

OUR OFFICES WILL BE CLOSED MON. MAY 26TH IN OBSERVATION OF MEMORIAL DAY.
AD DEADLINE FOR NEXT WEEKS' PAPER IS FRIDAY AT NOON.

FRIDAY, MAY 23, 2025

THE BOSTON SUN

PUBLISHED EVERY FRIDAY

SERVING BACK BAY - SOUTH END - FENWAY - KENMORE

Esplanade Association breaks ground on new Charles River campus

By Dan Murphy

The Esplanade Association marked a long-awaited milestone on Tuesday, May 13, when it broke ground on the new Charles River Esplanade campus, which will transform the 2-acre site of the former Lee Pool complex into a year-round, universally accessible destination in the park.

Made possible via a nearly 25-year public-private partnership between EA and the state's Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), the new campus is expected to be fully installed in 2026, and it will be highlighted by the year-round Smith Family Pavilion at

Charlesbank.

The project, designed by Architect Maryann Thompson, includes plans for "all-season public restrooms, an indoor/outdoor café, free Wi-Fi, lobby educational displays, reservable community rooms, a covered patio and upper deck, an outdoor stage, multipurpose recreational courts, flexible plaza, native tree canopy, rain garden, water conservation, and more free programs for all ages and abilities offered by EA and partners," according to the Esplanade Association.

Funding for the \$20 million-plus project cost has currently reached 95 percent, according

(ESPLANADE CAMPUS, PG. 4)



D. MURPHY PHOTO

Another group of ribbon-cutters comprised EA board members, along with Jen Mergel, EA's James & Audrey Foster executive director (third from right) and Architect Maryann Thompson (second from right).

USES HOSTS ANNUAL GALA FUNDRAISER



Emcee and benefit auctioneer Tom Stenbins presents an oversized bottle of wine for attendees to do battle over through bidding.



DEREK KOUYOUMJIAN PHOTOS

Gala attendees raise their paddles, eager to contribute to United South End Settlements. See more photos on Pages 8-9.



Segun Idowu, City of Boston's Chief of Economic Opportunity and Inclusion, was the recipient of the Mel King Social Innovator Award.

EDITORIAL

MEMORIAL DAY

Although the Memorial Day weekend signifies the start of the summer season and is observed by families and friends who gather for barbecues and similar festivities, we should keep in mind that Memorial Day is our most solemn national holiday.

Memorial Day reminds us that freedom isn't free. The holiday makes us aware of the Supreme Sacrifice that has been made by so many of our fellow citizens, providing us with an opportunity to honor their sacrifice.

Memorial Day has its roots in what originally was known as Decoration Day in the aftermath of the Civil War, when the women of communities in the North decorated the graves of the soldiers who perished in that horrific and tragic conflict.

Decoration Day became an official holiday with the proclamation by Gen. Logan on May 5, 1868, in which he declared:

"The 30th day of May, 1868, is designated for the purpose of strewing with flowers or otherwise decorating the graves of comrades who died in defense of their country during the late rebellion, and whose bodies now lie in almost every city, village, and hamlet churchyard in the land. In this observance no form or ceremony is prescribed, but posts and comrades will in their own way arrange such fitting services and testimonials of respect as circumstances may permit. Let us, then, at the time appointed, gather around their sacred remains and garland the passionless mounds above them with choicest flowers of springtime; let us raise above them the dear old flag they saved from dishonor; let us in this solemn presence renew our pledges to aid and assist those whom they have left among us as sacred charges upon the Nation's gratitude, the soldier's and sailor's widow and orphan."

In keeping with the spirit of Decoration Day (and the 160th anniversary of the end of the Civil War), we are reprinting below President Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, considered by many to be one of the greatest speeches of all time and which states far more eloquently than we ever could the debt that each of us owes to the brave men and women who have fought and died to defend our nation's freedom and liberty.

