



COMMUNITY CONNECT

NEWS BULLETIN FOR AND ABOUT RESIDENTS OF LOWER ROXBURY FALL 2005 Vol 1 Number 3

FOCUS ON PUBLIC SAFETY

Roxbury – Several tenant leaders huddled with a few community partners of Lower Roxbury Coalition at the meeting hall of St. Katharine Drexel Parish to brainstorm on action steps meant to address issues pertaining to leadership, elections, public safety, youth programming, services and support for children and families, and much more.

At this meeting held on Thursday, September 29, 2005, approximately fifteen (15) community stakeholders agreed to meet every other month so that they could plan bi-monthly neighborhood meetings on public safety. According to Rukia Ali, Outreach Program Coordinator at Whittier Street Health Center, "Planning the neighborhood meetings would enable the residents to exert leadership at these meetings." Indeed, these tenant leaders listed a series of current concerns that they would like local officials and institutions to tackle.

First, on this long list of issues, is the development of youth programming and services targeting kids-at-risk; second, they want municipal services to be more efficient; and third, they would like to speak with local officials who can effectively respond to their concerns. According to Maurice Sequoia, a long time tenant activist and member of the Whittier Tenant Task Force, "It does not make sense to meet with the Community Service Officer when all he can do is read the police incidents report without being able to answer the questions the residents ask."

In conclusion, these community stakeholders reached consensus on the need to maintain the focus on public safety and to collaborate and support community initiatives that seek to improve quality of life in Lower Roxbury.

ACCESS TO CHILD WELFARE

The Dimock Street Department of Social Services (DSS) Area Office is located in Roxbury, on the campus of the Dimock Community Health Center. The Dimock Street DSS Area Office is made up of a strong team of diverse staff. The cultural and racial diversity reflects many of the populations of the communities serviced by the Dimock Street Office, and many social workers speak second languages. The staff at the Dimock Street Area Office is energetic and passionate about their commitment to the families we service, as well as to DSS and to child welfare.



DSS believes that every child is entitled to a home that is free from abuse and neglect. The Department's vision is to ensure the safety of children in a manner that holds the best hope of nurturing a sustained, resilient network of relationships to support the child's

growth and development into adulthood. The DSS Core Values are anchors that ground our practice. DSS is committed to making these values more than words on paper. By strengthening the links between the Department, families and communities, DSS will move closer to service delivery systems that reflect the core values: Child-driven, Family-centered, Community-focused, Strength-based, Committed to Diversity and Cultural Competence, and Committed to Continuous Learning.

The Family Support Unit of the Massachusetts Department of Social Services has two main goals: to build the capacity of high risk communities to support

families and prevent child abuse and neglect, and to integrate a strengths-based approach into the Department's practice. To accomplish these goals, the Family Support Unit sustains a variety of initiatives. One of these initiatives is Community Connections, which is a neighborhood-based, resident-driven network of coalitions in neighborhoods across Massachusetts. The goal is to build a comprehensive continuum of family support that strengthens families, builds communities, and prevents child abuse and neglect. Community Connections coalitions accomplish this by better coordinating resources already in the community, involving residents in planning for local resources, and ensuring that services meet the needs of the people.

The Department of Social Services offers many opportunities for community volunteers who would like to make a difference in a child's life. The Dimock Street Area Office is always in need of families to serve as foster or adoptive families to children in care. In addition, the Dimock Street Area Office welcomes community volunteers to serve on our Area Board, and on our Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Team. Please contact Daniel R. G. Lewis at 617.822.4710 if you are interested in any of these opportunities.

UPCOMING

NEIGHBORHOOD MEETING

Thursday, November 17, 6 pm
St Katharine Drexel Parish

SAVING THE HEALTH OF OUR COMMUNITY BENEFIT CONCERT

Berklee Performance Center
November 19, 2005 at 7:30 pm
Call 617.989.3224 for more info

MEN'S HEALTH SEMINAR

Every Thursday 6 pm at Whittier Street Health Center, Call 617.989.3028 for more info

MEMBERS

Alice H. Taylor Tenants' Association • Boston Police Neighborhood Crime Watch • Boston Vote • Boston Water and Sewer Commission • Boys and Girls Clubs of Boston • Center for Community Health Education, Research and Services • Children Services of Roxbury • Family Services of Greater Boston • Good Shepherd Church of Good In Christ • Grant A.M.E. Church • Hattie B. Cooper Community Center • Lenox/Camden Residents' Association • Lower Roxbury Residents' Association • Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority • Madison Park Development Corporation • Mission Main Morgan Memorial Goodwill Industries • Northeastern University • Orchard Garden Tenant Association • People's Baptist Church • Rosie's Place Roxbury Tenants of Harvard Association • Roxse Homes • Ruggles Square Pharmacy • St. Francis de Sales-St Philips Parish • Teen Empowerment • United South End Settlements • Urban League of Eastern Massachusetts • Whittier Street Health Center • Whittier Street Tenant's Association • Youth Advocacy Project