

# Dorchester Reporter

"The News and Values Around the Neighborhood"

Volume 42 Issue 4

Thursday, January 23, 2025

50¢

## 'MAKING THE SMALL, BIG'

### Binh Dinh Academy marks 20 years of teaching Vietnamese martial arts

By SETH DANIEL  
NEWS EDITOR

When Tan Nhat Bich emigrated to the United States from Vietnam in 1992, he was a well-known martial arts kickboxer and grandmaster in his native country. Once he and his family were settled in Dorchester, he moved to introduce traditional Vietnamese martial arts to his new country with the founding of the Dorchester-based Binh Dinh Academy, which has been training children ages 7 and up for the last 20 years.

Several times a week, the 74-year-old Bich gathers his students in the VietAID community room on Charles Street and at the Quincy YMCA, where he specializes in the Tan Forge technique, a combination of all the best forms of ancient Vietnamese fighting styles – a style focused on training the "weak to become the strong."

In an interview with



Natalie Nguyen, a long-time student at the school, practices a form with swords that she will perform at Tet in Boston this weekend. She has studied at Binh Dinh for more than a decade and recently achieved White Belt status.

Seth Daniel photo

The Reporter, Bich's daughter, Lien-Thu Dao, the chairperson of the academy's board of directors and a teacher, offered

a bit of history: "My dad originally started the school in Vietnam as a grandmaster after the war. He was a pilot in

the South Vietnamese Air Force fighting with the Americans and so when he got out of the (Continued on page 10)

## Mitigation matters stir a fuss between tenants on Point and Dot Bay City

By BILL FORRY  
EXECUTIVE EDITOR

A group of tenants in the Harbor Point Apartment community and their landlord—the Corcoran Jennison Companies—have filed an appeal to the state's Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) challenging that agency's decision to grant a key permit to the developers of the Dorchester Bay City project on the site of the former Bayside Expo Center in Dorchester.

The abutters' appeal, which contends that the project's application to the state was "premature" and "flawed," could further delay the complicated waterfront redevelopment project that has been in the works since 2018 and has been slowed by regulatory and financial challenges.

The letter to MassDEP, sent on Jan. 6, was followed by a letter to Mayor Wu and Gov. Healey from a longtime Harbor Point tenant leader asking them to intervene on behalf of residents and arguing that Accordia and its partner—the UMass Building Authority—have not followed through on promises to mitigate concerns raised by the abutters. Their concerns range from roadway access to Day Boulevard to fears that the new construction on the site might exacerbate coastal flooding that has already been a problem in the Harbor Point development.

A spokesperson for MassDEP confirmed that the agency had received the appeal, which challenges a Dec. 16 "Consolidated Written Determination" that cleared the way for a key permit—commonly referred

(Continued on page 15)

## Dever Elementary community denounces plan to close school

By SETH DANIEL  
NEWS EDITOR

One by one, parents with pupils in the Paul Dever Elementary School on Columbia Point recounted last Tuesday how their lives were upended by an unexpected e-mail the week before from the Boston Public Schools (BPS) announcing the closure of their school community next year.

"Shock." "Out of the blue." "Lightning bolt," "Punch to the gut." These words were the constant refrain during a rally and protest staged that afternoon in front of the school that drew a

**"It was a shock when I got the email. It's so unfair to the families and the kids are so sad."**

— Cindy Maltez, a Harbor Point resident and mother of a fourth grader

few dozen people. "Don't close the Dever," they shouted.

Those on hand interviewed by The Reporter said they were unaware of any discussion about closing the school before that message, which was sent from BPS Superintendent Mary Skipper. In fact, many had hoped that the school, which has been in state receivership for years, would soon emerge from that and be back under full control of the Boston district.

"I didn't have any idea this would happen; it was a shock when I got the email," said Cindy Maltez, a Harbor Point resident and mother of a fourth grader. "It's so unfair to the families and the kids are so sad. We were even helping the school by selling chocolate and I don't know what will happen with that. It's a shock to families." Her son, Yahir, added: "I don't think it's fair what they did because the school is close to our



Dever School first grader Crystal Esmerelda called for her school to stay open during a rally on Tuesday in front of the Dever on Columbia Point.

Seth Daniel photo

home. Other schools are far away. The school is really good because of the supervisors and teachers. They help me a lot."

BPS said that more than 9,000 people engaged in surveys and community meetings that informed the decisions that were (Continued on page 4)

## BPS program offers kids and their parents a way to save and learn

By CASSIDY MCNEELEY  
REPORTER STAFF

Did you know that children enrolled in grades K-5 in a Boston Public School can bank hundreds of dollars into a savings account over the course of their education to help pay for college or career training?

The program—called Boston Saves—started in 2019 under former Mayor Marty Walsh and continues under the Wu administration. This month, the program is putting out the call for more students and families to enroll and take advantage of an extra incentive.

Mayor Wu announced earlier this month that

BPS families who join before the end of January will get \$25 for a child's account—for a total of \$75 this calendar year for new signups.

The program is intended to help families with planning for their children's future in col- (Continued on page 14)

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Police, Courts & Fire

### DA Hayden's office targets shoplifters at South Bay Mall

A task force led by the Suffolk County District Attorney's office is cracking down on dozens of offenders who, prosecutors say, have repeatedly targeted stores in the South Bay Mall.

According to Suffolk District Attorney Kevin Hayden, his office has secured "stay-away" orders against 73 men and women who were arrested for shoplifting and other offenses at stores in South Bay over the last quarter of 2024.

Most recently, the office said, it "obtained a stay-away order against Kevin Whyte, 39, of Taunton, who was arraigned on 11 outstanding warrants at South Boston BMC for shoplifting offenses at South Bay."

Last Monday, Whyte was held on \$500 bail and ordered back to court on Feb. 7. He also faces outstanding warrants in courts outside Suffolk County, Hayden said.

"Our overarching goal with this initiative is to make shopping spaces safe for consumers and workers and to help prevent any more store closures, which we know have a dramatic impact on residents, particularly our older residents," the DA added.

"But that doesn't mean seeking incarceration for every offender. In many cases," he said, "the effective path is to address the underlying reason for the conduct, which is very often addiction disorders." He noted that the orders will "stay in effect while cases are pending and some remain in effect as part of sentencing."

The office has also referred nine defendants into drug-treatment programs while their cases were pending and "an additional 16 drug-treatment provisions as part of case dispositions."

Of the 45 cases disposed of through Dec., 16 included drug-treatment provisions as part of sentencing, 8 resulted in incarceration ranging from 10 days to one year, and 31 had the existing stay-away orders remain in effect. Judges also ordered a total of \$3,038.80 in restitution payments to Target.

-REPORTER STAFF

Two pedestrians were run down and a 20-year-old woman was killed around 8:30 p.m. on Sunday night (Jan. 19) when a hit-and-driver plowed into them on Washington Street near the South End. The second victim, a 23-year-old woman, suffered life-threatening injuries. The suspect vehicle is "described as a 2021-2023 dark-colored Mercedes small SUV, which has damage to the front grille and front light and is missing its right-side mirror. If you have any information, please call detectives at 617-343-4470 or text "TIP" to CRIME (27463)

•••

A 37-year-old man from Sharon was arrested last week after Boston Police officers investigating a rash of package thefts spotted him carrying "multiple packages" as he walked along Geneva Avenue. According to a BPD account, officers watched as the suspect—Najib Dagher—dropped the packages onto a porch before leaving the area. "Officers exited their cruiser to further examine the packages, and immediately noticed that none of the packages belonged to that address," the BPD report says. Dagher was later arrested when he returned to the area.

## Report: Kraft will challenge Wu for mayor

Josh Kraft, a scion of the family that owns the New England Patriots football organization, intends to announce his candidacy for mayor of Boston next month, according to sources close to his emerging campaign. The news, first reported on Monday by Politico Massachusetts, comes after more than a year of speculation that Kraft—a longtime youth worker and son of Patriots owner Robert Kraft—would challenge incumbent Mayor Wu, who is up for



Josh Kraft

re-election later this year.

The 58-year-old Kraft runs the New England Patriots Foundation, is the board chair of the Urban League of Massa-

chusetts, which is based in Roxbury, and formerly was the president and CEO of Boys & Girls Clubs of Boston. The Mattapan Teen Center that the BGCBC owns and manage is named for him.

He has also been a generous philanthropist to many other causes across the region and a regular attendee at neighborhood events across Boston over the last few years.

City Councillor Ed Flynn, who had been weighing his own chal-

lenge of Wu, will not be a candidate, according to the *Boston Herald*. For her part, the mayor delivered a healthy baby girl, her third child, on Jan. 13.

Candidates cannot begin the process of getting on the ballot for the September and November elections until April. Those choosing to run for mayor must collect 3,000 valid signatures from Boston voters to make the ballot.

-REPORTER STAFF

## Plan for condo village of 59 units, 6 stories on Boston St. gets okay from BPDA Board

A developer's plan to build a 59-unit, 6-story condo complex on Boston Street in Dorchester was approved by the BPDA board last week. The building will rise at 101-109 Boston St. adjacent to the Fortress storage building next to the bridge into South Boston and will include ground-level space for retail and a restaurant, according to the plan from Cobalt Development Partners.

There will be 10 indoor parking spaces, according to documents on the Boston Planning Dept. website, along with "an indoor bicycle storage room with space for 59 bicycles for residents and 12 bicycle spots outside."

Of the residential units, eight



Image courtesy Merge Architects

will be offered as "affordable," according to the Planning Dept.

-REPORTER STAFF

## Demolition set to begin at White Stadium

Demolition work at White Stadium will start this week, according to correspondence sent to neighbors on Jan. 16. The takedown will be the first phase in a renovation project that is expected to continue through winter 2026.

The initial work will include the removal of "hazardous materials from the grandstands as well as site preparation and some planned tree removals," the memo explained in noting that the demo phase "will continue on site for the following 2 months,

during which you will notice increased construction activity."

Neighbors were assured by city officials "that every effort is being made to complete this work on schedule and in a manner that minimizes the impact on residential neighborhoods and park users while prioritizing safety."

Work at the site will be done mainly on weekdays between 7 a.m. and 3 p.m., the memo noted, with "some weekend activity at different phases."

Neighbors with questions can contact whit-

estadium@boston.gov. -REPORTER STAFF

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The **Dorchester Winter Farmers Market** opens for the season on **Sat., Jan. 25, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.** at the Great Hall in Codman Square, 6 Norfolk St. See [dorchesterwinterfarmersmarket.org](http://dorchesterwinterfarmersmarket.org) for more info. A number of local events are planned this weekend to celebrate the **Tet Lunar New Year**, including the 36th annual Tet in Boston festival, **Jan. 25 and 26, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.**, at Flynn Cruiseport, South Boston. See Page 10 for a full listing of events. A **Disco Dance Party** will be held on **Fri., Jan. 24, from 8 to 11 p.m.** at First Parish

Dorchester, 10 Parish St. Dance under the disco lights to old favorites from the '70s and '80s as well as newer hits. Donations accepted, and all are welcome. This is an alcohol-free event. For more information, call 617-407-5987.

Learn about the risks, warning symptoms, and **preventative screenings of colon cancer** during a presentation at the **Grove Hall BPL, 41 Geneva Ave., on Thurs., Jan. 23, at 4:30 p.m.** Attendees will receive free at-home fecal immunochemical tests that can detect early colon cancer symptoms, as

well as a brochure containing local health-care resources for low-income/uninsured populations.

John F. Kennedy Library forum "**The Highest Calling: Conversations on the American Presidency**" features author **David M. Rubenstein** discussing his latest book on **Mon., Jan. 27, at 6:30 p.m.** RSVP at [jfklibrary.org](http://jfklibrary.org).

