

BUS STOP RETURNS TO WASHINGTON MANOR

Residents of the Washington Manor development in the South End have won an important battle in the war for mobility. The tenant task force, backed by the BHA administration and city leaders, persuaded the MBTA to reverse a decision to remove an important bus stop adjacent to the building.

Herbert McCarter, former vice president of the Washington Manor Tenant Task Force, saw it as a “blessing that they restored the bus stop for those who desperately need it.”

While the MBTA agreed immediately that it had made a mistake, the solution to the problem and actual restoration of the bus stop was an intense process for residents, consisting of five meetings during a four-week period, and continuous correspondence with elected officials and those representing the elderly and disabled.

Donna Henderson, secretary and long-time member of the task force, was particularly appreciative of the help residents received from Jennifer Jacobs – a liaison from Mass Senior Action, and State Representative Byron Rushing, and State Senator Dianne Wilkerson.

As a result of the residents’ hard work, the MBTA has rerouted the number 8 bus to stop in front of the 1701 Washington Street building as the short-term solution. As a long-term solution the T has decided to put a Silver Line stop in front of the building in the next two to three months so residents will have direct access to the Silver Line.

Task Force President Carol Miller, holding a file 4 inches thick containing various letters, flyers and documents pertaining to the battle, recalled the meeting held on July 30 where the T “admitted they

were wrong and said they were going to fix it.” While Miller expressed frustration with the level of work it took for residents to resolve the issue with the MBTA, she said she was very pleased with the outcome and thanked MBTA General Manager Mike Mulhern for bringing the bus stop back. She said residents had the

support of many people, such as elected officials and representatives from the Massachusetts Senior Action Council, as well.

The problem began for residents on July 20 when the MBTA debuted its first bus rapid transit line. After a long community input process, the T replaced the route 49 bus with the Silver Line from Dudley Station to Downtown Crossing along Washington Street. To offer a faster and more reliable trip, the service uses a special reserved bus lane, priority signals,

compressed natural gas buses and serves fewer stops. It is the last part of the project that bothered residents of the Washington Manor development.

The bus stop in front of Washington Manor was not one of the stops served by the new Silver Line.

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Members of the Washington Manor Tenant Task Force stand next to their bus stop, which they won back after a long and arduous process. From left to right, the members are: former Vice-President Herbert McCarter, President Carol Miller, Vice-President Warren Sapp, Secretary Donna Henderson and Jesse Sanders.

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DEVELOPMENTS HOLD SUMMER UNITY DAYS

Developments throughout the city are holding Unity Days this summer. The events, a way for residents to get to know each other better, feature food, entertainment, and games, as well as other activities for kids and adults.

Unity Days were started in the 1980s in response to neighborhood tensions. The first Unity Day was at the Washington Beech housing development in Roslindale. The event was so successful that other developments began having Unity Days and now each BHA housing development has its own annual Unity Day during the summer months.



Unity Day at Franklin Hill featured face-painting for the youngsters.



Maverick Gardens held its annual Unity day this summer.



South Street residents received free medical check-ups at their Unity Day festival.



The Unity Day celebration at South Street brought out the smiles.

Bus stop returns to Washington Manor *continued from page 1*

Beginning on July 20, the residents – all of whom are either elderly or disabled – were forced to travel two blocks and cross busy Massachusetts Avenue to reach the nearest “station-stop.”

This created an outcry from the building’s residents, many of whom depend on public transportation to go shopping and attend doctor’s appointments. Henderson questioned the T’s outreach efforts. “They just came in and took the sign down,” she remembers.

Sandra Henriquez, BHA Administrator, heard the residents’ call and crafted a letter to MBTA General Manager Michael Mulhern. In the letter she wrote, “The change in location will place a great burden on residents.”

“Our elderly residents greatly depend on public transportation. Massachusetts Avenue is a very busy intersection that poses risks to all pedestrians, in the

best weather. I hate to think of the challenges the residents will face in the winter. I appeal to you to reconsider the change in this stop location.”

