

Fall River and New Bedford “Guns for Groceries” events planned for Nov. 17

Initiative inspired by the late Rev. Robert Lawrence and facilitated by UMass Dartmouth Leduc Center for Civic Engagement encourages citizens to exchange guns for Market Basket gift cards and Domino's pizza coupons

The New Bedford and Fall River police departments, in partnership with the UMass Dartmouth Leduc Center for Civic Engagement, will host a “Guns for Groceries” day on Saturday, November 17.

The program was inspired by the October 17 Rev. Dr. Robert Lawrence Lecture at UMass Dartmouth, which featured two survivors of the Parkland, Florida school shooting. The late Rev. Lawrence had orchestrated numerous gun giveback programs in Southeastern Massachusetts, removing more than 3,100 guns from the streets.

“Guns for Groceries” will take place on Saturday, November 17, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at two locations:

Blessed Trinity Church, 1340 Plymouth Ave., Fall River

Pilgrim United Church of Christ, 634 Purchase St., New Bedford

The program will offer Market Basket gift cards and Domino's pizza coupons for guns – no questions asked. Anyone returning a shotgun or long gun will receive a \$50 gift card to Market Basket. Handguns returned will earn a \$75 gift card. Domino's pizza coupons will also be distributed.

“For 25 years, my husband was committed to making our communities safer by initiating the guns for groceries program,” said Elizabeth Duffy, Assistant General Counsel,

Massachusetts Department of Developmental Services and wife of the late Rev. Dr. Robert Lawrence. "I am proud of what my husband stood for and thrilled that UMass Dartmouth values his ideals and is continuing this important program."

"It is an honor to continue the legacy of Rev. Dr. Robert Lawrence in the Guns for Groceries program," Fall River Police Chief Albert F. Dupere said. "Even if only one gun, of over the 3000 collected so far in Fall River, saved one life, the entire program has succeeded beyond our collective hopes."

"This is a wonderful opportunity to ensure our community's safety by turning in firearms that individuals no longer wish to keep or have a use for," New Bedford Police Chief Joseph Cordeiro said. "It is equally important for parents to turn in firearms that their children or young adults may possess unlawfully. Let's keep our community safe by turning in unwanted guns."

"In memory of Dr. Robert Lawrence, Southcoast Health is proud to support the 'Guns for groceries' community initiative in our mutual mission to prevent gun-related accidents in the home," said Dr. Robert Caldas, D.O. Chief Medical Officer of Southcoast Health. "This is an effort to curb gun injury and acts of violence that threaten the safety and health of our communities."

"Pilgrim Church is pleased to cooperate with others in the community who are trying to make our streets and homes safer," said Rev. Douglas Cederberg, pastor of Pilgrim United Church of Christ. "We see it as our contribution to making life better in New Bedford."

"We at Blessed Trinity are looking forward to hosting Guns for Groceries in an effort to make our city safer by getting guns off our streets and to also honor this important work begun many years ago by the late Rev. Dr. Robert Lawrence for the good of our community," said Rev. Rob Nemkovich, pastor at

Blessed Trinity Parish in Fall River.

"Many people purchase guns for various reasons but sometimes they end up not being used much, left unsecured and forgotten," said Rev. David A. Lima, pastor of the New Seasons Worship Center and executive minister of Inter-Church Council of Greater New Bedford. "That's when they can fall into the hands of a curious youngster, or, worse, a person contemplating harm to themselves or others. In recent years we have seen an increase in suicide by gun, an alarming trend."

"Unsecured guns present a high risk of being stolen in house breaks, often by family members or acquaintances sliding into addiction or despair. Once on the street, they pose an unacceptable risk to everyone in the community," said Nelson Hockert-Lotz of Domino's Team New Bedford. "Gun Safety Exchanges, such as November 17th's Guns for Groceries, remind all gun owners of the critical importance of securing firearms properly, or turning firearms that might pose a hazard to a child, a family, or our community into the proper authorities, no questions asked."

"The Leduc Center is proud to collaborate with many organizations in promoting the legacy of Rev. Lawrence of making our community a safer place to live," said Dr. Matthew Roy, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Civic Engagement. "I am particularly grateful to Domino's, Market Basket, Attorney Scott Lang, Representative Carole Fiola, Southcoast Health, and Durfee High students. We are counting on New Bedford and Fall River youth to lead the charge in marketing this program."

Rev Dr. Robert Lawrence



GUNS FOR GROCERIES

No Questions Asked

Gift certificates for groceries will be given in exchange for the guns you return.

\$50 - \$75

Saturday, November 17th

9am - 2pm

Blessed Trinity Church, 1340 Plymouth Ave. Fall River, MA

*With Generous Support from
Southcoast Health, Market Basket, Attorney Scott Lang, and Domino's Team Fall River*