

HILL HISTORY, PAGES 6 AND 7

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# Mission Hill GAZETTE

*Serving Mission Hill and the Longwood Medical and Academic Area*



617-524-7662 • www.MissionHillGazette.com      FEBRUARY 2, 2024 — FEBRUARY 29, 2024

## CHILDREN'S SERVICES OF ROXBURY FOUNDERS RECEIVE DRUM MAJOR AWARD



From left to right: CSR founders Rev. Richard Richardson and Mrs. Jestina Richardson; Global View Communications founder and CEO Greg Almeida; and Mayor Michelle Wu. See story on Page 2.

## Hebron Market coming to the neighborhood

Butcher shop, convenience store will open March 1

BY CARY SHUMAN

Yousef Irziqat has been a shining example of an American success story.

Inspired by his brother, Naser Othman, Irziqat, 41, opened Crispy Dough, a popular pizzeria located at 1514 Tremont Street. He has operated the Mission Hill neighborhood favorite for a dozen

years.

Irziqat, who grew up in Palestine and earned his law degree at a college in Jordan, will be branching out in the food business soon as he prepares to open Hebron Market, a butcher shop and convenience store at 1522 Tremont St. on March 1. Hebron Market will have Halal-certified meat and reasonably priced,

pre-packaged meals.

"It's been an exciting and busy year so far," said Irizqat.

Irizqat's pizzeria has been a gathering spot for students from Northeastern, Wentworth, Roxbury Community College, MCPHS, Simmons and Harvard Medical School and employees of

Continued on page 2

## CAMH contemplates project on Burney Street

BY MICHAEL COUGHLIN JR.

In its first meeting of 2024 on January 17th, the Community Alliance of Mission Hill (CAMH) heard about and discussed the first presentation for a project at 8 Burney Street, which involves demolishing an existing building.

The plans for the project, which were presented by Luis Santana, a consultant, alongside the property owner, Dermot Doyne, are to demolish the existing three-story building at the site and build a new five-story building with nine units.

It should be noted that, as of now, a demolition application has not been filed, according to Santana.

"That is premature; we need to go through the community process and the Zoning Board of

Appeal before we collect all the information required for a demo permit, which is quite extensive," he said.

In terms of the unit mix for the proposed building, there are slated to be three studios, four one-bedrooms, one two-bedroom, and one three-bedroom.

Additionally, there are no parking spaces, and there are plans for two roof decks as part of the proposal.

As part of the presentation, Santana walked through different views of the site and outlined the anticipated zoning relief needed for the project.

Specifically, the refusal letter from the Inspectional Services Department showcased during the presentation indicated the project would need relief from

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## ABCD offers free tax prep for residents who earned up to \$64,000 last year

SPECIAL TO THE GAZETTE

ABCD urges all residents of Boston who earned \$64,000 or less in 2023 to schedule a FREE in-person tax prep appointment right away at one of our neighborhood sites by calling 617-348-6329 or visiting [bostonabcd.org/tax](http://bostonabcd.org/tax).

ABCD is a co-founder of the Boston Tax Help Coalition, a

public-private collaboration with the City of Boston and a number of other non-profit organizations, which seeks to ensure the full participation of all Boston residents in the City's economic vitality and future. Additionally, as a member of the Massachusetts Association for Community Action (MASSCAP) Volunteer

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Email [stephen.quigley@reverejournal.com](mailto:stephen.quigley@reverejournal.com) or [patricia@jamaicaplaingazette.com](mailto:patricia@jamaicaplaingazette.com)  
or call 781-485-0588 for your Mission Hill information

# Children's Services of Roxbury founders receive Drum Major Award

SPECIAL TO THE GAZETTE

Children's Services of Roxbury (CSR) founders Rev. Richard Richardson and Mrs. Jestina Richardson received the Drum Major Award at the 54th Annual Martin Luther King Memorial Breakfast on Monday for their extraordinary contributions to justice, diversity, and inclusion efforts in Boston. The Richardsons established CSR 50 years ago with the goal of providing resources that increase the social and economic health of families and children of color, and the organization has grown to be one of the largest Black-run nonprofits in Massachusetts.

"When we started Children's Services of Roxbury, we sought to fill in the gap that was missing to meet the critical needs of families and children of color who often find themselves trapped in systems they cannot access effectively to meet their needs," said Rev. Richard Richardson

and Mrs. Jestina Richardson. "We've always been about the people we serve, so this award, which we are grateful to receive, is a validation of the work we started is a part of the legacy and vision of Dr. King to live in service to others."

CSR provides children and families with culturally competent wraparound services across five key areas: behavioral health; early education and childcare; intensive foster care and family support; housing and stabilization; and youth development. Since its founding, CSR has expanded to annually serve more than 6,000 of the most vulnerable residents of the Commonwealth across Greater Roxbury, Greater Lowell, Greater Springfield, and Worcester.

"Reverend and Mrs. Richardson have dedicated more than half of their lives to serving others, they truly embody what it means to be a drum major," said

Sandra McCroom, president and CEO of CSR. "As CSR continues to uphold the legacy created by both Dr. King and the Richardsons, we are proud to be a catalyst of the services that empower children and families in changing the trajectory of their lives."

The longest-running celebration of its kind in the United States, the Boston MLK Breakfast is co-hosted annually by St. Cyprian's Episcopal Church and Union United Methodist Church. Each year, the MLK Breakfast Committee bestows the Drum Major Award to individuals and community organizations that exemplify the qualities of instinct of service and care for community described by Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in his 1968 "drum major" sermon.

"For over 50 years, the Richardsons have been pillars of the Boston community, promoting Dr. King's messages of social justice," said James Dilday, a

lifelong Boston resident, principal attorney of Dilday Law, and co-chair of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Breakfast Committee. "The Committee is honored to celebrate the work both the Richardsons and CSR have done to allow our state's most vulnerable children, particularly those in foster care, to break systemic barriers."

The Richardsons were honored alongside Dorchester native Greg Almeida, founder of Global View Communications, a leading diversity and inclusion business strategy firm.

Held at the Boston Convention Center, nearly 1,000 dignitaries, business, community, religious, and civil rights leaders attended the breakfast, including Governor Maura Healey, Mayor Michelle Wu, Senator Ed Markey, and Representative Ayanna Pressley. The Drum Major Award comes on the heels of three major grants to CSR from the Eastern Bank Foun-

dation, the Lynch Foundation, and Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, supporting efforts to expand services, including early childhood programs and behavioral health services.

Children's Services of Roxbury (CSR) is celebrating 50 years of providing wraparound programs for children and families that include family shelter, culturally attuned behavioral health services, foster care and family support services, early education and childcare, and youth development programs. CSR is one of Massachusetts' largest Black-run nonprofit organizations, led by a Board and staff that represent the diverse communities it serves. CSR's programs and services demonstrate practices that break the cycle of systemic racism for future generations and empower families and young adults on their journey from poverty to stability and wealth-building.

# Tania Del Rio named Commissioner at Inspectional Services Department

SPECIAL TO THE GAZETTE

Mayor Michelle Wu appointed Tania Del Rio as Commissioner of the Inspectional Services Department (ISD) starting February 26, 2024. ISD administers and enforces building, housing,

health, sanitation and safety regulations mandated by city and state governments. Inspectional Services is made up of five regulatory divisions charged with serving the public by protecting the health, safety, and environmental stability of Boston's busi-

ness and residential communities. Del Rio currently serves as the Director of the Coordinated Response Team for the City of Boston, leading the cross-departmental effort to address the intersecting crises of homelessness and substance use disorder. Del Rio will be the first woman to be ISD's Commissioner.

"I am so grateful to Tania for her effective and compassionate leadership coordinating our efforts to address the urgent needs of the crises of homelessness and substance use disorder," said Mayor Michelle Wu. "With her ability to strategically lead multiple teams and deliver continuous improvement for our residents and City workers, I am excited to see her lead the agencies that deliver essential services impacting so many residents, businesses, and workers. I am grateful for Sean Lydon's service leading the department to ensure our residential buildings and businesses are healthy and safe places for our communities."

As the head of the Coordinated Response Team, she brought together over a dozen City departments and partner agencies to transform how the City cares for unsheltered constituents impacted by substance use disorder, homelessness, and untreated mental illness, with



ISD Commissioner Tania Del Rio.

a focus on the 'Mass and Cass' / Newmarket neighborhood. In 2023, she coordinated the work

that helped over 100 unsheltered people transition from a large encampment into safe and supportive settings.

Mayor Wu also announced that Brian Foran and Michaela Nee of the Coordinated Response Team will be named Acting Co-Directors. Both have extensive experience managing the City's work on unsheltered homelessness and working with City Departments and external partners. Foran and Nee helped lead the recent phase change that ended the permanent encampment on Atkinson Street

Continued on page 10


## The Mission Hill / Fenway Neighborhood Trust

requests proposals from organizations seeking funding for projects and programs intended to serve residents of the Mission Hill and Fenway neighborhoods.

Visit [www.missionhillfenwaynt.org](http://www.missionhillfenwaynt.org) to access the on-line application.

Proposals must be submitted no later than 5PM on March 31, 2024.

Please email any questions to [hello@missionhillfenwaynt.org](mailto:hello@missionhillfenwaynt.org).

 Mission Hill Fenway Neighborhood Trust

## Hebron Market

Continued from page 1

the area hospitals. Crispy Dough is often called upon to cater parties in the neighborhood.

Irziqat expects that his many current customers will enjoy his new addition to the food scene. Hebron Market will offer Halal-certified meat and reasonably priced, pre-packaged meals.

Irziqat said customers will be

given a 30 per cent discount on all food items during the month of March.

Hebron Market will be open seven days a week, from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Meanwhile, there is happy news to celebrate in the Irziqat home. The family enjoyed a milestone Wednesday when Yousef's wife delivered a new baby, the couple's third child.

