



# Jeremiah's Times



Winter 2024

## Black History Month

### The Intersection of Substance Use Disorder, Hunger, and Black History

During Black History Month, it's essential to shed light on the intersectionality of various issues that affect the African American and BIPOC community. One such intersection that demands attention is the link between substance use disorder (SUD), hunger, and the narratives of resilience within the black community. A vast body of research shows that communities of color have less access to substance use disorder (SUD) treatment than does the White population, and that barriers to accessing substance use care for people of color may contribute to racial and ethnic disparities, highlighting the need for a nuanced discussion around these issues.

Hunger, too, plays a significant role in the black community, with a disproportionate number of Black and African American households experiencing food insecurity. According to Feeding America, 21.2% of Black households faced food insecurity in 2019, compared to the national average of 10.5%. The intertwining of SUD and hunger can often be traced back to systemic issues such as socioeconomic disparities and limited access to SUD treatment, food resources, and employment opportunities.

To truly understand the complexities of substance use and hunger within the black community, one must acknowledge the historical context. Centuries of systemic racism have contributed to the socioeconomic disparities that persist today. These disparities, in turn, impact access to education,

employment, and healthcare, creating an environment where individuals may turn to substance use as a coping mechanism.

However, amidst these challenges, the history of black resilience shines through. Black leaders and communities have continuously demonstrated strength, perseverance, and the ability to overcome adversity. Many organizations such as the Black Emotional And Mental Health Collective (BEAM) <https://beam.community> and <https://justroots.org>, located in Greenfield, MA, work tirelessly to address SUD, mental health, and food justice in the black community, offering support, resources, and education.

As we celebrate Black History Month, it is crucial to recognize and address the intersection of SUD, hunger, and the historical context that shapes these issues. By fostering understanding and promoting initiatives that address systemic inequalities, we can contribute to a future where all individuals, regardless of their background, have equal access to opportunities, resources, and the support they need. Let us honor Black History Month by acknowledging the resilience of the African American and BIPOC community and by working toward a more just and equitable future.



## Holiday Wish Program Pioneers



**Pam Copland & Nancy Cook**

Pam and Nancy are the heart and soul of the holiday wish program. We could not do any of it without their help. For almost 10 years Pam Copland of Pam's Porch 5 and Nancy Cook begin helping us in late October and don't stop organizing donors, sorting, wrapping, and shopping for residents and last minute gifts until our holiday party! These women mean so much to our organization and to the men who come through this program.

One resident wrote: "I'll always remember your kindness. This has been a difficult year for me. I came to Worcester from a scary place and I was very unsure of myself and my future. 2023 has become a very special year for me, since coming to JI, I have found purpose and my people. Thank you so much for being a part of the memories and helping me have a wonderful Christmas."



## Hope for the Holidays

We are profoundly grateful for the unparalleled generosity within our community—it truly makes us feel blessed beyond measure! Year after year, your unwavering support never fails to inspire and amaze us. A heartfelt thank you to our incredible network of community partners, sponsors, grantors, in-kind donors, and supporters of every kind that have helped make the holidays extraordinary for our residents and guests.

### Masterman's Safety & Industrial Supply Co.



Every Thanksgiving, our friends at Masterman's generously deliver thirty pies from Giovanni's Bakery & Deli and thirty Butterball turkey vouchers for the residents and guests of our program to enjoy! This year they including winter hats for the Holiday Wish Program. What a wonderful and heartwarming treat!

### Worcester Telegram & Gazette & United Way of Central MA

For 85 years the T&G Santa Fund along with their main partner the UWCM has donated toys, games, and books to children and teens in need throughout the region. United Way partners with over 20 local community service organizations, like Jeremiah's Inn, to connect these gifts with nearly 8,000 children!



### Advantage Truck Group Haulin 4 Hunger (H4H)



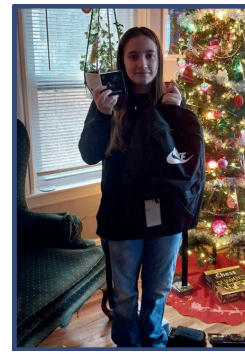
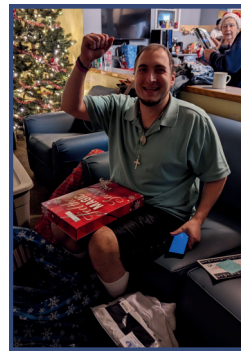
Since 2012, H4H has distributed over 30,000 meals to local organizations during the holidays. Each year, they generously provide 30 turkeys and 30 bags of sides for the residents and guests of the food pantry. We express our deep gratitude for being a consistent recipient of their generosity each and every year.

