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**JP OBSERVER: PAGE 4**

# Jamaica Plain GAZETTE



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*COURTESY PHOTOS*  
 Residents and officials gather on Feb. 16 at the former Blessed Sacrament Church where Mayor Wu announced \$67 million in funding from the Mayor's Office of Housing, the Community Preservation Fund, and the Neighborhood Housing Trust (NHT). Shown left, State Rep. Samantha Montano, Mayor Michelle Wu, and Boston City Councilors Mackenzie Bok and Kendra Lara.

## Wu announces investment of \$67 million to create and preserve 802 income-restricted homes in Boston

SPECIAL TO THE GAZETTE

On Thursday, Feb. 16, Mayor Michelle Wu came to Jamaica Plain and joined the Hyde Square Task Force, affordable housing developers, and community organizations at the site of the former Blessed Sacrament church to announce \$67 million in new recommended funding from the Mayor's Office of Housing, the Community Preservation Fund, and the Neighborhood Housing Trust (NHT) to create and preserve more than 800 income-restricted units of housing in eight Boston neighborhoods. The Blessed Sacrament site is one of the

projects that will be funded. The ambitious portfolio consists of 17 projects with a total of 802 units of mixed-income housing that includes rental housing for families, while also creating new homeownership opportunities for low- and moderate-income Bostonians. Of the 802 units, 160 will be income restricted housing for seniors. These proposed projects meet the Mayor's Office of Housing standards for zero-emissions buildings and represent transit-oriented, green development.

"We are partnering with community and using every tool

*Continued on page 10*



## JPNC Housing Comm. discusses Shattuck project

BY GAZETTE STAFF

The Housing and Development Committee of the Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Council held a regular monthly meeting last Tuesday, February 21.

Chairperson Renee Stacey Welch and the approximately 20 committee and community members who were in attendance took up a wide-ranging set of issues.

Chief among them was a discussion of the state's plans for the Lemuel Shattuck Hospital property that is within Franklin Park and abuts the Stony

Brook neighborhood. The hospital, which has 260 in-patient beds, will be closing in 2024 and relocating to a new facility in the South End.

The state has announced plans to develop the land with supportive housing that will be targeted to individuals and families who have experienced chronic homelessness and who also face the challenges of chronic illnesses, mental health needs, or substance use disorders.

However, in late 2021, the

*Continued on page 2*

## JP resident new Dranaya Owens named Brookview House Director

SPECIAL TO THE GAZETTE

Brookview House is pleased to announce that Dranaya Owens has joined the organization as Director of Community-Based Services. In this role, Owens will oversee the activities and operations of Community-Based

Services, which focus on empowering individuals and families to achieve long-term stability in the City of Boston with special concentration in the neighborhoods of Dorchester, Roxbury, and Mattapan.

The Jamaica Plain resident joins Brookview from Communi-

ty Resources for Justice (CRJ), a long-standing New England organization that advances policy and delivers individualized services that promote safety, justice, and inclusion. There Ow-

*Continued on page 4*

# Project Bread's Walk For Hunger returns May 7

STAFF REPORT

One of Massachusetts' most iconic events is back! Project Bread's The Walk for Hunger, the Commonwealth's largest and oldest day of community action

against hunger, is seeking walkers for a new 3-mile route. Back in-person for the first time since 2019, the one-day fundraising event is set for Sunday, May 7 at the Boston Common, featuring plenty of family-friendly activities along the 3-mile loop. The

Walk for Hunger is a fundraiser that supports Project Bread's work to raise awareness for food insecurity and increase food access for people of all ages in Massachusetts. In its 55th year, Project Bread invites you to help us raise more than \$1 million to

support food assistance resources and sustainable policy solutions to end hunger. Likeminded anti-hunger organizations can enroll in our co-fundraising program, The Commonwealth, forming teams to raise money to support their own work, while

also furthering the statewide effort. To register for the event and create a personal or team fundraising page for the Walk for Hunger or to make a donation, visit [projectbread.org/walk](http://projectbread.org/walk) or call (617) 723-5000.

## JPNC

*Continued from page 1*

state constructed temporary housing on a portion of the hospital's parking lot in order to alleviate the homelessness crisis at the infamous Mass. and Cass intersection.

It was evident from the members' comments that there is both anger about the present situation and apprehension about the state's future plans for the site.

A member of the committee, who lives near to the site, said that the area has become a disposal area for needles and other heroin-related paraphernalia. He said he used to take his young

son to play in the park, but that no longer is possible because of the open and rampant drug use by the new residents.

"I have sympathy, but I believe in tough love," said another member, who suggested that those with a substance abuse issue who are accepted into the housing program must agree to enter into treatment and remain clean. "The people who live in the communities abutting these developments should not be left to absorb the problems there.

"We should not have residents picking up needles while residents are shooting up," he continued. "People who live there have to help themselves. If we're willing to give them housing, they have to be held to a certain

type of behavior.

"We need to stand up for the people of this community," he added. "If the drug dealers are following them, and no one is being required to take services, then we have a big problem."

However, it was pointed out by another member that the units there now are just temporary housing and are not reflective of the solution for permanent housing being proposed for the area.

There also was a lot of conjecture about the possible size of the eventual project. The state's official web site states that there may be 75-100 units of housing, but some members say the actual figure may be closer to 400.

One member noted that the scope of the project "has not been shared, which is causing a lot of anxiety," among JP residents. "This has not been an authentic public process from the outset."

"I'm scared to death of the additional 400 units that might go in there," said one member. "This is a very high density project in a small area, especially because it is abutting the Stony Brook neighborhood. Adding another 400 units would overly-burden the area."

"This is a big one, a big topic," agreed another member, who reiterated that the state's plans for the Shattuck project call for permanent supportive housing (as opposed to the temporary housing in place now), half for families and half for individuals,

with the homeless having priority.

"What I'm getting from families and others in the neighborhood is that we really don't know what's happening with this project," said Welch.

"It is important that at our next meeting we have the facts about the project," said another member.

The group also discussed the Forest Hill/Arborway Yard/Garage project being undertaken by the MBTA. The project has been on the MBTA's radar since 1999, but it finally is gathering momentum because of the T's desire to change its bus fleet to all-electric buses. The new garage will house charging stations for 200 electric buses, which is double the present number of gas-powered buses that currently use the facility. The electric buses will go into service immediately along Jamaica Plain's bus routes, with the T hoping to have an entirely-electric bus fleet throughout its system by 2040.

The original Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the scope of the project among the MBTA, the city, and JP community groups was written in 1999. However, it was noted that the MOU is outdated in many respects because of the transformational changes that have occurred in the area over the past 25 years.

Among the most significant of the T's changes in its plans for the development of the parcel is a reduction in the size of the area that was to be designated for community development. The original MOU called for turning over eight acres on the site for community development purposes, but the T's updated plan has shrunk that space to 6.4 acres, a change that has drawn the ire of the JP community.

The so-called City Pole Yard also was due to be removed per the 1999 plan, but the city now has stated that it will be retaining the site for maintenance

purposes and staging for snow removal equipment.

The group raised other issues with the T's plan, such as the lack of landscaping and the spectre of a structure with a blank facade, which members asserted are major deficiencies given the garage's location within the Emerald Necklace area.

On another topic, the committee discussed the contents of a proposed letter to the mayor's office, suggesting that there be more affordable housing as a percentage (25%) of all future housing developments than what Mayor Wu has called for. The city presently requires that 12 percent of new housing be affordable, but the mayor has proposed to increase the level of inclusionary housing to 17 percent, a figure which the group felt was too low.

Welch proposed adding a separate line regarding the need to educate small landlords about the use of rental vouchers.

"The low-hanging fruit we should talk about is small landlords. How do we educate landlords about how to navigate the system for tenants with vouchers? If for some reason rents are withheld, landlords go right to eviction," said Welch, who herself is a landlord. "A lot of landlords, especially women, are afraid to use the rental voucher system."

The group will be drafting a letter that will go to the full JPNC for approval before it is sent to the mayor.

In other matters, the members discussed how they can increase the diversity of their committee to include more renters, persons of color, and younger residents.

Welch also presented an update on the status of the Forbes Building, telling the group that rent protection for the low-income, subsidized tenants has been extended through the end of the year.

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# Mayor Wu announces citywide permanent outdoor dining program

SPECIAL TO THE GAZETTE

Mayor Michelle Wu announced the City of Boston's Permanent Outdoor Dining Program, in coordination with the Office of Economic Opportunity and Inclusion (OEIOI), the Streets Cabinet, and the Disabilities Commission. The permanent program creates a predictable, streamlined process for business owners that will expedite application review and allow for annual renewals. It incorporates the activation of public space enjoyed during the temporary program, but addresses issues such as barriers to accessibility and concerns from public safety officials. The application to participate in the permanent program will be made available later this month with the goal of restaurant patios opening as early as May 1. The new program will include a monthly fee for all participants to help fund efforts to further expand outdoor dining more equitably across the City.

"Outdoor dining expanded as a way to keep our businesses open during the pandemic, and has turned into a popular opportunity to enjoy our streets and each other's company," said Mayor Michelle Wu. "The Permanent Outdoor Dining Program is a multi-departmental collaboration to reimagine our public space for the benefit of residents, business owners, and visitors. We've taken what we learned over the last couple years to inform the permanent program, and we're committed to working with our neighborhoods to make this program a success."

"The outdoor dining program served as a lifeline to many small businesses in the City to ensure that they could keep their doors open throughout the pandemic," said Segun Idowu, Chief of Economic Opportunity and Inclusion. "With the success of the program, I am excited for the program to continue to operate and to keep our neighborhoods vibrant moving forward."

Business owners will be able to apply via an online portal which will be open starting on February 23, 2023. Through this portal, businesses will be able to submit their applications, track application progress, and renew the Outdoor Dining Permit annually. The application to apply

will be available here.

