

The CONNECTOR

FOCUSING ON NONPROFITS AND THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE COMMUNITY

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WHAT HAPPENS IN LYNN



STAYS.

Celebrate Lynn legacies. May 14.

BY MEAGHAN CASEY

It's the Shoe City, the home of Marshmallow Fluff and the birthplace of the Golden Greek. Lynn is a city built on fascinating legacies – legacies that the Lynn Museum & Historical Society is determined to preserve and pass on to future generations.

For more than a century, the Lynn

Museum has existed to collect, maintain and foster an appreciation of Lynn through its textiles, paintings, photographs and historical artifacts. Today, the organization is taking the next step to reinvent itself – making it more relevant to the community and to a younger audience. It intends to upgrade and update its exhibits,

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Heroes Among Us

Girls Inc. honors 2010 scholarship recipients



By MEAGHAN CASEY

In every community, there are heroes among us.

At Girls Inc. of Lynn, four inspirational heroes stood out at the organization's annual Celebration Luncheon on April 15.

Stephanie Hardy, 17, was awarded \$2,500 through the national Girls Inc. Lucile Miller Wright Scholars Program. Hardy, a Lynn native, is in her third year at Girls Inc. She has been active in Part of the Solution, the youth advisory council to Lynn's Communities that Care Coalition, and La Verdad, a peer leadership group that works with the Lynn community to prevent substance abuse and help youth make healthy decisions. She also serves as a tutor in the Girls Inc. middle school program and a youth member of the Girls Inc. Board of Directors. "I'm

passionate about what I do, and I hope to be able to speak out and reach my peers in a positive way," said Hardy. "Girls Inc. has prepared me in every way, from public speaking to college prep. The girls and the staff here are like my second family."

Hardy is a junior at Lynn English High School, where she is an active member of JROTC. Last summer, she attended the Junior Statesman Program at Stanford University and took an advanced placement course in macroeconomics. In the future, she hopes to earn a degree in accounting or finance, join the military and eventually pursue a political career.

In addition to Hardy, Girls Inc. members Jacklyn Crowley, Phumana Phim and Ivanna Solano were each presented with \$1,500 through the Moyer Family Scholarship Fund. The fund was established in 2006 by Joy Moyer in memory of her parents, Roy and Joan (Hauschild) Moyer, and her grandmother, Anna Moyer. The interest from the fund provides scholarships for the annual Girl Hero Award, which recognizes young women who demonstrate leadership abilities, serve as role models and are active in the community.

"For me, the honor is more about the title than the scholarship money," said Solano. "I wanted to be a hero in my community and a role model to other young girls."

Solano, 17, is a

Lynn Classical High School senior. She moved to the U.S. from the Dominican Republic at age 7. She is in her third year at Girls Inc., after trying out the Sister 2 Sister Program. She now serves as a teen health ambassador and has also participated in Career Path and Part of the Solution.

"The best thing about Girls Inc. has been the journey of gaining confidence," said Solano. "I was really shy when I started out, but now I can talk in front of a crowd of 150 people."

At Classical, Solano has continued to stand out as a leader, serving as a peer mediator and a youth translator. She has been accepted to a number of schools, including American University. She hopes to pursue a degree in criminal justice, enroll in law school and eventually work for the FBI.

Crowley, 17, is also a senior at Classical. The Girl Hero Award was the second honor she has received through Girls Inc. Last year, she was awarded \$15,000 through the Lucile Miller Wright Scholars Program. As a member since age 5, Crowley has grown up with Girls Inc.

"It's like a second home," she said. "I look forward to coming here; it's just an awesome place. Everyone encourages and pushes you to do your best."

Crowley is an academic assistant in the middle school program, helping the younger participants with their homework. She is an avid dancer and a member of Classical's Volunteer Club. Dedicated to helping others, she plans to pursue a career in the medical field. She has been accepted to six of her top choices of colleges, including Northeastern University.

Phim, 20, moved to the U.S. from Cambodia four years ago. She has been an active Girls Inc. member for the past year.

"It was an opportunity to make friends, to join a community and to improve my speaking and writing skills," she said. "As girls, we all have the same feelings. When we talk, we understand each other."

A senior at Lynn English, Phim has taken advantage of Girls Inc.'s Career Path, which has helped guide her through the college application process. She will be the first in her family to attend college. Her top choices, as of now, are Merrimack College and Newbury College. She hopes to pursue a degree in accounting.

Each of these scholars benefited greatly from the Mentoring Program at Girls Inc. If you are interested in becoming a mentor, or making a donation to the Scholarship Fund, please contact Girls Inc. of Lynn at 781-592-9744. Training and on-going support are provided. The next class of mentors will begin in October.

For more information about Girls Inc. of Lynn visit www.girlsinclynn.org or call 781-592-9744

From left, Girls Inc. of Lynn participants Jacklyn Crowley, Stephanie Hardy, Ivanna Solano and Phumana Phim were awarded \$7,000 in scholarships this year.



Safe at home



Project COPE offers mother a fresh start

By PAUL HALLORAN

Thanks to Project COPE, Nikki has something at age 24 that she did not have when she was 17: a home.

Nikki and her 2-year-old son, Rocco, live in a multi-family residence on Hanover Street. She is a full-time student at North Shore Community College working toward certifications in medical coding and substance-abuse counseling. The latter is especially meaningful to Nikki, a recovering addict.

"I'd like to do substance-abuse counseling part-time," she said. "I'd like to help addicts the way I was helped."

