



# CHARITIES Committee

Ralph Orleck, Chairman



The RISAA Charities Committee exists to lend a helping hand to others in need, and is a way of giving back to our community.

## THIS MONTH'S CONTRIBUTION

### Rhode Island Center Assisting Those In Need

Report by  
**TOM  
MEADE**



The Rhode Island Center Assisting Those in Need (RICAN) serves more than 400 families from West Warwick, RI to Pawcatuck, CT.

RICAN provides 280,000 meals — about 369,000 pounds of food — per year, according to **Catherine Fox**, president of the charity based in Charlestown. Most of the families that RICAN serves live in Washington County.

The group has between 70 and 90 volunteers during the year, according to **Dana Moriarty** who runs RICAN's office and thrift shop at the corner of Route 91 and Route 112.

Drive by or visit RICAN, and you will see lines of people waiting for food. Recently, more of them have been veterans, seniors and adults with intellectual disabilities, Catherine said.

Shopping at a food pantry requires an eligibility assessment, and it carries a stigma for some folks, she said.

“Some people don't use us because they say they don't want to take food from people who may need it more,” she said. So now, the food bank is experimenting with opening on Fridays for anyone without having to fill out an application. “It removes some of the stigma,” she continued.

The food bank “rescues” much of its food from markets where it would otherwise be wasted. It's an ancient tradition the Bible calls “gleaning:” collecting extra food for neighbors in need.

RICAN piloted the Walmart Food Rescue program which became a model for the state and is now coordinated by the Rhode Island Community Food Bank.

The agency also provides clothing, diapers and personal care items, based on need and availability.

RICAN began as a church-sponsored food pantry, based in an old carriage barn that has since been demolished. In the food pantry's early years, a number of sport fishermen volunteered there, and Breachway Bait & Tackle kept a cooler outside the store for anglers who wanted to contribute their catch. (They

received a free raffle ticket for every donation.)

Some anglers still volunteer there, and the Rhode Island Saltwater Anglers Association is proud of their support.

To find out more about RICAN call their office at 401-364-9412 or visit their office at 805 Alton Carolina Rd, Charlestown. Vist their web site at [rhodeislandcan.org](http://rhodeislandcan.org)



Dana Moriarty (left) and Catherine Fox accept the RISAA donation in the food warehouse of RICAN

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