







PHOTOS BY MELANIE GILBERT — LOWELL SUN

Children in the preschool classroom at Community Teamwork's James Houlares Head Start Center on Phoenix Avenue in Lowell Nov. 10, 2025. The children range in age from 2.9 to 5 years old.

## Programs

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of low-income children and families across Greater Lowell and the Merrimack Valley, providing early education, nutrition and family support services that promote school readiness and long-term success.

The Houlares Center houses the Early Learning Head Start Program and accepts children 6 weeks to 5 years of age from low-income families.

Michelle Haimowitz, executive director of the Massachusetts Head Start Association, said that more than 10,000 children statewide rely on Head Start. Five days a week, children enrolled in the program are guaranteed access to a quality education, nutritious meals, health screenings, disability services, family job training and much more.

"It's time to end the shutdown and restore funding to our essential programs like Head Start to ensure the well-being of our children, families and communities," she said.

While CTI Head Start remains open, four Self Help Inc. Head Start centers in Brockton and Norwood had to close on Nov. 3, leaving



Children in the toddler classroom at Community Teamwork's James Houlares Head Start Center on Phoenix Avenue in Lowell Nov. 10, 2025 with their teacher Tiffany Rodriquez.

more than 550 children without care and over 150 staff members furloughed.

"Their teachers are out of work and their parents and guardians struggle to find affordable and reliable child care so they can go to work and school as well," Haimowitz said. "All of this because of the federal inaction and the government shutdown."

The shutdown is in its 41st day. And despite the U.S. Senate vote on Sunday to reopen the government, the shutdown continues and Head Start officials remain concerned about its long-term impacts on children, families and staff.

"Head Start is not a light switch. We can't just turn our programs on and off," Haimowitz said. "Even if funding is released tomorrow, it will take a while to hire back employees, bring back families, and get our programs up to full strength."

CTI is using non-federal funding to maintain operations as long as possible, including the Head Start State Supplemental Grant and Commonwealth Cares for Children grants. However, those temporary solutions cannot replace federal funding, which makes up at least 80% of all Head Start budgets.



Rita O'Brien-Dee, at left, with teacher Daniella Jaramillo, speaks with some of the children in preschool classroom at Community Teamwork's James Houlares Head Start Center on Phoenix Avenue in Lowell Nov. 10, 2025. The children range in age from 2.9 to 5 years old.



Parents Xiomara Tiburcio, left, and Jesalina Sabater spoke during a press conference at the James Houlares Head Start Center on Phoenix Avenue in Lowell Nov. 10, 2025, to call for the end of the federal shutdown and the release of funding to the Head Start program.

"No amount of patchwork state funding can replace these Head Start funds," Howell said. "We are deeply grateful for the Healey administration, our state legislators, and the Head Start State Supplemental and C3 grants that are helping us stay afloat, but these dollars were never meant to carry programs during a federal shutdown."

Xiomara Tiburcio knows firsthand the impact CTI has on people's lives. The "proud single mom of three kids" was one of two parents who spoke at the press conference, describing her year-long journey to stabilize her

family through the services and programs offered by the agency. She said Head Start "needs to be protected."

"For 60 years, Head Start has been a lifeline for millions of families," Tiburcio said. "(It's) not just a program, but a promise ... That is at risk. Our kids are counting on us."

She urged members of the audience to contact their state representatives to push for an end to the shutdown and restore Head Start funding.

Jesalina Sabater described a tenuous time following the death of her child's father during COVID, in which

Head Start child care for her daughter allowed her to regain her footing and self-sufficiency.

She said the shutdown made her "feel scared all over again."

Taking care of children has been Rita O'Brien-Dee's life work, first as a single mother raising her children, and later as a Head Start teacher and now as a CTI board member.

Last September, CTI cut the ribbon on the new Rita O'Brien-Dee Center for Behavioral Health and Development at the Houlares Early Learning Center. The new center provides all children and families at CTI with developmental and behavioral health services that nurture healthy social-emotional and educational development.

O'Brien-Dee has been a vocal advocate for supporting teachers and young children in CTT's care throughout her more than 55 years of continuous involvement with the organization.

"I had three children who went to Head Start, and they went on to higher education," O'Brien-Dee said. "As board members, we are very protective, appreciative of our children, staff — we care what happens to them. Hopefully, we can bring back the people that are furloughed, and they can keep doing the good work."

