



THE NEW BEDFORD LIGHT
FREE • INDEPENDENT • NEWS

REAL JOURNALISM.

Impact Report 2025



“This is what
democracy
looks like.”

READER QUOTE





Now, more than ever, America needs real journalism — in-depth, fact-based reporting of urgent local issues.

As newspapers have shrunk, communities often settle for ghost papers or no media at all. And with a proliferation of websites, podcasts and social media sites that thrive on misinformation, the truth itself becomes endangered.

The result: A fractured America — with citizens who no longer trust the news.

But New Bedford is different. In June of 2021, founders of The New Bedford Light launched a new, nonprofit, nonpartisan, fact-based news source that is fearlessly independent. The goal: to inform residents, empower community members, celebrate the region's vibrant arts economy and give the greater New Bedford region a powerful voice.

The Light's reporters do not hold allegiance to public officials, business owners or a political party. We research, report, fact-check and write stories solely for the benefit of the public.

Four years later, The Light is a media success story, setting a model for nonprofit news startups around the country. Our journalists work to uncover important news that would otherwise go unreported. We keep a watchful eye on business, government and neighborhoods. And we explain complex subjects, helping readers gain a better understanding of the place where they live and work. In the following pages, you'll learn how The Light amplifies local voices, holds powerful institutions accountable, and makes a tangible impact across the region.

New Bedford is ground zero for immigration.

As of early June, at least 28 city residents have been detained, including an immigrant whose car window was smashed by a federal agent. Video obtained by The Light went viral, and the man was eventually freed on bond.



“Without your dedication, the world would not have known about this travesty and the thuggish behavior of people who claim to be representatives of the federal government.”

READER QUOTE



Our immigration team
Our multilingual reporters Eleonora Bianchi (left), Gerardo Beltran Salinas (center), and Kevin G. Andrade have developed reliable sources to uncover stories when officials aren't talking.



Keating demands explanation from federal officials about immigrant's violent arrest

**We bear witness.
We have impact.**

The Light's reporting on immigration, including the case of a man who was born in Portugal and lived nearly his entire life in New Bedford, has drawn media coverage across the U.S. and around the world.



“No immigrant is going to disappear off the streets of New Bedford without the public knowing about it.”

KAREN BORDELEAU, EXECUTIVE EDITOR OF THE NEW BEDFORD LIGHT

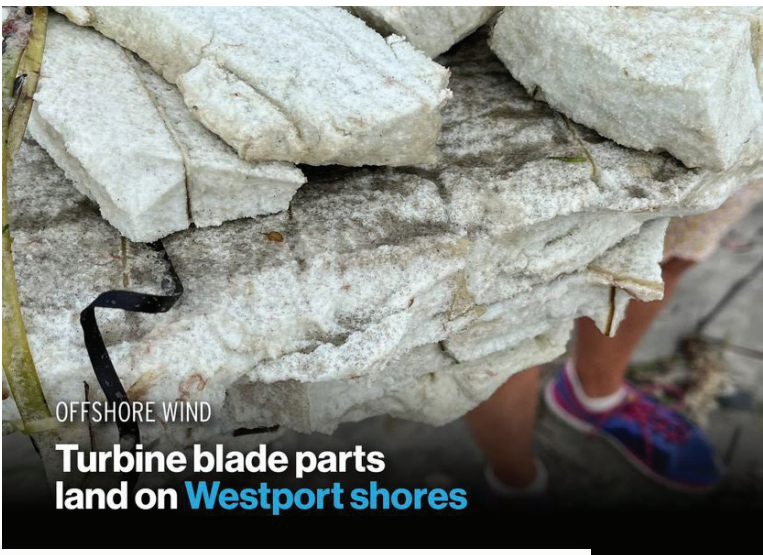
We don't pick sides.

The offshore wind industry, a major presence on New Bedford's waterfront, is complicated and contentious. We bring expertise and clarity to the debate.



