the door on access to welfare benefits falls squarely on the shoulders of our MA Democratic House.

With the number of homeless families in Massachusetts seeking shelter in hotels and motels hitting an all-time high of 2,038 and with the reality of one in seven people in our state relying on food stamps how could our legislators possibly decide it would be a good idea to curtail access to welfare benefits?

As if living in a motel room with small children isn't bad not enough- think about the location of most motels. Near a highway. Isolated. No supermarkets to buy food. No cooking allowed. Many of these

homeless families are also facing hunger because they have no access to food. That should make us all cringe at any point in time.... but especially during Thanksgiving season...

There are frightening increases in human suffering all around us. The response thus far has been less than compassionate. "George Steiner, the Holocaust essayist, tells us that tragedy becomes possible when cultures become less rational in behavior and belief." We can certainly see this in the U.S today. I read one person's online response to those of us who seek justice for poor people, "Wake up and realize that all poor people are lazy and everyone could find a well paying job if they really wanted to!"

In spite of these cruel attitudes in the legislature and the general public there are throngs of dedicated advocates who jump into action in order to mitigate untold hardships being visited on people whose only crime is that they are poor. PPUF's Georgia and PPUF friend Vicky are among those keeping a vigilant eye on the development of policies that will negatively impact poor people. They keep us connected to the prophetic hope that people like us can make a difference. Though it's easy to get discouraged--- we don't have that luxury. People are counting on us...harsh realities are being created for them by those in power.



Hanukkah will be celebrated on the same day as Thanksgiving this year. And though there is more to this Jewish holiday than 8 days of gift giving, it is still safe to say that the holiday reminds us that we must safeguard our spiritual homes and keep the flame of compassion glowing. One way to do that is to make sure you talk to your legislator about maintaining benefits to the thousands of people suffer the indignities of poverty.

Thanks to all of you who have helped us over the years. We could still use your help as poor people need as many voices as can be gathered on their behalf.

You are part of our lives and give us hope. As we move toward Thanksgiving we move forward in gratitude for you.

In Struggle and Hope,

*Georgia, Margaret and Fran*

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## WHAT KINDS OF CALLS DO WE GET AT PPUF?

Over the summer and Fall, we received more calls than usual, including many new callers. We heard from callers who need help with security deposits, moving expenses, rent, utilities. Often these callers had some unexpected expense, such as a car repair or medical cost, that set them back on payment of rent or utilities. One caller, who typified many, referred to herself as "financially embarrassed." She had applied to twelve agencies to avoid shutdown of her electricity; no agency could help. Another caller, a single parent with five children, was facing immediate eviction if she didn't come up with an additional one hundred dollars for rent. Because she had received state help for housing a year ago she would not be eligible again for another year, and she had found no other agency that could help. We refer callers as best we can, and occasionally we are able to help, but we also lack funds for this kind of expense.



## Compassion is a Discipline

by Georgia Mattison

In our summer newsletter we reported on how recent welfare “reform” legislation approved in the state Senate further undermines an already battered benefit. Fortunately, there is a large Massachusetts Welfare Coalition that has for years worked relentlessly at the State House to represent cash assistance recipients, the majority of whom are children. The group never let up in their opposition to the Senate bill, whose most draconian provision required families to document a job search before they applied for the benefit. This bill has now traveled to the House for approval. A group from the coalition is methodically meeting with every representative, sometimes several times. It is encouraging that no matter the setbacks, losses, and bad press, this coalition persists. We visited a representative in his office to educate him as to the effects of the Senate’s new requirement of documenting a job search. The group pointed out that the same requirement adopted in Pennsylvania resulted in 8 out of 10 applicants being denied. While those applying for benefits want to find work, documenting a search that doesn’t result in a job is difficult. The other onerous new requirement would be a new disability standard that according to Naomi Meyer from Greater Boston Legal Services would be twelve times more severe than the current one which exempts recipients from the work requirement. Jewish Vocational Services and ABCD have also been active in advocating for recipients on the Senate bill and they have also urged that the eighty percent cut in education and training money be restored.

