

# Faces of New Bedford

Faces of New Bedford is a project by Colton Simmons. If you are interested in booking a shoot or getting prints from the series email all inquiries to [josh@newbedfordguide.com](mailto:josh@newbedfordguide.com).

If you'd like to see the faces from newest to old go **here**.

Faces Of New Bedford – #01: Kat Knutsen



Meet Kat Knutsen, a resident of downtown New Bedford. Kat moved to New Bedford from Asheville, NC to attend UMASS Dartmouth where she earned her Masters degree in Fine Arts.

“After graduating I took notice of the concentrated art scene in this area and started a local art publication called The Siren (<https://www.facebook.com/TheSirenNB>) as a way to document and promote the arts in this area. Also after graduating I was invited back to UMass Dartmouth to be an artist in residence in fibers. My current work revolves around multi media in combining knitting, painting, animation and

music production.”

She is very excited to see the direction that New Bedford is moving in and hopes to be a part of molding it into what it will become.

## Faces Of New Bedford – #02: Nick Dompierre



Meet Nick Dompierre, professional skateboarder turned fitness expert. Growing up in New Bedford he was drawn to the skate culture that exploded from Solstice Skateboarding and had his humble beginnings at Livesey Skatepark.

Later gathering several endorsement sponsors and turning professional he was able to travel the world and live out his dreams. After an injury in 2011, he was left with a broken neck and took time off from skateboarding to focus on his health. Strengthening the muscles around his neck using fitness and weight training, he found a new passion. Recently he has become part of the Live Fit team of fitness athletes

where he is able to skateboard and train, while inspiring thousands of people.

*“Be Positive. Be Focused. Be Consistent. I use these 3 everyday for success and reaching my goals.”*

Faces Of New Bedford – #03: Marcus Cusick



Meet Marcus Cusick, a recent graduate from the Fine Arts program at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth.

Here he is pictured preparing for the Seaport Artwalk, where he had several sculptures installed and a large mural of a lobster claw. When asked what it was about New Bedford that inspired him and his art his reply was the culture. “I mean, look at downtown, there’s a Mexican place down the street from a Portuguese place, down the street from a Thai place, next to a Dominican place.”

Faces Of New Bedford – #04: Dereck Boyd





Meet Dereck Boyd, a 22 year-old student at Bristol Community College.

Although you may recognize him as your friendly bagger at Market Basket, there is more to Dereck than meets the eyes.

He is also an aspiring dancer, singer, and actor who has a huge passion for fashion. He spends his spare time volunteering at the Apostolic Church of Jesus Christ to put on youth events. He loves that there is so much musical talent in New Bedford and the history of Downtown and Seaport.

He remembers graduating college and living on the floor of his friend's apartment thinking, "How will I ever get out of this?" Almost two decades later he knows that he only got through it by the strength of God and it was that difficult time that pushed him to do all that he has for the community.

Faces Of New Bedford – #05: Erik Andrade





Meet Erik Andrade, a poet and activist who calls our beautiful city home.

After moving here 20 years ago during his time at UMass Dartmouth, he fell in love with the rich history of social justice and the Cape Verdean community that New Bedford thrives from. Since then, he has become involved in helping the youth overcome their adversity through leadership development and after school tutoring.

“Outside of lighting the world with candles, we have enlightened the world with tolerance, social justice, equality, and equity. From the likes of from the likes of Frederick Douglass, Paul Cuffee, Sweet Daddy Grace, and Jibreel Khazan, we have been home to visionaries who have not only created change, but also inspired social-change movements throughout the world.”

He remembers graduating college and living on the floor of his friend’s apartment thinking, “How will I ever get out of

this?" Almost two decades later he knows that he only got through it by the strength of God and it was that difficult time that pushed him to do all that he has for the community.

Faces Of New Bedford – #06: Jordan Pina





Meet Jordan Pina, New Bedford High School Educational Advisor by day and Female Varsity Basketball Head Coach by night.

After graduating New Bedford High School in 2008, he left New Bedford to attend Wheelock College in Boston. Due to the impact that many role models, such as Coach DeBritto, had in his life, he returned to New Bedford after attaining his Bachelor's Degree in order to continue on the legacy set before him.

"Family raised me, New Bedford made me," is what he stated when asked what he felt could sum up a short synopsis of what New Bedford means to him. Being inspired by the history of our city and the bright future ahead of it, despite all of the negativity he hopes to, "let the light expose itself to push the darkness aside."

As an Educational Advisor he has had the opportunity to help kids, who wouldn't normally have applied for college, not only pursue different universities but also move on to those institutes after graduating. He is excited to not only to assist students getting into college and chasing championship titles, but to interact with each one he encounters and really make a difference in their lives.

Faces Of New Bedford – #07: Charlie Perry



Photo by Colton Simmons.

Meet Charlie Perry, an officer in the New Bedford Police department.

After spending a year in the cadet program in 1987, he left for the academy and never looked back. In his almost 30 years of service, he has not only patrolled our streets to keep them safe, but has worked as a detective and resource officer at Keith Junior High School.

His tremendous love for New Bedford has been the reason he has worked as a police officer all of these years. When he isn't busy helping the citizens of our city, he spends his time working on his second passion, writing. Not only has he written tons of poetry, he has published his own book, a biography of Andre McCoy. The proceeds from the book go to fund the New Bedford Boy's and Girls club.

"I really owe everything I have learned about being a police officer to Captain Guy Oliveira, who was a true inspiration

and mentor. I just want to be able to help the community and impact our city and this badge allows me to do that.”

## Faces Of New Bedford – #08: Meagan “Meaggsy” Borges



Meet Meagan “Meaggsy” Borges, a 24-year-old marine fabricator and artist.

After 8 long years of working at multiple McDonald restaurants in the area she left to work for Steele and Rowe, where she discovered her love for fashion design while crafting boat covers. Using the skills developed while working there, she creates backpacks, hats, and many other commissioned works.

Not only is she a full time fabricator, but she also recently graduated UMass Boston with a degree in Finance, which she hopes to use, along with her artistic abilities, to open a business in downtown New Bedford.

She has also been drawing since she first picked up a pencil.



Inspired by the cartoons she watched as a child, her art heavily revolves around detailed line work and many familiar faces from 90s television.

She is inspired by the local community and how everyone has always been supportive of anything she has tried to do, which is why she loves this city. She just recently showed at the Pour Farm Tavern which garnered her a lot of local attention.

“Find out what makes you you and do it. Keep growing and learning to make whoever you find yourself to be better than you were the day before.”

Faces Of New Bedford – #09: Gildas Roberts



Meet Gildas Robert, a young creative from New Bedford.

Growing up in the city he has always been inspired by the remnants of the architecture from New Bedford past. He enjoys to be by the ocean and loves the sailing and fishing culture.

After a small stay at UMass Dartmouth studying English, he took a hiatus to truly find out what he desires to do the most. Feeling inclined to his passion for all things art, he is planning on entering into the CVPA program this upcoming fall.

“This city is so fascinating and I can’t just stay at home, so I am always on the go. Once you find the things you love never let it go, stay positive, and don’t ever give up.”

#### Faces Of New Bedford – #10: Courtney Saunders



Meet Courtney Saunders, a 29-year old hair dresser and business owner from New Bedford, Massachusetts.

Being part of a family that has been in this city for generations, she is passionate about seeing growth and success in our lovely city. As co-owner of the Beehive hair salon she hopes to help cultivate the trendy and eclectic nuance that is growing in that area. She anticipates a positive economic

growth approaching our city and is happy to help be a part of that.

Coming from a salon that has helped shaped the face of Padanaram village, she aspires to bring that same life to the bustling cobblestones of Centre street. Courtney loves the charm of New Bedford and that is something that she truly appreciates.

### Faces Of New Bedford – #11: Christian Farland

Meet Christian Farland, a 36 year-old civil engineer from New Bedford.



Living in the city his entire life, he felt a commitment to the community and decided to continue to live and raise his family here and start his career. After moving out of his home during his junior year in high school and having a child at 19, just a few years later, he was still able to graduate from The University of Massachusetts Dartmouth with a Bachelors



Degree in Civil Engineering. He stated that math always come easy to him and pursued a career in it due to the impact of Mrs. Baptiste and Mrs. Bourgeois, two math teachers he had growing up.

Currently, he is the owner of two local businesses: Thompson Farland, which is a civil engineering and land surveying company and Farland Corp, which handles site construction. He started Thompson Farland in 2008 during the midst of the economic turmoil this country was facing and received criticism that it would take off. Years later, and after 60-70 hour work weeks at times, the company has proved itself successful.

Christian's love for the rich history and culture has given him the drive to see improvement in this city, like a better school system and the flourishing of downtown New Bedford. In his venture to do this, he has been involved with the South Coast Business Alliance for the past 7 years and has been the President for the past 3 years. He also sits on the UMass Faculty Advisor Board and South Coast Health Presidents Council.

"You can do or be anything you want, the opportunities are out there. You just need to make sure you are ready when the opportunity comes your way. It doesn't happen over night but by setting short-term goals and taking it one day at a time you will get there."

Faces Of New Bedford – #12: Andrew Kepinski



Meet Andrew Kepinski, a 36-year old bartender and photographer who lives in Downtown New Bedford.

Growing up between Westport and New Bedford, he got to experience the best of both worlds. Not only did he get to experience the peacefulness of Westport but also the culture and diversity of the city.

He has had the opportunity to work at the Pour Farm Tavern, a flourishing tavern/bar and grille in the heart of the downtown area, for the last six and a half years. He enjoys the flexibility he has with his schedule there to be able to make a living and pursue his passion of photography.

During his time growing as a photographer he has hosted 4 photo exhibitions in Downtown New Bedford with his 5th one being shown at the Pour Farm on September 10th. He is encouraged and inspired by the innumerable amount of talent that surrounds him in our city.

“I hope to see more people realize the potential this city

has. I've seen downtown at its worst about twenty years ago. It's amazing what a turn its made and I only see it getting better in the future."

### Faces Of New Bedford – #13: Ben Gilbarg



Meet Ben Gilbarg, a 37 year-old Videographer and Adjunct Professor at Bristol Community College.

As the owner of Visionary Communications Consultants LCC his hope is to produce dynamic video content. These videos are produced with the intention of making an impact to the social current of our culture. He also helped to co-found Third Eye Open at the age of twenty, which is a non-profit organization which strives to equip the youth with the ability to grow in the arts and music.

Although both of his parents weren't originally born here, one hailing from Cleveland and the other from California, they met in Boston and relocated to New Bedford, where Ben was born. He



has spent most of his life in New Bedford, with the exception of his time spent in Amherst and Los Angeles, where he received his Bachelors and Masters Degrees.

His career path was inspired by the lack of needs being met in New Bedford after he returned home from college. He also saw the condition that the world was in and wanted to expand what he was doing locally to impact the world as well. For instance, he is currently working on a centennial music video anthem for the National Park Service which is aimed at raising awareness and projecting the voice of the youth.

This city is a huge inspiration to him due to the talent that resonates here and the heart, culture, and style of the people that live here. He sees the lack of mentors and knows that if we as a city can focus on the creative youth economy then we will see a major turn around in the development of our children.

“Do something, everyone has some sort of talent, interest, or niche. Communities don’t get better by people waiting for others to make a stand, you have to go out and make it happen. In the words of Ray Bradbury, ‘Jump of a cliff and build your wings on the way down.’”

Faces Of New Bedford – #14: Dana Ribeiro



Meet Dana Ribeiro, a City Councilor and a Community of Color Outreach member of the Massachusetts Democratic Party. She is the councilor of Ward 4, which encompasses most of the West End of New Bedford, some of the South End, and even Pope's Island.

Dana returned to the city she loved after living in various places like New York, LA and even parts of South America. Her love is what has perpetuated her desire to help the city move forward. Influences here, both good and bad, have inspired her voice for people who don't otherwise have one. Her father was a Panther Party leader, who was falsely imprisoned for murder and released 13 years later to the community where he lived and continued to advocate for the poor. This virtue he passed on to his oldest daughter and it stays with her to this day.

Her hope is to help create opportunities for the poor and working class to bring back to life the dying middle class this city once had. She is a firm believer that by creating more home and business owners who are citizens of New Bedford,

we will be able to strengthen our economy.

“What good is the torch if you don’t pass it on. There is so much unlocked potential in our city and all it takes is someone being inspired enough to help someone move beyond what they believe their limits are.”

Faces Of New Bedford – #15: Lindsey Rocha



Meet Lindsey Rocha, a 26 year-old senior program manager and coordinator with the New Bedford Health Department.

Growing up she faced tons of adversity, living in and out of foster care while coping with her family’s battles with addiction. These traumatic experiences could have led her down a dark path herself, but she is able to use them to bring hope to others.

While attending Greater New Bedford Regional Vocational High School, she started an internship at the Ocean Explorium in



downtown New Bedford. As long as she could remember she focused on her survival and marine biology gave her something else to grasp onto and it changed her life. It was during her time at the Explorium where she worked with at risk youth and she saw herself in these kids, which made her strive to want to show them that there was something in life they could relate to outside of their struggles.

Since then she has become a therapeutic mentor at Child and Family services, where prior to her involvement with the City of New Bedford, she worked with high risk youth, teaching them self awareness and coping skills. Not only did she give provide them with those resources but she helped them get involved with the community. She soon realized that the majority of the trauma these children and teens received were the result of substance abuse, which is why is working with the Health Department to raise awareness of opioid abuse.

“Don’t be afraid to let the walls down and share your story. There is power in vulnerability, you have no idea how what you have gone through could impact someone else.”

Faces Of New Bedford – #16: Clinton “CJ” Cassidy Dunston Jr.



Meet Clinton "CJ" Cassidy Dunston Jr., an 11 year-old student at Keith Junior High School. Cj's favorite subject in school is math and hopes to one day become an engineer.

Although he loves math, he would also one day love to play in the MLB or NBA. He currently plays on the NB Police team in the SEEYA and has helped the team to claim two undefeated seasons, playing 2nd base, and two championships. He is also involved in a fall ball team out of RI where he also plays second base.

When asked who inspires him to become a better athlete, he mentioned how Jordan Todman helps him to see that it is possible for anyone coming from New Bedford to make it to the professionals.

Faces Of New Bedford – #17: Nicole Corkum



Meet Nicole Corkum, a 27 year-old jewelry maker and thrift store owner.

Having lived here her entire life, she has seen several business grow into something out of nothing in the downtown area.

That was, in part, her inspiration to starting New Bedford Negotiables, a thrift store located in the south end of New Bedford. After seeing how profitable it was selling her old and unused clothes through online yard sales, she thought about taking that vision and turning it into a full scale operation.

Three years later, that vision has turned into a reality for Nicole. Teaming up with local artists and jewelry makers, not only does she resell people's older and vintage items, but supports the local art community by providing space for them to sell their wares.

She would love to join others in the community and help development an environment of positivity.

“We are only going to see change if we are actively seeking it, rather than sitting back and complaining. Instead of people seeing things in a negative way, we should be encouraging them to try and see the positive in things. Crime happens everywhere and rather than bash our city we can improve it because complaining gets us nowhere. We need to be the change we want to see in the world.”

## Faces Of New Bedford – #18: Giovanni Willet



Meet Giovanni Willet, a 21-year-old cook and art student.

He spent most of his childhood traveling due to his parents' careers, never staying in one place for more than a month. At the age of 9, they settled in New Bedford, which is why the city means so much to him. Before living here, he wasn't able to experience a normal childhood and coming here allowed him to discover skateboarding.

He instantly fell in love with the culture and it allowed him



to find himself as a person. Through skateboarding, he was able to explore numerous artists that greatly influence his artwork. All of this has pushed him to go to school to study graphic design.

He is also inspired by the community, which has flourishing art galleries and local businesses. To him, they prove that if you work hard enough you can make your dreams a reality. So far, Giovanni has already co-hosted two shows in downtown New Bedford, which garnered great local exposure.

“An old friend of mine, Andrew, used to say, ‘Hard work beats talent when talent doesn’t work hard,’ and that has always kept me going.’”

#### Faces Of New Bedford – #19: Clyde



Meet Clyde, the peace-sign waving local that anyone from New Bedford can recognize. A known staple to the city’s north end, Clyde is always greeting cars and foot traffic as they pass by

the corner of Acushnet and Coffin Avenues.

In a brief conversation with Clyde you can tell that he is interested in one thing, love. Although people may be immediately opposed to talking to stranger on the street, Clyde is willing to talk with anyone. He constantly talks about his care for his friends and all people. In his own words, he just wants to show people how it's like to 'live like the big man upstairs.'

"To me, it's all about One love."

Faces Of New Bedford – #20: Shanna Sears



Meet Shanna Sears, a 28-year-old painter and residential remodeler.

Shanna grew up in New Bedford and at the age of 15 she emancipated herself due to family issues and finished her high school career living with a friend's family. At the age of 22

she moved away to San Deigo, where she eventually got married and had a daughter. To everyone it appeared that she had overcome difficulty and now had a seemingly perfect life, but little did she know, the greatest challenge she would ever face was to come.

In February, she had a physical check up and everything was normal but a few weeks later, after noticing a lump, she went back in for an ultrasound , mammogram, and eventually a biopsy. It was then that she received the news that she had be diagnosed with triple negative stage-two breast cancer. In shock, she traveled back to New Bedford, where she knew she'd be able to seek treatment in Boston and be around the only family she really knew.

Between the months of May and September she received chemotherapy and went through a divorce, all while trying to raise her 3-year-old daughter, Randi. During this time she was overwhelmed with the response from the community around her, receiving phone calls from people she barely knew, offering to help in any way that they could. She even had a golf tournament held in her honor, which raised money that helped support her and Randi, as she wasn't able to work during her treatment.

Today, after receiving a double-mastectomy, Shanna is cancer-free and truly grateful. She had always loved the community, but her appreciation has multiplied after seeing how it came together to in her time of need..

"It's not about the money, gifts, or any of that, it's about the endless acts of kindness that people have poured out to us. I know I've said it before but I am truly thankful for each and every person that has come along side of me to show their support. Everyday is a lesson and everyone is put in your life for a reason."



Meet Jonna Algarin-Mojica, a 22-year-old IT Specialist with the National Guard.

After joining the military at the age of 19, he has had several contracts where he has worked with computer systems throughout the state of Massachusetts.

Towards the end of 2014, he was laid off, due to a lapse in contracts, and was without work for a few months. During that time period he picked up his camera and started experimenting with street photography. It was during this time period where his passion for photography exploded and he was able to really dedicate his time into getting better.

The Instagram community really pushed him harder and harder and has led to the success that Jonna has received in his short time as a photographer. After being featured in Street Dreams magazine, a quarterly photography magazine, which narrows down millions of submissions into a handful of lucky individuals and prints their work in the magazine.



While living in Milford in 2014 for a short period of time, he would constantly hear of the bad name that New Bedford had from the surrounding area. This encouraged and inspired him to be able to show the world that New Bedford didn't have as bad of a rep as it seemed. In early September he was able to do just that, as he had been given a spotlight in the online blog Hypebeast, which has over 2 million viewers daily. Over the course of the weekend they posted his images of New Bedford, with little excerpts of his interview, talking about how great and inspiring the city is.

Today, Jonna is currently training for his new contract with the National Guard and chasing his photography dreams head on. He would love to see the community come together and work on accomplishing similar goals rather than trying to constantly cut each other off at the feet.

"Be yourself, there's a lot of people that will guide you in the direction of what they think is right. You are only going to be happy or succeed if you are being true to yourself."

Faces Of New Bedford – #22: Joseph Arruda



Meet Joseph “The Beardfather” Arruda, a 36-year-old direct support residential staff, founder of Beards of New Bedford, and President of the South Coast Beard and Mustache Guild.

He also helps his wife run the gallery that she co-owns, TL6 the Gallery, which is located on William Street in downtown New Bedford.

After growing up in Somerset, and attending the University of Massachusetts, he moved to New Bedford in 2000 to be closer to his friends and this new community that he had become so fond of. His father’s family had lived here for generations and his grandfather was a fire fighter here for 40 years, so he always felt a strong connection to the city.

After deciding to grow a beard a few years back, he never would have understood then how much it would impact his life today. He created a page on Facebook titled “Beards of New Bedford”, where he chronicled the growth of his beard and, after garnering some attention from the community, other men’s

beards as well. With the formation of a group of guys that were interested in growing and styling their facial hair, the South Coast Beard and Mustache Guild had come to life. They started holding beard competitions and have focused the proceeds of these events, which include different categories of beards and mustaches, to benefit charitable organizations. He really believes that by uniting with others in similar interests we can really make a change in our city.

“The Guild is home to welders, artists, photographers, professionals, and even some women, but the one thing that ties us together is our love for beards and wanting to help people.”

#### Faces Of New Bedford – #23: Kathy Plante



Meet Kathy Plante, a 57-year-old Registered Nurse of 36 years and Professor at Bristol Community College.

Kathy is not only a full-time faculty member at BCC, she is

also a full-time wife, mother, and student at University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, working towards her PhD in Nurse Research.

For Kathy, there was no one moment or experience in her life that made her decide to become a nurse. Innately, she always knew that nursing was her goal. After much hard work and determination, she graduated from the Nursing Program at Bristol Community College—the same program where she educates students, today. Kathy went on to work at St. Luke's Hospital in the the Labor and Delivery and Maternity departments for 27 years, caring for thousands the citizens from our city and local community.

With a profession that is in such a high demand, Kathy could have gone anywhere for work, but chose New Bedford for so many reasons. With deep Madeiran roots, she loves the Portuguese culture of our city. She and her husband, Steve, volunteer every year at our annual Feast of the Blessed Sacrament. Kathy and her husband also love the atmosphere of the downtown area, frequenting the shops and restaurants that call it home.

