

# Faces Of New Bedford – #53: Rosannette Rivera

Meet Rosannette Rivera, 30-year old painter and teacher at New Bedford High School.



Rosannette was born in Puerto Rico but spent the first 12 years of her life in Central/South America and the Caribbean, as her father was a missionary who worked throughout these locations. Due to her families' appearance, most people thought they were American, which caused hostility from the locals where they traveled. This caused Rosannette to spend a great deal indoors, where she went to drawing and other forms of art for refuge.

After her father's service, they moved to the US and had a brief stay in New Jersey before they settled in New Bedford. Although she never expected to take art seriously, as she thought that you couldn't find a future working in it, she met Ms. Riley at NBHS, who changed her view completely. She showed her the power art held to communicate and express things to people from any walk of life.

With the inspiration she received from her classes, she graduated and pursued a degree in Fine Art and Art Education at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth. She began

teaching art at Roosevelt middle school where she came across students who were living through extremely unfortunate circumstances. She used her position to be able to show those students how to use art as she had during her childhood and overcome their situations.

This has only continued to her current teaching position at New Bedford High School, where she is able to impact students at the most pivotal time of their lives, just before they journey off into what life has before them. Her hope is that she can continue to show her students what art became to her when she was in their position, and move on with a better appreciation and literacy for art.

*"It's not about pretty, it's about taking the necessary steps to get better in the future."*

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## **Faces Of New Bedford – #52: Colton Simmons**

With the one year anniversary of the Faces of New Bedford we would like to give you a glimpse into the life of its creator!



Meet Colton Simmons, 27-year-old photographer and graphic designer. Colton grew up in United Front Homes with his mom. His mother did her best to keep him out the trouble that was rampant with gangs in the city during his neighborhood. With his focus on school and extracurricular activities, he was always involved in art, whether drawing, painting or music. The death of his father at age 16 was a pivotal moment for him, as it pushed him, more than ever, to get out of the circumstances that he had grown up in.

Upon graduating from Greater New Bedford Regional Vocational Technical School, he attended the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, however after a year in a half in the Computer Science program, he could no longer afford school and his bills, which forced him to drop out.

Working dead-end job to dead-end job, he knew that he had to break free from the cycle and get back to school. After paying off the debt accumulated in his first time in college and with the support and encouragement of his wife and family, he enrolled at Bristol Community College in the Graphic Design program. There his love for photography and design was rekindled, even helping create what Faces of New Bedford has become today.

Colton has also done as much as possible to give back to the community by volunteering countless hours at local non-profit organizations and churches, trying to help bring hope back to city that has seen so much pain. He is currently graduating from Bristol Community College as the Salutatorian of his class and hoping to finish his undergraduate degree at the Rhode Island School of Design. Colton has also worked as the IT Administrator and most recently, the Graphic Designer for Teen Challenge New England, a non-profit drug rehabilitation program located in Brockton, MA.

*"It's been my faith that has allowed me to get this far and it is only my hope that others can see what God has been able to do in my life and the purpose He has for them."*

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## **Faces Of New Bedford – #51: Ryan McAfee**

Meet Ryan Mcfee, 40-year-old fine artist from New Bedford. Ryan grew up playing sports, so being an artist was far from his mind.



After graduating high school, he moved to Boston where he attended the Suffolk University, majoring in History. At the time, the university bought the New England School of Art and Design, so he took a few electives in art, one being Intro to Oil Painting.

Living above a café and framing shop in Boston's North end, he got some of his schoolwork framed at the shop below. The owner encouraged him to paint the buildings and restaurants that scattered "Little Italy", which he did. The framing shop owner started selling his pieces, starting his career as a painter.

He relocated his studio from his little apartment to the SOWA building in South Boston during his infancy up until he was affected by the economy crash and moved back to New Bedford in 2011. He had been able to get closer to family and opened a studio space with his mother on Williams Street.

