## NEW PET POLICY ON THE WAY

The Boston Housing Authority is implementing a new pet policy in its federal family developments beginning April 15. The policy was

recently approved by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development after an extensive review and comment period open to residents and interested parties. The BHA began to develop a new policy after changes in federal legislation required that housing authorities allow residents to own pets but also allowed limits to be set on pet ownership. The BHA's new policy is meant to balance residents' desire to have pets with the need to provide a decent, safe and sanitary environment for all residents.



Staff from Gallivan Boulevard, (left to right in photo with Administrator Henriquez), Youth Worker Cosme Rodriguez, Carpenter Bob McEachen and Plasterer John Queally went to the aid of a young girl when she was unexpectedly attacked by a Pit Bull recently. The BHA presented all three staff members with Certificates of Appreciation for their assistance in this scary incident.

The policy allows pets in all BHA federal family developments (due to different regulations state family developments have the option to adopt a no-

pet policy, but cannot adopt a policy

that is more lenient than the federal family policy) but limits them by breed, size and number. Therefore, residents may own pets such as dogs, cats, birds and fish, but may not own breeds of dogs such as Doberman Pinschers, Rotweillers and Pit Bulls. In addition, the total number of pets per apartment will be limited to two pets in apartments that have two or fewer bedrooms and three pets in apartments with three or more bedrooms. Pets expected to weigh more than 50 pounds at maturity will not be permitted.

continued on page 7

# HOMEOWNERSHIP PROGRAM AND OCCUPANCY POLICY COMING

In addition to the new pet policy, there is another important new policy about to be implemented that will outline the BHA's admissions and occupancy policies. On the Section 8 side, a new Homeownership Program will be made available to participants of that program. Both are discussed briefly below with more information to come in future issues of BHA Today.

• The Section 8 Homeownership Program will allow eligible Section 8 voucher recipients to use their voucher subsidy to meet monthly homeownership expenses. Those expenses include principal and interest on a mortgage debt, mortgage insurance, real estate taxes, home insurance and utility allowance. Voucher funds may not be used to assist with financing costs such as a down payment and closing costs

and participants will be responsible for finding a home to purchase. The draft plan of this program was submitted for approval to the US Department continued on page 7

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# OUT & ABOUT

## FRANKLIN HILL SHOWCASES NEW WALL

The corner of Franklin Hill Street and Harvard Street is looking good, thanks to recently

completed work
on its eroding hillside. A
granite cobblestone
retaining wall was
erected in early
December to stabilize
the slope of the hill. The
wall also provides a
safer environment for
school children waiting
for the bus, a long time
concern of the Franklin
Hill Task Force.



The hillside before stabilization work began.

The project began over a year ago, when Jamaise Martin, of Healthy Dorchester approached Jim McCarthy, manager of Franklin Hill, about working collaboratively to address the soil erosion problem. Together they applied for funding from the Greater Boston Urban Resources Partnership, ultimately receiving a \$26,000 grant.

The first challenge was to understand the physical strengths and limitations of the new wall the rock ledge located at the intersection and Harvard Sof Blue Hill Avenue, Harvard Street and Franklin Hill Street. After much discussion and fact-finding through the use of Ground Penetrating Radar, a retaining wall along Franklin Hill Street was chosen as a solution.

Martin thought this project could help local

youth learn about the masonry trade, and enlisted local businessman Thurgood Jones, who through his company, Designer Masonry, Inc. of Kenwood Street

in Dorchester, supervised and provided insurance liability for the youth participating in the Youth Build Boston, Inc. program, to build the wall. The wall was constructed with concrete blocks allowing for appropriate drainage holes and faced with granite cobblestones. The land behind the wall was backfilled with stones for proper drainage and leveled with new loam. Final touches included the planting of shrub and the mulching of the entire

For McCarthy, his staff and residents, the impact of the final product was immense. "This small piece

accomplished two things. Firstly, it

took care of the soil erosion and falling tree problems on the hill and secondly, it made the whole corner look so much nicer," he said. "The [Franklin Hill] kids and I had done some earlier work further up the hill, and the new wall ties that whole side of the land together as one."

Marc Mac Queen and his civil engineering staff at the

Massachusetts Community Assistance Partnership, with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, designed the wall.