Although Kathy has moved on from a life-long dream at St. Luke's Hospital, she has moved on to another life-long dream in her current position as an Associate Professor of Nursing at BCC. The best part of her job is the students, who come from various backgrounds and age groups. With the course load being so demanding, she is encouraged to see non-traditional college students, some even older than herself, persevere, graduate, and achieve their dreams.

Returning to education for her Bachelors, Masters, and PhD, 27 years after graduating, Kathy is an advocate and “cheerleader” to all returning students, no matter what age they are.

“As a current student, I know what it is like to work full-time while going to school full-time. I know what it's like to lose my weekends and miss out on family events, but in the



end, it will be worth all the hard work and sacrifice.”

## Faces Of New Bedford – #24: Joshua Lemaire



Meet Joshua Lemaire, 27-year-old chef and owner of dNB Burger.

Having lived in the area his entire life, he was drawn by the charm of the city to the downtown area. After working in restaurants for 10 years and attending Le Cordon Bleu, his passion for cooking resulted in the birth of dNB Burger.

Now dNB isn't your normal restaurant, that seems to be molded by a cookie cutter and operated in the typical manner every other establishment is. It is the home to a from-scratch kitchen, which only 400 years ago was common place but now it is an almost non-existent commodity. With the commercialization of almost everything in our lives, Josh wanted to break the mold, which they do at dNB Burger everyday.

Although he may work longer days and work harder to grind the meat and prepare the sauces (just to name a few of the things they do daily), this is a sacrifice Josh is willing to make to serve great food to his customers. He doesn't do what he does for the money, but for the satisfaction of serving something mind blowing to his customers.

He hopes to see the community realize what a precious city we have and start cutting some slack for the good that is really going on here. So many local entrepreneurs are taking risks in hopes to make this city better and he encourages everyone to continue their hard work.

"Someone once told me that you 'Need to be the change you want to see in the world,' and that really stuck with me."

Faces Of New Bedford – #25: Samantha Johnson



Meet Samantha Johnson, a 26 year-old singer.

Samantha moved to New Bedford at the age of 12 from Dennis because her father took on new responsibilities at work, but she secretly thinks he did it because he wanted his family to be more cultured.

As a full time singer, Samantha has been able to travel around the globe. Before her run on America's Got Talent this past summer, she worked on the Michael Jackson Tribute show for four years as the lead female vocalist.

Samantha owes a lot of her drive and determination to the music program she was heavily involved with at New Bedford High School. Under the leadership of Ms. Brasil, she learned how to set goals, create plans to accomplish them and, most importantly, strive towards those goals until they are completed.

With her recent shot to fame, she is constantly being pulled in all directions, one in particular, is to move away. She just couldn't imagine doing that though. Her siblings go to school here, her friends are here, and most importantly her home is here. Out of the places she's visited New Bedford is different, you can find anything you want here, culture, passion, art. She also enjoys how real people are here, they have real lives with real struggles, and it's hard to find that anywhere else.

"I want people to visit New Bedford like we visit New York, or LA. We have everything we need to make New Bedford a destination, we just have to realize the potential and run with it."

Faces Of New Bedford – #26: Lorenzo Vazquez



Meet Lorenzo Vazquez, a case manager with Seven Hills Behavioral Health.

He moved to New Bedford in 1997 to seek better opportunities for his family. He started his career in as an advocate at the Health Center back in 2000 when he saw the need in this city for people to stand up for those who didn't have a voice.

Recently, after a split with his ex-wife, he has assumed full responsibility for his four children, which can be a daunting task for him. Juggling his career and raising his children alone has been tough but amidst it all, he is still chasing his other passions, which include opening a bakery.

He has always dreamed of opening his own bakery and that dream is slowly becoming a reality as he renovates its future home in the north end of New Bedford. When opened it will become New Bedford's first Spanish bakery, serving breakfast and plenty of Spanish delicacies.

He loves New Bedford because upon arriving here he knew nobody



but was made welcome by the community here. The fact that although there are many negative things going on and yet as people we persevere really encourages him.

“We need more community oneness. Although we have many cultures here, we would see a better community if we all came together to make it happen. We see too many divisions between ethnicities that stop us from being able to truly make a difference.”

#### Faces Of New Bedford – #27: Manuel Mederios



Meet Manuel Mederios, 64-year-old barber in New Bedford.

Manuel and his family migrated to New Bedford when he was only 12 years old and has lived here ever since. When he first got his barber's license he managed a barbershop on Union street for a few years before opening his own, Your Father's Mustache, right around the corner.

Since opening the shop he has been in operation for 33 years and has become a landmark in the Purchase street landscape. He loves the cities sense of community, as it has allowed him to build his business through word of mouth, which he continues to do without any advertising.

He hopes that the city's economy has a resurgence of job opportunities. He remembers when someone could lose their job in the morning and have a new one by the evening time and sees the potential for that to return.

"Remain grateful. Somebody might have driven by 4-5 barbershops to get here and I always stay humbled every time someone walks through the door."

Faces Of New Bedford – #28: Ashley Bendiksen



Meet Ashley Bendiksen, a 29-year old, and the Executive Assistant to the Bristol County District Attorney.

Ashley, who had spent a brief time in college after she graduated high school, became involved in an abusive relationship which forced her to leave school. Once she eventually freed herself from that relationship she spent time volunteering and working in New Bedford to piece her life back together.

Remembering what her childhood dance teacher had told her about the Miss New Bedford contest, she saw that were she to win, she would receive a scholarship to allow her to afford to attend school again, as well as engage even more in the community. After lots of work and dedication she walked across the stage and received the title of Miss New Bedford 2009. As a requirement she also spent the next year volunteering to help raise awareness for domestic violence.

She eventually returned to school and at 26, she graduated from Salve Regina University as valedictorian, with her Bachelors Degree in Criminal Justice. She appreciates the experiences she has been through in order to get where she has and New Bedford has played a major role in that. When she felt that she had nothing she was able to build her identity in this city through her experience, the community, and her job. She has had the opportunity to work on the Board of Directors of the YWCA, as the chairperson of the Miss New Bedford program, chairperson of the Southeastern Massachusetts Walk to End Alzheimer's and President of One Theater Group – a non profit theater group that she helped found which raises money for various organizations.

"New Bedford offers so much. As far as living here there is so much to do, diverse people, amazing music and arts, history and culture, and it's a great central location to enjoy the entire New England area. There's also so much opportunity here, whether it's running a business or starting your own nonprofit. I think it's just an awesome place to live."

## Faces Of New Bedford – #29: Jamie Casey



Meet Jamie Casey, a 42-year-old ministry leader and property manager.

Now life for Jamie hasn't always been living to serve others and make a difference, in fact it was very destructive for many years. At an early age he was focused on money, having "fun" and self fulfillment, while indulging himself in the underworld of New Bedford.

It wasn't soon after working in bars and nightclubs that he not only started selling drugs, but using them as well. With a wife and 3 children he tried to balance out his life by starting to go to church at the age of 25, but in turn created two parallel lives. On Sundays he would go to church and wrestle with his faith, but the rest of the week his life would be in total disarray.

By 35, he had jumped from job to job and even lost his wife and the relationship he had with his children, all of this due



to his drug addiction. At the verge of committing suicide, his two parallel lives collided and his faith became a very real thing to him for the first time in 10 years. Not wanting to live the life he had for so long, with the help of family and friends, he checked himself into Teen Challenge New England, a faith-based residential rehabilitation program.

After a year in the program, Jamie returned to New Bedford renewed and ready to re-build his life the right way. He started all over again and spent a lot of time in the community, trying to right the wrongs he had made over the years. His goal was to help those who were still in the darkness and introduce them to the light he had found in his relationship with God.

He has since remarried to Stacey, who shares his passion and vision for ministry. And in the past 5 years he and a few close friends founded the Acts 29 Project, which has been involved in multiple foreign mission trips, as well as a yearly Thanksgiving Ministry at GNB Voc-Tech that prepares and delivers meals to the elderly, sick and shut-ins of our community. They also “adopt” families during Christmas to help them provide gifts, and have a recovery program that focuses on reaching those struggling with addiction.

“Its for Christ, for the glory of God. The call of the Christian life is to live out your faith and not just go to church, but to be the church. There’s a war on our streets and the greatest weapon we possess in this city, is love.”

Faces Of New Bedford – #30: John Biel



Meet John Biel, one of the many homeless on the streets of New Bedford.

Without a place for him to live he struggles trying to find a job that will hire him. Most nights he has no idea where he is going to sleep, as he tries to do whatever he can during the day to get money for food. With the early admittance time for the Sister Rose house, it's just not feasible for anyone trying to work to get in at night.

Although he has faced homelessness for many years now, he is thankful for the people who have helped him in his time of need. Local businesses in the South End, like New Bedford House of Pizza, have helped provide him food when he didn't have all of the money to pay for it.

Although pan handling is a major issue in our city, it is how he survives. He has even been put in compromising situations, where people have told him that the only way they would give him money would be to admit he was buying alcohol with it.

“I am so grateful for everyone who has helped me. I never know if tomorrow is going to be the day that things fall apart, but thank you for all of your help.”

Faces Of New Bedford – #31: Roger Andrews



Meet Roger Andrews, a 45-year-old commercial artist.

Roger grew up in the city and came from a modest family, who lived in and out of some of the housing projects throughout the city. With moments to spare, during the summer after his eighth-grade year, he got into New Bedford Voc-Tech, where he pursued the commercial art program.

During that time, graphic design was mostly drawing based, which allowed him to grow technically. Upon graduating he enrolled in Butera School of Art, which has in recent years been absorbed by Fisher College, where he continued his education in their two-year Sign Painting program. Having impressed the faculty at the school he received a full ride to

take part in their 3-year Commercial Art program, which they allowed him to finish in 2.

Upon graduating, he worked for several years for ad agencies in Boston, understanding and learning what it took to make it in the graphic art business. He would notice that when the companies he worked for had large projects, they would hire freelance designers, who made exponentially more than he did at the time, to assist in completing these contracts. It was soon after that he decided to venture into the freelance world.

Some years after this decision, he also started teaching at his alma mater, where he formed a close relationship with one of his students Chris Ford. Chris went on to work for Hasbro in the games department and this was the moment that Roger's life as a commercial artist really started to take shape. Chris asked for assistance on Hasbro's board game redesign project from Roger, which opened amazing doors for him. He was introduced to Bill Concannon, who Chris later started Pilot with, and this led to Roger doing more work with Hasbro.

Since then Roger has worked on character design for all of Hasbro's Star Wars Galactic Heroes line and Marvel's Super Hero Squad, as well as many board games that we know and love. This opportunity, has allowed for Roger to see the world and even be a keynote guest at comic conventions all over the world.

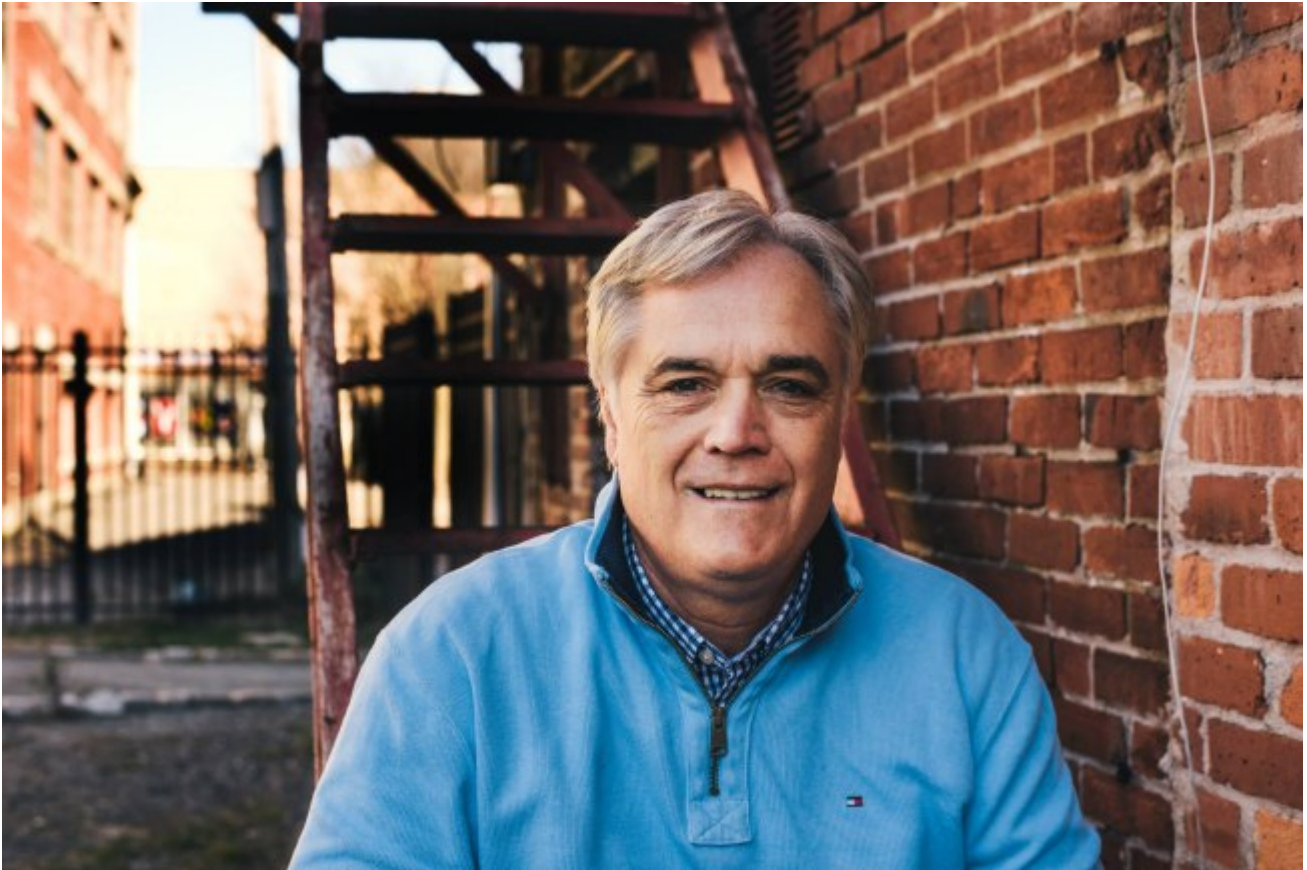
Roger has also done work for Angry Birds, Jurassic World, Transformers, and Best Fiends, just to name a few.

As an artist, Andrews is appreciative of the renaissance that is taking place in our city. With the support that is shown to young creatives and entrepreneurs he hopes to see our city continue to progress in the direction that it is headed.

To check out Roger's work visit his site:  
<http://www.rand247.com>



## Faces Of New Bedford – #32: Ed Rodrigues



Meet Ed Rodrigues, 62-year old retired teacher and basketball coach at New Bedford High School, who recently became the Athletic Director for Wareham High school.

Ed grew up in the south end of New Bedford where there was a lot of negative temptations. Alongside his good friend, Brian Baptiste, who is the Head Basketball coach at UMass Dartmouth, filled his time with playing basketball, instead of getting involved in the trouble that surrounded them.

After graduating high school, he went on to college, and upon returning to New Bedford started coaching and teaching U.S. History at New Bedford High. New Bedford is his home and he felt it was important to return to the city that he loved to impact kids who wanted and out from the trouble just like him. In his time as the Men's Varsity basketball coach he led the team to win 2 State Championships and multiple conference championships. His biggest enjoyment of coach and teaching was

seeing kids overcome their trials and go on to succeed in life.

He made such an impact at the school during his time there that they even named the basketball court after him. After retiring from his career at the school he couldn't stay away from being involved in teenagers lives and accepted the position as the Athletic Director for Wareham High School.

“Give an effort every single day, have a passion for what you are doing, and be loyal to those who have helped you out.”

Faces Of New Bedford – #33: Abdourahmane Doumbouya



Meet Abdourahmane Doumbouya, 26 year old Senior Software Support Engineer and Musician from New Bedford.

Abdourahmane, also known as Abdou, moved to the United States in the December of 1996 from Senegal, West Africa, after a quick stay in France. As a kid he always felt a barrier

between himself and others, as a young, black, Muslim living in the country. In Africa, he had the freedoms of a teenager and had to revert back to doing the things children do here.

He found that once he stopped trying to fit in with everyone around him, he found himself and actually started to make friends. This was all great until the unfortunate events of 9/11, where he was treated as an outcast, even by some teachers, for weeks.

As most children who are immigrated to the states, he found himself without documentation. The attacks on 9/11 made it even harder for his family to get him any type of citizenship with added security measures put into place. As all of his friends were getting their licenses and picking out colleges, Abdou felt alone once again, even making excuses to why he couldn't join in these activities with them. During this time, he really poured his life into making music, not only to cope with these struggles but to give a voice to those who were stuck in the same situation.

It wasn't until 2012, where after working multiple jobs under the table and trying to just get by he was covered until President Obama's Dream Act, which failed twice in Congress before he put it into effect with an Executive Order. This allowed for children who didn't have the option to come into the country and had excelled in school to become a legal resident in the United States.

Shortly after he began his career working for LogMeIn where he is a high level support engineer on two of their products, Rescue and BoldChat. Aside from that his music career is able to now reach heights he couldn't get to in the past in fear of facing deportation. Recording between Boston, New York, and LA he is hoping to put out two albums this year under his moniker 'Caliph.' He hopes that his music becomes the voice for the millions of others who struggle just as he did to make a place in this world.

“If what I am leaving in this world changes one person’s life for the better, then I’ve done my job. I hope to do that and positively impact the world.”

#### Faces Of New Bedford – #34: Crystal Lister



Meet Crystal Lister, a 31 year-old Medical Lab Technician, body coach, and cook. Crystal works for the Greater New Bedford Health Center. When she isn’t in the lab, her and her husband are the owners of Heathy Bites Meal Preps, which means she is constantly researching healthy meals and creatively helping others live cleaner, heathier lives.

Now she hadn’t always been such a health enthusiast. Attending Greater New Bedford Voc-Tech she was in the Culinary Arts program and always enjoyed cooking growing up. Crystal never really managed how she ate and once she had her two kids, she had even less time to devote to developing a healthy way of living. It got to the point where she felt miserable and blamed everyone around her for her unhealthy lifestyle.



It was at this point she realized that for the sake of her health and the future of her children, she needed to make a change in her life. After working with a trainer who was passionate about fitness and inspiring others, she fell in love with the idea of living a healthy life. After learning how to prep her meals and working out consistently, Crystal dropped down over 45 pounds and found herself at a weight that she really felt comfortable with.

This gave her the desire to develop and assist in the same growth in others. Explaining that diet was one of the most important parts of leading a healthier lifestyle and that her clients needed to prep their meals, she found that more than not they would just ask her to prep for them. This got her thinking and not to long afterwards she opened up her own business, prepping meals for those who want to eat healthy but don't have the time to portion and prep for themselves.

Her desire to help others goes beyond the notion of attaining the "perfect body." Working in the medical field, she realizes how unhealthy people are. As more people are being diagnosed with diabetes, high cholesterol, and high blood pressure, she wants to raise the awareness that these aren't death sentences. With the correct diet people can actively fight these diseases and live longer, happier lives.

"It is so much more than losing weight, it's more about finding yourself and loving the person that you are."

Faces Of New Bedford – #35: John Brendon



Meet John Brendon "JB" Macaroco, 22-year old aspiring business owner/fashion designer.

JB works for his family's business M&R ScreenPrinting, which was started in the basement of his grandfather's house in 1982. The business continued to grow and expand up until 1996, when his grandfather decided to retire and sell the company to an outside party.

In 1990 JB's father, John, lost his job as a Phys Ed teacher due to city cut backs. He then started working for his father-in-law's company to provide for his family. After several years of managing the shop, he then with a partner purchased the company. Fast forward 20 years and JB now works with his entire family to keep the business running smoothly.

After spending a few years going for an engineering degree, JB felt that he didn't want to take that route in life and switched into the business program at #UMassDartmouth. Upon entering the program talks between his sister, Sorrell, began

about starting a clothing company. In 2014, in an attempt to put his business knowledge to use, he and his sister released Wicked Clothing's first line and met mixed results.

Not satisfied, JB took the initiative to research and learn the market to better implement his vision. In 2015, with much gained experience and knowledge he, working together with local photographer Jonna Mojica, launched a summer and winter line, which became pivotal for JB and the future of Wicked.

Now fulfilling orders across the country and having some prominent faces in the fashion world co-signing and wearing his apparel, he can only be thankful. #NewBedford and the culture here has helped inspire and motivate the creativity he has poured out into his work. His hope for this year is to get his line into stores, while continuing to push the company's online presence.

"I just encourage everyone to chase their dreams. New Bedford is a place with so much talent and underrated skill, we just have to come together and make it happen."

Faces Of New Bedford – #36: Victor Fernandes



Meet Victor Fernandes, 44-year-old mason contractor at Fernandes Masonry and co-founder of the Noah Foundation. Victor moved to New Bedford 28-years ago from Linhares DaBeira, Portugal.

It wasn't until their son, Noah, turned five that he was diagnosed with M.E.L.A.S.

– a progressive and degenerative mitochondrial disease. Raising a child with this type of disorder puts a large strain on the family between all of the medical visits and the equipment needed in order to make a house suitable for them to live in.

Seeing this daunting task, Victor and his wife Christine founded the non-profit organization Team Noah Foundation. The goal of the organization is to help raise funds in order to be able to fill in the gaps where insurances and government funds fail. They firmly believe that no child should be without the proper equipment to cope with the disease.



So far they have been able to provide the reconstruction of a few patients homes, installing ramps and lifts throughout the house to make their daily routines more feasible. Their main goal at the moment is to raise a million dollars to build a park in New Bedford that an entire family who has a disabled child can go. Most of the time, when a family has a child with a disorder like M.E.L.A.S., that child has to stay behind when their siblings go to the park with the other parent. Their vision is to allow everyone to be able to enjoy their time out with their loved ones without leaving anyone out.

