



Poor People's United Fund

645 Boylston Street
Boston, MA 02116
(617) 262-5922
e-mail: fran@ppuf.org

Boston's Spare Change Community

Fall 2017

I have this hope. I have this rage. I have this dream that somehow we are going to make it together, you and I; that we will transform society. Kip Tiernan

IS THERE ANYTHING AT ALL TO SMILE ABOUT? YES!

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

So much has happened since our last newsletter: US withdrawal from the Paris Accord, terror attack on London Bridge, Orlando Shooting, escalation of Opioid epidemic, Officials charged in Flint water crisis, terror attack in Paris, numerous attempts to repeal Obama Care, North Korean 'Issues', Las Vegas... Then for good measure, we can add North Korea and unending Presidential Tweets. It all makes us want to stick our heads in the ground and never look up.

But in the midst of all this, there is **some good news!** The Massachusetts Legislature has **restored funding for housing** and services for unaccompanied youth and young adults experiencing homelessness, overriding the Governor's elimination of funding. Also, we are **gaining momentum** on overturning the policy that requires many families to first stay in places not meant for human habitation before being able to access family shelter.



PPUF **completed** its updating of the late **Betty Reid Mandell's** *Survival Tips* which provides information on housing, food, fuel assistance, Christmas gifts, and more... It's posted on ppuf's website. (www.ppuf.org) Hard copies will be distributed to advocates around Boston.

The **woman's march** made visible the fact that people are not going to stand by idly while those who don't care much for compassion or justice run rough shod over our democracy. We were able to cheer several times as we all kept our eyes on the prize **beating back** several Republican **assaults on Obamacare**.

After the white nationalists came out of the dark in Charlottesville people have been showing up in great numbers to stand against white supremacy and racism. Lots more to do.

This past summer fifteen hundred **more delegates** than last year showed up to be a part of the Democratic Convention in Worcester!

With your help and the help of the Freeman Foundation PPUF has been able to assist families and individuals get some extra food in the house. We expanded our reach to a local school where some children, dependent on school lunches were going home to no food on the weekends. Their teachers help doing what they can. PPUF has joined them in the effort to make sure kids have something to eat.

Things are tough for lots of our neighbors so PPUF is trying to do more.

In the early morning hours there are dozens of people sleeping in the nooks and crannies of the Boston Public Library, area churches and store fronts. When no more of those spaces are available then people will sleep in the middle of the sidewalk. PPUF is working with its allies to make sure that those who could make things better don't forget about the ones who have fallen off the edge.

Again with your help we have been able to help folks with some of the basics of life ... back rent, keeping the lights on, keeping the heat on. But to do this we need your help. Believe me we know that lots of organizations are asking you for help and the good Lord knows that our donors are not related to the Bill Gateses of the world. But if you are able to send some spare change our way, we can keep some of our neighbors from falling off the edge. If you have already contributed this season, THANK YOU!

So if you spend a lot of time worrying about the state of our Democracy, that will probably not stop. But **take heart**. There are thousands and hopefully millions who feel the same way and are stepping up to meet the challenges. Many of them are young people!

Thank you for all you are and do for the people around you and beyond.

One more bit of good news. **Kip's memorial** has taken a step forward. The fabricator (person who actually builds the structure) has been hired! The delays and bumps in the road have resulted in an increase in the cost. If you want to send a gift to Rosie's Place to help with Kippy's memorial, be sure to indicate on the check that you wish your donation be directed to help pay for the memorial. Or send the check to ppuf and we will be certain Rosie's gets it.

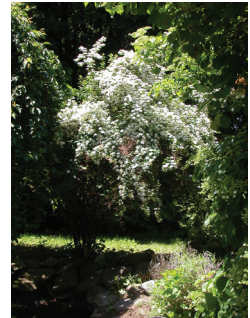
Ways to Help PPUF

- * Purchase a copy of Urban Meditations for Christmas or Chanukah
- * Consider a monthly gift- we can send you envelopes for this purpose
- * Or you can give online through www.firstgiving.com then write in Poor People's United Fund.
- * Don't forget when buying items/gifts through **AMAZON**. On your first visit to AmazonSmile (smile.amazon.com), you are prompted to select a charitable organization from a list of eligible organizations. You can change your selection at any time.