Nikki had been homeless for three years and in and out of treatment several times when in February 2007 she checked into a local treatment program for recovering addicts. Though she only completed half of the six-month program – she left after getting into a relationship with the man who would become the father of her son – she was eventually referred to Project COPE's transitional housing program.

Nikki interviewed for a room at COPE's Rogers Avenue facility, which has 14 SRO (single room occupancy) units for women in recovery. Marie DeVito, director of Recovery Housing Services at COPE, had some concerns, but ultimately decided to take a chance on Nikki.

"Because she had left the treatment program early, she could have been a higher-risk client," DeVito said, "but we took her in. She had been in and out of treatment and she had the tools and education to do the right thing. She ended up being a success story."

There was an immediate complication, however. Two weeks after moving into Rogers Avenue, Nikki found out she was pregnant, leaving her with a decision, since she was now living in an adults-only facility.

"I figured the best decision was to have the baby," Nikki said. "I'm so happy I made the choice I did. He's awesome; he's what puts a smile on my face when I wake up every day."

The next decision was COPE's. "Either we refer Nikki to an outside agency or get her (long-term) housing within Project COPE," DeVito said. "Somebody moved out of Hanover Street and she was able to move in."



Nikki and her son, Rocco with Project COPE Director of Recovery Housing Services Marie DeVito.

Nikki has been living independently in her two-bedroom apartment since February 2008. Rocco goes to day care while she is in class. Clean and sober for 17 months, she is a poster child for the success of Project COPE's Recovery Housing programs, which feature transitional and long-term units scattered in more than a half-dozen sites in Lynn.

Nikki has come a long way from the days when she starting experimenting with drugs and alcohol as a 14-year-old middle school student in Central Mass. Alcohol and marijuana led to cocaine, acid, Ecstasy, heroin and crystal meth. She had a baby at

age 15, a daughter with whom she has recently taken steps to reunite. Nikki said she gave up drugs cold-turkey while was pregnant – and went back to shooting heroin right after the baby was born.

"I went clean a lot of times," she said, "but I could never stay clean."

Fortunately, that has changed in the 17 months since her last relapse – which she called "pretty rough" – though she acknowledges staying clean it is a constant challenge.

"I still get cravings," she said. "But I have the tools to not run out the door and go get high. I can call someone or go to a meeting.

You have to stick with the program. It gets worse before it gets better, but it's finally starting to get better for me. My life is falling into place.

"Project COPE has helped me a lot," she added. "If it wasn't for them, I would be living in a shelter with my son. They give us all the resources we need; then it's what we do with them."

For more information about Project COPE visit www.projectcope.com or call 781-593-5333.



KIPP's adult-education program, which runs three nights a week, is very popular among parents.

IT TAKES A VILLAGE

Parent engagement is key at KIPP

Mike Brown understands it takes a village to raise a child and, while school is very much a part of that, Brown will never lose sight of the most important “residents” of the village: parents.

“Schools have to be an extension of the household,” said Brown, the director of multicultural and community affairs at KIPP Academy Lynn, a public charter school for students in grades 5-8. “We really believe it takes a village, and we know we are part of that. But schools will never take the place of the role of the parents. We see ourselves as a partner not as a replacement.”

Brown had done a great deal of parent outreach in two years as a history teacher at KIPP. He convinced Principal Josh Zoia that coordinating parent and community engagement is a full-time job, and he was named to the position at the start of this school year.

“KIPP is a place where we walk the walk,” said Brown, who taught in Virginia before coming to KIPP in 2007. “We do very little talking and meeting; we are about action.”

Under Brown's leadership, KIPP has taken several measures to get parents involved in their children's school. KIPP has an adult-education program three nights a week for parents and members of the community at large. Classes are offered in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), computer literacy and citizenship. According to Brown, there are currently 95 participants in the classes.

Each grade level of KIPP teachers hosts one parent event every month, ranging from family game nights and talent shows to potluck dinners and parent cook-offs. Those events, combined with the classes and other activities, bring parents into the building four nights a week.

Every Monday night at KIPP, the Parents Book Club meets. About 20 parents – primarily mothers – come to the school to discuss a book they are reading. Brown said many of the books



KIPP's Mike Brown teaches a class for parents. center around the mother-child relationship.

In one instance, the book club brings together three generations from the same family. Rose Egbuiwe is a regular participant. She comes with her mother, Patricia, and her daughter Ese, a KIPP sixth-grader.

Patricia has also taken advantage of the adult-education classes. An immigrant from Nigeria, she was not computer literate when she came to the U.S. eight years ago. She took the computer classes at KIPP last year and bought her first computer. She used it to go online and study for her U.S. citizenship exam, which she passed last year, allowing her to vote for the first time in the Scott Brown-Martha Coakley U.S. Senate election in January.

“That was really the highlight of her life,” Rose Egbuiwe said of her 70-year-old mother.

Egbuiwe, who also has a daughter – Bekemeh – in the seventh grade, said KIPP has done a tremendous job bringing together parents and teachers. “We have a very close



relationship with the teachers, and a lot of parents have become friends because of the school.”

That is music to the ears of Brown, whose goal for parental involvement at KIPP is close to being reached.

“Our goal is to have 80 percent of families actively involved and engaged in the life of the school,” he said. “We have 212 families (320 students). We now have 154 families involved; the goal is 169.”

That is an impressive number, especially considering KIPP has a higher standard for active involvement than the average school. KIPP defines an “active” parent as one who comes to the school at least five times a year; the national standard is three times.

“We have a lofty goal, and we appreciate that,” said Brown, noting that KIPP parents are required to pick up their children's report cards at the school and that all teachers do home visits. “We are always striving to make KIPP a welcoming place for parents and we want them to feel like they are a part of the school community.”