“There are so many around us who have come to support, show us love, and create opportunities for Team Noah Foundation to help peoples lives. We know that there are so many who need help, but we want to help change that.”

#### Faces Of New Bedford – #37: Brian Rudolph



Meet Brian Rudolph, 27-year-old teacher's assistant, basketball player, and coach.

Spending his whole life in New Bedford, Brian has always found an attraction to basketball, one that even landed him a position to play for Loyola University Maryland. After graduating with his Bachelors degree in Advertising and Public Relation, he came back to New Bedford, where he started working for the public school system and coaching Junior Varsity Basketball for NBHS.

During the day he works with children who have disabilities,

assisting them in staying focused during class and coaching them through the triggers they may face throughout their day. At night he helps lead the JV basketball team to face against the same teams he did during his time at New Bedford High. When he was younger he felt that his calling was to just play basketball, but as he has grown older and matured he knows that he is meant to coach. He loves being able to teach his players life lessons through coaching and show them that there are opportunities for them beyond what is being offered to them in the city.

He also spends his summers playing for the Cape Verdean National Basketball team, where he has played against professional basketball players from across the world for the past four season. Their hard work has even led them to the AfroBasket, which is Africa's qualifying tournament for the Olympics. Although he led the team in scoring throughout the season, an injury kept Brian and the team from taking home the top spot, and a seed in the Summer 2016 Olympics. Despite the loss, he is relieved that he was able to come back and be here for his family and his students.

His hope is to help spearhead a summer basketball league at Monte's Park, which will allow the neighborhood kids an outlet in the summer, rather than turning to the streets. Growing up he's seen struggle and success in his immediate family and wants to see not only success in his life but the lives of the students he impacts everyday.

"You can't cheat the grind. It's not just about basketball either, whatever kind of work you put into something, is what you will see in the end. You reap what you sow."

## Faces Of New Bedford – #38: Carlos



Meet Carlos Araujo, 19-year-old photographer who spent his entire life in New Bedford.

His passion for photography came about one day when his cousin Kathy asked him to do a photoshoot for her and her boyfriend. She placed a camera in his hand and, with no prior experience, started shooting away. Although they weren't the best photos she saw that he had a very great eye for composition and told him he should look into getting his own camera.

After saving for a few months, collecting all that he could from his checks from McDonalds, at the age of 16 he bought a camera and started taking pictures of his friends around the city. Soon after, he started making a business out of his photography, traveling to Boston and networking with photographers across the region. During the week he would balance school, soccer and his job and spend his weekends growing and perfecting his craft.

By 18, he had graduated high school and even started attending the New England School of Photography. One night, with no money or ticket in his pocket, he attempted to get into RCA Recording artist Los' show, to hopefully photograph and talk with the rapper. He was able to get in and send the photos to Los, who loved his style and asked him to photograph the rest of his tour. The two became really close and Los offered him the chance of a lifetime, to come out to LA and become his personal photographer.

In the time between then and now, he has had the chance to work with artists such as Jeremiah, Lucas Coly, Justin Combs, P. Diddy, and Justin Bieber. He feels like the support he has back at home, from his friends and family during this journey have pushed him to be able to get to the places that he has at such a young age. He is constantly encouraged by the local artists and photographers, providing constant fuel for him to put New Bedford on the map as an emerging creative force.

“Knowledge is King!”

Faces Of New Bedford – #39: Paulo Duarte



Meet Paulo Duarte, 23-year-old store manager of U7 and co-brand owner at Longevity Co.

Paulo has had a deep love for sneakers since he graduated high school, where he really started to get into the streetwear culture. From there he began collecting sneakers, learning the value in reselling exclusive sneaker releases, at the time Retro Air Jordans. The urban culture and sneaker heads in New Bedford really inspired Paulo to get involved, frequenting stores such as Carters and Expressions to check out the latest gear.

Delving into this passion he started buying and selling sneakers on Facebook groups and Kixify, which is an online resource that allows users to sell sneakers, unlocking the ability to sell more sneakers at a time depending on how well



your business is. In a once in a lifetime opportunity, he sold a pair to the owner of the website, who was so pleased in the way Paulo handled the transaction, gave him the ability to sell unlimited sneakers on their platform.

It was around that time that Shop U7 had opened in the south end of New Bedford, where his friends had told the owners about Paulo and his knowledge of sneakers. He stopped in during the opening week and the owners tested his knowledge of pricing and they were impressed but the young mans prowess. He quit his job of delivering pizza, where he was extremely unhappy, and was hired on and started as an assistant in the shop.

As time went on and the owner's trust in him grew, they promoted him to store manager. During his time working there, he as also come alongside his close friends to start LongevityCo, a local streetwear clothing company, which has grown immensely in popularity over the past few years. He's grown to learn that he needs to love what he does and he is finally in the position to do that.

Paulo is highly encouraged by the young and ambitious people around him. He sees so many people who are working on their craft and they encourage him to get better. For him to see a business open in New Bedford, he thinks about the fact that they had an idea and made it a reality, in an environment where you are guaranteed to succeed.

"If you put time and effort into something you are passionate about everyday, it will pay off. Trust your ideas & don't let anybody tell you, you can't do what you want."

## Faces Of New Bedford – #40: Daniell



Meet Danielle Lopez, 21-year-old Honors student at Bridgewater State University.

She is currently studying in Biology with the intention of obtaining her Doctorate in Dental Medicine. Although her current is very promising, thing's haven't always been so great.

When Danielle was just 8 years old, her mother was working to two jobs just take care of her and her 3 siblings. Due to unfortunate circumstances, she lost both of her jobs and was unable to find another position that would be able to support the entire family. Due to the jobs her mom held, she always found herself just above the poverty line, so they weren't eligible for assistance during this period.

Shorty after, they lost their apartment and were forced to live in a tent at a local campground. For the next 3 months they bathed in coin operated showers and commuted back to New Bedford from Rochester for school and work. While her mother continued to work at her new job and strive to restore their living situation, they were eventually blessed with an RV to stay in.

Fast forward 13 years later, Danielle looks back at her mother's sacrifice and perseverance, thankful that she learned what she had at such a young age. She also reflects on the time she spent at Dennison Memorial in the wake of these events, which really sculpted and molded her desire to learn.

This has manifested itself in her current position, striving to create a better life for herself and her future family.

“The position you are in now isn’t where you are going to be forever, but if you don’t change the things you do then you are going to just perpetuate the cycle.”

#### Faces Of New Bedford – #41: Craig Dee



Meet Craig DeMelo, 33-year-old teacher and musician.

Craig grew up his entire life and graduated from New Bedford High in 2000. During his time in high school he started singing in a band called Affliction. Having been involved in chorus all throughout his childhood, he had always sang but wanted to learn how to play the guitar, so he taught himself in 6 months.

In college, he had someone introduce him to Dave Matthews Band and it was during that time where his journey as a song writer really took off. Finishing up the last year of college, he started subbing in the New Bedford school system to make extra cash while finishing his degree and fell in love with teaching. It was during this time where he was also part of the band Lemon Stone, which he toured across New England with.

He graduated college and started working full time as a teacher in at Roosevelt. Lemon Stone had broken up and Craig really started developing his solo work, writing and recording an album, “The Wiskey Poet,” which he released in 2007. This

album opened up a slew of gigs for him, playing in several large venues between New Bedford and New York.

As he has gotten older, growing his family and raising his children, he has enjoyed to be able to play locally and still teach at the High School, where he has taught English and Journalism since 2008. It's been awesome for him to see students who come through the school and rise beyond the trials that they face and become successful.

His hope is for New Bedford High's image to become more accurately represented and that the exception which is publicized wouldn't be considered the normal behavior of the school. He remembers when there was a valor about going to NBHS and he is working and hoping to see that restored.

#### Faces Of New Bedford – #42: Raymond Ramos



Meet Raymond Ramos, 41-year-old production worker for Harvey Building Products and Cosplayer.

Raymond has been an artist his entire life and started created costumes at the age of 10. Every year he would be constantly trying to out do his costume from the years prior. Along with his creation of costumes he started illustrating his own comic book characters, which he says was spurred on by his friend Manny DeBritto.

Although he spent a lot of his youth creating costumes, it wasn't until 2007 when he created his first full costume for a



work Halloween party, the Marvel Comic character Blade. From there he continued to find ways to improve this look, trying to create the real life Blade look. After being connected with his martial arts instructor's former student, he entered his first show, South Coast Toy and Comic show.

A few years later Raymond's friend started the Rhode Island Comic Con, which has grown into an event so large that it sold out the Dunkin Donut center last year. Raymond has been featured every year as a cosplay guest and has won awards for the Best in Master's class for his Batman costume.

Being linked with the Rhode Island Comic Con has also opened opportunities to volunteer and give back. He has dressed for occasions at the Hasbro Children's Dental Clinic, bringing smiles to the kids and even the adults who work in the office.

#### Faces Of New Bedford – #43: Stacey Mendonca



Meet Stacey Mendonca, 42-year-old certified occupational therapist assistant for the New Bedford Public Schools.

Stacey had lived a normal life that most in her position would, as an employee, wife, mother, and grandmother until an event that took place during the Summer of 2015 turned her life upside down. On August 2nd, she received the news that no mother ever wants to hear, her 24 year old son, Jeffery Sylvia, Jr. was found murdered in the city's South End.

In the wake of this tragic event, her family was at a total loss. Although she knows that her son may have not always made the best decisions, nobody should ever be able to choose whether someone lives or dies.

She owes her ability to be able to make it through each day with support from family and friends, grief crisis counseling, which was established by the Victim Advocacy Program days after her son's death and support from the POMC (Parents of Murdered Children) groups she attends with her daughter.

Having come along way since her son's death, she wants to impact the community and raise awareness to the Youth about the cause and effects of senseless acts of violence. She has started the J.E.F.F. (Just Envision Future First) campaign in memory of her son to do just that. She is currently raising funds to start a scholarship for a NBHS graduate and to donate a new baseball scoreboard to the GNBYSBL, where he played as a child and is hosting the Spare the Pain Bowl-A-Thon to do so. With J.E.F.F. she hopes to be able to stop another family from facing the pain and challenges that she and her family has had to endure in the aftermath of her son's traumatic passing.

"We have been taught to not put our hand in fire because we know we will be burned. However because the consequence is delayed we don't think of the severity of our actions. It's time to get our youth to envision a future self before making a choice that could crush their hopes and dreams for a better future."

## Faces Of New Bedford – #44: Joel Cordero



Meet Joel Cordero, 31 year-old father of two, Broadcast Editor and all-around artist.

Joel has lived most of his life in New Bedford. After graduating from Bristol Community College with a degree in Graphic Design, he started working with an artist, Thomas Deininger, creating found object assemblages that the duo installed in skyscrapers, hotels and private collections across the country. He worked with Deininger for about eight years before deciding that he wanted to continue his Bachelors Degree.

After experimenting with a few different majors, he settled on photography, which is something he had already been freelancing.

During his time in school, the city of New Bedford highly influenced his direction as an artist and photographer. He worked on his "The Ave" project, which documented the people, places, and events that happen on New Bedford's Acushnet Avenue. This developed into his senior thesis as a short documentary, a series of large prints and a very-well put together book. Through this project he was able to meet people he'd never met before and create work that he was proud of.

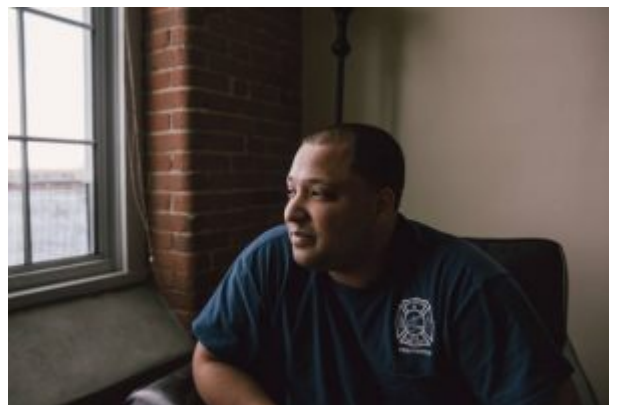
His freelancing really started to pick up in 2014 as he began working with large companies, such as Bluefly, shooting high-end fashion products for e-commerce.

In early 2015, after eight years of managing commercial and

residential properties in New Bedford and Fall River, he acquired his MA Real Estate license and began to practice flying UAS (Unmanned Aerial Systems) as a marketing tool and for fun. In February of this year he was awarded his FAA (Federal Aviation Administration) Sec. 333 Exemption for Commercial photography and video.

The day before he passed his realtor's exam he received a call to inform him he landed a job as a Broadcast Editor at Boston's Ch7 NBC News. There he edits together stories and openings of the news broadcasts. He is en route to working with reporters as a Videographer on the road. He is excited about his work and knows this is only the beginning to bigger and better opportunities.

Faces Of New Bedford – #45: Bryce Fortes



Meet Bryce Fortes, 26-year-old fire fighter for the New Bedford fire department.

He never realized growing up that he would end up working to save peoples lives everyday. He had gone to Greater New Bedford Regional Vocation Technical High School and had graduated from the Carpentry shop. Upon graduation he started working with Youth Build, teaching at-risk youth how to build houses, while they studied to get their GED.

This was a fulfilling job for him, as he cared about the lives of the kids he had the chance to impact on a daily basis. After talking to his father one day, who is a corrections



officer, he was left wondering what it would be like to work in civil service. He quickly became interested in the work that the fire fighters do on a daily basis and even went to offer to volunteer at one of the local stations, just to get a glimpse of what it was like. After taking his exam in 2011, he joined the academy and was soon on his first Engine.

He didn't realize how much of blessing and calling he had to become a fire fighter until he witnessed the first toy drive that they were involved in. For him to see how his other co-workers took the time out of their day off to give back to the community, his eyes were opened to a brotherhood he had never known.

This was only the beginning of his desire to give back to the community. Being located at Ladder 4, on Acushnet Avenue in the North End, there is a lot of foot traffic. During the nicer weather, he and the fire fighters at that station are able to talk with the neighborhood kids and be an example in their lives. They also give back time at Gifts to Give and occasionally have pick up games with the youth at the Boys and Girls Club.

"I realize how blessed I am to be in the position I am in today. I am grateful and humbled by the fact I am in a position to be a positive role model for kids who come from where I come from. It is with an immense deal of pride that I say I am a member of the New Bedford Fire Department."

## Faces Of New Bedford – #46: Marlene



Meet Marlene Gomes, a 38-year-old teacher and personal trainer.

Born in Lisbon, Portugal she moved to New Bedford in 1978 and has lived here ever since. After time studying hotel, restaurant and travel administration at UMASS Amherst, she opened a cleaning business in the city.

Dissatisfied with that career path, she continued her education, while running her business, being a single mother, and attaining her Master's Degree in Linguistics from UMASS Boston. During all of this, she began teaching ESL at Roosevelt Middle school, where she has been able to teach students in 6th, 7th, and 8th grades how to speak English for the past 8 years.

It wasn't until 2011, when Marlene began training with Ray Oliveira, who introduced her to boxing. She immediately fell in love with the sport. After training with others Marlene felt the need to push herself further and got involved in Zumba. Marlene went on to become a licensed Zumba instructor and began teaching.

While renting a space from another trainer and teaching classes, the unthinkable happened to her. She tore her ACL which forced her to take almost a year off from her journey through fitness. Within that year she faced a lot of doubt. The thought crossed her mind several times that she might never get back to where she was physically.

Turning that downtime into motivation, she laid out the plans and worked towards opening her own gym.

In November 2015, Marlene was able to open Keeping it Movin Fitness, where she holds everything from Zumba classes to boot camps. She doesn't just indulge in fitness for the way her body looks, but to get away from the business of life. To Marlene it's an outlet for expression and her hope is to share that with others. Through exercise you can become stress free and think clearer.

"I am a creator of my own reality."

Faces Of New Bedford – #47: Yanire Gomez



Meet Yanire Gomez, 33-year-old president and owner of Trilogy Laboratories.

As a lifelong New Bedford resident, Yanire has a fond appreciation for the city. After graduating high school, she attended Northeastern University, where she received her bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice. She started working at different correctional facilities with inmates, most of whom had come out of struggles with addiction. It was at that time she and her colleagues were discussing toxicology and how it was beneficial field to get involved in, as they could work toward advocating for clients before they ever became inmates.

Seeing how the city of New Bedford has been ravaged by drug use, she wanted to start her business here, where the people

she had grown up with needed it the most. Upon dealing with personal loss in her own life from substance abuse, she knows how it can affect a family, which has driven her to open Trilogy Laboratories.

The unique thing about the philosophy behind Trilogy Testing Laboratories is that as a toxicology lab; that runs urinalysis testing to confirm or deny drug use, they also focus on patient advocacy and a medical continuum of care. Where large international labs are only worried about delivering a report, Yanire strives to provide an all encompassing relationship as a “Clinical Parter.”

Her focus is to work alongside her partners and educate them on how they could better treat their patients. Rather than simply providing a solitary piece of information, the test result, Trilogy aims to advocate for the patient, work alongside the medical providers, and bring awareness to her community concerning the effects of substance abuse. The focus is individualized treatment plans that will provide term care while decreasing relapses and recidivism.

“Mediocrity is madness. As people we are created for so much more but so often we are handicapped by our fears and complacency.”

Faces Of New Bedford – #48: Ryan Tavares



Meet Ryan Tavares, 28-year-old scallop fisherman.

He grew up in the North End of New Bedford in the Lord Phillip housing development. Living in a small 2-bedroom apartment with his brother and mom, he understands the struggle that most people go through in our city. During his teenage years, he met the girl who would become his wife and she helped him stay out of the trouble going on around in his environment.

After graduating from New Bedford Voc-Tech he worked between a few construction jobs, not finding enjoyment in his work. It was around the age of 20 where he became interested in fishing, as his girlfriend's father was a scallop fisherman. He started off working for little to no money, cleaning the boats and helping them with gear work, before they asked him to come on as a full-time fisherman.

It wasn't too long before he had become passionate about his career path. With New Bedford being the number one fishing port in the world, we lose sight of the hard work and economic growth the industry brings into our city. Rather than focusing on the negative atmosphere that surrounds it, Ryan started a fishing focused clothing company, Slave of the Sea.

The ideology behind it is simple, as it represents the guys who don't have the option to turn down the next trip out because their family depend on them fishing. In a sense they become "Slaves to the Sea" which can be a dual edged sword, a love/hate relationship. He has seen some decent success, selling several runs of gear at local boat supply shops and even selling at supply stores in Cape May, New Jersey.

His passion for New Bedford and seeing others succeed and understand the potential they have is an obvious thing. He is currently working with a local barber and friend to open a barbershop in downtown New Bedford, The New Bedford Barber Company. Their hope is to open a barbershop with a classy feel and a place for local artists and brands to get their feet off the ground, offering retail space and walls to hang art.



“You are not a product of your environment, you are a product of how you perceive your environment. If you grow up with everyone doing the wrong thing, you don’t have to follow suit but have the decision to make your own decisions.”

#### Faces Of New Bedford – #49: Tiffany Ferreira



Meet Tiffany Ferreira, a Research Assistant at the University of Massachusetts as part of a Doctoral fellowship and part-time Operations Manager at Southern Lights Solar.

As long as Tiffany could remember she had been good at math and during her high school years had even considered going to college to become a math teacher. With the push of several teachers from New Bedford High School (Ms. Daamguard, Mr. Viera, and Mr. Knickerson; just to name a few) she began her freshman year as a Math major at UMass Dartmouth.

After a few semesters her interests in math had shifted and she became a physics major. During her first few years in college she didn’t really get involved but it wasn’t until the faculty in the Math and Physics department invited her to go to the Undergraduate Women’s Physics conference where she really had a life changing event. During one of the sessions, someone mentioned how only 2 percent of women in undergraduate Physics programs would continue on to receive their Doctorate, and this fact bothered her.

From that point on she made it her mission to advocate for

women in the math and science world. Upon graduating from the University of Massachusetts with her Degree in Science and Physics, she was invited to join a doctoral fellowship at the school, where she is studying how to numerically model the onset and progression of Alzheimer's disease.

She is heavily involved with Women in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) working to help other people see that there are plenty of opportunities to grow and work in the fields of science, physics.

They have hosted events for OUR Sister's School for girls on several occasions, teaching them to understand science using games and presentations.

"We have the potential to be a great hub like Boston and New Bedford should look to UMass for all of the opportunities that it has, rather than seeing it as 'The closest school to go to so it is my last option.'"

Faces Of New Bedford – #50: Angel Diaz



Meet Angel Diaz, 28-year-old Math teacher, co-program director and DJ.

Angel moved to New Bedford in his early teenage years, after living in Florida and New York for his early childhood. His start in New Bedford wasn't that great, getting kicked out of New Bedford High School for carrying a weapon on him to

dropping out of the alternative high school. It wasn't too long after that Angel realized he didn't want to continue down the path of destruction he was on and went back for his GED at the age of 16. He was also avidly involved in music, working with two others to open his own professional studio, where he was recording and mixing music at the same age.

He then went on to work for a host of organizations where he helped youth, whether it was with their homework or creating lessons for them, all while continuing his secondary education. He got involved with Dream Out Loud, then Brick by Brick, and continued teaching teenagers music on and off for the past 14 years. It was in 2014, that he became the co-program director. Since then he has even worked alongside a group of teens on a project, which they performed for the President of Bermuda on the island. Angel is also a full time math teacher for the girls at the Our Sister School, which is a private charter school for low income girls.

