

MAYOR MENINO ANNOUNCES ENERGY PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE BHA AND KEYSpan

While temperatures hovered below freezing, Mayor Thomas M. Menino recently announced the results of a unique public/private partnership with KeySpan Energy New England that promotes and supports energy efficiency and improved comfort for residents of Boston Housing Authority. He made the announcement at the Orient Heights public housing development in East Boston, which recently converted from oil to gas heat.

“In these difficult fiscal times, it is imperative that we look toward creative ways to save money while also giving our citizens the services they need,” said Mayor Thomas M. Menino. “KeySpan and the BHA should be commended for the work they have done to both improve the heating systems for residents and save money at the same time. I look forward to participating in similar projects with KeySpan in the future.”

Through this historic partnership with the Boston Housing Authority, KeySpan has assisted the BHA in saving millions of taxpayer dollars through energy related initiatives and conversions. These initiatives allow the BHA to make capital improvements to its housing that provide residents with better heating with more environmentally friendly equipment and technology. These measures include rezoned heating systems, high efficiency hot water boilers, insulation and Energy Star windows.

Sandy Ortiz, leader of the Orient Heights Neighborhood Organization, believes “residents are very happy with how the new heating system is working.” “When they wake up in the morning, the floors are warm,” highlighted Ortiz.

With savings generated from the energy

improvements and rebates from KeySpan that total more than \$1 million, the BHA has been able to make improvements at the Orient Heights, Archdale, West

Broadway, Foley, Franklin Hill, Franklin Field, Lenox, Bromley-Heath, Mary Ellen McCormack, Patricia White, and West Ninth Street developments. It is estimated that the BHA saved more than \$400,000 in gas savings for the work that has been done thus far. In addition, KeySpan has committed \$290,000 worth of efficiency rebates this year to the BHA for improvements at four housing developments. It is expected that this work will

generate about \$200,000 per year in gas savings.

“This partnership is a winning proposition for everybody,” said Nick Stavropoulos, President of KeySpan Energy Delivery New England. “The residents get improved quality of life, the taxpayers save money and we are able to continue to provide high quality, energy efficient and environmentally

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Sandra Henriquez, BHA Administrator/CEO (I) and KeySpan President Nick Stavropoulos discuss the energy partnership at the Orient Heights event.

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WINTER CELEBRATIONS

There were a number of celebrations, dedications and get-togethers during the holiday time, some of which are reflected in the photos below. In addition to the events below, Archdale had a community get-together and tree-lighting for the first time drawing over 50 children, State Representative Liz Malia, City Councilor Rob Consalvo and a number of community activists and neighbors. The event was so successful, it generated extensive coverage in the West Roxbury Bulletin. Also in Roslindale, the team at Washington-Beech hosted a holiday party drawing 40 kids, residents and staff. This event included the erection of a hand-decorated tree at the development. Unfortunately, BHA Today was unable to obtain photos of these two events.



The John C. Berlandi Garden at Old Colony is unveiled and dedicated.



Orient Heights residents and staff enjoy Thanksgiving dinner.



The Old Colony Tenant Force hosted a holiday party drawing hundreds of residents.



Charlestown celebrated a successful Unity Day.

OUT & ABOUT

BHA POLICE TEAM-UP TO BRING CHEER THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

Every year the BHA Police step up their efforts during the holiday season. This year they continued their yearly tradition of organizing the Children's Holiday Party, which draws nearly 1,000 BHA children, and distributed over 250 turkey dinners to families in BHA housing. This year they also served hot turkey dinners to elderly/disabled residents at the Amory Street and Bellflower developments. The BHA Police formed a strong and growing partnership with staff and students at Boston College High School, who donated funds and food toward the turkey drive, as well as time to help serve the dinners and assist at the Children's Holiday Party. Also assisting at the Children's Holiday Party were youth from St. John the Baptist Church in Quincy. The church, along with the Municipal Police Patrolmen's Association assisted with gifts and funding for the Children's Party as well. Photos are below.



Students from Boston College High School help fill up a truck with donated food for turkey dinners.



Face painting and balloon making are part of the fun at the BHA Children's Holiday Party.



Amory Street residents enjoy their turkey dinners and take some time out to relax.

BOSTON HOUSING AUTHORITY FILES AGENCY PLAN WITH HUD

Each year the Boston Housing Authority submits an Agency Plan to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. This plan outlines the BHA plans and goals for the coming year. The Agency Plan contains an enormous amount of information on a broad range of topics. It may not be the type of document that you would sit down and read cover to cover, or would call a “page-turner,” but it does provide a wealth of useful information and can be used as a great resource.

