



Barnstable County Human Rights Advisory Commission

2023 Awards

International Human Rights Day

Cornerstone: Ann Burke – Marstons Mills

Ann Burke is a registered nurse and has a Master's Degree in Counseling Psychology. She is a long-time advocate for Transgender people who live on Cape Cod, Nantucket, and Martha's Vineyard. She is the Cape Cod Advocate for Fenway Health's Violence Recovery Program. Ann is the founder, and serves as a board member of the Cape and Islands Trans Resource Fund. Ann is facilitator of Transgender Social Support group under the auspices of Fenway Health of Boston. She also serves as a member of the Advisory Board for the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families, Transgender Day of Remembrance (TDOR) committee member, Steering Committee member of Barnstable's No Place for Hate, the District Attorney of the Cape and Islands DEI Advisory Committee, Youth Outreach & Hospitality committee (a subcommittee of Nauset Interfaith Association), Barnstable's Children's Behavioral Health Assessment Core Planning Committee, Co-facilitates the Gender Continuum group for ages (5-12) and Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program Planning Committee. Ann has participated in PFLAG of Cape Cod Profiles In LGBTQIA+ Courage Podcasts.

She, who is not Transgender herself, is a committed advocate for Transgender people. She provides a critical spotlight on the many challenges Transgender people face -- be it in navigating the legal and healthcare systems of Massachusetts, or dealing with discrimination in housing and employment. Ann addresses the realities a Transgender person faces when coming out: often losing their entire support system which often includes a person's family, partner, friends, neighbors and job.

Rosenthal: MLK Action Team Police Task Force – Nauset Interfaith

After the murder of George Floyd in 2020, the Nauset Interfaith MLK Action Team established a Conversation with Police Chiefs from Chatham, Orleans and Brewster. These Chiefs reached out to the MLK Action Team to see if they could collaborate to build stronger community ties among people of color, residents and visitors and their public safety officers on. The Harwich Police Chief later joined the group. The objective of this group has been to establish listening sessions and dialogue to promote understanding and improve the relationship between the police and the communities they serve.

Collectively the Taskforce members have focused on initiatives to address issues of race with a goal to improve the impact of policing operations, especially on BIPOC individuals. The Taskforce is also working to build a bridge between communities of color and law enforcement based on trust, empathy and understanding. These Conversations have continued regularly for 3 years. Understanding and

respect among the members has led to actual changes in policing and some impressive initiatives have resulted in positive changes. The Task Force has expanded over time to a second group, including Wellfleet and Eastham.

Relationship and Trust Building Conversations

The success of these ongoing conversations has built unity, by sharing knowledge and experiences in a safe space, respectful listening, group reflection, education, community experiences with BIPOC people and discussions.

Transformative Empathy

Both the police and community members of the Taskforce share that building empathy has been transformative. Sharing each other's lived experiences has led to better understanding and knowledge about what police do and why as well as the historic and current experiences of people of color with the police and society at large. All express seeing through the lens of others helps us to have a better understanding of the challenges, stressors, and risks that we all face every day.

Responsive Action to Address Racial Bias, Build Community Trust, and Relationships

The empathy and trust built in this group has led the police chiefs to institute specific improvements or changes to policies and specific operations to address racial and other biases with the goal of reducing the tension between police people of color and the risk of potential danger or harm.

Members of the Initial Police Taskforce

Police Chiefs: Michael Anderson of Chatham; Heath Eldredge of Brewster; Scott MacDonald of Orleans; David Guillemette of Harwich

Community Members: Jeff Spalter (chair), Becky Alden, Tia Cross, Jeanne Morrison, Pancheta Peterson, David Purdy, Deborah Ullman, Wesley Williams.

Tim McCarthy Award: Ngina Lythcott of Provincetown

Ngina has been an active voice for children, and advocate for public health and racial justice in Provincetown for the past twenty years. Ngina spent the last nine years as an elected member of the Provincetown School Committee, two of those years as Chair. She represents Provincetown on the Board of the Cape Cod Council Collaboration (the regional special needs resource for school children), and is an active supporter of infant, toddler and preschool children. She raises money annually for the Scholarship Committee of Provincetown Schools, supports high schoolers through the college application and admissions process, and is active in town meeting.

Nationally, Ngina is a member of the Intercultural Cancer Council Board (bringing together Black, Latina, Native, Asian and low-income white women to address cancer morbidity and mortality disparities). She is the Breast Cancer Liaison for the Black Womens' Health Imperative, and has, for the 18 years, been a consultant with the US Department of Defense Breast Cancer Research Program, which funds over \$150 million in research grants each year.