Equally, there are other coalitions like the Food SNAP Improvement Coalition, which has been tireless in responding to attacks on the program in Massachusetts and in Congress. Despite their efforts, we now have the Photo ID on the EBT card, an emphatic stigmatization of Food Stamp recipients.

The coalition had visited all members of Congress and the Statehouse to stave off massive cuts and the photo ID. Without their advocacy, the SNAP situation would no doubt be worse.

Thankfully, we also have the Coalition for the Homeless, a strong organization that works with the Massachusetts legislature to increase emergency shelter in the face of an overwhelming increase in homelessness. This group made some headway in the last legislative session with the truly dangerous requirement that applicants had to show that they were staying in a place unfit for human habitation before they could even apply for emergency shelter. Some additional funds were added.

The recent government shutdown for seventeen days put safety net programs in great jeopardy. Funding had to be borrowed from state reserves to keep open the SNAP and other food programs that are entirely federally funded, and it isn’t yet clear whether funding will be repaid.

Advocates who have been around for many years remember a similar time in the 1970’s. During that decade wages were leveling off while prices were going up, especially for fuel. It became clear that



*photo credit: Ellen Shub*

*Continued on page 4...*

*PPUF Fall'13 (3)*

## **BIO LAB UPDATE: October, 2013 – Stop the Bio-Terror Lab**

**The Fight Continues ..... It isn't over till it's over** (by Vicky Steinitz)

Approval of research on deadly pathogens at the NEIDL, the BU Bioweapons lab, is not a done deal. Despite Federal Chief Judge Saris' decision that the federal Risk Assessment complies with federal environmental review requirements, a number of steep hurdles remain for the lab's proponents. **The Coalition to Stop the Bioterror Lab is determined to make sure that dangerous Levels 3 and 4 research will never be permitted at the BU lab.**

Until Nov. 5th, the Safety Net and the Coalition is focusing on the Boston municipal elections. The next Mayor of Boston and City Council have the power to oppose deadly research in levels 3 and 4. The two candidates for Mayor have very different positions.. Marty Walsh has serious concerns about the lab while John Connolly is a supporter. Here are their statements as published on Boston.com .

Marty Walsh:

"As mayor I would oppose the Biosafety Level-4 (BSL-4) laboratory at the Boston University Medical Campus in the South End. A laboratory handling dangerous diseases and pathogens like Ebola, smallpox, and anthrax, which cannot be cured or contained if there were to be an outbreak, has no place in such a populous neighborhood. BU's Medical Campus has 50,000 residents living within a mile of its laboratories. An outbreak would be an immediate threat to the patients and staff at nearby Boston Medical Center, as well as to Boston's many homeless citizens that receive services at shelters and service agencies only a few hundred feet away from the laboratory. The Boston Marathon attack showed us how much devastation can be caused by a couple of individuals with homemade weapons in a densely populated area. The damage that could result from a terrorist gaining access to dangerous material in a BSL-4 laboratory, which exists in a similarly populated area, is unthinkable. As mayor, I will ensure that Boston remains on the cutting edge of medical research by partnering with biotech companies, hospitals, colleges, and universities. Boston can continue its consistent track record of bold innovation through these partnerships, and possibly even allow for a BSL-4 laboratory if there is a safer plan and the right location for it, but we cannot risk our safety by carelessly pursuing these benefits."

**John Connolly:**

"I believe this advanced research presents an opportunity for job creation and research that may lead to groundbreaking medical breakthroughs. Now we must ensure that BU takes all steps necessary and works with the community and the city government to make sure the facility is safe."

**City Council:**

Seven affirming City Council votes will pass a resolution calling for a ban on the proposed BU Bio-Terror Level 4 research on Albany St. in Roxbury. To date, four sitting councilors have gone on record in opposition to Level 4 research. There is a good chance of reaching the magic number 7 in the Council elected in November. Thus far, seven of the eight at-large candidates as well as ten of the District candidates have told us they oppose BSL4 research.at the NEIDL.