"We were so excited to hear about the return of outdoor dining. For us, as a small restaurant the pandemic forced us to get creative, and the outdoor dining program has been a critical component to our sustainability and recovery. We saw changes in consumer behavior when we were forced to rethink the way we use public spaces," said Andy Fadous, co-owner of American Provisions & Gray's Hall. "With our two businesses on East Broadway & I Street in South Boston, we were able to provide an outdoor space for the community in both the morning and evenings, open longer hours and employ more staff."

The permanent program requires businesses to submit professionally engineered site plans for outdoor dining setups on the street and sidewalk to ensure all patios meet the requirements of the state building code. The COVID-19 temporary program allowed for hand-drawn site plans and portable ramps under a temporary variance from the Massachusetts Architectural Access Board (MAAB). The City has prepared multiple sample templates, which have been informed by the Disabilities Commission and approved by the MAAB for permanent use. The City has designated a staff member to help restaurant owners with technical assistance on engineering plans.

"With spring around the corner, we're very excited for the return of the city's outdoor dining program here in Allston," said Alex Cornacchini, the Executive Director of Allston Village Main Streets. "The last few years have shown that our restaurants have benefited from the added seating capacity, residents have benefited from the safer seating options during COVID, and the whole neighborhood has benefited from the added vibrancy these pop up patios produce."

In 2020, the Outdoor Dining Pilot Program was created under temporary state legislation as a business relief response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Prior to any of the temporary outdoor dining programs, fees were collected for the City's Sidewalk Cafe Program, which predated the pandemic.

Going forward, all approved businesses participating in outdoor dining will be required to pay \$399 per month if they have

a liquor license and \$199 per month if they do not. Fees will go toward technical assistance for hiring architects to draft site plans, with the goal of expanding the program to businesses that would not otherwise be able to participate.

The City will not be permitting on-street outdoor dining in the North End this year. Restaurants in the neighborhood with adequate sidewalk width will be eligible to apply for outdoor dining if their proposal complies with accessibility and licensing requirements. Restaurants with privately owned spaces seeking to have outdoor dining patios are encouraged to apply through the Inspectional Services Department.

The scheduled closures of the Summer Tunnel and continued congestion around the North Washington Street Bridge construction project are expected to put a greater strain on North End traffic this summer and make it harder for residents and first responders to navigate the area. With about 95 restaurants in just over a third of a square mile, the North End has the densest per capita number of restaurants in the state. This has brought

unique challenges and quality of life issues expressed by residents over the course of the temporary programs, including increased traffic, sanitation issues, and accessibility problems for older residents and those with limited mobility. The City will be creating a task force to determine how these issues could be remedied in future iterations of the permanent program. This year, the City will buy back jersey barriers from North End restaurant owners and provide relief for costs related to storing these items.

The City previously held two Citywide meetings to brief business owners and residents on the permanent program and collect feedback. City officials have heard from residents throughout the temporary program and used neighborhood concerns to inform the permanent program. Restaurants applying for the program are encouraged to actively involve residents, community members, and civic groups to discuss future plans for outdoor dining patios on any public space. Residents and community members can share their comments regarding restaurants applying to the program to the dedicated outdoor dining email address ([\[boston.gov\]\(mailto:boston.gov\)\) before the business's Boston Licensing Board hearing date. Residents and community members with feedback are also encouraged to attend the scheduled Boston Licensing Board hearing.](mailto:outdoordining@</a></p>
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The Permanent Outdoor Dining Program builds off of Mayor Wu's commitment to reimagine how Boston streets work for residents and visitors and how reconfiguring public spaces can foster community. In January, the Boston Planning & Development Agency (BPDA) announced findings from the Copley Connect pilot in summer of 2022. Following the success of the pilot, transportation planners with the BPDA and BTB intend to study permanent improvements to Dartmouth Street between the Boston Public Library and Copley Square Park that would improve the public realm between three of Boston's most iconic civic spaces and formally unify Copley Square. Additionally, the Boston Transportation Department will be announcing more Open Streets events in the coming months following the success of last year's events creating more than a mile of car-free space in Jamaica Plain, Roxbury, and Dorchester.



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## JP OBSERVER

# ChatGPT: Is AI Armageddon upon us?

By SANDRA STOREY / SPECIAL TO THE GAZETTE

As if newspaper columnists and other journalists needed something else to freak people out about this year, along came ChatGPT. It was released by non-profit creator OpenAI in late November so people can have things written to order for them.

Most media praised its writing abilities while expressing fears about just that.

University professors, teachers and other highly verbal people are worried in the reports. They are discussing changing writing assignment protocols to

avoid getting AI papers instead of student-written ones. Some are asking students to handwrite (print?) papers in class.

Reporters and columnists are presenting AI-generated examples, trying, it seems, to convince us that ChatGPT is going to replace humans as thinkers and writers. The media folks have either read and watched a lot of science fiction, or they think we have.

Deep thinkers say they fear AI writing could be programmed to change our politics and minds.

Maybe the fearmongers trust Elon Musk, who once predicted that AI would take over the world by 2025. Just recently at a conference in Dubai, commenting on ChatGPT, he called AI “one of the biggest risks to the future of civilization.”

Momentarily the pundits seem to have forgotten climate change. Could ChatGPT have written to them that the environmental crisis went away?

For Valentine’s Day, the New York Times asked readers to choose a mood, a person, and a famous poet and have ChatGPT draft a Valentine to the person. All I can say is, with all due respect to Paul Simon: This AI provides the 51st way.

Thank goodness Rihanna will never get the “wistful” Rumi-inspired poem ChatGPT wrote for me to send:

“My darling Rihanna, / In my heart your beauty lies / My love for you remains strong / Yet I must live with these sighs / Your love I can’t touch, caress / Still I cherish a blazing light / That will remain as an inner warmth / Until you are here by my side”

Lucky Rihanna. Poor readers. Poor Rumi. I apologize.

[Note: I originally wrote, “Rumi must be rolling over in this grave” here. But I looked it up. Turns out he is buried close to where the earthquake hit Turkey earlier this month. I changed what I wrote. Would ChatGPT have done that? I doubt it.]

I have read essays in the new York Times written by both school kids and ChatGPT responding to an assignment. It was easy to tell which was which. Eighth graders don’t use subjunctive voice, let alone, correctly.

The Boston Globe praised ChatGPT for its handling of a fictional Westminster Dog show that featured robotic dogs rather than real ones. The Globe apparently did not realize it was not a news story, but a piece of fiction. ChatGPT also had the Boston Dynamic robot dogs performing tricks, which doesn’t happen at Westminster.

From examples I’ve seen, ChatGPT is OK at analysis and other intellectual writing, if frequently boring. Though it’s good

at grammar, its tone tends to be either frivolous or stiff. Its writing often sounds to me like something I read before, even though I didn’t, not exactly.

Professors and teachers who think AI writing is so good that it’s dangerous to society should consider assigning more creative, contemporary writing projects.

It’s no accident that AI is very useful for writing sports and fitness stories and articles. It is being used to do that at some media outlets already. Any game write-up with AI is like Mad Libs; fill the numbers and basic events in the blanks. Fitness stories abound already for AI to learn, absorb and pretty much repeat.

Any assignment that needs very recent information or needs quotes from a person who has never been quoted on the topic before will be tough for ChatGPT to complete. In short, right now ChatGPT won’t work for most news stories or many other practical tasks, like writing minutes of a meeting.

Everyone (Except freelance columnists and reporters desperate for an assignment?) should calm down about the end of the world. The most ChatGPT could do is end a Valentine relationship.

*Sandra Storey is the Publisher Emeritus of the Jamaica Plain Gazette.*

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## Owens

*Continued from page 1*

ens most recently served as an Assistant Director within CRJ’s Social Justice Services division, which supports people leaving incarceration to make positive, sustainable life transitions. She led the team that oversaw the intake, release, and employment department of the program.

“Dranaya brings a great deal of experience in establishing productive relationships with community organizations and in working with sensitive populations in need of services,” said Deborah Hughes, president and CEO of Brookview House. “She



*Dranaya Owens, Director of Community-Based Services for Brookview House.*

is an ideal addition to our team, we are fortunate and delighted to have her.”

Each year, Brookview House

provides 270 women and children experiencing homelessness with a safe, supportive environment in which to live and acquire and practice skills to pursue education, job training and employment in order to achieve long-term stability and economic independence. At-risk women and children who live in the community are also invited to participate in Brookview’s programs. Recognized nationally for its successful model, 92 percent of mothers who have lived at Brookview maintain permanent housing after leaving, and 88 percent of the children who participate in Brookview’s Youth Development Program graduate high school, compared to the national average of 64 percent.

# GSEMA SHARE THE LOVE ON VALENTINE'S DAY WITH COOKIE DONATIONS

COURTESY PHOTO

The Girl Scouts of Eastern Massachusetts (GSEMA) celebrated Valentine's Day this year by donating cookies to seven local non-profit organizations in the Greater Boston Area for their annual 'Share the Love' event. The Girl Scouts of Eastern Massachusetts spent the day delivering 1,100 cases (that's nearly 250,000 cookies) of their famous cookies to those who might not be able to spend the day with their loved ones. In hopes to share some love on cupid's holiday GSEMA stopped in Jamaica Plain at the American Legion Post 76, with 50 cases of cookies.



Members of the American Legion Post 76 in Jamaica Plain join the Chief Executive Officer of GSEMA, Barbara Fortier, along with donated cookies.

## MWRA to temporarily shut down fluoride system

STAFF REPORT

Starting in late February, the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority will be replacing portions of the equipment that feeds fluoride into its drinking water. During this period, MWRA will not be adding fluoride to the water. This work is expected to take about three months to complete.

MWRA has worked closely with the Massachusetts Department of Public Health on this issue. While fluoride is important for dental health, health officials believe that this short-term shutdown will not pose any risk to dental health and will not require any special action by consumers.