That's why Brown smiles whenever he is driving around the city and sees a KIPP parent wearing a “KIPP Parent & Community Team” sweatshirt, which is earned after the fifth visit to the school.

“When I see them wearing that sweatshirt it reminds me that our school is playing a role in strengthening our Lynn village, and it feels good,” Brown said.

For more information about KIPP visit www.kipplynn.org or call 781-598-1609.



Meeting the challenge

Bridgewell is meeting the unique needs of Alzheimer's patients

BY PAUL HALLORAN

When direct care staff noticed an increased number of their individuals being diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease, particularly those with Downs Syndrome, Bridgewell developed a long-range plan to respond to their needs and address the challenge.

That forethought and planning is paying dividends for several members of Bridgewell's family, including five individuals who now call Wedgemere Road in Beverly home. This very special modular home was designed and built to meet the specific needs of people with developmental disabilities suffering from Alzheimer's.

As a custom-build, this single-story residence features a large, open floor plan with plenty of natural lighting. The light-colored wood flooring is the same in every room in order to minimize some of the depth-perception issues caused by Alzheimer's. Each room is wheelchair-accessible and can accommodate larger medical equipment. Doors are equipped with alarm announcers that alert staff when anyone enters or exits.

"About eight years ago, we had identified a real need to develop special services for the increasing number of individuals we support who are being diagnosed with Alzheimer's," said Robert Scholz, Bridgewell director of residential services. "We had envisioned what a house like this would look like. We're very happy with how it turned out, and the folks who live here are doing quite well."

According to Justin Devoe, program director for the Wedgemere Road home, there are three Bridgewell staff on duty during the day and two overnight. Some of the residents also have personal care assistants who come in. A nurse consultant spends 10 hours a week there as well.

"The residents are getting the same range of services that people in our other residential facilities receive," Scholz said. "They get a significant amount of medical attention."

Some of the residents attend day programs run by



A staff member for Bridgewell's house in Beverly for Alzheimer's patients helps a resident back inside.



Bridgewell's Carmen Jimenez uses sign language with Rosemary O'Brien at the Boston Street Center.

Bridgewell in other locations, including a specialized day habilitation program at the Boston Street Center in Lynn for individuals with developmental disabilities and Alzheimer's. There are currently eight people in that program, which is



A staff member assists a resident of Bridgewell's house in Beverly set the table.

staffed by case manager Donna Lucier and aide Carmen Jimenez.

This service is overseen by Bridgewell's program director Vicky Macciarone, while Susan Scott Craven, clinical director of day services, provides counsel on a regular basis. Since attending a train-the-trainer program sponsored by the Alzheimer's Association four years ago, Craven has become one of Bridgewell's resident experts in dealing with individuals with Alzheimer's.

"We've done a lot of research and the staff has been highly trained," she said, noting that she and other Bridgewell staff serve as trainers for the Alzheimer's Association of Massachusetts. Based on some assessments and programs implemented by Bridgewell, the Alzheimer's Association will be adapting some of its training for the developmentally disabled population.

Craven said the philosophy behind the Boston Street program is simple: stay positive.

"We want to make every day a positive experience for them," she said. "We want to maintain the skills that people have as

long as possible. The program is focused on independence and positive feelings."

The Boston Street program, which runs Monday-Friday from 8:15 a.m. to 3:15 p.m., provides participants with a variety of services, including occupational, physical and speech therapy, nursing, and behavioral intervention. Pictures and objects are used to enhance communication skills.

"We do a lot of sensory work," she said. "We have them make choices whenever possible, to inspire independence within each individual."

As evidence of the close association and productive working relationship Bridgewell has developed with the Alzheimer's Association, Craven will be among the team of Bridgewell clinicians presenting at an Alzheimer's Association conference May 5 in Marlborough. She will speak about providing clinical supports in a day program for individuals with developmental disabilities who have a probable Alzheimer's diagnosis.

For more information about Bridgewell visit www.bridgewell.org or call 781-593-1088.



All Care Hospice volunteer coordinator Jessica Contarino and volunteer Richard Rivard.

Volunteers all care to make a difference

By MEAGHAN CASEY

Richard Rivard stood by his mother’s bedside when she passed away in 2006, at 100 years of age. Since then, he has been at the side of more than a dozen terminally ill patients and their families to offer comfort, support and companionship at a time when they need it most.

Rivard is one of more than 55 dedicated volunteers at All Care Hospice. With a focus on caring, not curing, All Care Hospice aims to enhance the quality of a person’s life, while optimizing the time spent with family and friends. Volunteers provide companionship to the patient and family that help make their lives a little brighter. Many volunteers spend time reading to the patient, reminiscing or just being a supportive presence.

Volunteers give the caregivers the opportunity to run an errand or go to an appointment with the piece of mind knowing that someone is with their loved one.

“It’s patient and family care,” said Jessica Contarino, All Care Hospice Volunteer Coordinator. “It doesn’t just benefit the patients. Often times, it’s the family who relies most on the volunteer and the hospice team support.”

As one of the All Care Hospice’s earliest volunteers, Rivard made the commitment to hospice in 2007, in his mother’s memory. A former public school teacher in Providence and Everett, Rivard spent 13 years caring for his mother in his home in Revere. Determined to continue caring for others, he participated in All Care’s 18-hour volunteer training and was matched with a patient with terminal cancer.

“It can be a sad situation, and yet, you try to bring some hope where there seems to be little,” said Rivard. “You create a bond with them and become familiar with their situation. You bring some sunshine into their lives.”

And that philosophy, according to Contarino, is vital as a volunteer.

