

# Faces Of New Bedford #198: Carlos Chamorro

Meet Carlos Chamorro, 31-year-old Graphic Designer. Carlos grew up in Fort Meyers, but relocated to New Bedford after high school to be closer to the rest of his family.



After arriving in the city, he began working at The Landing Gift Shop located in New Bedford's Historical District and immediately fell in love with the city. Carlos worked as a seamster. He later developed a fondness for the arts and decided he wanted to become part of the community. He suggested to the owner to design shirts for all the different type of customers that came in. Through lots of trial and error, Carlos was able to teach himself the software allowing him to collaborate with the tourists and fishermen solidified relationships.

Carlos shares the great history of New Bedford to all the tourists that come from all over the world. He also works to provide fishermen with gear and clothing from Maine down to Virginia.

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## Faces Of New Bedford #197: Eric Santos

Meet Eric “Ewreckage” Santos, 19-year-old college student and musical artist. Eric knew from a young age that he wanted to work in the education system, so after graduating from Global Learning Charter Public School, he enrolled in the English/Secondary Education program at Bridgewater State University. He credits GLCPS for providing him an environment where he could express himself creatively, and ultimately spark his musical ambitions.



While studying for his courses and working at the YMCA as a lifeguard, he decided to take his passion for writing and use it to start song writing. Although he was writing songs, he didn't feel confident enough to sing them, so with inspiration from artists like DJ Khaled and Benny Blanco, he decided to seek out musicians to help him bring his vision to life.

After finding a vocalist from Australia, he produced his first song “Ocean” in September of 2018, which through promotion and social media, was able to chart at #65 on the Turkish iTunes charts. This inspired him to get right back to work and release his first EP “Saudade” earlier this March. He chose the name “Saudade” as a tribute towards his Portuguese

ancestry, and because it's meaning reflects a theme of the EP. "Saudade" has since accumulated over 25,000 streams on Spotify, and his Instagram account has grown to 11,000 followers. He hopes to continue growing and developing as an artist, eventually performing in the future, as well as continuing on his path to become an English teacher.

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## **Faces Of New Bedford #196: James Perry**

Meet James Perry, 30-year-old Program Retention Counselor at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth. James grew up in New Bedford and when he was in high school, he wasn't sure he would ever attend university. He had a 2.2 GPA and because he was a quiet student, he never spoke up when he didn't understand something and suffered alone as many students do.



After being introduced to the College Now Program, which focuses on helping first-generation and low-income students

enroll in college, he was enrolled at UMass Dartmouth. For the first time he was excelling in school but due to unfortunate financial circumstances, he was forced to take time off from school.

James didn't let this defeat him though, as he immediately started volunteering with Child and Family Services, which led to a full-time position as a therapeutic mentor. Soon after, he was enrolled at Fisher College, taking online classes toward his Bachelors Degree and then going on to finish his Master's Degree where his college career began, UMass Dartmouth.

Today, James works for the program that first afforded him an opportunity at higher education, as the Program Retention Counselor for the College Now Program at UMass Dartmouth. His responsibilities include recruiting high school students for the programs, as well as equipping the students in the program with the resources and guidance to make it through their time at school.

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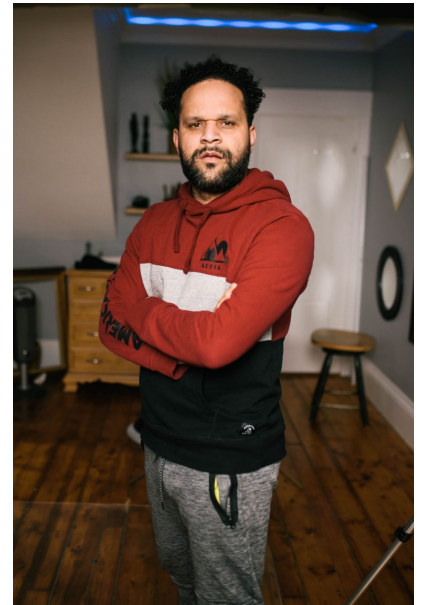
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## **Faces Of New Bedford #195:**

# Djecy Ramos

Meet Djecy Ramos, 37-year-old Sales Representative, and Photographer. Djecy was born in Cape Verde and didn't move to the United States until he finished high school. While in Cape Verde, he picked up photography when his friends started a band, knowing he wanted to find a way to still be involved in the music scene. His time with photography was short, as he gave it up to pursue college in the United States.



