

United Way to Host Tom Lopes Documentary Screenings

For decades, Tom Lopes was dedicated to making life in New Bedford better for all residents. As the first Cape Verdean elected to the Massachusetts House of Representatives, Tom, who was already well known to the community for his activism, fought for the residents on the SouthCoast.

To honor his legacy, a team of students worked with Reel Serious to produce a documentary about his life. With a number of interviews from friends, families and other politicians, they tell the story about his accomplishments and the impact he made on New Bedford. The creation of the documentary was funded in part with a grant from United Way of Greater New Bedford. The documentary was first screened in October.

"My brother always used to say, If you can believe it, you can achieve it," said Deborah Ramos, Tom Lopes' sister. "We hope this documentary inspires residents to take pride in our community."

United Way of Greater New Bedford will be hosting three screenings of the documentary in the South End of New Bedford for residents. As part of the documentary screenings, United Way will also be hosting an open forum to discuss the progress of their work with the Working Cities Challenge grant and to get input from South End residents on the upcoming work in their community. The event is free. Dinner and child care will be provided as well as raffles for those in attendance.

Tom Lopes: Bringing Community Together Events will take place: March 22nd 5:30- 8pm at Dennison Memorial Community Center (755 So. First St.), March 29th 5:30- 8pm at Our Lady of Assumption Church (47 So. 6th St.), and April 5th at the Cape Verdean American Veterans Hall (561 Purchase St.).

If you are interested in attending one of the events, please contact United Way at 508-994-9625 ext. 19 or email sellis@unitedwayofgnb.org.

“We hope residents in the South End take these events as opportunities to give their input and help guide our Working Cities team as we continue our work in the community,” said Allison Yates-Berg, Vice President of Community Impact and Operations at United Way. “We truly value the support and input of neighborhood residents in this process.”

In November, United Way of Greater New Bedford was one of ten cities in Massachusetts to receive a \$15,000 Working Cities Challenge planning grant to improve the quality of life of residents in the South End. Later this spring, United Way and the New Bedford Team will have the opportunity to apply for a three year, implementation grant of \$475,000 to continue with this work.