Fluoride has been added to the region's water since the 1970s. The US Centers for Disease Control recommends its usage for reducing tooth decay and promoting community public health. MWRA also consulted with the Department of Public Health Oral Health Office and the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, both of which approved this temporary fluoride shutdown.

MWRA treats drinking water from the Quabbin and Wachusett Reservoirs at the John J. Car-

roll Treatment Plant in Marlborough. In addition to fluoride, water is treated with both ozone and ultraviolet light for disinfection, and the pH is adjusted to make the water less corrosive and less likely to leach lead from

home plumbing.

If you have any concerns, check with your dental care provider. For more information on your drinking water, please visit [www.mwra.com](http://www.mwra.com) or call MWRA at 617-242-7283.

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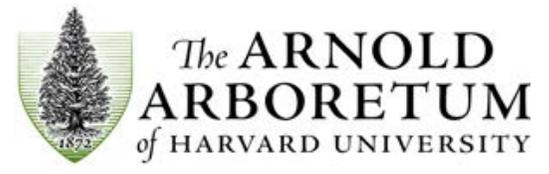
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# Whittier Street Health Center receives \$500,000 grant

STAFF REPORT

Whittier Street Health Center, a community health center with a mission to serve as a center of excellence that provides high quality and accessible health care and social services that achieve health equity, social justice, and the economic well-being of a diverse patient population, is one of 22 Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) funded health centers nationwide to receive a grant to improve access to life-saving cancer screenings and early detection services for underserved communities.

Use of the \$500,000 grant awarded to Whittier Street Health Center will focus on a

breast cancer screening program, in partnership with Dana-Farber Cancer Institute.

The grant awards come on the first anniversary of the Biden-Harris Administration's reignited Cancer Moonshot initiative, a call to action to reduce the cancer death rate in this country by at least 50% over the next 25 years and to support families living with and surviving cancer.

According to Xavier Becerra, secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the 22 grants totaling nearly \$11 million is an investment in health centers working toward reducing the disparities in cancer screenings "across races, ethnicities, genders, and incomes."

"We are grateful to the

Biden-Harris Administration and HRSA for this grant that will allow us, in partnership with Dana-Farber, to offer life-saving breast cancer screenings and linkage to treatment and evaluation for patients from diverse backgrounds," said Frederica M. Williams, president and CEO of Whittier Street Health Center. "While it is true that cancer affects all population groups, disparities in screening, treatment, and cancer rate are disproportionate due to economic, social, and environmental disadvantages. With this grant we hope to mitigate some of that disparity."

Whittier Street Health Center is an independently licensed community health care center with a mission of providing high quality, reliable and accessible

primary healthcare for diverse populations while promoting wellness and eliminating health and social disparities. A champion of equitable access to high quality, patient-focused care, social justice and economic equity, Whittier Street Health Center is accredited by The Joint Commission (TJC), certified by the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) as a Patient-Centered Medical Home, and recognized by the NCQA for its Behavioral Health Integration. Through its locations in Roxbury and North Dorchester, and its Mobile Health Van program, Whittier Street Health Center serves more than 30,000 patients and 20,000 community outreach visits annually; its ethnically and racially diverse

patient base is primarily made up of individuals from Roxbury, Dorchester, Jamaica Plain, the South End and greater Boston. Approximately 36% of Whittier's patients are uninsured. Whittier Street Health Center provides a comprehensive array of 40 healthcare programs and services designed to meet the primary health care, behavioral health, and social needs of the community. For more information, please visit [www.wshc.org](http://www.wshc.org) as well as Facebook ([www.facebook.com/WhittierStreetHealthCenter](http://www.facebook.com/WhittierStreetHealthCenter)), Twitter (@Whittier\_Boston), or LinkedIn (<https://www.linkedin.com/company/whittier-street-health-center/>), or call 617-989-3221.

## Sixteen-year-old charged with stabbing murder

BY GAZETTE STAFF

A 16 year-old girl, Wilmary Mejia Matos of Roxbury, was arraigned in the West Roxbury Division of the Boston Municipal Court last Monday (February 13) for the alleged stabbing murder of 21 year-old Brianna Brown early on the Saturday evening of February 11.

In addition, the defendant was charged with assault and

battery by means of a dangerous weapon for the stabbing of a second female, a 17 year-old companion of Brown's, who was seriously wounded in the attack.

The defendant pleaded not guilty to all charges.

The tragic incident took place at approximately 5 p.m. on Woodside Ave. Both of the victims made their way to the District 13 police station at 3347 Washington St., which is about a block

away from Woodside Ave., in the aftermath of the attack despite their multiple stab wounds, including to the neck. They were taken to separate hospitals, but Brown succumbed to her injuries.

Police who responded to the scene arrested Mejia on nearby Glen Rd. immediately after the incident. Mejia was taken to the hospital with non-life threatening injuries.

According to prosecutors, the incident stemmed from an argument over photos sent by Mejia's boyfriend to one or both of the victims.

"The scope of this tragedy is immense," said Suffolk County District Attorney Kevin Hayden. "One young woman is dead, another is seriously injured, and a third is entering a life-altering journey through the court system. The trauma of

this incident touches all of them, and all of their families. It also touches anyone who hopes and prays for a community less beset by pain and loss."

Under Massachusetts law, arraignments of juveniles ages 14 to 17 who have been charged with homicide take place in a regular adult court session instead of in a juvenile session, which is closed to the public.

## Officials reminds residents to respond to 2023 Annual Resident Listing

STAFF REPORT

The City of Boston's Election Department is reminding res-

idents of the importance of responding to the Annual Resident Listing. The 2023 Boston Annual

Resident Listing helps provide information for the fair planning and distribution of City services. The information collected is used to provide access to a fair jury and helps maintain an accurate and up to date voter list.

Registered voters must respond to the Boston Annual Resident Listing in order to keep their registration active. Residents can check their voting status or register to vote at <https://www.sec.state.ma.us/ovr/>.

The Annual Resident Listing does not register one to vote. Residents can register to vote online, in-person at the Boston Election Department, or by calling (617) 635-8683 (VOTE) to have a form mailed to them.

Included with the 2023 Bos-

ton Annual Resident Listing is the City of Boston Childcare Survey. The survey, administered by the Office of Early Childhood provides data on the needs of parents with children ages 0-5 to inform policy and programming. Residents can fill out the Childcare Survey and return it with their response to the Boston Annual Resident Listing in the prepaid envelope provided or online at [www.boston.gov/childcare-survey](http://www.boston.gov/childcare-survey). The survey is available in Spanish, Chinese, Portuguese, Vietnamese, Haitian Creole, and Cape Verdean Creole.

How to respond:

- By mail: Residents can return the completed forms to the Election Department using the prepaid envelope that is provid-

ed to all households as part of the mailing.

- Respond online: Visit [Boston.gov/census](http://Boston.gov/census) to respond to the Boston Annual Resident Listing. Translations are available online.

- Printable mail-in version: If for any reason residents did not receive the Boston Annual Resident Listing or if the mailing was misplaced, a printable version is available online at [Boston.gov/census](http://Boston.gov/census) or by calling (617) 635-8683 (VOTE).

- Call the Election Department: Residents can call (617) 635-8683 (VOTE), Monday through Friday between 9 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., to speak to a representative about completing the census.

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# Hayden announces appointments to leadership team

SPECIAL TO THE GAZETTE

Suffolk District Attorney Kevin Hayden today announced several appointments to his leadership team as he shapes the direction of the office for his four-year term. The appointments include:

- Byron Knight, Second Assistant District Attorney—Byron has been in private practice specializing in criminal defense since 2015. Prior to that he served deputy legal counsel in the office of the governor's legal counsel and held numerous prosecutor and investigator positions in the Suffolk district attorney's office and Massachusetts attorney general's office.

- Maria Romero, Chief Legal Counsel—Maria has served as assistant general counsel in the Suffolk sheriff's office since 2001. Maria began her career in the Suffolk district attorney's office, first in Dorchester district court and then on the general felony team and the narcotics and asset forfeiture unit.

- Joseph Janezic, III, Chief,

Crime Strategies Bureau—Joseph has led the gang and community prosecutions unit in the Plymouth district attorney's office since 2016. Prior to that he served as deputy chief and then chief of the Suffolk DA gang and Safe Neighborhood Initiative units and as an assistant attorney general.

- Jennifer Zalnasky, Chief, Integrity Review Bureau—Jennifer has been chief of the appeals unit in the Berkshire district attorney's office since early 2021. She served as an assistant attorney general from 2014 to 2021 in the criminal bureau-appeals division and from 2008 to 2014 as assistant general counsel for the Sex Offender Registry Board. Prior to her state service Jennifer spent seven years in private practice.

- David McGowan, Chief, Appeals Unit—David began his career in the Suffolk district attorney's appeal unit in 2007 and subsequently served in the major felony bureau, narcotics and asset forfeiture unit, domestic violence and sexual assault unit and

senior trial unit, and homicide unit. He has also served as chief of arson and fire investigations since 2013.

- Marc Tohme, Chief of Municipal and District Courts—Marc has served as deputy chief of district courts since January 2020 and has been acting chief since December 2022. Marc started his career in 2013 as an assistant district attorney in

Dorchester BMC and also served on the gang unit.

- Linda Champion, Municipal and District Court Legal Counsel—Linda has served as assistant general counsel for the Massachusetts Department of Industrial Accidents since 2013. She worked as a superior court and district court assistant district attorney in the Suffolk district attorney's office from 2011

to 2013 and has extensive private practice experience.

- Tracy Litthcut, Special Advisor, Youth Initiatives and DEI—Tracy has over 20 years of public sector experience with the Boston mayor's office and other organizations in policy development, coalition building, proposal writing, violence prevention programming and family/youth engagement.

## Councilors seek to make swimming in City safer

STAFF REPORT

At the February 8 of the Boston City Council, Council President Ed Flynn and Councilor Kendra Lara refiled a hearing order to discuss water safety awareness and increasing access to swimming lessons in the City of Boston.