This story was submitted by Andrea Taaffe, Program Manager for the Greenspace Initiative.



The new wall at the corner of Franklin Hill and Harvard Streets.

# VOLUNTEERS MAKE A DIFFERENCE AT HERITAGE

In October, residents and staff of the Heritage Apartments in East Boston participated in National Make a Difference Day, a day for communities throughout the United States to come together to perform volunteer activities.

Volunteers spent the weekend of October 27-28 landscaping residents' backyards, adding fresh coats of paint to hallways, and hanging new curtains. Children from the Big Brother/Big Sister organization stopped by Sunday to host a luncheon party, which included activities for the resident seniors.

For the second consecutive year, Boston Senior Home Care partnered with J.P. Morgan Chase, a leading global financial services firm, to make the day possible. Together, the two groups chose Heritage as the site for this year's project.

Both residents and staff are thrilled with their new surroundings, according to Jennifer Harding of Maloney Properties, the site's manager.

This story was submitted by Heritage Manager Jennifer Harding.

# OUT & ABOUT

## STAFF AND RESIDENTS OBSERVE RAMADAN

BHA staff and their guests filled Chauncy Street's 11th floor conference rooms on Tuesday, November 20 for the first of four Iftar celebrations held by the BHA in observance of Ramadan. From first light until sundown during the holy month, Muslims abstain from food and drink as a method of self-purification, according to www.islam.org. Iftar is the evening meal eaten by Muslims to break their daily fast. The BHA's celebrations featured a light snack, followed by a discussion of Ramadan and an opportunity to ask questions of Muslims in attendance. Other Iftar were held at Amory Street, Charlestown, and West Broadway throughout the month. Shown here, staff members enjoy fruit, soup, and light pastry during the Nov. 20 Iftar at Chauncy Street.



# MISSION MAIN, ALICE TAYLOR CELEBRATE TOGETHER

ore than 75 residents of Mission Main and Alice Taylor celebrated during the 5th annual Christmas Dinner at the Johnson Community Center in Roxbury. Held by the Alice **Taylor Tenants Task Force** and Missing in Action, a support group that confronts issues of health and parenting, the dinner represents an guests at December's dinner. opportunity for people in the community to gather and show their appreciation.

"We get dressed up, come out, have a nice sitdown dinner and give out awards," said Matilda



Task force chair Matilda Drayton (center) poses with other

group.

Drayton, Chairperson of the Alice Taylor Tenants Task Force. "We acknowledge people and they really appreciate it."

Food for the event was provided by several local organizations including Wentworth Institute of Technology, Northeastern University, New England Baptist Hospital and the Mission Resident Support

"This is a community thing. You don't have to be an Alice Taylor resident, everyone is welcome," added Drayton.

The Boston Housing Authority provides affordable housing to tens of thousands of residents in the City of Boston through its public housing and rental certificate programs.

The Mayor of the City of Boston, Thomas M. Menino appointed Sandra B. Henriquez to serve as the BHA's Administrator in 1996.

#### The BHA's Mission Statement is:

- To provide stable, quality affordable housing for low and moderate income persons;
- To deliver these services with integrity and mutual accountability; and
- To create living environments which serve as catalysts for the transformation from dependency to economic self-sufficiency.

#### TENANTS ASSIST IN HEARING GRIEVANCES FROM THEIR PEERS

The first in a short series on grievance procedures for BHA tenants, applicants and voucher holders.

Hearing Panel members John Hayes (back, left), Jimmy

(JJ) Jackson, Helen James (front, left) and Debra Ashe

after a recent day of hearings and decision-making.

he BHA has several avenues for tenants, applicants and Section 8 voucher holders to appeal a decision that the Authority has made.

One of those avenues, open to BHA public housing tenants, is via the Hearing Panel. It is in this forum that tenants may express their grievances with the BHA about subjects such as rent disputes, transfer requests and pending evictions as long as they are not drug or violence related.

The Hearing Panel, which recently gained many new volunteers, is made up of three BHA residents and two BHA staff members.