Aside from teaching, Angel is also an entertainer. His involvement with music since such a young age has opened up the door for him to be able to work in various different platforms of music, from production to evening DJing. He has done tons of corporate events and parties but recently has teamed up with the Blessed Energy band. He will be joining them to tour New England this upcoming summer alongside a few other DJing opportunities he has.

"I'm an "edutainer," I like to educate while entertaining. I was a person that the system failed so I didn't want to see other kids go through that."

Faces Of New Bedford – #51: Ryan McAfee



Meet Ryan Mcfee, 40-year-old fine artist from New Bedford. Ryan grew up playing sports, so being an artist was far from his mind.

After graduating high school, he moved to Boston where he attended the Suffolk University, majoring in History. At the time, the university bought the New England School of Art and Design, so he took a few electives in art, one being Intro to Oil Painting.

Living above a café and framing shop in Boston's North end, he got some of his schoolwork framed at the shop below. The owner encouraged him to paint the buildings and restaurants that scattered "Little Italy", which he did. The framing shop owner started selling his pieces, starting his career as a painter.

He relocated his studio from his little apartment to the SOWA building in South Boston during his infancy up until he was affected by the economy crash and moved back to New Bedford in 2011. He had been able to get closer to family and opened a

studio space with his mother on Williams Street.

They started in a little storefront and as business got better for him he was able to claim the old storefront of the Artificial Marketplace. Being in New Bedford has giving him a large inspiration in his art, drawing from the history of whaling and fishing that has given this city its identity in history. He enjoys being able to be apart of all of the growth and creativity that is happening downtown.

“You have to work your butt off and be prepared to go through periods where you fail, but pick up the pieces and continue on with what you love.”

Faces Of New Bedford – #52: Colton Simmons



With the one year anniversary of the Faces of New Bedford we would like to give you a glimpse into the life of its creator!

Meet Colton Simmons, 27-year-old photographer and graphic



designer. Colton grew up in United Front Homes with his mom. His mother did her best to keep him out the trouble that was rampant with gangs in the city during his neighborhood. With his focus on school and extracurricular activities, he was always involved in art, whether drawing, painting or music. The death of his father at age 16 was a pivotal moment for him, as it pushed him, more than ever, to get out of the circumstances that he had grown up in.

Upon graduating from Greater New Bedford Regional Vocational Technical School, he attended the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, however after a year in a half in the Computer Science program, he could no longer afford school and his bills, which forced him to drop out.

Working dead-end job to dead-end job, he knew that he had to break free from the cycle and get back to school. After paying off the debt accumulated in his first time in college and with the support and encouragement of his wife and family, he enrolled at Bristol Community College in the Graphic Design program. There his love for photography and design was rekindled, even helping create what Faces of New Bedford has become today.

Colton has also done as much as possible to give back to the community by volunteering countless hours at local non-profit organizations and churches, trying to help bring hope back to city that has seen so much pain. He is currently graduating from Bristol Community College as the Salutatorian of his class and hoping to finish his undergraduate degree at the Rhode Island School of Design. Colton has also worked as the IT Administrator and most recently, the Graphic Designer for Teen Challenge New England, a non-profit drug rehabilitation program located in Brockton, MA.

"It's been my faith that has allowed me to get this far and it is only my hope that others can see what God has been able to do in my life and the purpose He has for them."

## Faces Of New Bedford – #53: Rosannette Rivera



Meet Rosannette Rivera, 30-year old painter and teacher at New Bedford High School.

Rosannette was born in Puerto Rico but spent the first 12 years of her life in Central/South America and the Caribbean, as her father was a missionary who worked throughout these locations. Due to her families' appearance, most people thought they were American, which caused hostility from the locals where they traveled. This caused Rosannette to spend a great deal indoors, where she went to drawing and other forms of art for refuge.

After her father's service, they moved to the US and had a brief stay in New Jersey before they settled in New Bedford. Although she never expected to take art seriously, as she thought that you couldn't find a future working in it, she met Ms. Riley at NBHS, who changed her view completely. She showed her the power art held to communicate and express things to

people from any walk of life.

With the inspiration she received from her classes, she graduated and pursued a degree in Fine Art and Art Education at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth. She began teaching art at Roosevelt middle school where she came across students who were living through extremely unfortunate circumstances. She used her position to be able to show those students how to use art as she had during her childhood and overcome their situations.

This has only continued to her current teaching position at New Bedford High School, where she is able to impact students at the most pivotal time of their lives, just before they journey off into what life has before them. Her hope is that she can continue to show her students what art became to her when she was in their position, and move on with a better appreciation and literacy for art.

“It’s not about pretty, it’s about taking the necessary steps to get better in the future.”

Faces Of New Bedford – #54: Edson Goncalves

Meet Edson Goncalves, 27-year-old systems engineer.

Edson’s mother saved money during his early life, to move him from Praia, Cape Verde to New Bedford to work towards a better life. Growing up in housing projects throughout the city most of his life, he had been exposed to so many things that troubled him. From friends who had been imprisoned for murder to friends who overdosed and passed away.

Knowing he wanted to become more than that and from a little inspiration from Star Wars, he chased the dreams of becoming an engineer. He saw all of this amazing technology in the movies and asked someone why we didn’t have any of it and they told him because engineers hadn’t created them yet. Doing his

best to stay out of trouble, he graduated from New Bedford High School and attended UMass Dartmouth, where he received a degree in Electrical Engineering.

He had heard great things about working with Department of Defense so pursued a job with General Dynamics, who held multiple contracts with the U.S. Government. During his time there he worked with the networks and systems that have assisted our troops overseas in communicating with one another as they are out in the battlefield.

Wanting more out of his career he moved on from General Dynamics to Riverbed Technology, where he is currently helping improve network performance for Fortune 100 Companies. He understands the importance of communications and hasn't let his dreams of Star Wars technology slip away, as he hopes to continue helping create and innovate better ways for the human race to stay in contact.

"Don't follow the trend. You don't have to do everything everyone else is doing because it most likely won't lead to anywhere good. Don't let your dreams die and continue until you achieve them."

Faces Of New Bedford – #55: Joe Lopes





Meet Joe Lopes, 42-year-old loan officer and City Councilor for the City of New Bedford.

Spending his entire life living in New Bedford, he always had a huge love for the city. After graduating from the University of Massachusetts with a degree in Political Science and with some inspiration from one of his professors, Dr. Hackey, he went on to pursue his Masters Degree in International Business. His time at Johnson and Wales, where he received his Masters, was important because he was able to learn so much about the world, and himself, from the diverse group of students and teachers there.

Having a family who had always been involved in political campaigns and working towards social justice, he always wanted to do something to give back to the community he loved so much. Joe had run 3 times for the position of City Councilor and lost all three times. After his last run, he was offered a job to work under former-Mayor Lang in the New Bedford Economic Council, where he gained a vast knowledge about city infrastructure and politics.

In 2009, Joe ran for city council for his 4th time and won, making him the Councilman over Ward 6. This was huge for him because growing up in the south end was crucial to him becoming the man he has become, so he is honored to serve that area. In his time as councilman, he has worked on projects to renovate the playgrounds of Hazlewood and Ashley parks, making those locations once again a place for families to visit. He is also working with the city to build much needed new elementary schools to the ward.

"The world is bigger than your window, look at it, explore it, and seek it."

Faces Of New Bedford – #56 Jess Bregoli



Meet Jess Bregoli, 32-year-old gardener and sculptor.

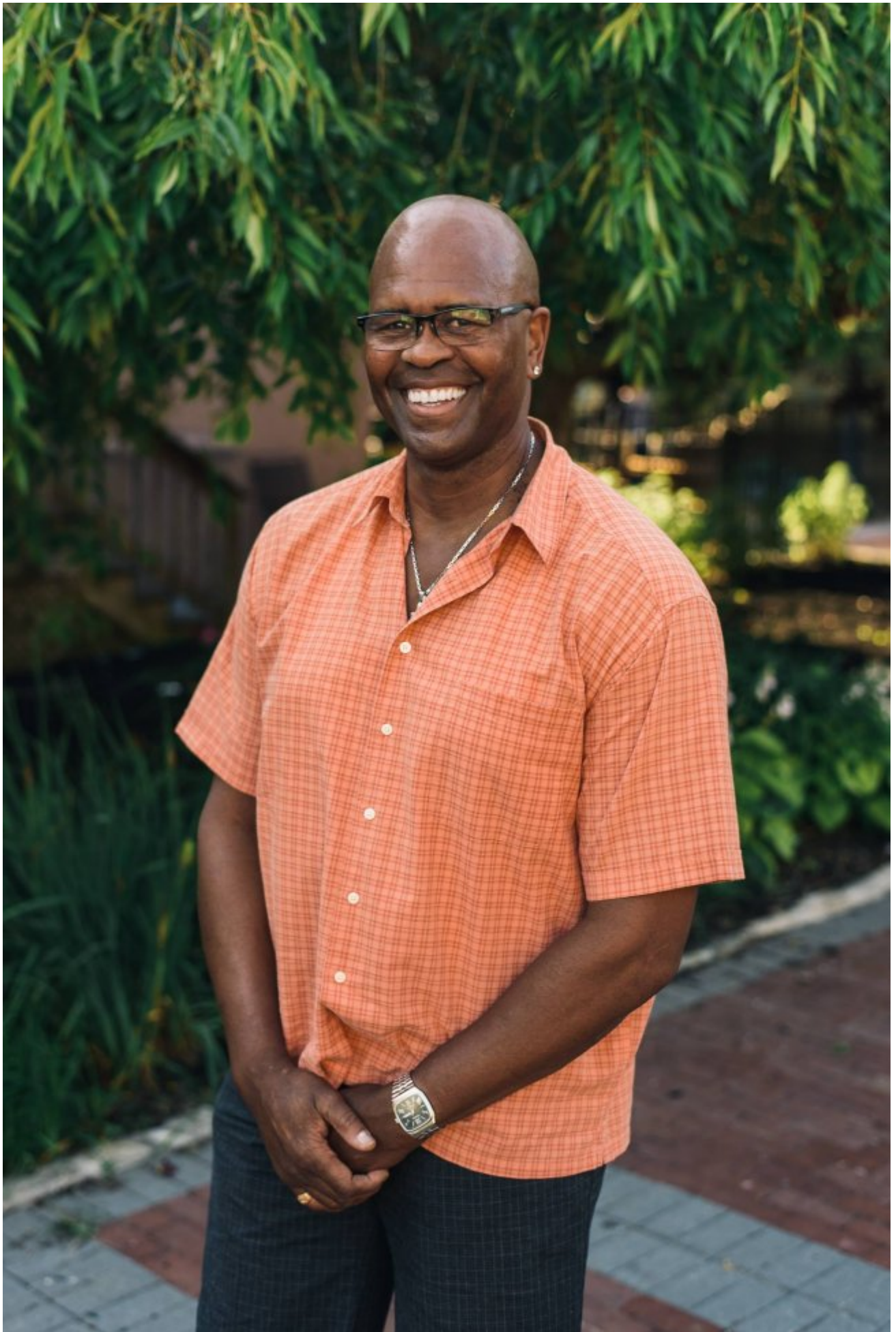
Jess moved to the area when she was a child from Oregon so that her mother could finish her Masters degree at UMass Dartmouth. Growing up she would work with her mentor, Emily Johns, taking care of the waterfront gardens at the Seaport in Downtown New Bedford. At the age of 16 she left school and backpacked through New England and ended up in Vermont. When she was 17 she realized that she needed to finish high school and came back home.

During her early 20s she attempted to complete a degree in Art History at several local colleges but left the area to pursue a relationship and business ventures in Atlanta, Georgia. While in Georgia she owned a coffee shop/art gallery and ran a high end clothing store. She then had her son, Sage, and it was around that time that she realized that she wanted to do large scale sculptures about environmental issues. Upon her split with Sage's father, she moved back to New England.

Back home, she decided to go back to school and finish her degree, but got involved with the sculpture program at UMass, seeing she hadn't had any formal training and wanted to start creating. Upon graduation from UMass, Jess has worked with several local committees, including being co-chair of New Bedford Beautiful, freelancing as the Art Administrator for the City of New Bedford, and working with the New Bedford Cultural Council. Working with these departments, she has worked for the last two years on the Seaport Art Walk, where local artists gather to bring to life our Seaport area with murals and sculptures of all shapes and sizes.

Faces Of New Bedford – #58 – Frank Stephens





Meet Frank Stephens, 62-year-old security officer at St. Luke's Hospital.

Frank was born in Kansas City, but grew up in Newport and Providence, Rhode Island. Upon graduating high school, he spent some time at Tennessee State University before transferring to American International College (AIC) in Springfield, where he received his degree in Business and Economics.

After getting married he relocated to New Bedford, where he fell in love with the city immediately. He worked for 14 years as a production manager of sonar at Raytheon. When the company sold the technology to the US government, Frank was laid off. Getting involved with the correction department, he started working at the Ash Street Prison.

During his 20 years with the Sheriff's Department, he worked his way up to a Captain at the Dartmouth House of Corrections, a position he retired from earlier this year. He always treated his inmates the way he would want to be treated, so it was encouraging to run into them years later and see the impact he had in helping change their lives.

He also spent a good portion of time owning his own security business, which serviced notable clients such as Mo Vaughn, MC Hammer, as well as various New England Patriot's and Boston Celtic's players. This experience led him to taking a per diem position as a security officer for Southcoast Health, where he feels blessed to work. The hospital is like a small city and he loves to be able to help out in anyway that he can while there, even if that means getting water for a patient on a busy floor during rounds or walking staff to their cars at night.

"Follow the way of the Lord's passages, do unto others you want to be done unto you. That goes a long way and it's what allowed me to be fair in my time of security and corrections."



Faces Of New Bedford – #59 Sarah Kocur



Meet Sarah Kocur, 28-year-old academic advisor/adjunct instructor and small business owner. As far back as she could remember, her mom, grandmother and nana had sewn. Being of European decent, it wasn't uncommon for the women to make their own clothes, so she picked up on it and found excitement in creating her own pieces.

As she got older and had graduated high school, she started attending Bristol Community College. She had always found it difficult to continue her education and wanted to give up many times, but through the support of her family, she pushed on. During her time at BCC, she started as a work study and as she moved on to UMass Dartmouth and eventually Eastern Nazarene, where she obtained her Masters in Science – Management, she continued advancing her career at BCC.

In 2011, she became a full-time employee and also teaches courses on college success. Through her position as an advisor and instructor, she finds it effective to share with her students that there were so many times that she wanted to quit, but kept pushing hard and it was worth it in the end.

Alongside her endeavors with BCC, she owns LOVEmoda (which translated from Polish means "Love Fashion"), a purse and clothing company based out of New Bedford. As she became older she turned her passion for sewing into something that she, after the push from friends and family, could make into a career. Starting off with just clutches, she has opened doors for herself, selling her products on Etsy, at SoWa in Boston, with the Etsy Mill Gypsies throughout New England, and several of the Craft-O-Rama exhibits held in New Bedford. Her hope is to grow LOVEmoda, creating accessories for men's fashion as well.

Faces Of New Bedford #60 – Trevor Carter



Meet Trevor Carter, 30-year-old business manager of Carter's Clothing and Footwear.

Trevor has always been involved in his family's business as long as he could remember, starting to work at the business at the age of 11. Carter's Clothing was opened by his grandfather, William "Bill" Carter in 1947, which began as an army surplus store that became a sporting good store and is today the supplier of sneakers and clothing to consumers in Downtown New Bedford.

After high school, Trevor attended BCC and graduated with an associates degree in Business Management, all while taking over the responsibilities as store manager of his father's business. It is important for him to be apart of the hard work that his family has invested in their company, as they have become a name that people could trust.

He enjoys that he is in the heart of the city, as he gets to be apart of the rich and cultural experience, all while meeting people from different socio-economic backgrounds. Trevor actually hopes to see more retail stores open in the downtown area, as it would create healthier competition in the market and drive more people down there to shop.

"With the transformation I have seen in the past 19 years..I can't imagine what I'm gonna see in the next 19 years."

Faces Of New Bedford #61- Yesenia Miranda-Santiago





Meet Yesenia Miranda-Santiago, 26-year-old New Bedford Police Officer and Army Combat Veteran. Yesenia was born in Puerto Rico and moved to the United States when she was 4 years old. Growing up she wanted to serve in the military, as she took great pride in her new home and wanted to see what life in the service was all about.

After graduating from Greater New Bedford Voc-Tech, Yesenia spent a semester in BCC before realizing that she wasn't ready for school. In 2009 Yesenia enlisted in the Army and not soon after returning from basic training, found out that she would be deployed to Iraq. Only 19 and scared, she left in February of 2010 and was trained as a military police officer.

During her time in Iraq, Yesenia worked with the Iraqi Police and helped to train at the academies in Baghdad. It was a tough adjustment being halfway across the world from her family and only having spotty internet to Skype them on holidays, however, she endured the long 11 months there.

Upon returning to the United States, with some motivation from other officers she met during her time abroad, Yesenia enrolled in the police academy. After graduating she became a New Bedford Patrol Officer on February 14, 2013 and has been serving the city ever since. In lieu of recent negative light on police officers, she has seen an amazing amount of support from the community, which has given her ease while on the job.

"Don't let anything hold you back, you always have a choice in how your future unfolds."

Faces Of New Bedford #62 – Debra Perry





Meet Debra Perry, 52-year-old Singer and Vocal Coach.

Debra has always loved singing and teaching, even organizing the children in her neighborhood and practicing Christmas Carols in October, only at the age of 9. As she got older she continued to perfect her voice, training with Katie Linder-Tetzel at the Music Center.

Debra attended the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth and studied Music and Psychology, because she wanted to eventually work as music therapist. Upon graduating, she sang for various bands, choirs, and events, including weddings, baptisms, and corporate functions. Her most memorable moment was singing with a choir in a church in Leningrad, Russia which hadn't had any music for 100 years.

Debra taught at as a Vocal coach at the Music Center for 11 years. She also taught under the direction of Jeannie at her voice studio in Boston. During this time, she learned the technique that she has been using for the past 20 years. In 2004, Debra then opened her own studio in New Bedford, The Vocal Development Studio. She opened the studio in New Bedford, because there weren't studios in the city that taught vocalists to gain control of their voice, while also building a strong stage presence and confidence in their vocal abilities.

In her time as a Vocal Coach, Debra has had the opportunity to train vocalist who have gone on to lead lasting careers, such as Devin Lima (LF0), Sean Gallagher (Beyond the Embrace), Aoife Clancy, and many more. She has also worked in studio with big names like Denny Dias (Steely Dan) and Dinky Dawson (Tour Manager and Sound Engineer of Fleetwood Mac).

"You have to think of yourself like an athlete. Singing takes a lot of discipline. It isn't what you see on TV. It takes more than natural talent. You need to train."

Faces Of New Bedford #63 – Robert Mendes





Meet Robert Mendes, Executive Director of the Boys and Girls Club of Greater New Bedford.

Robert grew up in the cities south end, before moving into the house his parents bought just a few blocks from the program. Almost immediately his mother had him and his siblings signed up and they began attending everyday afterschool.

Soon after his time at the Club, he enjoyed helping the Gym Director, Chet Travers, gather equipment and form intramural leagues. Robert did this throughout his teenage years and started working as an aid in the Gym before he graduated High School. It was during his years there where saw kids from all walks of life coming together, some with no guidance besides the club, grow and see success they wouldn't normally have.

He stayed on at the Boys and Girls Club and it morphed into a career for him. He's worked as a basketball coach for the past 40 years. He took over the position as the Physical Director, transitioned to the Program Director, and eventually became the Executive Director, which he has been doing for the last 18 years.

He's enjoyed being able to impart to them all of the things that his mentors had to him in his youth. When Robert became the Executive Director he knew he didn't want to stay pent up in his office all day, but become apart of these children's life and push them to be respectful and take advantage of every opportunity that is awarded to them.

"The kids are the most important aspect of this job and organization. You can never put yourself in a level where you aren't in touch with the kids."

Faces Of New Bedford #64 – Rayana Grace



Meet Rayana Grace, 24-year-old Youth Development Director at the YMCA.

Rayana, who has lived in the city her entire life, couldn't imagine living and working anywhere else. After graduating from Boston College with a degree in Sociology and African/African-Diaspora studies, she had friends who took their skills and talents elsewhere, as she followed after her intuition to return home and seek employment.

Realizing the importance of giving back to the city that helped raise her she started working as a case manager at the Harbour House. The Harbour House caters to homeless families that are trying to get back on their feet, providing them with a place to live and a case manager, who can help plug them into the services offered in the city. She enjoyed this job, as it opened her eyes to the difficulties that others face in the city and gave her compassion to be able to do her best to help them.

After her time with Harbor House, she started working for the YMCA as the Youth Development Director, which was a position that hadn't been held for 8 years prior to her employment there. With the Y, Rayana is able to create and maintain programs for the children who attend the downtown location. She has helped establish a drama club, dancing classes, and a plethora of other services during her time there.

Her hopes are to be able to empower the children to recognize that anything that they are looking for outside of themselves is already within them. So if they are looking for love or strength or faith, those are already gifts within them.

Faces Of New Bedford #65 – Shelley Cardoos





Meet Shelley Cardoos, 36-year-old Artist, Business Owner, and Executive Director of EforAll (Entrepreneur for All). Shelley located to New Bedford while attending the University of Massachusetts – Dartmouth in 1998, where she obtained a Bachelors Degree in Sculpture. Upon graduation, she started working at AHEAD as a color picker and eventually became the manager of the creative department.



During the 12 years she spent there, she pursued her passions in her free time, playing and singing in several bands and helping Elissa Paquette start CRAFT-O-RAMA. CRAFT-O-RAMA began as a seasonal holiday pop-up shop. For the past few years the shop has opened just after Thanksgiving and remained open until Christmas.