# VETERANS DAY



## HONORING ALL WHO SERVED

### Notable monuments to veterans across the United States



Veterans Day honors the millions of men and women who have sacrificed much to serve in the United States military. Veterans Day is commemorated each year on November 11 because it was that day in 1918 when an armistice was reached between combatants in World War I, which estimates suggest claimed the lives of as many as 22 million people. There are many ways for Americans to celebrate

veterans on Veterans Day. Visiting war memorials can instill a greater sense of appreciation for the men and women who have served in the United States military. The following are some notable war memorials honoring veterans across the United States.

#### Tomb of the Unknown Soldier

The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier is an iconic memorial located in Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Virginia. Cemetery officials note New York Congressman and World War I veteran Hamilton Fish, Jr., played an integral role in establishing the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier by proposing legislation that provided for the internment of one unknown American soldier killed during WWI. Guards are now present at the tomb 24/7, and visitors, including U.S. presidents

and foreign dignitaries, typically lay a wreath at the tomb to honor the sacrifices of all U.S. veterans.

#### Korean War Veterans Memorial

The Korean War Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C. honors the roughly 1.5 million American veterans who fought alongside forces from the United Nations in a conflict that lasted from 1950 to 1953. Nineteen sculptures depicting U.S. servicemen on patrol during the conflict are among the many notable components of this moving memorial, which also features a wall and pool of remembrance that display the names of the more than 36,000 Americans killed during the Korean War.

#### Liberty Memorial

The Liberty Memorial in Kansas City, Missouri, was built in 1926 to honor the brave American service

members who lost their lives in World War I. The Liberty Memorial, which is now known as the National World War I Museum and Memorial, is an iconic landmark in Kansas City that features the Liberty Memorial Tower, which rises 217 feet about Memorial Courtyard and 268 feet above the North Lawn. The top of the tower emits a flame at night to create a stunning visual. Memory Hall on the east side of the Liberty Memorial Tower

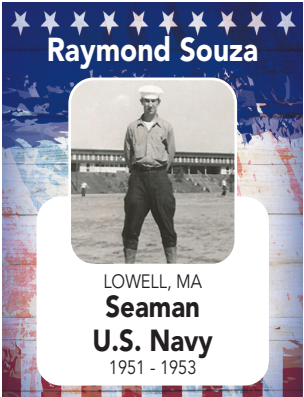
containing a portion of the Panth on de la Guerre, an iconic French painting that depicts the Allied nations of World War I.

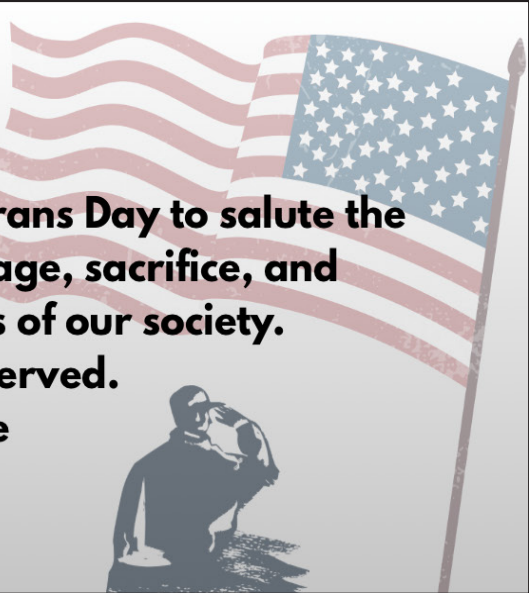

#### USS Arizona Memorial

The USS Arizona Memorial in Honolulu, Hawaii, is dedicated to preserving the memories of the sacrifices of servicemen who fought in the Pacific theater throughout World War II. The memorial marks the resting place of more than 1,100 sailors during the

Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, an event that led to U.S. involvement in World War II. The memorial is accessible exclusively by boat and the sunken remains of the battleship USS Arizona straddle the site.

These are just four of the many notable landmarks that commemorate the sacrifice and service of U.S. military members over the course of the nation's history.





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**The entire team at Quinn's Construction proudly pauses this Veterans Day to salute the brave men and women of the united armed forces. Your courage, sacrifice, and commitment to our nation are the very beams and supports of our society.**

**We extend our deepest gratitude to all who have served.**

**May your day be filled with honor and peace**