They started in a little storefront and as business got better for him he was able to claim the old storefront of the Artificial Marketplace. Being in New Bedford has giving him a large inspiration in his art, drawing from the history of whaling and fishing that has given this city its identity in history. He enjoys being able to be apart of all of the growth and creativity that is happening downtown.

*"You have to work your butt off and be prepared to go through periods where you fail, but pick up the pieces and continue on with what you love."*

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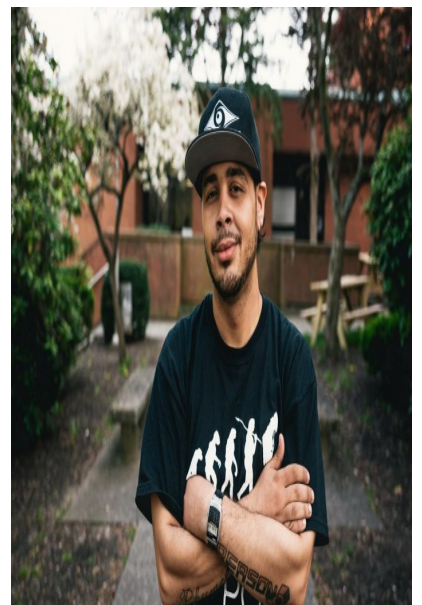
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## Faces Of New Bedford – #50: Angel Diaz

Meet Angel Diaz, 28-year-old Math teacher, co-program director and DJ.



Angel moved to New Bedford in his early teenage years, after living in Florida and New York for his early childhood. His start in New Bedford wasn't that great, getting kicked out of New Bedford High School for carrying a weapon on him to dropping out of the alternative high school. It wasn't too

long after that Angel realized he didn't want to continue down the path of destruction he was on and went back for his GED at the age of 16. He was also avidly involved in music, working with two others to open his own professional studio, where he was recording and mixing music at the same age.

He then went on to work for a host of organizations where he helped youth, whether it was with their homework or creating lessons for them, all while continuing his secondary education. He got involved with Dream Out Loud, then Brick by Brick, and continued teaching teenagers music on and off for the past 14 years. It was in 2014, that he became the co-program director. Since then he has even worked alongside a group of teens on a project, which they performed for the President of Bermuda on the island. Angel is also a full time math teacher for the girls at the Our Sister School, which is a private charter school for low income girls.

Aside from teaching, Angel is also an entertainer. His involvement with music since such a young age has opened up the door for him to be able to work in various different platforms of music, from production to evening DJing. He has done tons of corporate events and parties but recently has teamed up with the Blessed Energy band. He will be joining them to tour New England this upcoming summer alongside a few other DJing opportunities he has.

"I'm an "edutainer," I like to educate while entertaining. I was a person that the system failed so I didn't want to see other kids go through that."

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# Faces Of New Bedford – #49: Tiffany Ferreira

Meet Tiffany Ferreira, a Research Assistant at the University of Massachusetts as part of a Doctoral fellowship and part-time Operations Manager at Southern Lights Solar.



As long as Tiffany could remember she had been good at math and during her high school years had even considered going to college to become a math teacher. With the push of several teachers from New Bedford High School (Ms. Daamguard, Mr. Viera, and Mr. Knickerson; just to name a few) she began her freshman year as a Math major at UMass Dartmouth.

After a few semesters her interests in math had shifted and she became a physics major. During her first few years in college she didn't really get involved but it wasn't until the faculty in the Math and Physics department invited her to go to the Undergraduate Women's Physics conference where she really had a life changing event. During one of the sessions, someone mentioned how only 2 percent of women in undergraduate Physics programs would continue on to receive their Doctorate, and this fact bothered her.

From that point on she made it her mission to advocate for



women in the math and science world. Upon graduating from the University of Massachusetts with her Degree in Science and Physics, she was invited to join a doctoral fellowship at the school, where she is studying how to numerically model the onset and progression of Alzheimer's disease.

She is heavily involved with Women in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) working to help other people see that there are plenty of opportunities to grow and work in the fields of science, physics.