FISHING INDUSTRY

Fishermen may not like offshore wind, but some work for it



OFFSHORE WIND

Turbine blade parts land on Westport shores

OFFSHORE WIND

Nantucket officials, group challenge 3 offshore wind projects



The Light always reports the local news in a clear and honest way. This type of media outlet should serve as an example for how to do local news right."

READER QUOTE



BREAKING NEWS

Mass. AG Campbell sues Trump to defend offshore wind

A presidential memorandum against wind energy projects jeopardizes states' abilities to supply enough electricity, Andrea Campbell and other state attorneys general argue.

THE NEW BEDFORD LIGHT



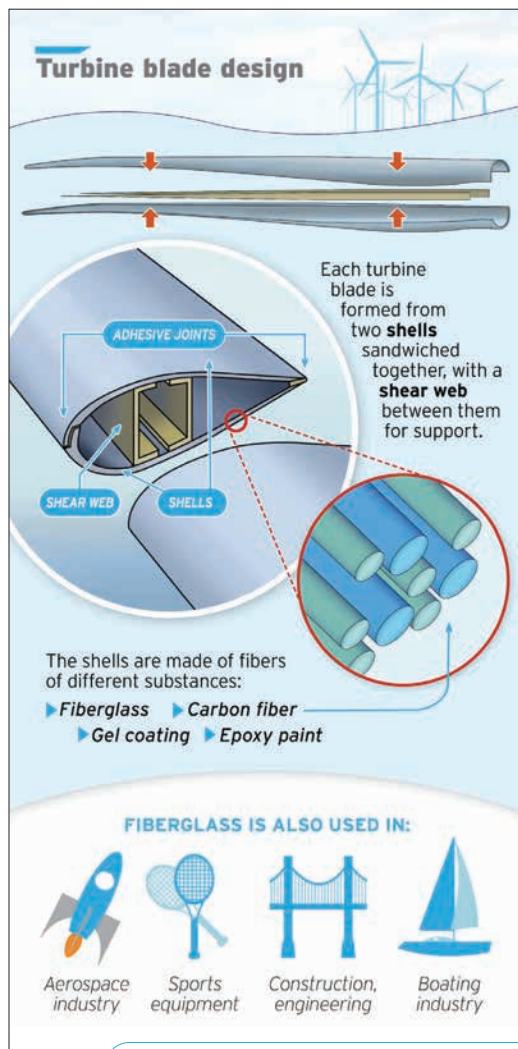
OFFSHORE WIND

SouthCoast Wind's value declines due to Trump's opposition

A parent company of SouthCoast Wind announced a \$260 million reduction in the value of its North American portfolio.

AQ

**We dig deep.
We don't give up.**



“ Thank you for the thorough article. It really helped me to see the challenges inherent in blade manufacturing.”

READER QUOTE

We hold powerful people accountable — especially when they try to avoid us.



When officials declined our questions:

- We filed Freedom of Information Act requests.
- We tracked ships with international geolocation data.
- We analyzed satellite images and drone photos from citizen observers.
- We exchanged messages with residents and journalists in Cherbourg, France, where defective blades were shipped for repairs.
- We collaborated with Canadian reporters to learn about problems at the GE Vernova factory in Quebec, where Vineyard Wind turbine blades are produced.
- We literally went the extra nautical miles — hiring a local vessel to take us out to the Vineyard Wind construction site to see with our own eyes where the project stands.



Reporter Anastasia E. Lennon covers the offshore wind industry and police misconduct.

We listen to voters.

We remain nonpartisan. Our election coverage is not just about the horse race. It's about helping readers understand the stakes.

✓ ELECTION 2024 GUIDE

- ▶ Local race previews
- ▶ Ballot questions
- ▶ Info on voting

*Follow The Light
for continuing updates
before Election Day.*



—THE NEW BEDFORD LIGHT

Fishermen, fleet owners hope Trump helps their industry

Fishermen want Trump to stop offshore wind and overturn the commercial fishing ban in Marine National Monuments.