This hearing order is a refile from last year, where Massachusetts saw a spike in the number of drownings, particularly in the month of May. Drowning is the leading cause of preventable, injury-related deaths in Massachusetts in children below the age of 15, and unfortunately, Black and lower income communities

are more likely to be affected by drownings. A study from the University of Memphis found that 66% of Black children could not swim well enough to be safe in the deep end, and a report by USA Swimming found that 79% of children in families that earn less than \$50,000 in annual income have little or no swimming ability.

"As a City surrounded by water, it is vital for our young people to have basic water safety awareness and to know how to swim. We must explore ways to partner with local and community organizations to provide swimming classes for our low-income residents and young people of color so that they can have the basic skills to be safe around water." Council

President Flynn said.

"Access, knowledge, and safety are all driving factors in pool usage. If we want to ensure all communities benefit from our city facilities, we must tackle the root causes behind the decline in usage. Increasing access to swim lessons and water safety awareness is one way to move the needle towards equity and truly democratize access to recreation." District Six City Councilor Kendra Lara said.

Council President Flynn and Councilor Lara will hold this hearing in the coming weeks.

For more information, please contact Council President Flynn's office at 617-635-3203 and Ed.Flynn@Boston.gov.

## BPHC issues cocaine advisory to providers

STAFF REPORT

The Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC) issued an advisory to Boston health care providers alerting them about concerning levels of presumed opioid-related overdoses in Nubian Square among individuals who believed they were using cocaine.

BPHC attributes these overdoses to the increasing presence of fentanyl within the cocaine supply. In 2021, the State detection program found 12% of cocaine samples tested in Boston flagged positive for fentanyl.

"Fentanyl is a highly dangerous substance that even in small amounts can lead to a fatal overdose, so we urge all residents, health care providers, recovery workers, and outreach workers to remain vigilant for signs of opioid overdose, including among individuals who use cocaine," said Dr. Bisola Ojikutu, Commissioner of Public Health and Executive Director of the Boston Public Health Commission. "If you believe that someone

has overdosed, call 911 immediately and administer naloxone (Narcan). BPHC offers harm reduction services to reduce the risk of fatal overdose, including naloxone (Narcan) distribution, drug testing and trainings on how to respond to an overdose. All our services are offered in compassionate and judgement free environments."

Drug testing for fentanyl, naloxone, and overdose prevention and training are available to all through BPHC's Access, Harm Reduction, Overdose Prevention and Education Program (AHOPE). Individuals struggling with substance use, as well as their friends and families are encouraged to utilize these harm reduction services. Additionally, BPHC's Providing Access to Addictions Treatment, Hope and Support (PAATHS) program offers clinical treatment resources and referrals for treatment and recovery services.

For more information about harm reduction and treatment services, please visit [boston.gov/recovery](http://boston.gov/recovery) or call 311.



## Virtual Public Meeting

# 265-267 Amory Street

March 14, 2023

6:00 PM - 7:30 PM

Zoom Link: [bit.ly/3ZduZuH](https://bit.ly/3ZduZuH)

Toll Free: (833) 568-8864

Meeting ID: 160 058 8949



### Project Description:

The BPDA is hosting a Public Meeting for the proposed 265–267 Amory Street project, located in the Jamaica Plain neighborhood of Boston. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the Small Project Change. The meeting will include a presentation followed by questions and comments from the public.

The Small Project Change includes the reduction of height for both the YES building and the homeownership building. The homeownership building will also contain seven units, which is two less than the previously approved project.

mail to: **Ebony DaRosa**

Boston Planning & Development Agency

One City Hall Square, 9th Floor

Boston, MA 02201

phone: 617.918.4419

email: [ebony.darosa@boston.gov](mailto:ebony.darosa@boston.gov)

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# Mayor Michelle Wu, former Mayor Kim Janey to be recognized at Boston Arts Academy Foundation Champion Reception

SPECIAL TO THE GAZETTE

Boston Mayor Michelle Wu and former Mayor Kim Janey will be honored by Boston Arts Academy and Boston Arts Academy Foundation with the prestigious Champion Award at the 2023 Boston Arts Academy Foundation Champion Reception on March 16. The event will take place at the iconic House of Blues in Fenway on Lansdowne Street and will be followed by the opening night all-star performance of *Shrek The Musical*, put on entirely by Boston Arts Academy students. This will be the first live production in the school's newly opened theater, and the first major production in-person in two years.

"We are so thrilled to honor Mayor Michelle Wu and former Mayor Kim Janey as our 2023 Champions," said Boston Arts Academy Foundation President and CEO Denella J. Clark. "March is Women's History Month, and I can't think of a better way to celebrate than by honoring the first two women mayors in Boston who both champion our students and the arts community."

Boston Arts Academy Foundation is an independent charitable non-profit organization that helps bridge the growing gap between the Boston Arts Academy's allocation from the Boston Public Schools, and the true cost

of a high-quality education that is both arts-intensive and college preparatory. In 2018, Boston Arts Academy Foundation led a six-year, \$32 million comprehensive campaign called Building Our Future designed to elevate the visibility of and support for Boston Arts Academy, and to ensure the sustainability of this unique education model. In just five years, Boston Arts Academy Foundation is halfway through the campaign and have exceeded the campaign's \$20M milestone goal.

Each year, Boston Arts Academy Foundation presents the Champion Award to a member of the community who embodies the school's commitment to the arts, scholarship, and citizenship. Previous BAAF Champion Award honorees include former First Lady of Massachusetts Diane Patrick, former Boston Mayor, current United States Secretary of Labor Martin J. Walsh, Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley, Massachusetts Governor Maura Healey and former Governor Charlie Baker.

Mayor Michelle Wu is particularly excited to be honored by such a diverse and inclusive organization. "Boston Arts Academy is an example of how we all benefit when we invest in our young people and give them the resources they need to succeed," said Mayor Wu. "I'm honored to work alongside the Boston



Former Boston Mayor Kim Janey.

Arts Academy Foundation and all the partners who have helped to make modernized, energy-efficient school buildings like BAA a possibility."

Mayor Wu has been a voice for accessibility, transparency, and community engagement in city leadership since being elected to the Boston City Council in November 2013. As a classical trained pianist, Mayor Wu continues to be a strong advocate for the arts in Boston. We witnessed her dedication to the arts shortly after her inauguration as Mayor, when she had the city-owned piano moved into her office so that she could play. In 2023 she pledged to make the largest investment ever in artists and the arts. She has backed that up by investing up to \$1.7 million to preserve affordable artist workspaces in Dorchester.



Mayor Michelle Wu.

In addition to Mayor Wu, former Mayor Kim Janey will also be honored by Boston Arts Academy Foundation. As Boston's first woman and first black mayor, Mayor Janey successfully led the city through a multitude of unprecedented challenges, including the COVID-19 global pandemic. Mayor Janey introduced a citywide agenda of recovery and reopening, focusing on health and wellness while elevating arts and culture. Janey started the "Joy Agenda", a city-wide program that featured investment in recovery and renewal through supporting arts and culture workers, local small businesses, and youth. Currently, Mayor Janey is President and CEO of the Boston-based non-profit, Economic Mobility Pathways (EMPath).

"The work being done by Bos-

ton Arts Academy Foundation is critical towards the advancement of arts and academic education in our city," said Janey. "Champion Reception is a great example of how our community leaders can come together to support the highly talented and creative students at Boston Arts Academy. I am honored to be recognized as a champion for our community and will continue to be a champion for the arts and our youth."

At the completion of the reception, guests will walk across the street and be treated to the first-ever musical performed in Boston Arts Academy's new theater. The inaugural show, *Shrek The Musical*, is an entirely student run production. Boston Arts Academy chose the show because of the themes of inclusiveness and the welcoming of the diverse and underrepresented is in line with the culture of BAA.

Tickets to Champion Reception and opening night of *Shrek The Musical* are available for a donation of \$125, while a ticket for all other performances are \$25. Proceeds from the event will directly support BAA's arts programming and more. For more information and to purchase tickets for all four performances of *Shrek The Musical*, visit <https://bostonartsacademy.org/foundation/event/champion-reception-2023>

## EBNHC introducing the Office of the Patient Advocate

BY MICHAEL COUGHLIN JR.

Equity is one of the East Boston Neighborhood Health Center's (EBNHC) biggest focuses this year in all facets. With equity in mind and to improve patient service, the EBNHC is creating the Office of the Patient Advocate.

In a press release, Greg Wilmot, EBNHC's President and CEO said the office will "provide patients, a significant number of whom are immigrants and non-English speakers, with an additional access point to address and resolve any concern that may arise."

Elida Acuña-Martínez, EBNHC's Senior Director of Interpreter Services and the Office of the Patient Advocate, described what its creation means for over 100,000 patients that the health center serves.

"By creating this office, we send a clear message to our patients and empower them to advocate for themselves and their families. Our team is here to support them in doing just that," said Acuña-Martínez in the same press release.

The creation of this office will undoubtedly be massive in the health center's emphasis on equity in that it will serve patients

that may face barriers in the healthcare realm. For example, according to statistics provided by EBNHC, 71% of its patients are below 200% of the federal poverty level, and 70% of patients are served best in a language that is not English.

Along with creating the Office of the Patient Advocate, the EBNHC has been hard at work in other areas to promote equity in its care.

The health center has created a diversified staff to better understand and serve its patients, with 50% of its 1,500 staff members being from its service area, 32% speaking Spanish, and 45% being Latinx.

EBNHC has also done tremendous work with its Interpreter Services Department, offering interpretation in-person, over the phone, and via video. EBNHC statistics revealed that the health center provided over 205,000 interpretations to patients in its last fiscal year with these services – a figure comparable to Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH).

As a new year gets underway, it is evident that with the creation of the Office of the Patient Advocate, the EBNHC is taking significant steps to provide the best and most equitable care to its patients.