Djecy spent a few years studying Philosophy at Middlesex County College in New Jersey before he knew he wasn't passionate about it and left college to work. Packing all of his things into his car, he and his girlfriend moved out to New Bedford, where he instantly fell in love with the city and the history the Cape Verdean culture had here.

Shortly after his arrival in New Bedford in 2009, he began working in cell phone sales. He was also reintroduced to his love for photography around the same time, buying his first digital camera shortly after in 2012. Djecy's passion lies in portraiture, so he specializes in wedding and portrait work, which is how he has been able to grow his business over the last few years. He also gives back with his love for photography, volunteering with Criolas Contra Cancer (Creoles Against Cancer) as a photographer for their yearly events.

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## Faces Of New Bedford #194: Bridgitte Cook

Meet Bridgitte Cook, 46-year-old Heath Center Director at SSTAR Family Healthcare Center. Growing up, Bridgitte's life had been impacted by the effects of mental illness, with her mother committing suicide when she was 8 years old and a father who suffered from schizophrenia.



After graduating from high school, Bridgitte applied to the Diman School of Practical Nursing, as she knew she wanted to help those suffering from mental illness. Upon her completion, she began working at the Dartmouth House of Corrections, where she really saw how many people in prison were struggling with mental health issues and drug addiction, but ended up there because it was the only place for them.

Bridgitte also spent time working at Bridgewater State Correctional Facility as well, which pushed her to go back to school for her RN, so she could really help to service this demographic she held so dearly to her. She received her Associates Degree from Bristol Community College and Bachelor's Degree from Curry College. Not shortly after, she took on the role of assistant clinic manager with SSTAR, where

they focus on not only treating the patient's mental state but providing a plethora of resources for them.

Bridgitte will be completing her Masters Nursing program this May and hopes to continue to be able to service the community, by empowering and helping those who suffer from mental illness and drug addiction.

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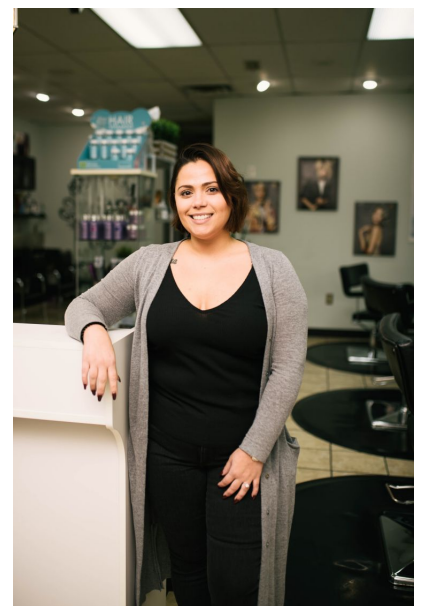
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## **Faces Of New Bedford #193: Monica Melo**

Meet Monica Melo, 33-year-old owner and hairstylist of Salon Gigi. Monica was born in Portugal and moved to New Bedford with her parents when she was one. Growing up, she always had a passion for making people look and feel good.



When it came time for college she attended Bristol Community

College, although she knew that she didn't want to go to college. After a year of school, she dropped out and enrolled in LaBaron Hair Dressing school, where she knew she could pursue her passion. After graduating, she worked for a few years in a handful of salons before taking time off to be home with her newborn children.

Once her children were a little older, she knew she wanted to return to hairdressing but didn't want to work for someone else. It was in 2014 that she open Salon Gigi, where she has been ever since. For her, it's not about just doing her clients' hair, but building a relationship with them and empowering them to be confident and love themselves.

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## **Faces Of New Bedford #192: Heather Dextrateur**



Meet Heather Dextradeur, 45-year-old Assistant Director at Lifestream and Bridges-To-Faith Coordinator with Better Community Living. Heather got involved with working with the developmentally disabled community when she was 24-years-old, as a student at BCC.



Starting in direct care with Lifestream, she fell in love with her work and has never looked back. She would eventually move on to manage the home she was working in. When she took the position she thought that she would spend her time teaching life skills and things like that, but she has realized how much she has learned from them.

No only does she spend her days working to impact the lives of those developmentally disabled, but she goes home to foster 3 adults who need live-in assistance. She also works with Bridges-to-Faith to help those with mental disabilities to build and foster relationships, no matter the religion they decide to seek.