“Good volunteering is about finding the common denominator – what makes us human,” said Contarino. “It’s not

about thinking, ‘I’m healthy, you’re sick,’ but instead, ‘how can I make a difference?’”

“Richard has the ability to find out people’s passions,” she said. “As a volunteer, you’re going into someone’s home at an extremely emotional and intense time in that person’s life. You have to be able to get to the center of what they’re interested in and make them feel comfortable. That’s the art of it.”

Volunteers are matched with hospice patients based on location and interests, and make a commitment to seeing those individuals through their final hours.

“Even if a patient is moved to a different facility in a different city, our volunteers always say, ‘we’re attached; we’re here for the long haul,’” continued Contarino. “That says a lot about their dedication.”

Cherish The Children

All Care Hospice and the Solimine family invite all parents, family and friends who have endured the death of a child to: Cherish The Children –A walk on Mother’s Day to remember the child we have loved and lost.

The walk will be held **May 9** (rain or shine) at Flax Pond Park in Lynn. There will be a remembrance service at 9 a.m. with music, reflections and readings. An optional walk around Flax Pond will follow (approximately 2 miles). Coffee and pastries will be served at the All Care Hospice Center for Grief and Loss, 583 Chestnut St., Lynn.

For more information, please call Diane Moran at 781-586-1608 x571 or e-mail dmoran@allcare.org

While there is no minimum time requirement, volunteers are encouraged to visit their patients for at least one hour per week. There is also a volunteer pool for vigil and special respite care.

In addition to the volunteers, All Care Hospice’s interdisciplinary team includes nurses, aides, social workers and chaplains who work with the patient’s physician and the hospice medical director to provide physical, emotional and spiritual support for the patient and family. All Care Hospice offers patients and families control over the final aspects of their lives, ensuring their last days are lived on their own terms, with their wishes and decisions respected, and their dignity assured.

To inquire about All Care Hospice volunteer opportunities, please visit www.allcare.org or call 781-586-1605 x510.

A timeline of Catholic Charities work in the communities north of Boston

1919-1949: The Archdiocese of Boston commissions the start of two Catholic Charities agencies: in Lynn to focus on counseling and basic needs, and Salem to concentrate on child welfare services.

1949-1959: With the need for assistance expanding, Catholic Charities finds new locations that allowed programs to expand. Moves were made to North Street (1949) and Broad Street (1959) in Salem and North Common Street (1950) in Lynn.

1960-1969: The state of Massachusetts begins to contract with organizations to provide a wide variety of human services, and Catholic Charities grows to meet these new responsibilities.

1965: Catholic Charities in Lynn is recognized by the Child Welfare League of America.

1972: Catholic Charities works with the Lynn School Department to open Second Chance, offering pregnant adolescents an opportunity to continue high school and access counseling and medical care in a comfortable setting.

1976: As programs continue to expand, the agency moves to its current headquarters at 55 Lynn Shore Drive in Lynn. Along with this move comes a shift from predominantly foster and adoption services to a large increase in parent and family support programs such as the Parent Aide Program.

1976-79: Catholic Charities in Peabody expands programs responding to people with an immediate need for food, clothing, shelter and economic assistance. The organization adds a food pantry and additional Thanksgiving and Christmas assistance programs.

1976: The Childcare Center in Peabody opens.

1983: The Christ Child Nursery on North Federal Street in Lynn is added to Catholic Charities’ wide array of programs, providing a child development program for Lynn families.

1986: Catholic Charities begins two decades of successful residential programs in Lynn. The organization opens a nine apartment home on Amity Street to provide transitional housing for single mothers and takes over Tully Home on Ocean Street, which housed four developmentally disabled women.

1987: The Education and Parenting Skills Center opens, providing alternative education for out-of-school, pregnant or parenting adolescents. The program provides daycare, instruction for the GED exam, parenting and life skills classes, transportation and social services to help them achieve their educational and career goals.

1987: Catholic Charities in Lynn hires a Cambodian outreach worker, an early forerunner to the agency’s Asian Center, which provides emergency assistance and English classes.

1985: Catholic Charities begins offering licensed professional mental health counseling, expanding that service into the clinic in Danvers in 1993.

1995: Catholic Charities opens an office in Gloucester to respond to the needs of fishing families.

1996: Catholic Charities begins Officeworks, a skills training program for people referred by the Department of Transitional Assistance providing three months of training and support in finding work.

1998: Catholic Charities greatly expanded its programs for young parents with the addition of Healthy Families, a home visitor program for first time mothers under 20.

2000: The Second Chance School returns to Lynn Public Schools and Catholic Charities develops an Education Center to provide an array of GED programs, serving about 150 per year in Lynn and Salem. In addition to the young parent GED program, the Education Center adds a class for high-risk, out-of-school youth and an evening program for working youth.

2003: Catholic Charities of Boston celebrates its 100th anniversary.

2004: A new volunteer opportunity called Grandparents for Literacy brings older adults into Catholic Charities childcare centers to read to the children.

2005: A new volunteer opportunity called Companions to the Elderly began providing weekly companionship visits to homebound elders.

2007: The agency begins adding a Financial Education component to Education and Basic Needs programs.

2009-2010: Catholic Charities celebrates its 90th anniversary working in the communities north of Boston. Catholic Charities renews its focus on core programs: basic needs assistance to the poor and working poor; supportive services to children and families; assisting refugees and immigrants as they become active participants in their communities.



In the 1920s, Catholic Charities focused on children’s services.



The Second Chance picnic in the 1970s.



Grandparents for Literacy was started in 2004.



Healthy Families parent support program participant with her daughter.