Volunteers rotate to staff the panel, which hears and makes decisions on a number of

grievances filed by tenants on Mondays and Wednesdays of every week. Sometimes, as was the case on the day the Hearing Panel was interviewed, four members may hear cases as long as the tenant who filed the grievance agrees.

"We're basically here to hear what the tenant has to say," said John Hayes, a resident member since 1991, who was the designated Chairperson of the group for the day. It was his job, described as that of a "Captain on a Ship" by another member, to keep the hearing focused and moving along. Cases that come before the Hearing Panel are often the result of a disagreement between the tenant and his or her manager where the tenant feels that he's not getting a fair shake, explained Hayes.

In order to serve on the panel, tenants must apply and receive training. Residents who serve are asked to sit on the panel at least once a month. They are each paid a stipend of \$46 for the day. Recently, the BHA recruited new members and received 72 applications from residents. Of those, 33 residents completed training and chose to serve on the panel. An additional 13 residents who have been serving on

the panel will help train the new members.

"I like the concept, the idea of it [the panel]," said Jimmy (JJ) Jackson, who has been sitting on the

Hearing Panel since its inception in

October of 1967 and is one of the residents who helps train new volunteers. "The panel is here to hear the evidence presented, it helps us hear both sides of the story," said Jackson, who explained that there was a time when people felt managers were above tenants and tenants had no say so, and as a result the Hearing Panel (originally named the Grievance Panel) was

formed

Resident Helen James and staff person Debra Ashe rounded out the panel members for a

recent Monday. Ashe is a new member but James has been with the panel since 1991. James said that she enjoys her time on the panel and pointed out that a lot of tenants that come to the panel do have a legitimate complaint. For Ashe, the panel provides an opportunity to gain a new experience at the BHA.

However, there are times when members of the Hearing Panel can't determine who's right or wrong and the case proceeds to Housing Court for a judge to decide. "We're not Solomon, we don't always know who's lying," said Hayes, who added that many of the cases that come before them are between tenants and have elements of "he said, she said" arguments to them.

The panel gets an average of five cases a day but can get as many as eight or nine. A typical transfer case takes a half-an-hour, but some hearings take two hours or more, depending on the issue. Only residents can request a hearing and there is a specified time limit depending on the type of case.

To request a hearing, a resident should file a written request with his or her manager or mail it to the Office of Civil Rights in care of the Hearing Panel

continued on page 5

# Tenants assist in hearing grievances from their peers continued from page 4

Coordinator, JoAnna Caban. Caban schedules all hearings and makes up the schedule of who will sit on the panel on any given day. Part of this task includes making sure that there are no staff people or residents on the panel that are from the same development as the person filing the grievance. This is done so there is no conflict or appearance of conflict in the panel's decision.

"It's gratifying because we often catch issues that would otherwise go to Housing Court and we resolve them to the benefit of both parties," said Caban, who has run the Hearing Panel process since 1996.

During the hearing, the resident may bring any representative, documentation, witnesses or evidence he or she feels is necessary to make his or her case. The panel reviews the information the tenant puts forth and issues a written decision to the tenant within 15 days of the hearing date. The decision of the Hearing Panel is final, unless either side appeals to the Administrator or the Administrator's designee and the Administrator determines there is a need for review of the decision.

There are some instances when a resident may not qualify for a hearing before the Grievance Hearing Panel. For example, cases of eviction where a resident has engaged in criminal conduct, which seriously threatened or endangered the health or safety of a BHA resident or employee may not qualify to be heard before the panel. More information is available on the Hearing Panel process on the BHA's website at www.bostonhousing.org under the Civil Rights Department information. Anyone who has questions about the panel or BHA residents' rights may call the BHA's Office of Civil Rights at 617-988-4383.

The residents and staff that volunteer for the Hearing Panel are listed in the box to the right.