Environmental Victories

Although the Trump administration is dismantling regulations and laws that protect our air, land and water at the national level, at the state-level Massachusetts continues to make strides toward a greener and healthier future.

Thanks to supportive state policies, we're replacing dirty energy with cleaner sources. In May, 2017, the last coal-fired plant in Ma closed down. Meanwhile, solar energy has grown more than 300-fold in Massachusetts since 2007. Already, Massachusetts has nearly twice as much solar installed as Texas and more than three times as much as Florida. Now a group of organizations is urging the City of Boston to join other cities like Atlanta and San Diego to commit to getting 100% of its energy from renewable energy by 2050. Four Massachusetts communities—Salem, Cambridge, Framingham and Leverett—have already made the commitment.



Poor people are particularly at risk for environmental harm. Pollutants are more likely to be concentrated in poor neighborhoods, and global warming, as we have seen from Hurricane Katrina and Harvey, has an outsized impact on poor communities.

Now more than ever, we must advocate for clean air and water and work to reduce the pollution that fuels global warming. In Massachusetts, we must continue to lead and build on the progress we've made.

Sin DACA Sin Miedo

The young immigrants who sat in at Trump Tower the day after Atty. Gen. Sessions announced the end of DACA were holding signs with this message. You may have seen the signs and wondered what they meant. Sin Miedo – Without Fear. Sin DACA – Without the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program. These protesters are the bravest I can remember since watching the children of Selma confront the police and their dogs in Alabama in the 60's. These undocumented youth were announcing to the world that they would not be silenced, that they would continue to demand their rights, no matter the price.



And the price could be very high. Those arrested at the demonstration face criminal charges which could result in deportation. We do not know how successful the struggle to keep DACA alive will be, but we do know that by their actions these youth are sending a message to the world that hiding and living in fear is not the only option. They inspire us as do all those who take great personal risks in pursuit of justice.

The “Sin DACA, Sin Miedo” campaign is the brainchild of COSECHA, a relatively new immigrant rights group with a far reaching agenda. Cosecha is “a nonviolent movement fighting for permanent protection, dignity, and respect for all immigrants in the United States.” With its bold street actions and long term strategy, COSECHA is striving to mobilize millions of Americans in hopes of building a much broader immigrant rights movement than has previously existed. Their ultimate goal is a seven day immigrant strike which will demonstrate that the United States cannot function without the undocumented community.

These are very difficult days. We must salute the creative activists who are keeping hope alive.

We are Winning Significant Battles for the Poor

by Georgia Mattison

Massachusetts has a large Welfare Coalition that has for years worked relentlessly at the State House to represent cash assistance recipients, the majority of whom are poor children. The group never let up in their opposition to the Governor's proposal to reduce the number of families who receive state disability by counting their Social Security Income SSI in their calculations. Had this passed, it would have prevented 6900 families from receiving the benefits, families who barely survive even with the disability benefit. Coalition efforts resulted in an override of Governor Baker's veto by the House and Senate. The override vote also included restoration of a small increase to the Children's Clothing Allowance given annually in September.

Currently the 100 member coalition is working tirelessly to eliminate the practice of denying benefits to children born during the time a family is on Welfare -- the "Lift the (Family) Cap" campaign. The estimated 1250 babies currently denied coverage still have to be fed, diapered and clothed, often to the detriment of other children in the family. Events at the State House this past spring, Diaper Day, and this fall, Hats and Mittens Day, publicize to legislators the essentials that are not available to these children. After many visits to House and Senate members, support is there to pass this change into law.