Visit [MissionHillGazette.com](http://MissionHillGazette.com)

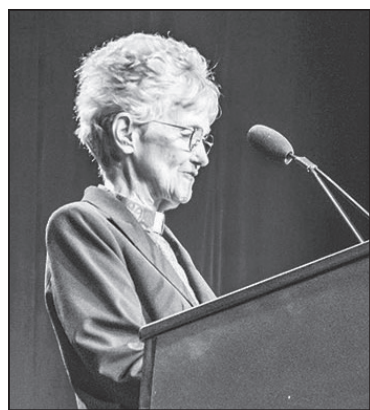


# CITY OFFICIALS HOLD ANNUAL REV. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. BREAKFAST

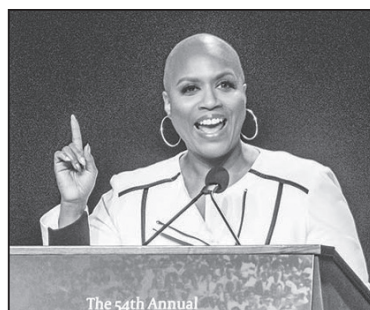
Derek Kouyoumjian photos



Mariah Diaz Perez receives an MLK Middle School Art Award.



The Benediction was given by Bishop Peggy A Johnson of the United Methodist Church.

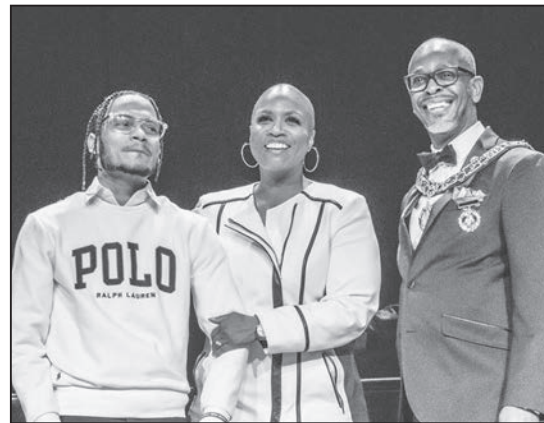


US Representative Ayanna Pressley speaks of Martin Luther King Jr: "the love letter he sent to future generations is embodied in the young people we salute today."



US Senator Ed Markey with Jessica Tantin, Vikki Spruill, and Ferris Batie of the NE Aquarium.

The 54th annual Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. Breakfast was held on January 15, at the Boston Convention Center. The event celebrated MLK's mission of peace, justice, and righteousness.



Roxbury Community College student Juan D Lopez is presented with a \$1,500 Allied Health Scholarship by US Representative Ayanna Pressley and the Hon Justin A Petty of St Cyprian's Episcopal Church.



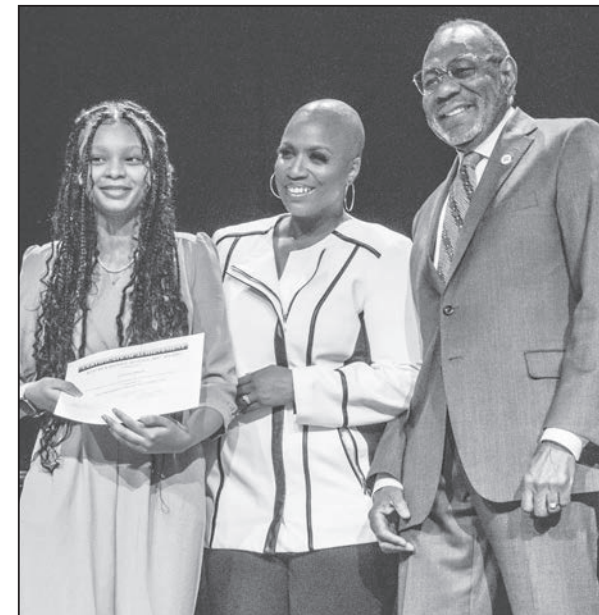
MLK Breakfast Keynote Speaker Dr Khalil Gibran Muhammad, professor at the Harvard Kennedy School, addresses the assembly.



Boston Mayor Michelle Wu speaks "When it comes to democracy, the world looks to Boston."



Roxbury Community College student Hawa Jalloh is presented with a \$1,500 Allied Health Scholarship by US Representative Ayanna Pressley and the Hon Justin A Petty of St Cyprian's Episcopal Church.



Cyrielle Marsh receives an MLK Middle School Art Award.



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## JP OBSERVER

## How not to waste a vote for president

BY SANDRA STOREY / SPECIAL TO THE GAZETTE

Voters Beware Tip #3 to prepare for the Nov. 5 election, in song: “Mammas, don’t let your babies grow up to be vote-wasters.” (Thanks to Waylon Jennings and Willie Nelson for the “cowboys” lyrics inspiration.)

Everybody knows it’s important to register and then vote in the presidential election. Period.

Unfortunately, some people waste their final votes for president on a candidate or blank ballot that won’t achieve anything. Worst of all, the nihilistic behavior could very well lead to the voter’s least favorite candidate winning, as third-party voting may well have done in 2016.

During a very close presidential election where the candidates of the two major parties on the final ballot are different in important ways, a vote-waster is someone who: 1) votes for a third-party candidate who doesn’t have a chance of winning; 2) writes in a name not on the ballot; 3) purposely leaves all the circles blank next to the presidential choices on their ballot,

essentially choosing to officially not choose anyone for president; or 4) purposely doesn’t vote in the entire election in the first place.

The Democratic and Republican Parties will hold primary elections here soon, on March 5. People who are not enrolled in either party (called “unenrolled” voters officially), can ask for a ballot for either party primary in our state. This Voters Beware Tip about vote-wasting pertains to the final election.

No one doubts, at this point, that it looks like the November presidential election results will be close nationally, as they often are.

Lots of pundits and politicians have theorized for years about why and how controversial Donald Trump, predicted to lose by pollsters and pundits, won the presidency in 2016. The mathematical answer lies in numbers of votes cast—not simply for Republican Trump or Democrat Hillary Clinton—but for Green Party nominee Jill Stein in just three states.

Stein won more votes than Trump’s margin of victory in swing (or “battleground” or “competitive” or “purple”) states of Michigan, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin in 2016. If those vote-wasters had voted for Clinton instead of Stein, she would have captured those states’ electors, the electoral college and, therefore the presidency, as reported in USA Today. Trump would not have become president. Though Clinton famously won the national popular vote by millions, she only needed those three states’ votes that went to Stein to win it all.

Republicans hoping vote-wasters take control of the final presidential election results again this year are already setting the table during the primary season to encourage Democrats to waste their votes. Candidates and campaigns love to claim Biden shares Trump’s poor leadership qualities.

Nikki Haley, running against front-runner Trump for the Republican nomination, begins

many of her many TV ads by saying negative things about both Trump and Biden: They are “too old.” This past Sunday in a speech in New Hampshire, she said making either of them president might be tantamount to “abuse of old guys,” preferring her statement by saying she didn’t want to be “disrespectful.”

Haley further tries to muddy their differences by attaching Trump’s defects to Biden, too, “Both are consumed by chaos, negativity and grievances of the past,” her ads and supporters repeat like a mantra only in slightly different words many times over.

According to USA Today, then “GOP presidential contender Chris Christie called [Biden versus Trump] a ‘crappy choice’ during a recent campaign stop, telling a crowd of New Hampshire voters they ‘don’t have an obligation to vote for either of them’ if that’s the choice in November.”

We all need to be aware of this kind of rhetoric purposefully designed to blur differences between the two major candidates—call it out and refuse to fall for it.

Anyone who doesn’t want Republican Donald Trump to be elected again this coming November needs to support and then vote for Democrat Joe Biden. It’s pretty simple. In Jamaica Plain, Boston and Massachusetts, which all tend to vote Democratic, votes not cast for Biden or Trump will probably end up supporting Trump. But it might not matter because the Democratic candidate usually wins here despite set-backs.

Meanwhile, many of us have friends and family in other states. And if one of them says they are thinking of wasting their vote by casting it for neither top candidate, reasonable people should try to diplomatically but firmly talk them out of it, especially if that friend or relative lives and votes in a swing state where results are so crucial to the electoral college vote.

Swing states in 2020, identified by Ballotpedia, where the votes will probably also be close in 2024 are: Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsyl-

vania, Texas, and Wisconsin. Massachusetts is not a swing state, because we vote predictably Democratic.

Vote-wasters are often responding to the tired, confusing cliché spoken in many of our elections, that voting for one of the two main candidates requires choosing between “the lesser of two evils.”

Or they poo-poo “party politics.”

Say they are “sending a message.”

The vote-wasters sometimes say they are expressing their morals and beliefs in the voting booth.

Those reasons show a sense of righteousness that, unfortunately, amounts to absurdity when it comes to the entirely negative outcome that kind of vote seriously risks. Often, it’s true, voting can require choosing between on overall bad candidate and a specifically flawed one.

Even people who seriously disagree with one or two important stands of the flawed candidate should vote for that person anyway. It’s highly unlikely a voter can find anyone who agrees with them on everything. It’s better not to vote in ways that end up promoting the worst person, while lobbying the less-than-perfect candidate to change.

Earlier this month columnist and former Secretary of Labor Robert Reich called the idea of voting third party to avoid voting for the “lesser of two evils” “rubbish,” pointing out what he correctly predicted in 2016: Not voting for the Democratic candidate would support Trump getting elected.

Voting is not a religious act. No candidate is the perfect choice, just like no voter would be. It’s actually a better idea to vote for the less than perfect candidate than to help launch the bad one into office indirectly.

Using our full voting strength to block the person who seems to be the worst candidate for president is a great idea. That’s an important goal of all voting. That’s what everyone alive today and in future generations is counting on us as voters to do this year. We are not choosing a religious leader or guru; we’re

## ZONING HEARING

The Zoning Commission of the City of Boston hereby gives notice, in accordance with Chapter 665 of the Acts of 1956, as amended, that a virtual public hearing will be held on February 14, 2024, at 9:00 A.M., in connection with a petition for approval of the First Amendment to Development Plan for Planned Development Area No. 100, Parcel 25/Parcel 25B (“First Amendment”), filed by the Boston Redevelopment Authority d/b/a the Boston Planning & Development Agency.

The First Amendment will redevelop the under-utilized Parcel 25H site with construction of a new six

(6) story, approximately 120,000 GSF building with up to ninety-four (94) affordable rental units and 33 above ground parking spaces, including eight (8) for the sole use of the Proposed Project residents and the remaining 25 spaces as ancillary parking for the adjacent Phase 1A Project, including residential, office and retail spaces.