**Muqeeda Salaam and Frederick Williams** will lead a discussion about the **impact of Frederick Douglass on the history of the United States** in a lecture intended

for teens and adults ages 13 and up at the **Grove Hall BPL branch on Tues., Jan. 28, at 3:30 p.m.** Food will be provided and a free book giveaway to 5 lecture attendees. Join the **Mattapan Branch of the BPL, 1350 Blue Hill Ave., and Bro. Joel Mackall** for a **Saturday Series presentation on the "Hidden History of Black Boston" on Sat., March 1, from 2 to 4 p.m.**

**SEND IN EVENT NOTICES TO NEWSEDITOR@DOTNEWS.COM**



# Chicken restaurant owner eyes vacant Fields Corner storefront

By SETH DANIEL  
NEWS EDITOR

The operator of a chicken restaurant near Franklin Park appeared before Fields Corner Civic Association (FCCA) at its Jan. 7 meeting to pitch his intention to open another business in a long-vacant storefront at 1476 Dorchester Ave.

The landlord, Lillian Vo, who has been investing time and money into bringing the building up to code, has told civic leaders that she is confused about what to do next. A previous proposed tenant, Sam's Spot, received a 'Stop Work Order' on her opening from the city's

Inspectional Services Department (ISD) due to two shooting incidents allegedly related to after-hours parties staged at the building under previous ownership.

FCCA members and other neighborhood groups advised all parties involved in this latest bid to work closely with ISD as there is great value seen in getting that storefront back in operation. The prospective new tenant—Omi's Hot Chicken—is owned by Moheuddin Faysal, who currently operates Maaz's Chicken on Blue Hill Avenue adjacent to Franklin Park.

Other items discussed

at the meeting included: •Several burglaries were logged in the business district over the past month, according to Boston Police officers who attended the meeting. On Dec. 14 around 1 a.m., a store at 1461 Dorchester Ave. was broken into and sunglasses were stolen.

Photos of the perpetrator were quickly relayed to officers and a suspect was spotted nearby and arrested. The 53-year-old Malden man had several pairs of sunglasses on his person.

Police are searching for a white male who is alleged to have committed two commercial bur-

glaries with a crowbar over the new year. On Dec. 28, the man used the tool to break into Sweet Sip restaurant at 285 Adams St. and stole \$100 from the register. Then, on Jan. 5 at 3:50 a.m. the same man was observed using it to break into Pizza 24 shop at 305 Adams St. At first, he took nothing and left, but then returned and stole a large amount of soda.

•Two shots-fired calls in late December are going to be major priorities for the C-11 district, said Capt. Steven Sweeney, who took charge at the Gibson Street station-house in late December.

On Dec. 20 at 10:55 p.m. officers were called to Parkman Street for a man with a firearm. Arriving officers pursued two men in a vehicle onto Melville Avenue and then to Upland Street. They saw the car stop and two people exit. Because it was snowing heavily, police were able to follow the tracks of one man into a backyard, where they recovered a .40 calibre firearm with 14 rounds loaded. A shots-fired call on Parkman Street had also been reported a few days earlier.

On Dec. 22 at 9:19 p.m. police were called to the area of 34 Ditson

St. for nine shots fired. Police found casings in the street and noted that three motor vehicles were hit with gunfire, and the senior citizen homes were also hit with gunfire, with rounds reportedly going into apartments there. A suspect fled on foot, but there have been no arrests and no injuries.

"We're going to do our best being out there and that's going to be a focus moving forward," Sweeney said.

•Tet (Lunar) New Year is scheduled for Jan. 25 this year. See related story in this edition.

# Galvin's office is still probing issues with dearth of city ballots in November

Secretary of State William Galvin's office is still in the process of investigating Boston's election division and he has not yet decided whether to appoint a receiver to seize control of the city's elections, after an issue with Boston's ballots last November.

Galvin held a press conference that month at which he said he would most likely appoint a receiver after some city polling locations did not have enough ballots during Election Day, causing the secretary's office to send police cars, sirens

blaring, to rush extra ballots to those locations.

"It's about the voters' rights, which we want to protect," Galvin said at the time.

Two months later, the News Service asked the secretary's office if it had named a receiver. "The investigation is ongoing, so no receiver has been appointed. Generally, that is something that is recommended or not recommended based on the conclusion of the investigation," responded Deb O'Malley, a spokesperson for Galvin.

She said that Boston has been "responsive" in providing the information that the secretary's office has asked for, but they still have more materials to collect for the ongoing investigation.

2025 is an important election year for the city. Boston Mayor Michelle Wu is running for reelection, as are other municipal officials down-ballot.

"While the investigative process is ongoing, the Elections Division is also working with the Boston Elections Department to review their policies



Secretary William Galvin holds up specimen ballots during a pre-election press conference on Monday, Nov. 4, 2024.

Sam Doran/SHNS photo

and procedures "ahead of the upcoming elections," O'Malley said.

-SAM DRYSDALE  
State House News Service

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# Dever Elementary parents, allies denounce plans to close the school

(Continued from page 1) made public on Jan. 6. An initial presentation to the School Committee on the closure and reconfiguration plan was set for Wednesday of this week, but a vote isn't expected until the spring. BPS officials say they are now focused on helping students and families find their next home.

"We know that last

week's announcement has caused a range of emotions in our school communities, including the Dever," BPS said in a statement released on Tuesday. "In our initial conversations with these school communities we have valued hearing their feedback and what they love about their school. We remain committed to working with

school communities to develop transition plans that honor that feedback and support each individual student and their family, as well as our staff members in a successful transition from their current school to their next step whether that is graduation or a new school community."

Parents and students at the rally on Tuesday



Harbor Point Task Force chair Orlando Perilla, left, and Dever parent Adnan Khushafa said the sudden closing should have been discussed with community and parents first. The closing violates a long-held "guarantee" of keeping a school on Columbia Point, Perilla said.

said they were intent on getting the district to change its mind and reverse the closure decision.

"This is the only school I chose for my son because it's the only one that has really helped him," said Jean Matthews, who has a third-grade son there. "I don't know where he'll be going and he's going to lose all his friends and the teachers that have helped him. It's not fair. Where do we go now?"

In the same vein, second grader Zasha said, "If they close this school, I'm not sure where we will go to learn. I think they should change their minds."

Orlando Perilla, Harbor Point Task Force chair, said the decision upends a promise made to keep a school on the Point.

"This is an insult to the community," he said. "There was a guarantee to the residents of Harbor Point that they would always have a school and now that is no longer the case. The school was in receivership for a long time, and they keep saying that, but whose fault is that? We've been



Jean Matthews and her third-grade son, Ryan Long, felt the closing without any notification was "unfair." He said he was worried he would lose touch with all his friends.

Seth Daniel photos

working to make it better and now it is better... Everyone is well aware there are issues with the buses, and we didn't need buses for the Dever. Now they want to put our kids on buses. No wonder BPS is losing ground with kids and parents."

Adnan Khushafa, a parent at the Dever and the high school next door —Ruth Batson Academy—was upset by the way the news was relayed. "They didn't discuss this issue with us before making the decision," he said. "A decision like that has to be discussed with parents."

The BPS statement to The Reporter offered no indication that the district will re-consider its recommendation to the School Committee.

"In the case of the Dever, alongside the rest of our impacted communities, we will be here to listen, support and commit to a successful transition," read the statement.

In a press briefing last week addressing the school reconfiguration announcement, Supt. Skipper alluded to the plans for rehabilitating the 7-12 Ruth Batson

Academy, which sits next door to the Dever School. She noted that the Dever property will be needed during property construction, if the project is eventually funded by the city and the state.

"We believe we will need the Dever building as some swing space," she said of the need to house Batson students during the anticipated buildout.

She also mentioned that many of the kids attending the Dever were thought to have other options closer to their homes.

"The Dever has a very fractured walk zone," she told reporters. "We believe we are able to get students closer to home with the closure."

A statement from the Dever Parent Council called on the Committee to do a deeper dive and realize they are breaking up a community, not a school.

"When you close any school, families lose more than just an educational facility: they lose the cornerstone of the community," read the statement. "Schools are sanctuaries where joy and learning thrive."

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# Mattapan teens host ML King Day commemoration

## Question of the day: How best to bring his legacy closer to home

By SETH DANIEL  
NEWS EDITOR

The Josh Kraft Mattapan Teen Center hosted a teen-led intergenerational luncheon to celebrate the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. holiday on Monday with its young members putting together a program with a catered lunch and invitations to senior citizens, community service officers, teens, teachers, and adults from throughout the community.

After lunch, participants at each table were encouraged to respond to questions prompted by teen members that focused on how the King

legacy could be brought closer to home in Mattapan.

Myrtle Huggins, a senior who is active at the Mildred Avenue Community Center and serves as chair of her Apple Grove civic group, said it was about “everyone pulling together. We should come out to a meeting and be open with something we need help on. It can’t just be me opening my mouth all the time. I think we could get someplace great if we all pull together.”

Bobby Jenkins, a Mattapan resident and youth sports advocate, said he felt it was time to honor Dr. King by coming out in



The first-ever teen-led Martin Luther King, Jr. Day commemoration took place at the Mattapan Teen Center on Monday with a large crowd from all walks of life in attendance. *Seth Daniel photos*

greater numbers to vote, especially in local elections like those coming up this fall.

“We need to get out and vote,” he said. “The numbers from the last few elections are horrible. Dr. King and our forefathers fought and died for

that freedom, so we can vote. We need to get out and vote as a community.”

Josh Kraft, a likely candidate for mayor this year, according to recent reports, was in attendance. The center was re-named for him three years ago in recognition

of his leadership at the Boys and Girls Clubs of Boston (BGCB), which owns and manages the Hazelton Street space.

Kraft advised the teens: “Meet as many people as you can and get to know them.”

During the back-and-

forth session, adults from the BGCB said having intergenerational dialogue helps young people avoid making the same mistakes as the older generation. Suggestions also included investing money wisely and buying real estate whenever possible.



Community Service Officer Derek Green with Myrtle Huggins and B-3 Sgt. Joe DeVito.



Josh Kraft, the MTC’s namesake, attended the luncheon and talked with youth and seniors about their experiences.



Tanisha Milton, a BPS Educator of the Year from Tech-Boston Academy, Jose Ruiz, of the Latino Law Enforcement Group (LLEGO), and Leslie Ann Milton, a member of the Mildred Avenue Senior Drop-in.



Mattapan’s Bobby Jenkins with City Councillor Henry Santana.

# ASPIRING TO BE DORCHESTER’S COMMUNITY BANK

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## Author, chef Margot Gabriel explores 'Soup Joumou' in Just-Bookish event

BY SHERRI CAJUSTE  
SPECIAL TO THE REPORTER

Food and culture enthusiasts and members of the Haitian community gathered on Jan. 9 to listen as chef and author Margo Gabriel discussed her work with a special emphasis on Soup Joumou during a special event held inside the new Fields Corner bookstore, Just-Bookish.

It was a homecoming of sorts for Gabriel, who was born and raised in Mattapan to Haitian parents. Her presentation was hosted by Tamika Francis, founder of the Food and Folklore series. As part of the event, guests were treated to a tasting of different renditions of Soup Joumou, with each recipe reflecting the personal touch of the host and her understanding of this iconic dish. From the texture of the broth to the combination of seasonings, every bite



Margo Gabriel, author of "The Expat Kitchen Cookbook" with her brother and Boston-based entrepreneur Peter Edouard. Photo by Joel Theodat

told a story of Haitian resilience and heritage. Gabriel talked about how she fell in love with

the culture watching her mother cook her favorite dishes and soon began to learn on her own. She

started her career as an accountant but always had a passion for education and writing. She soon began working as a food writer for different publications such as *Edible Boston* and *Solstice Literary Magazine*. She currently writes for the publications *Time Out Portugal* and *Cuisine Noir*, based in Oakland, California.