With her deep concern for youth, she has helped countless families advocate for their children. Ngina, of African American and Cape Verdean ancestry, has been a gentle yet outspoken supporter of human rights on the Cape, dedicating herself to building bridges across communities. She gladly worked on racial justice issues with Barnstable County Police Captains when asked, and is an active member of the Juneteenth Planning Committee in Provincetown. Like a true “auntie”—Ngina Lythcott has been a constant and active North Star for the children of Provincetown.

Unsung Heroes:

Patricia Cawley –West Harwich

Pat, who recently retired from Duffy Health Center in 2023 as the Senior Director of Program Services has been an ally in identifying, addressing, and advocating for human and civil rights of the communities she has served. Pat was a front line Clinical Social Worker, and then Clinical Director for Associates for Human Potential, at the Boston City Hospital, working with marginalized community members. She then spent over 15 years at Camillus House in Florida, supporting the development of services that included providing food and other basic needs, emergency shelter, transitional and permanent housing, treatment for substance use disorder and mental illness for people who are experiencing homelessness. In 2012, Pat joined Duffy Health Center, supporting the agency’s growth in behavioral health and supportive services. Her leadership and advocacy for human and civil rights has altered the way in which our community responds to our unhoused populations in Barnstable County, in particular her key role leading the In From the Streets program during COVID. Pat's staff describe her as the most caring, patient, and supportive manager they have ever experienced in their careers.

Christine Drew – Barnstable County Court

An anonymous person, identified as “Suicide Survivor,” says that there are too many reasons to list as to why Christine is deserving of recognition.

“Probation officer Christine Drew has helped many to find their path and cares more than anyone in the Commonwealth for people living with mental health and substance abuse. She is the best and has saved many of our lives just by being her kind self.”

Natalia Frois – Hyannis

Natalia is very active in the community, helping other immigrants to thrive. She is a trilingual immigrant from Brazil. She is the Program Director for Covenant to Care for Foster Families, a ministry of the Cape Cod Council of Churches, part-time Instructor for Cape Cod Community College, and the Director of Communication and Business for A Noticia USA. In 2020, she started her own company, International Business Relations and founded the Latino Business Network. With these organizations, she supports other immigrants in finding and creating business opportunities. Through her business she provides business consultation, business analysis, and business relations services in 3 languages. She has organized many business events, business expos and cultural events for community engagement, outreach, and education. She has created 4 different courses to educate our community: ESL for beginners, Empower Through Business Language, Financial Empowerment and Business Planning. She is a Commissioner for Cape Cod and Island Commission on the Status of Women and a Trustee at the Hyannis Public Library. She was awarded the 2020 Massachusetts Latinx Trailblazer and the 2022 Massachusetts Latino Excellence Award.

James Matthews –West Yarmouth

Jim goes out of his way to stoically help make positive changes in someone's life and family for generations to come. At Cape Cod Community College, Jim helps students attain their High School Equivalency Diploma — especially those who may have struggled in a traditional academic setting and, in particular, those that are immigrants. He is a heartfelt friend and counselor to those in our community that struggle with mental health and/or addiction. Also, through his work with Big Nick's Ride for the Fallen, Jim helped increase an appreciation for Native American Veterans and their dedicated sacrifice and service to our country, with special recognition for veterans from the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe. As a result, he assisted in raising \$5,000 for Wampanoag Veterans services and to help build a Veterans memorial on the tribal grounds of the Mashpee Wampanoags. Jim is kind and smart and has a huge heart and strong mind."

Michael Mecnas –Hyannis

Michael has been a tremendous help to our community. He is the founder and Director of Health Ministry, a nonprofit organization created to provide services for immigrants and low-income families on Cape Cod and the Islands. He is an excellent human rights leader. He has been in front of the line for the immigrant population on the cape making sure that they are treated as a human being and part of the community. He is a huge advocate for anti-discrimination and prejudices.

Dan Miville – Yarmouthport

Dan Miville is a man with a huge heart. He cooks a home cooked meal for hundreds of people who are hungry and homeless in Hyannis three days a week, all year round. Dan is a United Marine Corps veteran who works as a chef for the Cape Cod Council of Churches providing delicious food at the Faith Family Kitchen. This is not just a job - it's a passion, and Dan takes it very seriously. In addition, Dan has provided thousands of pounds of food to Veterans and people in need all over Cape Cod and the Commonwealth through his volunteer work with the Massachusetts Military Support Foundation, Big Nick's Ride for the Fallen, and the Nicholas G. Xiarhos Memorial Fund. During these tough times in our Community and Commonwealth, Dan always makes sure that everyone is treated equally—and with dignity and compassion—and feels welcome and safe.