This meeting will only be held virtually and not in person. You can participate in this meeting by going to [https://bit.ly/BZC\\_Feb142024](https://bit.ly/BZC_Feb142024). Copies of the petitions and a map of the area involved may be obtained from the Zoning

Commission electronically, and you may also submit written comments or questions to [zoningcommission@boston.gov](mailto:zoningcommission@boston.gov).

Interpreting services are available to communicate information at this hearing. If you require interpreting services, please contact the following: [zoningcommission@boston.gov](mailto:zoningcommission@boston.gov) or 617-918-4308. The meeting is scheduled for February 14, 2024. Please request interpreting services no later than February 9, 2024.

For the Commission  
Jeffrey M. Hampton  
Executive Secretary

Boston Planning & Development  
Agency (BPDA)  
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# Hill Happenings

By MAURICE 'MOSSY' MARTIN

St. Alphonsus Hall, designed by Franz Joseph Untersee, was built on Smith Street in 1898.

Mission Hill residents are aware that the majestic auditorium was razed a few months ago. The demise of St. Alphonsus Hall was the culmination of a series of missteps starting when the Redemptorists sold the building to Western Associates in 2003. With the deterioration and lack of maintenance on the building, it was inevitable that St. Alphonsus Hall was destined for the dustbin of history and imminent wrecking ball, despite it being a landmark designation. St. Alphonsus Hall was the site of Reverend Kenzel's famous play, 'Pilate's Daughter.' That

religious play, first performed in 1901, attracted huge crowds to the Hall until the mid '60s.

I have wonderful memories of St. Alphonsus Hall going back to the 1950s at Mission Grammar School when the nuns would escort us there to watch movies every month. While at Mission High. I had bit parts in a few plays at the Hall including 'The Sound of Music,' and I had so much fun in my role in a barroom brawl in 'Oklahoma,' or was it 'Lil Abner'?

In the 1970s and '80s, theater fans packed St. Alphonsus Hall, to watch Rick McDermott, Frank Garvin, and several other talented actors perform in the Mission Hill Theater Group.

Weston Associates plans to build residential towers on the

site. The company also purchased the old grammar school building and the convent.

The Mission Hill Post 327 will hold their next meeting March 14, time and location to be announced.

We are always seeking good men and women to join the M.H. Post, and interested parties may contact our Commander, Col. George Rollins, at 703-209-2124.

Mission Church Pastor Father Philip Dabney was assaulted but not injured on Jan. 8 by a young woman, who darted to the altar, while our beloved priest was saying Mass. Father Dabney asked me to mention this in praise of the several Boston Police officers who responded immediately. The officers gently escorted the boisterous woman out of church, and

Father Dabney said a prayer for the troubled lady.

Condolences to the family of Jane (Kane) Giblin who passed away Jan.19.

Jane, who lived in Norwood, is a 1974 Mission High graduate. The Kanes are a wonderful Mission Hill family and I fondly recall engaging in many games of whist with Jane's dad, Willie Kane, 50 years ago at the Mission Hill Post.

Jane was a wonderful woman and the proud mother of four who was an active member in St. Timothy's parish in Norwood. Jane will be deeply missed.

Donations in Jane's name may be made to the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society.

In last month's column I made an error of omission by not men-

tioning that the New England Baptist Hospital sponsored the seniors party at the Tobin Center in December. N.E.B.H. is a terrific Mission Hill neighbor. The Tobin Community Center also chipped in to feed the M.H. senior citizens for that event, including me, with the excellent food.

For a quick lunch, I recommend the smallish Solid Ground Cafe at Brigham Circle. I visited the café last week and had a delicious chicken-salad sandwich tinged with cranberries, lettuce and celery for \$12. While waiting in line for my food, a friendly young lady asked, to my surprise, if I was a vegetarian,

"No," I responded. "That would be a missed steak."

Maurice can be reached at [mossymartin2@gmail.com](mailto:mossymartin2@gmail.com)

## CAMH

Continued from page 1

the Zoning Board of Appeal for use, off-street parking, lot area, open space, rear yard, side yard and height.

Moreover, Santana continued the presentation by going through the floor plans, the elevations for the proposed building, and a height study that looked at the topography of different areas, such as Delle Avenue and Trem-

ont Street, compared to Burney Street.

Following Santana's presentation, there were a number of questions and comments from those in attendance.

For example, Doyne was asked whether he would rent to undergraduate students, to which he said, "Absolutely not," and whether the building would be all-electric, to which he, in part, said, "It'd be great if it was," later adding, "We haven't really got to the mechanics."

The abutters' meeting for the project was also discussed. "It was very positive. I actually felt that it was positive, and it was great," said Doyne. He also discussed how he has spoken with abutters about the project and received support.

An attendee also spoke about their experience at the abutters' meeting, saying, "The meeting

was pretty straight ahead with a good presentation and a few questions and answers, and in general, the non-abutters who attended liked the meeting — liked the development."

"As Dermot [Doyne] said, it was a very friendly meeting," they added.

Other topics, such as the use of the basement, the roof space,

and more, were brought up before the project discussion came to a close.

Following the discussion, Martin Beinborn, CAMH's President, reiterated the process for projects. Since this was the first presentation, the proposal will need to be presented again at a future CAMH meeting, where it will then go to a vote.

## Feeling the Blues?

If you or someone you know is...

- ☑ 60 years or older
- ☑ Experiencing a lot of stress, can't get going, worrying a lot, or sleeping poorly

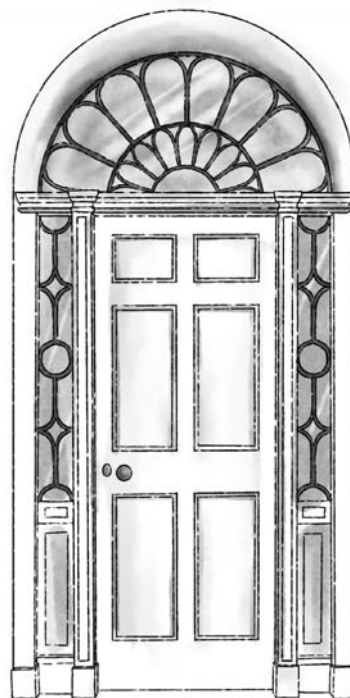
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# A look back through time on the Hill

COMPILED FROM THE MISSION  
HILL GAZETTE ARCHIVES

## 2013

### "NU outlines 18 possible projects"

Northeastern University (NU) had released an Institutional Master Plan which was designated as a "wish list" for hoped-for projects. The plans included a major renovation of a city playground and at least one dormitory project.

The university's main priorities were to replace the 2.7-acre parking lot at 795 Columbus Ave. with three buildings varying from seven to 18 stories each, creating up to 600,000 square feet of academic and research space. This is currently a parking garage.

NU also wanted to redevelop Carter Playground at Columbus Avenue and Cedar Street. NU said it would donate funds to increase the area of the playground about 25 percent, enough to add a second multi-purpose field. The redevelopment would also reorient the fields and existing tennis courts. In 2015, it was announced that NU had committed to investing \$26 million to transforming the playground

in a public-private partnership with the City of Boston.

To see the 2013 proposed NU IMP, visit [bit.ly/NUimp2013](http://bit.ly/NUimp2013).

## 2012:

### Hundreds protest T cuts

It's the same old MBTA: residents of Mission Hill are bothered by the fare increases and service cuts of the MBTA, today and yesterday.

In 2012, more than 125 speakers blasted the MBTA's proposed fare hike and service cuts at Mission Hill-area meetings, and at least 500 people attended.

The MBTA had proposed ending the E Line subway/streetcar on the weekends, among other slashings. Some residents were willing to pay higher fares, but no one wanted these service cuts.

Residents at meetings were upset at the root of the problem: the MBTA's \$5 billion debt and funding issues.

"None of these people in this room had anything to do with these problems and the solution cannot be on their backs," said Mission Hill resident Richard Giordano, summing up the situation.

City and State officials who

are still at play now issued their opinions on the potential cuts at the time.

State Rep. Jeffrey Sanchez said that public transit should be growing, not contracting, arguing that the cuts would harm businesses, cultural institutions, low-income residents, and public health.

State senator Sonia Chang-Diaz said the responsibility lay with the legislature to fix the T's funding problems. City Councilor Tito Jackson said that paying more and getting less "doesn't make sense to me and doesn't make sense to the people I represent."

The MBTA was struggling to close a \$161 million budget gap for 2012 alone, and was required to do so by July 1 under state law.

## 2008

### "Muddy River may see the light"

In 2008, MH residents still complained about the infamous "jughandle" lane from Brookline Avenue to Park Drive, and looked forward to the soon forthcoming Muddy River Restoration Project.

An agreement was made between the Project's oversight

committee in late 2007 that the state Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) would maintain the revamped river and its parkland, which came with a \$24 million maintenance fund.

At the time, the project was held up by some major approvals, including the fact that the project hadn't secured full federal funding yet.

The Muddy was a heavily altered river that flowed from Jamaica Plain's Jamaica Pond along the Brookline border, then through the Fenway and Back Bay, where it entered the Charles River. The river flooded regularly, which caused massive damage in 1996 and 1998 in the Longwood Medical and Academic Area (LMA) and the Fenway.

The project involved clearing and dredging the river and giving it more room to flow. The City of Boston had previously done its own repairs to the Charlesgate area, where the Muddy enters the Charles.

The project had been in the works for years with heavy involvement from the Emerald Necklace Conservancy (ENC). The 2008 meeting, held in the Landmark Center atrium, included an awards ceremony and the touting of Lance Armstrong-style green

plastic bracelets indicating the wearer's support of the project.

## 2003

### "Sanchez makes politically sensitive decisions"

In his first month in office, newly elected state Rep. Jeffrey Sanchez made three decisions related to the state's budget crisis at the time. They included voting to retain controversial House Speaker Thomas Finneran; voting to give Gov. Mitt Romney unprecedented authority to cut the state budget; and a decision to decline a pay raise.

The speaker is chosen annually by a vote by House members. Finneran had been accused of being autocratic and vengeful in his House leadership.

"Like I said [during the campaign], I want to go up there and work with leadership," Sanchez said in 2003. "We'll need somebody up there who understands the fiscal crisis we're in right now. It's going to be an extremely challenging time."

