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East Boston

TIMES-FREE PRESS



Wednesday, February 8, 2023

CONGRATULATIONS, EBHS SWIM TEAM



The East Boston High School swim team celebrate its third place finish in the city league championship on Thursday, February 2. The annual event was held at Madison Park in Roxbury.

Wu, CDC celebrate housing plan

Special to the Times-Free Press

Mayor Michelle Wu joined the East Boston Community Development Corporation (CDC) for the East Boston Neighborhood Trust Blue Line Celebration that was held Jan. 31, in the auditorium at the Barnes School Apartments.

Al Cardarelli, executive director of the East Boston CDC who has been a part of the organization

for 50 years, was master of ceremonies for the festive event that marked the East Boston Neighborhood Trust's previously announced acquisition of 114 units in 36 site properties throughout East Boston, reclaiming the units off the private market to create affordable, family housing in East Boston.

Mayor Wu, Sen. Lydia Edwards, Rep. Adrian Madaro, and Boston City

See CELEBRATION Page 12

MY JOURNEY

Cynthia Grant-Carter reflects on her life for Black History Month

By Marianne Salza

Cynthia Grant-Carter has been a Boston Public Schools teacher since the late 1970s, empowering her students to voice their opinions, and be courageous, responsible, generous people. Although the Dorchester resident retired in 2021, she serves as a substitute nearly every day of the week, starting each morning with gratitude (and a chocolate chip muffin).

"Give me the strength and patience to deal with what's going to face me," Grant-Carter prayed softly. "Help me to listen before I react. Protect me traveling back and forth."

Grant-Carter has predominantly taught in

elementary schools, in grades 1-5, with a concentration in second and third grade. At the beginning of her career, she worked at elementary and high schools in Dorchester, Jamaica Plain, Roxbury, and Roslindale.

"It was good because I got to see what was happening at each school, the different styles of teaching, and the ways headmasters run their particular schools," said Grant-Carter, who has been a fixture in East Boston's Patrick J. Kennedy Elementary School (PKJ) for three decades.

Uninterested in soap operas and daytime television, Grant-Carter cringed

See JOURNEY Page 12

Boston Public Schools adds electric buses to its fleet

Special to the Times-Free Press

Mayor Michelle Wu celebrated the arrival of the first two electric school buses to the Boston Public Schools (BPS) school bus fleet. An additional 18 buses will arrive in the coming weeks and are expected to be in use following the February school vacation. This is a major milestone in creating a Green New Deal for the City of Boston, leading to immediate health and quality-of-life improvements for Boston students, workers, and residents, while advancing climate action. Mayor Wu joined BPS Superintendent Mary Skipper, Green New Deal Director Oliver Sellers-Garcia, BPS Di-

rector of Transportation Dan Rosengard, bus driver trainers, and community members at the Readville bus yard in Hyde Park to see how these electric buses are being integrated into the fleet.

"I'm grateful to the many people who have been instrumental in getting Boston to this point and helping us demonstrate the many overlapping benefits of moving to a green economy and ensuring that our kids and our workforce are at the center of that transition," said Mayor Michelle Wu. "Today is one of many steps we are taking to make Boston a Green New Deal city and to move with the urgency that our communities and residents deserve.

From cutting down on emissions from every part of our education infrastructure - where our students learn and how they get to class - to preparing our next generation of workers to build and sustain cleaner, greener infrastructure for all of us, we're so excited about where this will lead Boston."

"Our children deserve to learn, grow up, and play while enjoying clean air and experiencing a healthy environment free of air pollution," said Boston Public Schools Superintendent Mary Skipper. "When these buses hit the road, they will operate with zero emissions and significantly lower noise levels than their diesel-fuel counter-

parts. So when you see the buses with the green bird with a plug logo on each side, be sure to wave and smile as they and the children inside represent our great city's future."

"As a City, we know we must prioritize the development of electric vehicle infrastructure to support the future of green mobility in Boston to advance our Green New Deal for all of our residents," said Green New Deal Director Oliver Sellers-Garcia. "I'm grateful to Boston Public Schools for their leadership in making critical climate investments while supporting the health of our communities and growing our green workforce trained with these skills."

The BPS Department of Transportation carefully selected the first routes - 111 trips, across 42 schools - to run electric school buses based on a variety of factors, including distance from the dispatch yard charging station, total length of route, and the expected traffic patterns along the route, with a preference for stop-and-go traffic rather than highway driving. Additionally, the cold weather deployment was factored into route selection to ensure power supply for battery conditioning and bus heating. Routes travel through nearly all of Boston's neighbor-



Boston Mayor Michelle Wu (speaking), joins Superintendent Mary Skipper, Green New Deal Director Oliver Sellers-Garcia to celebrate the start of school bus fleet electrification.

See BUSES Page 2



PHOTO PROVIDED BY CYNTHIA GRANT-CARTER

Cynthia Grant-Carter sitting at the Taj Mahal, in India, with friend, Dolores Johnson.

Life Planning Seminar!

Join us to learn more about pre-planning your funeral with us on March 10, 2023 at 2pm at the East Boston Senior Center, 7 Bayswater Street.



Ruggiero Family Memorial Home
East Boston

Let's be honest- no one likes to have the tough conversations of what happens after they die but here at the Ruggiero Family Memorial Home, we are here to help navigate those difficult conversations. It's important to pre-plan not only so your wishes are met but so your loved ones have a sense of peace during an already difficult time. You can pre-plan and pre-pay any type of service you'd like, from full funeral to direct cremations and anything in between. This is why we have created a workshop for you to learn more about how, why and when to begin life planning. Joining us will be Attorney AJ Moscone, who will focus on estate planning. Pre-planning and estate planning should go hand and hand when starting life planning. Together we will ensure your wishes are met and your family is stress-free during an unbearable time.



For the latest news in East Boston that you need to know, check eastietimes.com

FEMA awards over \$1.3 million to Boston for winter storm plowing costs

The Federal Emergency Management Agency will be sending more than \$1.3 million to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to reimburse the City of Boston for some of the costs of clearing snow after Winter Storm Kenan in January 2022.

Kenan caused record or near record snowfall in four counties in Massachusetts. This created an immediate threat to the health and safety of the public and improved property, requiring emergency response and protective measures.

The \$1,351,689 Public Assistance grant will reimburse the City of Boston for 22,777 overtime hours worked by employees and for contracting for plowing services between Saturday, Jan. 29 and

Monday, Jan. 31, during which time it had to clear 785 lane miles continuously.

The city also had to clear parking lots, building entrances and walkways at 73 fire station, 121 public schools, 25 libraries, five municipal facilities, 35 Boston Center for Youth and Families Community Centers, 16 stations for 26 Boston EMS ambulances, and the harbor.

President Joe Biden's disaster declaration made federal funding available to commonwealth, tribal and eligible local governments, and certain private nonprofit organizations on a cost-sharing basis for emergency work and the repair or replacement of damaged facilities in Bristol, Norfolk, Plymouth and Suffolk counties, and

for the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe.

FEMA has awarded almost \$25 million in Public Assistance grants to state and local governments for the disaster to date.

"FEMA is pleased to be able to reimburse the City of Boston for the costs incurred recovering from Winter Storm Kenan," said FEMA Region 1 Regional Administrator Lori Ehrlich. "Re-opening highways for public safety vehicles required extraordinary measures deserving of federal assistance."

FEMA's Public Assistance program is an essential source of funding for states and communities recovering from a federally declared disaster or emergency.

Boston Water and Sewer Commission selected as Biden-Harris "Get the Lead Out" inaugural partner

Boston Water and Sewer Commission (BWSC) has been chosen to participate in the Biden-Harris administration's "Get the Lead Out" Partnership, comprised of over 100 state and local officials, water utilities, labor unions, and other organizations committed to advance and accelerate lead pipe funding and replacement. Boston Water and Sewer Commission recently was an invitee to and participant in the White House Summit on Accelerating Lead Pipe Replacement hosted by Vice President Kamala Harris, during which the Biden-Harris administration announced new actions and progress to deliver clean drinking water, replace lead pipes, and remediate lead paint.

BWSC Chief Engineer John P. Sullivan, P.E., was honored to represent the agency at the summit and participate in the Partnership's launch.

"BWSC looks forward to joining this collaboration, which will be essential in creating new innovative practices and approaches and wider awareness throughout the country to effectuate the elimination of lead service lines in older properties," said Sullivan.

BWSC also will contribute its own significant expertise and experience removing lead service pipes to the Partnership's collaborative efforts, as

over the past three decades the agency has been a national leader in successfully removing lead pipes.

"As a result of the hard work of the men and women of BWSC who work tirelessly to prioritize lead pipe removal, in 2022 BWSC replaced over 300 lead service lines in Boston," said BWSC Executive Director Henry F. Vitale.

The Get Out the Lead Partnership will further incentivize BWSC to remove Boston's remaining lead service pipes, whose locations are largely identified but whose removal requires knowledge and cooperation on the part of their property owners. Executive Director Vitale said that, during this initiative, the Commission will:

- Increase its public awareness campaign through targeted outreach and inspections to property owners where the service pipe material is unknown;
- Increase efforts publicizing BWSC's Private Lead Incentive Replacement Program which provides owners with up to \$4,000.00 towards the cost of removal of the private lead service lines; and
- Advise all consumers of the dangers of lead in drinking water and inform them of steps to take to avoid lead exposure.

