

**LOCAL VIEW**

# Giving where you live

**By Judy Salerno and Stephen Pratt**  
 Guest columnists

Homelessness can stare you straight in the eye on the streets of Boston. Yet it can seem absent in the daily suburban life of the MetroWest neighborhoods. But, despite the lack of visibility of human struggle in our suburbs, we know that significant hardship does exist throughout the region.

Some of your neighbors struggle to put food on the table or to get the proper mental and physical health services they require. Others are coping with unemployment and possible foreclosure on their homes. Economic difficulties are deeply felt in MetroWest due to an overall cost of living that is about 34 percent above the national average.

Congruent to the hardships that are being felt, government funding for social services is continually declining. The dedicated organizations that serve our most vulnerable citizens tell us about the increasing demands they face. Many MetroWest nonprofits estimate that they are addressing less than 25 percent

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Like most suburban areas in the U.S., we have seen poverty rates increase at a faster rate than urban areas. Research conducted by Root Cause, a nonprofit research and consulting firm, found that there are 99 foundations that provide grants exclusively to Boston nonprofits and only four foundations offering support to the MetroWest area.

In addition, for every one person living in poverty in Suffolk County, three people are living in poverty in the five counties surrounding Boston. Further, for every five dollars spent on poverty intervention and prevention in Boston, only one dollar is spent in

the surrounding counties combined.

At Foundation for MetroWest, the only community foundation for the MetroWest region, we understand the needs of the hundreds of nonprofits in our area. We see the expanding needs being reported by local nonprofits yet the gap continues to increase between grants requested and our ability to fund them.

It is clear that the MetroWest region faces an uphill battle when it comes to funding. In order to alleviate this growing problem, we need to face this reality together as a community. We encourage you to join Foundation for MetroWest and Root Cause in working to build strong families, creating better lives, and strengthening our region. It's about working together to make a difference in MetroWest.

Please feel free to call Foundation for MetroWest at 508-647-2260 or email [jsalerno@foundationformetrowest.org](mailto:jsalerno@foundationformetrowest.org).

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