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# Faces Of New Bedford #191: Angelee Contreras

Meet Angelee Contreras, 33-year-old owner of Privy Boutique. Angelee grew up as a first generation citizen, with her father coming from Spain and her mom from Puerto Rico. Her parents always worked hard to provide for their children and taught them the importance of hard work ethics. This push Angelee to do well in school, and after high school, she went on to study Sports & Entertainment Management in Miami at Johnson and Wales University.



During her Christmas break that year her life was turned upside down, with the passing of her father. He had worked hard enough to help her through college, but with him gone, Angelee went back to school and took on 3 jobs to pay for all of her expenses, using the passing of her father to motivate her to give it her all. She finished up her Bachelor's degree and moved back to be closer with family as she continued toward her Master's Degree in Hospitality Sales and Marketing. Being involved in retail since the age of 16, after graduating she went on to work for companies like MadRag, Lacoste, and Wet Seal, where she held manager and director positions.

After having her children, she knew she couldn't keep traveling so far for work and wanted to curate and sell fashion that she was passionate about. This drove her to leave her position with MadRags in 2017 to open Boutique Privy, a local shop focused on street contemporary fashion. She shops for the best quality material, which although carry a high price tag, ensure she's selling quality apparel to her clients. Since opening, she has extended her lines to include

men's apparel but her major focus is empowering women. As a woman business owner, her hope is to inspire other women to chase their dreams and spread a message of positivity and love.

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## **Faces Of New Bedford #190: John Masella**

Meet John Masella, 38-year-old Attorney. John grew up in upstate New York and knew that he wanted to work in the justice system from a young age. After attending the State University of New York – Plattsburgh, he decided to attend Southern New England School of Law, now UMass Law school. While attending the school, John fell in love with New Bedford, as it was so diverse and rich with culture.



After graduating and taking his bar exam, he returned to New York, practicing law for a short while. Missing his time in New Bedford, he decided to pack all of his things into his car and headed back to the city he had fallen in love with, in

hopes to use his newfound career to benefit the community. He quickly met Gerline Lowe, a prominent figure in the local justice system, and she got him introduced to the local court. John's practice started in the hopes of helping the neediest of people. Working to help provide justice to those who didn't have the means, John made it his mission to help provide legal counsel for those who would have otherwise not had a chance.

Since coming back to the system almost 10 years ago, he has done many things to benefit the community. He is a Drug Court Attorney, working with those involved in the Drug Court in their journey towards rehabilitation. John is also a member of the US Supreme court as well as the US First Circuit courts. John hopes to continue to serve the city and the Commonwealth, ensuring that justice is being upheld and preserved, for every group of people.

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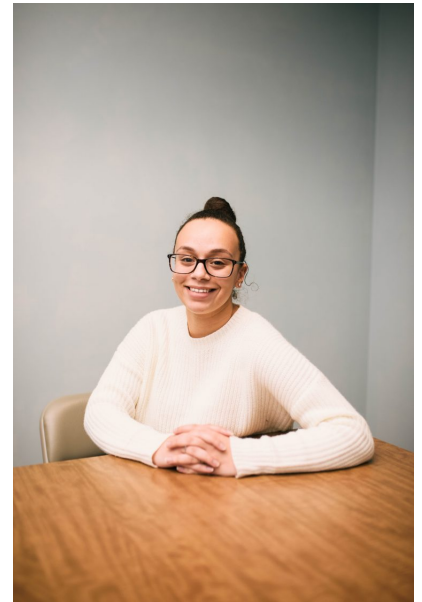
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## **Faces Of New Bedford #189: Lana Collins**

Meet Lana Collins, 21-year-old Student and Case Manager. Growing up, Lana witnessed those suffering from substance abuse and mental health issues within her family and this gave her the drive to help others.



After graduating from high school, Lana began studying at Rhode Island college, bouncing between different majors. It was during her sophomore year when she got a job working with individuals who had developmental disabilities. It was this line of work that made her declare herself as a psych major, focusing in on social work.

Since then, Lana has accepted a position as a Case Manager with Newport Mental health and is en route to graduate with her Bachelor's Degree this Spring. Beyond her time at Rhode Island College, her hope is to continue to pursue her education and eventually obtain her Ph.D., so that she can open her own practice in the city. Her hope would be to help those families suffering due to addiction and mental health issues.

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