At the source of supply, Boston's drinking water, which is provid-

ed by the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA), is lead-free when it leaves the reservoirs. Neither MWRA's, nor the Boston Water and Sewer Commission's water distribution mains contain lead. Replacement of lead service lines is an important public health issue because lead can enter the drinking water when the water remains unused for long periods of time and water service pipes and household plumbing containing lead dissolve into the water. Excessive amounts of lead in the body can cause serious adverse health effects including damage to the brain, red blood cells and kidneys. The greatest risk is to infants and young children, whose physical growth and mental development can be impaired by lead contamination. Also vulnerable are pregnant women, whose fetuses can be harmed by lead.

For more information about lead in drinking water and to find out how to test tap water for lead, Boston residents may contact the Commission at the Lead Hotline at (617) 989-7888. Customers may also visit the Commission's website at bwsc.org with any questions and obtain free brochures about lead in drinking water.

Boston is home to New England's oldest and largest water, sewer and storm-water systems, which are owned, maintained and operated by Boston Water and Sewer Commission (BWSC). Established in 1977, BWSC provides portable water and sewer services to more than one million people per day. BWSC is also the leading organizer of We Are All Connected, a campaign to raise public awareness about the importance of protecting and preserving Boston's waterways. For more information please visit: www.bwsc.org.

NATIONAL GRID OFFERS SAVINGS INITIATIVE

National Grid is proud to serve a diverse community of Massachusetts residents and provide bill help solutions during challenging economic times. Through the company's Winter Customer Savings Initiative, nearly 60,000 customers have enrolled in the company's discount program, which provides eligible customers with 25-32 percent savings on their utility bills. An additional 12,000 customers have signed up for bill management programs since the program was launched in September 2022.

Spanish and Chinese speaking customers can now find the resources they need in their favored language through the Winter Customer Saving Initiative web page at ngrid.com/heretohelp.

National Grid remains committed to providing customers a variety of energy-saving tips and billing options to help offset the increases in this winter's energy prices. Customers in need of billing assistance or additional support can visit ngrid.com/heretohelp to learn more.

Spanish Translation

National Grid se enorgullece de prestar servicio a una comunidad diversa de residentes de Massachusetts y brindar soluciones de ayuda con las facturas durante tiempos difíciles a nivel económico. A través de la iniciativa de ahorro

NEWS IN BRIEF

para clientes durante el invierno de la empresa, casi 60 000 clientes se han inscrito en el programa de descuento de la empresa, que ofrece a los clientes elegibles un ahorro del 25 al 32 % en sus facturas de servicios públicos. Otros 12 000 clientes se han inscrito en programas de gestión de facturas desde que el programa se puso en marcha en septiembre de 2022.

Los clientes que hablan español y chino ahora pueden encontrar los recursos que necesitan en su idioma favorito a través de la página web de la iniciativa de ahorro para clientes durante el invierno en ngrid.com/heretohelp.

National Grid mantiene su compromiso de proporcionar a los clientes una variedad de consejos para ahorrar energía y opciones de facturación para ayudar a compensar los aumentos en los precios de la energía de este invierno. Los clientes que necesitan asistencia con la facturación o ayuda adicional pueden visitar ngrid.com/heretohelp para obtener más información.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH EVENTS

Looking for ways to celebrate and learn about Black history in the Mystic? Check out these opportunities and community events happening around the watershed:

- Explore the works of Medford Poet Laureate

Terry E. Carter. We were excited to see Terry E. Carter, GreenRoots and environmental justice featured in the newest installation at the Mystic Mural Project (pictured above) — a 22-year-long mural project near Blessing of the Bay in Somerville sponsored by the Somerville Arts Council and led by artist David Fichter.

- Learn more about the Royal House & Slave Quarters in Medford MA: "As one of the only remaining freestanding quarters where enslaved people lived and worked in the North, the museum bears witness to their lives, to the intertwined stories of wealth and bondage in pre-Revolutionary Massachusetts, and to the resistance and political and legal activism of enslaved and free Black people in the eighteenth century."

- Visit the Museum of Science's Black History Month celebration, spotlighting influential Black scientists and engineers — including local figures like Lewis Howard Latimer (1848–1928), the inventor, electrical engineer, and patent draftsman born in Chelsea, MA.

- Follow the West Medford Community Center as they share Medford's Black history and uplift Black entrepreneurs, creators, and artists.

- Check out the Chelsea Black Community's great series of events and community activities throughout Black History Month!

Buses // CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

hoods.

BPS is finalizing installation of 20 charging stations at the Readville bus yard, utilizing increased charging capacity that was added with support from Eversource. Each electric bus will have a dedicated charger and be charged every day. The total time to charge each bus is about three to four hours. The learnings from this first phase of electric school bus deployment will support the City in designing and implementing future electric school bus fleet expansion.

Prior to integrating the 20 buses into the fleet, BPS is training driver trainers, drivers, mechanics, operations staff, and emergency responders to ensure familiarity with the bus design and operation. During the upcoming February vacation, drivers will test routes to ensure they are comfortable driving the new buses in advance of students boarding later this month. An estimated 2,561 students across 42 schools will be riding the 20 buses each school day. BPS currently has 620 buses on the road each day.

Boston's Green New Deal works to address climate change with positive co-benefits including creating good jobs, enhancing public health, and

transforming structures to promote racial and economic justice. School bus electrification will protect children from diesel particulate matter, eliminate tailpipe emissions, address air quality and noise concerns around school pick-up and drop-off, and offer a healthier work environment for bus drivers and monitors. The City of Boston is fostering the Green New Deal by leveraging funding to invest in solutions that improve the lives of Bostonians and catalyze the transition to a just, green City.

In April 2022, Mayor Wu first announced that up to 20 electric school buses would be deployed during the 2022-23 school year. These electric buses will replace existing diesel buses. These buses were funded through the BPS operating budget and the federal American Rescue Plan Act. Mayor Wu previously shared the goal that BPS will work to replace additional big buses each year, and then move to replacing smaller buses until the entire fleet is electrified by 2030.

Additionally last spring, the Public Works Central Fleet Maintenance Division introduced the first ever train-the-trainer class for fleet mechanics from the Public Works Depart-

ment (PWD) and BPS on how to safely service and repair electric vehicles at Madison Park Technical Vocational High School. To date, eight mechanics from the PWD and two from BPS have completed the course and continue to take online classes to keep pace with the ever-changing technology. Beginning in the fall of this year, electric vehicle maintenance will be added as part of the core curriculum for seniors participating in Madison Park's automotive program.

This celebration will lay the foundation for the future of the Boston Public Schools bus fleet. The City intends to use federal funding from the Environmental Protection Agency and Inflation Reduction Act to further expand the number of electric buses in the fleet and enhance training for staff.

The City has been making progress on its commitment to installing electric vehicle (EV) charging stations throughout Boston's neighborhoods for both municipal use and residents. The City currently operates 66 LV II EV charging plugs across 14 municipal parking lots. There are plans to add an additional 18 LV II EV charging plugs, and four high-speed LV III DC fast chargers this year. This investment in public charging, along with the City's EV readiness policy for new development and right-to-charge rules for condominium residents provide a foundation for the rapid, equitable electrification of transportation in Boston. The City also continues to electrify its vehicle fleet, adding charging plugs where City vehicles are garaged, prioritizing EVs in its replacement cycle, and adding its first all-electric street sweeper last year.

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Steering committee to advise on reforms to Article 80 development review process

Mayor Michelle Wu announced on Friday the members of a steering committee of real estate and civic leaders to advise on reforms to Article 80 of the Boston Zoning Code being undertaken by the Mayor's Office and the Boston Planning & Development Agency (BPDA). She announced her intention to create the committee during her State of the City speech last week as one piece of a comprehensive set of reforms to improve the planning and development process so Boston can meet its housing and economic growth needs.

Article 80 refers to a section of the Boston Zoning Code adopted in 1996 to establish a more extensive review process for development proposals of more than 20,000 square feet or more than 15 dwelling units. Mayor Wu is undertaking the first comprehensive review of the process after nearly three decades to ensure greater predictability and consistency.

"I'm grateful to these leaders for lending their expertise and working with us to improve our

processes," said Mayor Michelle Wu. "From reforming planning and updating our zoning code, to streamlining development review and strengthening compliance, we are taking action to set Boston on a course for sustainable growth so all our communities are included in the city's opportunities."

"Working with this group will be integral to comprehensively reforming planning and development in our communities," said Chief of Planning Arthur Jemison. "I am confident that those selected will bring a unique perspective and help the BPDA reform this process in a way that improves the process and delivers more resilient, affordable, and equitable development across the city."

The steering committee will include:

- Joseph Bonfiglio, Business Manager of the Massachusetts and Northern New England District Council since 2009. The Council comprises more than 25,000 represented workers, including laborers working in numerous aspects of the general construction trade.

- Anthony D'Isidoro, President of the Allston Civic Association. Among many other community roles, Tony also serves as Board President of the Veronica B Smith Multi-Service Senior Center, Inc., a member of the Allston Multimodal Project task force and Harvard Allston task force, and has served on a number of Impact Advisory Groups. He is a product of the Boston Public Schools both as a student and teacher, a small business owner, and author of a weekly community newsletter. As a community leader, organizer and activist, D'Isidoro advocates with the belief that empowering people can achieve great things to ensure a community that works for everyone.