We trust that our readers will agree that Lincoln's words are as inspiring today as they were when he uttered them in November of 1863 at Gettysburg -- and have special resonance today, when the democratic values and institutions for which so many of our fellow Americans gave their lives are being challenged more so than at any time since the end of the Civil War:

"Four score and seven years ago, our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

"Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battle-field of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field, as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

"But, in a larger sense, we can not dedicate -- we can not consecrate -- we can not hallow -- this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us -- that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion -- that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain -- that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom -- and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth."

ENJOY THE WEEKEND -- SAFELY

Memorial Day weekend marks the traditional start of the summer season, bringing with it the anticipation of sunshine and warmth, of vacations, and of time spent with family and friends.

So we ask our readers to stop right now -- and think for a moment -- about all of the good times that we will be sharing with our friends and our loved ones over the next three months.

But then think for a moment about how quickly all of that can dissolve in the blink of an eye if we make a wrong choice -- if we drink and drive a car or a boat while under the influence, if we abuse drugs, or if we use fireworks or other dangerous incendiaries. If friends or family members are showing clear signs of intoxication, we should not hesitate to take their keys, whether from a car or a boat, to prevent a tragedy from occurring.

It is inevitable that the TV and newspapers will inform us of the hundreds of tragedies that will occur this holiday weekend because of poor choices made by our fellow Americans. It is up to each of us to ensure that we do not become just another sad statistic.

We wish all of our readers a happy -- and safe -- Memorial Day weekend.

NEWS IN BRIEF

MAYOR'S NEIGHBORHOOD COFFEE HOUR RETURNS JUNE 11 TO BACK BAY FENS

Mayor Michelle Wu will join the Office of Neighborhood Services and the Boston Parks and Recreation Department for the return of her annual Neighborhood Coffee Hours, including an event for Fenway/Kenmore voters on Wednesday, June 11, from 10-11 a.m. at the Back Bay Fens - Kelleher Rose Garden, located at 73 Park Drive.

The Mayor Neighborhood Coffee Hours, presented in partnership with Dunkin' and Star Market, offers Boston residents the opportunity to speak directly with Mayor Wu and staff from city departments about city services and resident concerns. Leadership and staff from

the Community Engagement Cabinet will attend each Coffee Hour, and attendees will have the opportunity to meet their neighborhood liaisons, who will deliver remarks focused on city improvements in each neighborhood.

Visit boston.gov/coffee-hours for more information and a complete schedule of Mayor's Neighborhood Coffee Hours.

FENWAY PORCHFEST SET TO RETURN SATURDAY, JUNE 21

The sixth annual Fenway Porchfest is set to return from noon to 4 p.m., and will again transform open spaces throughout the neighborhood into impromptu concert stages for a range of genre-spanning performances.

Visit linktr.ee/fenwayporchfest for more information.

All hotel shelters across state to close this summer

Special to the Sun

Gov. Maura Healey announced that her administration's plan to close all hotel shelters is six months ahead of schedule, with the remaining 32 hotels expected to close this summer. Governor Healey had previously directed all hotel shelters to be closed by the end of 2025.

A new report shows that, as of April 30, only 32 hotel shelters remain, down from a peak of 100 in the summer of 2023, a 68-percent decrease. These

decreases are a result of a number of reforms Governor Healey made to reduce caseloads and the cost of the state's Emergency Assistance family shelter system, including a six-month length of stay requirement, workforce training and job placement for residents, and increased case management to help families find stable housing. The total number of families in shelter recently dropped below 5,000 for the first time since July 2023 and is expected to drop below 4,000 families this summer -- six

(SHELTERS, PG. 3)

The Independent Newspaper Group reserves the right to edit letters for space and clarity. The Independent Newspaper Group publishes columns, viewpoints and letters to the editor as a forum for readers to express their opinions and to encourage debate. Please note that the opinions expressed are not necessarily those of The Independent Newspaper Group. Text or attachments emailed to deb@thebostonsun.com are preferred.

Councilors Durkan and Flynn join BPD for office hours on Common amid public safety concerns

By Dan Murphy

City Councilors Sharon Durkan and Ed Flynn were joined by Boston Police for special office hours on Wednesday, May 14, at Brewer Fountain on Boston Common to address ongoing public safety concerns in the park and around Downtown Crossing.