By **Will Sennott**
October 31, 2024



Raymond Hartley, a New Bedford fisherman supporting Donald Trump for president. Credit: Will Sennott / The New Bedford Light

ELECTION 2024

Women's advocates worry Trump could limit abortion rights here

Trump has equivocated on abortion rights, but Vice President-elect J.D. Vance and conservative supporters have proposed federal action against abortion that could have far-ranging impacts.

By **Anastasia E. Lennon**
November 7, 2024

ELECTION 2024

Harris voters fear Trump is an autocrat in the making; Trump supporters aren't worried

Local Kamala Harris supporters express alarm about Donald Trump's authoritarian potential; Trump supporters cite what they consider more urgent problems.

ELECTION 2024

Would presidential candidates' plans make housing more affordable?

Kamala Harris pitches tax incentives and down-payment assistance.
Donald Trump's housing plan is less detailed — he points to other goals.

By **Grace Ferguson**
October 29, 2024



Arthur Hirsch has reported on government, arts, economic development and more.



We dive into issues.

From MCAS to federal cuts that endanger key programs to language challenges and segregation in the city’s schools, The Light investigates.



“ You do a great job with your reporting. I like that you keep your reporting unbiased.”

READER QUOTE



Segregation in New Bedford

Ten district and charter schools in New Bedford received a label of “segregated” in a report

By **Colin Hogan**
July 24, 2024

✕

School	1st language not English
Winslow Elementary New Bedford	15%
DeMello Elementary Dartmouth	4%
DeValles Elementary New Bedford	53%



EDUCATION

Special Report: Should Massachusetts voters abolish MCAS testing requirement?

A ballot question asks Massachusetts voters to remove the MCAS testing requirement for high school graduation. Here's what you need to know.

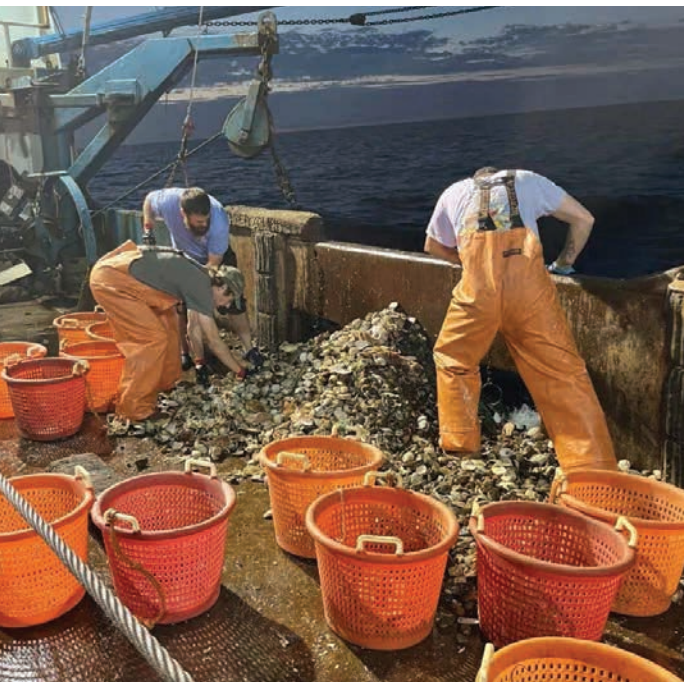
By **Colin Hogan** October 9, 2024



Colin Hogan reports on education and City Hall.

We focus on fishing.

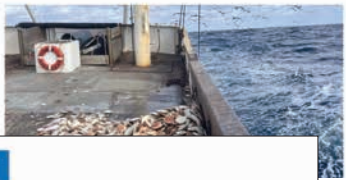
The nation’s most lucrative seafood port faces new challenges. We analyze the impact of changing climate, marine development and global business trends.