One of the hallmarks of Catholic Charities North for the last 90 years has been a loyal and dedicated staff. Above, Officeworks teacher Angie Smith with her students at graduation.

A mission to serve

Catholic Charities North celebrates 90 years

By PAUL HALLORAN

If the success of a company or organization can be measured by the longevity and loyalty of those who work there, Catholic Charities North is thriving.

Providing essential services to people in need in the communities north of Boston has been at the core of Catholic Charities North’s mission for 90 years. In that time, the organization has been fortunate to have a competent and flexible staff with serious longevity. Many have dedicated more than a decade to the agency, including four who collectively have more than 120 years of service.

“We’re lucky to have quality people working here,” said Erin Heenan of Salem, Director of Family and Children’s Services, who has been with Catholic Charities North for 28 years. “I really like my work. I feel like I do good work and make a difference.” Indeed, Heenan’s programs provide mentoring and counseling support to hundreds of teenage parents every year. That sentiment is shared by three other Catholic Charities North veterans: Ellen Galligan (40 years), Jill Bowen (27) and Pat Hickey (26).

“We work as a team and value our employees,” said Galligan, a Salem resident who is Director of Community Services. Since she started in the late 1970’s, Galligan has seen programs providing economic assistance to the

Annual Spring Gala

Catholic Charities North will hold its annual Spring Gala on May 6 at 7 p.m. at the Hawthorne Hotel in Salem. The theme of this year’s gala is Celebrating 90, as the agency marks 90 years of providing services to those in need on the North Shore.

This year’s Ggala will transform the first floor of the Hawthorne Hotel into the 1920s, ’40s, ’60s, ’90s and today. As you move through the hotel, you will step into the sights, sounds and tastes of the eras. You will also discover how Catholic Charities responded and continues to respond to the needs of the community. There will be four rooms with uniquely themed hors d’oeuvres, main dishes and desserts.

Tickets cost \$100 and can be purchased online at www.ccab.org/north90 or by calling 781-593-2312.

poor and working poor expand and become increasingly more important. Working with her is Bowen, who oversees the Salem office, meeting with families who need assistance providing for basic needs, such as rental assistance and emergency food. She also provides mental health counseling, seeing many families dealing with stressors related to poverty.

Bowen, who lives in Marblehead, said she has recently noticed a change in the demographics of those seeking help. “We now have well educated people in their 50s and 60s seeking help. They don’t want to ask for help,



Jill Bowen



Ellen Galligan



Erin Heenan



Pat Hickey

but they have lost their job and have nowhere else to turn.”

Hickey, a Nahant resident who is part of the support staff, said after a quarter-century she still feels like she is “part of accomplishing something good.” In fact, in her quarter-century at Catholic Charities, she has seen the educational programs for out-of-school youth grow from a single class to touching 150 young people every year.

Heenan said Catholic Charities North has many times expanded and adapted its services in response to the changing needs of the community. “Over the years our identity has changed.”

But not the mission. “Our job is to catch people when they are falling, get them back on their feet and keep them there” said Tiziana Dearing, President of Catholic Charities of Boston. “It’s an important time to be doing that right now.”

Dearing said while Catholic Charities had adapted the services it provides, the organization has not lost sight of its purpose.

“Feed the hungry; clothe the naked,” she said. “Ninety years ago, that had a lot to do with homeless children. Today, people need help to keep their homes. They have general, basic needs so they can rettool and participate in the economy. We have to be able to respond to whatever the crisis of the day is.”

Catholic Charities North has been doing just that for almost a century.

For more information about Catholic Charties North visit www.ccab.org or call 781-593-2312.

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Time for a change — again

Non as in *non-profit*. Perhaps those of us in the nonprofit world should take a look at how we describe ourselves because people know what we are not (i.e. not about making a profit) but do they know what we are?

Nonprofits were all started to change



Mark S. Kennard

something. Whether people were dying from drug overdoses, or needed less expensive medical care, or had no place to live or could not find affordable childcare, the mission of every nonprofit was to “change” something. Our organizational

founders saw something in the world or community that just was not right and felt that they could contribute something towards an improvement. Popular or not, the basis of the nonprofit movement was about creating change.

The challenge facing many nonprofit leaders now is our resistance to the very thing that we signed on for. Nonprofits, in my experience, do not like to change. Perhaps many of the nonprofit leaders and boards are now middle-aged – a time when a certain complacency or rigidity about life sets in. Perhaps many of us are tired of the “fight” – for funding, for recognition, for programs, for staff. Perhaps the problems are just too deep and too unyielding at times.

Whatever the reason, the energy and excitement of being the change agent has been

relegated to the discomfort of being stuck in the permafrost of survival. Every barrier becomes insurmountable, every element of the status quo is cast in stone, every response is protective, every idea is safe. The net result is a permanent state of accepting the status quo.

The nonprofit industry is always reinventing itself through the constant birth of small, brand-new entities that crop up like weeds in a field. They, too, share our earlier passion for creating some kind of change, but sadly, too many of the larger, more established organizations give them too little time or attention or, worse yet, consider them as threats to dwindling funding streams. Rather than embrace their dynamic energy and cutting-edge mentality to take action, we do not give them time or attention – an indifference that too often destroys them.

Our work is too vital and too important to wallow in a sea of safe mediocrity. It is time for the nonprofit sector to resume its rightful place at the front of the change line to create a new dynamic for inclusion and action that stresses boldness, big thinking and risk-taking. Yes, risk of failure in the name of social progress is a small price to pay for taking a stand against something wrong or filling a need because it's the right thing to do. Perhaps we will even take the risk of redefining ourselves with a label that says who are and what we stand for.