Rachel with Debroah Harris of MA Law Reform

There are other coalitions like the Food SNAP Improvement Coalition, which has been persistent in responding to attacks on the program in the State and in Congress. The Food Stamp program just celebrated its 40th anniversary of responding to food insecurity during economic displacements and disasters. The Coalition monitors the implementation in Massachusetts and has worked fiercely this year to support reauthorization in Congress.



Georgia & Lynnette

Most recently, the Coalition worked with the Department of Transitional Assistance DTA to create a separate unit for the Elderly and the Disabled. This unit now makes the benefit much more accessible to these beneficiaries, many of whom were not receiving Food Stamps. With its separate phone line and case workers, the unit is able to respond more quickly to problems of access. The Coalition members bring information about access problems to DTA from food pantries and other food programs around the state. Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless also has had some victories. IT convinced the legislature to increase emergency shelter funds in the face of an overwhelming increase in homelessness. This group also made some headway in the last legislative session to eliminate the 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.

In addition, in this onslaught against poor people, the Affordable Care Act ACA (Obama Care) was in danger of being replaced with a block grant for the Medicaid program, in effect reducing or eliminating coverage to 31 million people. This happened to Cash Assistance in 1996 as it was converted into a block grant to the states. The states then had control over the expenditures. Over the years the benefit has almost disappeared. Massachusetts is one of the few states where it hasn't disappeared even though the case load is a sixth of what it was in 1996. (see PPUF video on the danger of block grants)

Beginning last January a national coalition, led primarily by the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities CBPP, formed to defend

Continued on page 4 ...

(Battles for Poor continued from page 3)

Medicaid. CPBB had webinars weekly to give information and strategic suggestions to pressure Republican legislators. Constituents were organized to visit their representatives with stories about the consequences of repealing the ACA. In Massachusetts we convinced our republican Governor Charlie Baker to publically condemn this replacement of the ACA. Those of us with solid democratic delegations began contacting Republicans and thanking those Republicans who voted against the proposed bills. With this enormous effort, the last of four bills was defeated in September

Currently, Trump's attempts to sabotage the ACA seem so dangerous that many Congressional Republicans do not support them. Changing the law will require an extensive rule-making process. Massachusetts has already filed a lawsuit against the Trump administration as have many other states. The fight goes on.

Kip said real compassion is a hard discipline. This article gives credit to the many persevering advocates who continue to fight for poor people.

Happy Thanksgiving!

*"While we continue to make some strides, we still have a long way to go. But then the pilgrimage of faith must always be made in the company of others.
We will continue to walk to justice together." (Kip)*

Mitch Snyder Award

As part of First Church in Cambridge's 30th anniversary celebration the Church held the TheDoris Beauvais Luncheon and Lecture to memorialize the life and leadership of the late Doris Beauvais, a member of First Church who played a significant role in First Church's acceptance of the challenge to offer shelter to the homeless.

At that celebration on October 29th, Fran received a Mitch Snyder award in recognition of her work on poverty and homelessness.

Mitch Snyder was passionate about the plight of homeless people. He became a national figure by giving the movement in support of homeless people a public voice and face throughout the 1980s.





Poor People's United Fund
645 Boylston Street
Boston MA 02116

Non-Profit Organization

U.S. POSTAGE

PAID

Boston, Mass.

PERMIT NO. 57477

Fundraiser for PPUF

PPUF is very excited about the upcoming concert offered by the trumpeter-composer Mark Harvey and his Aardvark Jazz Orchestra. Come hear the extraordinary jazz carols and music that form the heartbeat of their historic 45th Annual Christmas concert.



Partial proceeds will benefit PPUF, for which we are very proud!!

We look forward to seeing you on
December 9, 2017 at Emmanuel Church,
15 Newbury Street, Boston
from 7:30-9pm!!

Admission: \$20

Information: 617-452-3205 or
617-776-8778

<http://www.aardvarkjazz.com>