The event began as a social hour where conversations about Haiti filled the room. Francis talked about her brand and future plans for blending cultural storytelling with culinary experiences.

Gabriel, who now lives in Portugal, joined the discussion to share insights into her new cookbook "The Expat Kitchen," a fusion of Haitian, Portuguese and American recipes that also explores themes of identity, history, and culture.



Margo Gabriel, right, author of "The Expat Kitchen Cookbook," is shown with Tamika Francis, left, the founder of "Food and Folklore" series at Just Book-ish on Jan. 9. Photo courtesy Tamika Francis

When asked what Soup Joumou means to her, Gabriel said it means "to feel at ease and to challenge the narrative. It means to embrace freedom and your ancestors' sacrifices."

Sherri Cajuste is the founder of *Haitians of Boston*, which partners with *BostonHaitian.com* and *BNN, Inc.* Follow *Haitians of Boston* on Instagram.

## Ward 15 Dems salute one of their own, former Rep. Charlotte Golar Richie

BY HARRIET GAYE  
SPECIAL TO THE REPORTER

Former state Rep. Charlotte Golar Richie, who represented the Fifth Suffolk district in the 1990s and later served as the city of Boston's chief of Housing under Mayor Tom Menino, was honored by her neighbors and fellow members of the Ward 15 Democratic Committee last Saturday evening (Jan. 19) at First Parish Dorchester's hall with a potluck dinner and party

First elected in 1995, the 66-year-old Richie served two full terms in the House of Representatives, including a stint as chairperson of the Legislature's Committee on Housing and Urban Development. She left state government to run Boston's Dept. of Neighborhood Development. She has since served as a member of the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination and was a candidate for mayor of Boston in 2013.

"Charlotte is the type of person who's never done anything for her own benefit," said Edward Cook, who co-chairs the Ward 15 Democratic committee. "She's all about service."

When Richie and her husband Winston—both former Peace Corps volunteers—and their two young daughters moved to Dorchester's Meetinghouse Hill in the early 1990s, the couple quickly became active in civic affairs. Cook was one of the people who urged her to run for state representative.

"There's something notable about Ward 15 because you are a model



Pictured in First Parish Dorchester's Rev. Allen hall on Saturday, Jan. 18: (l-r) Rep. Christopher Worell, City Councillor John FitzGerald, Edward Cook, Hon. Charlotte Golar Richie, Errin Davis and City Council President Ruthzee Louijeune.



Former Rep. Charlotte Golar Richie is shown with members of the Ward 15 Democratic Committee and guests at a party held in her honor at First Parish Dorchester on Sat., Jan. 18. Harriet Gaye photos

of diverse community working together," Richie said. "It's very, very important to really hold that up, too. Some of our neighborhoods are still kind of monolithic. We're very diverse here and I think people work together, like each other, partner together."

Cook explained: "People like that rarely get

acknowledged in my experience, so giving her an award and this kind of recognition from the people who know her best and have known her the longest, it just seems to me a very appropriate thing to do."

Three current elected officials with Dorchester ties—City Council President Ruthzee Louijeune,

state Rep. Chris Worell, and City Councillor John FitzGerald—were among those who stopped by the potluck dinner to salute the honoree. The councillors brought along a citation designating January 18, 2025, as Charlotte Golar Richie day in Boston. Rep. Worell presented her with flowers.

"Charlotte Golar Richie has been a steadfast public servant, visionary, leader, and passionate advocate for social justice, affordable housing, equity, dedicating her life, uplifting communities in the city of Boston and Beyond," Louijeune said, reading from the citation.

Errin Davis, who lives

in Dorchester and was one of many people mentored by Richie, presented her with a "lifetime achievement award" after the dinner. Davis recalled how Richie helped her secure a scholarship as a young woman.

"Being able to see a Black woman lead was always life-changing for me," Davis said.

Richie spent several years of her career focusing on public policy and housing insecurity. She developed a passage of \$296 billion bond bill for affordable housing in Massachusetts. Additionally, she organized the 5th Suffolk District Advisory Committee, in which residents met at her house to discuss housing, transportation and other policy matters to help guide her decisions while in office.

"You heard your name in a legendary status, when we talked about the Reps in the House then and now to be able to be here as the son of someone you served with," said Councillor FitzGerald, referring to his father, the late Rep. Kevin W. FitzGerald. "Giving you flowers for all you've done for the city, I think it's a great story in the history of Boston and just what the city can do for each other, in terms of people, and what we look like who we are and bringing people together."

At the end of the ceremony, Richie thanked all those in attendance with special recognition to Ward 15: "I love you all and I will share this memory, this evening, for the rest of my life."



# Reporter's People News about people in and around our Neighborhoods

## Dedham Savings makes sure that Cristo Rey stays open, and warm

Cristo Rey Boston High School received a generous grant this season from Dedham Savings to repair its boiler system, which began to fail in the fall. It has been repaired and is keeping the school comfortable this week as winter drops the temperatures to single figures.

"We are incredibly grateful to Dedham Savings for their support," said Rosemary Powers, president of Cristo Rey Boston. "Their investment in our facilities directly impacts our students' daily lives, allowing them to focus on their education without distraction. This partnership underscores the importance of community collaboration in fostering student success."



Back Row, Rosemary Powers, president CRB; Celia Williams, director of Business and Operations CRB; Dick Burke, Vice President, Government and Not For Profit Banking at Dedham Savings; and Charlie Toczykowski, Vice President, Business Banking at Dedham Savings. Front Row, CRB students Jeomany Issac Davila Castro and Jalil Presley.



Dorchester resident Caitlin A. Romasco is now a partner at the Boston law firm of Casner & Edwards. With over a decade of experience, she focuses on commercial litigation and represents clients involved in closely held business, contract, real estate, condominium law, employment, construction, professional liability, insurance coverage, product liability, premises liability and liquor liability.

Photo by Matthew McKee



Conservatory Lab first grader Kayli Kiser tried out one of the bikes in the shop. Photo courtesy Conservatory Lab

## Conservatory Lab first graders get a very up-close look at how motorcycles are built and fixed

About 50 first graders from the Conservatory Lab Charter Lower School took a field trip to popular Madhouse Motors and Café on Blue Hill Avenue. Teachers wanted the children to meet community "help-

ers" who own markets, salons, bakeries, cafes, schools and repair shops.

Madhouse is a combination motorcycle repair shop, and bakery and café – likely the only such business in the city. There, the children

learned about the parts of a motorcycle, held some of the tools that the mechanics use, and rode a dirt bike and revved the engine.

School leaders said it was a trip that the students will never forget.

## Dot scholar scores big in Purchase University 'Shark Tank' contest

Dorchester's Oliver Culliton, who is studying psychology at New York's Purchase College, was one of the finalists in the college's recent Startup Pitching Competition, modeled on the popular ABC show Shark Tank. The competition gave students the opportunity to pitch their business ideas to entrepreneurs and investors.

Culliton collected a \$1,500 award for his non-profit business idea, "Beyond the Blurb," which would fund a lecture series at Purchase focused on student mental health.

"Shark Tank offers Purchase students incredible opportunities. We have contestants who are already running their small businesses, and



Dorchester's Oliver Culliton, a \$1,500 award winner in a 'Shark Tank' pitch contest at Purchase University last month.

Photo courtesy Purchase College

the competition provides them with the chance to contemplate scaling up and dreaming big," said Assistant Professor of Economics, Iuliia Chikish, who spearhead-

ed the competition.

"Additionally, we have students who only have their big idea, and Shark Tank assists them in formalizing it into a doable business plan."

## Dot student cited for collaboration at Lasell U.

Jayden Guzman, of Dorchester, has been awarded the Collaboration Recognition Award at Lasell University for the 2024 fall semester. Recipients of the award are selected by their peers for exemplifying superior skills

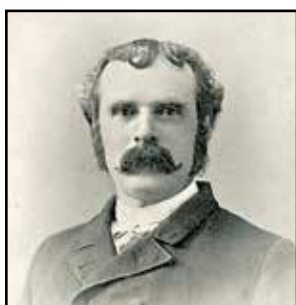
in collaboration by sharing ideas and useful information, communicating in a professional manner, and cooperating in a way to ensure success. A key feature of this program is a peer-nomination process at the end of the semester.

## YESTERYEAR ARCHIVE

### DORCHESTER HISTORICAL SOCIETY

#### Edward Payson Jackson

He was born on March 15, 1840, in Erzeroum, Turkey, where his parents lived and worked as American missionaries. He came to the United States in 1845 and studied at Andover Seminary, Dartmouth College, and Amherst College, graduating in 1861. The next year, he enlisted in Company D, Forty-fifth Massachu-



Edward Payson Jackson (1840-1905). He lived at 41 Lyndhurst St.

setts Infantry in service of the North in the Civil War. He later became a teacher and the principal of Holyoke High School. In 1877, Jackson became a master at the Boston Latin School. (Appletons Encyclopedia, Copyright © 2001 Virtualology)

Jackson's first wife Helen M. (Smith) died in 1896. He and his second wife, Mary E. Clarke, a

physician, moved into 41 Lyndhurst St. This was third marriage for Mary, whose maiden name seems to have been Emerson.

He wrote a number of books, among them, "A Mathematical Geography... Designed for Common Schools" (Hartford, 1872), and "A Demigod: A Novel," an early American science fiction work

described this way in The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction: It is "about a Eugenics program, begun in Greece in the seventeenth century, [that] generates in the late nineteenth century a Superman who boasts extraordinary strength and agility, plus a massive intellect, out of which pours Inventions galore, including a process by

which artificial diamonds are created, and a superior hand-gun."

The archive of these historical posts can be viewed on the blog at [dorchestershistoricalalso-ciety.org](http://dorchestershistoricalalso-ciety.org). The society's William Clapp House and James Blake House are open to the public on the third Sunday of the month from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.



## Editorial

## Our neighbors prep for darkening times

And so it begins. Dorchester has long been a destination for waves of immigrants—and it's what makes our community a wonderfully diverse and special place. It's painful to see our neighbors and friends have to bear this burden of fear, preparation, and anxiety.

As promised, the new president wasted no time on Monday in following through on his campaign pledges to target immigrants and their children with a flurry of executive orders. If they survive court challenges—and we hope they won't—the Trumpist agenda would end so-called "birthright citizenship," which has extended US citizenship to people born here, even if their parents aren't themselves citizens or even living here with permission.

The order, thankfully, would not be retroactive, which is a relief to millions of US-born citizens who have been living in fear of deportation from their own country. But it would kick in for anyone born to "unlawfully present" parents within 30 days of Jan. 20, 2025. Lawyers who oppose the order, which Trump telegraphed for months on the campaign trail, were ready and waiting with lawsuits of their own that challenge the presidential action, arguing that he does not have the authority to change the rules.

"Denying citizenship to US-born children is not only unconstitutional — it's also a reckless and ruthless repudiation of American values," said Anthony Romero, executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union, according to State House News Service. "Birthright citizenship is part of what makes the United States the strong and dynamic nation that it is. This order seeks to repeat one of the gravest errors in American history, by creating a permanent subclass of people born in the US who are denied full rights as Americans."

Closer to home, the Boston-based Lawyers for Civil Rights also filed a suit on behalf of "expectant mothers and immigrant organizations" to counter Trump's order, which it characterizes as "overtly racist and threatens to harm millions of children and families across the country."