They have hosted events for OUR Sister's School for girls on several occasions, teaching them to understand science using games and presentations.

"We have the potential to be a great hub like Boston and New Bedford should look to UMass for all of the opportunities that it has, rather than seeing it as 'The closest school to go to so it is my last option.'"

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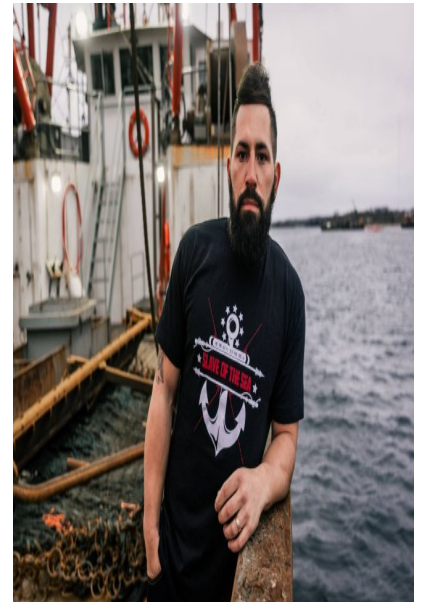
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## **Faces Of New Bedford – #48: Ryan Tavares**

Meet Ryan Tavares, 28-year-old scallop fisherman.



He grew up in the North End of New Bedford in the Lord Phillip housing development. Living in a small 2-bedroom apartment with his brother and mom, he understands the struggle that most people go through in our city. During his teenage years, he met the girl who would become his wife and she helped him stay out of the trouble going on around in his environment.

After graduating from New Bedford Voc-Tech he worked between a few construction jobs, not finding enjoyment in his work. It was around the age of 20 where he became interested in fishing, as his girlfriend's father was a scallop fisherman. He started off working for little to no money, cleaning the boats and helping them with gear work, before they asked him to come on as a full-time fisherman.

It wasn't too long before he had become passionate about his career path. With New Bedford being the number one fishing port in the world, we lose sight of the hard work and economic growth the industry brings into our city. Rather than focusing on the negative atmosphere that surrounds it, Ryan started a fishing focused clothing company, Slave of the Sea.

The ideology behind it is simple, as it represents the guys who don't have the option to turn down the next trip out because their family depend on them fishing. In a sense they

become “Slaves to the Sea” which can be a dual edged sword, a love/hate relationship. He has seen some decent success, selling several runs of gear at local boat supply shops and even selling at supply stores in Cape May, New Jersey.

His passion for New Bedford and seeing others succeed and understand the potential they have is an obvious thing. He is currently working with a local barber and friend to open a barbershop in downtown New Bedford, The New Bedford Barber Company. Their hope is to open a barbershop with a classy feel and a place for local artists and brands to get their feet off the ground, offering retail space and walls to hang art.

“You are not a product of your environment, you are a product of how you perceive your environment. If you grow up with everyone doing the wrong thing, you don’t have to follow suit but have the decision to make your own decisions.”

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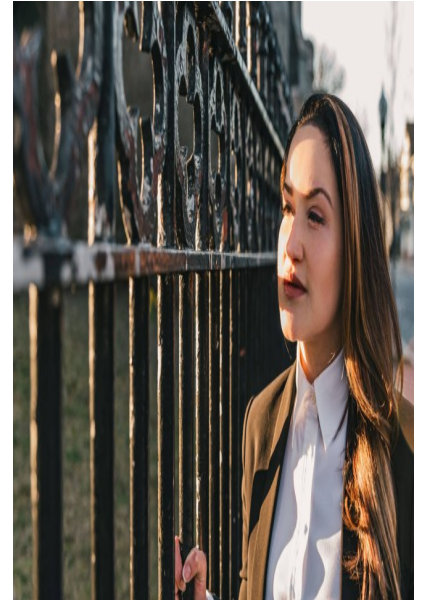
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## **Faces Of New Bedford – #47: Yanire Gomez**

Meet Yanire Gomez, 33-year-old president and owner of Trilogy Laboratories.