Councilor Durkan lauded Boston Police as the best police department in the U.S., adding that in the end, she and Councilor Flynn can't effectively do their jobs in office "without good policing."

Councilor Flynn said even during recent times when the Common was ridden with drug dealing and other crime, Boston Police never gave up on the park. "And I'm not giving up on this area as well," he added.

Captain Richard Driscoll of Area-A-1, who was among the Boston Police officers on hand for the event, emphasized the



District 8 City Councilor Sharon Durkan speaks, flanked by District 2 City Councilor Ed Flynn.

positive benefits of using programming to activate the Com-

mon, along with the necessity of making services readily available to those struggling with addiction.

Captain Driscoll added that Boston Police welcome the public sharing their "hidden data" based on what they observe on the Common to help better address crime and other quality-of-life issues in the park.

"We want your feedback," he said.

Sgt. Zachary Crossen of Area A-1 urged those in attendance to support organizations like St. Francis House, Pine Street Inn, and New England Center and Home for Veterans, instead of giving money to homeless individuals themselves.

Following the office hours, Councilor Flynn stated in a press release: "Downtown and the Boston Common are economic engines for our city, and home to some of the most important historic sites in our country. We



D. MURPHY PHOTOS

Captain Richard Driscoll of Boston Police Area-A-1 address the office hours attendees.

cannot continue to allow violent crime, open drug dealing or drug use, and other activities to negatively impact the public safety, public health, and quality of life for our residents, businesses, and visitors to Boston. It is critical that we work together

to ensure that those individuals battling addiction get treatment, and those who are preying on vulnerable people or committing acts of violence are arrested and, if warranted, receive a state sentence."

SHELTERS (from Page 2)

months ahead of schedule.

"When we took office, homeless families were being placed in hotel shelters across the state," said Governor Healey. "A hotel is no place to raise a family, and they are the least cost effective... We also promised to close all hotel shelters by the end of the year."

"I'm pleased that we are ahead of schedule, with more families getting jobs and moving to stable housing."

"Closing hotel shelters is essential to making sure that families are set up for success and to save our state hundreds of millions of dollars a year," said Lt. Gov. Kim Driscoll. "We're grateful to our team and partners for working so hard to help families leave shelter for stable housing, which is better for families and better for taxpayers."

"We want to express our deep appreciation for the extraordinary work of the frontline teams, who are vital partners in supporting families throughout this crisis," said Housing and Livable Communities Secretary Ed Augustus. "Shelter providers and their staff played a critical role in rapidly scaling up services to meet an unprecedented surge

in need. Their dedication and agility ensured that thousands of families across the state had access to safe shelter and support at a time when it was most needed. We are also grateful to the communities and partners who have come together to support families throughout this emergency."

The report details the state's history with turning to hotels and motels to shelter homeless families. In 2014, 1,500 families were being sheltered in hotels across the state. The previous administration turned to hotels again in 2022 as the number of families seeking shelter began to dramatically increase due to the housing crisis, failed federal immigration policy, and a lack of safeguards to control the expansion of the shelter system.

Due to declining caseload, the Norfolk Rapid Shelter located at the former Bay State Correctional Center and the Revere CSR site at the Revere Quality Inn will close this summer. Additionally, the Lowell Inn and Conference Center will transition from a Bridge Track shelter site to a Rapid Track shelter and CSR site in July.

The Healey-Driscoll Administration inherited two dual challenges when it arrived in office in 2023: an unprecedented surge of families seeking emergency shelter and a flawed shelter system that was ill-equipped to handle such a surge. To meet this unprecedented challenge, Governor Healey initiated a number of reforms to lower the caseload, reduce taxpayer costs and improve safety.

Governor Healey declared a state of emergency and imposed a cap on the system at 7,500 families in 2023. She also worked with the Legislature to reform the Right to Shelter law. That includes requiring proof of Massachusetts residency as well as the requirement that all family members have lawful immigration status, with limited exemptions. Governor Healey imposed mandatory CORI checks for all adults before entry into the system.