"This executive order is a brutal and unconstitutional attempt to redefine what it means to be an American," said Iván Espinoza-Madriral, the group's executive director. "The Constitution is clear: birthplace, not parentage, determines citizenship in this country. This lawsuit is about ensuring that the fundamental rights guaranteed by our Constitution are upheld."

"We are seeing first-hand the fear and instability this policy creates for mothers in our community," said Mattapan's Rev. Dieufort Fleurissant of Haitian Americans United. "For many of our immigrant families, birthright citizenship is the foundation of the next generation's future and security. Stripping away this right is cruel."

On Monday, Lawyers for Civil Rights launched a new "Immigrant Defense Hotline"—617-988-0606—that will provide "timely and free legal advice for immigrants facing imminent threats related to immigration enforcement, such as immigration raids or mass deportations." The group will also offer training to attorneys and law firms willing to offer pro-bono counsel to people impacted.

The group has additionally prepared helpful guidance for people who may need to plan for how to prepare for their children "in case of deportation or separation"—including designating people to act as caregivers or guardians in case they are taken into custody.

Another document prepared by the LCR group offers guidance on "interactions with ICE and Law Enforcement," from asking to see valid warrants and whether to open doors for police or ICE agents. "Always exercise your right to remain silent," it urges.

— Bill Forry

## Memories of Frank Bellotti the politician



*In the wake of the death at age 101 of former Massachusetts attorney general and lieutenant governor Francis X. Bellotti (top right) last month, Judy Meredith, above, a longtime presence on Beacon Hill as a lobbyist, sat down with civic activist Lew Finfer, an occasional Reporter contributor, to talk about her memories of the Bellotti she knew.*

*One of the characters in the conversation was former Massachusetts Gov. Francis W. Sargent, at right, for whom Meredith worked in his election campaigns and to whom Bellotti went for advice about the best way for him to get liberals, whom he suspected of a careless bigotry toward Italians, to pay attention to what he was up to as state attorney general. The governor told him to talk to Meredith, who tells about that meeting and other ways that Bellotti served the public while in office:*



In 1974 I was working for the Office for Children and Gov. Frank Sargent's reelection campaign. The Office for Children distributed a questionnaire to all the candidates for every state office and Frank Bellotti never returned the questionnaire. Nevertheless, he won the election over the silk-stockinged liberal Republican Josiah Spaulding.

After being the focus of several previous corruption investigations that yielded nothing, and after an earlier loss in an attorney general's race to Elliot Richardson, Bellotti, concerned about liberal support, asked the progressive Republican Sargent, "Why don't any of your liberals support me?" Sargent recommended that he talk to me, someone who had worked with many so-called liberal groups and officeholders in my role as a parent advocate for foster and hard to place adoptive children.

We met on the 50th floor of a high-end restaurant, and he started out by belligerently asking that question about the liberals not supporting him. I said it's "because you are short, dark, and Italian." He never forgave me for the short answer, but he already suspected the liberals of that careless bigotry toward Italians. But satisfied that I was willing to introduce him to my so-called liberal contacts, he hired me anyway, and had me working before he took office in January. He asked my advice on people to hire and recruit. And he had the instinct to hire some very good ones like Scott Harshbarger, Paula Gold, Steve Rosenfeld, Margot Botsford, and Don Stern, to name a few.

Soon after his swearing in, groups with causes and just people who suffered injustice would request meetings and ask for his help. One of the first was a group of women who worked in publishing and who wanted him to take up their employment discrimination claims.

Frank was a hugger and toucher of women and men he was fond of, so I warned him before the meeting that these were feminists who didn't like that kind of thing. and I warned the women not to be offended if he reached out for a pat or two. Of course, by the end of the meeting when he agreed to support them, there were hugs all around.

Another early request for support came from Sam Lovejoy, then 28, who had been arrested for destroying a weather tower in Montague as a protest against a proposed nuclear plant. Frank met him, and appreciated his protest against nuclear power. He ended up speaking out in support of the peaceful demonstrators against the Seabrook Nuclear Power Plant in New Hampshire at which many hundreds were arrested.

I usually read incoming mail from outside groups and I read one big package from Massachusetts Public Interest Research Group (PIRG), a consumer reform group that Ralph Nader started with chapters in different states. The cover letter ripped into his office for running a terrible consumer protection department. It also contained many pages on how to set up an effective one that would get relief to violated consumers.

I took off the cover letter and gave the report

to Bellotti and said, "They've got some good suggestions." And he agreed and we went out to ask PIRG to help him build and maintain a reformed department. A productive meeting.

Afterwards, he wanted to get around and meet some more liberal groups on the ground, so we started taking field trips every month and meet with groups around the state like we had met with these Mass PIRG people at their office out in Amherst. At that time, I shared my office with a man named Bobby who was the advance man to coordinate these field trips. That was Bobby Travaglini, who later became Senate President.

It was Bobby who pointed out that arson was a major problem in many neighborhoods. There were buildings burning everywhere. A determined and somewhat radical Symphony Tenants Organizing Project had seen some 30 fires in buildings in their Fenway neighborhood. Four people died in one fire and a four-year-old kid in another. They came in to meet with Frank. David Scondras, later the first gay Boston City Councillor, led the group and they made the case.

Bellotti's office had just installed computers. They were able to track the patterns of fires and insurance paid out. They brought numerous cases and 33 people were indicted for fires in 33 buildings. Those arrested and convicted included state and city arson officials, insurance adjusters, and building owners.

Bellotti said he took this on because, "there's an absolute lack of deterrents out there and everybody knows it. Arson is a very hard crime to prove, and both because of corruption and a lack of motivation and training, it just isn't being investigated. As a result, it's a growing, money-making business."

Of particular interest to me was a case he brought on behalf of retarded people against the inhumane conditions in Belchertown State School. The case was filed on behalf of the patients at the mental health facility. Normally when the state is sued, the attorney general represents the state in court. After visiting the conditions at Belchertown, Bellotti threw up — in the parking lot there. He came back and told then-Gov. Michael Dukakis that he wouldn't defend the state. The governor then designated one of Frank's assistant AGs Steve Rosenfeld to negotiate a closing, which eventually took place in 1992.

These few stories and others taught me the guiding principle of my future lobbying career — present a compelling and sympathetic problem to an elected or appointed official along with an effective and affordable solution that presents a hero opportunity, and they will take it on.

I believe Frank Bellotti was guided by his gut as to whether injustice was going on. And his sense that people deserved justice even if they were not powerful and no one was speaking for them. So, he acted, and we are better for it. He is missed.

*Judy Meredith is a longtime public interest lobbyist for the poor, the elderly and the disabled, and their organizations. Lew Finfer works with the Mass Community Action Network.*

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# About faith, compassion, and dignity

BY DAVE MANZO  
SPECIAL TO THE REPORTER

His voice carried past more than 100 men sitting on benches. It carried through the haze of the smoke-filled room. It carried through the stifling July heat. It carried past young and old men waiting for a bed, a ride to detox or a visit to the nurse's clinic.

His eyes locked on mine. His voice was clear and strong when he screamed at me, "I'm going to f\_\_\_ kill you!"

I clearly understood that the threat, at least in his mind, was serious. It was frightening. It was the summer of 1976, and it was my first day volunteering at Pine Street Inn.

He was known to the staff as "Gene the Marine." In those days, few truly understood Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), but the Inn's staff recognized that mental health and substance abuse issues precipitated Gene's outbursts. Rather than calling the police or physically removing him from the premises, skilled staff redirected him, and he began to calm down. "Gene the Marine" was embraced by the Inn's simple mission: Treat each guest with dignity and respect.

Today's Pine Street Inn is more than the emergency shelter I first experienced. Services now include job training, street outreach and more than 1,000 units of permanent housing, far more robust than I could ever have imagined when I first visited the Inn. In Boston, thanks to Pine Street, to other non-profit organizations, and to strong business and government leaders, fewer than 4 percent of men and women who are experiencing homelessness are unsheltered. In Oakland and San Jose,

the number of unsheltered homeless exceeds 65 percent.

My path to Pine Street Inn and another important organization, Haley House in the South End, was molded by Brother David Warnke, of the Congregation of Holy Cross (CSC), my senior year English teacher at Holy Cross High School in Waterbury, Connecticut. I wouldn't say I was particularly close to Brother David. Immaturely, I once stood outside the teacher's lounge shouting at him because he did not choose me for a part in a school play. But there was something that happened in his class that shaped my journey.

There's a term called, "a random triggering event." It is when something happens that takes you from concerned to committed. On Mondays, Brother David would tell us about his weekend, which began on Fridays with an 80-mile bus trip from Waterbury to New York City, not to see a play or visit a museum or watch a game at Yankee Stadium, but to volunteer at the Catholic Worker.

Every Monday he was back in class. I was intrigued and wanted to hear more. My first impression was that this was crazy. Wait, he teaches all week and then he goes to The Bowery in NYC and feeds street people? Since my childhood mirrored the middle-class images of the 60's TV family sitcom – think "Leave it to Beaver" or the "Wonder Years" – what Brother David was doing challenged me.

Soon, he was suggesting books about Catholic Worker co-founder Dorothy Day, subscribing to its newspaper (still one cent per issue), and inspiring us by his actions to help those in need. He was attempting to live out the Gospel passage

(Matthew 25) that we have all heard hundreds of times: Feed the hungry, clothe the naked, two of the corporal works of mercy.

For me, it was his active example that impressed me – deeds more than words.

When I moved to Boston for college, I had all good intentions, yet I was clueless about matters of homelessness and intractable poverty. I asked Jim Halpin, a Jesuit at Boston College, if Boston had a Catholic Worker House. Jim told me about Haley House and then borrowed a car and took me there. It was the first step on a journey of 50 years and counting.

As a student in BC's PULSE Program, I volunteered at Haley House. Arriving at 6 a.m. to get the coffee and soup started, I met our guests and neighbors and heard their life stories. Kenny and Lefty and Mrs. Foley left an indelible mark on me. In those days it was called "lending an ear." Today, we would call this being "proximate."

When I graduated in 1977, I went to live for three years as a full-time volunteer in a room above the soup kitchen. Years later, my wife, Noreen, began to help our guests access permanent affordable housing. She served the Haley House mission for 22 years.

It's all here – the through line – Brother David, my high school teacher plants a seed. Jim Halpin, a Jesuit at Boston College, brings me to Haley House. There I met Kathe and John McKenna, who founded the mission by opening their home to men who were sleeping on their doorstep. Later, I met Father Frank Kelley, one of the Boston Urban Priests who founded Pine Street Inn, and Paul Sullivan, the first executive director of the Inn, who saw those who

entered the doors at Pine Street Inn as guests not clients.

My life was surrounded by those who were living their faith by their deeds, including "Clarkie." Gentle and alone, Clarkie slept in the abandoned fireplace in the lobby of the old Pine Street Inn, steps from where Gene had first screamed at me. I never asked him why he slept huddled in a fireplace with an old blanket. I suppose he felt safer having three walls and a roof, albeit a fireplace flue, over his head to protect his slight body.

Clarkie focused on helping others. After sleeping at Pine Street Inn, he walked 15 minutes to the Haley House Soup Kitchen, where he volunteered to wash dishes and to serve breakfast.

Haley House and Pine Street Inn schooled me.

There, the words from Matthew 25 were brought to life every day – "For I was hungry, and you gave me food, I was thirsty, and you gave me drink, a stranger, and you welcomed me, naked, and you clothed me, ill, and you cared for me, in prison, and you visited me."