- Fernando J. Domenech, Jr., President of DHK Architects, where he has worked on community-based urban housing. Domenech has focused primarily on affordable housing for over thirty years, specifically on the revitalization of inner city neighborhoods through creative planning, imaginative urban design and

architecture.

- Colleen Fonseca, Executive Director of the Builders of Color Coalition, where she is responsible for leading the development and expansion of programming to increase access and diversity in Boston's commercial real estate sector. Prior to her role with BCC, she served as a Senior Advisor to Mayor Jorge Elorza on COVID Recovery and as the Director of Workforce Development and Economic Opportunity for the City of Providence. She currently sits on the Real Estate Finance Association (REFA) Board of Directors.

- Beyazmin Jimenez, Director of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Culture for the Planning and Real Estate Department at Northeastern University. Jimenez is an urban planner and pro-housing organizer, formerly the Board President for Abundant Housing MA, an organization she co-founded in 2018. Her experience in housing policy and community development has led her to support resident engagement efforts at Madison Park Development Corporation in

Roxbury, and lead state-wide housing programs at CHAPA. She holds a Master's in Urban Planning from Boston University.

- Matthew Kiefer, land use attorney at Goulston & Storrs. Kiefer's practice focuses on obtaining site control and development approvals from public agencies for complex urban projects. He co-chairs the firm's Climate Change Resilience Task Force. Kiefer serves on the Advisory Board and Management Committee of ULI Boston; he is the immediate past Chair of the Boston Municipal Research Bureau, which supports best practices in municipal governance; and he co-chairs the Council of Advisors of Historic Boston, a non-profit redeveloper of historic buildings.

- Steve Samuels, Founder and Chairman of Samuels & Associates, a Boston commercial real estate developer, property manager, and leasing company. Samuels serves on the Board of Trustees at The Park School on Building & Grounds Committee in addition to his Board of Trustees role

at Emerson College.

- Kairos Shen, Executive Director of the Center for Real Estate at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Prior to joining MIT, Shen worked at the then-BRA for 22 years, first as Boston's Chief City Planner, and then as the Director of Planning. He worked on the development guidelines for the Rose Kennedy Greenway, the planning for the South Boston Waterfront Innovation District, the refurbishment of Fenway Park, and the revitalization of Nubian Square.

- Kirk Sykes, Managing Director of Accordia Partners, LLC, a Boston based real estate investment and development company. He also serves on the Boston Civic Design Commission and is the Real Estate Executive Council Chairman for the Initiative for a Competitive Inner City. Sykes was formerly the head of an urban real estate investment fund called Urban Strategy America Fund, L.P. He was the Chairman of The Federal Reserve Bank of Boston Board.

CITY PAWS

Sniffing our stress

By Penny & Ed Cherubino

Have you ever heard the expression that fear or stress comes down the leash from a person to the dog on the other end? A recent study out of Queen's University Belfast School of Psychology found that a dog may respond to the smell of stress from their human companion.

The Washington Post quoted one of the study's authors, Clara Wilson. "In real-life settings, dogs probably use a variety of contextual signals such as our body language, tone of voice, or breathing rate to help them understand a situation," Wilson explained. "The study results provide firm evidence that odor is also a component that dogs can pick up on," she said.

Service Dogs

This ability to sniff out stress allows dogs to perform essential tasks

for someone with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). In addition to alerting the person served to the beginning of an episode, these dogs can be trained to respond with protective behaviors. For example, a dog might position itself in front of a person to guard personal space or behind a person offering the security of someone watching his back.

Some dogs wake a person from nightmares and offer non-judgmental support and comfort. And, as is often the case with any dog, service dogs can act as social ice-breakers, making it easier for someone with social anxiety to get out, interact with family and friends, and even meet new people.

In this case, remember, you should never approach a working service dog without the handler's permission. Speak to the person, not the dog, and

ask before interacting with the animal.

Your Turn!

Now that we know that your dog can sniff out stress and will often try to comfort a stressed human, it's our turn to learn to sniff out a dog's anxiety and find ways to help lessen it.

Most people respond when a dog vocalizes stress or fear by whining, whimpering, barking, or growling. However, many of us are not as attuned to a dog's body language signs of stress.

Writing for The American Kennel Club, Abbie Mood identified important body language alerts. "Stress signs to look for include whale eye (when dogs reveal the whites of their eyes), tucked ears, tucked tail, raised hackles, lip-licking, yawning, and panting. Your dog might also avoid eye contact or look away."



Research has shown a dog's nose can detect stress in organic compounds emanating from your breath and sweat. (Photo by Tadeusz Lakota)

With our fearful little Westie, we've also experienced a dog who will freeze and shut down when confronted with an anxiety trigger. And many of us have seen a thunderstorm or fireworks cause our dogs to pace with fear.

Sniffing out stress can be a symbiotic service between you and your dog. Sometimes your dog may sense your tension before you do and help you take

steps to bring it under control. As you increase your skill at noticing when your dog is stressed, you can develop ways to provide some relief.

As it happens, interacting with your dog by stroking, playing, or even going for a walk is a proven way of calming a person. Your dog may have his own way of trying to comfort you by leaning against you, sitting next to you, or trying to protect

you. And, once you discover specific stress triggers for your dog, you can begin to do what you can to remove, avoid, or desensitize the dog to those things. Or, at the very least comfort your dog when you can't do anything else.

Do you have a question or topic for Fresh & Local? Send an email to Penny@BostonZest.com with your suggestion.

A SHORT STORY ABOUT A MOTORCYCLE AND A SUDDEN TURN.

When she was a young college student, Elisabeth Marra had a serious motorcycle accident that ultimately changed her life. Two years after the crash, her painful open fractures had failed to heal. Then she heard about a new and complex surgery pioneered by a surgeon who used a patient's own stem cells to concentrate the healing process. This time, her surgery and subsequent therapy were successful.

Elisabeth's experience caused her to re-direct her own career aspirations. Inspired by the medical professionals who helped her reclaim her active lifestyle, she changed her major to study physical therapy—a profession where her own experience could help other patients prevail through difficult recoveries.

We tell Elisabeth Marra's story here to illustrate two of the most profound messages we know: Don't give up, and remember to give back. If reading it inspires just one more person to achieve something special, then its telling here has been well worth while.



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312 Border Street, East Boston, MA

Has some openings in the High School Equivalency Classes (HSE)

If interested, access the registration form via the school website: ebhcs.org or simply scan the QR code below:



These classes run Monday (remotely), Wednesday and Thursday (In Person) from 6:00 – 8:15 PM. They cover all five subjects needed to pass the GED or HiSet exam, both of which are authorized High School Equivalency Diplomas.

Email Michael Kelsen at mkelsen@ebhcs.org if you need further details or have any questions.

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Lydia Edwards
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Times-Free Press

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Forum



ONLY GOD CAN MAKE A TREE -- BUT YOU CAN HELP

As we were reading the news story in last week's newspaper about the efforts of Tree Eastie, a non-profit organization that focuses on planting and maintaining trees to increase East Boston's scarce tree canopy, it brought to mind the poem *Trees* by Joyce Kilmer that we learned in third grade from the nuns at Our Lady of Grace School in Everett:

I think that I shall never see
A poem as lovely as a tree.
A tree whose hungry mouth is prest
Against the earth's sweet flowing breast;
A tree that looks at God all day,
And lifts her leafy arms to pray;
A tree that may in Summer wear
A nest of robins in her hair;
Upon whose bosom snow has lain;
Who intimately lives with rain.
Poems are made by fools like me,
But only God can make a tree.

We have lived in this area all of our lives, but we have to admit that we were stunned to read East Boston's tree canopy sits at 7% – the lowest in the City of Boston – which averages 27%.

As the article noted, not only do trees help to reduce air pollution, but they can cool down streets, filter stormwater, and even increase property values.

So we wish to acknowledge the efforts of Tree Eastie, which was founded by Bill Masterton, which already has achieved great success with the planting of 164 street trees over the last 15 months.

An equally-significant aspect of this undertaking is the maintenance of new and existing trees. Residents can participate through Tree Eastie's Adopt-a-Tree program, which asks residents with trees near their homes to sign up and water them.

We know we speak for all of our fellow Eastie residents in thanking Tree Eastie for their efforts and we urge as many of our residents as possible to volunteer to assist with this wonderful program.

(Residents who want to get involved can visit <https://treeeastie.org/> or email treeeastie@gmail.com.)

NO CHILD SHOULD LIVE IN DEEP POVERTY

We wish to voice our support for a bill sponsored by Everett State Senator Sal DiDomenico, the Assistant Majority Leader of the Massachusetts Senate, that seeks to accelerate the timetable for lifting children in our state out of what is known as Deep Poverty.

The Act to Lift Kids Out of Deep Poverty would raise the maximum cash assistance grant by 25% a year until it reaches half of the federal poverty level. Families living below half the federal poverty level are considered to be in Deep Poverty. Under Senator DiDomenico's bill, grants would increase each year and would keep pace with inflation as the poverty level goes up.