Port of New Bedford cites ‘grave concern’ about new offshore wind area

The new area outlined for offshore wind development overlaps with “vital” scallop areas, the Port Authority wrote. That includes iconic fishing grounds like Elephant Trunk, Hudson Canyon and Delmarva.

By Will Sennott
October 24, 2024



Researcher: Codfish regulators should consider effects on fishermen’s lives

FISHING INDUSTRY

The Godfather’s 2nd act: ‘I’m the bank now’

Three years after his release from prison, Carlos Rafael, the infamous former fishing mogul, is financing real estate projects across Greater New Bedford.

By Will Sennott
July 10, 2024



New England scallopers face a tough 2025

FISHING INDUSTRY

Migrant teens sue Raw Seafoods, claiming child labor violations

Will Sennott provided in-depth coverage of the fishing industry.



And the environment.

From contaminants in drinking water to pollution in Buzzards Bay, The Light examines environmental issues with an emphasis on scientific research, real-world repercussions and potential solutions.

NEW BEDFORD LIGHT PRESENTS:

Community Conversation
The cost of a clean bay



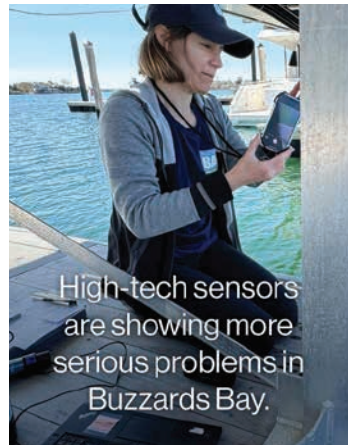
Climate reporter Adam Goldstein and representatives from The Buzzards Bay Coalition and local municipalities will discuss nitrogen pollution from sewage in Buzzards Bay and how the South Coast is addressing the problem.

 Wednesday, Sept. 25 at 6 p.m.  Kilburn Mill Event Center



ENVIRONMENT

Marine mammal strandings break record in Southeastern Massachusetts in 2024



High-tech sensors are showing more serious problems in Buzzards Bay.

ENVIRONMENT

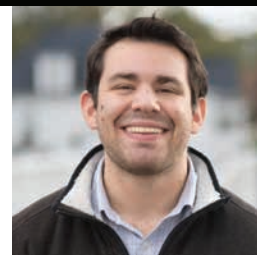
Can eelgrass make a comeback in Buzzards Bay?

State fisheries researchers are snorkeling along the coast, testing whether seed-based eelgrass restoration is feasible in Buzzards Bay. It could help rebuild this productive ecosystem in local waters, after decades of decline.



ENVIRONMENT

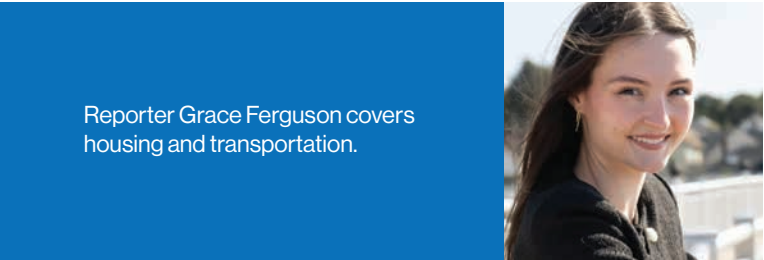
South Coast towns confront PFAS contamination in drinking water



Reporter Adam Goldstein covered climate and the environment.

Housing: We seek solutions to the crisis.

The Light has examined the housing crisis with facts, figures and personal stories.



Our reporting sparks action.

POLICE AND COURTS

New Bedford family wants 'justice for Jacob'

Our story on Jacob Pothier prompted a legislative push to outlaw sexual misconduct by school staff.

EDUCATION

Educator sex abuse bill: 'I hope it makes it to the finish line this session'

A state senator and child advocates on Tuesday urged lawmakers to take action on a bill that would criminalize sexual misconduct by school staff with students 16 or older.

The Light measures success by our journalism's impact on the community—revealing important truths that animate public issues and bring change.