For at Haley House or Pine Street Inn, whether a guest was thoughtful like Clarkie or difficult like Gene the Marine, I witnessed faith, compassion and dignity.

*Dave Manzo served as Haley House's board chair from 1981-91 and is currently a board member. Since 1988, he has served on Pine Street Inn's Board of Directors and for four years, beginning in 2002, served as its board chair. He is currently an adjunct faculty member at Boston College, teaching in the PULSE Program.*

## What a difference 60 years have made in experiencing community life

BY LAWRENCE S. DICARA  
SPECIAL TO THE REPORTER

It is inevitable at this time of the year that many of us think about family. Growing up in Dorchester, I just assumed that everybody lived under the same roof as their grandparents.



Lawrence S. DiCara

In my case, my father's mother lived with us on the second floor. My mother's parents, who owned the house, lived on the first floor. Codman Hill Avenue was

full of people in very similar situations. That was the case with the Curries, the Connollys, the Prendergasts, the Sciabas, the Owens, the Bakers, and many others.

In those much simpler times after World War II, families tended to stick around. Children didn't flee to other states or other countries, as is so common today. That meant that holidays were really very easy.

In my case, because my grandfather was housebound, the eight of us celebrated all of our holidays under the same roof on Codman Hill Avenue from the spring of 1958 through the fall of 1964. Now we are at the mercy of train schedules, flight schedules, and weather reports.

Prof. Robert Putnam, who wrote about social capital and isolation in his book "Bowling Alone," has written significantly about dramatic changes in American life. I think it is quite connected to the changes to the American family derived from the ability to so easily move from one jurisdiction to the other. Growing up in Dorchester, we thought that it required a passport to move from St. Ambrose parish to St. Gregory's, as we did in 1956.

In other states, as well as in Massachusetts, the experiences of community life, family life, and life surrounding a church or a synagogue have changed dramatically. Just as people change jobs

much more frequently than was the case a half-century ago, so do people move from one part of the country to the other.

Back when Walter Baker relocated to Delaware over 60 years ago, there was trauma throughout Dorchester Lower Mills because some of the employees also made the move to hold onto their jobs; others were out of work because there weren't a lot of other chocolate factories in Dorchester at the time.

Putnam speaks about the rapid decline of civic life in America, which is almost simultaneous to the significant changes in family demographics. I think he calculated that the peak of civic life in America was the year 1964, which was when the Greatest Generation was on either side of 50 and in their peak years of earnings and civic involvement.

If any family in Dorchester had a problem in those days, the St. Vincent DePaul Society, the Holy Name Society, the Knights of Columbus, and the VFW Post, all within walking distance of each other, came to the aid of the family. No fingerprints. Perhaps a thank you note. That has all changed. Knights of Columbus Councils have merged and, in some cases, have gone out of business. VFW Posts have handed in their charters and their liquor licenses. Parishes have merged. Those community building blocks are no longer. I think we are the poorer because of it.

We have, of course, replaced face-to-face meetings and in-person community involvement with an obsession for electronic communications. I think that the American people are not faring as well as they did back when we met in church basements and spoke among ourselves and did good deeds. It is much easier to be angry at someone tapping away on a screen, whether it be in the palm of one's hand or on a laptop, than it is when you meet someone after church for a cup of coffee and a donut.

The changes of which I have written in the way we communicate and the way we access information is dramatically connected to the reduction in the community life that I knew growing up. If you were lucky enough to see your

family, or most of your family, during this season, say a prayer of thanks, as I have.

*Larry DiCara is an attorney and former Boston city councillor.*

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Binh Dinh Academy members gathered in the community room at VietAID on Charles Street last Friday at the conclusion of their weekly class. The group is hoping to find a permanent home in Dorchester so they can expand outside and inside the Vietnamese community. *Seth Daniel photos*

## Binh Dinh Academy marks 20 years of teaching Vietnamese martial arts

(Continued from page 1) here and teaches classes re-education camp there, he founded the school.” She noted that her parents worked seven days a week, sometimes three shifts a day, to support their family.

“Once we got settled,” said Dao, “he founded the new Tan Forge in Boston, and we called it Binh Dinh Academy. This year marks our 20th anniversary.”

Citing humble beginnings in the family’s basement, Dao remembers her father teaching her and her siblings four days a week, getting them up at 8 a.m. on Saturdays to train. That soon branched out to a neighbor’s garage, where he taught them and some neighborhood kids. For a time, classes were held at the DotHouse, but they have been using the VietAID building and the Quincy YMCA since the end of the pandemic.

The school now boasts 150 members and teachers, as well as a group of long-term students who are now assistant teachers.

“All of our teachers are volunteers, and one of our masters comes

until 8 p.m. and then goes to work the night shift,” said Dao. “Most of our students come from Dorchester but we have other kids from other communities, too. Most of the students are Vietnamese, but we really have a goal to open it up to more than just the Vietnamese.”

The academy features 18 different levels, starting with a Black Belt and working up to blue, red, yellow, and, finally, the White Belt at the 18th level, with various stripes and tassels added to belts to denote skills mastered within each level.

Dao and Bich explained that the style at Binh Dinh differs from other approaches. “While others teach force, strength and precision, our martial arts is more about fluidity. It originates from over 1,000 years of different forms from Vietnam in combination together. The high point of this form was in 1780 in Tay Son when they fought back a Chinese invasion. We chose the best part of all those forms and combined it into this. It is for battle to make the weak,



Board Chair Lien-Thu Dao looks over a form with Board Vice President Tri Luong during classes on Friday night.

strong, and to make the small, big.”

Dao said they emphasize speed and flexibility in their training. The Binh Dinh teachings do not involve standing still. Even when positioning the hands, it is a fluid motion with lots of movement that serves as a defense to repel punches.

They also teach dances like the Dragon Dance, Ribbon Dance, Fan Dance, and Stick Dance – all of which will be on display during the Tet New Year celebrations over the next week.

Dao said she has taken many life lessons from her martial arts training, including perseverance, determination, and physical fitness. Now, the academy incorporates educational studies into the program – with experts coming in to speak to the kids on bullying, cyber-security, and personal finances.

“I am lucky because I was born into a martial arts family and I apply it to so many things in my life,” she said. “Our mission is youth development and leadership,



Long-time student David Le practices the Stick Dance for his performance at Tet in Boston.

Binh Dinh Student Julia Nguyen practices the Fan Dance for the upcoming Tet in Boston performance this weekend.

and some kids come here with no confidence and gain it here.

“We have one student that was bullied so badly and had to change schools four times but found confidence here. We have kids with autism, too. We teach them to strive physically and to be scholars so that they are well-rounded.”

Binh Dinh Academy will be the opening act at the annual Tet in Bos-

ton celebration in Flynn Cruisport this weekend, and Dao and Bich noted that it will feature a 10-minute act with firecrackers, drumming, a fan dance, ribbon dance, stick dance, and nine dragons (one of them 32 feet long) performing the dragon dance.

“It’s going to be huge,” said Dao.

## Tet New Year Events

- Murphy School Lunar New Year Celebration, Thursday, Jan. 23, 5:30 p.m., 1 Worrell St., Dorchester.
- 36<sup>th</sup> annual Tet in Boston festival, Jan. 25 and 26, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Flynn Cruiseport, South Boston. Headliner is Don Ho, with opening ceremony performers Vietnamese Traditional Martial Arts-Binh Dinh Academy (VTMA) of Dorchester.
- St. Ambrose Church Tet New Year Mass at 4 p.m. with reception and party at the church afterward. 240 Adams St., Dorchester.
- Mather School Vietnamese Dual Language program celebration, Friday, Jan. 31, 5-7 pm. 1 Parish St., Dorchester.
- Circle of Vietnamese Parents celebration, Sunday, Feb. 23, noon to 3:30 p.m. Florian Hall, 55 Hallet St., Dorchester. Families of youth with disabilities are invited to attend the annual celebration. (This event is designed to provide a comfortable environment with adjusted sensory features, allowing individuals on the autism spectrum and individuals with disabilities to participate more comfortably and engage with activities without feeling overwhelmed.)



The Binh Dinh Academy, which is celebrating its 20th anniversary this year, boasts an enrollment of about 150 students ages 7 and up. *Seth Daniel photos*



# Tet in Boston plans a two-day celebration of Lunar New Year

By **SETH DANIEL**  
NEWS EDITOR

The annual Tet in Boston celebration commemorating Lunar New Year and ushering in the Year of the Snake will take place over two days this coming Saturday and Sunday at the Flynn Cruiseport in South Boston.

Organizers said that scores of performers, vendors, and organizations from the Vietnamese American community are lined up for an event that expects more than 5,000 people to attend. Doors will open each day at 10 a.m. and close at 5 p.m.

The all-volunteer-run event is commemorating its 36th year in collaboration with the Vietnamese American Community of Massachusetts (VACM) and the New England Intercollegiate Vietnamese Student Association, but, more importantly for this year, the 50th anniversary of the fall of Saigon is also part of the event.

Anthony Nguyen, 24, and Jaely Pereira, 26, are leading the effort this year.

"It is the best and most popular event for the Vietnamese diaspora in New England," Nguyen said. "Because of the high demand we wanted to expand the experience and to also deal with the high population. So, as a group we decided to open it up to two days. Many family members have to work on Saturday or Sunday, so this opens up the experience to more people."

Pereira noted that this is the fifth year at the Cruiseport, after having it at Bayside Expo



Members of the Tet in Boston committee are shown in the Flynn Cruiseport venue.

Photo courtesy Tet in Boston

and at BC High in Dorchester previously. She said they remain limited in their venues.

"The vendors are a huge part of the festival and it's a huge part of the Vietnamese culture," she said. "A lot of venues won't let you bring food in, but this one does. We cannot eliminate the vendors and that's been a limiting factor for our venue."

So, the party will go on, with the featured colors being green, yellow and red to honor the Year of the Snake. In addition, the décor will focus on nostalgia of old Saigon in the context of what happened in 1975. "This year being the 50th anniversary, we really wanted to honor that and the generation that came before us," said Pereira. "We want to remember Saigon as they remember it."

Pereira added that they hope to create "dialog" within families and the community, and have these lived experiences inform the younger generation

and "uplift the Vietnamese refugee experience in a meaningful way."

On the entertainment end, the Vietnamese Traditional Martial Arts-Binh Dinh Academy (VTMA) of Dorchester will be Saturday's opening act during opening ceremonies, and the performance will highlight its 20th anniversary. In addition, the Murphy School youth performers will be highlighted, as well as the Rainbow Adult Day Care Center dancers.

The headlining act will be the popular Don Ho, a huge attraction in the Vietnamese American community who is well known for his singing of "Paris by Night." He will be performing on Sunday.

Finally, Nguyen and Pereira, members of the younger generation stepping up to keep the

festival alive, are putting out a call for more help.

"I do this because I grew up in Dorchester and went to this event every year at the Bayside Expo Center," said Nguyen. "I never imagined a time when I would play a part in it. I always thought it just happened and took it for granted...It's very much on our shoulders and an urgent call for the next generation to step up. It's only a handful of us, so if one of us moves or retires, we could very much lose this event."

Added Pereira, "We're working very hard on that this year in terms of getting young people to step into leadership roles. It's the only way we can keep this festival going and carry on the traditions and the archival history of Tet in Boston."



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# It took a while, but Papa John's is open for business in Fields Corner

By SETH DANIEL  
NEWS EDITOR

After a nearly two-year permitting process and build-out, the new Papa John's Pizza shop opened in Fields Corner last week. "So far, so good," said Joe Johnson, who co-owns the store with his wife Rolanda and another partner, David Rothman.

"The reception has been phenomenal. We've heard from a lot of residents and neighbors and they're excited we are here. We're happier to be here."