As a lifelong New Bedford resident, Yanire has a fond appreciation for the city. After graduating high school, she attended Northeastern University, where she received her bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice. She started working at different correctional facilities with inmates, most of whom had come out of struggles with addiction. It was at that time she and her colleagues were discussing toxicology and how it was beneficial field to get involved in, as they could work toward advocating for clients before they ever became inmates.

Seeing how the city of New Bedford has been ravaged by drug use, she wanted to start her business here, where the people she had grown up with needed it the most. Upon dealing with personal loss in her own life from substance abuse, she knows how it can affect a family, which has driven her to open Trilogy Laboratories.

The unique thing about the philosophy behind Trilogy Testing Laboratories is that as a toxicology lab; that runs urinalysis testing to confirm or deny drug use, they also focus on patient advocacy and a medical continuum of care. Where large international labs are only worried about delivering a report, Yanire strives to provide an all encompassing relationship as a "Clinical Partner."

Her focus is to work alongside her partners and educate them on how they could better treat their patients. Rather than simply providing a solitary piece of information, the test result, Trilogy aims to advocate for the patient, work alongside the medical providers, and bring awareness to her community concerning the effects of substance abuse. The focus is individualized treatment plans that will provide term care while decreasing relapses and recidivism.

*“Mediocrity is madness. As people we are created for so much more but so often we are handicapped by our fears and complacency.”*

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## **Faces Of New Bedford – #46: Marlene Gomes**

Meet Marlene Gomes, a 38-year-old teacher and personal trainer.



Born in Lisbon, Portugal she moved to New Bedford in 1978 and has lived here ever since. After time studying hotel, restaurant and travel administration at UMASS Amherst, she opened a cleaning business in the city.

Dissatisfied with that career path, she continued her education, while running her business, being a single mother, and attaining her Master's Degree in Linguistics from UMASS Boston. During all of this, she began teaching ESL at Roosevelt Middle school, where she has been able to teach students in 6th, 7th, and 8th grades how to speak English for the past 8 years.

It wasn't until 2011, when Marlene began training with Ray Oliveira, who introduced her to boxing. She immediately fell in love with the sport. After training with others Marlene felt the need to push herself further and got involved in Zumba. Marlene went on to become a licensed Zumba instructor and began teaching.

While renting a space from another trainer and teaching classes, the unthinkable happened to her. She tore her ACL which forced her to take almost a year off from her journey through fitness. Within that year she faced a lot of doubt. The thought crossed her mind several times that she might

never get back to where she was physically.

Turning that downtime into motivation, she laid out the plans and worked towards opening her own gym.

In November 2015, Marlene was able to open Keeping it Movin Fitness, where she holds everything from Zumba classes to boot camps. She doesn't just indulge in fitness for the way her body looks, but to get away from the business of life. To Marlene it's an outlet for expression and her hope is to share that with others. Through exercise you can become stress free and think clearer.

*"I am a creator of my own reality."*

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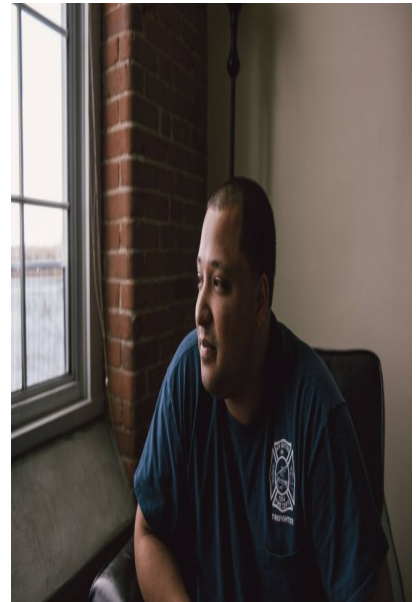
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## **Faces Of New Bedford – #45: Bryce Fortes**

Meet Bryce Fortes, 26-year-old fire fighter for the New Bedford fire department.