As a result of Governor Healey's actions, caseloads and costs have decreased. The number of families in shelter dropped below 5,000 for the first time since July 2023. Since the start of 2025, double the number of families have exited shelter

(approximately 2,500) than have entered shelter (approximately 1,100). Approximately

85-90 percent of families seeking shelter are now longtime Massachusetts families.

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ESPLANADE CAMPUS (from Page 1)

to EA, kickstarted by early gifts from the Richard and Susan Smith Family Foundation, the Conine Family Foundation, Bob and Happy Doran, Amy and David Abrams, Barbara and Amos Hostetter, and EA's Board of Directors, among other donors,

"After years of planning, it was a thrill to gather at a future site of convening, creating, celebrating, and discovery along with Commissioner Brian Arriago and his wonderful DCR col-

leagues, and so many friends of the Esplanade Association," Jen Mergel, EA's James & Audrey Foster executive director, said in a statement released following the groundbreaking. "The Smith Family Pavilion will honor the park's rich and revolutionary history by allow Charlesbank to do what it was originally created and designed for: giving year-round access to welcome more people from more places to enjoy the vital benefits of communal access to greenspace."



Ali Badrigian, the Esplanade Association's director of projects and planning.



Michael Nichols, former executive director of the Esplanade Association, with his wife, Sara, and their newborn son, Finn.



District 8 City Councilor Sharon Durkan.



Jen Mergel, James & Audrey Foster executive director of the Esplanade Association, with Architect Maryann Thompson.



Jen Mergel, James & Audrey Foster executive director of the Esplanade Association, and Rep. Jay Livingstone.



Esplanade Association staff members, including Jen Mergel, EA's James & Audrey Foster executive director (center), along with Michael Nichols, former executive director of EA (second from right), comprised one of four groups that broke ground on the project.

MAYOR WU BRINGS
NEIGHBORHOOD COFFEE HOUR
TO COPLEY BPL



Maccon Bonner, the Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services liaison to Back Bay and Beacon Hill, addresses the crowd.



MAYOR'S OFFICE PHOTO BY JOHN WILCOX
Mayor Michelle Wu cradles her infant daughter, Mira, while greeting guests.



D. MURPHY PHOTO
Officer Jason Richardson of Boston Police Area A-1 and Rep. Jay Livingstone.

Mayor's Office Photos by John Wilcox

Due to inclement weather, Mayor Michelle Wu brought her annual Neighborhood Coffee Hour for Back Bay and Beacon Hill on Thursday, May 15, inside the Copley Branch of the Boston Public Library. (The event was originally scheduled to take place at its typical location on the Commonwealth Avenue Mall.)

Each year, the Mayor's Neighborhood Coffee Hours allows opportunities for residents from across the city to meet and hear from their neighborhood liaisons, as well as to connect with city leadership and staff from the Community Engagement Cabinet.



MAYOR'S OFFICE PHOTO BY JOHN WILCOX
District 8 City Councilor Sharon Durkan speaks, flanked in back(left to right) by: Maccon Bonner, the Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services liaison to Back Bay and Beacon Hill; City Councilor at-Large Henry Santana; Rep. Jay Livingstone; and Council President Ruthzee Louijeune.

REMEMBERING
ALL WHO
GAVE THE
ULTIMATE
SACRIFICE THIS
MEMORIAL
DAY

Happy Memorial Day!
REMEMBER AND HONOR



Jay Livingstone
8th Suffolk District
State Representative

★★★★★
**MEMORIAL
DAY**

WE REMEMBER AND HONOR THOSE
WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES SO THAT
WE MAY LIVE OURS IN FREEDOM



SENATOR NICK COLLINS & FAMILY

Boston City Council votes to advance Ranked Choice Voting

Special to the Sun

Last week, the Boston City Council approved a Home Rule Petition to adopt Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) for city elections by a vote of 8-4.

The proposal, introduced by Council President Ruthzee Louijeune and co-sponsored

by Councilors Julia Mejia and Henry Santana, now heads to Mayor Michelle Wu for approval before advancing to the Massachusetts Legislature. If passed by the Legislature and signed by the Governor, Boston voters will have the opportunity to decide on RCV through a ballot referendum.