Sanchez also joined the House vote that, along with state Senate support, gave Romney expanded powers to cut the state budget for a limited time. Under standard law, Romney could only make unilateral cuts to the health and human services parts of the budget.

"It's so the services that help the elderly, the poor, the most vulnerable populations don't get disproportionately affected," Sanchez said. "Now everybody's going to be affected. That's the challenge. The challenge we're facing now is the biggest we have faced since the Depression."

The budget crisis presented Sanchez with another sticky decision: whether to accept a 6.5 percent pay raise, from \$50,123 to \$53,381 a year.

Under a 1998 amendment to the state constitution, the legislature got an automatic pay adjustment every two years, with the raise or cut determined by the governor and based on the state's median household income.

Romney pressured state representatives and senators not to accept the pay raise.

## SUPPORTING MISSION HILL HISTORY

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## History

Continued from page 6

"I'm looking at [the budget] and it looks pretty nasty," Sanchez said. "You know, other people need [the money]. The more of us who don't take it, the better."

State Representative Jeffrey Sanchez still represents Mission Hill today.

**2002:**

### War on KFC

Fifteen years ago the Mission Hill community declared war on Colonel Sanders.

About 75 residents attended a meeting to oppose a plan to build a KFC/Pizza Hut drive-thru restaurant on Tremont Street across from historic Mission Church.

"I think a suburban fast-food joint in this location is completely inappropriate," said Joe Bachour, a local resident.

Residents came armed with a laundry list of complaints about the proposal, ranging from increased traffic, trash and noise, to the impact of light pollution and air pollution on quality of life in the neighborhood.

"I don't believe the children of the neighborhood should have to hear bedtime stories of extra crispy chicken wings from a drive-thru speaker," read a letter circulated at the meeting.

Tricon, the parent company of KFC and Pizza Hut, was seeking to build a 46-seat, 2,800-square-foot restaurant with a drive-thru and parking for 37.

Just a few blocks up from Brigham Circle, which was undergoing a major redevelopment, community members felt that a fast-food restaurant was the wrong direction to take that stretch of Tremont Street, which was a mixture of residential and small commercial spaces.

The Boston Redevelopment Authority had recommended that the ZBA deny the drive-thru variance because the proposal would "undermine the goal of the community to create pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use environment along Tremont Street."

A representative of the group proposing the restaurant asked the community if they would feel differently if they removed the drive-thru aspect. The answer was a unanimous "no."

**1998**

**"Wentworth garage plan raises eyebrows"**

Over the years, some community issues remain the same. Concerns about traffic and parking, as they are now, were raised at a public meeting in 1998.

Wentworth Institute had proposed to build a 1,200-space parking garage at Prentiss and Halleck streets in order to consolidate the school's parking. Several people raised concerns that the facility would encourage students to keep cars and increase traffic in an already overburdened area, and that the green line was already convenient and sufficient in that area.

Fredericka Buckley said "it seems totally unnecessary."

Wentworth maintained the view that the garage would be necessary to accommodate for the students that commute to school and those that hold jobs that require cars.

At the time, 185 on-street parking spaces were slated to vanish due to the redesign of Huntington Avenue and the designation of some nearby streets to become resident-only. This was right around the time that Huntington Avenue was newly-named Avenue of the Arts.

The site exists today as a parking lot, not garage.

**1997**

### Opening of School

Around this time in 1997, The Mission Hill School was recruiting students for its first class at the pilot school.

Mission Hill School replaced the old Mission High School to recruit children ages 5-10. Today, the school serves approximately 250 children ages 3-14 (grades K-8). In 2012, the school community relocated to Jamaica Plain.

Based on our archives, educator and author Deborah Meier was slated to direct the school after having founded the successful Central Park East public school in East Harlem, New York.

At the time, school officials said the school would incorporate music, visual arts, and physical education into regular classroom work. Teachers would monitor students' progress through portfolios of work and recorded observations.

Children of different ages would learn in the same classroom: one class would serve 5 and 6 year olds, another class 7 and 8 year olds, and one for 9 and 10 year olds.

## Parks Dept. hosts February school vacation week activities

Children, parents, and caregivers are invited to join the Boston Parks and Recreation Department for February school vacation week. Online registration and more information on all these free family activities can be found at [boston.gov/parks](http://boston.gov/parks).

### Softball Hitting and Fielding Clinics

Tuesday, February 20 and Wednesday, February 21  
2:30 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

The Bubble at Carter Field, 709 Columbus Avenue

The program features UMass Boston softball players and coaches and is open to teams and individual players of all skill levels.

Pre-registration required  
Ages 10 and up  
[Boston.gov/sports](http://Boston.gov/sports)

### Children's Winter Festival

Wednesday, February 21  
11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.  
Boston Common (corner of Beacon and Charles Streets)

This beloved annual festival offers winter activities, inflatable attractions, and fun giveaways.

All ages  
[Boston.gov/winterfest](http://Boston.gov/winterfest)

### Baseball Hitting and Fielding Clinics

Thursday, February 22 and Friday, February 23  
4:30 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

The Bubble at Carter Field, 709 Columbus Avenue

The program features UMass Boston baseball players and coaches and is open to teams and individual players of all skill levels.

Pre-registration required  
Ages 10-14

[Boston.gov/sports](http://Boston.gov/sports)

### Open Gym

Thursday, February 22 and Friday, February 23  
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

The Bubble at Carter Field, 709 Columbus Avenue

Open Gym is available to students, families, and community members to play pick-up sports such as kickball, wiffleball, soccer, football, run laps, and more.

Ages 7 and up

[Boston.gov/sports](http://Boston.gov/sports)

Call (617) 635-4505 or email [parks@boston.gov](mailto:parks@boston.gov) for more information. To stay up to date with news, events, and improvements in Boston parks, visit [Boston.gov/Parks](http://Boston.gov/Parks), join our email list at [bit.ly/Get-Parks-Emails](http://bit.ly/Get-Parks-Emails), and follow our social channels @bostonparksdept on X, Facebook, and Instagram.

## Observer

Continued from page 4

voting for a government leader.

People who want to reform party politics should get active in the party at the grassroots or state level. That how the Democratic Party drastically changed to include many more women and people of color in its presidential nominee selection system and national convention in the 1960s.

Robert F. Kennedy Jr, Cornel West, and Jill Stein have already announced they are also running for president this year. The third party candidates are now trying to qualify to appear on the November ballots in various states, but it is considered very unlikely they can come close to winning the entire election. Sen. Joe Manchin has said he may run. The Libertarian Party plans to choose candidates in May, and others have expressed interest.

Third party votes in the final for Kennedy or the Libertarian may likely be made by Republican-leaning voters; hence the Trump campaign has been known to express concern that voters might choose one of them instead of him.

In 2016, an amazing 7.8 million voters nationally cast their presidential votes for someone other than Trump or Clinton in what was forecasted and turned out to be a very close contest.

Even in Boston, 6.6 percent of votes for president went to candidates from "various parties,"

excluding the top two.

In our state, 1.52 percent of voters wrote someone in for president.

In his home state of Vermont, more than 18,000 people wrote in Bernie Sanders, giving him 3-5 percent of the total vote. Some states record names written in, and some don't. Nationwide, it was possible to vote for Sanders as a write-in candidate in 12 states, and exact totals of write-in votes for Sanders were published in three of those states: California, New Hampshire, and Vermont. Sanders received 111,850 write-in votes there.

Counting ballots where the presidential vote was left blank nationally is even more difficult than counting write-ins to determine results. According to the Washington Post, the 33 states that actually count those blanks reported that a total of 1.6 million people chose to not make any choice for chief executive on the ballot they turned in. We will never know about the other 17 states.

Back in 2016 people who said they were going to waste their votes were sometimes reminded by reasonable people that they

could be voting in a way that would give erratic Trump control over our nuclear arsenal.

Others warned with just one word: "judges," reminding doubters that whomever wins the presidency (and it won't be a third-party person or a write-in or blank ballot) gets to appoint lots of them to federal courts who will serve many years into the future.

The same warnings apply to this coming election—plus many other awful outcomes we know about this time after his one term in office, outcomes that led to two impeachments and 91 indictment counts.

Lots of people wasting their votes on third party candidates write-ins or blank ballots won't be delivering anything but a nihilistic, self-destructive message to the powers-that-be, very few of whom actually pay much attention to results for the al-so-rans. Blanks and write-ins don't ever get noted or tallied in many states. Vote-wasters can only look forward to knowing they may have contributed to their last choice candidate for the job winning it over everyone else.

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# What's Happening on Main Streets

BY COURTNEY WRIGHT  
SPECIAL TO THE GAZETTE

The story of Black History Month begins in 1915, half a century after the Thirteenth Amendment abolished slavery in the United States. That September, the Harvard-trained historian Carter G. Woodson and the prominent minister Jesse E. Moorland founded the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History (ASNLH), an organization dedicated to researching and promoting achievements by Black Americans and other peoples of African descent. This group sponsored the first Negro History week in 1926, choosing the sec-

ond week of February to coincide with the birthdays of Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass. The event inspired schools and communities nationwide to organize local celebrations, establish history clubs and host performances and lectures. President Gerald Ford officially recognized Black History Month in 1976, calling upon the public to "seize the opportunity to honor the too-often neglected accomplishments of Black Americans in every area of endeavor throughout our history." As we kick off Black History Month, I wanted to acknowledge the history of how it came to be.