Our story on new schools brought record attendance to a recent School Committee meeting.

EDUCATION

The \$1 billion proposal to update New Bedford's schools

Our in-depth coverage of Parallel Products' plan for a trash transfer station helped residents stay informed.



ENVIRONMENT

Trash wars

North End neighbors fight Parallel Products over transfer facility in business park



We value culture.

We highlight New Bedford's thriving arts scene and provide the region's most comprehensive calendar of cultural events.

ARTS AND CULTURE

Coming soon: The Z's transformation from destination to hub



JAZZ CULTURE THUR
Workshop MAY 8
& Jam Session

8 PM

Bring Your Instrument and/or Voice

Let's Make Some Music!!!

GALLERY X
169 William St - New Bedford, MA
SUPPORTED IN PART BY: Mass Cultural Council, New Bedford Creative, Mass Development TDI, Osborne Trust Fellowship

► Chasing the Muse



Mark Phelan, a painter with the soul of a poet

We celebrate community.

We highlight the South Coast's most intriguing people and capture the city's eclectic style trends.



We amplify voices.



SOUTH COAST RAIL

Here’s who rode New Bedford’s first South Coast Rail train

About 90 people boarded the first train from New Bedford to Boston at 4:27 a.m.

11:47 a.m.

98-year-old Virginia Callas “so lucky”

Reported by *Grace Ferguson* in New Bedford



Virginia Callas was on the train with officials from New Bedford to Taunton. “I’m just so lucky to be sitting in this train,” she said. “If it doesn’t go anywhere, I’m happy.”



11:23

 [SIGN UP](#)

“I just want to see how smooth it is,” he said, adding that they were planning on trips back to New Bedford to check out the restaurants.

“I’m just glad for New Bedford,” Pamela Nicholas said.



Neville Nicholas and his, Pamela, caught the 2:13 p.m. from the downtown station for the short ride to Middleborough. Credit: Arthur Hirsch / The New Bedford Light



11:26

 [SIGN UP](#)



Michael St. Louis of Fall River works as a conductor for a rail freight company in Rhode Island. Credit: Arthur Hirsch / The New Bedford Light



We inform debate.

We host community conversations on pressing topics, and publish readers' wide range of viewpoints on our Community Voices page. Opinion Columnist Jack Spillane provides insight and context.

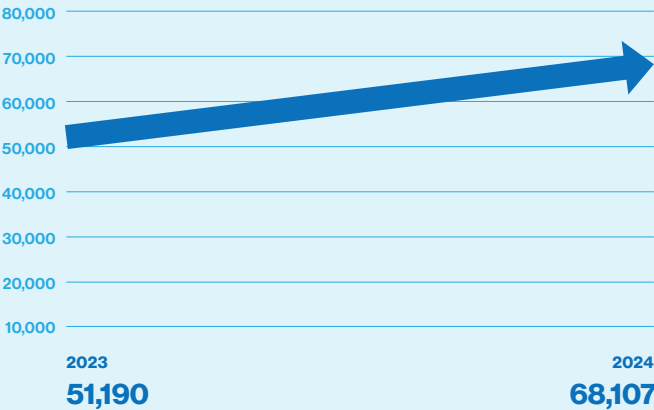


Jack Spillane is a career journalist who has lived and worked in New Bedford for decades. A reporter, editor and now columnist, his work has won numerous awards.

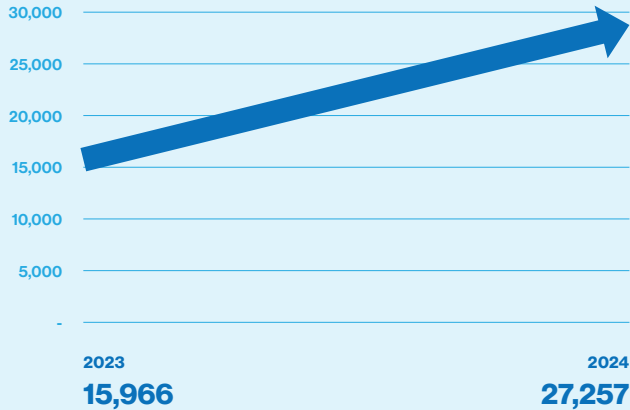
Our Reach

The Light continues to grow its audience reach while staying true to its mission — delivering impactful journalism without chasing clicks.

