

The root cause of hunger is poverty. Today in Rhode Island 11.1 percent of the population has income below the official poverty level, meaning that 114,000 people are living in poverty, including 35,000 children and 12,000 senior adults.

— From the Status Report on Hunger in Rhode Island

STILL HUNGRY



THE PROVIDENCE JOURNAL / STEVE SZYDLOWSKI

Lorraine Burns, who runs a food pantry at St. Teresa Church in Olneyville, loads 56 frozen turkeys into her trunk from the Rhode Island Community Food Bank. She and other church volunteers will produce 134 turkey baskets for those in need.

“I think it is a bad decision to have children you can’t support.”

GOVERNOR CARCIERI,
on WJAR-TV’s 10 News Conference

Carcieri decries welfare system

Saying that “we as taxpayers and citizens of the state are being asked to finance and support those decisions,” the governor says he’s looking at ways to put more of those receiving assistance to work.

BY KATHERINE GREGG
JOURNAL STATE HOUSE BUREAU

PROVIDENCE — Rhode Island’s welfare system is “enabling” unmarried women to “have children they can’t support.”

That has been one of the recurrent themes in Governor Carcieri’s recent radio and TV appearances, as he continues to set the stage for budget-cutting proposals that, in the welfare arena, seem to evolve out of his personal view of what constitutes a “loving, nurturing family environment.”



CARCIERI

“Frankly, I think from the state’s perspective we’ve been enabling and continue to enable a lot of bad decisions,” he said Sunday on WJAR-TV’s 10 News Conference. Asked to define “bad decisions,” he said: “Most of the people on our welfare programs are single women, unmarried with multiple children.”

“I think it is a bad decision to have children you can’t support...I am not making a

SEE **WELFARE, A2**

Many Rhode Islanders fail to use programs intended to alleviate the problem

BY TOM MOONEY
JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

PROVIDENCE — The Community Food Bank of Rhode Island will issue its annual report on hunger in the state today and what is new is what hasn’t changed.

In the eight-year period between 1998 and 2006, the number of households experiencing hunger or missed meals has increased 1 percent to 11.3 percent — the equivalent of 48,000 homes.

Why, after years of efforts to tackle the problem of hunger, is the situation worsening?

“Poverty is the root cause,” says

Andrew Schiff, executive director of the food bank.

Wages aren’t keeping up with the growing cost of living. The costs of some of those basics — home heating fuel, gasoline — are going through the roof. And the subprime mortgage crisis has many working families already living below the poverty level, paying high rents and steep mortgage payments that leave no money for food.



EXTRA: A full copy of the Food Bank’s report will be available this morning, at: projo.com

“For most middle-income people, you somehow absorb these increases in the basic cost of living,” said Schiff. “It hurts, you notice it, but the tendency is you pay that heating oil bill when it comes. The people we’re talking about ... are paying that bill and then they don’t have money for food.”

Schiff said a push is now under way to get more people who are eligible for food stamps to apply for them.

In its hunger report, the food bank quotes federal figures showing

SEE **HUNGER, A2**

2007 Poverty Guidelines

Size of Family unit	Annual Income limit
1	\$10,210
2	13,690
3	17,170
4	20,650
5	24,130
6	27,610
7	31,090
8	34,570

For each additional person add \$3,480

Source: Federal government

Measured in three-year increments, the percentage of Rhode Islanders who are identified as food insecure is on the rise: 1996-1998, 10.2% ; 2001-2003, 11.1% ; 2004-2006, 11.3%, according to the report.

With caution, hope, Iraqis seek a return to normalcy

With violence down dramatically in the capital, families forced to flee their Baghdad homes are slowly returning and venturing out.

BY DAMIEN CAVE and ALISSA J. RUBIN
THE NEW YORK TIMES

BAGHDAD — Five months ago, Suhaila al-Aasan lived in an oxygen tank factory with her husband and two sons, convinced that they would never go back to their apartment in Dora, a middle-class neighborhood in southern Baghdad.

Today she is home again, cooking by a sunlit window, sleeping beneath her favorite wedding picture.

And yet, she and her family are remarkably alone. The half-dozen other apart-

ments in her building echo with emptiness and on most days; Iraqi soldiers are the only neighbors she sees.

“I feel happy,” she said, standing in her bedroom, between a flowered bedspread and a bullet hole in the wall. “But my happiness is not complete. We need more people to come back. We need more people to feel safe.”

Aasan, 45, a Shiite librarian with an easy laugh, is living at the far end of Baghdad’s

SEE **IRAQ, A2**



NYT / JOAO SILVA

With violence decreasing, people in Baghdad are once again able to come together and share a meal at a restaurant.

SEE **YOUTHS, A8**

Face-off set on transfer of ‘gap kids’

The attorney general’s office says it will appeal a ruling that will send many of the 17-year-olds facing criminal trials who were treated as adults to Family Court.

BY EDWARD FITZPATRICK
JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

PROVIDENCE — The District Court’s top judge yesterday decided to send Family Court many of the “gap kids” who were charged with crimes during the 4½-month period when state law treated 17-year-olds as adults.

The state’s chief public defender estimated that 100 to 200 of the 500 children would be transferred to Family Court as a result of yesterday’s decision, but the attorney general’s office vowed to appeal the ruling.

District Court Chief Judge Albert E. DeRobbio agreed to transfer misdemeanor cases involving the affected children to Family Court if their criminal charges are still pending, and he said those who have entered pleas to misdemeanor charges but have not completed their sentences will have the option of seeking a transfer to Family Court.

But it will be up to Superior Court to decide whether to transfer felony cases involving gap kids to Family Court because Superior Court adjudicates felonies, DeRobbio said.

In making his ruling, DeRobbio said state law had been applied in an unconstitutional way. Citing the equal protection clause of the



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6 SECTIONS			
Ask Amy	F4	Lotteries	C4
Business	E1	Obituaries	D4
Classified	E8	People	F1
Comics	F5	Poker	F4
Crossword	F4	Rhode Island	B1
Editorial	B4	Sports	C1
Legal ads	E4	Television	F6
Lifebeat	F1	What’s Happening	F4
Local News	D1		

DOWN BUT NOT OUT

The company attempting to build a liquefied natural gas terminal in Fall River is forging ahead even after the Coast Guard rejected the proposal, insisting that, “it’s fair to say that the project is by no means dead.” **E1**

FIGHT FOR SURVIVAL

A humpback whale that had become entangled in yellow fishing line off the Rhode Island coast manages to free itself but observers worry the ordeal may have left the animal so weak, it may have jeopardized its chances of survival. **B1**

TOO CLOSE TO CALL

The top three contenders for the Democratic presidential nomination remain locked in a close battle in Iowa, with Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton falling slightly behind surging Sen. Barack Obama. **A4**



BACK IN THE FOLD

Third baseman Mike Lowell and the Red Sox come to terms on a \$37.5-million contract that will keep the World Series MVP in Boston for the next three years. **C1**