"I know that East Boston

Neighborhood Health Center is not just a medical provider, but a trusted-community-based organization that provides our neighbors with hope, care, and critical resources," said Acuña-Martínez in the press release.

"We want our community to know that there are people in every corner of our organization who are here to advocate for them and help them achieve the best health care for themselves and their families," said Wilmot in the press release.

For more information about the new office, you can visit <https://www.ebnhc.org/en/visitorpatient-info/patient-experience.html>.

# Housing

*Continued from page 1*

that the City has to urgently address Boston's housing crisis," said Mayor Wu. "These housing awards represent significant investments in making our communities stronger and more affordable, ensuring that Boston remains a place that current residents, families and future generations can call home. I'm grateful to the Neighborhood Housing Trust and the Community Preservation Committee for their leadership and as we continue our work to build a Boston for everyone."

In 2022, the City of Boston released two Requests for Propos-

als (RFP) offering funds for affordable housing developments. The Mayor's Office of Housing, the Community Preservation Committee, and the Neighborhood Housing Trust evaluated the proposals and prioritized 17 projects. These projects will promote City goals to affirmatively further fair housing, and will efficiently utilize City resources and land to increase the supply of housing available to low- and moderate-income households.

The RFPs required developers to support and implement the City of Boston's equity & inclusion goals. Projects where BIPOC individuals and entities represented 25 percent or more of the development team leadership received a high preference for the funding awards. Devel-



Residents pose for a photo with Mayor Michelle Wu.

opment teams where 25 percent or more of soft costs go to MBE subcontractors also received this advantage. Applicants were also required to provide information on how services offered in multifamily buildings will help support the economic mobility of residents who will live in income-restricted housing units.

"The funding being made available today will assist with the creation and preservation of 800 affordable homes. These high quality, green developments are located in neighborhoods throughout the City and will provide our residents stable housing options that they can afford," said Sheila Dillon, Chief of Housing. "This portfolio of projects includes both rental and homeownership opportunities, family, senior housing and supportive housing. All of these developments will benefit and

strengthen our residents, our communities and our City."

"The development of housing that is accessible to residents at a variety of income levels is critically important to the future of Boston," said Kenan Bigby, Managing Director of Trinity Financial, Inc. "We are thankful for the City of Boston's support of the project at 2085 Washington. These funds will allow us to develop needed affordable homeownership opportunities in Roxbury."

All the new construction projects funded in this round will be required to follow the Zero Emissions Building (ZEB) requirements outlined in the MOH Design Standards. Developers were required to submit and adhere to a Net Zero Strategy as part of the design submission. New developments will use electricity and on-site solar panels as the

sole (or primary) fuel source.

"South Boston NDC is grateful for funding support from the City of Boston, which will allow us to create affordable senior housing for our most vulnerable residents," said Donna Brown, Executive Director of the South Boston Neighborhood Development Corporation. "Funding for McDevitt Senior Homes will enable elderly residents to age in community, with the supportive services they need. We applaud the City's commitment to providing critical resources to address our housing needs."

The new funding for income-restricted housing was made possible in part by more than \$32.5 million in municipal and federal funds administered by the Mayor's Office of Housing. More than \$13.9 million in funds come from the NHT through the City's Linkage policy, which extracts affordable housing funds from developers of large commercial projects.

"We're proud to continue to support the Neighborhood Housing Trust through the work we do at the Boston Planning & Development Agency," said Chief of Planning Arthur Jemison. "In 2022, the BPDA Board approved new development projected to generate approximately \$40.7 million in linkage fees to support affordable housing in Boston. I am hopeful that there will be even more funding to go towards new, affordable homes for Bostonians, in the years to come."

The Community Preservation Committee is recommending more than \$20.4 million for the proposed projects. These projects are part of a larger award that includes income-restricted housing, historic preservation, and open space projects. The final slate of CPA-recommended projects will go to the City Council for review and approval in February.

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*Continued on page 11*

# Housing

*Continued from page 10*

fordable housing is critical for the health and vibrancy of our communities in Boston," said Felicia Jacques, Chair of the Community Preservation Committee. "As housing costs continue to rise, many families and individuals are being priced out of the city, exacerbating displacement and a loss of diversity. The Community Preservation Committee is committed to investing in well-designed, climate-ready affordable housing initiatives that provide safe and stable homes for our residents. By doing so, we ensure that our communities remain inclusive while supporting economic growth and sustainability. Investing in affordable housing is an investment in the future of our city and the well-being of our residents."

"As Boston continues to grow and thrive, it's critical that we prioritize affordable housing to ensure that our communities remain diverse and inclusive," said Catherine Hardaway, chair of the Neighborhood Housing Trust. "Affordable housing not only provides stable, quality homes for families and individuals, but also supports economic development and social equity. The Neighborhood Housing Trust is dedicated to advancing affordable housing solutions in Boston, working in partnership with developers, community groups, and residents. By investing in affordable housing, we can build stronger, more resilient neighborhoods that provide opportunities for all residents to thrive."

In addition to these City sources, the Mayor's Office of Housing has at its disposal significant federal funding from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) that can be used for income-restricted housing development. In July, the Boston City Council approved Mayor Wu's precedent-setting investment in income-restricted housing from ARPA funds, committing more than \$205 million to address specific housing issues. These investments include:

- \$58 million for income-restricted housing production and financial support to homebuyers
- \$30 million to transform publicly-owned land into green, mixed-income communities
- \$26 million for property acquisitions to prevent displacement
- \$20 million for greening income-restricted housing through deep green energy retrofits of



*Sheila Dillon, Chief of Housing, speaking at the ceremony.*



*District 6 City Councilor Kendra Lara speaking at the ceremony.*



*Boston City Councilor Kenzie Bok speaking at the ceremony.*



*State Rep. Samantha Montaño speaking at the ceremony.*

existing buildings

- \$19 million to create new permanent supportive housing for homeless individuals with substance use and behavioral health disorders

The following is a list of the local proposals that are receiving funding from the Mayor's Office of Housing and NHT, as well as recommended projects for inclusion in the current round of the CPA funding:

## JAMAICA PLAIN

- Pennrose Development and the Hyde Square Task Force will redevelop the former Blessed Sacrament Church with \$6,250,000 in funding. The development team will create 55 mixed-income units of rental housing and a new performance space for the Hyde Square Task Force Creative Arts Program.

- The Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Development Corporation will redevelop the Boston Housing Authority's Mildred Hailey Housing's Phase 2 with \$5,200,000 in funding. This phase includes demolition and abatement of two existing buildings to create a new 6-story, 100 percent income-restricted, 65-unit building, consisting of 23 public housing replacement units and 42 new units of income-restricted housing restricted at 60 percent

of AMI or below.

- Urban Edge Community Development Corporation will redevelop the Boston Housing Authority's (BHA) Mildred Hailey Housing Phase 3 with \$4,000,000 in funding. The development project includes demolition and abatement of the existing building to create a new six-story building with 60 units of income-restricted rental housing with 22 of the units being BHA housing replacement units, in addition, 38 of the new income-restricted housing units are restricted at 60 percent of AMI or below.

To help choose appropriate developments for funding and best achieve the City's goals to create equitable mixed-income housing, the City of Boston established funding priorities that were adhered to while making these awards. Proposals submitted were expected to fall under at least one of the priority criteria:

- Affordable housing developments that utilize City-owned land.
- Affordable housing developments targeting a mix of incomes: from units for homeless households to units targeted and restricted to incomes representative of Boston's workforce. The City prioritizes proposals that, in addition to the homeless set

aside, provide some portion of units targeting extremely low-income tenancies.

- Affordable housing developments have reduced the cost to build and/or efficiently use subsidies so that the project can move into construction more quickly.

- Affordable housing developments provide units that serve the disabled community, elders, veterans, artists, aging-out youth, etc.

- Acquisition of unrestricted housing developments to stabilize the tenancies and provide long-term affordability for a mix of incomes (i.e. unrestricted properties).

- Developments that are at

risk of losing their affordability within 5 years.

- Large projects with more than 50 units of housing, of which at least 51 percent will be deed-restricted income-restricted units.

- Projects that create new income-restricted units in high-cost neighborhoods where most of the IDP funds are generated.

- Projects that contain income-restricted units that cannot be funded from other subsidy sources available under this RFP, or through the NHT RFP.

- Projects that can quickly acquire existing unregulated units and convert them into long-term income-restricted housing.

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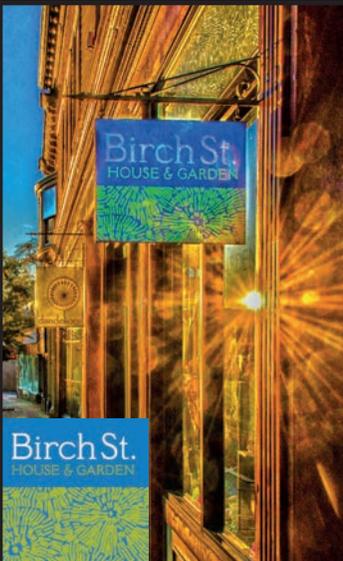
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## CITY PAWS

## Dogs at transition points

BY PENNY &amp; ED CHERUBINO

Throughout our lives, we encounter transition points, both positive and negative. We've noticed that these are often moments when people think about adding a dog to their lives. In each case, there are pros and cons you should consider.

Some common transition points are reaching a significant age; setting up your first home; moving in with someone else; getting married; becoming a parent; changing jobs; retiring; or losing an important person or animal.

**Job Change**

The transition to remote work during the pandemic made it possible for many people to add a dog to their lives. As some of these folks return to the office, they and their dogs must learn to live with that change.

A job change can also mean moving, longer hours, and more or less travel. These can impact your relationship with current animal companions, and in some

cases, may raise the possibility of adding an animal to your family.

**Retirement**

Leaving the world of work or moving to a semi-working status is a transition point that can have a massive impact on your lifestyle and your ability to make choices that can be good or bad for your mental and physical well-being.