The MBTA claimed that the decision to remove the stop was made by a committee “comprised of over 50 individuals with broad representation from the community.” In a letter to Administrator Henriquez, the MBTA general manager wrote, “Over sixty meetings were held to discuss all aspects of the location for every Silver Line stop.”

After hearing from Mulhern that the bus stop would be returned, Henriquez thanked him and praised the MBTA for “mak[ing] decisions based on what is in the interest of public good rather than what is expedient.”

Along with the residents listed above, new Task Force Vice-President Warren Sapp was also instrumental in the return of the bus stop.

OUT & ABOUT

FROM THE WORLD TO ASHMONT STREET

The Ashmont Street Tenant Task Force presented a health fair and multi-cultural cookout on Friday, September 16. The event featured food from Vietnam, Portugal, Jamaica, China, the US and many other nations. Reggae, gospel and Motown music filled the air, as tenants and neighbors collected important health and community information provided by Codman Square Health Center, Mass Senior Action and other area organizations.

A board with facts, figures and photos of nations throughout the world hung behind a long table holding steaming ribs, corn, rice and beans, Portuguese pasteis, and other international



Maria Fernandes, Ermit o Miranda, Henry Barboza, David Bouffard, Adeline McFarlan, and Anica Fernandes (clockwise from left).



The organizers of the event, Tenant Task Force Treasurer Esther Pendleton, BHA Community Services' Gloria Johnson, President Mary Burke, and Vice-President Patricia Catoe (l to r), pose in front of the multicultural buffet and information board.

delicacies. Outside, music and smoke from the grill wafted through the air, as residents, staff, and guests tackled well-stacked plates of food. Sunshine and mild temperatures greeted those in attendance.

Staff from various community groups were on hand to provide information on Medicare, prescription drug plans, senior health and other relevant issues.

New Employees:

Maria Chavez, *Community Services* • John Connolly, *Vacancy Rehab* • Sonya Davis, *Leased Housing* • Juan DeGallego, *Old Colony* • Michael Doherty, *Leased Housing* • Donna Domagala, *Legal* • Prince Haraway, *Elderly Area* • Geneva Johnson, *Torre Unidad* • Asad Khan, *Finance and Accounts* • Evangelista Lopez, *Capital Construction* • Joseph Meara, *Washington Beech* • Joshua Mello, *Communications* • Gustavo Montas, *Walnut Park* • Joanna O'Neill, *Leased Housing* • Salvador Pagan, *Frederick Douglass* • Madelaine Thompson, *Leased Housing* • Kevin Wood, *Elderly Area*

JOB WELL DONE

The BHA was recently awarded \$50,000 (BHA received an earlier award of \$150,000) from the Edward Ingersoll Browne Trust Fund for a planetary-themed educational walkway at Mary Ellen McCormack. Capital Construction's Dana Dilworth recognizes Project Manager Leo Murphy for "his extra efforts on behalf of the project and for his very persuasive persistence," which helped to secure the additional funding.

A special thanks to those who helped during the recent flood at Amory Street, including: **Mike Cook, Merville Crowe, Kevin Davis, Miguel Diaz, Hugh Donovan, Zenaída Figueroa, Robert Flood, Carl Foster, Ervan Fuller, Dave Geezil, Jay Gonzalez, Francis Heywood, James Mervin, John Moses, Ed Roth, James Fenton, Norma Lynch, Mike Maher, Jimmy Moore, Jr., Daniel Perez, Junior Valentin, and Wilson Villifane.**

Eleven residents/section 8 voucher holders recently graduated from the West Broadway Information Technology Literacy Program. Congrats goes to **Rachel Goodman** for a great program and to all of the graduates.

Civil Rights' **Jill Zellmer** and CSD's **Ron Marlow** thank **Vitali Chernikov** of MIS for his help in translating an important document into Russian.

The Patricia White Tenants Crime Watch were one of 10 crime watch groups recently selected "Crime Watch Groups of the Year" by the Boston Police Department.

Peter Brouwer, of Office Management, and **Carmelo Calderon**, of Operations, thank **Louie Sasso** and **Leroy Shelton**, of Office Management, for assisting several people trapped in an elevator.