Senator DiDomenico has been instrumental in leading the charge in the legislature to raise the grant levels three times for a total increase of 32% beginning in January, 2021.

According to the Massachusetts Budget & Policy Center, almost 80,000 children in our state live in Deep Poverty, a situation that not only is unconscionable in 2023, but that also is counterproductive to the future of our society.

We urge the legislature to pass this bill immediately to ensure that no child in our state lacks food, clothing, and the other basic necessities of life.

Your opinions, please

The Times welcomes letters to the editor. Our mailing address is 385 Broadway, Revere, MA 02151. Our fax number is 781-485-1403. Letters may also be e-mailed to editor@eastietimes.com. Letters must be signed. We reserve the right to edit for length and content.

Dr. Glenn Mollette

Do you get tired of hearing about China? Now we have floating surveillance balloons over our country. We are yet to know for sure what this is about but time will tell. China is probably scouting out the next land or business purchase. They may have come up with an easy way to determine which military bases have available adjacent land. It doesn't matter if it's for sale they can come up with enough money to buy the property. All they have to do is to keep piling up the money from everything they sell to the United States.

Alarms went off in Washington when the Fufeng Group, a Chinese agricultural company, bought 300 acres of land and set up a milling plant last spring in Grand Forks, N.D. The plant is a 20-minute drive from an Air Force base that, according to North Dakota Sen. John Hoeven, hosts a space mission that "will form the backbone of U.S. military communications across the globe." Source WSJ

Ten years ago Smithfield Foods was purchased by China's leading pork producer, Shuanghui International Holdings Ltd. (now called WH Group Ltd.), for \$4.72 billion.

Keep in mind China has 1.5 billion people. This requires a lot of people to feed. China would love to gain as much of our farmland as possible to gain more control of our food production. This is one area where China really

needs us. Our agricultural exports to them increased by over 27% from 2020 to 2021. They would need us if they can gain control of our farmland. It's also a plus for them if they can have it close to our military bases. This provides a two-fold benefit for them. In the middle of the cornfield, they can watch everything we are doing or even attempt to thwart what we are doing

The U.S. trade summary reveals the depth of our trade with China.

In 2021, U.S. exports to China were \$151.1 billion, a 21.4% (\$26.6 billion) increase from 2020; U.S. imports from China were \$506.4 billion, a 16.5% (\$71.6 billion) increase; and the trade deficit with China was \$355.3 billion, a 14.5% (\$45.0 billion) increase from \$310.3 billion in 2020.

China was the United States' third-largest trade partner in 2021.

In 2021, 8.6% of total U.S. exports of \$1.8 trillion were exported to China and 17.9% of total U.S. imports of \$2.8 trillion were imported from China.

Mechanical Appliances, Sound Recorders and TV sets were the most traded commodity sectors. In the last five years, U.S. exports of those commodities show an upward trend from \$25 billion in 2017 to \$36.1 billion in 2021. The percentages of imports of those commodities from China out of total imports from the World are impressive with 37.0% in 2017 and 29.3% in 2021.

In 2021, U.S. exports

of Agricultural Products to China continue to show an upward trend. In 2021, U.S. exports of Agriculture Products were \$31.6 billion, an increase of 27.5% (\$6.8 billion) from \$24.8 billion in 2020.

In 2021, China remained the major source of U.S. imports of Textile Products. In 2021, U.S. imports of \$50.3 billion of Textile Products from China constituted 32.6% of the total U.S. imports of Textile products.

Additionally, in 2021, China remained the major source of U.S. imports of Furniture, Bedding, Lamps, Toys, Games, Sports Equipment, Paint, and other Miscellaneous Manufactured Items. In 2021, the U.S. imports of \$68.5 billion of Miscellaneous Manufactured

Items from China constituted 53.2% of total U.S. imports of those commodities. Source: Government info data

What can we do about China? Try to buy products not made in China. You have to shop but it's possible. Shrinking the cash flow to China is crucial to reducing their growing economic and military power. By all means, please do not sell them your land.

Glenn Mollette is the publisher of Newburgh Press, Liberty Torch and various other publishing imprints; a national columnist – American Issues and Common Sense opinions, analysis, stories and features appear each week in over 500 newspapers, websites and blogs across the United States.

GUEST OP-ED

Tired of hearing about China? Stop the cash flow

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Ribbon-cutting ceremony held for new District A-7 Police Station in East Boston

Mayor Michelle Wu joined Boston Police Commissioner Michael Cox, Chief of Operations Dion Irish, police officers, and community leaders on Jan. 31 for a ribbon cutting ceremony for the new District A-7 police station in East Boston.

The new facility on East Eagle Street represents a \$29.9 million investment in East Boston's public safety and community spaces, and was designed following several public meetings to hear the community's opinions about the project, public safety, traffic, and accessibility. The new facility also includes stormwater management and more energy efficient systems.

"An investment in our municipal buildings is an investment in our City workers and our residents. This new state of the art station provides the working environment our officers deserve and creates a more accessible experience for the local community," said Mayor Michelle Wu. "I want to thank our Public Facilities Department for seeing this project through and incorporating community input and sustainability into the design."

"This new District A-7 station is a win for our officers and for the East Boston Community," said Boston Police Commissioner Michael Cox. "The former station was unsafe and outdated for far too long. The new A-7 is more strategically located and offers modern resources for our officers to better serve the diverse communities of East Boston. We are grateful to Mayor Wu, as well as the City's operations and facilities teams, for making this a priority. This building brings with it new space for our officers to meet and connect with residents and the business community as we work to build trust and enhance our community policing efforts."

The new police station is the first complete new district station in more than a decade. Its location is centrally located in East Boston. The new facility is safer and more code compliant than the old premise which contained antiquated mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems. The officers gain a more efficient space for work and collaboration which provides adequate space for personnel, equipment, and security. The new A-7 facility helps conserve water and prior-

itizes the use of safer materials to lower exposure to toxins. The mechanical systems are all controlled by a building management system and the lighting is controlled by a lighting control system and occupancy sensors to manage energy use and increase efficiency.

"We broke ground on this project in October of 2019 to create a modern facility with enhanced community access, improved working conditions, and public art," said Chief of Operations Dion Irish. "This new station will improve dispatch response times, while providing a sustainable, resilient asset for the East Boston neighborhood and Boston Police Department."

The building is situated so that the public lobby and community room face the neighborhood with transparent facades and an accessible plaza facing the main intersection. It is entirely accessible to both the community and to staff with dedicated parking.

To complement the construction of the new building, the City commissioned artist Monika Bravo to create a long-term public art project in the community room and main lobby of the building. The artwork, UNUS MUNDUS, consists of mosaics and hanging glass mobiles that mimic the original topography of East Boston, a place that was once five separate islands and now has been covered in landfill to create one neighborhood. Bravo referenced many historical and current images and maps of East Boston in creating the work, embedding some of them in the artwork itself. She also engaged community members and Boston Police officers in a series of workshops to learn more about the project and share their input and experiences.

"There has been much anticipation about the opening of the East Boston Police Station," said City Councilor Gabriela Coletta. "I look forward to working in partnership with the community and BPD to continue building trust and ensure that the station is a safe, inclusive, and welcoming space for everyone in the community."

"I'm so proud of the work Mayor Michelle Wu, City Staff, and the Boston Police Department have done to bring a new police station to East Boston, the first new station in Boston in a decade,"



Sgt. Joe Cheevers, Band Pipe Major, of the Boston Police Gaelic Column of Pipes and Drums, joined the contingent in providing music for the guest.



Rep. Adrian Madaro welcomes Boston Mayor Michelle Wu to the ribbon-cutting ceremony.



Veronica Robles of the Veronica Robles Cultural Center was one of the speakers during the ribbon-cutting ceremony.



Superintendent-in-Chief Gregory Long, Capt. Dean Bickerton, and East Boston Liaison Nathalia Benitez of the Office of Neighborhood Services.



Rep. Adrian Madaro delivers remarks at the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the new police station.



Boston City Councilor Gabriela Coletta, who grew up in the neighborhood where the new police station is situated, delivers remarks at the ribbon-cutting ceremony.

said State Senator Lydia Edwards.

"I'm glad to see the new A-7 police station open in East Boston after many years of hard work and collaboration with the community," said State Representative Adrian Madaro. "The new facility will be a more modern, healthy, and centrally located facility for both the officers who work there and East Boston residents."

This announcement builds off of Mayor Wu's commitment to invest in City workers and infrastructure to ensure all residents and City workers can take advantage of state-of-the-art facilities. In January Mayor Wu announced \$25 million for a new BCYF community center in the North End. Last year, Mayor Wu announced a Green New Deal for Boston Public Schools, a \$2 billion plan to overhaul BPS facilities, including new construction and renovation projects, as well as district-wide upgrades.



Pictured at the Jan. 31 ribbon-cutting ceremony for the new police station on East Eagle Street in East Boston are Boston Police Sgt. Kevin Yalmokas, Deputy Superintendent Louis Cruz, Superintendent Robert Ciccolo, and Sgt. Joseph Cintolo.



Police Capt. Dean Bickerton, Boston City Councilor Gabriela Coletta, Police Commissioner Michael Cox, Boston Mayor Michelle Wu, and Rep. Adrian Madaro are pictured at the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the new District A-7 police station in East Boston.