He never realized growing up that he would end up working to save peoples lives everyday. He had gone to Greater New Bedford Regional Vocation Technical High School and had graduated from the Carpentry shop. Upon graduation he started working with Youth Build, teaching at-risk youth how to build houses, while they studied to get their GED.

This was a fulfilling job for him, as he cared about the lives of the kids he had the chance to impact on a daily basis. After talking to his father one day, who is a corrections officer, he was left wondering what it would be like to work in civil service. He quickly became interested in the work that the fire fighters do on a daily basis and even went to offer to volunteer at one of the local stations, just to get a glimpse of what it was like. After taking his exam in 2011, he joined the academy and was soon on his first Engine.

He didn't realize how much of blessing and calling he had to become a fire fighter until he witnessed the first toy drive that they were involved in. For him to see how his other co-workers took the time out of their day off to give back to the community, his eyes were opened to a brotherhood he had never known.

This was only the beginning of his desire to give back to the



community. Being located at Ladder 4, on Acushnet Avenue in the North End, there is a lot of foot traffic. During the nicer weather, he and the fire fighters at that station are able to talk with the neighborhood kids and be an example in their lives. They also give back time at Gifts to Give and occasionally have pick up games with the youth at the Boys and Girls Club.

*"I realize how blessed I am to be in the position I am in today. I am grateful and humbled by the fact I am in a position to be a positive role model for kids who come from where I come from. It is with an immense deal of pride that I say I am a member of the New Bedford Fire Department."*

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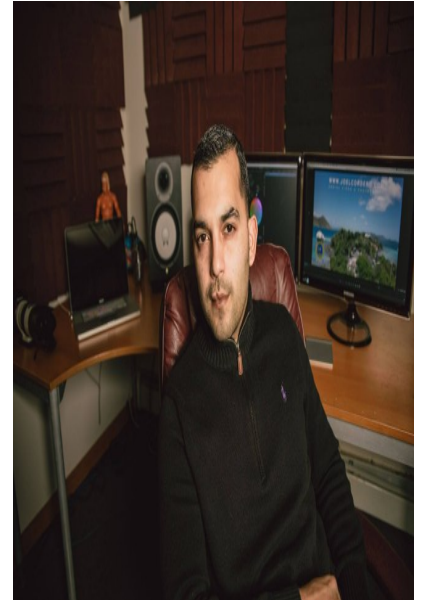
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## **Faces Of New Bedford – #44: Joel Cordero**

Meet Joel Cordero, 31 year-old father of two, Broadcast Editor and all-around artist.



Joel has lived most of his life in New Bedford. After graduating from Bristol Community College with a degree in Graphic Design, he started working with an artist, Thomas Deininger, creating found object assemblages that the duo installed in skyscrapers, hotels and private collections across the country. He worked with Deininger for about eight years before deciding that he wanted to continue his Bachelors Degree.

After experimenting with a few different majors, he settled on photography, which is something he had already been freelancing.

During his time in school, the city of New Bedford highly influenced his direction as an artist and photographer. He worked on his "The Ave" project, which documented the people, places, and events that happen on New Bedford's Acushnet Avenue. This developed into his senior thesis as a short documentary, a series of large prints and a very-well put together book. Through this project he was able to meet people he'd never met before and create work that he was proud of.

His freelancing really started to pick up in 2014 as he began working with large companies, such as Bluefly, shooting high-end fashion products for e-commerce.

In early 2015, after eight years of managing commercial and residential properties in New Bedford and Fall River, he acquired his MA Real Estate license and began to practice flying UAS (Unmanned Aerial Systems) as a marketing tool and for fun. In February of this year he was awarded his FAA (Federal Aviation Administration) Sec. 333 Exemption for Commercial photography and video.

The day before he passed his realtor's exam he received a call to inform him he landed a job as a Broadcast Editor at Boston's Ch7 NBC News. There he edits together stories and openings of the news broadcasts. He is en route to working with reporters as a Videographer on the road. He is excited about his work and knows this is only the beginning to bigger and better opportunities.

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