Monsignor Powers staff wish long-time Resident Custodian **Nick Drummy** well in his July 31 retirement. Drummy has been with the BHA 39 years, 14 of them at Monsignor Powers.

Congrats to Administration's **Anel Mejia** on the August 2 birth of her son, Andres Sebastian, who weighed in at 8 lbs., 1 oz. and was 20 in. long. Mother and son are well.

The Operations, Public Safety and Risk Management departments thank the committee overseeing Liberty Mutual's assessment of BHA work place safety and disability management practices,

including: **Lori Luce**, Program Maintenance Supervisor; **Jim Fenton**, Director of Elderly Maintenance; **Jim Daley**, carpenter, Maverick; **Al Whigham**, electrician, Franklin Hill; **Ed Toomer**, laborer, Charlestown; **Jim McCarthy**, Manager, Franklin Hill; **Gwen Friend**, Director of Property Management; **Hugh Donovan**, Director of Building Maintenance; **Declan Breslin**, Acting Police Sergeant; **Duayne Nelson**, police officer; **Mitch Allen**, Service Programs Coordinator; **Dick L'Europa**, Director of Risk Management; and **Barney Murphree**, Risk Management.

Director of CSD **Ron Marlow** acknowledged the Elderly/Disabled Resident Service Coordinators for their work with senior/disabled residents during a recent heat wave, including: **Cynthia Collins, Gloria Johnson, Dwayne Morales** and Program Director **Al Davis.**

Assistant Director of Property Management **Regina Dennis** recognizes staff at Codman and Peabody/Englewood for caring for residents during a power outage. Special thanks to **Leslie Peters, Cheryl Girvan, Audrey Perkins-Brown, Debbie Ashe, Jimmy Fenton, Al Davis, Francis Heywood, Dwayne Morales, Gloria Johnson, Jay Gonzalez** and **John Moses.**

BHA Administrator **Sandra Henriquez** congratulates **Ralph Currie** and **Deborah McBrayer** for their efforts at **Stand Down 2002**, an annual event organized by the US Department of Veteran Affairs to aid homeless veterans. Carol Klein, of Health Care for Homeless Veterans and an event organizer, praised Ralph and Deborah in a letter to the administrator, calling the pair "the most congenial, resilient, dedicated and capable group" at the event.

Lydia Agro thanks **Linda Fahy, Bernice (Bunny) Ryner, Gloria Johnson, Maya Hasegawa,** and **Sandra Henriquez** for participating in the Heart Walk. **Fahy** won the duffle bag and raised \$560! **Johnson** came in second and raised more than \$200!

During Unity Day, the **West Broadway Task Force** presented "Recognition Awards" to **Shirley Steed, Joe Mulligan** and **Cruz Rodriques** for maintaining the landscaping. **James Reed** thanks all of the staff at West Broadway, in particular **Richard Seward, Emanuel Goodloe** and **Shirley Steed**, for

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EARLY RETIREMENT VISITS THE BHA

Earlier this year, the Massachusetts legislature passed a bill authorizing cities and towns to offer early retirement packages to municipal employees, including those at local housing authorities. The Early Retirement Incentive (ERI) program, enacted to reduce budgetary expenditures, offers employees five extra years of service, an extra five years of age, or some combination of the two. This allows the employees to draw retirement benefits five years earlier than they would without the program. Those eligible must have at least 20 years of service, or be at least 55 with 10 years of service.

The BHA chose to participate in the ERI program and 32 staff members retired on September 30, 2002, the date set by the State-Boston Retirement Board. Of those that applied, the 32 below were selected by the Retirement Board based on their total number of years of credible service in the state/city retirement system.

The employee with the highest number of years of credible service was Edwin Roth, who has 39 years and 5 months credit toward retirement! Roth says he plans to "take it easy and have a good time for himself." Ed also "remembers all his true and dear friends at the BHA, who have helped him throughout the years."