She has enjoyed providing an outlet for local artists and crafters a place to sell their work and understand that there is a market to make money with their talents. Shelley is excited to be opening the Craft-O-Rama as a full-time store front on Purchase street in downtown New Bedford.

After 12 years with AHEAD, she left to become the Executive Director of the Southcoast expansion of the Lowell/Lawrence based organization, EforALL. EforALL is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to accelerating economic and social impact through entrepreneurship in mid-sized cities. With the organization, she has worked in collaboration with her colleagues to help locals with a passion for entrepreneurship make strides toward their dreams of owning their own businesses.

“This community has so many rich cultures and a variety of knowledge and the more we see people work together, the more growth we will see in our community.”

Faces Of New Bedford #66 – Linée Mello-Frost



Meet Linée Mello-Frost, 27-year-old Registered Nurse, Dance Instructor, and Head Field Hockey Coach for the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth. (Photo by Josh Souza)

For as long as Linée could remember she'd been active in dancing. She went to Center Stage Dance Studio for the majority of her dance career and was a member of the Competition Team. During her sixth grade year she started playing field hockey at Friends Academy and immediately fell in love.

She continued to play field hockey, ran track and danced throughout her high school years at NBHS. Upon graduation, she had several scholarship offers from Division One schools to play field hockey and to run track. Being so connected with her family and community, she decided to stay local and play and run for UMass Dartmouth. She had always wanted to help others so it was fitting that she also enrolled in their Nursing program. During this time, Linée continued to teach dance at the school she had once learned everything she knows.

After her last year at UMass, Linée decided to stay on as the assistant coach of the women's field hockey team while balancing her new career as a nurse at Tobey hospital. A few years later, Linée took on the role as Head Coach of the team, which she has done for the past 2 years. She loves that in all aspects of her life, whether at the University, at the hospital, or at the dance school, she is able to help others move forward in their lives toward a goal. Helping someone that is recovering from an intense surgery, working for the win on the field or nailing their dance routine flawlessly, truly gives Linée joy.

"Be the type of person you want to meet. In the end we only regret the chances we didn't take."



Meet Cedric Josey, 36-year-old Musician and teacher.

Cedric grew up in Brockton and moved to New Bedford when he began to attend the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, where he studied English, Drama/Film alongside a minor in African Studies. Having being involved in music since his early years of singing in the choir at his family's church, it was no surprise that he joined several bands during his time in college.

It was not long after his short stint in a few bands that he found himself living alone in an apartment in New Bedford, face to face with his first guitar. He loved song writing and was determined to learn guitar, so that in the chance things didn't work with a band, he could still make and play the music he loved. Remembering the trouble he had with neighbors learning saxophone as a child, he took up finger picking in order to keep from making loud music.

Cedric had graduated from college and started working with the youth in the area through substitute teaching positions and with the Trustees of Reservations. He felt it was important to be an African American male mentor in these youth's lives because it showed them another path was available to them than what society or their peers might lead them to believe.

He has also had the opportunity to work with local agencies like Destination New Bedford, where in collaboration with Ben Gilbarg, he wrote and produced a song "Being in New Bedford." This song was used to as a promotion piece for the different things that our city has to offer. Between local gigs and his interactions with the kids at the schools he teaches at Cedric sees so much potential for our city to grow into the great place it once was.

Faces Of New Bedford #68 – Milagros Sanchez





Meet Milagros Sanchez, 28 year-old Outreach manager and student.

Milagros was born in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic and relocated to Uptown Manhattan with her family in hopes of a better life. They all lived separately in different households until her family could get a job to afford an apartment for all of them. During her high school years, she got involved with the wrong crowd and ended up pregnant with her twin daughters and dropped out of high school.

For the next several years, Milagros found herself stuck, moving from abusive relationship to abusive relationship. In 2012, she had decided that enough was enough and in the middle of the night during one of the worst situations she had been placed in, she packed all of her and her daughter's things in trash bags and fled to New Bedford.

A case worker had suggested the city to her, as there were tons of opportunities for her to get her life on track there. She had even been able to transfer to the CVS here and continue in her position as a pharmacy tech. Shortly after though, due to the fact that she didn't have at least her G.E.D. and couldn't take the Massachusetts Pharmacy Technician certification test, she was without a job.

She knew she had no other option but to go back to school and get her G.E.D. Milagros didn't just stop there, she continued to pursue education at BCC, knowing that she wanted to educate and raise awareness for domestic violence. She quickly found herself involved in many school activities and part of the Commonwealth Honors Program, all while juggling jobs and raising her two children.

This past spring Milagros graduated and is now attending Simmons College in Boston pursuing a Bachelors Degree in Social Work. She also is the South Coast Energy Challenge Community Outreach Manager for the Marion Institute, where she

provides the community with resources to save money with their electricity and helps families who are less fortunate get plugged into programs like PACE.

Faces Of New Bedford #69 – Michael Rocha



(Photo by Josh Souza) Meet Michael Rocha, 41 year-old Cardiologist. Michael grew up in New Bedford and graduated from NBHS in 1993.

He finished his undergrad in chemistry at UMass Dartmouth and it was during this time he realized that he wanted to go into healthcare, as he had a passion for helping people. He began his Doctor of Medicine at UMass Medical School and during his

residency/fellowship at Tufts Medical Center, he specialized in Cardiology.

He knew that he wanted to come back to New Bedford and give back to the community that he grew up in, so upon completion Michael moved back and became a cardiologist with Hawthorn Medical Associates. He takes pride in helping patients, not just through prescriptions for medications, but by prescribing lifestyle changes, knowing most heart disease can be prevented by diet, exercise, avoiding smoking and stress reduction.

This also goes hand in hand with another initiative that Michael is involved with, like New Bedford Wellness Initiative. In 2014, New Bedford was dubbed as the least healthy in Massachusetts for people age over 65 and he couldn't sit back and let that continue. Working together with other physicians and local groups he helped start New Bedford Well, which started with a walk around Buttonwood park that raised awareness for the health issues. Now they hold a Sunday wellness program at the Boys and Girls Club focused on diet, exercise and stress reduction along with a pop-up farmers market.

"People have to realize that they are their own best physicians. They have to get beyond just the pills and procedures and realize that they have the power to change within themselves."

Faces of New Bedford #70 – John Thomas







Meet John Thomas, 48 year-old owner and director of Thomas Consultants which manages and oversees multiple recovery homes in New Bedford and Fall River, conducts interventions, and provides recovery coaching.

John grew up in a great home with a single mother. As an only child, he spent a lot of time out of the house with friends. Diagnosed with ADHD at an early age, John was prescribed with Ritalin and quickly learned that he could abuse the medication. He would act out and seek attention, attempting to fill the void of not having his father around. When he didn't want to deal with being reprimanded for his actions, he would double his dose of Ritalin to enter a drug induced state.

As he got older his drug abuse progressed – he went from smoking to drinking and from drinking to harder drugs like cocaine and opiates. He managed to control this abuse while finishing his degree at Mount Ida in Boston where he received his Associates Degree in Funeral Service and Embalming. At that time, he was living in Brockton and working at funeral home in Dorchester during the day and going out and partying all night.

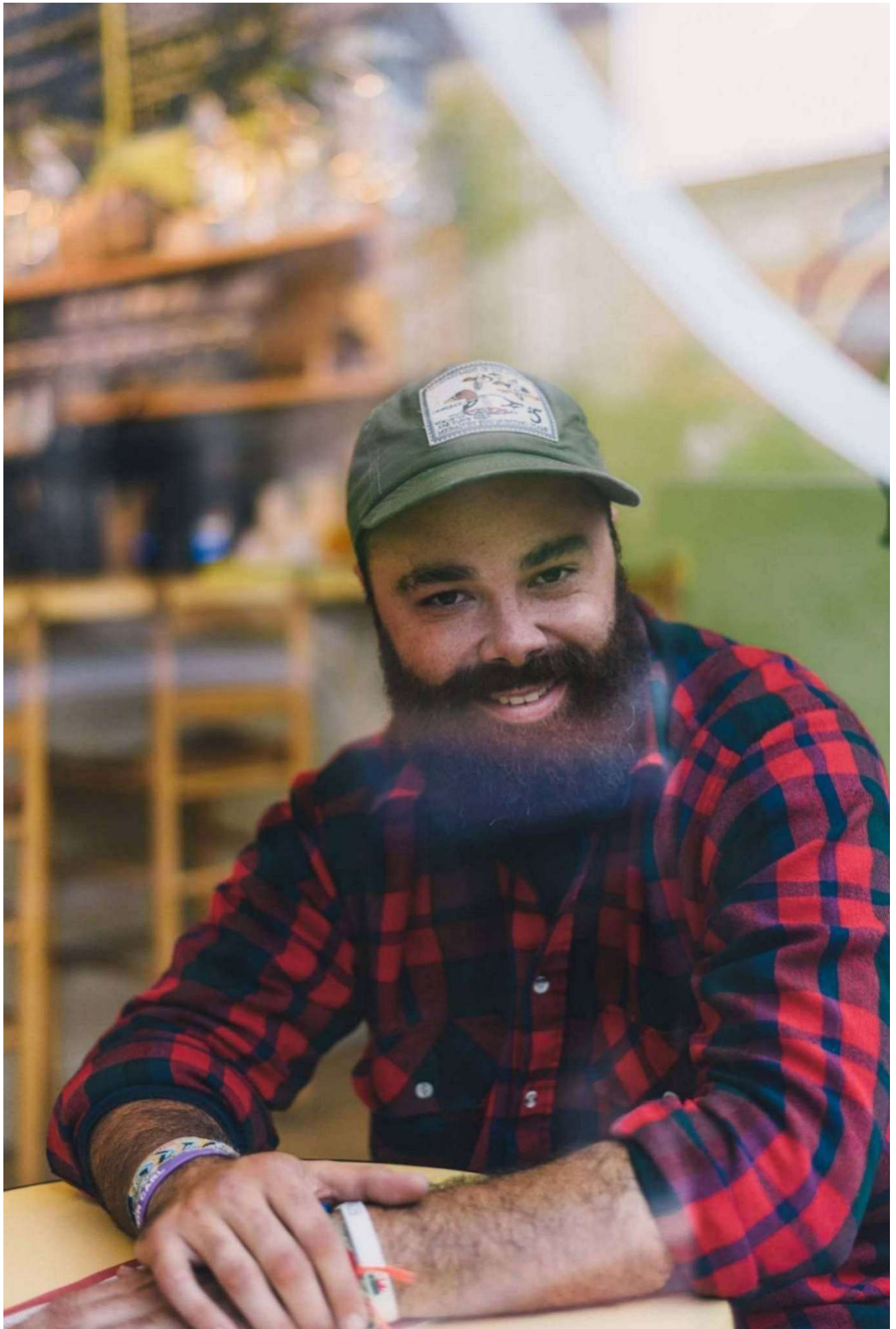
This lifestyle lasted for a while until he and his future wife decided they needed to move back to New Bedford. They bought a house and tried to act like everything was fine. John and his wife knew that his addiction had gotten much worse, which caused him to move out.

Bouncing around and being homeless brought him to a very low place in life, so low that John thought about killing himself. At that point he was living in a family friend's room. He looked up and saw the reading of Footsteps, that was always hanging in his grandmothers house, and at that point fell to his knees and surrendered his life.

It was a long road to recovery, but after a few years John had the opportunity open a recovery home with a partner.

Eventually taking over the home, John has made it his life's passion to help those who are in similar positions he once found himself. Now reunited with his wife, he has 4 recovery homes called Recovery Commons where he strives to help those struggling with drug addiction.

Faces of New Bedford #71 – Nicholas Walecka



Meet Nicholas Walecka, 34 year-old Freelance Journalist, Photographer, Teacher. Nick spent a short while at UMass Dartmouth after graduating from high school, majoring in Business.

Not sure that the field of study was for him, he dropped out and started working for his families' trucking business. During that time Nick got to see the country, but still felt like that wasn't what he wanted to spend the rest of his life doing.

He returned home and after receiving his associates degree, returned to UMass where he eventually found a passion for writing, realizing he always did better with papers than he had taking tests. Graduating with a degree in Creative Writing, he started writing for the Advocate, a weekly paper run by the Standard Times focused on Acushnet and Fairhaven. There he gained immense knowledge of journalism and confidence in his writing, which opened doors for him to work with news outlets such as the Wareham Week, Dartmouth Week, The New Bedford Guide, and the Standard Times.

After a few years of working between these publications, he craved another career change and began substitute teaching in the New Bedford Public system. Nicholas was excited to fill in for a teacher who was promoted from her position at Trinity Middle school, an alternative school for children in New Bedford. After a year of substituting in that position, he was hired on full-time and is excited to inspire this kids.

Aside from his career as a teacher, he works with the HOPE Collaborative, a program organized by the New Bedford Police Department and City, where he tutors inner city kids. He is so thankful to be able to be apart of the community in New Bedford because it was the same community that has been able to push him and encourage him in everything he does.

"New Bedford has such a welcoming and supporting community,

especially in the downtown area. You don't see businesses competing but helping each other out"

Faces of New Bedford #72 – David Costa





Meet David Costa, 34-year old Chiropractor and DOT Certified Medical Examiner.

As a lifelong native of New Bedford, he has watched his family, both immigrants from Portugal, worked hard to provide a good life for him and his brother. His father had is humble start in a factory he worked in for 13 years, until getting laid off due to production moving out of the country. It was then he took a gamble and started a lobster bait company with David's grandfather.

It was this sample of hard work that motivated David to attend Quinnipiac University in Connecticut, where he received his Bachelors degree and then went on to receive his Doctorate in Chiropractic at the University of Bridgeport. Being mentored by his Godfather, Dr. Antonio DaCunha, he was quickly drawn to the chiropractic profession due to his want to help people.

In his 8 years practicing, he has had two offices, one in downtown New Bedford and one in Wareham. During that time, he has become certified by the state of Massachusetts as a DOT Medical Examiner, which makes him one of a few people who can actually approve CDL Drivers, heavy machinery personel, just to name a few, fit for service.

He enjoys being able to help people who are in major pain and seeing their progress as they get better. He is also happy to be moving to a new location on Mt. Pleasant street, where he will have more room to fully service all of his patients. David also loves the time he gets to spend when he isn't helping others, with his wife and three kids.

"Hard work always pays off, if you work hard and treat people right good will come to you."

Faces of New Bedford #73 – Manuela Rosa





Meet Manuela Rosa, 39-year-old Program Director at the LifeWork Project.

Manuela moved to the United States at the age of 14 from Cape Verde. She grew up in housing projects with a single mother who worked hard to make a way for her in this country. She graduated from New Bedford High School and after time at BCC and UMass Dartmouth, she received her Bachelors Degree in Sociology with a concentration in Social Work.

Manuela soon began working for the state with the adult population. She assisted them in getting employment and providing stability for their families. With the encouragement of her mentor, Maria Grace, she ended up leaving her employment with the state and helping running the 3-year pilot program through the Women's Fund of Southeastern, MA, the LifeWork Project.

With the LifeWork Project, Manuela helps students who are newly enrolled at Bristol Community College who are single mothers or heads of house hold. Having grown up in similar environments she enjoys that the program's focus is to create self sufficiency in the women's life and she couldn't see herself doing anything else for work. Since coming to New Bedford from Cape Verde she has felt that there is no other place she could call home and want to give back to than here.

"Sometimes people just need a little help in order for them to recognize their potential."

Faces of New Bedford #74 – Courtney Miranda





Meet Courtney Miranda, 23-year-old Event Coordinator/Manager of Business Development and Field Hockey Coach.

Courtney has been involved with sports her entire life and during her time at New Bedford High School fell in love with field hockey. It was the impact that her coaches, Coach Rezendes and Kieltyka, had on her that taught her perseverance and consistency.

After graduating and attending Umass Amherst, Courtney had, for the first time in her life, been in a place where she wasn't playing sports competitively. This is what pushed her to come back, after receiving her bachelor's degree in Communication, to come back to NBHS and coach the field hockey team she once played on.

Fresh out of college and looking to start her career, she got introduced to a group of gentlemen who were in need of an Event Coordinator and Manager of Business Development for the restaurant they were planning on opening. After meeting with them and seeing the space of the soon-to-be Greasy Luck Brewery, she knew this is where she wanted to be.

As someone who has grown up in New Bedford her entire life and spending tons of time in the downtown area, Courtney felt it would be an amazing place to work. Hoping to assist the brewery in becoming a staple in the modern renaissance that is taking place in the cities growing community, she envisions a place where artist, musician's, and anyone chasing their dream can get their start.

Faces Of New Bedford #75 – Alison Wells



Meet Alison Wells, 44-year-old Artist and College professor.

Alison grew up on the island of Trinidad, where from a very early age she knew that she wanted to be an artist when she grew up. One day in class, a teacher embarrassed her for her grandeur ideas and told her she would most likely starve if she tried to make a living with art. This deterred her from keeping that a reality.

Once she graduated high school, she attempted to pursue a degree in architecture, as it seemed like the best way to blend art and a very plausible career. Becoming easily bored after a year, she received a letter notifying her she had received the scholarship she applied for 2 years earlier, to the Edna Manly College of Visual and Performing Arts in Jamaica. It was there she received a Bachelors in Fine Arts.

She returned to Trinidad, where she worked in advertising and teaching high school for quite some time, until her former teacher urged her to get her Master's degree. After taking a huge leap of faith, she moved to New Bedford, alone and without any friends or family, enrolled at UMass Dartmouth's masters program.

She fell in love with New Bedford, as the coastline city gave an island girl like herself a sense of comfort. Alison had come to New Bedford at a unique time in the city's history, as the artists of the area were developing a renaissance, that has had ripple effects on the art scene we have seen develop over the last decade.

She graduated from UMass and began teaching drawing and painting between there and Bristol Community College. She loves that she has been able to turn what she has loved her entire life into a reality and that New Bedford played in integral part in it.

Faces Of New Bedford #76 – Bienvenido "Ben" Perez





Meet Bienvenido “Ben” Perez, 26-year-old Lawyer.

Bienvenido was born and raised in New Bedford by his mother and father. He first thought of getting involved with law at the early age of 11, when his family was evicted from their home and faced homelessness. Because his family made just above the amount needed for a free lawyer and didn't make enough to afford to pay for one, they were forced to live between family members house for an entire summer.

Quite a few years later, Ben graduated from New Bedford High School and with a full tuition scholarship to Roger Williams University, he embarked on his journey to becoming a lawyer. During a mentorship program, he shadowed an attorney and that solidified his decision to practice law. Upon graduating with his bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice he enrolled in the Law School at Roger Williams.

Now he is practicing law, alongside his wife and father-in-law, in both New Bedford and Rhode Island. He has been able to give back and help families facing the same situations his family did, depending on the severity of the case. He loves that with his career he is able to service and give back to the people of the city where he grew up.

“Are we as big as Providence, no. Are we as big as Boston, no. We have a lot of character and that is all that matters.”

Faces Of New Bedford #77 – Richard Gormley





Meet Richard Gormley, 40-year-old Photographer and Graphic Designer.

Rick and his family moved to the area from Cincinnati when he was eight. Raised on a diet of Activision and Hanna-Barbara cartoons he would eventually graduate from Dartmouth High and get a degree in Film and Video from Michigan.

From there he moved to Los Angeles where he had the (mis)fortune to work on several straight to VHS movies. After 4 years in LA, Rick moved to Tokyo Japan, where he taught English to natives and although it wasn't what he'd gone to school for it was his calling. He fell in love with the people and the country. Unable to accurately describe the city to friends back in the States he started to take photographs.

Richard returned to New Bedford in 2009 and although he was unsure of what to do he knew he wanted to pursue his love for film, photography and design. Working a few odd jobs upon arrival, he quickly got working on pieces and featured a Tokyo inspired photo collage at Jeremiah Hernandez's U.G.L.Y. Gallery. He noted Jeremiah for his inspiration and encouragement to continue to pursue his desires as a creative.

His day job is as a graphic designer for Ahead USA, where he works on logo development and product photography. His hobby for photography has led him to photograph weddings, family portraits, fashion catalogs and most recently still lifes. His latest show at Alison Wells Studio in downtown New Bedford alongside Andrew Kepsinki and Peter Pereira features black and white photos of locally grown flowers.

His hope is to continue inspiring the youth of New Bedford through his work, especially the designs he partners with local skateboard shop Solstice to produce. Nothing makes him happier than to see the youth full of local pride.

"Everything I'm doing now I didn't go to school for and although I am not wealthy, I am happy. Be happy, because we

are all going to be working 70 hours a week, so you better like what you are doing. And if you want to get good get ready to fail, and enjoy failing.”

Faces Of New Bedford #78 – Edwin Cartagena



Meet Edwin Cartagena, 31-year-old Community & Family Engagement Coordinator at City on a Hill Charter School and President of United New Bedford.

Edwin was born and raised in Brockton, MA until the age of 9. During that time, both of his parents were struggling with addiction, while he and his sister were taken in by their grandmother.

At age 9, his mother had gotten custody of them and he moved with her to New Bedford. Although she was still struggling with her addiction, they stayed with her as they bounced from different people's homes and motels, until finally getting their own home in Presidential Heights. While living there, Edwin got involved with the street lifestyle and all that it encompassed, which led to him getting kicked out of school his senior year and then his home.

This lasted for a long time and brought him to the lowest place he has ever been in his life. He was facing legal issues and because of that wasn't able to get a job to provide for his girlfriend, now wife, and child. He attempted to take his life but at the last minute he made a plea for God to show himself if he was real to save him from this. It was then he remembered everything that happened until that point and saw every moment God had been there to save him from destruction.

Now Edwin uses all of those bad experiences to provide hope for others. He has since then gotten his GED and is attending school to get his degree in Business Management. He also works for the City on a Hill Charter Public school, where he works to provide families with resources on how to get enrolled in the school and puts on events for those students and families already involved with the school.