Mark S. Kennard is president of the Lynn Nonprofit Business Association.

Nonprofits worthy of support



Judith Flanagan Kennedy

We are fortunate to have a wide variety of nonprofit organizations in the City of Lynn whose mission is to help others. These agencies play a valuable role in our City. Not only do they provide assistance to those in need, they also stimulate our economy by

employing thousands of people and buying goods and services.

The Connector introduces us to some of these important agencies, their staff and, most importantly, the people who benefit from their services. Lynn has always been known as a place where those in need are taken care of; these nonprofits continue to perpetuate that legacy.

These stories and photos give the reader a telling glimpse of the nonprofit world as it exists in our City. It is a world that is worthy of our attention – and gratitude.

Judith Flanagan Kennedy is mayor of Lynn.

Museum honors Lynn legacies

MUSEUM: from Page 1

introducing interactive, modern technology and drawing a connection between the past and present day Lynn.

To successfully do so, the Museum must first accomplish its goal of raising \$283,000, in efforts to receive a matching grant from the Massachusetts Cultural Council – the state agency that promotes excellence, access, education and diversity in the arts, humanities and interpretive sciences. More than \$240,000 has already been raised, but another \$40,000 will be needed by August.

“Funds raised by the Museum will be matched dollar for dollar by the Mass. Cultural Council, and will enable us to develop interactive exhibitions to attract a new generation of students and families – making history come alive,” said Museum President Steven Babbitt.

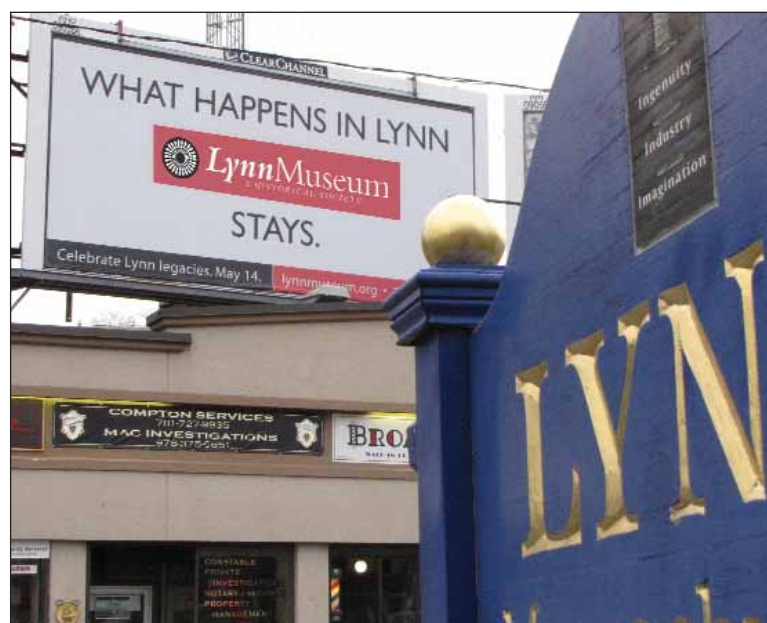
As part of its fundraising plan to meet the challenge grant criteria, the

Museum is hosting an event to celebrate Lynn Legacies on Friday, May 14. It will recognize donors and many of the families and businesses that have successfully shaped the Lynn community.

Open to the public, guests are invited to meet the legacies, enjoy light refreshments and support the

Museum. Event tickets are \$25/per person and can be purchased by sending a check to the Lynn Museum, 590 Washington St., Lynn, MA 01901 or \$30 at the door.

For more information about the event, contact Dena at office@lynnmuseum.



As the billboard in Wyoma Square and a class photo from the 1920s demonstrate, the Lynn Museum and Historical Society preserves all things Lynn.



Lynn YMCA Youth and Teen Director Gregg Ellenberg, far right, participant Gilbert Minaya and Iris Rivas, study group and computer center coordinator, gather for a group study session.

Gather, Pursue, Achieve

YMCA offers homework study group for students in grade 3-12

BY MEAGHAN CASEY

By definition, homework is an exercise in learning – at home. But for some local students, the Lynn YMCA is providing a more desirable setting to complete their nightly assignments.

The GPA Study Group (Gather, Pursue, Achieve) meets every Tuesday from 6 to 7:30 and every Thursday from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. in the computer lab. Free to members, it is part of the Lynn YMCA's drop-in youth program, The Core. Participants in grades 3-12 have the opportunity to work on homework, brush up on grammar and hone their creative writing skills.

"Overall, the students want to participate and they're more open to learning," said Iris Rivas, study group and computer center coordinator. "We mix it up, usually spending

the first 45 minutes on homework before moving on to the lessons I've put together for them. They also have journals for their writing blogs."

Rivas, a business major at UMass Boston, hopes to encourage participants to work independently outside of the classroom, applying and practicing the skills they learned.

"It's reinforcing what's going on at school," said Lynn YMCA Youth and Teen Director Gregg Ellenberg. "Hopefully it provides an early foundation for lifelong study and work habits."

Ellenberg considers Rivas a valuable resource particularly for students in homes where English is not the primary language spoken.

"As a parent, it is difficult to help reinforce English grammar skills if that is not

your primary language," Ellenberg said. "If the students aren't getting the reinforcement at home, we know they're getting it here."

The study group, which was re-launched last year, typically attracts up to 15 students per week. Lynn resident Gilbert Minaya, 11, is a regular. A fifth-grader at Drewicz Elementary School, Minaya is in his second year in the study group. Thanks to the structured environment, he is not only completing his assignments, but excelling in the classroom. His grades have significantly improved.