**State Court Appeal:**

There is also a pending appeal of the Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs' decision regarding the adequacy of the Supplemental Final Environmental Impact Review. There is a hearing on that case in the State Superior Court on Dec. 11th. We are confident that the certification will be vacated given the court's earlier decision.

**Action Steps:** 1. Support Marty Walsh and let your friends and family know that he strongly opposes the Level 4 biolab. 2. Find out where City Council candidates stand on the lab. Ask them to sign the Ban statement and contact [safetynetox@yahoo.com](mailto:safetynetox@yahoo.com) with their response 3. Attend the state court hearing on **Dec. 11th at 2 PM in Ct Rom 1017**, 3 Pemberton Square, Boston. 4. Keep hope alive: we can stop the most dangerous elements of the lab. PPUF supports these actions.

*Compassion....continued from page 3*

people could either pay for food or pay for heat, the heat and eat crisis. We were also in a recession. Sound familiar? The homeless were visible in large numbers for the first time, mostly men but also women. Kip Tiernan with help from Fran founded Rosie's Place, the first women's shelter in the country. As more and more people showed up at food pantries, Kip and Georgia founded the Boston Food Bank.

The situation today resembles more and more the 1970's in terms of homelessness and hunger, but today is a lot worse for Welfare families. In the 1970s, the Welfare program participation rate had increased thanks to outreach by advocates. This program was more visible than other programs at the time and received a lot of bad press about fraud and abuse, always with the broad implication that African-Americans were the majority of beneficiaries and that those on welfare didn't deserve the benefits. No matter how many letters advocacy organizations wrote to the press or how many statistics were provided countering these myths, it was to no avail. Currently after erroneous fraud and abuse attacks on the Food Stamp EBT, advocates tried to publicize the fact that fraud is less than 1%, also to no avail.

The 1970s saw an expansion of the SNAP, WIC, school and summer meals programs as well as the shelter system, thanks in large part to advocates. However, the savage press attacks against Welfare in the 70s was one of the factors leading to the drastically limited Cash Assistance five year life time benefit passed by Congress in 1996. The current doubling of the SNAP program from the recession has made it a target for the almost déjà vu disabling attacks. However, those who fight for the rights of the poor will continue the struggle to preserve and strengthen benefits. As Kip always said: real compassion is a discipline.

***Donate Your Spare Change to PPUF  
At TD Bank Branches***

PPUF has opened an account at TD Bank that provides a convenient way for you to **donate your spare change to PPUF.**

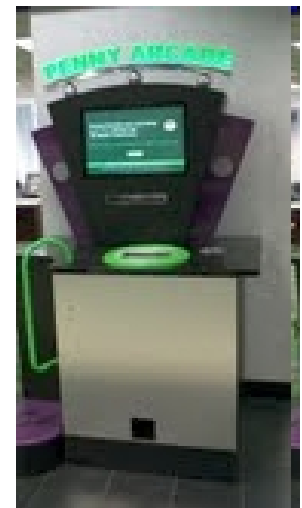
**Just take the nickels, dimes and pennies** that have been hanging around on your dresser and falling between the seats on your couch and take them to a TD Bank branch with a Penny Counter.

You can deposit them directly into PPUF's account!

All you need is our account number which is **8250954845.**



TD Banks have an arcade where you just pour your spare change into the machine, it counts the change and prints out a receipt. Take the receipt and account number to the teller and he/she will deposit into the PPUF account. Once you send us the deposit slip we will send you a letter of thanks you can use with IRS to receive a tax deduction. See a list of some area TD Bank Branches on the enclosed insert!





