



PRESS RELEASE
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**Senate Majority Leader Teresa Paiva-Weed Visits MLK Community Center
in Newport as Agency Continues to See Increasing Requests for Assistance**

*In Light of Difficult Times, Food Bank Member Agencies Continue to Make a Difference for
Thousands Thanks to Community Support*

PROVIDENCE, R.I. On Tuesday morning, Senate Majority Leader and District 13 Newport and Jamestown Senator Teresa Paiva-Weed visited the Martin Luther King Jr. Community Center in Newport to tour the agency's facility and lend a helping hand as more and more East Bay residents find themselves in need of assistance. The Martin Luther King Jr. Community Center is one of nearly 300 certified member agency programs of the Rhode Island Community Food Bank.

With increasing fuel, food and home utility costs devastating the household budgets of low-income families, more and more Rhode Islanders are coming to food pantries for help. Thanks to agencies such as the Martin Luther King Jr. Community Center, the Food Bank continues to work hard to provide food assistance to those who need it most.

Established in 1922 to provide recreational activities for community residents, the Center has since grown to become a multicultural, multi-service agency that provides a wide variety of services to low-income residents of Newport County. Among the many programs, the Center offers a meal site, food pantry, State licensed child care, before and after school care and a flourishing Teen Center. On average, the center's food pantry serves more than 140 individuals per month while the meal site provides more than 1,100 meals each number an increase over 2007.

While some may associate Newport with vacations and wealth, our community has many people that are in need and benefit from the programs here at MLK, commented Senator Paiva-Weed. Their partnership with the Rhode Island Community Food Bank really helps to make a difference in those households where the alternative is missing meals and going hungry. "

Established in 1982, the Rhode Island Community Food Bank is a private charitable non-profit that relies upon community support in order to offer its services. The support of the community is critical to our work, added Andrew Schiff, Executive Director of the Food Bank. Without the generosity of thousands of Rhode Islanders, we wouldn't be able to provide the assistance that helps so many. Every donation helps. "

For every dollar donated to the Food Bank, the organization can provide 3 healthy meals to those in need. If you would like to make a contribution, checks made payable to the Rhode Island Community Food Bank may be sent to 200 Niantic Avenue in Providence, 02907. Additionally, you can visit www.rifoodbank.org to make a secure, on-line donation. For more information on the Martin Luther King Jr. Community Center, and to support their work, visit www.mlkccenter.org.

Seeing the facility, and learning more about the growing need, and having a chance to help, was eye-opening. Between the pantry and the meal site, enough food to provide 80,000 meals left the Martin Luther King Jr. Center over the course of the past 12 months, added the Senator.

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Currently, the Rhode Island Community Food Bank is feeding tens of thousands of Rhode Islanders in need each month through a network of 300 certified member agency programs. A USDA statistical study on food insecurity shows that over 17% of Rhode Island s' children, 1 out of every 6, are at risk of hunger. Additionally, 11.3% of Rhode Island households, representing 48,000 families, are not able to afford adequate food.

The Rhode Island Community Food Bank is a non-profit organization located in Providence, RI. The Food Bank solicits, stores and distributes food products donated by supermarkets, wholesalers, food processors, local farmers and community food drives. The food is then distributed to the Food Bank s' network of over 300 member agency programs. In the past fiscal year, the Food Bank distributed 8.3 million pounds of food. For more information about the Food Bank, please visit www.rifoodbank.org

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