Putting the Agency Plan together is a collaborative effort requiring input from nearly every department within the BHA. In addition to an ongoing internal process, the BHA meets regularly with the Resident Advisory Board (and some advocates) to discuss the Agency Plan and any significant changes. The Resident Advisory Board (RAB) is comprised of 30 residents and voucher holders who have been elected to the position of board member for a two-year term. With each Agency Plan submission, the BHA is required to undertake a public process of review and public comment. One of the many interesting attachments to the Agency Plan documents all of the comments the BHA has received and includes an official response to each comment.

The first Agency Plan was submitted in February 2000 in compliance with the Housing Quality and Work Responsibility Act. The BHA recently submitted its fourth Agency Plan covering fiscal year 2003 on January 10. HUD is required to review the document and reply before the start of the fiscal year on April 1.

Mayor Menino announces energy partnership between the BHA and KeySpan *continued from page 1*

sensitive service. We look forward to continued collaboration.”

KeySpan provided additional support that allowed the BHA to remove old underground oil storage tanks and incentives to assist in the replacement of failed steam traps. KeySpan’s support provided leverage needed for BHA to structure a payment plan financed over time by the energy savings created by the projects.

The BHA and KeySpan pledged to continue their partnership into the future. KeySpan has already committed \$290,000 in rebates for four BHA properties during the next two years. This includes a rebate of approximately \$150,000 toward the installation of high efficiency heating equipment, wall and roof insulation, and a rezoning of the heating system in three previously abandoned buildings at the Bromley-Heath development in Jamaica Plain.

HUD can either approve the plan or cite any deficiencies that need to be corrected before the Agency Plan is approved.

This most recent submission proposes a number of significant changes. One proposal is to merge the current Admission and Continued Occupancy Policy for the Family Program and the Tenant Selection and Assignment and Transfer Plan in use in our elderly/disabled program. This would create one Admissions and Continued Occupancy Policy for the Public Housing Program to be known as ACOP. The merged policy would implement a site-based wait list for all BHA properties. Applicants and residents would be able to choose to apply for assignment to any or all BHA properties for which they qualify, rather than only applying to a citywide list. Another change involved adding a site-based wait list assessment attachment that will study the impact of site-based waiting lists at the Hope VI sites. In the future, when the ACOP is reapproved, the BHA will have to include an assessment for all sites with new site-based waiting lists. In response to a particular comment, the BHA has added the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program Priority 1 Information Sheet to provide detail on who is included in the priority 1 category.

If you would like to read more about the Agency Plan, it is available on the BHA website, in the government documents section of the Boston Public Library, in the planning department library, and in local tenant organization offices in developments around the city.

For several years, the BHA has been developing and engaging in various projects that pay for needed capital improvements and improve energy efficiency through the use of energy savings. Through two previous energy performance projects, the BHA was able to replace the entire heating system at the Mary Ellen McCormack housing development in South Boston at an estimated savings of almost \$9 million. In addition, energy and water upgrades were installed at six BHA state-funded developments at an estimated savings of more than \$7 million.

Partners such as the Department of Housing and Community Development, Department of Housing and Urban Development, Peregrine Energy, ReBuild Boston and NSTAR have been instrumental in assisting with the above and other energy-efficiency projects at a number of BHA developments.

SUFFREDINI COMPUTING CENTER DEDICATED

In a ceremony held in January, the MIS Department officially dedicated its computing center to Peter Suffredini, the department's recently retired Director of Data Processing.

Suffredini's former MIS colleagues joined well-wishers from other departments on the sixth floor of 52 Chauncy Street, where a plaque designating the center in Suffredini's name was unveiled.

In a letter to Suffredini, whose service at the BHA spanned nearly 34 years from December of 1968 until his September retirement, BHA Administrator Sandra Henriquez wrote:

"I can think of no more fitting tribute to you, Peter, that you should be remembered

each time the door of the computer center is opened by an MIS department employee seeking to carry on your exemplary tradition of rendering assistance to colleagues and — by extension — to those seeking housing in the City of Boston."

"Thank you for so many years of unblemished public service," continued Henriquez. "It is my most heartfelt wish that you enjoy a happy, healthy and productive retirement."

Suffredini, who began working at the BHA at age 26, supported the Leased Housing and Payroll departments and played a major role in the adoption of the CCS general ledger software. In 1993, he was also involved in the conversion of custom software code from the McDonnell-Douglas mainframe computer to the Sun Microsystems server now in use.