Average Monthly Website Visitors
33% Growth from 2023

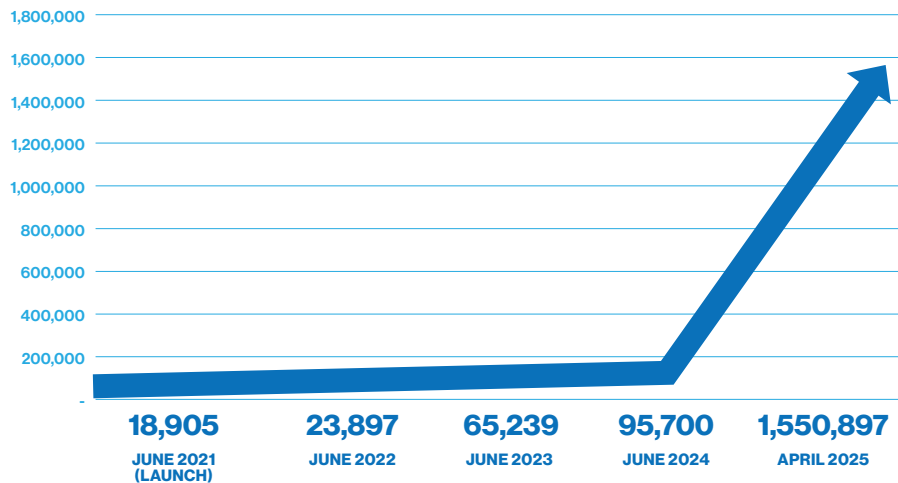


Average Monthly Video Views
60% Growth from 2023



Our immigration reporting, which drew significant national and international attention in 2025, led to a recent spike in social media reach.

Monthly Social Reach



Recognition & Awards

The Light's approach is drawing attention. Media outlets across the region and country are sharing our work.

The New York Times Magazine

For all these stories, the fishing industry was hardly the sole driver of the city's underground trade, and drug use there remains widespread independent of the fleet. **An investigation by The New Bedford Light, a nonprofit news site,** found that one in every 1,250 city residents died of an overdose in 2022, more than twice the rate statewide. (Nationally, about one in 4,070 people died of opioid overdoses in 2022. The report also found that about one out of eight New Bedford residents had enrolled in drug- or alcohol-addiction treatment since 2012.

POLITICO

The Boston Globe



Institute for
Nonprofit News

The Light's reporters have been recognized with top regional and national honors.

- Four of our journalists were awarded first and second place honors by the New England Newspaper and Press Association in March, earning recognition in seven categories.
- Will Sennott's reporting on the bankruptcy of Blue Harvest, the largest groundfish company on the East Coast, was a finalist for the Nonprofit News Awards Best Investigative Journalism.

Our Revenue

The New Bedford Light remains in a sound financial position, again maintaining more than six months of operating expenses in reserve.



Since our founding in 2021, we've raised more than \$5.6 million, with steady year-over-year revenue growth. We raised nearly \$1.7M in 2024, with 70% of that revenue directly supporting our local reporting. And we achieved this success while upholding our independence.

As part of our evolution from a start-up newsroom to a more established organization, we have shifted from reliance on pro-bono workers to hiring staff with competitive salaries — a vital investment in our future. During this transition in 2024, we responsibly used a portion of our seed funding to provide stability and support this strategic development.

In 2024, The Light increased its number of donors, total gifts, and overall revenue. Our robust fiscal health and growing community support reflect the impact of our journalism. And the growing awareness of our mission improves our ability to keep New Bedford and South Coast residents informed — always without a paywall.