In addition to the sponsors, the measure was supported by Councilors Enrique Pepén, Gabriela Coletta Zapata, Brian J. Worrell, Liz Breadon, and Benjamin J. Weber. Councilors Ed Flynn, Erin Murphy, John Fitzgerald, and Sharon Durkin voted in opposition. Coletta-Zapata, chair of the Committee on Government Operations, received praise from councilors voting both ways for shepherding the bill through her committee in a thorough and transparent process.

"This is a historic day for Boston," said Louijeune last week. "Today's vote brings us closer to a more inclusive, representative, and transparent democracy—one that ensures our elected leaders have broad support and are chosen by the majority of voters. Ranked choice voting is not only simple, it's powerful. It gives voters more voice and more choice."

RCV allows voters to rank candidates in order of preference, eliminating the fear of "spoiler" candidates and promoting coalition-building over division, according to its pro-

ponents. Under the proposal, RCV would apply to general and special elections for mayor and district councilor (when three or more candidates run), and general elections for at-large councilors.

"Ranked choice voting is a tool to disrupt the status quo, shift power to the people, and amplify the voices of communities historically excluded from decision-making processes," said Mejia. "This vote is a declaration that our democracy belongs to all of us."

Santana stated that more than 60 percent of Bostonians supported RCV in 2020.

"This isn't just about policy—it's about trust, representation, and making sure our government reflects the diversity of our city," Santana stated.

Flynn, who voted against the proposal, expressed concerns about the city's preparedness and whether residents are asking for this reform in the first place.

"The Election Department pretty much told me that they don't want to see this implemented," Flynn said during the Council meeting before the vote.

"They don't believe now is the time to make such a dramatic, significant change to how people vote."

Flynn cited issues from recent municipal elections – such as lighting failures and polling locations running out of ballots, requiring police to transport ballots – as signs that the city should focus on fixing its current voting infrastructure before adopting a new system.

"I would have a very difficult time explaining this process to my constituents in District 2," he said. "Many of them don't speak English, many of them live in public housing, many of them are seniors, English Language Learners. [...] I don't want to set us up for failure. That's what we're doing."

Murphy, who also voted against the measure, cited concerns about accessibility and potential voter confusion. She said that the existing voting system already works and that adding new layers of complexity could have unintended consequences for vulnerable populations.

ParkARTS Summer Watercolor Painting Workshops continue

Special to the Sun

Budding artists ages nine and up are invited to join the Boston Parks and Recreation Department for its popular summer series of ParkARTS Watercolor Painting Workshops, supported by title sponsor Bank of America. These free workshops welcome artists of all skill levels, providing materials and instruction by local artists. The series is open to Boston residents, and

registration is required.

Classes are held from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., weather permitting.

The next upcoming workshop closest to the neighborhood is on Sunday, June 8, at the Boston Public Garden (Lagoon), 4 Charles Street, Downtown.

For more information and to register, please visit boston.gov/watercolor-workshops. For general information, please visit Boston.gov/parks.

Call to Artists

ART in the **PARK** 2025

Saturday **SEPTEMBER 6** 10:00-5:30 | Rain Date September 7

CITY SQUARE PARK, CHARLESTOWN



ceramics by Tina Busa
photo by Adrien Sipos

AGC To Submit: ArtistsGroupofCharlestown.com
Deadline: July 23, 2025 at Midnight

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We also encourage readers to e-mail news releases and photos to deb@theboston.com.

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CITY PAWS

On the road again

By Penny & Ed Cherubino

Taking your pet on vacation can be fun. You spend some quality time with a creature you love. You don't have to worry about your cat or dog getting along with a pet sitter or in a kennel.

Getting Around No Pets

Scan vacation rental classifieds, and you'd think that "No Pets" is automatically added to every ad. How do those of us who want to take the whole family on our family vacation find a rental home? Simple: We do our homework and answer the homeowners' objections one by one.

You need references. Stay at a "pet-friendly" inn or bed and breakfast. Assuming all goes well, ask the owner to be a reference for your dog.