### Lakeview School

Jill Shea and her incredible middle school students have been spreading joy through the Holiday Wish Program with their annual toy drive. So much gratitude for the abundant donation of toys, clothing, and books that brought smiles to the faces of the children in our community. What makes this act of kindness even more extraordinary? Jill shared the beautiful tradition of a former student returning to donate a toy, proving that the spirit of giving is deeply ingrained in the Lakeview School family! Thank you Jill, faculty and students at Lakeview for another successful year!!

# Holiday Wish Program

Your support made this incredible achievement possible! Our aim was to provide each resident and their children with a complete outfit, including shoes and a coat, along with one additional gift. We not only met but exceeded our goal, and it's all thanks to our wonderful sponsors, dedicated shoppers, generous campaign donors, and those who shared our posts on social media. Your collective contributions and enthusiasm played a pivotal role in making this initiative a success.



## Holiday Wish Program Donors, Sponsors & Shoppers

Herlihy Insurance Group  
Lakeview School  
Millbury Federal Credit Union  
Savers Bank  
United Way Of Central  
Massachusetts  
Worcester Telegram & Gazette -  
Santa Fund  
Mr. & Mrs. Brian & Julie Anders  
Ms. Cathy Babiec  
Ms. Irene Berkowitz  
Mr. & Mrs. Kevin & Donna Boucher  
Mrs. Cheryl Brule  
Mr. & Mrs. Don & Bonnie Capman  
Ms. Christine Church  
Mrs. Eileen Church-Preston  
Ms Barbara Clarke-West  
Mr. & Mrs. James & Nancy Coghlin  
Ms. Nancy Cook

Ms. Pam Copland  
Mr. & Mrs. Fred & Dale Cormier  
Mr. Asher Goldberg  
Ms. Nancy Hughes  
Ms. Anne Kennedy  
Ms. Kathy Keohane  
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Mr. & Mrs. John & Sydney Rossetti  
Ms. Stephanie Sodon  
Mr. & Mrs. Joe & Elisa Sousa  
Mr. & Mrs. Steve & Terry Waite

We would also like to thank our dedicated staff for all of their hard work promoting and organizing sponsors and shoppers, wrapping, and helping with the Holiday Wish Program party and preparations. Our heartfelt thanks to each and every one of you for making a positive impact!



## Tech Goes Home (TGH) Comes to JI

TGH empowers communities to access and use digital tools to overcome barriers and advance lives. They bring computers, internet, and training to those without so students can do



homework, adults can find jobs and manage finances, seniors can connect with loved ones, and all can lead healthy lives. The TGH community of learners includes people of all ages living in communities throughout MA. TGH deliberately partners with communities most affected by structural injustices.

- 90% live in households that are considered "very low income" (HUD 2022)
- 85% identify as BIPOC (including 34% who identify as Black and 34% who identify as Latin)

Jeremiah's Inn TGH trainer will facilitate a 15 hr course on basic computer skills on TGH provided Chromebooks and at the end of the course students will be able to take home their device and receive a year of free internet! We are very excited to be able to offer this program to our residents make sure you follow us on social media to see updates.

[www.techgoeshome.org](http://www.techgoeshome.org)

## NEW Sign Up for Food Pantry Volunteers

To streamline the organization of volunteer shifts at our food pantry, we've implemented an online sign up system. This allows volunteers to easily view available shifts, schedule, and cancel them at [SignUp.com](http://SignUp.com).

Food pantry assisting is not suitable for large groups due to the limited space we have for distribution. If you are looking for an opportunity for larger groups check out the other opportunities on our website: [www.jeremiahsinn.com/volunteer-programs](http://www.jeremiahsinn.com/volunteer-programs)

## Volunteers Needed!



Thank you

Unrestricted

George F. &amp; Sybil H. Fuller Foundation

George I. Alden Trust

Herlihy Insurance Group

J. Irving England and Jane L. England

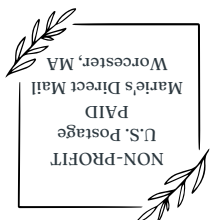
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