



Poor People's United Fund

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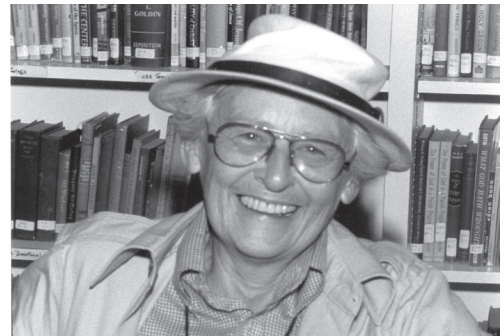
Boston's Spare Change Community

Fall 2022

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

Since we last were in touch the nation has moved from concerns about the pandemic to concerns about war, inflation, gun violence and a mid-term election. Throughout the pandemic our concerns about autocrats were not far from our minds. We narrowly missed a serious coup. This fear remains with us. The special committee has demonstrated that it was not an unorganized mob at the door but rather an orchestrated attempt to interfere with the peaceful transfer of power.

We have become painfully aware of the fragile nature of our democracy and are doing what we can to protect it. Yet, when talking with people I can hear weariness. That is why I put a picture of Kippy on the front page of the newsletter. She was relentless in the struggle for justice. Remembering her spirit bolsters mine. Maybe it will do the same for you.



PPUF continues to join the efforts of Mass Coalition for the Homeless, Lift the Kids, and Mass Law Reform Institute on issues of Hunger, Homelessness. We continue to distribute over 200 Stop and Shop gift cards per month to people in need of food and to help people with utility bills. We identified a newly formed organization in need of gift cards. New Beginnings provides support to women who are reentering community life after time in prison.

In the midst of hurricane destruction and the ongoing war in Ukraine, how about some good news? A few months ago a book about Kip was released. It is a wonderful children's book written by a woman who had volunteered at Rosie's Place for several years, **Christine McDonnell**. The book is called *Sanctuary*. I was impressed by how well the author and illustrator captured Kip's loving and formidable spirit. If you have children in your life, pick up a copy or two. Maybe donate a copy to your local library to help insure Kip's legacy.



Please consider making a donation to PPUF. We know that you know that we will use it well. And Please cross fingers and toes after going to voting booth.

In Struggle and Hope,

Fran, Margaret and Georgia.

In Memory of the strong ones --people who always pushed the envelope

Betty Commerford... She worked as an Adult Psychiatric Social Worker at the Massachusetts Mental Health Hospital for most of her professional life. In addition, Betty was a skilled mediator, and fierce neighborhood advocate, working to create affordable housing for Mission Hill residents. Betty was one of the founders of the Gurney Street Affordable Housing Development, The Mission Hill Housing Services, as well as The Boston Self Help Center. In addition, Betty was an active member of her beloved Rindge, NH community. She was a member of the Rindge Crime Watch and Emerson Pond Improvement Association, where she held many positions. She was also a regular participant and contributor in town meetings and planning boards.

Peg Doherty... Peg brought her considerable Irish wit and intellect to bear on any issue she dealt with. She cared a great deal about poor and homeless people and supported and encouraged Kip and Rosie's Place for many years. She was a woman of integrity and generosity and could never close her eyes to someone who was in need of help.

Jean Entine... Jean was a force. She spent forty years working in the non-profit sector as a progressive activist. She was the Executive Director of Women for Economic Justice and the Boston Women's Fund and Interim Executive Director of the Island Affordable Housing Fund on Martha's Vineyard. She also served as Interim Development Director of the Boston Architectural Center. Jean has served on a number of local, state and national boards. Most recently she served on the board of Jewish Voice for Peace, the Algebra Project and Grassroots International. A sampling of past board work includes Political Research Associates (secretary 1999-2004), Freedom House, Asian Taskforce on Domestic Violence, American Civil Liberties Union (treasurer 1989-1991), and the Cambridge Peace Commission (vice chair 1988-1992). She has also served on the Advisory Boards of the Center for Popular Economics, Neighbor to Neighbor, and the ACLU.

Jean is the recipient of several awards including the "Changing the Face of Philanthropy" award from the Women's Funding Network, a "Peace and Justice" award from the Cambridge Peace Commission and the "Lifetime Achievement" award from Rosie's Place.

Curtis Jones... Curtis was a deep analytical and creative thinker, who brought together his knowledge and experience in the arts, education, psychology, sociology, anthropology, history, economics, and politics to foster positive change. He worked tirelessly to use the power of art and music to promote economic and social justice. His legacy lives on in the thousands of children and adults he inspired to think in new ways about their power to change the world."