Find a sympathetic real estate agent. We've had the best results with agents who love dogs. If all else fails, call a local veterinary hospital and ask whether they can recommend a rental agency.

Start your search as early as possible. In the slow season,

agents have the time to negotiate special arrangements. Be prepared to offer a refundable security deposit. That could turn their "No!" into a "Yes!"

Transportation

Pack up the bags and go once you've found a destination where pets are welcome. Driving is the easiest way to travel with critters. For safety's sake, we use a dog crate in any car. In case of an accident, the crate will help keep your dog or cat safe and contained. It also gives you more control when you make stops along the way.

You can fly with small pets in the cabin of some airliners, if you get the proper health certificate and make a special reservation. If your dog is too big for the cabin, you should consider what the experts have to say. "The ASPCA urges pet owners to think twice about flying their pets on commercial airlines, especially if they plan on checking them in as cargo."

Paperwork and ID

Identification is very important for a pet when you're away from home. If separated on



Taking your pet on vacation can be fun. You spend some quality time with a creature you love.

vacation, be certain someone can return your companion to you. Our dog, Poppy, wears a tag that says she's traveling with us, with our cell phone numbers. Keep copies of rabies certificates, microchip number, and photographs of her on your phone. We carry a wallet card that says a pet is waiting for us, where she is, and who to contact to care for her.

Packing for a Pet

If your cat is a fussy eater or your dog has a sensitive tummy, you might have to bring the right

food or at least call ahead to be sure it's available at your destination. It's easiest to go to your vet for extra supplies of any medications you might need. If you give a monthly heartworm medication, check your pet's schedule to see if you should take it.

Check the Rules and Make Friends

In recent years, most places we've stayed have formal, written pet rules. Cities, towns, parks, beaches, and dog parks also have regulations. If you ask about the rules and follow them,

you'll make friends and be welcomed back.

Making new friends, meeting locals, and meeting other travelers are clearly advantages of traveling with a dog. Pets are great icebreakers! What's more, you and your pet could make the day of a lonely traveler who is suffering separation anxiety because they left their pal behind.

Do you have a question or topic for City Paws? Email Penny@BostonZest.com with your request.

Fire officials warn against Laptop Fire social media 'challenge'

14 incidents and attempts reported in Massachusetts, many more likely undetected

Special to the Sun

State Fire Marshal Jon Davine and Massachusetts fire chiefs are urging parents and educators to talk to youngsters about the risk of fire and injury posed by a recent social media "challenge."

The trend, which appears to have started on TikTok, promotes inserting a paper clip, pencil lead, or other conductive object into a laptop computer's

charging port or other port. This can cause a short circuit that increases the device's temperature or causes smoke, sparks, or a fire — any of which could injure a young user.

"We've received more than a dozen reports from Massachusetts fire departments of young people engaging in this behavior in less than a week," said State Fire Marshal Davine, who last week circulated a notice about the nationwide trend to local fire chiefs. "There are probably many more that responsible adults haven't heard of or officially reported. No matter

how smart your kids or students might be, please impress upon them that the only thing you should place in a computer port is the appropriate cord."

"Today's electronic devices pack a lot of power into small containers, and tampering with them is dangerous," said Foxborough Fire Chief Michael Kelleher, president of the Fire Chiefs Association of Massachusetts. "Almost all modern laptops are powered by lithium-ion batteries, which can erupt in sparks and flames when damaged or abused. An event like that will injure anyone close

by. The fire can easily spread to clothing, bedding, upholstery, and furniture."

Most of the reported incidents were interrupted by teachers who spotted the abuse of school-issued laptops. They occurred in Barnstable County, Essex County, Hampden County, Hampshire County, Middlesex County, and Worcester County beginning on or about May 6. So far, only one minor injury has been

reported but heavy smoke and device damage have been reported in some cases.

Unfortunately, social media trends involving risky fire-related behavior are not new. In 2020, numerous electrical fires and damage were reported after another challenge promoted dropping a coin onto the prongs of a power plug partially inserted into a wall outlet.