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Happy Valentine's Day



Happy Valentines to our Nana Michelle & papa Ternullo!
Love Olivia & Elliana



Happy Valentine's Day to the best Mamie!
Love Mandy & Maranda XO



My first Valentine's Day .. to Nonna and Nono! I love you,
Gianni Luisi



Happy Valentine's Day from Patrick & Evelyn



Happy Valentine's Day!
Love, hugs, and kisses,
Julianna & Anthony Merlina



To Christopher, We Love You Star Boy
Happy Valentines Day Love Mama & Father



Happy Valentine's Day Love, Jazzy



Happy Valentine's Day Love Charlotte & Oliver

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Sports

EAST BOSTON GIRLS BASKETBALL IN HOOP ACTION AGAINST CHARLESTOWN

PHOTOS BY BOB MARRA

East Boston girls basketball celebrated Senior Day by winning its fifth game of the year with a 51-28 victory over Charlestown at East Boston High School Thursday, February 9. Seven team members of the Class of 2023 were recognized before the Jets took the floor and dominated their City League rivals.



NOT PAST ME: Ebeline Oliva (23) blocks the path of a Charlestown forward.



STILL GOT IT: Gianna Troville (4) momentarily lost control of the ball but regained it as she moved past a Charlestown defender.



OUTTA MY WAY: Juliana Troville (21) on a determined drive for two points.



HIGH STEPPIN': Grace Melendez (20) steps away from trouble as she nears the basket.



SENIOR CELEBRATION: Teammates and fans honored the Class of 2023 members of the East Boston High School basketball team, from left to right, Juliana Troville, Cindy Alfaro, Isabella Munoz, Sterling Marte, Jaden Pacitta, Andreyra Evora, and Brandy Aguilar. See Page 7 for more photos.

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NASA comes to Chelsea

By Adam Swift

More than a half a century later, the first steps of man on the moon still inspire awe and wonder.

Now, thanks to the Space Adventure exhibit currently running at 121 Webster Ave., visitors can experience the thrill of lunar exploration complete with more than 300 original NASA items.

Visitors will have the opportunity to experience the Mercury, Gemini and Apollo missions – responsible for bringing the first humans to the lunar surface – through a series of immersive rooms that include original artifacts that no one has ever seen or been given access to before. These include the control panel and counting clock of the Houston Space Center, computers used in 1960, radios used for communication between spacecraft and Earth, astronaut suits, cameras used to capture the famous images of the lunar surface and astronauts, work tools and devices that filtered the air inside the modules, the Apollo mission food menu featuring items that could

be stored for decades and products developed especially for the personal hygiene of astronauts while they were in the space.

The exhibition is divided into several stages. The first is a 180-degree immersive video that welcomes and transports visitors to the space environment they are about to immerse themselves in, followed by a journey into the main room where the 300 original NASA objects are housed. From there they continue to the Control Room, which features the original computers from the NASA Space Center. Attendees will then embark on their wonderful journey from the “Departure to the Moon” room to culminate in the lunar landing in the “Arrival on the Moon” room.

Alexia Patino of the Space Adventure Team said there has been excellent feedback from those who have already visited, with many commenting on the mix of an immersive experience together with the original NASA items.

“We really hope people realize the bravery man

needs to get to the moon,” Patino said. “It is an experience where we hope everyone realizes the historic value of landing on the moon, especially now considering the time that we are planning on going back. It’s an exciting time to look back on the Apollo missions.”

The exhibition also includes a series of images and films documenting the different lunar missions through the years, as well as virtual reality experiences and a 5D Cinema with content related to space.

Space Adventure is open Wednesdays and Thursdays from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., Fridays from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m., Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. and Sundays, from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m through the end of February, although there is a chance that the exhibit could run longer. Tickets are available now online via Fever, the same company behind several of the recent immersive exhibits in Metro Boston.

This project is a collaboration between Primo Entertainment, DC Set Group, and the Cosmosphere Space Education



Shown above and below, some scenes from the Space Adventure exhibit on display at 121 Webster Ave. in Chelsea.



Center and Museum in Hutchinson, Kansas, the organization responsible for collecting, safeguarding, and managing the rare historical artifacts so they can be shared with all of humanity.

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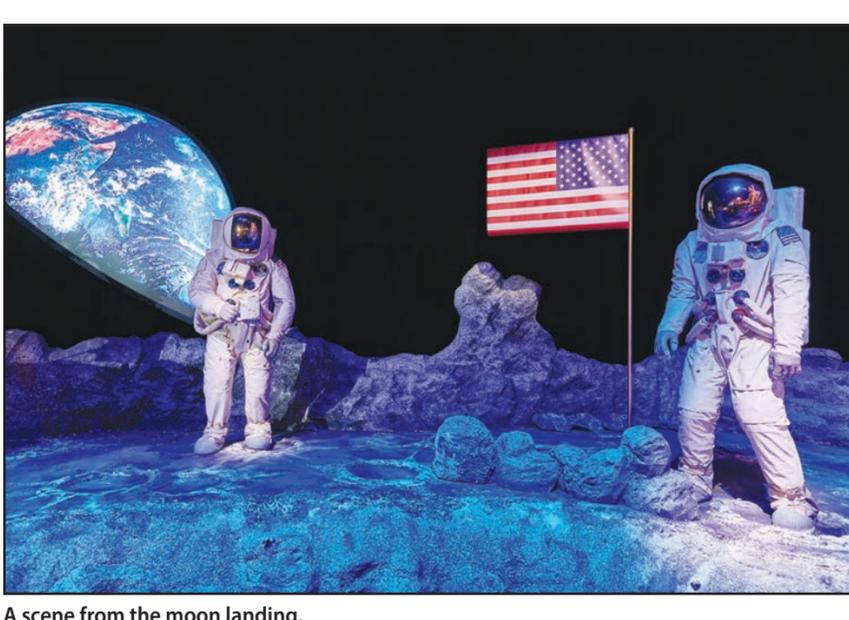
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Mass Humanities announces 2023 funding opportunities through grants

Special to the Times-Free Press

Mass Humanities, the Commonwealth's leading funder of humanities programs, announced upcoming opportunities for its 2023 grant season.

In 2022, the Northampton-based foundation awarded more than \$1 million in grants to non-profits, supporting free public events, oral history projects, and community conversations and media partnerships. This year, Mass Humanities seeks to increase its impact through the Expand Massachusetts Stories initiative, and its long-running Reading Frederick Douglass Together program.

Applications and guidelines are available at masshumanities.org.

"We believe the work of Massachusetts residents to reimagine our stories provides a pathway to reinvigorating our democracy at the local, state, and national level," said Brian Boyles, Executive Director of Mass Humanities. "These vital programs amplify the diverse ideas, stories and conversations that continue to make the Commonwealth a global leader in ideas and the fight for equality."

Mass Humanities grants opportunities for the 2023 season include:



In 2022, the Southeast Asian Coalition was an Expand Massachusetts Stories (EMS) grant recipient, one of 42 organizations across the state that received a Mass Humanities EMS grant.

- **Expand Massachusetts Stories** (Up to \$20,000)—At this pivotal time, Massachusetts needs new voices and fresh narratives to meet our challenges. We support organizations that embrace this historical moment as an opportunity to bring communities together to reimagine stories, revitalize traditions, and ignite new ideas for the future. Expand Massachusetts Stories (EMS) grants support projects that collect, interpret, and share narratives about the commonwealth, emphasizing the voices and experiences that have gone unrecognized or have been excluded from public conversation. As

part of the EMS grant program, Mass Humanities will also offer Advancing Equity Track grants to 15 applicants whose projects are led by people from historically excluded communities, and whose organizations meet additional criteria. The Advancing Equity Track applications open on Monday, Feb. 6, with Letter of Inquiries due on Monday, March 20. Applications for the EMS Open Track opens Monday, March 20, with applications due on Monday, May 22.

- **Read Frederick Douglass Together Grants** (Up to \$2,000)—Each year, Mass Humanities organizes and funds free events

where communities gather to read and talk about Frederick Douglass' influential address, "What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?" The most celebrated orator of his day, Douglass' denunciations of slavery and forceful examination of the Constitution challenge us to think about the stories we tell and do not tell, the ideas that they teach or do not teach, and the gaps between our actions and aspirations. To quote Douglass: "We have to work with the past only as we can make it useful to the future." Applications are open now and grants are made on a rolling basis each month.

An online webinar for

anyone interested in applying takes place on Feb. 16 at 1pm. A video of the webinar will be shared on masshumanities.org.

Last year Mass Humanities awarded more than \$713,000 in grants to 42 organizations across the Commonwealth through the Expand Massachusetts Stories grant program with support from the Barr Foundation. Of the 42 grantees, 62% had people who identify as BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and People of Color) among their project leadership; 60% of the organizations funded had operating budgets under \$500,000; and 48% had operating budgets under \$350,000.

More than 25 organizations hosted Reading Frederick Douglass Together events across the state. Each event features a group of diverse people gathering to read portions of the Douglass' Fourth of July speech. The readings provide the opportunity for communities to discuss race, democracy, and our responsibilities to the past and how we might find ways to strengthen our future together.

Mass Humanities grants are made possible in part by a partnership with Mass Cultural Council, the state arts agency, and by the

National Endowment for the Humanities.