Edwin also runs the operations of United New Bedford, an organization he and his wife started in 2013 to help bring life, hope, and love back to this city. Most noted for their I



Love my City event at Buttonwood part which follows the God Belongs in My City prayer walk from city hall, those are just the beginning ideas they have. With the newly implemented Adopt A Block program, they hope to reach all of the broken and hurting communities in New Bedford, one street at a time.

“If you have breath, you have life, and if you have life, you have purpose. No matter what may come your way. Never give up.”

Faces Of New Bedford #79 – Dena Haden



Meet Dena Haden, 34-year-old Co-founder/Co-Owner of Groundwork and artist.

Dena had always been interested in art as she used it to communicate from an early age. As she got older and realized her passion, she decided to pursue it in college. Attending the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, she double majored in painting and illustration, in the hopes to have a feasible career drawing and using painting for her passion.

Upon her graduation, she moved to Boston, where she taught at Newbury College in Brookline. As an adjunct professor, she taught foundational art studio classes but wanted to get more out of her career in teaching. With that in mind, Dena went to Philadelphia, where she attended the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts. She was challenged during this time because she felt that she could just draw or paint anything she wanted and felt stagnant, which is where Dena fell in love with sculpting.

Her plan was to move to New York and continue teaching and pursuing art, but due to an illness in her immediate family, she moved back to the area. She was teaching for a nonprofit art program that serviced inner-city kids, while also attending an artist critique group in Boston, which helped her gain inspiration for her art at the time. This has led to her constant work and her recent installations at Haskell's Garden and Ropeworks.

While meeting with her life-long friend, Sarah Athanas, who had just moved back to the area and was telling Dena that she wishes there was a local group like the one she attended in Boston. That is where they came up with the idea for Groundwork, the creative co-working space on Purchase street in New Bedford. It is a place that is home to many local entrepreneurs and start up companies, including Pidalia, Eforall, Marion Institute, and many others.

Faces Of New Bedford #80 – Adam Davenport





Meet Adam Davenport, 29-year-old business owner and environmental designer.

Adam was born and raised in the area and after high school went to the University of New Hampshire, where he majored in civil engineering. It was during this time that he really became passionate about sustainability, pushing him to take as many environmental courses as possible to fully understand the subject.

Upon graduation he traveled for some time before returning to Massachusetts, where he became a teacher at a therapeutic day program in Waltham. After a few years of teaching, Adam quit his job to start a company, Terra Cura (which in Latin means Earth Care). Terra Cura is a regenerative design and consulting company who's mission is, "to promote the social ethics of land care, people care, and equity, locally and globally.

With Terra Cura, Adam has worked on an urban agriculture

initiative with a local organization, the Food Security Network. He and his team have worked to research and analyze how New Bedford can be impacted by a stronger local food system with an increase in urban agriculture.

He also worked on similar projects for the Marion Institute, most prominently the Grow Education Program. Through this program, they have built 11 community gardens at public schools throughout the city. The main idea behind the project is to create community spaces, not to feed the community, but to create a platform for people to come together and build connections, while gaining skills and abilities.

Faces Of New Bedford #81 – Joseph Cordeiro





Meet Joseph Cordeiro, 52-year-old New Bedford Police chief.

Joseph moved to New Bedford with his family from St. Michael, Portugal when he was only 2 years old. He never considered becoming a police officer growing up, but when he was 19, he owned his own sports supply store and worked as a baker. At both of those jobs, he ran into a lot of police officers that encouraged him to join the academy.

Joseph joined the academy and initiated as a police officer on June 1st, 1986. Throughout his time serving our city there have been a handful of occasions that remind him why he loves what he does. Early on in his career, he responded to a house call of a young boy named Joey and during that time he bonded with the boy and took him to safety. Years later he was preparing for a parade and a young boy yell out "Joey," just to find the boy he had helped years before. It was then that he realized that all though they may not see the effect, police officers can impact everyone they help.

After years of schooling, attaining even his Master's Degree in Criminal Justice and working in many departments of the force, Joseph had the opportunity to apply to become the chief of police. In his short time, as chief, he has already done plenty to help create a more positive atmosphere in New Bedford. He recently organized with the police department and Target to host a day where the Police officers could pair with a child who is less fortunate and get gifts for them and their family.

"If people care for the each other and the community, our city can become the great city that it has been historically and is."

Faces Of New Bedford #82 – Shonna Ryan



Meet Shonna Ryan, 29-year-old instructional technologist and founder of non-profit organization Civic Support.

Shonna moved to the area when she started attending the University of Massachusetts, where she received her Bachelor's Degree in Communication.

Shonna currently works at Providence College, where she is an Instructional Technologist. This position focuses on running the learning management system for the school, which the professors use to organize their classes. She trains the faculty, and helps them with any needs that they may have with classroom technology or teaching software.

With friend and fellow UMD grad student, Kevin Pelissier, she decided to start Civic Support, an organization focused on helping non-profits with their outreach efforts through marketing and PR services. Seeing that they were already working with non-profits throughout their graduate program, it was easy for them to help target the needs of each



organization.

Their hope with Civic Support was not just to provide marketing services, but to train those community causes in best practices for up keeping their own outreach efforts.

“One great, strong, unselfish soul in every community could actually redeem the world. –Elbert Hubbard”

Faces Of New Bedford #83 – Ian Abreu



Meet Ian Abreu, 31-year-old City Councilor At-Large and Manager of Public Policy and Business Development with the Chamber of Commerce.

Growing up in the south end of New Bedford with his family, Ian has immense love for the city he was raised in. Watching his mother run for a councilor position in the 90s, when he was only 9, sparked a fascination with public office and helping advocate for the community.

He attended Bridgewater University, where he attained his Bachelor's Degree in Communication and soon began working for the region Chamber of Commerce. With the Chamber, Ian is responsible for working with employers and businesses throughout the Greater New Bedford Region to help them build their companies and make them profitable.

In 2015, Ian ran for the position of City Councilor at-Large, just like his mother had in the past, and successfully won. He takes immense pride in helping the city that raised him, as he hopes to provide a place that is not only safe for him and his family, but for every resident that calls New Bedford home.

"Every resident of New Bedford who is ready and able to work, should be able to and I want to foster an environment that is conducive to do that."

Faces Of New Bedford #84 – Jose Rego





Meet Jose Rego, 45-year-old Chef and Restaurant Owner. Jose grew up in a Portuguese family where cooking was central to their lifestyle. Their Sundays consisted of large feasts, where Joe learned so much about cooking.

As Joe got older and eventually graduated from high school, he became a pipefitter in Newport. Due to the nature of the job, he would get laid off every summer, which led him and a friend to move to North Carolina to help build a golf course. During that time as roommates his friend would clean and Joe would cook. Blown away by his talent, he encouraged him to go to school for culinary, and went as far as getting him an application to Johnson and Wales.

This was only the start to Jose's cooking career, as he finished school and went on to work in various restaurants across the country. During sometime in Atlanta, he heard about an open casting for the Food Network television-show Chopped, which he entered and was selected. He performed so well on the show that he finished in first. He also went on to compete in another of the network's show Cutthroat, which he also won and even competed in a Battle of the Champions special.

With all this experience, he returned home to create his own culinary dream. Alongside Mario Ribeiro, of The Pasta House, they have teamed up to open the Cask & Pig. Their hope is to bring a gastro pub to North Dartmouth, which is teeming with corporate-owned restaurants, and give their patrons a place where there is quality service, food, and drinks.

Jose's biggest philosophy isn't about receiving though, as he tries to spend as much time helping others as possible. He has, throughout the years, offered his chef services up for non-profit organizations to raffle off at banquet silent auctions, which has helped him raise over \$65,000 for causes such as NOAH's Foundation, Prince Henry Society, St. Francis School, St. Anthony Church Choir, and so many more.

"It's not all about receiving, it's about giving back."

## Faces Of New Bedford #85 – Gloria Williams



Meet Gloria Williams, 71-year-old Director of PACE YouthBuild. Gloria was born and raised in Springfield, Massachusetts. After time in college and some years working as a Math teacher, Gloria relocated to New Bedford to take a position working in the field of Human development.

After some time working in that field, she took the position at PACE YouthBuild, where she runs the program. PACE YouthBuild is a program for underserved at risk youth, 16-24, that have dropped out or been forced out of the traditional school system. They offer their members a host of wrap around services to lead them towards a brighter future. Through HiSET preparation, National construction certification, life and career development skills, YouthBuild prepares these young people for the rest of their lives.



Gloria has taken a huge amount of pride in what the YouthBuild team does at the program. She loves being at 593 Kempton Street, as it helps her keep going, knowing that they are impacting their students' lives. They are also involved in helping the community as well. PACE YouthBuild buys old and foreclosed homes, rehabs them, and then makes them affordable for first time home buyers, who wouldn't otherwise have been able purchase a home.

Gloria often says, "Once YouthBuild, always YouthBuild! Membership doesn't end when a student graduates, we are always here to support and enrich the lives of past, present and future members!"

#### Faces Of New Bedford #86 – Meet Brandon Roderick



Meet Brandon Roderick, 27-year-old Chef and owner of the The Baker.

Most of Brandon's life, he knew he wanted to grow up and

become a doctor. In high school, he worked in restaurants, with his first job being at Divino's in downtown New Bedford. His dream of becoming a doctor though soon became a reality for him, as he received a full ride to Tufts University.

While at Tufts, he continued to work in restaurants, all while pursuing his undergraduate degree full time. It was during a moment in his second year that everything changed and he knew that his passion wasn't in medicine. He was sitting in the library studying for a chemistry test, when he got the urge to call Le Cordon Bleu and apply for enrollment in their culinary arts program.

He finished the semester at Tufts and began his journey the following September at Le Cordon Bleu. During his time there, he greatly pressed into the teachings of his mentor Ying Wei Luo, who saw his skill in baking and poured into him. Brandon would be early for class and leave late, trying to perfect everything Ying had to teach him. Upon graduating, he worked long days serving tables and long nights in a bakery, getting 3 hours of sleep in his car.

He found out that his great-grandmother's health was declining and moved back to New Bedford, where he continued to commute back to Boston. This became too much for him and he then took a job as the General Manager of Ella's in Wareham. This opened his eyes to the business side of the restaurant business, which helped him tremendously in the planning and opening of his own bakery, The Baker.

Brandon opened The Baker in downtown New Bedford in late 2016 and couldn't be happier. He was told by many while living in Boston that he would be a fool to come to New Bedford and open a bake shop focused on artisan, hand-made, pastries and baked goods. Being the city that he loved and in the middle of a revitalization of the downtown area, he knew that a bakery would be a great addition to our already great city.



“Follow your passion, do what you love.”

## Faces Of New Bedford #87 – Meet Brandon Oliver



Meet Brandon Oliver, 29-year-old delivery driver and founder of 508 Sneakerheads.

Brandon grew up in the 90s, watching Michael Jordan play in his prime. During this time, the Jordan sneakers were growing in immense popularity and if Michael wore it, you wanted to have them. It was then, where Brandon's love for sneakers was born.

Once at the age where he could work and afford to buy the sneakers he had always wanted, he started hunting down the rare and limited sneaker releases he always wanted. This became difficult without a network of people to connect with and that led to his starting of the 508 Sneakerheads on Facebook. It started as a small group of local collectors, where they could buy/trade/sell or just connect with others

who had a passion for sneakers and the culture behind them.

It wasn't long before this group started to take off, connecting people from Connecticut to Maine, over their love for sneakers, and has over 15,000 active members. Brandon, who is passionate about the sneaker industry doesn't want to just stop there, but make a career working to design sneakers or in management and marketing at the major sneaker companies.

"No matter what you go thru in life never give up on your dreams"

Faces Of New Bedford #88 – Connie Mimoso



Meet Connie Rocha-Mimoso, 50-year-old Director of Community Health Services at Seven Hills.

Connie moved to New Bedford from Portugal in 1981, at the age of 14, with her parents and 4 siblings. Her family always instilled the value of helping others, from her grandfather

taking in homeless people in Portugal to her mother who helped house a boy for a year while his family moved to Germany.

This lead to her seeking a position at the Center of Health and Human Services, where she became an outreach worker. The job became fulfilling for her and something that she wanted to continue to pursue. After receiving her license to become a Drug and Alcohol Counselor and a few years of experience she became director of the entire program.

Connie loves that she can help fight the opioid epidemic that has been ravaging out city for some time now. She also, through her work with Seven Hills, can provide resources for low income families, assist those living with life threatening diseases, and much more. She also spends time volunteering for several non-profits and organizations, including Team NOAH Foundation, Suicide Prevention Coalition, Opioid Task Force and the Day of Portugal Road Race. On top of her work on opioid prevention with Seven Hills, she also works with the New Bedford Police department on their regular ride-along drives, visiting struggling addicts who have had recent overdoses, in hopes to offer help.

“We need to treat every individual with respect and dignity.”

Faces Of New Bedford #89 – Cristina Pereira



Meet Cristina Pereira, 51-year-old REALTOR®. Cristina was born in South Africa, to two migrants of Portugal.

They then moved to Mozambique where the family started to build their lives. It was during that time that there was a



revolution with the government, becoming refugees back to Portugal, with just the clothes on their backs at the age of 9. Hoping to start a new life for their family, they moved to the United States to try their luck here.

She graduated high school and went to the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth to study Computer Science. When she realized that wasn't what she wanted to do for the rest of her life, she left school and started working as a secretary at a realty agency. A few years later she started working as an assistant under one of the most successful female realtors in the area.

Cristina worked with her up until 2013, when her mentor retired, learning everything she could from her. She began working with Pelletier Realty, the number one Real Estate Agency in the area since 2007. Since being there she has had major success, even winning the award for being one of the top producers for the past two years.

"You have to go above and beyond your duties to be successful. If that means skipping going out to eat on a Friday night, then that is what it takes."

Faces Of New Bedford #90: Susana Viera





Meet Susana Viera, 42-year-old Nurse Practitioner and Co-Founder of Susana Viera Multiple Sclerosis Foundation.

Susana and her family migrated to New Bedford from São Miguel, Açores, Portugal when she was 18 months old. After graduating New Bedford High School, she decided to go to UMass Dartmouth, in hopes of attending medical school afterwards.

After the counsel of friends and teachers, who told her that she would be better as a nurse and that she shouldn't uproot her family to move to Worcester, she decided to pursue a career in nursing. She graduated UMass Dartmouth with her degree in Bio and then went to BCC, where she received her associates in Nursing.

She worked in several departments throughout hospitals and long-term care departments, in love with her new career. She got to the highest position she could with her education at the time and went on to complete her Masters degree. Shortly after her graduation, she self-diagnosed herself with multiple

sclerosis, referencing the material a friend gathered during her Master's thesis. After a visit to a neurologist and some tests, her diagnosis was proven true.

Multiple Sclerosis affects those diagnosed in two ways, physically and sensory. Some become immobile and others lose the feeling in their extremities, and in Susana's case, she lost feeling to parts of her hands and arms. With her newly diagnosed illness, she didn't want to succumb but raise awareness of it, starting the Susana Viera Multiple Sclerosis Foundation. With this non-profit, the team holds an annual fundraiser, this year's being held on March 31st, and with funds raised at the event we provide adaptive equipment, 6 scholarships every year to graduating high school seniors, money for research, and support the Helping hands transportation program designed to offer wheelchair van transportation for people with neurological diseases like MS.

"Do as much as you can for others while you can because tomorrow isn't guaranteed."

Faces Of New Bedford #91: Brian Dube



Meet Brian Dube, 43-year-old Pastor and Chaplain in charge of Spiritual Life at Teen Challenge Brockton.

Brian grew up in a healthy environment, with a family that loved and supported him. He, however, felt like he never quite fit in or connected with other kids. After transferring from a private catholic school to New Bedford High, that sense of disconnectedness became even broader. His desire to fit in and have friends led him to the party scene, filled with drinking and drugs, which led him on a slow downward spiral. This would affect the next 15 years of his life.

During that time, he had started a family and become successful in the Information Technology field that was booming during the nineties. Brian had splintered his life in half; the hardworking family man during the week and the party-filled bar hopper on the weekend. Being prescribed pain killers for the migraines he suffered from, his addiction then worsened from alcohol to prescription pills. He found himself at in all time low in 2007, when he suffered a drug induced seizure. He was at a crossroads, get help or lose everything he had worked so hard for.

It was then when his family brought him into Brockton's Teen Challenge, a faith-based drug treatment program. He went in broken, lost and without any real hope of getting clean, he just knew he wasn't ready to die. During his time there, his life changed dramatically. He had his family restored to him and accepted a position to work with the organization upon completing the program. That was ten years ago!

Since then he has taken over the lead Pastor position at South Coast Community Church in Fairhaven, MA. During his time with South Coast they have been active in ministry to the lost, addicted and broken throughout the city and at one time opened their own transitional home. He has also recently become a ride along chaplain with the NBPD, helping provide hope to those in New Bedford battling addiction, in those same places

and with the same despair that he had once found himself in. A life once lost and now found.

“Once in a while you get shown the light, in the strangest of places if you look at it right.”

– Scarlet Begonias, The Grateful Dead

“The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.”

– John 1:5

Faces Of New Bedford #92: Heather Brito



Meet Heather Brito, 38-year-old Licensed Mental Health Counselor, Sand Play Practitioner and owner of HSW Counseling.

Growing up, people always thought she was happy go luck and on the outside she had it all, doing great in school and sports through college. But a series of bad decisions that had lasting effects on a lot of people, made her come to the



realization that she wasn't who she wanted to be and started a journey of that discovery.

Hearing that Sandplay therapy, a form of therapy that, like other expressive forms of therapy, allow the individual to tap into their unconscious in order to work out your light and dark, bringing them into balance. She traveled to Vermont, because there weren't any local therapists, one weekend a month for two years.

Because of her success with this therapy, she wanted to bring it to others in the area, due to the large amounts of brokenness in the SouthCoast. She finished her Master's degree and got her license to become a Mental Health Counselor in 2012, to help her open HSW Counseling. Almost a year after opening, she has been able to help those in the area through sandplay therapy, EMDR, Cognitive Behavior Therapy, Art, and Massage Therapy. She is even holding her first retreat, Awaken 2017, where she is hoping, along with the other presenters, to bring healing and more healthy lives to the attendees.

"Because true belonging only happens when we present our authentic imperfect selves to the world, our sense of belonging can never be greater than our level of self acceptance." Renee Brown

Faces Of New Bedford #93: Sarah Medeiros



Meet Sarah Medeiros, 28-year-old Special Education teacher. Growing up Sarah was always around kids, as her mother owned an in-home daycare. This pushed her to take a class in high school, which focused on working with younger children with disabilities, as she had the childcare experience.

She graduated from high school and went to BCC, unsure what she wanted to do with her future, but knowing that she wanted to work with kids. Soon after she found out that she was pregnant with her daughter and quickly became a single mother working through school. She wasn't sure that she wanted to continue her education as she was trying to raise her daughter, but with the encouragement of her parents she continued onto finish her Bachelor's Degree in Psych at Umass Dartmouth.

Sarah then applied for a position as an ABA therapist at Carney Academy and began working soon after. At first she was worried that the position was going to be too much for her but realized that the students needed someone on their team to overcome the learning difficulties they faced. She began to love her job so much that she went back to finish her Master's degree in Special Education and test for her teaching license, so she could work with these children.

Due to the nature of her field, she mostly teaches children with autism, but they all have some sort of learning disability. Sarah enjoys seeing the huge progress these children make in her classroom, as she doesn't limit the capability of her students but constantly finding ways for them to reach their full potential. She credits most of her success to the hard working staff at Carney, which play a major role in the education of her students.

"If a child can't learn the way we teach, maybe we should teach the way they learn." -- Ignacio Estrada

Faces Of New Bedford #94: Devin Byrnes



Meet Devin Byrnes, 42-year-old cook and owner of Destination Soups.

Devin grew up in Salem, MA and always found himself cooking, from a young age and through high school in restaurants. He located to New Bedford to attend the University of Massachusetts and fell in love. He never felt that Salem was a home to him, and got that sense while in New Bedford right away.

After spending about 7 years in New Bedford, he moved to New York chasing his career as a cook. While there he met his wife and they moved back to New Bedford, with aspirations of opening his own restaurant. Throughout the years, he had specialized in making soups, so it only made sense to open a soup shop.

His goal with Destination Soups is to have a place where the average worker or college student can stop in to have an affordable and healthy lunch. He has been able to successfully do that, although his first few years were a struggle, working open to close with only one part time employee. Devin was able to push through and persevere, even moving to a bigger space and purchasing the building it is located in.

“There is something to be said for sticking around and sticking it out.”

Faces Of New Bedford #95: Lee Heald





Meet Lee Heald, 63-year-old Director of AHA New Bedford.

Lee moved to the area in the nineties to work at the Whaling Museum as the Vice President of Education and Exhibitions. During her time at the museum, she worked under a large grant that connected communities of whaling with the cultural institutions that collected the information on its history. This project did a lot to help educate New Bedford on its history as a whaling port and opened opportunity to connect our community with others across the world that also shared a similar history.

In 1999, Lee worked to write a grant to fund the first AHA project, not knowing that she would eventually run the organization it became. In 2007, she left her position at the Whaling Museum to take on the Director role at AHA. She loves that AHA is about collaboration and that it is always about the people. It's designed to connect six different sectors: Arts and Culture, Health and human Services, Environment, Education, business oriented and communities of faith.

When you look at the AHA platform, It's not just arts and culture but the community. One of the things that they have demonstrated that it is really possible to build a brand that is inclusive of all of the parts of the community.

"If we are a community that supports all creativity at all levels, we need a place to celebrate."