Suffredini lives in Medford with his wife Diane, a travel agent.



BHA FAMILIES BENEFIT FROM NEW FLEET FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY LOANS

The Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) Program coordinators at the Boston Housing Authority, in cooperation with Fleet Bank, 37 other housing authorities and various non-profit organizations, recently launched a pilot loan program. These loans are targeted toward families already enrolled in the FSS Program, who need credit to pay for transportation, school tuition, childcare, debt consolidation, and other costs that may interrupt their route toward self-sufficiency. The loans are administered by Fleet Bank and were the brainchild of the Massachusetts FSS Coordinators Group. An accredited, non-profit community service organization that helps individuals and families regain control over their finances, Consumer Credit Counseling Service, also collaborated on the development of this unique program.

Suzanne Forgione, a BHA FSS Coordinator and a member of the Massachusetts FSS Coordinators Group Loan Committee believes "that the loans will become a tool for people to become more financially literate and for families to achieve self-sufficiency."

The Family Self-Sufficiency Program is designed to help families receiving Section 8 rental assistance

become self-supporting. This program is voluntary and open to all families receiving Section 8 assistance through the Boston Housing Authority. The only requirements are a desire to become self-sufficient and a willingness to take the steps to make this happen. The FSS Program provides support and assistance to the entire family for up to five years. The head of household enters into a five-year contract with the BHA. This contract contains a service plan that identifies the employment goal of the participant and outlines the activities and services necessary to achieve this goal. The FSS coordinator helps the family obtain the services listed in the plan. The BHA establishes an escrow account when the family increases its earned income, instead of raising the resident's rent.

Emergencies, such as lack of transportation or childcare can wreak havoc on any budget, but low-income families are particularly at risk. Many Section 8 recipients do not accumulate any money in their escrow accounts for the first year or two that they participate in the FSS Program. Access to the funds in the escrow is also highly regulated by HUD.

The Fleet/FSS Loan Program was created to bridge this gap, and also allow families to rebuild

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JOB WELL DONE

Gloria Meneses, Occupancy, appeared on ABCD's cable show recently. She helped viewers understand BHA application procedures.

In November **Linda Fahy**, Operations, received the **Trunk Award** from the Massachusetts Community Forestry Council for outstanding support of urban and community forests.

Thanks go to **Denise Murphy, Billy Wuschke, Donald Graham, Joan Shea, Kellie Dean, Gwen Friend, Linda Fahy, Hugh Donovan, Dick L'Europa, Barney Murphree, Dan Casals, Donna Tansey, Pat Collins, Christine Curry** and **Pat O'Reilly** for their assistance with the Franklin Field grading, landscaping and safety project.

Dick L'Europa thanks his colleagues, **Christine Curry, Steve Vitello, Mitch Allen, Jim Fenton, Hugh Donovan, Kevin Davis, Zenaida Figueroa,** and **Regina Dennis**, who assisted in the claim settlement for loss to the Amory Street alarm system.

Jim Reed and **Lydia Agro** thank **Sister Mary Adele Robinson** and **Beverly Donovan** from the Labouré Center, **Kate Bennett** from Planning, **Zaida Roshandel** and **Joe Bamberg** from Real Estate, **ICON Architecture, Environmental Demolition Services, Bill McGonagle, Steve Melia, Lori Luce, Wanda Roldan, Emanuel Goodloe, Leo McCue, Ed Kelly, Sean Connaughton, Joe Mulligan, Richard Seward, Shirley Steed, Kevin Scott, Barbara Mellan** and the **West Broadway Tenant Task Force**, who assisted with the demolition event at West Broadway.

The **Washington-Beech Holiday Party** was a great success. With 40 children, their parents, and other residents in attendance, a hand-decorated tree erected at the development. **Bob MacGregor** would like to thank the development staff, as well as **Maria Chávez** and **Rachel Goodman** for the outstanding work—the residents are all talking about how great it was.