To learn more about Mass Humanities grant opportunities contact Katherine Stevens, Director of Grants and Programs, at grants@masshumanities.org.

Mass Humanities, a non-profit foundation based in Northampton, creates opportunities for the people of Massachusetts to transform their lives and build a more equitable commonwealth through the humanities. Since its founding in 1974, the organization has provided millions of dollars to support thousands of humanities projects across the Commonwealth. Established as the state-based affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), Mass Humanities is an independent programming and grant-making organization that receives support from the NEH and the Massachusetts Cultural Council and private sources. For more information, visit www.masshumanities.org or connect on social media at:

Facebook.com/masshumanities

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NEWS FROM AROUND THE REGION

CITY PLANNER EARNS AWARD

CHELSEA - Karl Allen, Chelsea's Economic Development Planner, was awarded the Transcending Barriers Award at the inaugural Transcend International Gala in Salt Lake City, Utah, late last year.

The award was created to honor leaders in the public sector who are working to create or further an initiative, intervention, or program focused on improving the quality of life for a particular group or community.

Allen was honored for his role in bringing accessible broadband internet access to the city through a digital equity program.

"As part of our work on digital equity here, we first applied in conjunction with Everett and Revere, and the regional planning agency, MAPC, to do a digital equity plan," said Allen. "In the process of doing that, the three communities applied for a national Build Better Broadband grant. We were one of six groups selected nationally, and that provided a couple of technical experts who wrote a digital action plan for us."

The plan went through the process of figuring out what community needs were and doing preliminary design of what a municipal broadband network would look like. One of those experts had been working with a foundation that was looking to do a video as part of their work and suggested Allen would be a good person for them to interview.

When Transcend International wanted to hold their initial gala, Allen was nominated for the work he was doing with Chelsea's Housing and Community Development Department to further digital equity.

Transcend International is a data-driven 501(c)3 organization that looks to technologies, strategic investments, and partnerships with corporate, government, and community

organizations to accelerate inclusion in the financial and educational sectors. Transcend International's largest project is focused on minimizing the digital divide by utilizing public dollars for public infrastructure for public good. During their Transcend International Charity Gala, the organization raised \$2 million dollars that will go directly toward research and creating resources for communities striving to implement digital equity plans just like the City of Chelsea.

"The pandemic really showed us how unequal access is," said Allen. "The federal program to address digital equity tends to focus on geographic disparities. There are lots of people in rural America who have no access to the internet and that's where most of the federal money to date has been going."

But there is also an economic digital divide, Allen said, where companies provide subpar service because they can't make enough money off of the community they are serving.

"This is the digital divide in Chelsea we are trying to address, and we are hoping to address it aggressively over the next couple of years," said Allen.

Addressing the digital divide is just one way the Housing and Economic Development Department and Chelsea's planners have taken a bit of a different approach to urban planning.

"We are much more on the ground than planners traditionally were, and that has been a very rewarding experience," said Allen. "We are serving the residents of Chelsea, and they need more help than the state or the federal government is providing, and we are trying very hard to be creative in filling as many of those gaps as we possibly can."

For Allen, working in the public sector is something that came a little lat-

er in life.

Allen had a successful career in the software industry, then returned to graduate school when he was in his fifties to study resource economics and urban planning. He has used that degree as a springboard, devoting the latter part of his career to public service, starting in the Chelsea planning department at the end of 2016.

"This is by far the best job I've ever had," said Allen. "You are actually helping people, as opposed to profit maximizing, so I am very happy that we can make a difference in people's lives."

One of the next steps in the city's digital equity initiative will be the creation of a Broadband Resident Advisory Committee. Anyone interested in participating can contact the economic development department at (617) 466-4180.

BLS EMERGENCY VEHICLE ADDED

EVERETT - Mayor Carlo DeMaria is pleased to announce, alongside Everett Fire Department (EFD) Acting Chief Scott Dalrymple and President of Everett Firefighters Union Local 143 Lieutenant Craig Hardy, the signing of an agreement to introduce a Basic Life Support (BLS) Ambulance Emergency Service Vehicle into the EFD fleet.

The majority of calls that the EFD responds to each year are for medical responses. Everett Fire Department's first-ever ambulance will allow for quicker response times to residents' medical emergencies and allow for possibly life-saving care to be administered with new equipment and increased professional training as EMTs.

"It's always been my goal to make sure that the members of the Everett Fire Department have the training and equipment they need to serve our res-

idents," said Mayor DeMaria. "Residents should be reassured that if you need medical assistance, our EFD members will be there in minutes."

Currently, the ambulance industry is dealing with staffing shortages, which has resulted in the possibility of longer wait times for emergency medical care. Equipping Everett Firefighters with an ambulance and EMT training will help combat this statewide issue for the residents of Everett.

Mayor DeMaria stated, "I want to thank Local 143 and the members of the EFD for sharing my commitment to offering our residents this important and potentially life-saving new service."

COUNCIL EXAMINES NEW HIGH SCHOOL NUMBERS

REVERE - The future location of a new Revere High School doesn't seem like as much of a sure thing as it did only months ago, at least for a few city councillors.

During a nearly three hour ways and means subcommittee meeting, the City Council heard from the project manager about the project costs and Revere's share of the price tag.

Once again, the council also heard from the city's chief financial officer, Richard Viscay, who stated there will have to

be some tough decisions made to pay for the project.

Near the end of the lengthy meeting, several councillors said they would like to see revised cost estimates for a project that would keep a new high school at the site of the current Revere High. There was also an agreement among several of the council members that the price tag for any high school building project would have to drop to make it more palatable.

The latest series of council meetings on the project was set in motion late last year, when the cost estimate for the new high school ballooned to

See REGION Page 10

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Region // CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

nearly \$500 million, up considerably from the \$384 million estimate the council was presented with when it voted to select the Wonderland site as the location of a new Revere High School last year.

Brian Dakin, the senior project manager for the high school project from LeftField, kicked off the meeting with a presentation on how the estimated cost of the project jumped due to unprecedented financial times over the past year.

Dakin also had some good news on the financial front as the city attempts to meet a March 1 deadline to submit schematic design plans for the project to the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA).

The latest overall cost estimate for the new high school has dropped to just over \$480 million, with an expected increase in the MSBA grant from the state of about \$22 million.

The latest figures put the current expected cost of the project to Revere at \$296 million, according to Dakin.

Dakin also addressed the increase in the project costs from the preferred schematic report (PSR) phase of the project early last year to the figures that were presented to the City Council in December.

"The main thing that happened there, which unfortunately happened not just to Revere but to everyone building these projects, was that the cost escalation that was estimated in the budget that we presented turned out to be inaccurate," said Dakin.

Early last year, Dakin said there were estimates of 6 to 7 percent for cost escalation, which he said is high in the construction industry.

But the actual cost escalation in the construction industry over the past year has been closer to 15 percent, Dakin said, with certain items in construction spiking as much as 30 percent over the past year.

"The cost escalation projection that we had built into the budget a year ago did not pan out," he said. "Those impact how we estimate the cost escalation."

In addition, Dakin said there were also some cost increases related to site work related to wetlands and environmental factors.

"The other main difference is a year ago, when

we were looking at this, we were also charting a September, 2026 occupancy," said Dakin. "Based on the amount of time it took to get here and get the eminent domain process in process and done, we are now looking, at best, at a September, 2027 occupancy."

That extra year, on top of the historically high construction escalation costs, were major factors in the increased project cost estimate.

Dakin compared the projected cost of the Revere High School project to several other high school building projects in the state that are at a similar point in the process. The effective construction cost per square foot of a new 422,600-square-foot building in Revere is \$948 per square foot, Dakin said. The estimates for new high schools, including ones in Wakefield and Boston, range from about \$860 per square foot to over \$1,000 per square foot.

"The range is pretty staggering, I'm not going to say these numbers are normal to us in the industry," said Dakin. "In the last few years, all these numbers have gone through the roof."

With ways and means subcommittee meetings on the high school project scheduled through February, Dakin said he will present a more detailed breakdown of the project budget, including programming and contingency costs.

During the question and answer phase of the meeting, several councillors noted the need to get the project moving, since the cost of building will only go up with more delays.

"Whatever we build, we should build top notch, and not something that is going to be antiquated in 20 years," said Ward 5 Councillor John Powers.

Several other councillors, however, expressed concern about how the city will pay for it, and asked that the consultants come back with a cost estimate for going back to a plan to build on the current high school site.

"This particular project tonight, if I had to vote for it, there is no way I would vote for it, because I cannot see the way, I have not seen a pathway, certainly not without a debt exclusion or Proposition 21/2 override, that the city is going to be able to afford its share," said Councillor-at-Large Dan Rizzo.

Dakin said a vote to submit the planning schematics to the MSBA does not mean the budget numbers are locked in. If the City Council were to vote on the submission in March, a final agreement with the MSBA would likely come back to the city in May. That agreement would set the number for reimbursement from the state.

Even at that point, Dakin said there would be additional design steps where there could be opportunities to save on the overall budget.

Council President Patrick Keefe said there is a need to bring the price tag of the project down, in addition to finding ways for the city to pay for it without putting it on the backs of the taxpayers.