#### New tenant volunteers:

Walika Wright/Faneuil; John Young/Franklin Field; Herbert L. McCarter/Washington Manor; Phyllis Senna/Charlestown; James A. Burns/Frederick Douglass; Mamie P. Stephens/West Newton St: Geraldine Patton/Maverick; Ruth Capone/Maverick; Julia Familia/Franklin Field: Sister Maria Bunuan/Spring Street: Robert Sneed/Roslyn Apartments; Aida Guadalupe/Commonwealth; Mary Q. Lopes/Commonwealth; Elsi Caldwell/Frederick Douglass; Charles Turner/MLK; Feliks Losin/Patricia White; Giuseppe Giarrapputo/Ausonia; Aramis Camps/Commonwealth; Marie M. Forbes/Archdale: Jackson W. Whitehead/Ashmont: Martin L. Ryan/Torre Unidad; Richard Condorelli/West Newton St; Sandra A. Ortiz/Orient Heights; David Paul/Holgate: Eileen Brewster/Alice Taylor: Kelly Patricia Catoe/Ashmont; Laura Langford/Alice Taylor; Carl Purdy/Holgate; Miranda W. Bowman/Charlestown; Catharine A. Burr/Bellflower; Helen Ann McNamee/Patricia White: Neil F. Jones/Lower Mills: Peter T. Tibbets/Maverick: Frank R. Jones/Hassan; Jean M. Ratliff/Old Colony

# Previous tenant volunteers who will assist with training:

Lance Ross/Alice Taylor; James Jackson/Amory St; John Hayes/MEM; Helen James/Maverick; Irene Key/Alice Taylor; Anna McNally/Old Colony; Helen Sullivan/Maverick; Verdell Washington/MLK; Mary Boyle/West Ninth St; Olive Fulton/MLK; Theresa Johnson/Frederick Douglass; Constance Johnson/MLK; Marie Judge/Alice Taylor

#### **Staff volunteers:**

Dee Thomas and Debbie Ashe/Elderly; Barbara Clanton/Lower Mills; Lynne Jones/Msgr. Powers; Kevin Davis/Amory St; Michael DeRosa and Diane Clark/South St; Esther McPherson and Yahinelis Amaro/Whittier St; Waleska Figueroa and Emma Speed/Cathedral; Neyda Gomez and Carolyn Seymour/West Newton St; Ivette Rogriquez and Betsy Santiago/Franklin Hill; Bob Franklin and Howard Grant/Fairmount; Evelyn Colon and Julia Donaldson/MEM; Rupert Walcott and Richard Marston/Gallivan; Geoffrey Bynoe, Renee Patton, Gloria Johnson and Nilda Lopez/Community Services; Theresa Roberts and Leslie Peters/Peabody-Englewood; Mary Cocar and Lynda Mills/Alice Taylor; Ruth McDermott/Codman; Maria Cortes and Michelle Feliz/Franklin Field; James Wallace and Henry Meneses/Central Maintenance: Joanne Vance/Pasciucco: Zadia Gomez and Lin Xu/Torre Unidad; Debbie Berryman/Purchasing; Alease Walker and Deirdre Lawson/Occupancy; John Kane and Kate Bennett/Planning.

# JOB WELL DONE

nanks to the Public Safety Department for their work in delivering turkeys, as well as

other Thanksgiving dinner fixings (seen here), to needy families throughout the Authority in November. Much of the food was donated by local vendors, with the help of students at Boston College High School.

Congrats to the West Broadway Youth Center for placing third in the 1st Annual Boston Community Centers' Step Competition.

In a recent email, an
Orlando Housing Authority employee referred to the
BHA's website as "great." Thanks to Communications
and MIS, particularly **Byron Calamese**, for helping
to maintain the site.

Thanks to the nearly 120 people who attended **Ruby Jackson's** November 8 retirement celebration. Jackson recently retired from the BHA after 23 years of service.

Congrats to **Sherry Long** of Capital Construction on the birth of her daughter, Jessica Anne, on November 1.

Old Colony's **Moe Morad** thanks laborer **Bill Finn** for recently stopping to help a blind girl cross the street.

Whittier Street Manager Esther McPherson would like to thank the following employees for their help during a recent flood at the site: Warren Stewart, Jason Neff, Roderick Williams, Henry Ansley, Gralyn Hart, Eddie Simas, Gregory Jackson, Demis Delvalle, Neyda Gomez, Juan Figueroa, Alcidez Lopez, Anthony Burch, Latoya Rogers, Ricardo Ortiz, David McDonald, Billy Wuschke, Paul Neves, and Yahinelis Amaro.