In my previous life, before

Main Streets, one of the program's I worked on was Wentworth Institute of Technology's Alternative Spring Break, which takes a group of students during their spring break week to another community outside of Boston to learn and engage through volunteerism for the week. In 2019, I was lucky enough to accompany the students to Selma, Alabama. Our time there coincided with the famous Bridge Crossing Jubilee, held annually to commemorate the anniversary of Bloody Sunday and the Selma-to-Montgomery March that precipitated the signing of the Civil Rights Act of 1965. It is a day and experience I will never forget. The

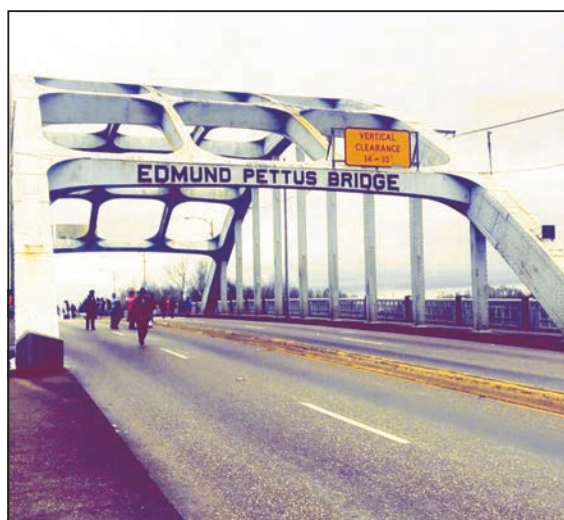
annual walk across the Edmund Pettus Bridge begins as it did then, with a service at the Brown Chapel A.M.E Church. As I stood outside the church in total awe of my luck at being able to experience this celebration, the weather turned and tornadoes touched down- a story for another day- and we were temporarily rerouted before finally getting to walk across the Pettus Bridge with the other attendees made up of Civil Rights heroes, elected officials and Alabamians. I think of this experience often, but it always becomes even more powerful during February, as we pay homage to those very Civil Rights heroes that paved the way for the official holiday designation that came years later.

When I look back at my experiences in Selma, I reflect on the examples of advocacy, hard fought battles for inclusion and equity that happen day in, day out, often unseen, within our own neighborhood. Mission Hill is known for its activists and community organizing heroes, and in the last decade, I hear a lot about the concern for who will continue the work of neighborhood preservation as the demographics change. I think for anyone who works in community development broadly, there is a lot of thought about what can be done to make the future

easier for those who follow, 'to plant seeds for trees under whose shade you don't intend to sit'. I think of my own mentors in Mission Hill, Willie Pearl Clark at Mission Main, John Jackson, the administrator of the Tobin Community Center- and the lessons that they've been teaching me through their example for the last twelve years. When talking about my experience in Selma at the Bridge Crossing Jubilee one evening a couple years ago at Yellow Door Taqueria with John and others, I learned that we had in common having spent time in Pine Hill, a town of less than 800 people in the rural Black Belt region of Alabama. As I thought about what I would write this month, I wanted to reflect on what things we do in our daily life and what examples we are leaving for those who come after us. I went to visit John at the Tobin and curious on his thoughts on the topic of legacy, asked him about what that means for him when he thinks of his work in Mission Hill:

"I think one of the one of the legacies that I would want to leave is making sure that we continue to help and work with each other and build on those efforts to support one another so that the younger generation can

*Continued on page 9*



Shown above left, the Brown Chapel A.M.E. Church, and above-right, the Edmund Pettus Bridge, which are the sites of an annual commemoration of Bloody Sunday and the Selma-to-Montgomery March.

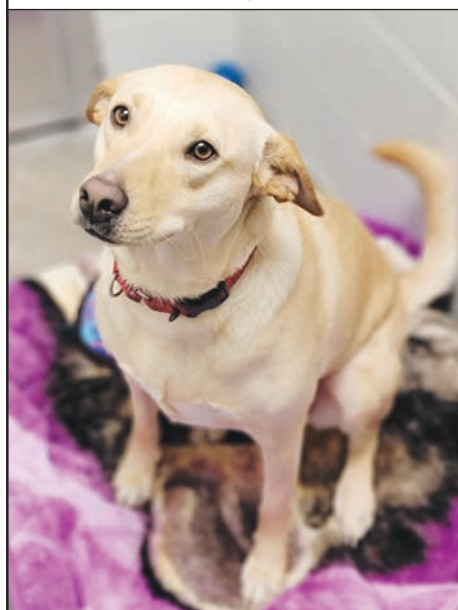
## Gazette Pet of the Week

by Sarah Carroll



### 'ARIEL'

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## Parks Department hosts Winter Soccer Clinic

SPECIAL TO THE GAZETTE

The Boston Parks and Recreation Department, in partnership with the Anthony Rougier Sports Foundation, is pleased to announce the 2024 Winter Soccer Clinic. This free clinic is designed to help aspiring athletes aged 10 to 18 maintain their skills during the offseason and gear up for spring soccer.

Winter Soccer clinic takes place at Carter Playground Bubble, 709 Columbus Avenue. Professional coaches and trainers will guide participants through specialized drills and exercises tailored to their age groups. This clinic caters to all skill levels, serving both junior players looking to improve their skills and senior athletes seeking advanced training.

### Program Dates:

Sundays, January 28 to February 18

### Session 1:

Ages: 10 - 14

Time: 10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

### Session 2:

Ages: 15 - 18

Time: 11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Early registration is recom-

mended as spots are limited. To register for the Winter Soccer Clinic, visit [boston.gov/sports](https://boston.gov/sports). For more information, contact [woodley.auguste@boston.gov](mailto:woodley.auguste@boston.gov) or call (617) 961-3084.

Sign up for our email list at [bit.ly/Get-Parks-Emails](https://bit.ly/Get-Parks-Emails) and follow us on social media @boston-parksdept to stay up-to-date with Boston Parks and Recreation Department news and events.

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## Main Streets

Continued from page 8

see that that's what a community does... When I see kids surprised about the support given to them sometimes, I tell them, when people see the potential and see that you're doing something good and want to help. That's the thing I'd want to pass on, the spirit of giving and helping people and the understanding that you don't have to be by yourself, there are people here that are going to do their best to help you. The spirit of giving and spirit of community where if we can help someone, we should. My philosophy is, I always believe this 'it's bigger than me' so it's not about how I feel about you it's about what can we do together to get it done. My attitude is that we can agree to disagree, but let's get it done. At the end of the day people don't see what goes on behind the scenes, they just know they can come and see the people here and that's what it boils down to, being able to support each other because at the end of the day it's bigger than me and you, the work is bigger than us."

For those who currently live in the neighborhood, whether permanently or temporarily, I wanted to provide information on how to get involved with the Tobin Community Center and see firsthand the extensive programming and services they provide for not only Mission Hill, but the City of Boston and BCYF. I come across a lot of people who have the desire to get more involved but aren't sure where to start, so wanted to demystify that a little in the case of those interested in youth mentorship and the Tobin.

"We always have room for folks that want to come in and help with our athletic programs, after-school programs, whether it's tutoring or something else we do, we serve a lot of students in this area. To me, when you move into a neighborhood it's your responsibility to find out what the resources are, whether you're a student or not, just find out what's going on your neighborhood. If someone wants to find out about Tobin, I'd say come in, find out who we are and we'll figure it out; whether it's sports, academics, or STEM, we'll figure it out."

Thank you, John, for taking the time to talk to me and sharing your thoughts. On behalf of all of us, thank you for the work you do, and the presence you have in the neighborhood, and



Mayor Michelle Wu with John Jackson.

in our lives. You are one of one.

Switching gears- we have a couple of exciting business updates on the calendar for the next couple of weeks. Next Friday, February 9th at 10:30 a.m.



Courtney Wright shown with students who she traveled to Selma, Ala. in 2019 as part of Wentworth Institute of Technology's Alternative SpringBreak program.

please join us at 1520 Tremont St (formerly Boba Me) for the Green Haus Ribbon Cutting. The owner and staff will be on hand to share about their new venture and show the community their space and offerings if you haven't already stopped in.

Need ideas for Valentine's

Day? Solid Ground Café is partnering with Emily's Flower Kitchen (woman owned, creative floral designs) for the ordering and pick-up of gorgeous bouquets for the holiday of love. Order by Monday, February 12th for pick up on February 14th from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Pre-order is

highly recommended via emilys-flowerkitchen.com as there will be limited bouquets available for walk-ins. Everything on her website is available, choose the "pick up" option at check out and you're all set to grab them at Solid Ground on Valentine's Day!

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Levinson Bldg	835 Huntington Avenue	Tremont House Of Pizza
Neville Building	Huntington Avenue	Subway Sandwiches
Rob.ther.parks Comm.bldg.	Mission Park Drive	Mini Mart
Flynn House	805 Huntington Ave	Boston Property
Huntington Market	818 Huntington Ave	Elen Real State
Huntntgton Pizza	784 Huntington Ave	Spinney Auto Insurance
Carman' S Beauty Salon	764 Huntington Ave	Mikes Donut
Green Coffe Shop	750 Huntington Ave	Lillys Gourmet
Davos Wine& Spirits	754 Huntington Ave	Grispy Dough Pizza
Flames	746 Huntington Ave	Wan Convenience
Hollywood Dry Cleaners	742 Huntington Ave	Discount Auto Part
Udb Uq	738 Huntington Ave	Laundromat
Halal Indian Cuisine	766 Huntington Ave	Dunkin Donut
Brigham Liquors	732 Huntington Ave	Solstice Café
Brighman Circle Chines	728 Huntington Ave	Mission Hill Liquors
The Mission Pub	724 Huntington Ave	Flann O'brien 'S
Stop & Shop	Tremont And Huntington	Mn American Legion
Walgreens	Tremont And Huntington	Mission Hill Properties
J P L Ick's	Tremonte And Huntington	Mission Hill Post Office
Bank Of America	Tremonte And Huntington	1575 Longwood Street Apts
Citizens Bank	Tremonte And Huntington	Needham Bank
		Bruggels Bakery

## ISD

Continued from page 2

under Del Rio's leadership.

"The responsibility of the Inspectional Services Department is to deliver core, essential City services to our residents, guaranteeing that the places they eat, shop, and stay are healthy and safe," said Tania Del Rio, incoming Commissioner of the

Inspectional Services Department. "I am so thrilled for this opportunity, and grateful for the honor of having worked with the many selfless teams serving our residents in need of substance use, mental health, and housing support. Together, they have helped countless residents embark on a path to stability and recovery. I have great confidence that Michaela and Brian can continue to move this work forward

and I'm excited to get to work at ISD."

Del Rio will be responsible for carrying out several of the Mayor's priorities including expanding the Additional Dwelling Unit (ADU) program, executing the conversion of commercial buildings to residential buildings, streamlining and fast tracking permitting for small businesses and homeowners, and improving quality of life for residents by

enhancing basic City services.

She has a B.A. from New York University and a Master in Public Policy from the Harvard Kennedy School. Del Rio is a BPS mother, a Latina immigrant, and a proven leader.