"We have to find a way to reduce the budget, then we have to find a way to produce from our end, from the city budgeting standpoint, a way to make sure we are not passing it off to the taxpayer," said Keefe.

Councillor-at-Large Anthony Zambuto raised several issues about the vote to bond \$29.5 million to take the approximately 33 acre Wonderland parcel by eminent domain.

"My contention is that the council voted without having the full information," said Zambuto.

Zambuto reiterated his stance that the actual cost to the city of the land taking (which is not included in the total project cost) will be higher than the \$29.5 million that was bonded. He has also said he was against building on the Wonderland site because it takes potential property tax income from development of the site off the table.

Zambuto, Rizzo, and Councillor-at-Large Gerry Visconti were among those Monday night who asked Dakin to come back with a revised estimate to build on the current site. The current high school site was considered a final option for a new high school by the school building committee, alongside the Wonderland parcel.

Dakin said it would be possible to go back to a plan for the original site, but that it could push the project back several years.

"Is it possible?" Dakin said. "Yes. Would it be open a couple of years later than the track we are on? Yes."

The delay would also lead to a greater cost escalation, he added.

The councillors also

grilled Viscay on how the city will pay for the project. At last week's council meeting, the CFO presented a number of options he was looking for input on to help make debt payments for the project.

Viscay noted that on the current schedule, the debt payments would start to hit their peak around 2028. He also noted that the debt payments could range from \$14 to \$19 million per year, depending on interest rates.

Viscay's presentation touched on a wide range of avenues to cover the expected debt service for the new high school, ranging from expected new growth from the HYM Suffolk Downs development, to increased city fees, to tightening the city's operating and capital budgets, to the eventual extra capital that will be available when the city's pension plan is fully funded in 2034. Viscay also noted that the city does not have any income from cannabis sales, and the council may want to rethink allowing recreational cannabis sales in the city as an avenue to raise money.

One of the biggest chunks the city could take out of its budget would be for it to renegotiate with its unions to provide a Group Insurance Commission health insurance plan through the state rather than its current health insurance plan.

Viscay said the city could ultimately realize \$3 to \$5 million per year in savings by switching to a GIC plan.

"We're not going to build this by cutting paper clips and travel budgets," said Viscay. "We're going to have to make some serious decisions."

Viscay was asked several times if the city could pay for the high school without a debt exclusion or override. Viscay said if the council did not want to move forward with any of the options he brought forward, it would not be able to afford the debt payments without an override or debt exclusion.

Visconti noted that even if the council had the stomach to move forward with an override, the city's voters would have the final say on that option.

"My concern is that if we vote yes, the taxpayers are going to say not, and where does that leave us?" said Visconti. "That's a major concern."

OBITUARIES

Carol Ann Sacco

Long time Stone & Webster Division Systems Manager

Carol Ann Sacco of Orient Heights, East Boston passed away on February 1.

Carol graduated from St Lazarus, Mount Saint Joseph Academy and Boston University. She worked as a Division Systems Manager at Stone & Webster Engineering Corporation in Boston for over 20 years.

The loving daughter of the late Albert Sacco and the late Helen (D'Ambrosio) Sacco, she was the dear sister of Ronald Sacco and his longtime companion, Paula Swanson of Saugus and the late Edward Sacco; beloved longtime companion of Vito Suziedelis of Naples, Florida and cherished

cousin of Lucille Malvone of Wakefield, Diane Balsis of Kennebunkport, Maine, and Robert Sergi of Hasbrouck Heights, New Jersey.

Family and friends honored Carol's life by gathering at the Ruggiero Family Memorial Home, 971 Saratoga Street (Orient Heights), on Sunday, February 5 and again on Monday, February 6 before leaving in procession to St. Joseph-St. Lazarus Church for a mass celebrating Carol's life. Services concluded with Carol being laid to rest at Holy Cross Cemetery in Malden. To leave an online condolence visit www.ruggieromh.com.

Dorothy Anita DiStefano

Retired hairdresser and dog groomer

Dorothy Anita (Sarno) DiStefano of East Boston passed away on February 4 at the age of 88.

Dorothy grew up in the North End of Boston. She met her husband, Charles there. They moved to London Street in East Boston before purchasing the home on Saratoga Street where they lived for over 50 years. She was a hairdresser for many years before starting her own dog grooming business. She retired from dog grooming and continued working at Maycom for many years. Dorothy loved baking and cooking for her family and enjoyed sewing and crafting. She will be missed by all. May she rest in peace.

The beloved wife of

the late Charles DiStefano, she was the devoted mother of Charles DiStefano and his wife, Carol of East Boston; cherished grandmother of Nick, Bianca, Joseph and Ariana and dear sister of Joseph Sarno.

Family and friends will honor Dorothy's life by gathering at the Ruggiero Family Memorial Home, 971 Saratoga Street, Orient Heights, East Boston today, Wednesday, February 8 from 8:30 to 10:30 a.m. before leaving in procession to Sacred Heart Church in East Boston for an 11 a.m. Mass. Services will conclude with Dorothy being laid to rest with her husband, Charles at Woodlawn Cemetery.

9TH ANNIVERSARY REMEMBRANCE

Rich Ford



February 9, 2014 - February 9, 2023

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LOCAL STUDENTS EARN ACADEMIC HONORS

ASSUMPTION STUDENT NAMED TO UNIVERSITY'S DEAN'S LIST

Assumption University has announced those who have been named to the University's Dean's List for the fall 2022 semester. Students named to the Dean's List must achieve a grade point average of 3.5 for a minimum of a five-class, 15-credit semester to be included on the prestigious list. The Dean's List is announced at the completion of each fall and spring semester.

Genesis Funes, Class of 2026, of East Boston

Assumption University, founded in 1904 by the Augustinians of the Assumption, is New England's premier university for high-quality education, integrating career preparation and education of the whole person, drawing upon the best in the rich and centuries-long tradition of Catholic higher education. Assumption, located in Worcester, Massachusetts, seeks to provide students with a transformative education that forms graduates who

possess critical intelligence, thoughtful citizenship, and compassionate service. The University offers 38 majors and 50 minors in the liberal arts, sciences, business, nursing and professional studies; as well as master's and continuing education degrees and professional certificate programs.

THOMAS NAMED TO FALL 2022 DEAN'S LIST

The University of Rhode Island is pleased to announce that Nathan Thomas of East Boston has been named to the Fall 2022 Dean's List. Students named to the Dean's List represent nearly all of Rhode Island's cities and towns, all six New England states, New York and New Jersey, and many other states and countries.

To be included on the Dean's List, full-time students must have completed 12 or more credits for letter grades which are GPA applicable during a semester and achieved at least a 3.30 quality point average. Part-time stu-

dents qualify with the accumulation of 12 or more credits for letter grades which are GPA applicable earning at least a 3.30 quality point average.

Founded in 1892, the University of Rhode Island is the principal public flagship research and graduate institution in Rhode Island. Competitive and highly regarded, its more than 14,500 undergraduate students and 2,200 graduate students represent 48 states and 76 countries across the globe. With 203 academic programs, URI offers its undergraduate, graduate, and professional students distinctive educational opportunities designed to meet the global challenges of today's world and the rapidly evolving needs of tomorrow. At URI, you will find some of today's leading innovators, discoverers, and creative problem solvers.

NHU ANNOUNCES FALL 2022 PRESIDENT'S LIST

It is with great pleasure that Southern New Hamp-

shire University (SNHU) congratulates the following students on being named to the Fall 2022 President's List. The fall terms run from September to December.

Full-time undergraduate students who have earned a minimum grade-point average of 3.700 and above for the reporting term are named to the President's List. Full-time status is achieved by earning 12 credits over each 16-week term or paired 8-week terms grouped in fall, winter/spring, and summer.

Shannon Haglund of East Boston

Curtis Kitchen of Boston
Southern New Hampshire University (SNHU) is a private, nonprofit institution with a 90-year history of educating traditional-aged students and working adults. Now serving more than 170,000 learners worldwide, SNHU offers approximately 200 accredited undergraduate, graduate

and certificate programs, available online and on its 300-acre campus in Manchester, NH. Recognized as one of the "Most Innovative" regional universities by U.S. News & World Report and one of the fastest-growing universities in the country, SNHU is committed to expanding access to high quality, affordable pathways that meet the needs of each learner.

DEPAULO NAMED TO DEAN'S LIST AT STONEHILL COLLEGE

Anamarie DePaulo of East Boston, a member of the Class of 2023, has been named to the Fall 2022 Dean's List at Stonehill College.

To qualify for the Dean's List, students must have a semester grade point average of 3.50 or better and must have completed successfully all courses for which they were registered.

About Stonehill College

Stonehill College, a Catholic institution of higher learning, was founded by the Congregation of Holy Cross in 1948. Located on the beautiful 384-acre campus and former estate of Frederick Lothrop Ames in North Easton, Massachusetts, it is a community of scholarship and faith anchored by a belief in the inherent dignity of each person.

Through more than 100 academic programs in the liberal arts, sciences, business and pre-professional field, Stonehill College provides an education of the highest caliber that fosters critical thinking, free inquiry and the interchange of ideas for over 2,500 students.

Stonehill College educates the whole person so that each Stonehill graduate thinks, acts and leads with courage toward the creation of a more just and compassionate world.