Johnson has forged a special partnership with the Boys and Girls Clubs of Dorchester, with contributions of \$10,000 to the club last year and 100 percent of the first week's profits this year.

"We've got a great connection to the Boys and Girls Club, and I was a club kid growing up," he said. "We have a lot of ways we can grow that partnership with them."

Beyond the donations, some of the paintings from the BGCD Art Program are hanging in the store on Dorchester Avenue. Artists Ashley Sandoval, Miya G., and Leomana Addo Fung also have their work displayed there.



Members of the new Papa John's Pizza in Fields Corner celebrate their ribbon cutting with representatives from the Boys and Girls Clubs of Dorchester. *Seth Daniel photos*



Operating Partner Charles Tabb and his mother, Stacy Bridgeman.



Artwork from the Boys and Girls Clubs of Dorchester hangs on the walls.



The new Papa John's Pizza shop in Fields Corner opened officially on Thurs., Jan. 16.

## \$35m grant will allow BPS to expand electric bus fleet

By VIVIAN LA  
WBUR

The Boston Public Schools last week received \$35 million from the US Environmental Protection Agency to expand its fleet of electric buses. In using the grant, the district will move closer to its goal of being fully electric by 2030.

Speaking to reporters outside the BPS bus lot off of Freepoint Street in Dorchester last Thursday, Boston Latin Academy senior Paulina Mendes Javier said the expansion will improve the city.

"The adoption of electric buses is more than just a technological upgrade. It's a commitment to cleaner air, quieter streets, and a healthier environment for generations to come," she said.

BPS Superintendent Mary Skipper said the grant will pay for 125 new electric buses, more than tripling the district's current fleet of 40. One electric bus costs about \$320,000 — three times more than a traditional diesel bus.

The district has a total of 740 buses, BPS officials said. Most are still diesel.

Diesel fumes can cause eye irritation and nausea, according to the US Occupational Safety and Health Administration. They also have been linked to increased risks for asthma and lung cancer.

David Cash, the director of the EPA's New En-



An electric school bus in Boston Public Schools' bus fleet.

*Jesse Costa/WBUR photo*

gland office, said switching to electric buses means students, parents, teachers, bus drivers and those working in bus depots won't have to worry about breathing in harmful exhaust. Cash, a former teacher, recalled his days doing bus duty for Amherst Regional Public Schools.

"So, I would stand on the curb as bus after bus after bus came, and I would breathe in those stinky diesel fumes," Cash said. "This investment and these buses are going to be what brings us into a new era."

The award comes from the EPA's Clean Heavy-Duty Vehicle program, which was established by the Biden administration's Inflation Reduction Act. Three other Massachusetts school districts and the state's Department of

Energy Resources are also among the 70 grant recipients nationwide.

Cash said the point of these investments is to "catalyze the develop-

ment of this new kind of technology that has huge public benefits."

Boston has received other funding for electric school buses from the

federal Diesel Emissions Reduction Act, which directs money toward converting existing buses to electric, as well as state and local partners. An additional 55 electric buses will hit the road this summer as a result of this funding.

By the 2026-2027 school year, the district expects to have 220 electric school buses.

The figure, while increasing, is still less than half of BPS's bus fleet. Executive Director of Transportation Daniel Rosengard said the district will explore all available funding opportunities to reach its goal of a fully electric fleet.

It's unclear what federal funding will be available under President Donald Trump. His ad-

ministration is expected to roll back incentives to buy electric cars and trucks.

"We're hopeful, but let's be realistic about what the priorities have been," said the city's Green New Deal Director Oliver Sellers-Garcia. Fortunately, the change in administration won't have any effect on this grant, he said. "This one is signed."

Jackson Janvier, who trains bus drivers for BPS' transportation provider, Transdev, said he's excited about the electric buses, and so are other drivers — even some long-retired colleagues.

"When they heard electric was coming, they say, 'Jackson, you know what, I'm gonna come back just to drive the EV,'" he said.



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# BPS program offers kids and their parents a way to save and learn

(Continued from page 1)

lege or their career of choice and to help youngsters take up financial literacy at an early age.

Currently, BPS students in K2 through fifth grade can participate and families can earn additional Boston Saves dollars throughout their academic years. The funds that get banked and saved over the years will be released upon a student's graduation to help defray college tuition or a vocational training. Students must use the money before they turn 27, according to a city website that details how the program works.

"Starting in the fall of 2019, we've opened a children's savings account for every student who's in kindergarten, for \$50," said Boston Saves senior program manager Sasha VanDerzee. "Every year we add new kindergarteners, so right now K2 through fifth grade is eligible, but next year it will be kindergarten through sixth grade. Eventually, it will be K to 12 but we only add one grade a year," said VanDerzee.

Eligible students who didn't join in kindergarten can join up now, too. "We have fifth graders that log in for the first time that never heard about it or maybe just moved to Boston," she noted.



Start planning for your child's future today with Boston Saves. Photo courtesy Boston Saves

The program relies on a network of volunteers called Family Champions who promote the opportunity within their school community. George Deveney, Sr., a Dorchester resident and father of two children, is the Family Champion at the Kenny Elementary School, where his son, George Jr., is a student.

"I was blown away by what I was hearing," said Deveney.

"Basically, there are not a lot of people taking advantage of this. It's a great resource for people to have, but I think what I've enjoyed about it since we signed up was how it kind of forced me to get other financial things in order."

During the first year of use, families can increase the \$50 in their child's account to \$115 by participating in incentives,

some of which are also accessible in succeeding years. For example, if a guardian links a financial account to the student's Boston Saves account, they will receive an additional \$25.

Families can also earn \$5 for every three-month period that they save at least \$25. There are other savings opportunities for those who are not able to

add additional money to the account. For instance, families can earn up to \$20 a year by reading with their children.

Deveney added: "When you do sign up, it's worthwhile because there are activities that you could do throughout the year. The stuff you're already doing like reading to your kid, that can earn you bonus dollars that get deposited directly into the savings account."

VanDerzee says the mission is to get kids and parents thinking long-range about financial plans for education. "That might be college or university, that might be training programs, [but] all of that money goes toward that," she said.

Deveney says he's excited to help George and his younger sister Julie learn more about money management when the time is right.

"I think after the third grade is when I would have them potentially do that or have a more hands-on role," Deveney told The Reporter. "I think it's a great opportunity for them to learn about savings. It's a great opportunity for them to learn about responsibility and to be thinking about their future."

To find out more, go to [boston.gov/departments/schools/boston-saves](http://boston.gov/departments/schools/boston-saves).

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Nasr, Amine	Leahy, Timothy W	41 Melville Ave #B	Dorchester	12/30/24	675,000
Family & Developments LLC	34 Fayston Street Rt	34 Fayston St	Dorchester	01/02/25	150,000
Tran, Michael D	33 Greenbrier St Rt	33 Greenbrier St	Dorchester	01/03/25	1,215,000
Pham, Kevin H	Udenna, Chinenye	60 Bowdoin Ave	Dorchester	01/03/25	905,000
Ashforth, Elisabeth	Miroslaw A Grochal Ft	56 Bakersfield St	Dorchester	12/31/24	816,000
Ephesus LLC	Wheeler, Denise L	4-6 Harlem St	Dorchester	12/30/24	600,000
Nguyen, Thuhuong	Nguyen, Thanh V	53 Linden St	Dorchester	12/30/24	1,050,000
Doan, Thuylinh	Adams St Prop Mgmt LLC	648 Adams St	Dorchester	01/03/25	1,550,000
Mccarthy, John B	Halley Mary M Est	36 Nahant Ave #9	Dorchester	12/30/24	389,900
Harrington, Denis	Vlastos George Est	69 Myrtlebank Ave	Dorchester	12/31/24	1,020,000
Dieck, Brendan H	Scheier, Matthew	37 Groveland St	Mattapan	12/30/24	655,000
Brisson, Joaann	Canty, John C	95 Colorado St	Mattapan	12/30/24	550,000
805 Blue Hill LLC	Hall, Gerald B	805 Blue Hill Ave	Dorchester	12/31/24	545,000
Scanlon, Thomas	Anderson, Philip	25 Peverell St #1	Dorchester	12/31/24	690,000
Horvath, Charles J	Shirmpont, Gregory M	65 Auckland St #2	Dorchester	01/03/25	675,000
Milkiewicz, Jay S	Burns, Adam D	335 East St	Dorchester	01/03/25	1,362,500
Williams, Ronethia S					
Abou-Ezzi, Marc					
Adesogan, Adedayo					
Grochal, Miroslaw A					
Finn, Kathleen					
Capozzoli, Diane J					
Canty, Deborah J					
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Callahani, Morgan					
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# Harbor Point tenants, landlords appeal state's OK for Dorchester Bay City

(Continued from page 1)

to as a Waterways permit— to be issued. The recommendation was an important victory for the Dorchester Bay City proponents at Accordia, a Boston-based company led by Richard Galvin and Kirk Sykes.

“A presiding officer in MassDEP’s Office of Appeals and Dispute Resolution will be assigned and will work with the parties on an adjudicatory schedule,” said Fabienne Alexis, a spokesperson for Mass-DEP.

While such appeals are fairly common in large-scale re-development projects— and may not ultimately result in a reversal of the permit— this one could stall and further complicate Accordia’s attempt to finalize its financing plan and begin actual construction at the 20-acre site on the Columbia Point peninsula. The review of the abutters’ appeal could take months to complete.

The DBC project, estimated as a \$5 billion investment over 10-plus years, has been in the planning stages for almost seven years. The bulk of the new construction would be centered on roughly 20 acres of land owned by UMass, which acquired the former Bayside Expo parcels in 2008. The university has agreed to lease the site to Accordia Partners in a 99-year lease that could yield the UMass system between \$192.5 and \$235 million, according to filings with city and state regulators.

In a statement responding to The Reporter’s request for comment, a spokesperson for Accordia Partners said they were “disappointed by the suit,” particularly given the “proactive, comprehensive, and forward-looking approach the Accordia team took in creating an environmentally sustainable project.”

The 110-page appeal, prepared by attorney Dylan Sanders from the Boston law firm Seve-ridge & Diamond PC, urges that the MassDEP “vacate and reverse” its December decision to recommend that the DBC Waterways program application be approved. It asks the agency for “further review, analysis, and findings” on the project’s impacts to a series of issues that the Harbor Point group argue will adversely impact them specifically, from roadway access to coastal flooding that they worry will worsen when the DBC site is built out in the coming years.

It reads, in part: “The stakes for both the DBC Project and the neighborhood are also heightened by ongoing sea level rise, coastal stormwater surges, and flooding,



Images used in a July 2023 presentation about the Dorchester Bay City project on Dorchester’s Columbia Point peninsula show the current condition of the former Bayside Expo Center parcels, at left, and a rendering of what a fully built-out project might look like once it’s completed.

which disproportionately impact the neighborhood in general and Petitioner Harbor Point Apartments in particular.”

Many of the arguments laid out in the appeal were also central to a Jan. 17 letter from Orlando Perilla, the chairman and CEO of the Harbor Point Community Task Force, Inc., a group that includes scores of longtime tenants in the mixed-income apartment community that is primarily owned by the Corcoran Jennison Companies organization, which also owns the nearby Doubletree Hotel and the Bayside Office Center, a five-story building that is adjacent to the Bayside Expo Center property.

(The Dorchester Reporter is a tenant in the Bayside Office Center where the offices of the Corcoran Jennison Companies are located, along with the state’s Registry of Vital Statistics, a state Lottery office, and some departments of the University of Massachusetts.)