Dolores Pickett--- Here are some thoughts from her friends... She was a storyteller; a truth-teller. A living historian. She lived breathed & walked true justice. She dropped gems into the hearts of others. She pushed herself, pushed me, pushed us and made us better. Dogged. Stubborn. Great insight. Incurable romantic. Loving. Ended conversations with I love you.

Old South Church Pastor Retires

Nancy Taylor, senior minister at Old South Church for 17 years, has retired. Nancy has heaped many kindnesses on PPUF over the years. We are enormously grateful for the ways she joined us in our efforts to seek justice for poor and homeless people. Copley Square is 'home' to many who find themselves unable to find housing. Nancy made sure Old South responded to their needs as best they could. After the bridge to Long Island was closed and cut access to shelter, Old South opened a space in the church where people could come during the day to get warmth and food.

Nancy is a person of great faith and was a leader in Boston's religious and civic life. She was a gifted preacher and a friend to PPUF. We wish her well and send her off with a big Thank you, NANCY.



Supermarket Gift Card Stories

Here are two examples of organizations that receive a share of 2400 gift cards PPUF distributes each year

Hawthorne Youth and Community Center, Inc in Roxury has been around for almost 50 years. We started as a place for youth to find positive activities and be a convening space for the community. We are still providing those services in addition to introducing youth and others to the joys of urban agriculture. The COVID outbreak provided us with an opportunity to share our produce with our seniors and others. In addition to the fresh food we were able to supplement diets with **Stop and Shop gift cards** generously given by PPUF. They



have been consistent in their willingness to support our efforts from the start. It has made a difference for the 60 families we have been able to support over these two chaotic years. Food insecurity has always been an issue in BIPOC communities. Partners like PPUF have been powerful allies in this work.

One Young Woman's Story

by Claire Cassidy, Nurse

Ellie, is 19 years old, and has been in and out of foster care due to her parents' inability to parent, related to : mental illness and use of multiple substances. From there, Ellie found herself bouncing from one residential program to another. As you can imagine, mental health care became inconsistent, primarily due to the # of placements over varying amounts of time, along with careless and incomplete record keeping.

Additionally, Ellie was diagnosed with an array of psychiatric illnesses; ADHD, ODD and Bipolar Disorder. Fortunately, we were able to assist her in finding a psychiatrist willing to listen as well as prescribe, and after a couple of tries, found what we believed was the best option for her. Once stable on medication, Ellie realized she needed additional help. We were able to get her hooked into Bridge over Troubled Water which assisted her in obtaining MAss ID, Birth Certificate and Job Training. Given she was not fully employed, and with limited income, the **Stop and Shop Gift Cards** were essential, affording her the opportunity to feed and care for herself independently. During this time, Ellie still wanted to make her own decisions around housing. She believed that she neither wanted or needed assistance in this area. Given her trusting nature which is generally an asset, at times, it also undermined her ability to make the best decisions, and sometimes left her in potentially unsafe situations.

Finally, Ellie was able to find stable housing under the auspices of Bridge. Currently she lives with 5 other young women in supportive housing in Mattapan. She is working nearly full time and looking for additional hours, and possibly another part time job. The Stop and Shop Cards continue to be helpful as her rent and telephone bills consume a large portion of her salary. Ellie is a great kid, kind, responsible and hardworking.

Welfare Coalition Accomplishments -October 2022- report by Georgia Mattison

We lobbied the legislature to increase welfare benefits by another 10 percent, the third increase in three years. The Latest 10 percent began October 1st. Also on the same date, the clothing allowance was increased from \$350 to \$400. The concern is that the increases do not cover the cost of inflation.

New Beginnings Reentry Services

The mission of New Beginnings Reentry is to work to reduce recidivism by advocating for and providing services to women who are reentering local neighborhoods and communities. Since our Grand opening on April 19th, 2022 supported by our Congresswoman Ayanan Pressley and other dignitaries, we are proud to say we are now open and fully functioning! We have four participants that are adjusting well in our Reentry Program, our Staff are fully operational as we are a 24 hour Residential program and we are hoping to fill the other 6 beds soon!

We recently had a visit from the Squad plus one, for which we are so immensely grateful. We are super excited and inspired by this extraordinary show of support by our Congresswomen!!! We are exceptionally grateful for our Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley for choosing **New Beginnings Reentry Services** as a model that services our sisters' society often throws away!

Participants learn to express feelings appropriately, improving their social skills and relationships while strengthening the innumerable roles they play in their personal and professional lives. There has been a discovery that those who received drama therapy show a significant improvement in their self-image, self-esteem, and self-discipline.