Faces Of New Bedford #96: Ryan Caton



Meet Ryan Caton, 26-year-old surveyor and owner of Got Chew.

Ryan graduated from New Bedford High School in hopes of becoming a pharmacist. He added the Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and while living in Boston, frequently used a delivery service that would deliver for restaurants that didn't offer that sort of service.

Upon graduating and entering the field, he realized that he didn't want to spend the rest of his life working in medicine. Bouncing around from job to job, he finally settled in at Vivint, working as a site surveyor. Living with his girlfriend and working opposite schedules, he would find himself at home for dinner, with the inability to cook, missing the delivery service he used so often during school. It was then that the idea of Got Chew was birthed and shortly thereafter became a reality.

Teaming up with lifelong friends Will and Justin, Ryan's idea become much more than they. They pitched their idea at Southcoast E4All's Pitch Contest and won first place, along with crowd favorite. With this momentum they continued full speed ahead, locking in local restaurants like Two Sisters and dNB Burger, all while developing the app, mobile and desktop site. With Got Chew, you can log in, view menus for the restaurants they service, place your order and pay all in one location.

Ryan's love for the city he was born and raised in pushed him to bring this to our city streets. His hope is that his team can positively impact the community and local business by allowing another avenue for growth to occur because of their service.

Faces Of New Bedford #97: Cait Joseph







Meet Caitlin Joseph, 31-year-old Personal Trainer and Nutrition coach at Boutique Fitness.

From a young age, Cait was always involved in competitive sports, but it wasn't until her senior year of high school and starting college that her interest in the weight room and running really took off. After graduating from Johnson & Wales with a degree in Marketing Communications, she started working in the marketing field.

Boutique Fitness opened in 2012 and Cait fell in love with their functional approach to fitness and the camaraderie that came with working out in small groups. It didn't take long before she became a part of the movement. Shortly after Cait became a client, Angela Corrieri-Johnson and Lara Harrington asked her to be the first to join their team. With their support and guidance, Cait obtained her ISSA certification and began taking on clients at the studio. Working with clients of different fitness levels everyday, all of the trainers at Boutique Fitness strive to help their members achieve their fitness goals without comparing themselves to others.

Often times, what holds individuals back from reaching their goals, is their self doubt and lack of confidence. With that in mind, Lara and Cait decided that bringing up the topic to school age students would be a perfect opportunity to discuss the sensitive issues of body image and self esteem, before they snow ball into life long issues to be dealt with through adulthood. This led to the program – Mindful Me – Supported by Boutique Fitness, spearheaded by Cait Joseph.

The program was designed to bring up the topics of positive body image, mindfulness, and confidence. Topics that many students are often too embarrassed or nervous to talk about. This program gives them an appropriate outlet and support system for this kind of conversation. They just completed the pilot program at Our Sisters' School and had a very positive experience. Cait hopes to continue at Our Sisters' School and

watch the program grow.

“I get to make people feel better and work towards reaching their goals everyday. I have the best job in the world!”

Faces Of New Bedford #98: Adrian Carvalho



Meet Adrian Carvalho, 47-year-old Soccer Coach and Philanthropist.

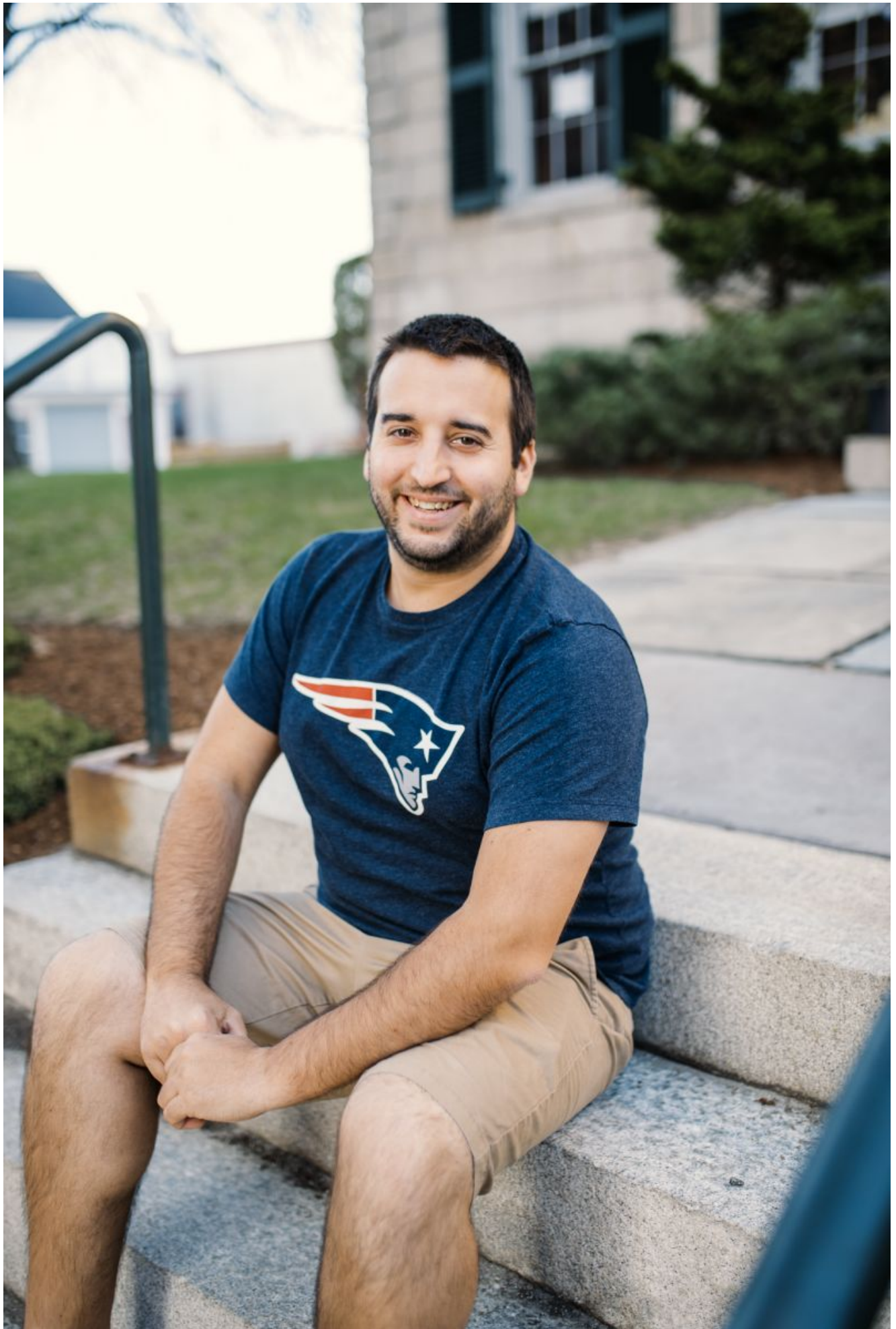
Adrian, growing up in New Bedford, began playing soccer at the age of six, soon taking the position as goalkeeper. He was involved in many leagues but notes the push he received from one of his coaches, Carlos Valente, that lead him down the path he is on today.

After graduating high school, he started working for his families' construction business but also play semi-professional soccer for the LASA, Luzo America Soccer Association, from the age of 16 to 40. It was throughout his time playing that he decided that he wanted to give back to the youth of New Bedford.

This desire is what propelled him to start Top Level Goalkeeping, where he helps kids from all ages on the importance of goal keeping. Most coaches put their emphasis on the offense of a team, rarely ever focusing on the goal keeper, which is where Adrian flourishes.

Recently, he has taken on the full-time position of the Academy Goalkeeper Coach with the New England Revolution. At the academy, he works with children from the age of 8 up to college students at the age of 23, training and perfecting their skills, in hopes to prepare them for playing for a professional team.

Faces Of New Bedford #99: Jordan Paiva





Meet Jordan Paiva, 25-year-old singer and DJ.

Growing up, Jordan was always interested in music and sang in several school organizations. During trips with his parents, he was fascinated by the way the entertainers were able to get the crowd involved and it was then that he realized what he wanted to do for a career. It was at the age of 15 when he started DJing, getting a gig at Fairhaven High Schools's homecoming dance. He quickly grew from small birthday parties and events to weddings in no time, taking pleasure in being a young entrepreneur.

He takes pride in not just being a DJ, but entertainment. His clients have told him they enjoy that he not only interacts with the crowd but checks in to make sure that their night is stress free. To him there is something special about bringing two families together, that may come from two different cultures, to enjoy themselves while celebrating such an important event as a wedding.

With his success in what he does, he feels it is so important to give back to the community. With the loss of his grandmother in 2010 to pancreatic cancer, he decided he wanted to help raise money to fight cancer. He has since volunteered at several Relay for Life events and contributes to the American Cancer Society.

"It's not about making money, it's about doing what you love."

Faces Of New Bedford #100: Caitlyn Fontes



Meet Caitlyn Fontes, 30-year-old co-owner of Two Sisters and author.

Caitlyn has worked in the food industry for the majority of her adult life and throughout a good portion of her teenage years. She got her start in restaurants, waitressing at a small breakfast place in Fairhaven.

With the recent death of her grandfather, her and her sister decided that they wanted to open a restaurant in memory of him. Due to the lack of food trucks in New Bedford, in comparison to the rest of the cities in our country, they decided to try their luck building one of their own. Two Sisters was born, a Portuguese-styled restaurant, to honor their grandfather and culture that they were born into.

Although it began with a bumpy start, stolen generators and kitchen fires, they have just passed their milestone of 10,000 orders fulfilled in just the first 6 months. Caitlyn loves what Two Sisters means to her family and New Bedford, hoping to diversify the locations of the truck by adding more to the fleet.

Not only has Caitlyn successfully opened her own food truck, but has had her hand in publishing children's books. Her series, Magestica: The Land of Imagination, was inspired by one of her favorite authors advice to her at a signing, "You want to write a book? What's stopping you?"

Faces Of New Bedford #101: Hugh Dunn



Meet Hugh Dunn, 31-year-old Director of Economic Development and City councilor.

Hugh, born in Worcester MA, is 4th generation Irish with ancestry rooted in the whaling industry in Ireland. Prior to pursuing a degree in Political Science, Hugh worked at a freezer warehouse that caused him to become ill and poised him in the middle of a class action lawsuit. It was his encounter with how the law highlighted the fight for justice in his case that was a catalyst for him to pursue a political science and eventual degree in law.

After receiving his bachelor's degree from American International College in Springfield, he moved to New Bedford, where he attended UMass Law. He felt at home in New Bedford, living in the downtown historic district. He had also studied and learned to speak Portuguese while volunteering in Brazil – and was immediately excited to live in a Portuguese speaking city. While in school he worked for congressman Keating and after taking the bar, became a full-time on his New Bedford District Staff. Hugh would often sit in on meetings that the congressman couldn't attend, including the meetings of the SouthCoast Development Partnership – which he now directs.

The Southcoast Development Partnership works to improve the quality of life for this region. Two of it's major projects right now include the Southcoast Rail system and building cross border collaboration between Rhode Island and Southern Mass.

Recently, Hugh participated in and won a special election to replace the Ward 3 City councilor. Although not born here, over the past 7 years he has been able to immerse himself in the community and its future, which is why he takes pride in his new position. His hope to is help the city continue in its positive trajectory, utilize all his tools to do so. His major focus is going to be on battling the opioid epidemic and economic development, while advocating for the constituents



throughout the ward.

“Honored to serve the city and work to keep its residents and business’s moving forward.”

Faces Of New Bedford #102: Jon Mitchell



Meet Jon Mitchell, 48-year-old mayor of New Bedford.

The city of New Bedford is dear to Jon, as he grew up in a fishing family. After graduating from high school, he attended Harvard University, which he paid for with financial aid and working summers when he was back home. Jon graduated Harvard with an economics degree and moved to Washington, D.C. where he attended law school at George Washington University.

Upon graduation, Mitchell began working for the United States Department of Justice as one of the youngest federal prosecutors. With this experience, he moved back to Massachusetts and worked with the Attorney General and a prestigious law firm in Boston.

Jon Mitchell's goal since arriving in office in 2012 has been to reclaim New Bedford's position as a leading city in the Northeast. One of his biggest projects at the moment is the Blue Lane project, using the cove walks and future projects to create a path along the entire coast of New Bedford for recreation.

Faces Of New Bedford #103: Taylor Gordon



Meet Taylor Gordon, 18-year-old student and advocate.

Taylor grew up with many challenging obstacles. She had single mother who worked hard to provide during times where her biological father had been absent in and out of prison and battling with substance abuse and many issues from his own past. After being adopted by her mother's husband, she was given a second chance at having a father who loved Taylor as his own. However, she always longed for the missing puzzle piece her biological father left. From a very early age Taylor knew why her biological father wasn't around and notes that it is what made her the strong, young woman she is today. As a young child she was diagnosed with many medical conditions, such as Celiac Disease, Hashimoto's Disease, rheumatoid arthritis, and Lupus. Despite everything stacked against her, she always pushed through it with a smile on her face.

As she got older, her mother and father had given her the option to get to know her biological father, who was clean and trying to better his life. A month before meeting, he relapsed and that chance for her slipped away. A few years later though, he reached out to Taylor on social media, telling her that he wanted to be a father to her. With her strong faith, and help from her supports, she finally gave him the chance. Taylor knew that she didn't want to live her life with the regret of never getting to know the man who made her who she is today, and make the decision to build a relationship. Taking care of her parent wasn't what she had in mind, but she knew from her heart that she was going to love him back to life, despite how hard this can be. He had wonderful moments where he was living clean and everything seemed great until she faced the hard reality, he had relapsed again.

Although growing up with a parent who wrestled with addiction, this was the first time she had dealt with the hurt and disappointment that comes with it. Having faced all she has in life, she isn't allowing this to stop her positive outlook. Taylor is a big example of resiliency, and knew that each time



she fell down she got back up even stronger. Rather than be held back, Taylor wants to use her experience to help other youth in the community that are in the same position as her. She also wants for others to know that it's possible to get back up. She is pursuing a degree in social work so she can do just that. Growing up she felt that she didn't have someone she could go to who would understand her situation, so she wants to be that for other kids throughout our city.

"Narcan is great and can save someone's life, but it don't forget the families and children who carry this weight, and that is where I want to help. Don't forget to thank people for the good, and the bad, because it's what makes you who you are"

Faces Of New Bedford #104: Andrew Thornhill



Meet Andrew Thornhill, 28-year-old co-owner of Silverbrook Farms. After graduating from Greater New Bedford Voc-Tech, he decided that he wanted to pursue a career in law enforcement and started taking classes at Bristol Community College.

He began taking classes focused on a future job in agriculture. Andrew had begun working as a farm hand at Silverbrook Farms after his brother-in-law, who worked there at the time got him interested in agriculture. He quickly moved up at the farm, learning the ins and outs of the industry, and started working from Boston to Cape Cod, selling the produce to markets.

After becoming the greenhouse manager at the farm and working there for some time, he could really see himself really investing himself into a farm. It was around this time that the owner got injured and decided that he didn't want to work the farm anymore, so Andrew and his business partner, David Sanders, purchased the farm.

"Farming isn't always the cover of a seed catalogue. People think that it is this cornucopia of goodness, but there is the harsh reality of the hard decisions you have to make."

Faces Of New Bedford #105: A.J. Tavares



Meet A.J. Tavares, a 30-year-old teacher, basketball coach, and owner of A1 Skills, Development and Training.

A.J. started playing basketball at a very young age, falling in love with sports at the Boys and Girls Club. He played sports throughout school, playing varsity football, basketball, and baseball his senior year.

After his time at New Bedford High School, A.J. went on to UMass Dartmouth, where he majored in Business and continued to play all three sports. He initially didn't want to attend the school but his professors and coaches made him feel at home and contributed to his growth as a young athlete. His senior year became a pivotal one as he helped lead the team to a 20-0 start reaching #2 in the country, ultimately finishing 25-4 and ranked 10th in the country, losing in the 2nd Round of the NCAA Tournament.

After switching into the Criminal Justice program, he graduated from UMass Dartmouth. He turned down a position working for campus police and pursued a sales position in Boston. After 8 month of working there he realized that isn't what he wanted to do for the rest of his life and began working as a youth life coach between Boston and New Bedford. He saw the impact that he was having on the kids and wanted to focus that on the community.

A.J. recently became a 4th grade teacher at Devalles school, where he is able to help kids at such a vital age, where they start forming habits that will stick with them throughout the rest of their lives. Not only does he teach elementary students, but coaches boys junior varsity basketball for New Bedford High School and runs a company called A1 Skills, Development and Training.

A1 Skills, which stands for Adversity First, is focused on training youth with the fundamentals of basketball, like footwork, handling, and shooting, as well as physical fitness

and sport specific training. He picked the name Adversity first because he's a firm believer that it's only through the adversity in life that you become the person you are.

"I try to believe in everybody like I would want people to believe in me."

Faces Of New Bedford #107: Kenn Bongiorno





Meet Dr. Reverend Kenn Bongiorno, 51-year-old Pastor and Professor.

Kenn didn't grow up in a spiritual home or one that attended church. At 19-years old he spent three weeks with his grandfather in the hospital during his grandfather's last days alive. With a lot of emotions running through him, he spoke out and told God that he needed to know if he was real, and if he was to show himself to him. One late night, Kenn saw all the pain his grandfather was going through and thought that if he could, he would take his place for him. Kenn said that at that moment, "God told me that he took my grandfather's place at the cross and my place and that my grandfather would live beyond this life."

That night transformed Kenn and he would spend the next decade of his life trying to learn about who this God was, traveling to Southeastern University in Florida to attend college and then up to Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in South Hamilton, MA. During his time at Southeastern, he felt a strong call to New England, although he knew little about it or had ever even visited it, to bring the hope he found in Jesus. After a four-year pastorate in Pennsylvania and a sabbatical in Switzerland, his call was answered, as an opening at the multicultural city by the sea that he had envisioned many years before became available

Since moving here, Kenn has worked to strengthen the core members of his congregation to be able to impact their church and community of New Bedford. They've held services at the Zeiterion Theatre and have done a lot to impact our community. They've partnered with local non-profit United New Bedford, sponsoring their I Love My City Annual Event and more recently, went to Satellite Village to provide food and activities for all ages.

Faces Of New Bedford #108: Jesenia Navedo



Growing up, Jesenia had always pictured herself becoming a doctor. This idea became a reality when she saw her mother give birth to her youngest sister. She began a pre-med Biology program at UMass Amherst and shortly realized that she didn't want to be in school for the next 10 years of her life. Her roommate at the time was a nursing major and she decided that would be the best route for her to still pursue a career where she could help others.

She graduated with her BSN and immediately started working in a nursing home, where she cared for patients in sub-acute rehab. Jesenia had heard from a friend that there was a new grad program starting up at the ER in St. Lukes Hospital and immediately took the leap to join the team. Although the ER can be a fast pace and almost scary environment, she took on the challenge and learned a lot.

While in her field, she began noticing medicine being pushed too far for patients in their late 80's and 90's, even seeing ribs broken just to resuscitate them. This sparked an interest in hospice nursing, where she could assist her patients in their last days, helping them retain dignity and maintain a quality of life.

"There is such a dark stigma on death in our culture and there

isn't any reason that life shouldn't be celebrated and just as beautiful at death, as it is with birth."

**Faces Of New Bedford #110: Nick Correia**





Meet Nick Correia, 36-year-old construction worker and conditioning trainer.

Growing up, Nick's uncle was the head coach for the basketball team at New Bedford High School, so he spent plenty of time at the games. At the first game he attended, he saw Mike Herren play against his uncle's team with 5,000 people in attendance at Durfee High School.

Naturally, he played sports throughout his youth and when he started at NBHS, began playing on the different sports teams at the school. His way of fitting in though, was through alcohol and partying, as he would throw parties at his house on the weekends for his friends. This continued with him to college, where he was kicked out of Western New England College for his failing grades, due to his excessive drinking.

Nick returned to New Bedford and his problems only got worse, as he lost a few friends to unexpected deaths. On the outside, it seemed things were going good, as he worked a full-time job in construction and began coaching at New Bedford High and UMass Dartmouth, but on the inside, he was in turmoil. A knee injury is finally what pushed Nick over the deep-end, tossing him into a long battle with opioid addiction, costing him his coaching positions and almost his life.

Through the help of Chris and Mike Herren, Nick was able to get into a program, where he found sobriety and a new outlook on life. He began getting back into fitness and after a few years under his belt, the opportunity for him to work with Athletes First, where athletes from all over train in strength, conditioning and agility, all while learning the proper nutrition to perform at their peak potential. Nick was also able to work with the NBHS freshman football team this past summer, getting them conditioned for the season and be an example of how you can overcome the struggles in your life to continue doing what you love.

“I don’t care how rough the waters are, just bring the ship home.”

### **Faces Of New Bedford #111: Jennifer Potter**

Meet Jennifer Potter, 34-year-old business analyst, mobile app project manager and founder of SouthCoast Mamas & Babies.



After giving birth to her and her husband’s daughter, Jennifer had a desire to get to know other mothers. She wanted to have like-minded families around her and thought it would be beneficial to start a Facebook group to accomplish this. With the help from her best friend Stephanie Chace, she started the group. What started out as a small group to bring different groups of people together to host outings has turned into a group filled with nearly 3400 families, all helping each other grow and building lasting friendships.

Jennifer worked on building this group all while she has been working at her full-time job with the Turino Group, where she is a business analyst. Recently though, her role has been transitioning into their mobile app development department of the company. This has helped play a major role in her SCMB group, as Turino Group recently launched a mobile app for their group, and will be released by the end of July.

With the Facebook site, website and now mobile app, Jen is hoping to broaden the reach the group has had and bring even

more families and businesses together. She has been able to secure working partnerships with local businesses, so that most of the group events are free and the hope is to continue this in the future, allowing parents a fun and affordable way to socialize not only their children but themselves with other parents.