Chris Morin – Yarmouth

Chris Morin has worked at Independence House for the past 13 years. As Director of Prevention Education and Outreach, Chris has worked diligently to bring diverse groups together in the service of ending the oppression of Intimate partner violence. Chris exemplifies the value of respect for all people; she fiercely opposes any type of discrimination, and she approaches her colleagues with kindness, openness, and humility. She applies what she learns from people with lived experiences of discrimination and oppression to help draw attention and invite dialogue. She is member of Women International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), Barnstable No Place for Hate, Cape and Islands Enough Abuse Campaign, Age Friendly Yarmouth town committee, and represents Independence House on the Transgender Day of Remembrance planning committee. She is passionate about working as hard as possible to help prevent the use of violence in all its forms.

Cecilia Phelan-Stiles –Marstons Mills

Ceci Phelan-Stiles is a remarkable person who has selflessly served the community of Barnstable County for the last 23 years in her role as the Director of DEI and Interpreter Services at Cape Cod Health Care. Her dedication and hard work have provided effective communication access to thousands of patients during their turbulent and painful times. She has substantial communications and management skills through her experiences providing interpreter services at Cape Cod Healthcare, where she recruits, trains, and supervises a team of interpreters to promote high quality medical care and customer service throughout the organization and ensure that the health care civil rights of all are respected. Ceci is a passionate advocate for human rights with a focus on immigrant health and ensuring that best practices are implemented at Cape Cod Health Care and that all the staff and providers are educated on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion issues as they relate to patient care. Ceci also volunteers with the National Council on Interpreting in Healthcare (NCIHC) and the Forum on the Coordination of Interpreter Services (FOCIS). Ceci is also on the board for WECAN, Cape Cod Toy Library and Children's Cove.

Sheril Smith - Hyannis

Sheril E. Smith is the Student Support Director at PASS. Sheril provides the students with academic support and tutoring and also collaborates with PASS staff in psychoeducational group sessions. Sheril is a Jamaican immigrant and an educator with more than twenty-five years of experience at various levels of the education system. She works to facilitate the holistic development of all individuals in her charge, especially her students. Sheril holds a Masters of Science in Education from Walden University, MN. Sheril serves her community with a number of organizations; she is a member of the Steering Committee of the Yachievers, and the Secretary of the Board of Directors of Latinx In Action. Sheril also volunteers with WECAN. Currently, she volunteers to teach English Language to ESOL at the Latinx In Action's office. Due to her dedication to service, Sheril received a key to the city of Macon, Georgia.

David Thomas – East Sandwich

David is a retired Barnstable school administrator, and the Founder and Director of the Early Childhood Programs. He integrated Head Start and Public School preschool programs to benefit children in both groups in the Barnstable Early Learning Center. He fought tirelessly for grants to pay his teachers and provide his classrooms with everything they needed. He went in early on snow days and shoveled out the walkways when it wasn't covered by the Department of Education due to the classroom location. He built a playground structure at the original Barnstable Early Learning Center site, dismantled it when the school was moved, and built it again at the High School site. He supported co-regulation and restorative justice since the 80s, recognizing when a child was likely dealing with trauma or neurodiversity that needed care more than discipline. He developed the Barnstable Kindergarten Registration event, getting businesses on Main Street Hyannis to participate; children got a passport, and visited stores for stamps and gifts. He got Ben & Jerrys to cater an ice cream social, and wrote a grant for every child entering kindergarten to get a book. He focused on supporting English language learners, unhoused, and special needs children. He cared deeply about protecting the children of his community and making sure they were receiving an exceptional education.

The Family Pantry of Cape Cod – Harwich

The Family Pantry of Cape Cod is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit non-denominational organization located in Harwich. The Pantry provides food to anyone in need with no geographic restrictions.

Families/Individuals are welcome to return to the Pantry every 10 days for food and clothing. The Family Pantry is a choice pantry, which means that the food is not pre-bagged. Each client selects the products they want. A large selection of healthy foods including frozen meats, cheese, eggs, fresh produce as well as canned and packaged food products are offered. The pantry also provides warehouse space to the Greater Boston Food Bank to run a Cape Drop (with two large tractor trailer trucks loaded with food for 29 of the pantries and soup kitchens on Cape Cod.) The Pantry is staffed by over 650 volunteers, a full time executive director, Christine Menard, a warehouse manager and thrift store manager along with a part time office manager, assistant store manager and program manager.

Health Ministry, Inc. –Hyannis

This organization has been extremely successful in helping our low income and immigrants on the Cape and Islands. The health ministry does great work for our community; their best interest is to keep our community healthy and safe. Education is also a huge part of this organization. Since January, they have served over 3 thousand people in their facility. Health Ministry provides opportunities to promote spiritual, mental, and physical wellness through education programs, physical activities, and disease prevention.