The BHA employees who have been selected to take early retirement are:

Edwin Roth, *Director, ERS/ Operations*; James Devaney, *Resident Custodian, Pond Street*; Margarette Dukes, *Deputy Administrator, Administration*; Joan Cass,

Housing Manager I, Torre Unidad; Edward Civitarese, *Laborer*; Mary Ellen McCormack; James Moore, Jr., *Labor/Mgmt. Coordinator, Human Resources*; Peter Suffredini, *Leased Housing Analyst, MIS*; Johnnie Gorham, *Glazier, Amory Street*; Teresa Murphy, *Regional Property Mgr, Operations*; Gerard Geary, *Maintenance Supt., Charlestown*; Rupert Walcott, *Maintenance Supt., Gallivan Boulevard*; John Schaffner, Jr., *Sr. Program Coordinator, Capital Construction*; Jessie Stokes, *Maintenance Supt., Charlestown*; Hattie Hunter, *Services Coordinator, Occupancy*; James Orlando, *Heating Sys. Coordinator, RS/ Operations*; Richard LeBlanc, *Laborer, Orient Heights*; Charles Stewart; Carmelo Calderon, *Asst. to Program & Policy, Operations*; Patrick Bligh, *Steamfitter*; Mary Ellen McCormack; William Keady, *Fireman Lp, Washington Beech*; Jean Morrison, *Contract Coordinator, Purchasing*; James Porter, *Housing Inspector, Leased Housing*; Arthur Spacone, *Senior Inspector Lease, Leased Housing*; Robert Buckley, *Prog. Maintenance Supt., Charlestown*; Philip Powell, *Director, Central Stores*; Priscilla Queally, *Associate, Finance & Accounts*; Maureen Kennedy, *Administrative Secretary, Leased Housing*; Ronald Tierney, *Electrician, Operations*; William Wormstead, *Carpenter, Torre Unidad*; James Kelley, *Fireman Lp, ERS/ Operations*; Marguerite Young, *Senior Secretary, Franklin Field*; Eugene Mullen, *Plumber, Old Colony*.

Robert Carr and Tommy Johnson, both laborers, also retired this month.

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their participation and efforts to make this year's Unity Day event a success.

Sheila Donahue gets the Customer Service award for the month! Recently, Sheila was stuck in an elevator with a staff person and a customer visiting Leased Housing. Rather than panic, Sheila turned to the customer and calmly said, "Well, since we're in here, is there something I can help you with?"

Much thanks go to **Hugh Donovan** and **Steve Melia** for volunteering to give out pencils on the first day of school!

Linda Fahy, Landscape Management Coordinator, and **Jim LaCroix**, E/D Maintenance Superintendent, thank **Paulette Davis** and **Javier**

Soto for their extra efforts to prepare the grounds at **JJ Meade** and **Spring Street** for the East Region's training on Fall Landscape Care & Curb Appeal.

Carol Moran (and the rest of us) would like to thank **Debbie Sullivan**, **Raul Leon**, **Judy Howlett**, **Ed Lato**, **Linda LeClair** and **Fay Wong** for their outstanding efforts and teamwork to get the bonus payments out. "You all pulled together, without complaint, and did an amazing job turning this job around within a very short time frame! You made many people very happy and I sincerely thank you for your successful efforts on behalf of the BHA and its affected employees."

The BHA recently celebrated the successful completion of the Economic Development and Supportive Services program (EDSS). For the past two years, the Community Services Department (CSD) has administered the EDSS program, which is funded by HUD. EDSS has helped hundreds of BHA residents, both public housing and Section 8, find the right job opportunity or job training program.

Many of the BHA's key partners were at the celebration (see list of collaborators at end of article). The Administrator kicked off the party by marking some of the program's key achievements including:

- 846 residents enrolled into the program
- 337 residents achieved employment

- Average wage earned was \$9.50/hour (well above the state's minimum hourly wage of \$6.75)

Although the EDSS program has come to an end, many successful pieces of the program will be integrated into the Community Services Department's Workforce Development agenda.

"EDSS has taught, and confirmed for, us that public housing residents want to work. Often, it is a lack of information and/or a series of personal barriers that stand in the way of them making the transition from dependency to work. While the program has ended, the processes will continue and will take place in the broader context of CSD's Workforce Development agenda," said Ron Marlow, Director of CSD.