In his seven-page letter, Perilla frames the MassDEP appeal— and his request for Wu and Healey’s intervention— as “the final opportunity to ensure that the development is equitable, resilient, and aligned community well-being.”

Perilla notes that the Harbor Point community has “always expressed qualified support” for DBC but alleges that Accordia Partners and the UMBA “have not followed through on their multiple promises to address critical requirements we need to extend our unqualified support.”

Perilla makes specific reference to four key areas of concern. The first is “vehicular connectivity” between the Harbor Point compound and Day Boulevard, which Perilla says both UMass and their development partner had committed to including in their project plans. Perilla claims that his task force offered support for DBC’s review by the Boston Planning Dept. specifically after

receiving assurances that a cut-through road connecting Harbor Point residents to Day Boulevard would be part of the plan.

“This never happened!” Perilla writes. “[We] relied on DCB’s written commitment to lend our voice of support for DBC at their BPDA Planning Approval hearing. Accordia’s lack of good faith in securing our support was beyond anything we have ever experienced and should not be allowed to stand.”

Another key plank of the appeal pivots on Harbor Point’s vulnerability to coastal flooding and its fear that the DBC project might worsen an already precarious situation. Perilla also asks for the development team—and UMass in particular—to commit to a Harbor Point proposal to re-purpose a currently vacant parcel on Mount Vernon Street— known as R2— into a “community recreational area,” including a soccer field, basketball courts, and playground.”

In addition, Perilla makes the case for a mitigation fund to specifically benefit the Harbor Point tenants. “To date, Accordia and UMBA have designated generous funding commitments to

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Stephanie L. Everett, Esq.  
Register of Probate  
Published: January 23, 2025

Images courtesy Accordia Partners/Ares Management/Boston Planning Dept.

organizations with tenuous connections to the Columbia Point peninsula, while their primary abutter— the residents of Harbor Point— were not mentioned in their MEPA filing when they discussed their plans to address mitigation and community benefit.”

He concludes: “Accordia’s repeated failure to honor its commitments— including promises to formalize these agreements in a Memorandum of Agreement— demonstrates a pattern of disregard that demands regulatory intervention.”

In their response to The Reporter, a spokesperson for the Accordia team said the Dorchester Bay City project, when complete, “will serve as a model for resiliency and open space planning.

“The public/private partnership between DBC, City of Boston, Department of Conservation and Recreation, and other expert public agencies resulted in a plan that will provide

hugely important resilience measures and are a key component of the City’s overall resiliency strategy,” the statement continued.

“Our proposal for raising the site and managing stormwater is not only best in class, it provides comprehensive protection for the surrounding neighborhood and nearby residential properties,” the spokesperson noted while adding:

“The commitment to open space is unprecedented, with 19.7 acres of publicly accessible open space available across the site, including a new 2.7 acre green space adjacent to Dorchester Shores Reservation adjacent to the DCR Dorchester Shores Reservation.

“These environmental, resiliency, and open space benefits are part of a \$150 million package of public benefits that includes transportation improvements (both infrastructure and public transit), workforce training, housing, and more.”



Orlando Perilla, the chairman and CEO of the Harbor Point Community Task Force, Inc., is shown at a recent rally to protest the proposed closing of the Dever School on Mount Vernon Street. Seth Daniel photo

If built out fully to plans approved by the BPDA, the DBC campus would include 21 buildings with a mix of office space, labs, and restaurant space and roughly 8.3 acres of new open space. It also would include 1,950 residential apartment units, with 20 percent deemed affordable.

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\*If interested contact Tony Paciulli at [tpaciulli@outlook.com](mailto:tpaciulli@outlook.com)



# What's in the new Mass Save plan: More heat pumps, help for renters

By MIRIAM WASSER  
WBUR

In a new plan, leaders of Mass Save are pledging big changes to its statewide program that provides rebates to residents to make their homes and businesses more energy efficient. The program, they said, will shift its mission and now hold the dual goal of helping households conserve energy and slash planet-warming emissions.

Mass Save also will stop offering rebates for furnaces, boilers, and other appliances that use fossil fuels like natural gas or oil, even if they're highly efficient. Instead, administrators said they'll focus on heat pumps, which use electricity to provide heating and cooling.

They also promise greater outreach and an expansion of the pool of households — including many renters — eligible for free appliances and weatherization services, like insulation and new windows.

"This is our clean energy transition in action," said state Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Rebecca Tupper.

The Department of Public Utilities is reviewing the proposals, which have been released as part of Mass Save's plan through 2027. The department is expected to issue a decision by the end of February. If approved, many of the changes will take effect immediately.

The proposed plan is estimated to cost about \$5 billion, a 22 percent increase from its previous three-year plan. Mass Save is funded through fees on customers' utility bills; it's run by a partnership of gas and electric utilities, as well as the Cape Light Compact, a municipal energy program.

Kyle Murray, Massachusetts program director at the Acadia Center, a climate advocacy and research group, called the plan "innovative." It includes record-breaking numbers all around that will keep Massachusetts a leader in progress on climate," he wrote in an email. He added that it would help many residents — including renters and those with lower incomes — save money and reduce their homes' climate footprints.

## An outline of lofty goals

Mass Save leaders said the program aims to weatherize about 184,000 homes and apartments by the end of 2027. They also hope to persuade 120,000 households to install electric heat pumps for heating and cooling — a potentially huge spike

## New Mass Save rebates for other home energy upgrades

Product	2025-2027 rebates
Heat pump water heater	\$750 per unit
Heat pump clothes dryer	\$200 per unit
Smart thermostat	\$100 per unit
Induction electric stove	\$500 per unit
Energy efficient windows	\$75 per window

Source: Massachusetts 2025-2027 Energy Efficiency and Decarbonization Plan Executive Summary (Lisa Creamer/WBUR)

\* A Flourish data visualization



A heat pump condenser outside of a building in Lincoln, Mass.

Miriam Wasser/WBUR photo

in participants. Between 2020 and the first half of 2023, the program helped just 30,000 households make the switch.

"The goals are very aggressive [in order] to do more in the next three years than we've done in the past seven or so," said Elizabeth Mahoney, commissioner of the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources, which oversees Mass Save.

Historically, Mass Save almost entirely focused on energy efficiency, prioritizing efforts like weatherization and urging residents to purchase certain appliances. But a few years ago, lawmakers decided the program should do more to tackle carbon emissions, a key focus in the state's effort to address climate change.

To meet this new directive, Mass Save will go all-in on electric appliances. The program will only offer rebates for electric heat pumps and appliances, like induction stoves and internet-connected thermostats.

Mass Save heat pump rebates depend on the type and size of the system. The rebates proposed for 2025 are the same as those currently offered, but they will decrease slightly in 2026 and 2027. Utility officials said they lowered rebates because they expect installation and appliance costs to go down.

"We are trying to be protective and careful about how we're using ratepayer funds for program incentives," said Kate Peters, director of residential energy efficiency at Eversource, one of the utilities that runs Mass Save.

The plan also called for an increase in virtual assessments. The remote walk-throughs allow homeowners and renters to get energy efficiency advice from an approved contractor, including how to switch from gas or oil to electric.

Mahoney, with the Department of Energy Resources, said Mass Save rolled out the assessments in early 2023 and found customers who signed up took more steps to cut carbon emissions, "rather than just getting an audit and getting their free light bulbs."

## Statewide customer service center

Even the most energy-savvy residents can find Mass Save challenging to navigate. There are many contractors and technologies to deal with, and the best options are not always easy to identify.

According to its plan, Mass Save will create a statewide customer service center, so that residents can call, email, or chat online with a person who can walk them through the program and its offerings. A version

already exists for low-income customers, which Mahoney said has been successful.

She said service center staff will also be trained to assist residents with related home improvements, such as upgrading electrical panels, financing solar panels, or installing ductwork for centralized heating systems.

As as part of the update, the utilities pledged to process rebates faster — an issue that has frustrated some Mass Save customers in the past. They also said they'll allow pre-approvals for heat pump rebates, which should speed reimbursements and remove uncertainty about eligibility.

Administrators said the new plan was designed to improve equity for Mass Save consumers and stakeholders in several ways. They called for at least 40 percent of the program's total funding to go toward making weatherization and climate-friendly appliances more accessible and affordable.

It included an initiative to focus on reducing carbon emissions from schools in state-designated environmental justice communities. And it set aside millions of dollars for training a more diverse workforce of electricians, HVAC technicians, solar in-



The basement wall in a renovated three-decker, where an old stone wall has been covered with a hard layer of foam insulation.

Robin Lubbock/WBUR photo

stallers and other clean energy workers.

But some of the biggest impacts for customers may come from the proposed expansion of free services for moderate income households — those making 60-80 percent of the statewide median income, or approximately \$95,000-\$126,000 for a family of four.

Right now, low-income customers can get many Mass Save services for free — including weatherization and heat pumps. If the Department of Public Utilities approves the new plan, many moderate-income residents will qualify for these free services, too.

The 2025-2027 Mass Save Plan would also establish "designated equity communities" where all renters, regardless of income, can receive free weatherization and electrification services. Communities on this list include Boston, Brockton, Chelsea, Everett, Fall River, Framingham, Fitchburg, Lawrence, Lowell, Lynn, Malden, New Bedford, Oak Bluffs, Pittsfield, Quincy, Revere, Salem, Springfield, Tisbury, Woburn and Worcester.

Mahoney said this part of the plan was designed to encourage landlords to take advantage of Mass Save's offerings. Because tenants usually pay their own utility bills, many landlords don't have strong incentives to install better windows, seal up cracks, or install heat pumps.

The message to landlords is, "You're not going to have to pay out of pocket, and we're going to improve your property," Mahoney said. "We're hoping that's enough of a carrot for many more landlords to participate in this program."

## What will this mean for utility bills?

To fund the \$5 billion Mass Save program, utilities proposed a range of fees on customer electric and gas bills. The estimates, which vary by year and utility, are all over the place. Some households could see the fees drop a few cents; in other cases, they could rise by as much as \$38 a month and then drop off. The utilities stressed that these figures are not final and are subject to review by the Department of

Public Utilities.

Customers who weatherize their homes and apartments should see immediate savings on their heating and cooling bills. The effect for those who install electric heat pumps tends to be more variable. In general, households switching from propane, oil, or electric baseboard heating should see savings. Those switching from natural gas may see their bills go up a little, especially in the short term. Longterm effects depend largely on gas prices and global gas markets.

"I do think that a lot of our gas customers are thinking about the climate in the long term when they're making decisions about what they want to install in their home," Peters of Eversource said. "So maybe they see a bit of a cost increase, but that's worth it to them for the other benefits of a heat pump, like cleaner air."

Buildings in Massachusetts emit an estimated 22.6 million metric tons of climate pollution every year, accounting for about 35 percent of total state emissions. To stay on track with its mid-century climate goals, Massachusetts needs to cut at least 5 million metric tons of this pollution by 2030. Between 2025 and the end of 2027, the Mass Save program is expected to cut about 1 million metric tons of climate pollution.

While the Healey administration is not expecting Mass Save alone to shoulder the 2030 goal, it did ask the utilities to estimate what it would cost to cut 2.2 million metric tons, or half the total state goal, by 2027. The answer: at least \$16.3 billion.

Murray of the Acadia Center said that's too much to put on the backs of ratepayers. "We have likely hit close to the maximum output of the current funding model," he said in an email. "It is of the utmost importance that the Commonwealth make finding outside funding for the programs a top priority."

