

## Hope for Franklin Hill Families

**S**ilvia Brewer has lived in the Franklin Hill Development in Dorchester for more than 29 years and has seen its deterioration firsthand.

“I thought the place needed to be redone when I came here in 1974, it has just gotten worse,” said Brewer, the Vice Chair of the Franklin Hill Tenant Task Force.

Unfortunately, the buildings at Franklin Hill have come to the end of their useful life and require complete demolition and reconstruction. The buildings and their systems are also compromised because the original design of the site does not lend itself well to improvements without total reconstruction.



Franklin Hill, like many of its housing counterparts built in the early 1950’s, consists of nine, three-story barracks-style brick buildings.

This design is visually inconsistent with surrounding homes in the neighborhood, mostly late 19th and early-20th-century two- and three-story Victorians, clad primarily in wood and brick.

Furthermore, the site does not have a public street address and as many as 12 units share a common entrance to each building. This causes a sense of anonymity and isolates

residents of the monotonous development.

But if residents and the Boston Housing Authority get their wish, hope is on the way.

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## Charlestown Elects Task Force, Improvements in the Works

**R**esidents at the Charlestown Development used their power to vote on June 12, 2003 to elect a new Tenant Task Force. President Tyrenzo Sumler comes into office with many thoughts on improvements that can be made throughout the Development and a vision for a more unified community.

The Task Force has already begun redefining its image. The group now refers to itself as “The Multicultural Tenant Task Force,” a tribute to its diversity.

“We have members who are Spanish, Somalian and we have vacancies and are hoping others will join,” explained Sumler.

The objective is to have a task force that is representative of the Development’s racial and ethnic make-up. “We think a diverse group will be helpful in a huge way,” said Sumler of the board that currently consists of Linda Guerrero, Edna Walrath, Abdulkadir Yusuf, Janet Nardone, Phyllis Senna, Miranda Bowman, Jose Renta and Margaret Doherty. “We want to be able to communicate with everybody.”

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# Out & About

## Charlestown Elects Task Force, Improvements in the Works

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"I think that a multicultural task force will have a great impact given the diverse group of residents we have here," added Charlestown Manager Kellie Dean. "They should serve the needs of every resident at the Development."

Charlestown has the distinction of being the largest and most diverse Development the BHA owns. A great number of Hispanics, African-Americans, Caucasians, American-Indians and Asians bring their unique culture to the site. Also, there are more than 11 different languages spoken at the Development, increasing the need for an elective body that understands the concerns of all residents.

The Task Force has already begun interacting with tenants in an attempt to uncover their needs. "We've been going out and talking with the residents and getting feedback," said Sumler. "We've found that their main concerns are maintenance and security issues and we are working on solving them."

In fact, the Task Force has already set up a Security Subcommittee and a Maintenance Subcommittee that will report to the Task Force with ideas and suggestions for improvements.

For safety purposes the Task Force is currently encouraging tenants to call an anonymous tip line (1-800-78-crime) they can report important information to without fear of reprisal. The ultimate goal is to set up a crime prevention hotline exclusively for Charlestown residents.

Manager Kellie Dean has also organized "Take Back Your Hallway" meetings in coordination with the Task Force in order to further secure the Development. As part of the plan, hallways are

being fixed to ensure that the door hardware and intercom systems lock and are fully functional. Also, a resident in each hall will be appointed to monitor his hallway and make sure that everything is working properly.

Maintenance issues are also in the process of being resolved. "We are working together with the BHA to find solutions," said Sumler. He noted that they are already in the process of "getting out-standing work orders done."

In addition, the Task Force is planning events that will attempt to create a more unified atmosphere around the Development and boost morale. Some ideas include a "Next Resident Idol" competition in which tenants of all ages will showcase their talents, a reward for children who receive good report cards and an athletic competition between Charlestown and other BHA developments.

One of the first events held by the Task Force, a holiday celebration on December 20, was well received by residents.

Approximately 100 tenants turned out for the party. Children had their pictures taken with Santa Claus and enjoyed pizza. The night concluded with a tree lighting ceremony.

Ultimately, the goal is to create a positive environment in which to raise children. "The majority of residents are concerned about their kids," explained Sumler. "They are worried about their future."