Each of these efforts represents a piece to the workforce development puzzle. Through each program and initiative, the BHA will provide residents with multiple paths to self-sufficiency. What follows is a brief explanation of each program.

Washington Beech Resource and Development Center:

Through this center, residents will work with the CSD Resident Services Coordinator Maria Del Carmen Chavez, to develop an Individualized Service Plan, which identifies goals, actions and strategies for achieving economic self-sufficiency. Residents will be able to access detailed information on the most current education, General Equivalency Diploma (GED), English and Other Languages (ESOL), job readiness, financial awareness, health and well-being, legal services, employment listings, and training opportunities. Many services will be delivered on-site

such as job search, job readiness, job fairs, and open houses.

Walgreens Customer Service Training Program:

We have partnered with Walgreens and ABCD to offer a specialized customer service training for BHA and other Boston residents. This training is tailored to entry-level positions at Boston area Walgreens stores. However, graduates of the program will be able to market their skills to other employers such as Filene's, Macy's and CVS, who have similar types of customer service needs. The two-week training is offered at ABCD's LearningWorks offices. Upon graduation from the program, trainees are referred to area Walgreens stores with vacancies.



Community Entrepreneur Training Program:

The Center for Women and Enterprise, through its Community Entrepreneur Program, successfully targets low-income women who are interested in starting a business. Through this program, the BHA has been able to offer BHA residents access to the CWE Community Entrepreneurs Program, which guides the students from the initial visioning process of business concepts to the development of a business plan and preparation to apply for loan funds to launch the business.

Boston Workforce Investment Board Partnership:

Through an annual contractual agreement with the Boston Private Industry Council, the Boston Housing Authority works with Boston's three Career Centers – Boston Career Link, JobNet and the Work Place, local area training providers, and employers to provide job search assistance and vocational skills training. Also through this contract, we conduct specialized job fairs and staff development seminars.

The **EDSS Partners** included: The Boston Private Industry Council, the Mayor's Office for Jobs and Community Services, Greater Boston Legal Services, Metropolitan Boston Area Planning Council, Bromley Heath Tenant Management Corporation, Cathedral Tenants United, Commonwealth Tenants Association, Lenox Camden Residents Association, Maverick Tenants Organization, Mary Ellen McCormack Tenant Task Force, and West Broadway Tenant Task Force.

For additional information about any of the Community Services Department Workforce Development initiatives, contact Rachel Goodman at (617) 988-4299 or rachel.goodman@bostonhousing.org.

NEW HOUSEKEEPING/MAINTENANCE POLICIES TO DEBUT AT BHA DEVELOPMENTS

The BHA held a public hearing on the implementation of proposed new housekeeping/maintenance fees on September 18, 2002 at the Amory Street development. The maintenance fees will only apply to incidents within the residents' control, not routine work. The BHA has a limited amount of staff and resources and, after careful study, it has been determined that fees for tenant-caused maintenance work orders will reduce the number of these orders and free up BHA staff to address more pressing issues.

Gwen Friend, Director of Property Management at the BHA, summarized the impacts of, and reasoning behind the new policies. "Most tenants are very responsible, keep a nice home and won't be impacted by these proposed citations and charges. However, we need to hold tenants – as well as ourselves – accountable for their actions. We spend too much time on unnecessary repairs caused by tenant damages, which is what we are trying to deal with. In addition, we need a consistent method for dealing with housekeeping conditions which may negatively impact other residents," Friend said.

Some of the activities that may result in a charge to BHA tenants include: improper trash disposal, on-site auto repair, improper storage of personal belongings, overloading electrical systems, failing to clean old apartments when transferring, failing to clean up after pets, and after-hours lock outs.

The proposed policies and fees are designed to allow residents to correct certain issues before any punitive action is taken. For example, if a resident is cited by the manager for the improper disposal of trash, the manager will issue a housekeeping/damages citation. This document will list the time, day and nature of the problem and serve as a written warning to the resident. The resident will be given the opportunity to correct the problem.