A special thanks to all the Washington Beech employees for their help during a November 28 fire at the development, especially: **Frank Tringali**, **Robert Peele, Donna McGhee, Mark Tuttle, Paul Parlon, Jr., Robert Marino, Ron White, Milton**  Hunt, Ken Manning, Robert Ahern, Ramon Guzman, and Sam Bowdre.



Thanks to all who helped make this year's Holiday Party Wreath Decorating Competition a success, including: Matthew Richardson, Hugh Donovan, Shirley Ransom, Hollis Young, Regina Dennis, John Moulton, Debbie Ashe, Gwen Friend, and especially Linda Fahy.

Thanks to the BHA employees and their families who attended the Saturday, December 29 Disney on Ice performance. A special thanks to **Gladys DiChiara** of Occupancy, **Carmen Ayala** of Operations/Emergency Response, and **Patricia Barry** of Maverick for their help in making this event a success.

Assistant Director of Property Management **Regina Dennis** would like to thank **Rod Williams**, Maintenance Superintendent at Alice Taylor, for assisting a resident with a flooded unit during his holiday vacation. Thanks for the great work!

Communications Director Lydia Agro received a phone call from West Broadway resident Diane **Applegate** thanking Janitor/Groundskeeper **Shirley** Steed, and Maintenance Super Tony Cunningham for their work during a recent flood caused by a water main break at the site. "Shirley worked until 4 a.m. and then worked her regular job all day long," Applegate said. "Everybody loves her, she's fantastic." Describing Cunningham's work, Steed said, "He gets the job done; when he says he'll be here, he's here," and "I'd like to thank them both very much; they did a great job." Other staff that pitched in during the night and assisted in restoring water service to residents were Emanuel Goodloe, Richard Seward, John Reid, Bart Vanaria, Ed Roth, Mike Morrissey, Lori Luce. and Wanda Roldan.

#### New Pet Policy on the way continued from page 1

The BHA, with extensive input from residents, has decided to limit breeds of dogs that are considered aggressive. This is due to a concern for the safety of both residents and visitors to our communities. While the BHA has been working on preparing this policy for more than a year, a recent attack by a Pit Bull on a child at a BHA development has highlighted the need for it.

Tenants who currently have pets should report those pets to their managers. Currently owned pets that do not conform to the policy may be registered and allowed to stay. However, the three prohibited breeds of dogs will not be allowed to stay. In addition, tenants must make sure that their cats and dogs are licensed, have required inoculations and are spayed or neutered. The BHA will be holding development meetings with residents in all family developments regarding this policy during the next

few months. The BHA has also met with representatives of the Massachusetts Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, City of Boston Animal Control and its Shelter and Adoption Center, and Boston Police regarding the new policy. With the assistance of these groups, the BHA will provide residents with information about assistance that might be available to them and the responsibilities of pet ownership. Further, the BHA is planning to host "Pet Appreciation Days" to assist residents in photographing, licensing and inoculating their pets.

A complete copy of the new pet policy is available at BHA family development management offices and on the BHA website at the following link: <a href="http://www.bostonhousing.org/detpages/deptinfo123.html">http://www.bostonhousing.org/detpages/deptinfo123.html</a>. Residents who have questions about the policy should contact their managers.

#### Homeownership program and occupancy policy coming continued from page 1

of Housing and Urban Development last month. The Leased Housing Department is planning to mail information about implementation of the program and briefing sessions that will be held to all BHA Section 8 participants next month. Anyone interested in more information about this program may read the draft plan by going to the following link on the BHA's website: <a href="http://www.bostonhousing.org/detpages/deptinfo122.html">http://www.bostonhousing.org/detpages/deptinfo122.html</a>.

 The BHA is also preparing to implement a new Admissions and Continued Occupancy Policy (the ACOP), which describes the admission, occupancy and transfer policies by which the BHA determines eligibility for admission, selects prospective residents, assigns apartments, admits residents and processes transfers in a fair and nondiscriminatory manner. This ACOP is applicable to BHA family developments only. Applicants and residents will receive information from the BHA regarding this new policy during the next several months. A draft of the plan can be read on the BHA's website at the following link: <a href="http://www.bostonhousing.org/detpages/deptinfo114.html">http://www.bostonhousing.org/detpages/deptinfo114.html</a>. Click on the policy under the list of PDFs.