Research has found that dogs positively impact the lives of people of retirement age. Patti Murphy, writing for [www.travelawaits.com](http://www.travelawaits.com), said, "After I retired I noticed that I had a lot more free time and occasional boredom creeping in. Having a dog has helped fill some of that time and given me company on days when not much else is going on. We play, we walk, we do training, and I take him to visit family members who no longer have their pets and miss having a lively creature around."

Research has shown that dogs provide a reason to exercise and become part of a community. These are important factors

for heart health and cognitive function. Increased social interaction, companionship, daily routine, and the unconditional love of a dog can do wonders for our quality of life and mental health.

However, there are factors that must enter into your decision-making. Murphy suggests that retirees consider the size and strength of a dog who might pull on a walk and sometimes need a lift from you. She also recommends a more mature animal who might need less training and have less energy to burn off daily.

**Moving to a New Home**

Over the years, we've conducted home visits for various rescue groups. Quite a number of these were for young individuals or couples setting up their first home or home together.

One of the first questions in the adoption process is whether or not dogs are allowed in the building and under the lease. We gave a top approval rating to a couple from the Midwest who moved to Boston. They had leased a dog-friendly apartment,



PHOTO BY AVE CALVAR

*Research has found that dogs positively impact the lives of people of retirement age*

planned where they would walk a dog, and found a nearby veterinary hospital. Both were engaged in the adoption process and were enthusiastic about having a dog.

If you already have animals in your home when you relocate, let those critters get used to their new place before introducing an additional family member. Moving is stressful for our furry

companions, just as it is for the humans in the family. It will be harder to give a new dog the time and peaceful atmosphere needed to transition to a new home and family.

*Do you have a question or topic for City Paws? Send an email to [Penny@BostonZest.com](mailto:Penny@BostonZest.com) with your request.*

## Arnold Arboretum entrance improvement project viewing

SPECIAL TO THE GAZETTE

Engage with the future at the Arnold Arboretum! Through March 6, view a temporary exhibit in the Hunnewell Building illuminating the Entrance Improvement Project, a phased initiative to renovate all the Arboretum entrances and provide a safer, more accessible, and more welcoming experience for the visiting public.

Each day, the Arnold Arboretum welcomes visitors to explore via a number of gates and less formal entrances located around the three-mile perimeter of its 281-acre landscape. In keeping with the Arboretum's legacy as one of Boston's first completely free cultural institutions, these portals provide free and open access throughout the year, from dawn to dusk. Over time, shifts in transportation needs, capacity for maintenance, and availability of resources have made these access points highly variable in design, aesthetics, and ease of passage. Through the Entrance Improvement Project, the Arboretum aspires to improve how all visitors experience the landscape as part of its historical commitment to visitor engagement and green space equity.

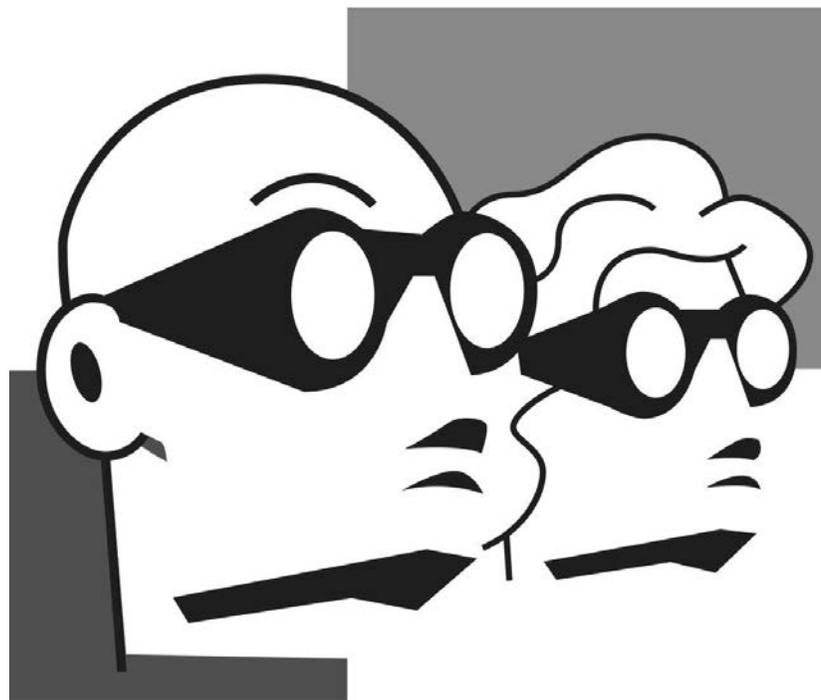
Phase 1 of the project will

focus on renovations to five Arboretum entrances: Arborway Gate, Beech Path Gate (on South Street), Poplar Gate (at intersection of South and Bussey Streets), Walter Street Gate, and Washington Street Gate (opposite the Forest Hills MBTA Station). Over the course of 2023, staff will gather information from the public and multiple state and local agencies to assess current conditions and design proposals.

Visit the Arnold Arboretum Visitor Center from 10am-4pm through March 6 to study the concept designs for Phase 1 and provide feedback. If you are unable to visit the exhibit in person, you can learn more about the project and contribute feedback online.

Founded in 1872 as the first public arboretum in North America, the Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University is a leading center for the study of biodiversity and a treasured Boston landscape open free to the public year round. One of the most comprehensive and best-documented collections of temperate woody plants in the world, the Arboretum promotes the understanding and appreciation of plants through world-class research, horticulture, and educational programs for all ages.

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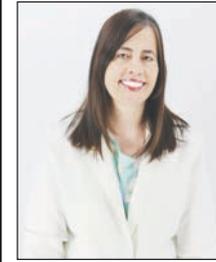
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## Sen. Liz Miranda announces committee assignments

STAFF REPORT

Massachusetts State Senator Liz Miranda of the 2nd Suffolk District announced her committee assignments for the 193rd General Court of the Massachusetts Legislature that she will utilize to expand economic opportunity, social justice, and inclusion in the Commonwealth, particularly in communities of color and her district, which includes neighborhoods in Roxbury, Dorchester, Mattapan, Hyde Park, Mission Hill, Jamaica Plain, South End, Roslindale, and the Fenway.

Senator Miranda will serve as Senate Chair of the Joint Standing Committee on Racial Equity, Civil Rights, and Inclusion, the Vice Chair of Economic Development and Emerging Technologies, and will serve as a member of the committees on Ways and Means, Community Development and Small Business, Elder Affairs, State Administration and Regulatory Oversight, the Census, and Juvenile and Emerging Justice. Senator

Miranda is also Senate Chair of the Commission on Postpartum Depression, Vice Chair of the MA Women's Caucus, leads the birth justice task force, and is a member of the Senate Progressive Caucus, Housing Caucus, and Criminal Justice Reform Caucus.

"For too long, communities of color in the Commonwealth have been placed at the back burner, experiencing disinvestment, systemic racism in our state institutions, and overrepresentation in our criminal legal system. I intend to use this committee as a pulpit for our communities, elevating the most challenging issues of our time and holding those in power accountable to the needs of our diverse communities in the Commonwealth. We will look at every issue from supplier diversity to wealth generation, housing, healthcare, state administration, the barriers our community has in securing state funding, and our Commonwealth's difficult history. We will share truth and work to center racial equity at the forefront of all we do," said, Senator Liz Miranda.

## LOCAL STUDENTS EARN ACADEMIC HONORS

### CURRY COLLEGE FALL 2022 DEAN'S LIST

Curry College congratulates Nicole Mertirio of Jamaica Plain, who was named to the Fall 2022 Dean's List.

Curry College congratulates Elizabeth Benchof of Jamaica Plain, who was named to the Fall 2022 Dean's List.

Curry College congratulates Luke Murray of Jamaica Plain, who was named to the Fall 2022 Dean's List.

Curry College, founded in Boston in 1879, is a private, co-educational, liberal arts-based institution located on 131 acres in Milton, Massachusetts.

The College extends its educational programs to a continuing education branch campus in Plymouth. The College offers 24 undergraduate majors in specialized and liberal arts programs, as well as graduate degrees in accounting, business, education, criminal justice, and nursing to a combined enrollment of nearly 2,500 students. The student body consists of 1,700 traditional students and nearly 800 continuing education and graduate students. The College offers a wide array of co-curricular activities ranging from 16 NCAA Division III athletic teams to an outstanding theatre and fine arts program.

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# Wu announces new PowerCorpsBOS Career Pathway in building operations

SPECIAL TO THE GAZETTE

PowerCorpsBOS joined A Better City and Roxbury Community College (RCC) for an orientation event to receive an overview of the newest PowerCorps building operations career pathway, skills to support the transition to energy efficiency and carbon reduction in Boston buildings. This program is a partnership between PowerCorpsBOS, Roxbury Community College's Center for Smart Building Technology and A Better City (ABC). Program participants will study at RCC's Center for Smart Building Technology and receive in-service learning opportunities within large buildings coordinated by A Better City.

"Creating career pathways through skills and job training is essential to growing our green workforce, especially as we work to transition more buildings to renewable, efficient energy," said Mayor Michelle Wu. "I'm grateful to our partners for working with us and the students participating for their commitment to helping lay the foundation for a clean, green future."

PowerCorpsBos works to train residents for green jobs after program completion, while focusing on career pathways into jobs that work to mitigate climate change to protect the environment. The first PowerCorps cohort graduated in December. All of the 21 program graduates either have a new green job or are enrolled in additional training. An 'earn and learn' program, PowerCorpsBos pays members to participate in hands-on training and provides them with career readiness support, and connections to employers in the green industry. PowerCorpsBOS is a partnership that is led by the Worker Empowerment Cabinet and the Environment Department, in collaboration with Community Safety, Office of Youth Employment and Opportunity, and Boston Centers for Youth & Families. The goals of PowerCorpsBOS are to promote workforce development for young people in growing industries while supporting environmental stewardship.

