

## American Legion hosts Bread of Life's evening meals

By Barbara Taormina

Two of Malden's cornerstone organizations are teaming up to continue their long-standing traditions of helping neighbors in need.

Starting this week, Bread of Life, a faith-based coalition of churches, synagogues, businesses and community groups, will start serving their evening meals on Wednesday and Thursday nights at the American Legion Post 69 at 368 Pleasant St. On Fridays, the First Baptist Church at 493 Main St. hosts the free evening meal.

"We are delighted to be here where we have friends," said Mark Golub, a member of Bread of Life's board of directors, when the heads of both groups met last week at the

post to sign an agreement to make the arrangement official.

And the members of Post 69 were happy to make room in their kitchen and function hall for a battalion of Bread of Life volunteers who run a variety of programs that provide more than 1 million meals a year to homeless and low-income teens, adults, seniors and families in Malden and surrounding communities.

"We do a lot of work for veterans and wounded warriors," said Post Commander Larry Clark. "We are especially concerned about homeless vets and we're happy to provide the space for Bread of Life."

The meals are served from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. and there's room at the table for anyone in need. No reservations are required, and guests do not



**American Legion Post 69 members Bud Klasner, Bill Lucas, George Sahady and Commander Larry Clark finalize the details of moving the evening meal program to the post with Bread of Life Director Tom Feagley, Special Projects Coordinator Gabriella Snyder Stelmack and board members Mark Golub and David Hart. (Advocate photos by Barbara Taormina)**

have to live in Malden.

"In the past, we've served a lot of seniors," said Gabriella Snyder Stelmack, Bread of Life's special projects coordinator. But retirees had troubles with stairs and accessibility at the former sites of the evening meals.

"There is a lot of senior housing in this area," said Snyder Stelmack. "With the American Legion Post's accessibility and parking, we are hoping to serve a lot of seniors again."

Although Bread of Life runs food pantries in Malden and Everett, and delivers grocer-

ies and meals to homebound seniors and homeless families sheltered in motels, Snyder Stelmack said the evening meals are the best chance for volunteers to get to know the people they're serving.

For Executive Directive Tom Feagley, who helped launch Bread of Life back in 1980, the Post is a great site that will help the organization reach more people.

"We want to let people in the community know we are always here to assist," he said.

Although Bread of Life staff say the partnership with

American Legion has been a godsend, they hope to eventually expand their program and serve meals from their home base on Eastern Avenue.

Post 69 members are also looking ahead to changes to their landmark yellow building that will let them to offer more services and support to veterans.

"We've been lucky to be here, and we've been here for a very long time," said Clark. "We are looking at creating a new hall with living spaces for veterans."