As the former Executive Director of Boston's Office of Women's Advancement and YWCA Cambridge, she has a track record of providing transformative leadership by fostering innovation, promoting strong organizational culture, responsible financial stewardship, and sharp strategic planning. Her work includes launching Boston's Childcare Entrepreneur Fund, which continues to provide crucial support to the city's childcare workers.

Del Rio is a proud resident of East Boston and an involved community leader. She enjoys spending time with her family, especially her two children, and staying active by surfing, swimming, and running.

Sean Lydon will remain with the City as Senior Advisor For Construction. In this role, he will assist in managing high priority projects under construction, including White Stadium, the stabilization of the buildings a part of the Long Island recovery campus, coastal resilience, and emergency projects. He will also provide guidance on permitting, particularly assisting with navigating the permit process for high priority projects under construction. This includes pre-construction, construction, and construction close out phases, with guidance on permitting strategy and execution to ensure timely

delivery and cost effectiveness.

"I am so grateful to both Tania and Sean for their leadership in taking on these new roles to carry out Mayor Wu's vision for a Boston with exceptional basic city services that residents can rely on," said Chief of Operations Dion Irish. "With Tania's experience effectively coordinating a cross-departmental team, I am confident in her ability to lead ISD, enhancing the core services our residents' need and deserve. And I am so thankful to Sean for continuing to serve our residents in this new role, ensuring we deliver on major projects efficiently and thoroughly across our city."

The mission of the Inspectional Services Department is to serve the public by protecting the health and safety of Boston's businesses and residential communities. The Department consistently aims to fairly administer public health, safety, land use and environmental regulations throughout the City of Boston. The Department will continue to utilize resources to promote the quality of life in Boston through education, enforcement and providing emergency services.



**Brendan Behan Pub**  
378A Centre Street  
Jamaica Plain



# Virtual Public Meeting

## 80-100 Smith Street

FEBRUARY


13

6:00 PM - 8:00 PM

**Zoom Link:**  
[bit.ly/80-100SmithStreet0213](https://bit.ly/80-100SmithStreet0213)

**Toll Free:** (833) 568 - 8864

**Meeting ID:** 160 438 2287



mail to:  
**Ebony DaRosa**  
Boston Planning & Development Agency  
One City Hall Square, 9th Floor  
Boston, MA 02201  
phone: 617.918.4419  
email: [ebony.darosa@boston.gov](mailto:ebony.darosa@boston.gov)

**Project Description:**

The BPDA is hosting a public meeting for the 80-100 Smith Street project located in Mission Hill. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss the Supplemental Filing. The Proposed Project will contain two new residential buildings totaling approximately 202,000 square feet, 218 rental units, approximately 214 parking spaces, and bicycle parking.

Please register for the meeting using the following Zoom link: [bit.ly/80-100SmithStreet0213](https://bit.ly/80-100SmithStreet0213) Meeting ID: 160 438 2287 Toll-Free Call-in Number: 833.568.8864

*La información de esta reunión es crucial para usted como residente y parte interesada de la ciudad de Boston. Si necesita servicios de traducción, contáctese con: [ebony.darosa@boston.gov](mailto:ebony.darosa@boston.gov) (617.918.4419) La reunión está programada para el 02/13/2024. Por favor, solicite los servicios de interpretación a más tardar 5 días antes de la fecha de la reunión.*

作为波士顿居民和利益相关者，本会议的信息对您来说是至关重要的。可以提供翻译服务以传达本会议的内容，您无需承担任何额外费用。如果您需要翻译服务，请通过以下方式联系：[ebony.darosa@boston.gov](mailto:ebony.darosa@boston.gov) (617.918.4419) 会议定于 2024 年 02月13日，请在会议前5天内申请口译服务。

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[BostonPlans.org](https://bostonplans.org)

 @BostonPlans

Teresa Polhemus, Executive Director/Secretary



# D.A.'s office creates animal cruelty task force

SPECIAL TO THE GAZETTE

The Suffolk County District Attorney's office has taken a major step in addressing the escalating issue of animal cruelty.

Last week, Suffolk County DA announced the creation of the county's first Animal Cruelty Task Force.

Hayden, a dog owner, said the task force will improve the quality of information and methods used among the participating agencies in investigations of crimes against animals.

"Anyone who has ever loved or owned a pet knows the joy and happiness they bring to our lives," Hayden said. "All these pets ask in return is to be sheltered, fed and cared for when they're sick or hurt. Sadly, too many animals and pets end up getting hurt through malicious intent or conscious neglect."

"This task force will improve our ability to investigate, charge and prosecute these cases and, hopefully, reduce them."

The task force will centralize the various agencies involved



Area police, officials gather for the Suffolk County DA announcement of the creation of the county's first Animal Cruelty Task Force.

in animal abuse cases into a group of designated individuals with animal law knowledge. This streamlined approach will improve information flow, create a more proficient understanding of animal cruelty investigations and prosecutions, and identify necessary legislative improvements to the state's animal protection laws.

The task force will be chaired by Assistant District Attorney Amelia Singh, chief of the DA's office in Chelsea District Court, and will include members of the Boston, Chelsea, Winthrop and Revere police departments, the Massachusetts State Police, the Massachusetts Environmental

Police, the Animal Rescue League of Boston, the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, the Massachusetts Department of Agriculture and the animal control departments in Boston, Chelsea, Winthrop and Revere.

The Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (MSPCA) handled 684 investigations involving animal abuse in 2023.

Last year, 17 individuals were charged in Suffolk County with at least one animal cruelty related offense. Sixteen of the defendants were adults and one was a juvenile.

The owner of a dog training

and boarding facility in South Boston was charged last May following an investigation by the Animal Rescue League after three dogs lost significant amounts of weight and/or were injured during their stay at the facility.

A Revere man was charged with assaulting his roommate and killing his dog in August. First responders entering the man's apartment found a dog covered in blood, suffering from at least five stab wounds.

According to the Domestic Violence Awareness Project, up to 70% of domestic violence victims have pets and of those with pets, 48% to 71% report that their pets

have been abused or killed.

A Boston man was charged after a neighbor noticed a strong odor emanating from his Chelsea apartment. A well-being check led to the discovery of a feces-covered apartment and a decomposing dog.

In November, a Boston woman was charged after multiple witnesses reported seeing her punch, kick, and strike her dog with a glass bottle in the Boston Common area.

Animal cruelty cases are increasing in Suffolk County and statewide. According to the Massachusetts Trial Court, animal cruelty cases have increased more than 70% from 2019-2022.

## Soni DOT - Proposed Cannabis Dispensary in Mission Hill

Dear Mission Hill Neighbors,

My name is Aditya Soni and I am the managing partner of Soni DOT, the proposed retail dispensary at 1576 Tremont Street in Mission Hill. I have taken over this location from my family and intend to be the first and only cannabis dispensary to open in Mission Hill.

When my father arrived in Roxbury

over two decades ago, he immediately began investing in our community. He opened the former Punjab Mini Mart that has served our neighborhood for 19 years, employing local residents and supporting our growing immigrant community.

As proud local business owners, my family has shown me the importance of being available to our community

and our customers. We want you, our neighbors, to be fully aware of each step that we are taking to open this dispensary and to make sure that we address any concerns that you may have.

With that in mind, I invite you to call me at (617) 383-9395 or email me at sonidispensary@gmail.com.

As a family-owned small business,

serving our community is my highest priority. I'm excited to open this dispensary alongside the many friends, neighbors, and loyal customers that have welcomed us over the past 20 years.

Yours In Service,

**Aditya Soni**  
Managing Partner, Soni DOT



To show your support for

**Soni DOT**

please scan the QR code





# Jamaica Plain/Mission Hill Gazette

## 2024 Publishing Calendar

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### JANUARY

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# House unanimously passes bill to prevent abuse and exploitation

The Massachusetts House of Representatives last week passed legislation that combines several separate legislative initiatives into one bill that will help to prevent abuse and exploitation, while also enhancing protections for survivors. The legislation addresses teen sexting and image-based sexual assault, commonly referred to as “revenge porn;” expands the definition of abuse to include coercive control for the purposes of obtaining a restraining order; and extends the statute of limitations for certain domestic violence offenses from six years to 15 years.

“This legislation modernizes our criminal laws by ensuring that those who share explicit images of others without their consent face punishment, while also educating minors on the dangers of sharing explicit images of themselves rather than imposing some of the criminal justice system’s most severe consequences,” said House Speaker Ronald J. Mariano (D-Quincy). “I’m also incredibly proud of this legislation’s bolstered protections for survivors, including the added consideration of non-physical forms of abuse for those seeking restraining orders from their abusers. I want to thank Chairman Day and the Judiciary Committee, along with each bill sponsor and all my colleagues in the House for prioritizing this vital legislation.”

“The House has heard the ur-

gent call of survivors to enhance protections and ensure that our laws keep up with technology. But the House doesn’t just listen, we act,” said Representative Michael S. Day (D-Stoneham), House Chair of the Joint Committee on the Judiciary. “It’s critical that these reforms pass into law quickly so that victims of coercive control, adolescent sexting and revenge porn aren’t left without relief.”

Currently, minors who possess, purchase, or share explicit photos of themselves or other minors are charged with violating Massachusetts child pornography laws and are required to register as sex offenders. The legislation passed today instead authorizes commitment to the Department of Youth Services (DYS), but also allows minors to be diverted to an educational program in lieu of criminal punishment. A district attorney, however, is allowed to petition the court to bring criminal charges in extreme cases.

The educational diversion program, to be created by the Attorney General in consultation with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), DHS, and the District Attorneys Association, would provide teenagers with information about the legal and non-legal consequences of sexting, which would be made available to school districts. DESE should also encourage districts to implement media literacy programs

in their schools as a prevention measure.

“This legislation represents a coordinated effort and a holistic approach to address an increasingly prevalent behavior and provides mechanisms to protect individuals victimized by those who threaten, intimidate, and harass the subjects of these images,” said State Representative Jeffrey N. Roy (D-Franklin), a lead sponsor of the bill. “The sexting provisions provide law enforcement officers with a middle ground that will allow them to educate kids about the consequences of their actions without ruining their lives. It will have a tremendous impact on people who have become entangled in the web and transmittal of images that can cause traumatic and lifetime harm through a diversion program that will educate them about the legal and personal consequences of this behavior.”