Please visit <https://www.newbeginningsreentryservices.org/> to learn more!

How to Apply for Home Heating Assistance

We have all heard by now it is going to be more expensive to heat our homes this winter. If this is going to severely impact you or a member of your family, here is some information about how to sign up for LOW INCOME HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE.

An organization called ABCD does an excellent job providing information about Massachusetts' heating assistance programs.

See their website abcd.org/service/fuel-assistance or call their main office 617.357.6012 They provide information about eligibility guidelines and how renters and homeowners can apply.



Also you can go directly to the state's website to get information.

<https://www.mass.gov/service-details/learn-about-low-income-home-energy-assistance-program-liheap> or you can call DHCD (Dept of Housing and Community Development) directly at (617) 573-1100.

You can apply online. The program runs from November 1 to April 30th.

Kip Frequently said...

“Bigotry kills. It kills the spirit, the incentive, the ego, the mind, the body and eventually the soul. Coming from a Christian tradition as I do, it is very hard for me to view the acceptance of discrimination on any level and yet, as Christians we find ourselves always involved in a selective morality. Yet, Jesus said, “Love one another.” What can be simpler than that? We are accountable to and for each other. That’s the theology of survival in a nutshell.

We cannot afford theological elitism as an alternative lifestyle if we are to survive. We cannot hope to survive without contact with each other. We must be aware of each other’s anxieties and fears and triumphs. We must support our brothers and sisters in jails, mental institutions and in the streets. We owe it to ourselves and our children. “



“The pain of being homeless — the endless waiting in welfare offices, the thoughtless dismissal, the terror of the streets, the endlessness of the long, dreary days, especially Sundays. The burdensome struggle to carry everything you own with you, the desperation of loneliness, the fear when the sun goes down, the biting cold of a careless February afternoon. The longing to have just five minutes alone with your kid for just one night, the distant memory of shared moments of joy and peace a long, long time ago. These are all real things that happen to real people. **Cui Bono?** Who sets the terms of the debate around poverty and homelessness? Who decides who gets the condo and who gets the cardboard box?”

“I sometimes wish everyone could experience the alienation and discrimination, the isolation of disapprovalso everyone could know how it feels to be unloved, unwanted, unnecessary.”

“Something is wrong when a society dismisses its most vulnerable—and it’s especially wrong when we are told the economy has never been better.”

“We are not bleeding hearts. We are not liberals. We are not do gooders. We... simply know beyond a reasonable doubt that this nation has fallen into ethical and moral decay because not enough people care to do anything to help stop the class war that goes on and on in the name of fiscal austerity, patriotism or simply good government.”

“...compassion, my friends, is a discipline--.... It is the will to fight for what is right and just.”

“We have, by our silence or indifference, allowed poverty to become so institutionalized that we once again numbly accept the idea of almshouses.”

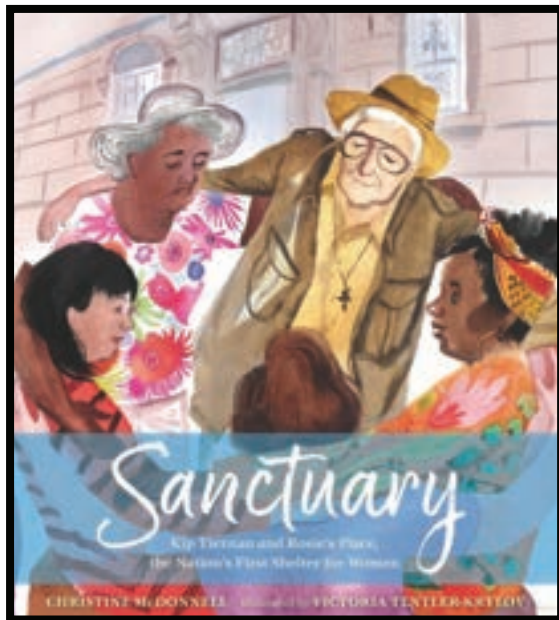
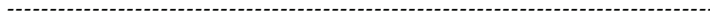
A quote we think Kip would subscribe to:

What Jesus never said: : “Feed the hungry only if they have papers.” “Clothe the naked only if they’re from your country.” Welcome the stranger only if there’s zero risk.” Help the poor only if it’s convenient.” Love your neighbor only if they look like you.

James Martin, S.J.



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*Please join us at
Aardvark Orchestra's 50th
Christmas Concert
December 10th 2022
at the
Church of the Covenant
67 Newbury Street Boston
Proceeds to Benefit
Poor People's United Fund*