*“Bringing together the surrounding communities is important and that gets me excited.”*

### **Faces Of New Bedford #112: Amy Moreira**

Meet Amy Moreira, 29-year-old Licensed Mental Health Counselor.



Amy was raised in a Portuguese family, that immigrated to New Bedford in search for a better quality of life. She witnessed many of the issues in the community, which shaped who she became as a person. During high school, she started volunteering in New Bedford in areas of juvenile probation and domestic violence.

She continued her studies until she was first generation in receiving a Master's degree in Clinical Psychology from the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth. Since graduating, she has had success working in educational settings, hospitals, correctional facilities, as well as the New Bedford Crisis Center.

Amy own's a private practice, More MH Counseling, LLC. She hopes that her own platform will allow her to educate and reduce stigma in facing the various mental health issues that exist including suicide, substance abuse, and youth violence. She specializes in Cognitive Behavioral Therapy and is fluent in both Portuguese and Spanish. She wants to give back to the community and often reserves a number of sessions pro bono. She hopes to see New Bedford use it's resiliency to grow as a community.

*"Focus on personal growth by challenging yourself daily."*

### **Faces Of New Bedford #113: Jeff Costa**

Meet Jeff Costa, 47-year-old fitness and yoga instructor.



Jeff grew up in the area and after graduating from high school, he moved to Boston where he attended Boston University and majored in English/French Literature. While living in Boston, Jeff began personal training and dancing, as his lifelong love for music evolved into his interest in human movement.

After almost a decade in Boston, he moved to LA, where he took his personal training career to the next level, working with celebrities such as Jennifer Love Hewitt, Christina Applegate, Jennifer Aniston, and members of the Girls Next Door cast.

While in California, Jeff also trademarked his own workout routine and videos, which sold on infomercials worldwide.

Jeff returned home to the South Coast in 2008 and was recruited by Reebok to be their master trainer for a fitness program called Jukari. Based on the techniques used by performers in Cirque du Soleil, Jeff taught the method to trainers from 14 countries, who would respectively teach classes back at home.

Jeff now teaches yoga and fitness classes throughout the Greater New Bedford area, as well as leading yoga retreats internationally, in locations like Bali and Costa Rica.

*"A healthy lifestyle, including yoga and meditation, puts the breaks on the aging process and fuels life's journey with joy and adventure."*

## **Faces Of New Bedford #114: Ian Yates**

Meet Nelly Saravia, 43-year-old photographer.

Nelly's interest in photography began when she worked for Amvona in Mansfield, which was a company that imported and sold backdrops, lighting, and other photography supplies. Her boss started a form of social media in 2006, before Facebook really picked up speed and encouraged their employees to create profiles and upload images. Nelly bought a camera and started photographing her kids.

This newly found passion developed over the next few years, as she started photographing families and working with other photographers as a second shooter on a few weddings. In 2008, she began photographing her own weddings and in 2010, she left her job to pursue her photography career full-time. During her first few years she focused on wedding, newborn and family photography, but as she got busier she started focusing more on just wedding and boudoir sessions.



Photography has become such a pivotal portion of Nelly's life, as she finds it so satisfying to be able to capture the most precious moments in her clients lives. Whether it is a photograph a family who may be going through something difficult or documenting a young woman's struggle with breast cancer, she has been honored to capture those moments in time. She has even been involved with the Van Noy Valor Foundation recently, which seeks to help raise funds for foster families who might not have all of the necessary funds to pay for the child's expenses, helping them photograph their events. She has also given her time to photograph for many other non-profits and gives away many sessions to families in need and to women who struggle with self-esteem.

### **Faces Of New Bedford #137: Scott Botelho**

Meet Scott Botelho, 50-year-old Real Estate Broker Associate and Realtor.



After growing up in the area, Scott began working at Massachusetts Department of Correction in Bridgewater. Knowing that he didn't want to spend the rest of his life as a corrections officer, he started researching the real estate market. His father-in-law Jesse Amorin took him under his wing and taught him the business.

As with any major life decision, Scott carefully mapped out his course as a real estate agent and once his business was

established, he left corrections in 2007. He owes all of his success in the industry to his ability to foster and maintain relationships, treating his clients as if they were his family, not letting them sell a house for less than what it's worth or buy a house he didn't feel would put them in a good position.

His passion for the city has driven almost 80 percent of all of his business here, where he is able to help the people of our city attain the dream of owning their own house. In 2016 he became the #1 RE/MAX agent in Massachusetts and as a result he recently added 2 full time agents to better serve the community.

### **Faces Of New Bedford #138: Kathlyn Dias**

Meet Kathlyn Dias, 26-year-old Model, Content Creator, and Social Media Influencer.



Kathlyn was born in New Bedford to two Cape Verdean parents, who migrated to New Bedford to create a better life for their family. After high school, Kathlyn attended Umass Dartmouth for one year and didn't return as she wasn't sure what she wanted to do for a career at that point in her life.

She had always dreamt of becoming a model and in magazines, so she began building a following on social media platforms, using Youtube to review different make-up that she uses and

offering tutorial videos. With the push from her now husband, Sean, they began taking her journey seriously, submitting her content to several large beauty companies annual contests. In 2017, she won every contest she submitted her work to and this opened the door for her to work with companies such as Palmers, Maybeline, Covergirl, MAC Cosmetics, and Elf Cosmetics.

Using her reach on Instagram, where she has over 120,000 followers, she works with many brands to promote their products and allow herself to be a stay at home mom to her two children, working with her husband to create all of the content they use for promotion. She hopes that she can inspire the youth from our city to never give up on their dreams.

*“Seek God first and find your purpose. Don’t let anything hold you back and when you find the thing that fulfills you, don’t get caught up in the things that don’t matter, but chase your dreams.”*

### **Faces Of New Bedford #139: Chris “Gazelle” Arsenault**

Meet Chris “Gazelle” Arsenault, 30-year-old Morning Show Producer 2.0 and On-Air Personality at Fun107.



Chris has always had a love for music, picking up the saxophone as a child and learning to play 11 other instruments throughout his life. After high school, Chris wanted to get

away to find himself, going to Lyndon State College in Vermont.

While there he started out with a major in Meteorology, but during his third year, they opened a Music Business with the Industry program, which immediately sparked his interest. Under the tutelage of one of his professors Joe Gittleman, bass player for the Mighty Mighty Bosstones, he soaked in as much information about the music industry that he could. He even had the opportunity to interview the Dropkick Murphys as a final project for his degree.

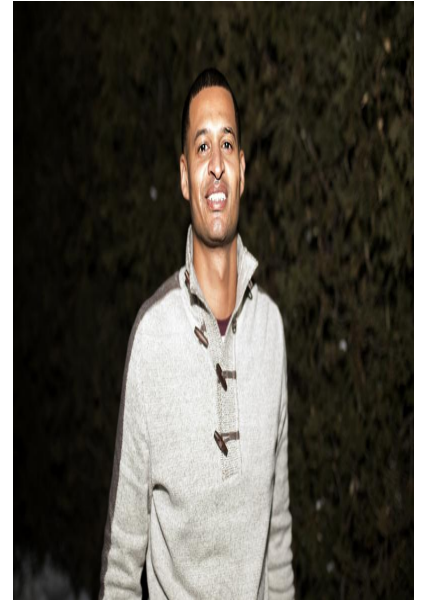
Upon graduating with his bachelor's degree, he moved back to the area and found himself doing promoting for Fun107. With many years of hard work and dedication, Chris filled in a temporary position on the morning show, which he eventually permanently filled. His love for the Southcoast fuels his desire to put his all into his job at the station as well as his philanthropic endeavors. Not only has he been involved with a partnership with United Way New Bedford in their Holiday Wishes Program, as well as working with Mission 22 and PAACA's Homeless Count.

*"Always stay humble. I want to use my voice here for good."*

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**Faces Of New Bedford #140: John Silva**

Meet John Silva, 38-year-old therapeutical mentor, referee and coach.



Jon started his coaching career during his freshman year of college, under the tutelage of Ed Rodrigues, while also working as a paraprofessional at New Bedford High School. He coached alongside Coach Rodrigues from 2003 to 2006.

It was in 2006, when his wife took over the Montes Park Summer Basketball league, which was focused on the youth in the community and serviced the families that didn't have the transportation or money to send their kids to other basketball leagues in the city. He spent every summer until 2011, coaching teams and pouring into the youth in the south end of the city.

Jon was also working for Justice Resource Institute at the time, working with troubled youth who attended a day program because they were on house arrest or being processed through the judicial system. He from there became a therapeutic mentor, spending one on one time with youth who need help developing skills to be productive members of our community. He also refereed high school basketball games for and 2 years ago was hired to referee college basketball at the division 3 level.

**Faces Of New Bedford #141: Rafaela DeFigueiredo Spence**



Meet Rafaela DeFigueiredo Spence, 36-year-old Principal of W. H. Taylor Elementary School.



Rafaela moved to New Bedford with her family from Brazil, just a day before her seventh birthday. Transitioning into school in the US was a difficult task for her, as she only knew how to speak Portuguese, but made the move to english speaking classes after 3 years as a bilingual student. Despite the difficulties of learning a new language, she had such a huge passion for school and learning.

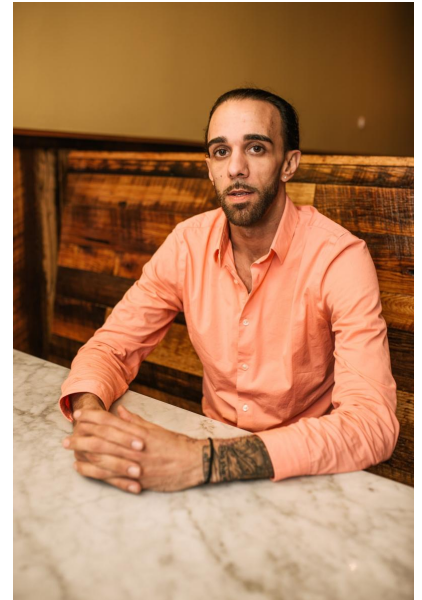
This love drove her into a career path involved in the education field, going to Umass Dartmouth where she received a bachelors degree in Psychology and a masters degree in clinical psychology, which helped her become an Adjustment Counselor in the New Bedford Public Schools. She started her career at Pacheco Elementary and it was while there that the principal, Marcia Faucher, inspired her to begin her journey to become a principal in the New Bedford Public School System.

After receiving her doctorate from Northeastern University in Urban Leadership, she became the assistant principal at Gomes School and would eventually move on to become the principal of Kempton Elementary school. Due to restructuring in the cities school system, Kempton closed and Rafaela moved into the role of principal of W. H. Taylor School, located in the cities south end. While in this position she has helped facility the move to their new building and also impact the lives of her

students each day. She finds joy in working in the city she migrated to as a child because of her love for the home it has become and her desire to see each and every one of her students succeed.

### **Faces Of New Bedford #142: Randall Pina**

Meet Randall Pina, 34-year-old Entrepreneur, Realtor, and Developer.



Randall grew up in New Bedford and dealing with a lot of trouble during his youth, even dropping out of school twice, he knew he had to do something to change that. During a period where his parents were splitting up, he sold his last few possessions in his late teens and moved to Florida to stay with his grandmother to clear his mind.

While in Florida, Randall worked at a restaurant, where he met a man that changed his life, whether he knew it or not at the time. He would come in once a week and constantly give him tips about real estate and how to become successful in life. Taking heed to his advice, Randy went and got his broker's license, which landed him a position working for E Value mortgage. The owners took him under their wings and showed him everything they knew, but when the market crashed in 2008-2009, he was left with little money to his name and they relocated their business to bounce back during the recession.

With no other hope in mind, he moved back home and tried his

luck back here. Just when things looked like they were going to pan out, he faced several failing businesses in the face and almost gave up on trying. Rather than walk away though, he turned those failures into the desire to truly succeed. He has since joined up with partners in Boston and helped sell 15 million dollars in properties to developers who work in condo conversion and is planning to sell 75 million worth of property this year. Randall also has his hands in growing a franchise of pizza restaurants in Florida and startup that he hopes will help integrate smart technology into people's home's.

*"Fail hard and fail often, that is your success. You look at it as a failure because you didn't get what you wanted but it'll give you the fire to push to the next level."*

### **Faces Of New Bedford #143: John Mosher**

Meet John Mosher, 51-year-old Math Teacher, and Coach at New Bedford High School.



John has always been involved in sports and knew from an early age that he wanted to eventually coach and teach. John spent a little time in college after high school but still uncertain on what he wanted to do, he began working in the Dartmouth House of Corrections. After his time there, he went on to get his bachelors degree at Bridgewater State University and began to pursue his dream of teaching.

He began his career at New Bedford High School, teaching freshman algebra. John was quickly recruited to help out with the basketball team and after some time helping with the team, was asked to coach boys football. He did that for a short period of time but eventually took over the position of coaching the freshman basketball team. A few years ago, with the school being in desperate need of a Girls Lacrosse coach, he took the position, even though he didn't have a background in the sport at all.

He quickly fell in love with the sport and did as much work as he could to be able to build a successful team for the school. Since his time with the team, they have made it to the state tournament, facing off against school systems that have youth feeder programs, training girls from the age 5 up, where New Bedford doesn't. He loves his job and is honored to have the impact he does on the incoming freshman every year.

John hopes to be able to help them set the foundation for their academic and professional careers early on so that they have the tools and knowledge to be successful in life. Aside from his positions at the school, John is also the director of St. Julies CYO program, where he coordinates the teams and coaches, while also coaching one of their boy's basketball teams.

**Faces Of New Bedford #144: Roger Chouinard**

Meet Roger Chouinard, musician and owner of Purchase Street Records. Growing up his uncle played for a band called Billy Squire and tour with acts like Ted Nugent, Alice Cooper, and Gary Moore, just to name a few.



This uncle's influence drove Roger to start playing music and he fell in love with playing the drums. Over time he has played in a few different bands, such as Drained and Closer than Kin. While playing for Closer than Kin, their following really took off and they toured throughout the US, Canada, and Europe. When he wasn't making music and touring with the band he had started buying and selling collectors items at flea markets and fairs.

He got interested in records when he bought a collection of records and saw how well they sold and seeing people's reactions to finally getting the album they always wanted. This pushed him to open a record store in 2016, with the advice of No Problemo owner Craig Paiva, opening right on Purchase Street, dubbing it Purchase Street Records. Since opening he has had the great experience of helping collectors find everything they've need, carrying such vast amount of music in the store.

Since opening Roger has released an album through the store, a two sided vinyl, featuring local bands The Pourmen and the Black Kennedy's. He also provides the music daily to 94 HJY, to play on their Final Vinyl Hour.

**Faces Of New Bedford #146: Wilson Alix**



Meet Wilson Alix, 23-year-old professional boxer.



Wilson moved to the US when he was 12 years old from Portugal. The transition for him was a bit difficult and during that time he got himself in a bit of trouble. At the age of 16 though, he saw two paths for himself and wanted to make sure that he went down the right one. Rather than use his fighting for bad, he decided to hone those abilities and began training with Jeffery Perez, who saw the potential Wilson had to become a professional boxer.

Continuing his training, he graduated high school and began college, all while working several jobs, like construction and personal training. As an amateur boxer, Wilson traveled all across New England, training in new gyms, sparring with other boxers and holding a record of 5-4, he diligently prepared himself to achieve his dreams of becoming a professional boxer. It was December of 2017 when he got the call that would change his life, he had been offered his first professional boxing match in February at Twin Rivers Casino.

Wilson had to make a tough decision of taking a chance and quitting his full-time job and deferring his enrollment at Bridgewater State, just to be able to take the chance of a lifetime. Although Wilson went on to lose his first fight, he walked away feeling more victorious than he had ever felt after his previous wins as an amateur. He had finally gotten

to the point that he had always dreamed of while also understanding it was the start of the biggest journey of his life. With an amazing team behind him, Wilson is continuing to train for his next fight and growing in the sport of boxing.

*"I just want to be able to show kids who don't have hope or a vision of their dreams coming true, that with hard work and focus you can achieve those dreams."*

### **Faces Of New Bedford #147: Kayla Mederios**

Meet Kayla Mederios, 27-year-old Occupational Therapy Assistant, Applications Specialist, and Buti Yoga Instructor.



Growing up Kayla always struggled to maintain weight, fluctuating up and down into her mid-20s. After graduating from BCC and she began her career as an occupational therapy assistant, which was inspired by working on an Alzheimer's unit as a CNA and wanting to help people even more. She quickly became good friends with her co-workers, who inspired her to begin her fitness journey.

Along that road, she lost 75 pounds by incorporating weight training and eventually Buti Yoga. She was introduced to Buti Yoga at a class and then began regularly attending classes at Motion Dance and then at Ritual Yoga Studio. It was her instructor, Tara, who inspired her to take it to the next level and after a year of attending classes, she took her

certification test in June of 2017.

Since receiving her certification she has begun teaching classes at Supreme Perfection Dance studio in Fairhaven and Gotta Dance Studio in New Bedford. She is glad that she has been able to take the inspiration from her friends to not only transform her own life but utilize it to transform the lives of her students. She is also planning on getting her Buti Sculpt certification this June, which is a HIIT (High-Intensity Interval Training) version of Buti, using poses in between exercises.

*"No matter how long the journey takes you're always one step closer to your dreams."*

### **Faces Of New Bedford #148: Warley Williams**

Meet Warley Williams, 33-year-old Assistant Principal of Greater New Bedford Voc-Tech. After high school, Warley attended UMass Dartmouth hoping to graduate with a degree in Computer Science, but shortly into his first semester, he found out that his now wife was pregnant with their first child. Out of his father's house and with bills adding up, he knew that he had to do what was right for them at the moment and left school to work at a lumberyard.

During that brutally cold winter, he quickly realized that he needed to find a way to make a better life for his family. With the mounting gang violence in the city during that time, he was inspired to get into education, in a hope to guide the future generations in a better direction. Starting at BCC, he began studying history, eventually returning to finish his degree at UMass.

While attending school, he started substitute teaching for the New Bedford Public School system. He was called to substitute a few times at Whaling City, the alternative high school, as they felt he had a great way of relating to the students

there.

He accepted a full-time history teacher position at Whaling City and after a short period there he was asked to become the principal of the school. He was excited to be a role model to the students there and help kids graduate and further their education or get a job, which prior to their attendance at Whaling City, didn't have the hope for either.

When the principal position became vacant at Greater New Bedford Voc-Tech, he applied for the position, hoping to impact an even larger population of the city's youth. Although they had someone else for that position, they offered him the assistant principal position, which he interviewed for and received. Along with his roles as assistant principal, he also is chair of the graduation committee, co-facilitator of the mentor program, co-advisor of the National Honor Society, and Director of Security at the school.

Outside of his career, Warley strives to give back to his community. He is a board of director for the United Way of greater New Bedford; directs summer programs for 8th graders going into high school to close the summer learning gap, and he and his family has hosted a teenager from the Bronx for the Fresh Air Fund for the last five years. Warley is very passionate about helping his community and bettering the future of all kids in the Greater New Bedford area.

**Faces Of New Bedford #149: Daisy Ormseth**

Meet Daisy Ormseth, 40-year-old Nurse Practitioner.



At the age of 14, Daisy found out that she was pregnant and decided to move in with her now husband, to be able to raise their daughter together. Living with her boyfriend and their daughter, they struggled to get by and she even dropped out of high school. By the age 18, she had seen a posting for an EMT job and knew she needed to go back to school for her family and their future. After receiving her GED and passing EMT school, she began her career as an EMT and worked in Boston for 10 years.

In and out of hospitals, she had tons of contact with the emergency staff and seeing how much they were able to do for the patients they brought in, she decided to go back to school to become a registered nurse. Upon graduating Massasoit with her associates degree in Nursing, she began working as an emergency nurse at Saint Anne's Hospital in Fall River. While also working part time in St. Lukes emergency room, she continued to go back to school, getting her bachelors from UMass Boston and then her master's degree from Simmons College, to become a Nurse Practitioner and to be able to provide more care for her patients.

Since becoming a Nurse Practitioner, she has been able to work in family practice at Prima Care of Fall River. She has also been able to volunteer in several capacities, such as



traveling to Miami and the Keys to help with Hurricane Irma Relief. She also is planning to volunteer at the Boston Marathon this upcoming holiday weekend. With advocacy, not only for her patients but other nurses, so important to her, Daisy is also planning on returning to school for her doctorate in nursing, with the hope to work in policy, creating safer environments for nurses to work in, allowing for better care of their patients.

*"Some people say you shouldn't look back because that's not where you're going, but I think it's important to see where you came from."*

### **Faces Of New Bedford #150: Jack Leao**

Meet Jack Leao, 30-year-old DJ.



Jack's parents moved to the US from Cape Verde prior to his birth in the mid 80's, which is where dad began DJing local events and parties. When he and his brother were old enough, their father began taking them to events to help him and learn how to DJ.

After high school, Jack and his brother continued DJing local hall events and some small events at UMass Dartmouth. This allowed Jack to gain enough experience to begin DJing at clubs, starting at Tantric in Providence. Under the umbrella

of the dj group, Passport DJs, he began working at several clubs each week, even working for the internet radio station based in Fall River called Hurricane Radio.

Over the last few years, he has been able to take his talents as an International DJ, specializing in music from all over the world, all over New England, New York, and New Jersey, performing at some of the largest nightclubs in those areas. Jack has also been involved in charity events, providing music for at the events free-of-charge to help raise money for causes, such as the Volcano that ravaged Cape Verdean island of Fogo in 2015. His hope is to take his shows international and perform across the world.

**Faces Of New Bedford #151: Matthew Jezierski**