In addition to teen sexting, the bill addresses the nonconsensual distribution of explicit images by adults by establishing a penalty in the existing criminal harassment statute, including up to two and a half years of prison time and/or a monetary fine of up to \$10,000. The bill increases the upper limit of the fine for criminal harassment from \$1,000 to \$5,000. Under this bill, a victim may also petition the court for a harassment prevention order against a person who has violated this statute.

The bill passed today also adds

coercive control to the definition of abuse. Coercive control is a nonphysical form of abuse which includes a pattern of behavior, or a single act intended to threaten, intimidate, harass, isolate, control, coerce or compel compliance of a family or household member that causes the family or household member to fear physical harm or to have a reduced sense of physical safety or autonomy. Examples of coercive control include threatening to share explicit images, regulating or monitoring a family or household member’s communications and access to services, and isolating a family or household member from friends or relatives.

The legislation passed today also extends the statute of limitations for assault and battery on a family or household member or against someone with an active protective order from six years to 15 years. This change brings the Massachusetts statute of limitations for these domestic violence offenses in line with the statute of limitations for rape, assault with intent to commit rape and sex trafficking.

“Massachusetts can and should be granting restraining orders for coercive control, but we know that for so many survivors, their emotional and psychological trauma is not given the same seriousness as physical violence. And the reality of that barrier can be deadly,” said Representative Natalie M. Higgins (D-Leominster), a lead

sponsor of the bill. “I am incredibly grateful to the Speaker and my House colleagues for taking a critical step forward in protecting our neighbors by codifying coercive control in the Mass General Laws and extending the statute of limitations so that survivors of domestic violence can build more safety and supports to come forward and report domestic abuse to law enforcement.”

“Domestic violence is not always physical violence, sometimes it’s much more insidious. During my time as a legal services attorney, I represented many survivors who suffered emotional trauma and financial devastation through fear and manipulation. Survivors and the courts need our help to update our laws to make it clear that coercive control is a type of domestic abuse that will not be tolerated,” said Representative Tram Nguyen (D-Andover), a lead sponsor of the bill. “I want to thank Speaker Mariano, Chair Michlewitz, and Chair Day for advancing this transformative and bipartisan legislation. I am also grateful for the partnership of Rep. Higgins, who co-filed this legislation with me, and the survivors and coalition advocates who spoke up for the thousands of women, men, and children in our Commonwealth who would be better able to take back control of their future if this bill is signed into law.”

## ABCD Taxes

*Continued from page 1*

Income Tax Assistance (VITA) network, ABCD offers free tax preparation services in the Mystic Valley. Both the Boston and Mystic Valley coalitions fall under the federal VITA program.

ABCD’s IRS-certified tax preparers will be at our 11 neighborhood sites and two satellite locations to prepare and electronically submit returns through in-person appointments and document drop off. In addition, we are offering evening tax prep services at Brookside Community Health Center in Jamaica Plain. VITA volunteers provide credit advising and financial education to clients in the form of the Financial Check-Up (FCU) – a light-touch credit advising session in which a trained Financial Guide assists taxpayers

in understanding their current financial situation, including a review of an individual’s credit report and FICO score, a personalized one-year plan to help improve their credit, and relevant service referrals. Our tax volunteers are multilingual – fluent in eight languages including English, Spanish, French, Mandarin, Cantonese, Vietnamese, Cape Verdean Creole and Haitian Creole. ABCD meets people where they are.

“ABCD is proud to be a long-standing partner of the MASSCAP VITA network and the Boston Tax Help Coalition,” said ABCD President and CEO Sharon Scott-Chandler. “Free tax preparation services bring millions of dollars back into our communities and help empower underserved residents in Boston and the Mystic Valley by providing IRS certified tax preparers at easy to access sites in the neigh-

borhoods ensuring that clients receive every tax credit for which they are eligible. The Massachusetts Child and Family Tax Credit, Rental Deduction and Senior Circuit Breaker increases in 2023 are good news for residents burdened by the high cost of living. In Massachusetts, according to Prosperity Now, an estimated 24.3% of eligible households do not claim EITC. This credit can be claimed retroactively for the past three years. Eligible taxpayers, including some seniors, can qualify for a sizable sum.”

Last year, ABCD helped 3,103 residents complete their state and federal tax returns, generating \$5,395,219 in federal and state refunds combined. A total of 488 clients filed for the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) which generated over \$1M in refunds. We filed 384 Child Tax Credits on behalf of our clients, generating \$498,691 in refunds. For over 30

years, ABCD has provided more than 150,000 people across the city with free tax preparation services. A list of required documents to complete tax returns can be found here.

Those who may qualify for free tax preparation services include:

- People who earned \$64,000 or less in 2023
- People with disabilities
- Limited English-speaking taxpayers

ABCD’S IRS-certified tax preparers will make sure that residents receive every tax relief measure to which they are entitled and that help reduce poverty rates among underserved households including:

- EITC – Earned Income Tax Credit – one of America’s most effective anti-poverty initiatives – EITC is a tax deduction that rewards work. This year, a Married Filing Jointly family with three

or more children earning up to \$63, 398 and filing jointly will receive total federal and state EITC deductions of \$10,402 off their 2023 income tax. The IRS estimates that one out of five eligible taxpayers will not claim EITC and will lose out on this important credit.

- CTC – CHILD TAX CREDIT – has increased to \$310 per qualifying child in 2023.
- SENIOR CIRCUIT BREAKER – a state tax deduction providing seniors age 65 and older who pay unsubsidized rent or property taxes. The maximum credit amount for tax year 2023 has increased from \$1,200 to \$2590. If the credit owed exceeds the amount of the total tax payable for the year, the additional amount of the credit will be refunded without interest.
- RENTAL DEDUCTION – which has increased from \$3,000 to \$4,000



# EDITORIAL

## Environmentalists: Putin's 'useful idiots'

Vladimir Lenin used the term “useful idiots” to refer to journalists, labor leaders, and politicians in the West who extolled the virtues of Lenin’s new Communist regime in Russia as a “worker’s paradise.” They were in the vanguard of the world-wide Communist movement who tried to import Lenin’s brand of Communism into their own countries.

The reason Lenin referred to them as “useful idiots” is because they were oblivious to what actually was going on in Russia during Lenin’s (and later, Stalin’s) transformation of that nation into a Communist regime: mass starvation, authoritarianism, political executions, and use of the Siberian gulag.

In short, the “useful idiots” for Lenin and Stalin were those in the West whose fervent belief in the ideology of Communism blinded them to the reality of what actually was happening in Russia in the 1920s and 1930s.

A century later, democracy and freedom are being challenged by another Vladimir, Vladimir Putin, whose invasion of Ukraine and genocidal campaign of executions, rape, bombings of civilians, and deportation of children poses a substantial threat to Western Europe and ultimately, the United States.

Western European nations stopped purchasing natural gas from Russia -- which had a pipeline directly into Western Europe -- shortly after the invasion began in order not to finance Putin’s war machine. These countries were able to do so thanks to a combination of sacrifice (lowering their thermostats and reducing industrial energy use), switching to dirtier forms of energy (coal and oil) for their power plants, and the ramping-up of the importation of liquefied natural gas (LNG) from the United States, with the promise that even more LNG will be forthcoming from the U.S. in the future.

However, President Biden, bowing to pressure from environmental groups, last week issued a directive that imposes new environmental rules on future LNG terminals that essentially has brought to a halt the construction of new LNG export facilities in the U.S. The move has alarmed our Western European allies, who have been able to withstand their embargo on Russian natural gas because of the promise of additional LNG from America.

There is no question that climate change, fueled by the burning of fossil fuels, represents a huge risk to the future of our planet. However, the threat posed by Putin and other dictatorial regimes, such as China and Iran, pose an immediate threat to our way of life today. An article in yesterday’s New York Times highlighted the fear of Western European leaders that they will be next in line if Putin succeeds in Ukraine.

In addition, the irony of Biden’s new environmental rules for future LNG plants in the U.S. is that Europe will continue to use oil and coal, which are far worse for the environment than natural gas. In addition, if the U.S. is unable to supply natural gas to Western Europe, those countries simply will turn elsewhere.

In short, the action by Biden at the behest of environmentalists accomplishes nothing (and even is a negative) in our battle against climate change in both the short and long terms. However, what it does accomplish is this: It encourages sociopathic dictators like Putin, who want to see the Western nations divided, to continue their campaign against democracies across the globe. The “inconvenient truth” for environmentalists is that the fight against Putin and his ilk requires that America must be united with our allies, no less than we were in World War II, when the free world similarly fought against the Axis of Evil at that time. The environmentalists whose rigid ideology regarding climate change blinds them to the reality of the immediate, existential threat posed by today’s Axis of Evil are the “useful idiots” of the dictators of the 21st century.

# OP-ED

## Alarming new survey reveals how high MBTA fares are harming riders

Dear Editor,

On the heels of Governor Healey pledging to fund a permanent low-income fare for the MBTA in her FY25 budget, a groundbreaking survey of riders finds that they forgo meals, medicines, and other necessities as a direct result of the high cost of fares. The MBTA Board kicked off a formal process to adopt a low-income fare at their meeting on last week and riders and workers were there to make their voices heard on how a low-income fare would be life changing. Here’s what riders are saying:

“Transportation costs, rent, groceries, medical costs, and other costs are all rising rapidly and that puts a lot of pressure on us,” said Jie Zhen Li, MBTA rider and Chinese Progressive Association member. “There are often service disruptions or delays for the Orange Line, which would make us get to work late and impact our wages, further causing us stress. Low-income workers should receive a low-income fare that is affordable and allows us to enjoy high-quality public transit services.”

“I use public transportation daily, and several times every day, and I would love for this fare to be approved by the MBTA Board” said Oneida Mejia, Chelsea resident and MBTA rider. “In Chelsea, most people travel everywhere by public transportation daily. When a low-income fare is approved, we hope that it will be accessible to all low-income residents, and that there will be no barriers that prevent people from obtaining it.”

The rider survey underscores how unaffordable fares are having a harmful effect on where Massachusetts residents can live and work, and on the quality of their day-to-day lives. A survey of over 300 MBTA riders across the state from November 22 to December 8, 2023 found the following:

- More than 50 percent of respondents found the cost of fares too high to afford.
- 68 percent of respondents said they would use the MBTA more if the fare was half the current cost.