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The Boston Sun encourages residents to submit engagement, wedding and birth announcements, news releases, business and education briefs, sports stories and photos for publication. Items should be e-mailed to deb@thebostonsun.com.



EMERGENCY
ALL BLOOD
TYPES NEEDED.

Give now.



UNITED SOUTH END SETTLEMENTS HOLD ANNUAL GALA FUNDRAISER AT CYCLORAMA

Derek Kouyoumjian Photos

United South End Settlements

held its annual Gala fundraiser event at the Cyclorama. Attendees donated \$957,643 to the

neighborhood institution to help fund the many services it offers to the community. USES

offers kids field trips, day activities, early childhood education, Camp Hale in New Hampshire for the Summer, and more.



United South End Settlements CEO Jerrell Cox with his team.



Josh and Patty Krumholz with Meghan Heveran and Crystal Beck.



Jaxznanny Alvarez and Toni Morgan.



Joe Shamatta and Fernando Phillips.



Joanna Humprey Flynn and Onnie Mayshak.



Sophia Dushku announces the recipients of the Philip Dushku Changemaker Award.

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JUNE 16- AUG 1
AGES 6-13

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UNITED SOUTH END SETTLEMENTS HOLD ANNUAL GALA FUNDRAISER AT CYCLORAMA



Ben Krass and Niki Rodriguez.



City of Boston's Chef of Economic Opportunity and Inclusion Segun Idowu with United South End Settlements CEO Jerrell Cox.



Crowd applause.



United South End Settlements CEO Jerrell Cox, Sophia Dushku, and Stefania and George Mallett after they received the Dushku Changemaker Award.



Emcee and benefit auctioneer Tom Stenbins hi-fives a donor who pledged.



Stefania and George Mallett offer remarks after being given the Philip Dushku Changemaker Award.



Niki Rodriguez, Damani Duverna, Ayinde Best, and Maxwell Schmitz.jpg



Tom Stenbins, emcee and benefit auctioneer, gets the crowd energized to donate and have fun.



United South End Settlements CEO Jerrell Cox.



Tanare Gordon, Melody Valdes, Maycharia Weir Lytle, and Gabriela Cruzado.

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BEACON HILL GARDEN CLUB HOSTS HIDDEN GARDENS TOUR SOIREE

The Beacon Hill Garden Club held its Hidden Gardens Tour Soiree the evening before the much anticipated annual event. The King’s Chapel Parish House was the setting and attendees enjoyed the ambience and a glorious Spring evening.

DEREK KOUYOUMJIAN PHOTOS



Jody Black, Addy Donnelly, Jeanne Burlingame, and Andrea Marquit Clagett.



Gary Borisi, owner of boutique Upstairs Downstairs, Laura Cousineau, Cynthia Ingols, Sally Casper, Steven Spitz, and Nancy Sinsabaugh.



The Hidden Gardens of Beacon Hill Soiree was held at the King’s Chapel Parish House.

OBITUARIES

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Georgia Balafas, Lori Scholz, and Lucy Dearborn.



David and Anne-Sophie Dankens with Jane Tyler.



Isabelle and John Evans with Katie Fagan (center).



Emily Griset with Fiduciary Trust, Sophia Watson, and Beacon Hill Garden member chairing event Renée Walsh.

BEACON HILL GARDEN CLUB HOSTS HIDDEN GARDENS TOUR SOIREE

DEREK KOUYOUMJIAN PHOTOS



Teresa Chope and Melissa Koester.



Georgia Lee and David Hall.



Sariah Wertman and Deb Blair.



John David Corey and Miguel Rosales.



Sarah Perry, Lisa Meaders, Katheryn Swiderski, William and Jasmine Hurley.



Secret Garden Tour hosts: Beth Johnson from 18 LouisburgSquare, Thomas Frank from 12 Louisburg Square, Alexandra Hastings, and Barbara Eisenson from 13 Louisburg Square.



Matt Yellen and Alexandra Stillman with Allison and Alan Braly.