"It's nice having the time to finish my homework and get my grades up," said Minaya. "And I like writing more now."

Minaya has been going to the YMCA daily for the past five years and is an active member of The Core program. "I have a place to go," he said. "I'm not just sitting

around at home."

Minaya's 16-year-old brother, Luis Minaya, also participates in the study group. Luis attends Classical High School and is a staff member of The Core. The Core program is open to students in grades K-8 and is based out of the Youth Center. The Core runs from 2-6 p.m., Monday – Friday. Activities include swimming, sports, art and crafts, homework help, computer center and a snack is served. Based around a team concept, at the end of each day staff members hand out Most Valuable Person awards to those who display the four core values of the YMCA; Honesty, Respect, Responsibility and Caring.

For more information about the Lynn YMCA and its youth programs, visit www.lynnymca.org or call 781-581-3105.



Caleb Isabella is one of the instructors at the United Way Financial Stability Center powered by SPIN.

Serving people in financial need

Financial Stability Center is making a difference

By PAUL HALLORAN

The United Way Financial Stability Center powered by SPIN is making a real difference in the lives of those who have taken advantage of the services offered. Just ask Petronila Jimenez.

Jimenez is a proud recent graduate of the financial education class offered at the center. Her longtime friend, Marisol Arruda — a case manager and the VITA (Voluntary Income Tax Assistance) coordinator at the center — recruited her to attend, and Jimenez is glad she did.

"They have very good programs," Jimenez said. "I learned a lot. I'm paying my bills on time and getting my credit back on track. I'm saving money to buy a house."

A Lynn resident who works as a personal care homemaker for Jewish Family Service of the North Shore, Jimenez said the financial education class also taught her to make a budget and keep a daily log of all her expenses. "It's a great help to know exactly where my money is going," she said,



Petronila Jimenez

Jimenez also took advantage of the VITA program, saving the \$300 she spent with a national tax-prep firm last year. "That's money I can buy something else with," she said.

The VITA program also promotes the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), a federal credit based on income that is designed to assist low-income workers by returning to them

adding that she has started making student loan payments that she had deferred for six years.

Another valuable service the Financial Stability Center offers is income tax preparation. The VITA program provides volunteers who assist people in preparing their tax returns at no charge. The returns can be filed online so refunds will arrive more quickly.

a percentage of what they earned in the previous year. The Internal Revenue Service estimates that \$3.2 million in EITC money is annually not claimed by eligible Lynn workers.

Thanks to the Financial Stability Center, that is starting to change.

As of April 5, 470 tax returns had been filed at the center, with \$704,660 in federal refunds and \$293,111 in EITC. Those numbers far exceed the goals set by SPIN and the United Way: 165 returns, \$231,000 in refunds, \$184,000 in EITC.

"We are very pleased with the results thus far," said Mark DeJoie, SPIN executive director. "We are becoming a trusted source for financial information for people making under \$100,000. Other financial stability centers are coming to Lynn to see what we are doing."

For more information about the SPIN Financial Stability Center visit www.spinlynn.org or call 781-598-9417.

Developing a better neighborhood



NDA helps turn around Jackson Street

By PAUL HALLORAN

Mike Pasquale and his wife, Anne, will no longer have to struggle to answer the inevitable question when friends visit for the first time: “What’s the story with that house next door?”

For two decades, the Pasquales, who keep a meticulously groomed front yard, could only shrug when asked that question. Thanks to the efforts of Neighborhood Development Associates (NDA) and the City, that is no longer the case.

“This has worked out beautifully,” Mike Pasquale said, referring to the new, two-family home at 46 Jackson St. that has been built by NDA, a not-for-profit housing corporation.

The former house at 46 Jackson St. had been vacant for more than 20 years and had become a haven for illicit and illegal activity. Pasquale, who has lived in the neighborhood since 1972, would tell anyone who would listen that the blight was seriously impacting the quality of life in the neighborhood, yet for years nothing was done.

Then along came Ward 3 Councilor Darren Cyr and NDA. Pasquale had never met Cyr until three years ago, when he asked him to come down and take a look at the abandoned house. From that point on, things began to change.

Cyr worked with his council colleagues, the mayor’s office, NDA and its administrative partner, the Lynn Housing Authority & Neighborhood Development, to eradicate the problem. NDA was eventually able to purchase the property from the former owner, demolish the eyesore and build a new townhouse that features two 3-bedroom, 1½-bathroom units.

“No matter what the City tried to do, there was always a roadblock put up,” said Cyr, who contacted LHAND Executive Director Charles Gaeta in an effort to solve the problem. “LHAND and NDA came in and worked with us to come up with a solution agreeable to all parties. Everybody in the neighborhood is thrilled that house is gone.”

“This project really defines what our agency is about,” said NDA board member Oliver Toomey. “By redeveloping this property and a few others in the area, we are able to make a significant positive impact in the neighborhood.”

Pasquale gives the bulk of the credit to Cyr and NDA.

“(Cyr) has worked his butt off for this neighborhood,” he said. “His top priority was getting rid of that house. He and the NDA have done a great job for this neighborhood.”

NDA is working on other projects in the Jackson Street/Essex Street area. The agency bought a foreclosed property at 63 Jackson St. and plans to rehab the house back to a single-family from the three-family it had been converted to. The house sits on a double lot, with 10 garage bays in the back. Those will also be knocked down in order to reduce density.

In addition to Jackson Street, NDA has redeveloped a property at 160 Essex St., which included demolishing a two-family house and building a new single-family.