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# BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS OF DORCHESTER



**BGCD Keystone Club Takes Part in Annual MLK Day Cupcakes for Caring Event:** See details below.



**BGCD Partners with Christopher Kimball's Milk Street for Teen Winter Cooking Session:** See details below.

**CONNECT THE DOT:**  
**BGCD Keystone Club Takes Part in Annual MLK Day "Cupcakes for Caring" Event:** On Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, Teen members of BGCD's Keystone Club took part in an annual service project called "Cupcakes for Caring" to deliver cupcakes to local First Responder locations. This is the 9th year for the annual event, which takes place every MLK Day and is an opportunity for Boys & Girls Clubs of Dorchester to thank First Responders working at 14 of our local Fire, Police and EMT stations within the community for all they do each and every day. In remembrance of Dr. King, we take pride in thanking those who provide such a critical role in the protection and service of our communities. Thanks to our teens for their amazing service work on this important holiday. For more information on Keystone Club, please contact Caitlyn Caggiano at [ccaggiano@bgcdorchester.org](mailto:ccaggiano@bgcdorchester.org).

**FIND OUT WHAT'S INSIDE:**  
**BGCD Partners with Christopher Kimball's Milk Street for Teen Winter Cooking Session:** Boys & Girls Clubs of Dorchester was excited to return this January to Christopher Kimball's Milk Street Cooking School to kick off an exciting new 3-class Winter session that promises to be both fun and educational for our members. Our most recent class had Teen members rolling up their sleeves to participate in a Meatball Challenge. This challenge had members crafting the perfect meatball and learning valuable culinary techniques and nutritional skills. Thank you to our friends at Christopher Kimball's Milk Street for making this long running partnership available to our teen members. We can't wait to see what other delicious meals our teens come up with! For more information on partnering with BGCD, please contact Mike Joyce at [mjoyce@bgcdorchester.org](mailto:mjoyce@bgcdorchester.org).

**DID YOU KNOW:**  
**BGCD Young Professionals Board & Lower Mills Tavern to Host "Tavern Takeover" - January 30<sup>th</sup>:** Join BGCD's Young Professionals Board and Lower Mills Tavern for the "Tavern Takeover" on January 30th from 7-10pm. Enjoy music by Boston's own Dylan Burke, raffle prizes, appetizers and a cash bar with proceeds benefiting BGCD's members and families. This is a great opportunity to learn more about BGCD and network with some up and coming leaders. Tickets are \$25 and can be purchased at [bit.ly/bgcdtakeover25](http://bit.ly/bgcdtakeover25). Tickets include a door prize entry to win 2 tickets to the Marathon Day Red Sox Game (April 21, Right Field Box 2, Row C)! This is a 21+ event. A special thank you to Brian O'Donnell of Lower Mills Tavern for his generosity and support of this event! For more information on Young Professionals, please contact Hailey Cummings at [hcummings@bgcdorchester.org](mailto:hcummings@bgcdorchester.org).

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

- Family Engagement Ski Trip  
January 25
- Marr-lins Swim Championship Meet  
January 25 & 26
- Milk Street Teen Cooking Series  
January 27
- Power Forward Career Cafe  
January 29
- Young Professionals Event @  
Lower Mills Tavern  
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# RECENT OBITUARIES



**BARROS, Christian Jose Fidalgo, 2**, of Dorchester. He is the youngest of five children. Almost a month after he turned one, Christian was diagnosed with a rare form of high-risk neuroblastoma cancer. On October 23, 2024, he was declared cancer-free. His family took advantage of this moment to create amazing memories, thinking they had defeated a monstrous disease, but less than a month after this date, the cancer re-

turned more aggressively. He continued to fight with all his might, but his body started to wear down. He courageously fought for almost one year and on Monday, January 13, 2025, surrounded by his loving family he left this world to meet his Lord. During his short life on Earth, Christian impacted so many lives, and his courage and strength continue to inspire so many more. Christian leaves behind his parents, his siblings, numerous aunts, uncles and cousins. He will be missed deeply. The Barros family request donations to the Christian J. Barros Foundation to support families dealing with Cancer and the Pediatric Oncology efforts at MGH. All checks can be written to the Christian J. Barros Foundation, 48 Virginia Street, Dorchester MA 02125.



**BRUYNELL, Mary C. (Shaw)**, 95, of Dorchester, formerly of South Boston. Wife of the late Kenneth C. Bruynell. Mother of James "Chip" Bruynell and his wife Betty of Marshfield, Michael Bruynell and his wife Claire of Milton, Marie Barrett and her husband Billy of Milton, Kenneth "Buddy" Bruynell and his wife Karen of Weymouth, and the late Bobby Bruynell. Grandmother of 8. Great-grandmother of 6. Donations in memory of Mary may be made to the Alzheimers Association Boston, 309 Waverly Oaks Rd., Waltham, MA 02452 alz.org or Boston Firefighters Burn Foundation, 55 Hallet St., Boston, MA 02124 bostonfirefightersburnfoundation.com.



**CIFRINO, Dolores Hayes**, 101 of Milton. Dolores was predeceased by her former husband, Paul J. Cifrino; and her sons, Paul J. Cifrino, Jr. and Peter A. Cifrino. She is survived by four children, Mark Cifrino, Margaret Cifrino, Andrew Cifrino and Elizabeth Polky; seven grandchildren, 12 great-grandchildren and many nieces and nephews.



ane Juliano of Sudbury and Jayne Morgan of Melrose. Grandmother of 4; great grandmother of 7. She worked as a Senior Account Clerk in the Boston School Department. She loved to reflect on a story in the Dorchester Reporter many years before that said, "she was the prettiest girl in Dorchester." Donations would be appreciated to the Poor Clare Nuns of Boston, Franciscan Monastery of St. Clare, 590 Gay Street, Westwood, MA. poorclar-enunsboston@gmail.com

Roxbury, William G. Norton and his late wife, Virginia Norton of Weymouth, Brenda A. Norton of Dorchester and the late Robert M. Norton and his wife, Anne Norton, Edward T. Norton and Atty. Mary F. Norton. Paul is also survived by 12 nieces and nephews and 24 great-nieces and nephews. US Army veteran. Member of the International Longshoremen's Association for over 40 years. Donations in Paul's memory may be made to St. Margaret Church, 800 Columbia Rd., Dorchester, MA 02125.



**POTTLE, Donald S.**, 87, of Dunstable, formerly of Dorchester. Son of the late Donald and Margaret "Allison" (Noel) Pottle. US Army veteran. A registered professional engineer, Donald taught Wastewater Engineering and served as head of the Industrial Technology Department at UMass Lowell. Surviving him, in addition to his wife Holly; are three sons and three daughters-in-law, Douglas Pottle and his wife, Christine Randlett, David Pottle and his wife, Amy Yacus and Glenn Gray and his wife, Denise; a daughter and son-in-law, Jennifer and Richard Haselton; five grandchildren; a dear friend, Storie Walsh and her husband, Steve Walsh and family; two brothers and two sisters-in-law, Bruce and Marian Pottle and Ralph and Rita Pottle; and several nieces and nephews. Those wishing may make a memorial donation in Donald's memory, may do so to the UMass Lowell Student Scholarships fund, atuml.edu/

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**LEGAL NOTICE**  
 COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS THE TRIAL COURT PROBATE AND FAMILY COURT SUFFOLK DIVISION INFORMAL PROBATE PUBLICATION NOTICE Docket No. SU24P1627EA ESTATE OF: WINSTON D. MARSHALL a/k/a: WINSTON DACOSTA PHILLIPS DATE OF DEATH: 11/24/2023  
 To all persons interested in the above captioned estate, by Petition of Petitioner Isalene Kersey of Greensboro, NC, a Will has been admitted to informal probate. Isalene Kersey of Greensboro, NC has been informally appointed as the Personal Representative of the estate to serve without surety on the bond.  
 The estate is being administered under informal procedure by the Personal Representative under the Massachusetts Uniform Probate Code without supervision by the Court. Inventory and accounts are not required to be filed with the Court, but interested parties are entitled to notice regarding the administration from the Personal Representative and can petition the Court in any matter relating to the estate, including distribution of assets and expenses of administration. Interested parties are entitled to petition the Court to institute formal proceedings and to obtain orders terminating or restricting the powers of Personal Representatives appointed under informal procedure. A copy of the Petition and Will, if any, can be obtained from the Petitioner.  
 Published: January 23, 2025



**GLYNN, Theresa H. (Sullivan)** of Sarasota, Florida. Theresa had a long career as a legal secretary. She is survived by her children, Denise Bennett, late James Bennett, Thomas Glynn, Lisa Glynn and Frank Glynn; and her four grandchildren. She was predeceased by her daughter, Andrea Glynn. Donations in her name can be made to Colonial Williamsburg.

**HURLEY, Audrey C.**, of Milton, formerly of Dorchester. She grew up in Dorchester in the Johnson family of five kids, James, Joan, Audrey, Edward and Robert. Wife of the late Timothy F. Hurley. Mother of Di-

**LEGAL NOTICE**  
 COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS THE TRIAL COURT PROBATE & FAMILY COURT SUFFOLK PROBATE & FAMILY COURT 24 NEW CHARDON STREET BOSTON, MA 02114 CITATION GIVING NOTICE OF PETITION FOR APPOINTMENT OF GUARDIAN FOR INCAPACITATED PERSON PURSUANT TO G.L. c. 190B, §5-304 Docket No. SU25P0086GD IN THE MATTER OF: JOHN KINDELL of DORCHESTER, MA RESPONDENT Alleged Incapacitated Person  
 To the named Respondent and all other interested persons, a petition has been filed by Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center of Boston, MA in the above captioned matter alleging that John Kindell is in need of a Guardian and requesting that (or some other suitable person) be appointed as Guardian to serve Without Surety on the bond.  
 The petition asks the Court to determine that the Respondent is incapacitated, that the appointment of a Guardian is necessary, and that the proposed Guardian is appropriate. The petition is on file with this court and may contain a request for certain specific authority.  
 You have the right to object to this proceeding. If you wish to do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance at this court on or before 10:00 A.M. on the return date of 02/11/2025. This day is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline date by which you have to file the written appearance if you object to the petition. If you fail to file the written appearance by the return date, action may be taken in this matter without further notice to you. In addition to filing the written appearance, you or your attorney must file a written affidavit stating the specific facts and grounds of your objection within 30 days after the return date.  
**IMPORTANT NOTICE**  
 The outcome of this proceeding may limit or completely take away the above-named person's right to make decisions about personal affairs or financial affairs or both. The above-named person has the right to ask for a lawyer. Anyone may make this request on behalf of the above-named person. If the above-named person cannot afford a lawyer, one may be appointed at State expense.  
 Witness, Hon. Brian J. Dunn, First Justice of this Court.  
 Stephanie L. Everett, Esq., Register of Probate  
 Date: January 14, 2025  
 Published: January 23, 2025



**MORASH, Rose Marie (Burley)**, 95, of Dorchester. Wife of the late Jack Morash. Mother of the late Jack Morash, and Russell Morash. Rose Marie is also survived by her sister-in-law, Beverly Sheets, daughter-in-law, Lisa Morash; 2 grandsons, and 2 granddaughters.



**WINFREY, Johnie Evans**, 85, Daughter to the late James Pierce Evans and Lucille Watkins Evans. Johnie leaves her husband Robert Winfrey; her sons Scott and Peter; three granddaughters; and many relatives and friends. After completing her bachelor's and master's degrees at Boston College, she was employed there as a librarian. She worked at that institution for twenty-five years. She taught Sunday School at Mattapan Baptist Church for several years.



**NORTON, Paul J.**, 86, of Dorchester. Son of the late Michael J. and Anna M. (McCarthy) Norton. Brother of Atty. John J. Norton of Dorchester, Michael W. and his wife, Patricia Norton of West

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