



Press Conference Speakers

Charles A Lombardi: Mayor of North Providence

Charles A. Lombardi has served as the Mayor of North Providence since his inauguration in August of 2007. With Lombardi's 42+ years of public service within the fire department, town council, league of cities and towns, as well as school departments much of his professional life has been dedicated to the public. The mayor has been inducted into the Boys and Girls Club Hall of Fame and continues to make a lasting impact on the public. Mayor Lombardi prides himself on being a family-man, running his family-owned business for 40+ years as well as spending time with his loving wife, children, and grandchildren in his off time.

Womazetta Jones: Secretary, Executive Office Of Health And Human Services (EOHHS)

Womazetta Jones, MA serves as the Secretary of Rhode Island's Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS), bringing almost 30 years of human services experience to the role. Among her immediate objectives are to lead Rhode Island's ongoing transition to a health and human service network that examines an individual's health needs on a holistic basis.

After graduating with a bachelor's degree in law enforcement administration and political science from Western Illinois University, Womazetta later went on to receive her Master of Arts degree in psychology, counseling and guidance from Chicago State University.

In her previous role, Womazetta served as the director of social services for Ramsey County, MN, which provides protection and support services for children and adults, including services around disabilities, mental health, substance abuse disorders, child protection, foster care and child care licensing, and adoptions. Here, she strived to help eliminate the stigma of mental health challenges facing communities of color and the area's Native American populations.

Womazetta began her career as a child welfare specialist at the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services in 1991, eventually being promoted to Deputy Bureau Chief. Here, Womazetta was responsible for child protection practices throughout Illinois.

Womazetta credits her upbringing with providing her with such a giving spirit. Growing up on Chicago's South Side, she spent time with her grandmother, who would prepare meals and deliver them, along with donated clothing, to area families in need—all on her own. It's because of this dedication to the community, Womazetta says, that her desire to help society's most vulnerable, and often invisible, populations burns so bright.



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Alfredo Ruggiero Jr.: North Providence Police Chief

Alfredo Ruggiero Jr. was appointed Deputy Chief of the North Providence Police Department in

May 2020, following 26 years of law enforcement experience proudly serving residents of the State of Rhode Island at the Rhode Island State Police. He was then promoted to Chief of Police in June of 2021.

As a North Providence native, who grew up participating in various Town sports, Chief Ruggiero recognizes the value of connecting to the community he serves. He promotes professionalism, accountability and commitment within the Department to build public trust and legitimacy. His leadership, experience, and deep understanding of North Providence serves the Department and community well.

Chief Ruggiero holds a Master's degree in Criminal Justice from Roger Williams University. He served eight (8) years in the United States Marine Corps and is a graduate of the 2018/273rd Session of the FBI National Academy in Quantico, Va.

Cheryl DaCosta: Blackstone Valley Partnerships for Success Grant Coordinator

Cheryl DaCosta is the coordinator of the Partnerships for Success Grant which focuses on the prevention of underage drinking. She works with BVPC's staff, municipal coordinators and law enforcement to develop and deliver programs for middle/high school youth, alcohol licensees and the community. Cheryl has 25 years of experience in grant management and workforce development. She has a Bachelor of Science Degree in Recreation and Leisure Studies- majoring in therapeutic recreation and recreation management. She was a Therapeutic Recreation Specialist at Butler Hospital, as well as the Director of Recreation for the Town of Cumberland.

Sheri and Michaela Shunney: Parent and Youth Supporters of the Campaign

Sheri Shunney is a registered nurse and mother who teaches clinical care techniques, anatomy, and physiology at Rhode Island College. Shunney, in addition to her position at RIC, teaches Mental Health First Aid for Lifespan and owns her own business teaching CPR and American Heart Association First Aid to health care providers and the community. In her time off, Shunney has taken part in a number of community coalitions including the Opioid Task Force, and more recently, the ASAPP+ group within East Greenwich.

However, the most important job that Sheri Shunney holds is being a mother to Jake and Michaela, 17-year-old twins, who are going into their senior year of high school. Sheri's motto with her kids is "I'm not trying to get you into Harvard, I just want you to get into Heaven."

Michaela Shunney is a rising senior at East Greenwich High School and an active community mental health advocate. Michaela has been previously noted in the media for her prevention work with the East



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Greenwich ASAPP (Access, seek Support, take Action, Proceed, and develop Prevention techniques) group as well as for the work on her senior project, a Pride Picnic, taking place at Goddard State Park.