“An old East Lynn neighborhood is getting a facelift,” said Peggy Phelps, assistant director of Neighborhood Development Services for LHAND. “We

encourage the neighbors to get involved.

Redevelopment is contagious. The LHAND is also offering loan and grant programs to Jackson Street neighbors to spruce up their homes as part of the comprehensive neighborhood development plan.”

For more information
about NDA visit
www.lhand.org or call
781-477-2800.



NDA

Neighborhood Development Associates, Inc.

From top, Ward 3 City Councilor Darren Cyr, NDA board member Oliver Toomey, Peggy Phelps of LHAND, and Jackson Street residents Mike and Anne Pasquale in front of the new house that replaced one that had been vacant for more than 20 years (right).



Marina Mazariegos takes care of her husband, Reynaldo, in their Lynn home.



Above, Laura Valenzuela cares for her mother, Laureana, who has been in the PACE program for one year. At right, Bruce Anderson gets assistance from PACE in caring for his wife, Gail.



Keeping PACE with caregiving

BY MEAGHAN CASEY

Caregivers – they are daughters, sons, husbands, wives, siblings and friends. They are the extraordinary people who devote their lives to caring for loved ones. And thanks to the supportive hand of Elder Service Plan of the North Shore and the Program of All-inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE), many of them are no longer doing it on their own.

A national model of care, the PACE program at Elder Service Plane of the North Shore promotes quality integrated services for individuals who need personal attention and family support to stay independent and in their own homes and communities.

“I would recommend PACE to anyone who has a senior in their home,” said Laura Valenzuela, whose mother, Laureana, has been in the program for a year. “With one phone call, everything was resolved. Our life has changed dramatically because of it.”

Valenzuela and her husband, Rodolpho, who have three children and one grandchild, care for her mother in their Salem home.

“She was a fantastic mom who gave us everything,” said Valenzuela. “It’s my turn to do it for her in the end. It gives me joy to wake up and see her face.”

A native of the Dominican Republic, Laureana, 83, came to the U.S. in 2002, following a tracheotomy. Shortly after, she began dialysis. In 2006 and again in 2008, her condition worsened.

“We were constantly overwhelmed before,” Valenzuela said. “We managed, but it was difficult.”

Since enrolling in PACE, Laureana has not experienced any other medical complications. She undergoes dialysis treatments three times a week, with transportation arranged by PACE. She also visits the PACE adult day health centers twice a week, where a nurse provides regular check-ups.

“She used to live from appointment to appointment, from

specialist to specialist,” said Valenzuela. “Now, PACE coordinates all of that – from her schedule to her transportation – and they keep me informed in all aspects of her care. The staff is superb – truly dedicated to the seniors.”

Valenzuela isn’t alone in her enthusiasm for the program. PACE has helped lessen the day-to-day demands of hundreds of participants and their caregivers by providing a comprehensive range of preventive, primary, acute and long-term care services. Each individual and his or her family become part of an interdisciplinary care team that includes

New caregiver support groups open to the public

- ◆ first Monday of every month, 10:30 a.m., 29 A Emerson Avenue, Gloucester
- ◆ first Tuesday of every month, 10:30 a.m., 100 Cummings Center, Suite 166 D, Beverly
- ◆ first Friday of every month, 10:30 a.m., 37 Friend Street, second floor, Lynn

For more information, call Chris at 781-722-0040.

social workers, physicians, nurses, therapists, home health aides and nurse practitioners.

“PACE has helped us maintain our independence,” said Bruce Anderson, 69, a retired carpet installer and the primary caregiver for his wife, Gail, 66. “If we need assistance, a ride, even help with grocery shopping, we know someone is there.”

Lifelong residents of Lynn, the Andersons have been married for 30 years. Gail, who underwent a laryngectomy, relies on a speaking device to communicate. Two years ago, a speech therapist recommended PACE. She has since undergone knee replacement surgery, followed by physical therapy. The support the couple has received from PACE has been a welcome relief.

“Financially, we wouldn’t be able to afford the medications she takes,” said Bruce. “Plus it’s helped us to manage and

coordinate everything.”

Reynaldo and Marina Mazariegos agree. Reynaldo, 69, and Marina, 64, will celebrate their 44th wedding anniversary this year. The couple emigrated to Lynn from Guatemala more than 20 years ago when Reynaldo became ill and was diagnosed with diabetes. Two years ago, his health worsened and he suffered six strokes.

“Before PACE, he was going to the hospital constantly because his blood sugar levels would get so low,” said Marina. “It was frightening; we couldn’t handle it on our own.”

Reynaldo now receives weekly home visits from a PACE nurse who monitors his blood pressure, blood sugar and circulation and administers his insulin. He also attends the adult day program two days a week.

“It’s helped me tremendously,” said Marina. “I can go to work with peace of mind and know they’re taking care of him. I can’t rave enough about the staff and the doctors who coordinate and oversee his overall care.”

Gloucester resident Ellen Hale, who cares for her disabled brother, Tim, 56, can also attest to the peace of mind that PACE provides. Tim attends the adult day center and receives visits from a home health aide.

“I’m out of the house for work by 7:15 and my father and stepmother are in their 80s, so having Tim in a safe place has taken such a load off all three of us,” said Hale. “I can’t be in two places at once, but finding a program like this allows me to work full-time and continue to be his primary caregiver. And the support he receives from the doctors and nurses is invaluable.”

Elder Service Plan of the North Shore’s PACE program began operating with 20 participants and seven employees. Its current client base of more than 700 participants is served from one of its six adult day health centers.

If you would like to learn more about the services Elder Service Plan of the North Shore provides, call 877-803-5564.