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645 Boylston Street  
Boston MA 02116

Non-Profit Organization

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### **In Memoriam Joan Ogilvie**

Joan was a long time friend our volunteer bookkeeper for 15 years .... from about 1983 until she moved to Arizona in 1998. In those early years, Joan provided the grounding Kip and I needed to be able to run around the city to do the work of PPUF. And did we ever need grounding! Joan developed a bookkeeping system for ppuf, answered phones and wrote thank you notes. She did all this because she was a person of great compassion and believed in PPUF's work. She knew poor people were getting a raw deal and she wanted to contribute in any way she could to alleviate that suffering. Joan was both sophisticated and down to earth so she could engage anyone in conversation. We had many discussions about politics, theology and art. We also had a lot of good hardy laughs. Thanks, Joan.



Our condolences to her husband Francis, and her children Ken, Nancy and Beth. Joan will forever remain in our hearts.

( Friends and family of Joan made generous gifts to PPUF in her name. If you wish to make a contribution in Joan's name, we will send a note to her family letting them know)

## Spare Change for PPUF

*Partial list of TD Banks in MA ---- Poor People's United Fund - Account Number 8250954845*

### A

TD Bank - - 61 Main Street Andover 978-684-6557  
TD Bank - - 880 Massachusetts Avenue Arlington 781-641-0050  
TD Bank - - Shaw's Plaza, 361 Pond Street Ashland 508-881-6894  
TD Bank - - 2156 Main Street Athol 978-249-3248  
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TD Bank - - 175 The Great Road Bedford 781-275-7410  
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TD Bank - - 1270 Massachusetts Avenue Cambridge 617-576-8612  
TD Bank - - 235 Alewife Brook Parkway Cambridge 617-498-3294  
TD Bank - - 95 Washington Street Canton 781-830-5610  
TD Bank - - 41 Drum Hill Road Chelmsford 978-459-5850  
TD Bank - - 457 Broadway Chelsea 617-884-2650  
TD Bank - - 59 Walden Street Concord 978-318-7950

### D

TD Bank - - 1255 Bridge Street Dracut 978-459-5860

### E

TD Bank - - 465 N Main Street East Longmeadow 413-748-8535  
TD Bank - - 15 Martin Street Essex 978-768-6060

### F

TD Bank - - 1265 Worcester Road (Route 9) at Temple Street Framingham 508-879-7400  
TD Bank - - 15 Park Street/74 Concord Street Framingham 508-424-7126  
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TD Bank - - 770 Water Street Framingham 508-877-1600

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TD Bank - - 224 Washington Street Gloucester 978-282-3414

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### L

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**TD Bank list Coninued.....**

**TD Bank - - 350 Westford Street Lowell 978-459-5800**

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**M**

**TD Bank - - 476 Main Street Melrose 781-662-2007**

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**N**

**TD Bank - - 95 Highland Avenue Needham 781-444-8333**

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**TD Bank - - 51 State Street Newburyport 978-463-7105**

**TD Bank - - 1197 Centre Street Newton 617-244-0559**

**TD Bank - - 108 Main Street North Andover 978-684-6612**

**TD Bank - - Routes 114 & 125; 451 Andover Street North Andover 978-689-7777**

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**TD Bank - - 10 Main Street Peabody 978-538-3309**

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**TD Bank - - 635 Lowell Street Peabody 978-538-3333**

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**TD Bank - - 470 Main Street Reading 781-944-7677**

**TD Bank - - 411 Broadway Revere 781-284-2650**

**TD Bank - - 174 Newburyport Turnpike Rowley 978-948-7736**

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**TD Bank - - 380 Washington Street, Playhouse Square (Route 16) Wellesley 781-235-1005**

**TD Bank - - 999 Worcester Street Wellesley 781-237-9100**

**TD Bank - - 280 Montvale Avenue Woburn 781-376-0100**

**TD Bank - - 1227 Main Street Worcester 508-793-4188**

**TD Bank - - 295 Park Avenue Worcester 508-752-2584**

**TD Bank - - 370 Main Street Worcester 508-368-6529**

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