We are deeply grateful to each and every reader and donor who has placed trust in The Light. Your ongoing support has built a foundation for durable, sustainable local journalism in our community.

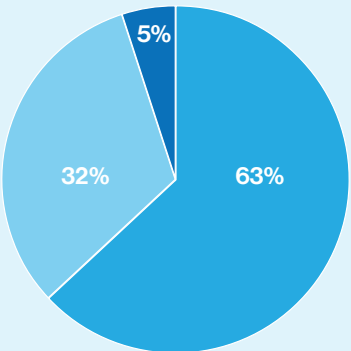
JOEL ALVORD, TREASURER

FISCAL YEAR 2024
January 1, 2024 to December 31, 2024
Unaudited Financial Results

Revenue

Individual Donations	\$1,067,063
Grants	\$545,430
Sponsorships & Events	\$76,451

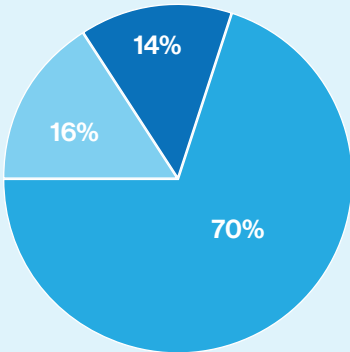
Total Revenue **\$1,688,944**



Operating Expenses

Journalism	\$1,250,431
Fundraising	\$278,321
Administration	\$242,932

Total Expenses **\$1,771,683**



NET ASSETS

Beginning	\$1,639,269
Change in Net Assets	(S120,220)
ENDING NET ASSETS	\$1,519,049

The Light shines brighter because of you.

A free press has never been more vital, yet never more at risk than it is today. Thanks to the generosity of more than 1,000 supporters in 2024, we're able to report on the issues that matter most to the South Coast. Every investigation, every profile, every fact-checked story begins with your belief in the power of local journalism. Together, we are building a stronger, more informed community, one story at a time. We're so grateful.

Founding Benefactors

Jacobs Family fund of the Jewish Community Foundation
Mary & Jim Ottaway

Corporate and foundation grants

Alera Group • Adam R. Scripps Foundation • Anonymous • Baldwin Brothers • Bank FIVE • Barry Investment Advisors • Breckinridge Capital Advisors • Bristol County Savings Bank • Carney Family Foundation • CHT Foundation • Claremont Companies • Cordeiro Family Fund • Cuttyhunk Ferry* • D.F. Pray • Edmund Beck Foundation • Google News Initiative • GroundTruth • Henry H. Crapo Foundation • Ice Cube Cold Storage & Logistics • Inasmuch Foundation • Island Foundation • LandVest • LION Publishers • Lofberg Family Foundation • Morton's Fork Catering Company* • NewsMatch • Nicholas B. Ottaway Foundation • Orphan Family Fund at Coastal Community Foundation • Rathmann Family Foundation • Raw Seafood, Inc. • Saturday Fund • Schrafft Charitable Trust • Skip's Marine • Sooner Foundation • SouthCoast 11th Hour Fund • SouthCoast Wind • Spirit Cat Rescue • Tonix Pharmaceuticals

Individual Gifts

A

Roberta Hazen Aaronson • Jane Abbott • Steven Abdo* • Beverley Abel • Melinda Ailes • James Airozo • Joan Akin • Lisa Aldrich • Sally Aldrich • Edward Allard • Leo & Jocelyn Allen • Sam Allis • Frank Almeida • Robert Almy • Joel Alvord & Lisa Schmid • Sarah Alvord* • Joshua Amaral* • Heather Amsden* • Carolee Matsumoto • David Gilbertson • Ben & Vanessa Anderson • Dana Anderson* • David Anderson • Donnie Anderson • James Anderson • Robert Anderson • Dr. Patricia Andrade • Patty Andrews •

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