The positive changes wrought by the Task Force should do much to quell those fears.



*The Charlestown Development (show above) will be undergoing several changes in the coming months*

# Out & About

## Bromley-Heath Cheer and Dance Teams Shine at the New England Regional



*The Saints Pee Wees perform  
for the judges*

**T**he Bromley-Heath Cheer and Dance Teams, the Lady Saints and the Saints Pee Wees placed an impressive 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>, respectively, at the New England Regional Cheer & Dance Competition. The event was held on November 8, 2003 at the Reggie Lewis Track Center in Roxbury.

The squads competed against teams from Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New Hampshire and New Jersey.

Shawanda Patterson serves as head coach for the Lady Saints, comprised of young women 10 and older. Patterson has been coaching for 12 years and is certified by the Universal Cheerleaders Association and is a member of the American Association of Cheerleading Coaches and Advisers. She works alongside her assistant coach Nayda Dones, who is a resident and parent volunteer.

The Saints Pee Wees are led by coach Selina Williams. Williams is a former cheerleader for the award-winning Brighton High School squad from 1997-2000. Her team consists of girls ages 8-10.

This season is the teams' third since being founded in 2001. They are scheduled to appear in two competitions: The New England Regional and the BPD Battle of the Cheerleaders. The teams will also showcase their skills at a number of local events including the Bromley-Heath Family Day.

The teams raise money by collaborating with their parents to hold fundraisers. They also garner generous donations from the community, which help defer the cost of uniforms, equipment and competition fees.

"What makes this program successful is the parents' and coaches' commitment to raising monies," said Patterson. "This year's goal is to raise enough money to attend the Universal Cheerleaders Association Cheer Camp at Mount Ida College."

Registration for the 2004 season will be held on April 28 at Bromley-Heath. If you would like to join or become a sponsor please contact Shawanda Patterson at 617-445-8515 X19.

*(Additional photos and complete rosters  
of both squads on page 8)*



*The Lady Saints warm -up  
before the competition*

# Hope for Franklin Hill Families

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The BHA recently submitted an application petitioning the Department of Housing and Urban Development for a \$20 million HOPE VI grant to completely rebuild Franklin Hill, a project estimated to cost \$105 million.

Residents have embraced the initiative.

In a written statement, seventy members of the Franklin Hill community signed off on the plan. The letter to HUD states, in part, "The Franklin Hill residents enthusiastically support the BHA's 2003 HOPE VI application to [HUD]. BHA staff, working side-by-side with us, kept us fully informed and involved throughout the application planning process."

The BHA has conducted several meetings with tenants of Franklin Hill and is in constant contact with them in order to ensure both parties have a say in the process. More than 350 residents of the development have been involved in the planning at one point or another.

Brewer acknowledges that, "the cooperation between the BHA and the residents has been wonderful."

Many tenants worry that the HOPE VI construction will decrease the number of affordable units in the development, as is often the case. However, the plan at Franklin Hill is to construct 378 housing units, all of which are affordable. Of the 378, there will be 69 units available for homeownership.

Current Franklin Hill residents, who qualify, will get preference for 56 of the homes.

"Residents are thrilled to have the option of returning," said Brewer.

"Homeownership is a good opportunity for families."

Another component of the revitalization is the de-urbanization of the development. The cement found throughout the site will be replaced with benches and tables for outdoor seating, a community garden, a playground, attractive

landscaping and lighting, and space for community gatherings.

"I think the outskirts of the development will blend in nicely with the rest of the neighborhood," explained Brewer.

In addition, the HOPE VI grant also sets money aside for community and supportive services for residents. These programs include case management services, job training sessions, education workshops and recreational programs.

It takes an immense amount of planning and preparation to execute a HOPE VI plan and the BHA has already proven it is up to the task. The Authority currently operates three HOPE VI grants in Mission Main, Orchard Gardens and Maverick Gardens.

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## Winter Celebrations Around the BHA

### Annual Children's Holiday Party

The Boston Housing Authority held its Annual Children's Holiday Party for BHA kids and their families on December 14 at the Teacher's Union Hall in Dorchester.