Governor Healey’s bold commitment to funding a low-income fare program would transform the lives of tens of more than 60,000 Massachusetts residents who count on the MBTA. For more than three years, MBTA riders and workers have united to demand a low-income fare and with the MBTA Board meeting, transit justice and affordability are within reach. As the report shows:

- A low-income fare would benefit up to 63,000 riders by the end of a five-year implementation period.
- Riders would save about 50% on fares.
- For a daily rider on the bus and subway, this would save \$720 a year, while a Zone 5 Commuter Rail rider would save almost \$2,000 a year.

Survey participants said they use the MBTA to get to a range of destinations and MBTA riders continue to make daily sacrifices and face financial hardships due to the regular cost of riding the MBTA. Survey responses included:

- Not paying rent to afford bus costs
- Skipping meals or cutting

back on groceries

- Not paying phone bills and basic necessities
- Not filling prescriptions
- Skipping medical appointments
- Walking or biking instead of taking the bus or train

“It’s clear that transportation is one of the biggest needs for those in our community seeking to take advantage of employment opportunities or accessing services,” said Mike Vartabedian, co-Chair of the Public Transit Public Good coalition and Assistant Directing Business Representative of the International Association of Machinists District 15. “This report shows that people are skipping meals, medicines, and appointments, just because they cannot afford the MBTA fare. These stories underscore the urgent need for a low-income fare program that takes into account the heavy financial burden borne by riders. We are so gratified to see the Healey administration and the MBTA taking real action to make the low-income fare a reality.”

**Public Transit Public Good  
Coalition**

The opinions expressed on these pages are not necessarily those of this newspaper.

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# Healey-Driscoll Administration awards nearly \$4 million to combat human trafficking and other gender-based offenses

SPECIAL TO THE GAZETTE

During Human Trafficking Awareness Month, the Healey-Driscoll Administration announced awards through two grant programs that will enhance enforcement and victim services for survivors of human trafficking, domestic and sexual violence, and stalking. The awards were announced today during a meeting of the Governor's Council to Address Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence and Human Trafficking.

Suffolk County received two grants. One grant was for \$98,242 for Training and \$146,915 for Prosecution Award.

Grants totaling \$472,428.50 were awarded to six District Attorney's Offices through the FY24 Human Trafficking Enforcement and Training Grant Program. Now in its second year, this state grant program was designed to support prosecutors' efforts to combat human trafficking and enhance their capacity to identify, assist, and provide referral services to those most impacted.

In addition, \$3,311,842.74 in federal funding was awarded to 43 state, local, and nonprofit agencies through the FFY23 Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) grant program. Agencies selected through a competi-

tive application process to receive awards in 2022 were invited to apply for continued funding. The recipients are eligible for up to two additional years of funding, which is provided through the Department of Justice (DOJ) Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA).

The Office of Grants and Research (OGR) manages and administers both grant programs in Massachusetts. OGR program coordinators will work with grant recipients to provide reporting and programmatic assistance throughout the grant period.

"In recognition of Human Trafficking Awareness Month, we reaffirm our deep commitment to ensuring that every per-

son can live with dignity, respect and free from fear and abuse," said Governor Maura Healey. "This grant funding will support survivors of domestic and sexual violence, human trafficking, and stalking by investing in programs that promote healing and justice. These grants allow professionals from diverse sectors to provide survivors with access to culturally appropriate and trauma-informed services."

"These grants represent our ongoing commitment to ending exploitation, intimate partner violence, sexual assault, and stalking," said Lt. Governor Kim Driscoll, chair of the Governor's Council to Address Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence and Human Trafficking. "The grant recipients have a proven record of delivering quality services to prevent, reduce, and address these crimes and to provide victims with the services they need and deserve as they move toward healing."

"Everyone deserves to feel safe. These grant programs support the vital efforts of commu-

nity service providers to help survivors as they recover and rebuild their lives. This funding also supports law enforcement and their ability to send a clear message to the perpetrators that they will be held accountable for these heinous crimes," said Secretary of Public Safety and Security Terrence Reidy.

"The VAWA program is a long-standing initiative allowing us to build partnerships with service providers and law enforcement to support effective approaches to reducing sexual assault, domestic violence, stalking, and human trafficking. The Human Trafficking Enforcement and Training Grant Program is a new, innovative program assisting in investigations, prosecutions, outreach, and delivery of services," said OGR Executive Director Kevin Stanton. "We are committed to working with program partners to strengthen responses to these crimes from courts, law enforcement, and prosecutors while enhancing the services available to survivors."

## Wu, BPHC announce the 'Family Overdose Support Fund'

SPECIAL TO THE GAZETTE

Mayor Michelle Wu and the Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC) announced the creation of the "Family Overdose Support Fund," a new fund that will provide financial support to Boston families who have lost a loved one to opioid overdose. The fund is the first use of the City's payments from multistate settlements with opioid manufacturers and distributors, and was established after an extensive community engagement process that invited residents to inform how the money should be spent.

"The grief and trauma of losing a loved one to overdose has a lasting impact on our communities," said Mayor Michelle Wu. "This fund will help support our families and our communities by easing the financial burdens that undermine a healthy grieving process. I want to thank everyone who participated in our public engagement process and our many state and city colleagues who worked for years to secure these funds and bring a measure of justice to families in Boston and across the country."

"The opioid epidemic has taken the lives of many loved ones throughout Boston's communities. Children have lost parents. Parents have lost sons and daughters. Families have suffered an enormous emotional toll and are also shouldering

a significant financial burden," said Dr. Bisola Ojikutu, Commissioner of Public Health and Executive Director of the Boston Public Health Commission. "The Family Overdose Support Fund will alleviate some of that burden by providing direct financial assistance to support childcare, funeral expenses, and other services to those who have been impacted by this ongoing tragedy."

The Family Overdose Support Fund will launch later this year with \$250,000 to distribute to Boston families who have experienced the loss of a family member due to opioid overdose. Families can use the funds to cover funeral expenses, therapy, legal services, childcare, and other financial burdens.

This will be one of several investments from Boston's share of the State's opioid settlements. Boston will incrementally receive at least \$22 million through 2038.

This announcement marks a new chapter in years of litigation, including a suit brought by the City of Boston against drug makers and opioid distributors for fueling the opioid epidemic. From July 2021 through December 2022, then-Attorney General Maura Healey announced four settlements that will provide almost a billion dollars to Massachusetts over 18 years. A portion of those funds gets distributed across the Commonwealth to

cities and towns for prevention, harm reduction, treatment, and recovery.

In Boston, BPHC conducted an extensive and equitable community engagement process, asking those impacted by overdose to inform how the funds should be spent. Throughout the summer of 2023, more than 600 people participated through community and provider listening sessions, surveys, and long-form responses. A majority of respondents wanted to prioritize the needs of grieving families by providing direct financial support. Respondents also expressed strong interest in housing support and low threshold housing for people with substance use disorder, community-based equity initiatives to address substance use, overdose prevention and prevention centers, and youth prevention. The full report is now released and can be found here.

BPHC is hiring an opioid settlement project director to implement and oversee the Family Overdose Support Fund and other settlement investments. Additional investments will include low threshold housing and community grants, and ongoing community engagement will continue to inform the funding process over the settlement period.

For more information on the city's opioid remediation settlement funds, visit [boston.gov/opioid-settlements](http://boston.gov/opioid-settlements).

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# Celebrate Presidents' Day Week at the JFK Library with family-friendly activities

SPECIAL TO THE GAZETTE

The John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum offers several family-oriented activities and programs throughout Presidents' Day week, including its signature Presidents' Day Festival on Feb. 19, featuring presidential storytelling, activities and performances, and a Celebrate! family performing arts program. The Celebrate! performance of Stories of Hope and Joy with Len Cabral features folktales, myths, and personal accounts brought to life with humor, wisdom, and compassion by international renowned storyteller Len Cabral. Audiences of all ages will be inspired by stories of the power of hopeful actions in honor of Black History Month.

**\$2 Off Museum Admission with Special Buzzword**

In celebration of Presidents' Day week, the JFK Library will reveal a special buzzword on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Visitors who provide the buzzword during admission during the week of February 17-25, 2024 will receive \$2 off adult admission prices and youth ages 17 and under will be free.

Additional student, military, senior and EBT discounts are available.

**Presidents' Day Festival**

Monday, February 19, 2024  
11:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

The 13th Annual Presidents' Day Festival's main activities will kick off at 11:00 a.m. Actors portraying Presidents John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, and

Theodore Roosevelt, and First Lady Abigail Adams will share stories and engage visitors in conversation.

Festival-goers can enjoy Museum tours and activities that bring history to life for all ages. This year, the Festival will feature special election-themed activities – visitors of all ages can make their own Kennedy hats, design campaign buttons, and test their presidential trivia knowledge – to complement election day 2024. The Festival will close with a special free concert by the Harvard Din & Tonics, who will perform Kennedy campaign songs and popular music from the 1960s and today.

Visit [www.jfklibrary.org/PresidentsDay](http://www.jfklibrary.org/PresidentsDay) for a detailed schedule of the Presidents' Day Festival offerings. Registration

is recommended.

Special Festival activities are free with paid adult admission.

The Harvard Din & Tonics closing concert is free for all. The Festival is especially appropriate for ages 7 and up.

**Celebrate! with Len Cabral – Stories of Hope and Joy**

Thursday, February 22, 2024  
10:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

Internationally renowned storyteller Len Cabral shares stories of the power of hopeful actions and shared joy in honor of Black History Month. Folktales, myths, and personal accounts come to life with humor, wisdom, and compassion that will inspire listeners of all ages.

The Celebrate! series, appropriate for family audiences and children ages 5 and up, high-

lights America's rich cultural diversity through the arts. This program reflects President and Mrs. Kennedy's concern for and support of the arts and culture as important components of a democratic society. In order to optimize your comfort and enjoyment, reservations are recommended for all visitors to this free program. Make reservations by visiting [www.jfklibrary.org/celebrate](http://www.jfklibrary.org/celebrate) or calling 617-514-1644 and leaving a message. Children are seated on the floor with their caretakers and space is available on a first-come, first-served basis. Limited seats are available for people with disabilities, seniors, and others unable to sit on the floor. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

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