# L Comings & Goings &

#### **New Employees:**

Miosotty Baez, *CSD* • Mary Boyle, *CSD* • Tammi Casagni, *Capital Construction* • Viengsaen Chokbengboun, *Leased Housing* • Barbara Collins, *CSD* • Herbert Gray, *East Boston* • Tominika Johnson, *CSD* • Bethany Kirby, *Charlestown* • Carlos Montoya, *Finance & Accounts* • Janet Reyes, *Old Colony* • Joseph Templeton, *Alice Taylor* • Patricia Terry, *CSD* • Louise Warren, *Public Safety* • Sandra Lebron, *Leased Housing* • Joseph Lombardi, *Leased Housing* • Ramon Ruiz, *Old Colony* • Tonya Bennett, *Mary Ellen McCormack* • Michael Flaherty, *Vacancy Rehab Crews* • Mark Wolongevicz, *Federal Family Program* • Eddy Pena, *Community Services* • Randolph Johnson, Jr., *Leased Housing* • Keith Lyons, *Beech Street* • Nadege Mondesir, *Operations/Emergency Response* • George Ortiz, *Operations/Emergency Response* • Haschel Sealy, *State Program* • Alfred Marra, *Leased Housing* • Christopher Perillo, *Leased Housing* • Shira Siegel, *Legal* 

#### BATTLING THE EFFECTS OF AGE

pologies to the nation's fitness gurus, but residents of Amory Street and Bromley Heath

A have discovered their own convenient way of staying in shape and preventing the damaging effects of osteoporosis. On-site weekly exercise classes, held by the Martha Eliot Health Center in Jamaica Plain, are offered to elderly and disabled residents interested in improving their strength, bone mass and balance

their strength, bone mass and balance.

Of particular concern for the health center and beginning an exercise class.

many aging adults are the effects of osteoporosis, which can cause women over the age of 35 to lose 1 percent of their bone mass each year. "In these classes we focus on weight bearing exercises," said Cindy Engler, Manager of Community Health Services at the center. "It is the best way to prevent osteoporosis and bring back bone mass."

Osteoporosis is a disease of the skeleton where the level of calcium in the bones slowly decreases causing them to become brittle and fracture easily. According

to Engler, residents are encouraged to ask health related questions during and after the program.

"We do some osteoporosis education and we have a nutritionist who has come in to talk about calcium rich foods, but we're always available to answer clinical or follow up questions," she said.

"This is the best part of my job because I see people from different communities working with each other. I really see how much it helps the residents and I know that they really appreciate it," added Engler.

Gladys Runon, who instructs the exercise classes, understands the

importance of elderly residents taking care of their bodies. "My goal is to use

my knowledge to prevent falls and broken bones," said Runon. "I focus on stretching and strengthening the body to build up strong bones."

The Health Center is offering a 10-week exercise class at both Amory Street and Bromley Heath. Following the completion of the 10-week session, a new 10-week session will begin. Classes, which are targeted towards elderly/disabled residents, but open to all, are held at Amory Street on Thursday's at 10 a.m. and Bromley Heath on Wednesday's at 10 a.m.

# SANTA STOPS EARLY FOR BHA YOUTH

Santa Claus and his elves took to the sidelines as the Grinch entertained the crowd at the December 9 Children's Holiday Party. The event, held at the Teacher's Union Hall in Dorchester, drew nearly 1,000 children from BHA developments across the City. Entertainment included balloons, costumed characters, jugglers, music, and more. Each child in attendance received a donated gift before the party's close. The annual event, organized by the BHA's Public Safety Department, is made possible through donations from "Toys for Tots," local vendors, employee contributions, and, this year, the help of students from Boston College High School in Dorchester. Here, resident Le My To enjoys the festivities with her sons William and Wesley.



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Comments and story ideas are welcome and should be mailed to Lydia Agro, Boston Housing Authority, 52 Chauncy Street, 11th Floor, Boston MA 02111 or faxed to 617-988-4133. BHA Today staff may also be reached by calling 617-988-4380 or 617-988-4109. Visit the BHA on the web at www.bostonhousing.org.