Santa and his elves were on hand to distribute gifts and pose for pictures with the hundreds of children in attendance.

The party serves as a safe and fun way to bring together youngsters between the ages of 3-10 to celebrate the holidays. The kids enjoyed an afternoon of entertainment and were treated to lunch.

The event was organized by the BHA's Public Safety Department and BHA employees contributed by donating toys, assisting with the gift-wrapping and giving several hours of their time to help arrange the party.

### Tree Lightings

Many BHA developments hosted tree lighting celebrations during the holiday season. At South Street, residents, local storeowners, neighbors, public officials and community leaders gathered for the Annual Tree Lighting Ceremony. Participants sang carols, enjoyed hot chocolate and cookies and entered in a raffle. All the events led to the big tree lighting, which lit up the development.



*Residents at South Street on hand  
for the festivities*

## Hope for Franklin Hill Families

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At Mission Main, all 535 units have been developed and occupancy is 100%. Orchard Gardens has already constructed 422 units and Maverick Gardens, the most recent HOPE IV recipient, is on schedule.

With such a track record of developing HOPE VI projects, the BHA welcomes the opportunity of cultivating a new beginning for Franklin Hill families.

BHA Administrator Sandra Henriquez explains, "At Franklin Hill, we have the unique opportunity to change radically the development, giving residents the chance to come into their own, however they define it for themselves. Our mission is to provide residents with a safe environment with high quality housing, where they don't have to worry about crime or if their roof is leaking, and can get on with their business and think about their goals for themselves – going back to school, getting a better job. This is why we are in this business – to provide residents with the opportunity to become everything they can be."

HUD is expected to make a decision whether to accept or reject the BHA's request by spring.



*Revelers react to the tree lighting  
at South Street*

# Job Well Done

**Mitch Allen** of Central Services would like to thank the Roofing Crew (**Arthur Metz, Bill Doherty, Charlie Hall, and Tom Russo**) for taking the time to transport the toys for the BHA Police Department's toy drive from the Marine Station in South Boston to Amory Street. They have been doing this for well over ten years.

Risk Management would like to welcome back **Paul Daly**, carpenter at Charlestown and **Charles Gately** from West Broadway.

**Diane Khoury** would like to thank all of the members of Teamsters Local 122 who supported her in the election for Trustee.

A thanks goes out to the maintenance crew of **Leroy, Louis and Paul** who did an excellent job of snow removal during the early winter storms while also performing their regular duties.

During the week of December 15 at the Washington Beech Community Center, more than 30 flu shots were given to families. The BHA would like to thank everybody involved in the event including the **Washington Beech Resident Health Advocates Maria Cezma, Linda Phifer, and Bridgett Wallace** from the Boston Public Health Commission, **Anna Bissonette** and **Saundra Perry** from the Boston Medical Coalition for Adult Immunization, **Barbara Loterro, Eva Phinex** and **Pat Lavallo** from the Greater Roslindale Medical and Dental Center, **Divya Cuma** from Casa Myrna Vasquez, Inc. and **Emily Cherniak** from City Year.

**Dick L'Europa** would like to thank those employees who attended and supported the 7th consecutive Employee Holiday Party on December 19. Special thanks to those who helped: **Linda Fahy, Matthew Richardson, Joyce Tognacci, Barney Murphree, Irma Gomes, Patricia Barry, George McGrath, Stephanie Uftring, Gloria Meneses**, the storm troopers from Occupancy/Leased Housing, **Nancy Otero, Gladys DiChiara, Ruth Santiago, Nixsa Lopez, and Gwen Friend, Jim Reed, and Chris Hansen**.

The entire Operations staff would like to say thank you to **Ed Lato** and the **Payroll Department staff** for working so hard to get all of the overtime in the paychecks during the holiday season.

**Elaine Napolitano** would like to thank everybody who participated in the Children's Holiday Celebration for all of their hard-work and dedication.

**Zenaida Figueroa** thanks everyone who came in to deal with the broken pipes and floods at Torre Unidad, MLK and F.F. Elderly over the weekend of December 10-11. Because of these folks we were able to avoid a more serious situation and the possibility of having to evacuate the residents, as was the case in other cities. Unity Towers: **Neyda Gomez, Merville Crow, Miguel Diaz, Junior Valentine, Julio Cordero and Robert Johnson**. MLK: **Sylvia Scott, Jonathan Bennett, Gregory Lawson and James Mervin**. F.F. Elderly: **Walter McCloud**.