The **Employee Holiday Party** was a great success. The organizers would like to recognize: **Lydia Agro, Patricia Barry, Peter Brouwer, David Caban, Joanne Carrasquillo, Mike Cimino, Barbara Clanton, Gladys DiChiara, Rachel Goodman, Linda Fahy, Irma Gomes, Chris Hansen, Jake Lavin, Angel Lopez, Lori Luce, Bobby Marino, George McGrath, Joshuah Mello,**

Gloria Meneses, John Moxley, Bob MacGregor, Barney Murphree, Nancy Otero, Jim Reed, Sandra Redish, Matthew Richardson, Theresa Roberts, Ruth Santiago, Carolyn Seymour, Gerry Smith-Hibbert, Dianne Williams, Michael Williams, Stephanie Utring, Accounts Payable, the Payroll Department, Gladys DiChiara, Reema Khan, Bill McGonagle, Joyce Tognacci, Contract Flooring, Gold Star Nurseries, Inc., Laborers Local 367, Seanes Landscaping, Teamsters Local 122, National Conference of Firemen and Oilers Local 3, Tree Tech Inc., Wayne's Drains and **David Caban** for their help.

Gwen Friend, Director of Property Management, presented *SUCH GOOD WORK AWARDS!* to the **Franklin Hill** team for high occupancy and rent collection and low outstanding tenant status reviews (TSRs), the **Codman/Meade/Bellflower** team for high occupancy and low work order turnaround time and TSRs, and to the **Ashmont/Peabody/Davison** team for high occupancy, low work order turnaround time and high rent collection. Winning the *EXCELLENCE AWARD!* (for all four categories) were the **Cathedral** team, headed by **Joanne Moore, Waleska Figueroa, Billy Wuschke** and **Carvis Hollis** and the **Roslyn/Rockland/Spring Street** team, headed by **Barbara Martin, Paul Gorham, Steve Bennett, Jose Ruiz** and **Javier Soto**.

Theresa Roberts, Hassan, thanks **Dan Duffy** (a.k.a. Doktor Dan the Plant Man), who donated, arranged and maintained the tropical plants in the atrium at Hassan.

Kellie Dean, Charlestown, thanks her staff, **Francina Brown, Michelle Feliz, Peter Wu, Maritza Rodriguez, Fred Hodges, Alfonso Williams, Eddie Toomer** and **Eddie LaSanta**, for their effort with the Unity Day celebration. Special thanks also goes to **Gwen Friend; Rachel Goodman, Raul Solano, Greg Davis** and **Perfecta Laboy** from CSD; **Fred Tomaino** and **Matthew Richardson** from Budget; **Charlie Kilroy, Mike Cimino**, the Accounts Payable staff, and **Manuela Estevez**.

Two BHA garage mechanics (**Warren Smith** and **Robert Pinchieri**) will be going to **Ford Motor Company School** for certification as Ford automobile repairmen at no cost to the authority.

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Dick L'Europa, of Risk Management would like to thank Warren who had the idea and Donna Tansey, in Procurement, who arranged the program.

Risk Management delivered to the **Fiscal Department** a check for \$388,234 from ACE Insurance Company, the authority's workers' compensation insurance carrier from 1991 to 1997. The check represents one year's work by the department in an effort to recover money for old BHA workers' compensation insurance claims. **Dick L'Europa** would like to thank **Barney Murphree** and **Michael Williams** for all their help in this effort.

Risk Management announces the winners of its **Yellow Diamond Awards: Chris LeZama** and the staff of **Pasciucco, Annapolis, and Franklin Field Elderly; Paul Neves, Jennifer Haynes**, and the staff of **Lenox; Barbara Martin** and the staff of **Roslyn, Rockland Towers, and Spring Street**. The awards recognize the consistent observation of safety procedures, striving to create a safe working environment, and the correction of safety hazards.

Ruth Olsen, FSS Coordinator, received a certificate of appreciation at Boston Aging Concerns' Annual meeting in appreciation of her "dedication

and commitment to Boston Aging Concerns: Young and Old United." She was honored for her work with the agency's grandparent program.

Through the efforts of the **Chauncy Street Risk Control Committee** and **Mitchell Allen**, all of the emergency telephones in the Chauncy Street elevators are functional.

Chuck Walker, Janet Penn, the Sharon MLK Committee and residents of the Sharon, Massachusetts would like to thank **Michelle Ekanem, Dawn Hadley** (Office of Civil Rights) and the members of BHA Diversity Theatre for their presentation of scenes from the play *SKIN* at Sharon's Martin Luther King, Jr. Day celebration. Janet Penn writes: "The scenes you delivered last night were very powerful and meaningful. They were thought provoking and served as a jumping off point for discussion about discrimination that would otherwise not have happened. The actors were poised, but real, energetic and convincing. We were all greatly enriched by their presence, and appreciate their willingness to take part in the discussion, not to mention, making the drive on a school night! We send our warmest thanks and regards."