If the resident continues to improperly dispose of trash, after receiving the first citation, he or she will be responsible for a \$25 fee for each violation – under the proposed policies. An invoice for the charge will be drafted by the manager and handed to the resident. Tenants are also provided the opportunity to meet with the manager and discuss any citations, perhaps to explain any mitigating circumstances or arrange for a reasonable accommodation. A resident who has been granted a reasonable accommodation is provided certain need-based services by BHA staff due to documented disabilities.

According to the proposal, in the event of damage to a unit or common area by a resident or pet, the resident will be responsible for the cost of replacement materials and a \$25 per hour labor fee. However, some frequently occurring repairs have simple flat fees. A new screen will cost \$25 as will a new battery-operated smoke detector.

Residents and others at the meeting had an opportunity voice any concerns regarding the new policies. One of the most common concerns was the differentiation between existing maintenance issues and tenant-caused damage. Residents were concerned with how the BHA would distinguish items that were damaged through wear and tear and those that were damaged through negligence. There was a suggestion that the BHA implement a move-in inspection in which the new resident would walk around the unit before moving in and would sign a form as to the condition of the unit. This process would prevent new residents from being fined from damages left from the previous occupant.

Friend was happy to receive resident input and promised to take it all under advisement before implementing any of the new policies or fees.

NEW LEADERSHIP AT COMMONWEALTH

The Commonwealth Tenants Association has newly elected task force leaders. The new Chairperson is Princess Johnson, Vice-Chair is Wanda Jusino, Secretary is CeCe Yuhas and Treasurer is Alejandro Matos. Congratulations Princess, Wanda, CeCe and Alejandro.

A YOUTHFUL VIEW OF MAVERICK

Their summer assignments included taking photos of things like squares and triangles as fourteen budding youth photographers took part in a photography class that focused on documenting the Maverick Gardens community prior to an upcoming redevelopment there. Armed with digital cameras, the youth took photos of themselves, their friends and their neighborhood.

Darrell Travis, who chose to take photos of a stop sign to fulfill his assignment for squares and triangles, said a camera was always something he wanted to learn to use.

For Elijah "Mookey" Chisholm, the best "cool" part was learning that he could manipulate the images on his computer and move his photo into another picture.



By Darrell Travis

The Maverick Youth Photography Project, offered in two eight-week sessions to Maverick residents ages 10-17, provided local arts programming while simultaneously creating a visual record of the Maverick community and its residents. Eight youth, Elijah



By I'nesha Travis

Corenne Skeen said assignments included taking photos of people being hot in the summer and shots at home. One of her more creative photos combines leaves with stars.

"Mookey" Chisholm, Vickyana Colon, Janet Guerra, David Johnson, Latisha "Kiki" Johnson, Keeshanna "Kiki" Myers, Jonathan Roldan, and Ruby Ross, participated in the first session and exhibited their work at the end of June. The second session included Robbie Travis, I'nesha Travis, Kenneth Travis, Corenne

Skeen, Pursha Evans, and Chimica Morrison, who exhibited their work at this year's Unity Day. The photos included the youths' favorite images of their homes, family and friends and are meant to be a lasting and intimate look at life at Maverick.

The classes were taught by co-teachers Jennifer Gilbert, the project director, and Jesse Kahn, an East Boston artist and graphic designer. Since digital cameras were used, each child was able to take many photos and then choose which ones he or she would like to keep. At the end of each

session, photos were sold at exhibits for \$5 each.

Funding for the project came from the Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities, Charles Butcher Foundation, Lend Lease Real Estate Investments, Inc., Lawrence Anderson Prize at MIT, and a number of



By Pursha Evans

small donors. Zumix supplied assistance as the fiscal agent. The Maverick Tenants Organization was a partner in the project as well, and supplied assistance with outreach and structure of the program.

Maverick Gardens, a 60-year-old development, is being redeveloped with the assistance of a \$35 million HOPE VI grant.

BHA Today is a Boston Housing Authority publication and a BHA 2001 initiative.

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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 Cheryl Simons/Administration.

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Visit the BHA on the web at www.bostonhousing.org.