"The core mission of PowerCorpsBos is to create pathways to earn a livable wage while also helping to care for the environment," said Davo Jefferson, Exec-

utive Director of PowerCorpsBos. "We are grateful to partner with RCC and ABC to ensure PowerCorps graduates are able to move directly into careers in the green building industry."

"In Boston, 70 percent of our greenhouse gas emissions come from the building sector," said Reverend Mariama White-Hammond, Chief of Environment, Energy and Open Space. "By creating a building operations career pathway through PowerCorps, these graduates are preparing for high quality careers which will support our carbon neutrality goals."

"Congratulations to PowerCorpsBOS for creating this innovative partnership with Roxbury Community College and A Better City," said Trinh Nguyen, Chief of Worker Empowerment. "Expanding opportunities for sustainable jobs at living wages is part of the City and Worker Empowerment's mission and we look forward to facilitating this new pathway."

The building operations pathway is training for jobs that reduce greenhouse gas emissions in large buildings by teaching participants skills to maintain building operations at peak efficiency. The curriculum is being offered by RCC's Center for Smart Building Technology in their state of the art lab and includes topics ranging from conducting energy audits to maintaining electrical, HVAC and plumbing systems. Participants will learn on the job with the goal of transitioning to an employee at the end of the six month training program.

A Better City has supported this partnership by working with member businesses and institutions to establish in-service learning opportunities in Boston-based large buildings. Participating organizations include the City of Boston, Beacon Capital Partners and their building operator partner, NEWMARK, Brigham and Women's Hospital, C&W Services, Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston, JLL, and MassGeneral Hospital. A Better City's work has been made possible by support from the Linde Family Foundation and the Barr Foundation.

The inaugural PowerCorps cohort were trained in urban forestry. The 21 graduates assisted 87 acres of public land, removed 284 bags of invasive

material, worked with 18 service project partners, planted 61 trees, underwent 16 hours of tree climbing training, earned three college credits from UMass Mount Ida in Arboriculture, talked to 68 employees in private to public industry, worked with four different City departments, pruned 32 trees, attended International Society of Arboriculture New England chapter conference, participated in 12 hours of mock interviews, and completed 16 hours of financial literacy courses. Graduates worked with Boston Housing Authority and UMass Mount Ida Campus to learn skills like tree protection, including pruning, felling, limbing, and bucking.

The City of Boston's green jobs program is inspired by the Philadelphia PowerCorpsPHL model that builds opportunities for young people by tackling pressing environmental challenges and developing the skills required to secure meaningful work. The priority of PowerCorpsBOS is to create equitable and inclusive workforce pipelines into green jobs for historically marginalized young people. Priority populations include returning citizens, court-involved

residents, youth who have experienced homelessness or housing instability, and young people who have been in foster care. In Boston, the program is designed with "earn and learn" practices to ensure that members enter and succeed in career green job pathways. Members go through specifically tailored phases, in a field of their choosing, that embed service and equity, as well as direct connections to job openings. The program also offers connections to continuing education opportunities, including through the City's Tuition Free Community College program. Not only current PowerCorps members, but also their families and alumni who are Boston residents, are eligible for TFCC.

"This partnership is not only a wonderful opportunity but essential to diversify the industry and create economic self-sufficiency for our community members," said RCC Interim President Jackie Jenkins-Scott. "RCC is proud to offer both workforce and degree programs in Smart Building Technology, ensuring Boston residents are leaders in this growing field."

"Public private partnerships are a vital strategy for build-

ing a green and growing city for everyone," said Yve Torrie, Director of Climate, Energy & Resilience at A Better City. "This PowerCorpsBOS partnership is poised to enhance our City's economic health and competitiveness, while promoting equitable growth for the in-demand jobs of today and tomorrow. We are immensely grateful to the City of Boston for their vision, to RCC for their curriculum expertise, and to the participating A Better City member companies and institutions for stepping up to provide real-world training and employment opportunities."

"We are thrilled to support the City of Boston's program to build and train a workforce that will run the energy efficient buildings of the future," said Jim Tierney, JLL New England Market Director and A Better City Board Chair. "A Better City member companies are providing state-of-the-art buildings as a training opportunity for hands-on experience in building operations. These buildings showcase the latest in technology and sustainability preparing trainees for the jobs of the future."

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# Jamaica Plain/Mission Hill Gazette

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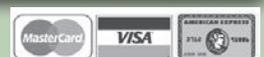
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# Santiago named state's first-ever Secretary of Veterans' Affairs

BY DAN MURPHY

Gov. Maura Healey announced Rep. Dr. Jon Santiago as the state's first-ever Secretary of the Executive Office of Veterans' Services on Friday, Feb. 17, which will trigger a special election to fill his current seat.

Rep. Santiago, age 40, of the South End, was elected state representative for the city's 9th Suffolk District in 2018. During his time in the Legislature, he also worked as an emergency medicine physician at Boston Medical Center, doubling his hours there in the wake of the pandemic. He also served as a member of the House of Representatives COVID-19 Working Group and Vice-Chair of the COVID-19 and Emergency Preparedness & Management during this time. Rep. Santiago, who launched an unsuccessful bid for Mayor of

Boston in 2021, is also a major in the U.S. Army Reserves.

"Representative Santiago has dedicated his life to serving his country – whether that's volunteering for the Peace Corps in the Dominican Republic, working in the emergency room throughout COVID, being deployed overseas with the U.S. Army Reserve, or advocating for increased access to housing, public transportation and substance use disorder treatment in the State House," said Gov. Healey in a press release. "His public health expertise and military service make him uniquely qualified to serve as Massachusetts' first ever Secretary of Veterans' Services. I'm confident that he will be the leader our veterans need and deserve and will always stand up for their health, safety and wellbeing."

Added Lt. Gov. Kimberly

Driscoll. "As the daughter of a Navy veteran, I'm so proud that Massachusetts is taking this critical step to ensure that our veterans are well cared for and prioritized by creating the Executive Office of Veterans' Services. I'm grateful to the veterans, legislators and advocates who worked so hard to see this through – and I'm grateful to Representative Santiago for stepping up to take on this enormous responsibility. I know our veterans will be in good hands under his leadership."

Rep. Santiago said in a press release: "I'm honored that Governor Healey and Lieutenant Governor Driscoll have placed their trust in me to assume this historic position. Our veterans deserve the absolute highest quality of care, but they are far too often underserved. The Healey-Driscoll Administration is committed to meeting the com-

plex needs of those who have bravely served our country, and I look forward to the opportunity to continue my own service as Secretary of Veterans' Services."

One of Santiago's State House colleague, Rep. Jay Livingstone, wished him luck in his new role and commended Gov. Healey on selecting Santiago for the job.

"Governor Healey made a great pick," said Rep. Livingstone. "I'm disappointed that I won't be working anymore with Jon Santiago in the House of Representatives, where he has been a great colleague, I look forward to working with him in his new role."

Rep. Santiago will be sworn in in his new role on March 1, and his duties will include ultimately appointing the heads of the state's two veterans homes, as well as "developing an annual report reviewing the Veterans' Homes' demographics, finances,



State Rep. Dr. John Santiago.

staffing levels, efficacy, equity, and resident well-being," according to a press release.

Last year, the Massachusetts Legislature made a number of key reforms, including the creation of the state's first cabinet-level Veterans Secretary, in response to the devastating COVID outbreak at the Chelsea Soldiers' Home in 2020 that reportedly killed at least 76 veterans.

Information on a Special Election to fill Rep. Santiago's 9th Suffolk District are expected to be announced soon.

# U.S. Postal Service warns the public about surge in use of counterfeit postage

SPECIAL TO THE GAZETTE

In recent years, a surge in the use of counterfeit postage has been found in the mail stream. The intentional use, or sale, of counterfeit postage is a crime because it seeks to obtain services without payment. This activity reflects an intentional effort to defraud the Postal Service of the funds it needs to provide services to the public.

In response to this problem, the Postal Service is filing a federal register notice about changes to the Mailing Standards of the United States Postal Service, Domestic Mail Manual (DMM®), that will allow the Postal Service to treat items found in the mail stream bearing counterfeit postage as abandoned. "As the most trusted government agency in the nation, we will continue to work together with other law enforcement and government agencies to protect the sanctity of the mail," said Chief Postal Inspector Gary Barksdale.

The Postal Service's proposed changes will provide the public notice of the handling of items bearing counterfeit postage. Under the revision to DMM 604.8.4, articles found in the mails with counterfeit postage will be considered abandoned and may be opened and disposed of at the Postal Service's discretion. The mission of the Postal Service and the Postal Inspection Service is to ensure the safety, security, and

integrity of the U.S. Mail. The implementation of these new regulations will continue to support and enhance this mission.

Counterfeit postage is any marking or indicia that has been made, printed, or otherwise created without authorization from the Postal Service that is printed

or applied, or otherwise affixed, on an article placed in the mails that indicates or represents that valid postage has been paid to mail the article. Consumers purchasing online items may be surprised to find out that the vendor mailed their goods using counterfeit postage. Under

the new regulations, such items will be considered abandoned and disposed of at the Postal Service's discretion. When this occurs, consumers will have to seek recourse from the vendor.

Public comments can be mailed or delivered on or before March 15, 2023, to: Manager,

Product Classification, U.S. Postal Service, 475 L'Enfant Plaza SW, Room 4446, Washington, DC 20260-5015. If sending comments by email, include the name and address of the commenter and send to PCFederalRegister@usps.gov, with a subject line of "Counterfeit Postage."

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## Gazette Pet of the Week

by Sarah Carroll

### 'CHIEF' & 'BLACKIE'

Chief and Blackie are looking for a home together! No kids or cats for them, but they like other dogs and warm up quickly to adults! They are 1 year old.