Zenaida would like to say a special thank you to **Mr. Fenton, Francis and Larry** for all their help. She would also like to thank **Carmen Ayala, Hugh Donovan** and all of the folks who work in **ERS**.

**Regina Dennis** would like to thank all of the people who turned out on Friday, January 9, to celebrate **Davey Byrnes** retirement. All who attended had a great time and Davey was deeply appreciative. A job well done to the Committee, **Debbie Ashe, Mike Kent, Bob MacGregor, Francina Brown, Zenaida Figueroa and Norma Lynch** for all the hard-work they did in putting this event together. The decorations by Debbie Ashe were fantastic and Bob MacGregor did a great job as the master of ceremonies. A special thanks to **Elena Roine** for helping with the decorations.

**Gwen Friend** would like to congratulate Old Colony managers **Chris Hansen, Wilma Sanchez, and Charlene Walker** for achieving zero outstanding Tenant Status Reviews for three months in a row. With well over 800 units, this is a great achievement.

**Lydia Agro** thanks **Winnie Moron** for translating for a resident (and for all the times you've done it in the past)...your assistance was very helpful.

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## ESL Graduation Ceremony Celebrates Residents' Accomplishments

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**O**n Friday, January 9 Washington Beech residents attended the First Annual English as a Second Language Commencement Ceremony to celebrate their completion of an intensive 12-week program taught by Waleska Roman. Four residents received certificates: Juana Flores, Dionica Facanda, Thisua Kim and Maria Garcia.

Also honored at the ceremony were Nancy Velazquez and Nilsa Moreno-Sanchez. Nancy recently received a certificate for completing a Resident Health Advocate Training



*(Back): Sandra Henriquez, Rachel Goodman, Waleska Roman, Maria Chavez, Kyle Robidoux, (Front): Juana Flores, Dionica Facanda, Thisua Kim, Maria Garcia, Nancy Velazquez, Nilsa Moreno-Sanchez*

Program, while Nilsa was commended for receiving a certificate in medical interpreting from Cambridge College.

BHA Administrator Sandra Henriquez, Director of Community Services Rachel Goodman, Resident Services Coordinator Maria Chavez and Kyle Robidoux, an aide from Boston City Councilor Felix Arroyo's office, were on hand to congratulate the Washington Beech residents for all of their accomplishments.

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## Camden Gets Landscape Improvements

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**T**he Capital Construction Department at the BHA recently completed utility and site improvements to the Camden Development in the South End.

The Department of Housing and Community Development, after some friendly lobbying, generously contributed additional funds to not only replace the underground utility lines but to fund the design and renovation of the entire site.

The once bare and drab area now consists of spacious concrete walkways, trees, shrubs and flowers (see the before and after photos).

The project was completed just before a storm dumped several inches of snow over the development, postponing a celebration by BHA staff and residents. They will instead celebrate amidst the blooming flowers in the spring - a party which will be covered in an upcoming newsletter.





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# Bromley-Heath Cheer and Dance Teams Shine At the New England Regional

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(Continued from page 3)



## **Lady Saints Roster**

Shawntaya Govan - Captain  
Imani Patterson-Frost  
Cinnamon Benjamin  
Natalie Vilsaint  
Tamara Webb  
Natallye Cuebas  
Joy Okafor  
Bianca Terry  
Shakara Carter  
Christine Turner (not pictured)  
Romelia Webb (not pictured)  
Simone Posey (not pictured)  
Carolyn Rivera (not Pictured)

## **Saints Pee Wees Roster**

Angelina Colon  
Ashley Diaz  
Kadeisha Reid  
Imari Brown  
Tameka Roberson  
Ronaisa Perry  
Casandra Roach  
Nashira Perry  
Destany Goforth (not pictured)

**Pee Wees Head Coach: Ms. Selina Williams**

**Saints Head Coach: Ms. Shawanda Patterson**

**Saints Assistant Coach: Mrs. Nayda Dones**



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