LEGAL NOTICE

LEGAL NOTICE

Commonwealth of Massachusetts The Trial Court Probate and Family Court CITATION GIVING NOTICE OF PETITION FOR APPOINTMENT OF GUARDIAN FOR INCAPACITATED PERSON PURSUANT TO G.L.C. 190B, §5-304 Docket No. SU22P2840GD Suffolk Probate and Family Court 24 New Chardon Street Boston, MA 02114 (617) 788-8300 In the matter of: Megan C. Devito

Of: East Boston, MA RESPONDENT Alleged Incapacitated Person To the named Respondent and all other interested persons, a petition has been filed by Lisa C. Devito of East Boston, MA in the above captioned matter alleging that Megan C. Devito is in need of a Guardian and requesting that Lisa C. Devito of East Boston, MA (or some other suitable person) be appointed as Guardian to serve on the bond. The petition asks the court to determine that the Respondent is incapacitated, that the appointment of a Guardian is necessary, and that the proposed Guardian is appropriate. The petition is on file with this court and may contain a request for

certain specific authority. You have the right to object to this proceeding. If you wish to do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance at this court on or before 10:00 A.M. on the return date of 03/02/2023. This day is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline date by which you have to file the written appearance if you object to the petition. If you fail the written appearance by the return date, action may be taken in this matter without further notice to you. In addition to filing the written appearance, you or your attorney must file a written affidavit stating the specific facts and grounds of your objection within 30 days after the return date. IMPORTANT

NOTICE

The outcome of this proceeding may limit or completely take away the above-named person's right to make decisions about personal affairs or financial affairs or both. The above-named person has the right to ask for a lawyer. Anyone may make this request on behalf of the above-named person. If the above-named person cannot afford a lawyer, one may be appointed at State expense. WITNESS, Hon. Brian J. Dunn, First Justice of this Court. Date: January 13, 2023 Felix D. Arroyo Register of Probate

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Celebration // CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Councilor Gabriela Coletta each congratulated the East Boston CDC on its successful efforts in providing affordable housing to residents.

In his introduction of Mayor Wu, Caldarelli said “we were fortunate to elect a mayor who has

come forth and proven to us that she supports us in all of our efforts and from the very beginning of her administration, she has started to push forward affordable housing, open space for our children, and care for our children.”

Tayna Hahnel, direc-

tor of real estate for the East Boston CDC, said the event was “a celebration with our community partners who have been organizing for affordable housing and anti-displacement work in East Boston for the better part of the last ten years.”

Hahnel lauded the several funders and investors “who stepped up and helped raise the \$50 million it took to take these 114 units off the market.”

“Honestly, this event was just an opportunity to celebrate with old and new partners,” said Hahnel.

East Boston CDC oversees approximately 700 apartments located mostly in East Boston, but also in the North End, along with one property in Winthrop.



Boston Mayor Michelle Wu praised the East Boston Community Development Corporation for its work in creating affordable housing opportunities for Boston residents.



Boston City Councilor Gabriela Coletta delivers remarks at the East Boston Neighborhood Trust Blue Line Celebration.



Pictured at the East Boston Neighborhood Trust Blue Line Celebration at the Barnes School Apartments are, from left, Tanya Hahnel, Director of Real Estate, East Boston CDC, Boston Mayor Michelle Wu, Senator Lydia Edwards, State Representative Adrian Madaro, Boston City Councilor Gabriela Coletta, Sheila Dillon, Chief of Housing, City of Boston, and Al Caldarelli, Executive Director, East Boston CDC.



Mayor Michelle Wu greets members of the Center for Cooperative Development and Solidarity (CCDS), Oscar Orosco, Gabriela Delegado, Luz Zambrano, and Maria Hincapie.



East Boston Community Development Corporation Director of Real Estate Tanya Hahnel delivers remarks at the East Boston Neighborhood Trust Blue Line Celebration at the Barnes School Apartments.

Journey // CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

remembering the quiet first two weeks of her retirement. She did enjoy purging her home of 30 years, and donating items that she was no longer using to The Salvation Army. Retirement also afforded her more quality time to distribute home cooked meals to neighbors at a local church.

“You have to keep your mind active,” advised Grant-Carter, who began noticing the gentrification of her neighborhood, with the integration of young business professionals and families. “Otherwise you become isolated from what’s happening in the community.”

Grant-Carter realized that she must return to her passion: teaching.

“If you love what you’re doing, no matter what the obstacles may be, do it with love,” Grant-Carter urged. “Mom said, ‘God has given everyone a talent. Once you find what it is, the resources will be there. Talent doesn’t develop overnight. People will come into your life and help and support you through the process.’ That’s a community.”

Grant-Carter instructs through hands-on activities. She aspires to provide students with real-life experiences, and implores them to ask questions.

“I try to break down what life is about, so they can understand on their terms,” explained Grant-Carter. “Appreciate what you have and be exposed to different types of living.”

The adventurer enjoys delving into the beauty and history of diverse cultures, avidly sharing her

discoveries and photographs in the classroom.

“I love to travel. It makes me appreciate what we have,” revealed Grant-Carter, who has vacationed with friends in five continents; and most recently visited Dubai. “When I went to China, I didn’t realize that black people – slaves – helped build the Great Wall.”

Grant-Carter encourages students to be grateful for their food, clothes, warm homes, and the love of family. She emphasizes how receiving an education – with the advantage of having school supplies and resources available to them -- is a gift.

“Treat people the way you want to be treated. Be kind to people -- not because you want something in return -- but because you’re doing it from the kindness of your heart,” listed Grant-Carter.

Grant-Carter advises her students to strive to be their best selves; especially while exploring during field trips, as they are representing the school.

“I’m teaching them that manners go a long way,” asserted Grant-Carter, who demands that girls and boys behave as respectful ladies and gentlemen.

The self-proclaimed field trip queen believes that it is important to expose students to new educational activities throughout Boston, such as meeting former president, Barack Obama, at the Reggie Lewis Center, in Roxbury, during his candidacy.

“I have eyes on the back of my head,” turned Grant-Carter, ruffling her



Cynthia Grant-Carter (third from left) with traveling friends, Pam Lightfoot, Suzanne Ricco, and Dorothy Belton.

hair; then leaning forward with stern eyes. “I say, ‘I want you to listen. When I was growing up, the community took care of everybody. Everyone looked after each other. One day, I was outside, playing with friends, acting like a fool. When I went upstairs, my grandmother knew I wasn’t being good, and that my mouth was awful. That’s what it means that I have eyes on the back of my head.’”

Seeking support and caring for members of one’s community are vital to Grant-Carter. She became an instant mother of her then 10-year-old niece, Shaunequa, with the passing of her twin sister. It was then that she fully realized the value of her compassionate neighbors.

“It was tough, but we made it through. I thank God for my neighbors,”

Grant-Carter shared. “You cannot take the journey by yourself.”

Grant-Carter has been a writing and soccer coach for grades 3-5 for 18 years with American Scores, a before and after school enrichment program for urban youth. She also teaches social, emotional learning through community service, such as handing bagged lunches and poems to the homeless in Central Square while on route to the soccer field at LoPresti Park.

“I always remember a line from a student’s poem: ‘Justice is doing the right thing when no one is looking at you,’” recited Grant-Carter, who boasted that two of her students had competed in a national poetry competition in New York City. “That’s powerful. This student was 10, and quiet. Through poetry, he was



PHOTOS PROVIDED BY CYNTHIA GRANT-CARTER

Cynthia Grant-Carter riding a camel in Essaouira, Morocco

able to express himself.”

Having taught three generations of PJK students, Grant-Carter has developed lasting relationships with families. The most rewarding aspect of her career is when she meets a former student.

“You never know who you’re going to touch. Sometimes if I’m walking down the street in East Boston, I’ll hear, ‘It’s Ms. Grant-Carter! How are you doing?’” shouted Grant-Carter. “It brings me joy that they remember me. Recently, one student saw me. He gave me a hug. He is teaching math at East Boston High School. Three of my former students are in his classroom. He made my day.”

Grant-Carter was raised by her grandmother, Jane, mother, Colentary Marie, and step-father, John, in Harlem, and The Bronx, New York. Dedicated and selfless, they are Grant-Carter’s role models, and the inspiration for the morals she instills in her students.

“They were helping their community while they were working. I try to bring their habits and traditions to the next generation,” said Grant-Carter. “You have to work for what you need. Keep

pushing. Be strong and patient. Life isn’t instant gratification. If you have faith in yourself, plant the seed, water it, and it will come.”

Grant-Carter believes that black history should be incorporated into daily curriculum, and celebrated throughout the year. People, Grant-Carter asserts, make history every day when they advocate for justice.

“Black history is every day,” said Grant-Carter, frankly. “We live it. We see it. The people who invented the clock, hairbrush, computer chip, and traffic light were black. We didn’t get credit for a lot of the inventions because we weren’t allowed to get patents.”

Grant-Carter recommends Boston Public School teachers of color to contact the Black Educators Alliance of Massachusetts for support and resources.

The most important lesson that Grant-Carter has taught her students is to remain focused during life’s challenges.

“Believe in God, and have faith that things are going to be okay,” maintained Grant-Carter. “Dream, believe, and achieve. There is always something good, even from a bad situation.”

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