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## NEWS RELEASE

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# A rare eye on homelessness, foreclosure

*United Way of RI exhibits award-winning Projo photographs*

**Name:** *Through the Lens: Capturing Stories of Foreclosure*

**What:** United Way of Rhode Island hosts a compelling exhibit of photographs on homelessness and the foreclosure crisis taken by Providence Journal photographer John Freidah.

**Where:** Lobby of the United Way building at 50 Valley St. in the Olneyville section of Providence.

**When:** Monday, Feb. 2, through Friday, March 27, 2009, from 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

**Special Event:** On Thursday, March 19, the exhibit will be a featured “art bus stop” on Gallery Night: Providence, a bus tour of area galleries that leaves from downtown Providence between 5:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m.

No charge; Gallery Night parking is free

**Providence, RI--** [United Way of Rhode Island](http://www.uwri.org) announces the creation of art gallery space at its new headquarters in the Olneyville section of Providence. The inaugural exhibit features award-winning, stand-out photographs of homelessness and the foreclosure crisis taken by Providence Journal photographer John Freidah.

The exhibit, which runs from Monday, Feb. 2, until Friday, March 27, is open to the public (at no charge) and is located in the lobby at United Way of RI, 50 Valley St. Entitled *Through the Lens: Capturing the Foreclosure Crisis*, the exhibit at United Way will be a featured “art bus” stop on 2009’s first Gallery Night: Providence on Thursday, March 19, from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m.

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“Our first art exhibit displays the impact the housing crisis and state and federal budget cuts are having on Rhode Islanders,” said Anthony Maione, President and CEO of United Way of RI.

“The engaging photographs are one of several initiatives we have put in place to draw attention to homelessness and the foreclosure crisis -- areas of interest to United Way of Rhode Island.”

The current economic climate is making life difficult for many Rhode Islanders. Between Jan. 1 and Sept. 30 of 2008, the total number of foreclosures in Rhode Island numbered 2,835; 1,096 of which were in Providence. The Homeless Coalition of Rhode Island is reporting that, for the first time, people are seeking shelter because of foreclosure.

“This is an issue that is not going away any time soon,” Maione added. “We need to keep drawing attention to what is occurring currently in our community in hopes of bringing about change.”

The photo exhibition is one of several initiatives United Way of Rhode Island (UWRI) has put in place to improve awareness and raise funds for homelessness prevention. United Way responded to this urgent call for need by announcing in January *United Way Fund to Prevent Homelessness in Rhode Island* in which 100 percent of the contributions made to the Fund will be distributed directly to people who need assistance to meet rent, mortgage and utilities.

UWRI’s CEO and President, Anthony Maione, announced that UWRI will match contributions to the Fund dollar-for-dollar up to \$100,000 between now and March 31. “In effect, United Way will double the donor’s gift,” added Maione. “It demonstrates just how grave we perceive this need to be.

“We can’t stand by while we watch hard working Rhode Islanders become homeless because they can’t pay basic household expenses,” said Maione. “We are hopeful that all of Rhode Island will come together to help our neighbors in need by contributing to the Fund.”

Photographer John Freidah, who has worked for the past 13 years as a photojournalist for The Providence Journal, has been focusing his documentary-style photography on helping to implement social change.

His work has received numerous awards, including Picture of the Year's *Newspaper Photographer of the Year*, 3rd place; Northern Short Course's *Photographer of the Year*; and three-time National Press Photographer's Regional *Photographer of the Year*. He won a National Media Award in print journalism from the National Association of Drug Court Professionals, and a National Excellence in Journalism award by the National Marrow Donor Program. Freidah's work has appeared in National Geographic, Time magazine, Newsweek, and on ABC's *Nightline*.

*Gallery Night: Providence* hosts monthly “art” bus tours of Providence’s galleries, which open their doors for free “visual arts parties.” It’s on the third Thursday of the month, March through November, from 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. No charge and parking is free. Gallery night transportation leaves from One Citizen Plaza, and a guide is assigned to each bus. For more information on [Gallery Night: Providence](http://www.gallerynight.info), call (401) 490-2042, or visit [www.gallerynight.info](http://www.gallerynight.info).

#### **About United Way of Rhode Island**

United Way of Rhode Island has been working to improve the quality of life in Rhode Island communities for over 80 years. UWRI’s mission is to mobilize the caring power of the community to improve the lives of people in need and address the issues Rhode Islanders care most about. United Way’s goal is to create long-lasting changes that prevent problems from happening in the first place. We believe that all Rhode Islanders deserve the opportunity to have a better life, as when any one of us succeeds, we all succeed. At United Way, we refer to this as advancing the common good. For more information, visit [www.liveunitedri.org](http://www.liveunitedri.org)

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