BHA families benefit from new Fleet Family Self-Sufficiency Loans *continued from page 5*

their credit, often damaged by high credit card debt and other financial troubles. All families in the FSS Program are eligible for a loan. FSS coordinators outline loan application procedures to potential applicants. Applicants must be in good standing, employed full-time and have enough surplus income to make loan payments. Those applying cannot have a record of bankruptcy within the last two years, default on student loans, outstanding child support or other "charge-offs." Applications are then transmitted to Consumer Credit Counseling Service, which calculates the ability of the family to make regular loan payments.

After a family is approved for a loan, ranging

from \$500 to \$7500, all of the information is transmitted to Fleet and the loan is disbursed. Interest rates are fixed at an annual rate of 9.74% or 9.99%, depending on the method of repayment. These rates are dramatically lower than those charged by credit card lenders, allowing many families to pay off outstanding credit card debt. So far six loans, and a total of \$25,200, have been dispensed to families receiving BHA Section 8 vouchers. Over 100 loans have been disbursed throughout the entire state of Massachusetts.

Many view the loan program as a great success and the team from Massachusetts has been invited to outline the program to Rhode Island FSS Coordinators.

New employees as of December 30, 2002:

Harold Driver, *Mary Ellen McCormack* • William Earley, *Mary Ellen McCormack* • James Imbruglia, Jr., *Operations* • Cynthia Jimenez, *Community Services* • Stephen Kineavy, *Elderly Area* • Jacob Lavin, *Civil Rights* • Edward Magee, *West Broadway* • Amelia Mochny, *Leased Housing* • Joseph O'Neil, *Maverick* • Joseph Pattavina, *Operations* • Robert Quinn, *Leased Housing* • Cruz Rodriguez, *Lenox/Camden* • James Ronan, *Vacancy Rehab* • Roselee Ross, *Legal* • Peter Wu, *Charlestown*

HEALTHY PUBLIC HOUSING INITIATIVE TACKLES ASTHMA IN BOSTON

In December, twelve proud residents of Boston Housing Authority developments graduated from an intensive training program in asthma education, research, and advocacy. The newly certified *community health advocates* are already working with 40 families in the Franklin Hill, West Broadway, and Washington-Beech developments. They are currently documenting the health status of children with asthma and initiating environmental improvements to the children's apartments. One of these improvements is the introduction of pest control techniques that may lessen the impacts of asthma.

The advocates are part of an innovative community/university/city collaborative known as the Healthy Public Housing Initiative (HPHI). The HPHI partners include the Boston Housing Authority, the tenant task forces at West Broadway and Franklin Hill, the Committee for Boston Public Housing, the Boston Public Health Commission, Boston University and Harvard University Schools of Public Health, and Tufts University School of Medicine. This multi-partner project is unique in that the community

health advocates double as field researchers and serve as a link between members of community

organizations, city agencies, universities and public housing residents. The project aims to demonstrate the health benefits of environmentally-sound pest control to those with asthma. The lessons learned will be documented for replication in public housing communities across the nation.

"We are especially committed to building knowledge, skills, and abilities in the residents we have trained and hired as our community health advocates," declared H. Patricia Hynes, a professor the Boston University School of Public Health and co-director of the Healthy Public Housing Initiative. "We believe that the intelligence, commitment, and accomplishments of the residents in their role as health advocates and community researchers is a model for other community-university partnerships nationwide."

Following four years of pilot studies and planning, the Healthy Public Housing Initiative began formally in 2001 with funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Boston Foundation, the Jessie B. Cox Charitable Trust, and, recently, the Kellogg Foundation.



The team of university, city, community, and BHA residents involved in the Healthy Public Housing initiative (HPHI).



Researchers Doug Brugge of the Tufts University School of Medicine, Community Health Advocate Rosaira Perez, Jack Spengler of the Harvard School of Public Health, and H. Patricia Hynes of the Boston University School of Public Health.

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The BHA Communications Committee advises the editor, guides content for BHA Today and works on other BHA communications related issues. Active committee members are [Declan Breslin](#)/Public Safety; [Brenda Cora](#)/Elderly; [Christine Curry](#)/Elderly; [Barbara Donovan](#)/Purchasing; [Morris Flood](#)/Budget; [Peg Kennedy](#)/Elderly; [Jim LaCroix](#)/Elderly; [Steve Melia](#)/Public Safety; [Bernice Ryner](#)/Leased Housing Inspections; and [Joshuah Mello](#)/Communications.

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