

## Boston secular groups join community response to tragedy

Boston's nontheists have been working to help those affected in Monday's bomb attack. The Secular Coalition for Massachusetts, the Boston Atheists, and the Humanist Community at Harvard are local sponsors of a secular fundraising effort with the group the We Are Atheism, which has raised over \$20,000 to assist victims. \$10,000 of this has been pledged to the One Boston Fund.

Members of the Harvard Humanist community have additionally played a lead role over in raising over \$140,000 for a fund to help two members of their extended Humanist community who suffered severe injuries.

Josiah Van Vliet, President of the Boston Atheists, said "I want to reach out to all those who do not have a church or a pastor, to tell them: You are not alone, and that there are others like you out here. We are also upset, and scared. Although your viewpoint may not be expressed at a prayer vigil, it is one that it shared and sympathized with throughout the country."

Georgina Capetillo, Boston Atheists Director of Diversity, agreed. "In the wake of tragedy, it's important that atheists be included in a positive way. We are all part of one community, and we sympathize with the victims of the attacks no less than any Americans."

Scott Romanowski is an organizer with the Atheists of Greater Lowell, one of the partner organizations of the Secular Coalition for Massachusetts. He said, "In tragedies like this all Americans, secular or not, come together to help each other. We can work to prevent such violence, we must also be ready to respond in a unified way when our community suffers a tragedy like this.

"Our hearts go out to the victims, their families and to all of those affected by this senseless act of violence," said Edwina Rogers, Executive Director of the Secular Coalition for America, of which the Secular Coalition for Massachusetts is a state chapter.

Plans are being made for a secular memorial service—a gathering for those disinclined to attend an event organized under a religious or inter-faith banner—to take place in Boston this weekend. An announcement with the time and location will be posted to Secular Coalition for Massachusetts social media pages.

*About the BA: The **Boston Atheists** is the largest atheist membership organization in New England, and one of the most active secular organizations in the Boston area. We provide opportunities for friendship, education, and community for hundreds of local atheists and, as a local affiliate of American Atheists, advocate for the advancement of reality-based worldviews. @bostonatheists | meetup.com/bostonatheists | [bostonatheists.org](http://bostonatheists.org)*

*About the SCMA: The mission of the **Secular Coalition for Massachusetts**, a state chapter of the Secular Coalition for America, is to increase visibility of and respect for nontheistic viewpoints, and to strengthen the secular character of our government as the best guarantee of freedom for all Americans. facebook.com/pages/Secular-Coalition-for-Massachusetts | @secularmass | [secular.org/states/chapters/Massachusetts](http://secular.org/states/chapters/Massachusetts)*

**See also:** <http://www.weareatheism.com/donate/donation-wall-boston-tragedy>  
<http://www.gofundme.com/CelesteandSydney>  
<http://secular.org/news/secular-coalition-our-hearts-go-out-bombing-victims-boston-marathon>

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