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## EDITORIAL

### Jimmy Carter: A wonderful, amazing man

The reports that former President Jimmy Carter has returned home for hospice care came as sad news for all Americans this week.

Ever since the self-described peanut farmer burst onto the national scene shortly after he was elected governor of Georgia, it is not an overstatement to say that Jimmy Carter served as the conscience of America for the past half century.

Jimmy Carter served four years as president from 1977-81. But that term of office was just a small mark left by this wonderful man during his decades of service to our country and the world.

He became the face of Habitat for Humanity, the organization that builds housing for low-income persons. He served as an official who oversaw numerous elections in foreign countries to ensure that they were run honestly and above-board. He also undertook a campaign to eradicate the Guinea worm, a human parasitic infection that plagued 3.5 million people across the globe annually 40 years ago, but thanks to the efforts of the Jimmy Carter Center, there were just 13 reported cases world-wide in 2022. For his many years of service to the world, Carter was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2002 "for his decades of untiring effort to find peaceful solutions to international conflicts, to advance democracy and human rights, and to promote economic and social development."

It is fair to say that no former American president had as great an impact on the world after he left office than Jimmy Carter -- it's not even close.

But the most remarkable aspect of Jimmy Carter's life has been his incredible humility, which no doubt was informed by his faith as a Christian minister in his small hometown church in Plains, Georgia, where he gave a sermon every Sunday.

It often is a cliché to say that someone will be missed. But in the case of our former President, Jimmy Carter, a man who spoke the truth -- even if America did not want to hear it (such as when he said in 1979 that America must end its dependence on fossil fuels) -- his absence truly will be a great loss for all of us.

### Our support for Ukraine must not waiver: we must remain the Arsenal of Democracy

This week marks the first anniversary of the unprovoked invasion of Ukraine by the government of Russia and its sociopathic leader, Vladimir Putin.

The Ukrainian people have demonstrated to the world that freedom isn't free. The enormous sacrifices they are making in order to fight off the Russian war machine have served as an inspiration to freedom-loving peoples around the world.

Russian atrocities against Ukrainian civilians -- the rapes, executions, forced deportation of children, and the attacks on civilian infrastructure -- have risen to the level of genocide and crimes against humanity.

Those in our country who question our commitment to help the Ukrainians resist the Russian invaders suffer from a combination of being incredibly naive, selfish, and shortsighted.

The Ukrainians, not Americans or anyone else, are the ones on the front lines. They are making the ultimate sacrifices in defense of both their country and the free world. Our allies in Europe, especially in Poland and the Baltic countries of Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania, know all too well that Russia, if left unchecked in Ukraine, will focus on them and that they will be next in line to feel the weight of the Russian oppressors, who will seek to undermine their democratic governments.

Vladimir Putin has gone on record as lamenting the dissolution of the former Soviet Union empire, for which he served as a KGB agent, and his invasion of Ukraine, in his eyes, is the first step in restoring the U.S.S.R. to what he perceives as its former glory.

We would note that the war in Ukraine is fundamentally different from that of every other conflict since WWII. This is the first time that an independent, democratic nation has been invaded by a foreign power since Hitler invaded European countries in the late 1930s starting with Czechoslovakia, then Poland, and then the rest of Europe.

With England remaining as the lone bulwark against the Nazis, President Franklin D. Roosevelt gave a fireside chat in late 1940 in which he spoke to the American people these words.

"The people of Europe who are defending themselves do not ask us to do their fighting. They ask us for the implements of war, the planes, the tanks, the guns, the freighters which will enable them to fight for their liberty and for our security. Emphatically, we must get these weapons to them, get them to them in sufficient volume and quickly enough so that we and our children will be saved the agony and suffering of war which others have had to endure."

Later in his talk he coined a phrase that has remained true ever since:

"America must be the great arsenal of democracy."

President Roosevelt's words are as true today as they were then. We urge all of our elected leaders to ensure that American support for Ukraine continues to be strong and unquestioned.

## OP-ED

### Police officers and citizens must have mutual respect

By Dr. Glenn Mollette

American citizens need police officers. Our state police, county sheriff's department and city police all deserve our help, respect and decent pay. None of us like being recipients of speeding or other motor vehicle violations. However, often a warning or a ticket may be what it takes to get our attention and might even save our lives.

When someone is threatening us we want the police. We expect them to come and help us. These are the men and women who often risk their lives to protect us. So, praise the good ones because they are deserving of honor.

The defund the police movement has been fueled by horrific incidents such as when Minneapolis police murdered George Floyd on May 25, 2020. This cruel and disturbing murder has been replayed over and over on national television. Most recently the horrific killing of Tyre Nichols in Memphis, Tennessee has fanned the flames of police hatred. These and other police brutality events continue to severely damage the image of America's police forces.

The behavior of five Memphis police officers toward Mr. Nichols was beyond criminal. This

does not justify defunding the police. Such behavior reinforces the need that all those in law enforcement must have routine mental health tests. Only qualified people who have been thoroughly examined and trained should ever be allowed to wear a badge. Training and mental health evaluations must be ongoing.

The Five former Memphis police officers were charged with murder over the death of Tyre Nichols but pled not guilty in their first court appearance.

The arrest of Mr. Nichols on January 7 has been reported throughout the national media.

They were fired after an internal investigation by the Memphis Police Department.

"Memphis and the whole world need to see that what's right is done in this case, and it needs to happen sooner rather than later," lead prosecutor Paul Hagerman told reporters.

The officers were arrested and taken into custody on January 26, after the Memphis police reviewed bodycam footage of the violent arrest.

In the footage, 29-year-old Mr. Nichols can be heard calling for his mother as he is beaten by police after being pulled over

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The opinions expressed on these pages are not necessarily those of this newspaper.

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OP-ED

Start solving the vocational admissions problem: Improve access, create more seats

BY STEVEN C. SHAREK

It's no longer a secret that Massachusetts vocational-technical and agricultural high schools are a great option for students of all backgrounds who want to learn a trade and pursue a career. Unfortunately, there simply isn't enough space in these schools to accommodate the huge demand.

Right now, there are roughly 55,000 students in Chapter 74 state-approved vocational-technical and agricultural programs, with another 6,000 students on wait lists. At the same time, business and industry are crying out for skilled workers.

We can be proud of these schools. They excel in academic performance, graduation rates, and expanded programming that includes fields like environmental science; information technology; and medical, health, and dental assisting. Students excel because they enjoy the engaging, hands-on learning.

We are at a tipping point. With this lack of available seats and strong demand for vocational education, advocates, elected officials, and editorial writers

are understandably concerned about whether students are being admitted equitably into our schools. Vocational school leaders are, too.

The current debate is centered on admissions policies and whether the adoption of a lottery system is the silver bullet for fixing any inequities, real or perceived. The reality is that a lottery does nothing to address the lack of capacity and it does not guarantee desired enrollment outcomes. As educators, we'd like to offer enrollment to everyone. We simply can't. We don't have the space. No lottery will ever change that. A lottery will just rearrange who sits in the seats, with 6,000 kids still on the outside looking in. With that in mind, we are working hard to conduct our admissions processes as fairly and equitably as possible:

-Since admissions regulations were revised by the state in 2021, 97% of vocational-technical and agricultural high schools have made changes in their admissions policies, personnel, or training. Clearly, our schools are serious about this effort.

-Grades are now less of a factor.

Many schools now give equal consideration for grades of C or above, unlike before when student grades were more heavily emphasized.

-Disciplinary issues are now less of a factor. Minor disciplinary issues are no longer factored into the admissions process.

-Most schools require a recommendation, typically from a guidance counselor, and a brief interview to gauge a student's interest in vocational education. We are training interviewers on eliminating bias and are providing supports and accommodations for those applying, including easier access to interviews and translation services.

-The admissions changes only took effect recently so we have limited data to gauge whether the changes we've made are making a real difference. One year of data doesn't make a trend. Moreover, our schools have no access to demographic information about the students who do not enroll. We need help from the state on this so we can make best-informed decisions.

-Finally, there's no guarantee that a lottery would actually help the protected groups of students

that all of us want to help. In fact, simulations run by some of our schools have demonstrated that a lottery would yield exactly the opposite result. That is, a lottery would result in lower numbers of enrolled students in some protected groups (just as one school experimenting with a lottery recently discovered).

Vocational-technical schools are continuously striving to serve under-represented populations. Consider special education. Five of the 10 school districts in Massachusetts with the largest percentages of students with disabilities are vocational-technical and agricultural high schools.

While there is strong sentiment on the both sides of the lottery debate, what all advocates of high quality vocational-technical education can agree on is this: The state can do more to help vocational schools and our potential students:

First, the state needs to make a massive capital investment in

vocational school construction to create more seats. Second, our schools need unfettered access to our middle schools so we can inform students, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds, about the value of vocational education. Put another way, we need better access to reach the very students our detractors say are being excluded. As demand for limited seats continues, we must work together to create opportunity and bright futures for all our high school students. Vocational-technical and agricultural high schools in Massachusetts will continue to do their part.

*Steven C. Sharek is Executive Director of the Massachusetts Association of Vocational Administrators, a professional association of educational leaders who administer and advocate for high-quality vocational-technical and agricultural education.*

Op-Ed

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for alleged reckless driving. He was pepper-sprayed, kicked and punched by the officers and died in hospital three days later.

Memphis Police Chief Cerelyn Davis said the incident was "not just a professional failing", but "a failing of basic humanity toward another individual". (Source BBC news)

I believe that 99 percent of the men and women wearing badges are good people who are looking

out for our welfare and safety. The actions of a few should not discredit all law enforcement. Whether it's politics, medical doctors, attorneys, business persons and more there are always a few bad apples that make others look bad.

Police officers have the upper hand. They have a badge and a gun. We should give them respect and they should respect all citizens. Having a badge never gives any law enforcement officer the right to pour out their frustrations, racial hatreds or their own personal demons on another citizen. No one is ever in a position to put up a defense

*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.*

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