Lisa Taffe, Tim and Liz Morningstar(2nd from right), Chandler Evans, and Ashley Harmon.



Publisher of MyBoston Renata Coker with Stephanie Pennell.



Lissie Sidar and Brett Roberts representing Spruce Sponsor RP Marzilli.



Owner of the Hampshire House Tom Kershaw with partner Lindy Roethlisberger.



Austin Shapard and John Morey.



Alastair Adam and Holt Massey.



Austin Shapard and John Evers.

PLEASE RECYCLE
THIS NEWSPAPER

Attention to Detail

PHOTOS AND TEXT BY PENNY CHERUBINO

THIS WEEK'S ANSWER



The doorway in the last clue is at 560 Columbus Avenue. A plaque on the building identifies it as the “Home of Calanthe of K.P. Sarah A. Stratmon G.W.D. 1920-1944.” This was an auxiliary of the Knights of Pythias. It served as a fraternal benefit society for African American women.

You’ll find the next clue in the Back Bay.

Do you have a favorite building or detail you would like featured? Email Penny@BostonZest.com with your suggestion.

THIS WEEK'S CLUE



Real Estate Transfers

BUYER 1	SELLER 1	ADDRESS	PRICE
BACK BAY			
Woodruff, Jennifer	Hartmann, Peter	229 Beacon St #1	\$655,000
Modi, Jignesh	Derek Robert Obrien Lt	271 Beacon St #1	\$540,000
Munfa, Marc	Marantz, Joshua D	273 Beacon St #3	\$4,250,000
L O L A Group	Cannistaro, Michael P	285 Beacon St #2B	\$2,400,000
Lewis, P J	Peterson, Bradley	361 Beacon St #2	\$5,900,000
Lori Susan G Thomas RET	Stucke, Coleman P	2 Clarendon St #208	\$850,000
Koon, John D	165 Comm Ave LLC	165 Commonwealth Ave #A	\$3,600,000
Koon, John D	165 Comm Ave LLC	165 Commonwealth Ave #B	\$3,600,000
Sayer, Gordon M	Marks, Emily D	252 Commonwealth Ave #4	\$645,000
Kenneth J Sax RET	Priscilla J Hayes RET	246 Marlborough St #2	\$565,000
Karakullukcu, Ilter	Sfkc LLC	188 Brookline Ave #251	\$1,600,000
Coppola, John	Sipper, Mary A	311 Commonwealth Ave #81	\$1,720,000
BEACON HILL			
Strawbridge, Andrew	Brown, Damon	37 Beacon St #65	\$1,160,000
High Street Dev LLC	Butterworth, Michael	70 Brimmer St #229	\$600,000
Charles Street Parking T	Rref li Bh Garage LLC	142-162 Charles St #PS2-15	\$250,000
High Street Dev LLC	Butterworth, Michael	108-114 Chestnut St #229	\$600,000
Whose Car LLC	Francis, Marie P	18 Chestnut St #6	\$950,000
Razzaq, Zaffar A	Xg 51 Hancock St LLC	51 Hancock St #11	\$620,000
Louisburg Square Rt	Victoria C Denninger RET	9 Louisburg Sq #2	\$4,450,000
Kapur, Paul	Mathieson, Paul	74 Mount Vernon St #1F	\$550,000
Rebecca J Clements Ft	Vladimir B Samarin RET	69 Myrtle St #3	\$1,050,000
51 Revere Street U2 LLC	Brown, Rebecca K	51 Revere St #2	\$820,000
Bird, Adam	Jdmd Owner LLC	45 Temple St #409	\$5,700,000
Zhao, Hongyu	Mills, Shelley R	6 Whittier Pl #16R	\$565,000
BAY VILLAGE/SOUTH END/KENMORE			
Hartnett, John F	Nouf Holdings LLC	1 Charles St S #1506	\$1,895,000
Mohedin, Barzan	Abarbanel Stephen J Est	325 Columbus Ave #2	\$1,255,000
Bourgea, Jason	Farrow, Keith H	21 Follen St #1	\$1,704,000
Katherine D Hein RET	Sanborn, Linda A	1 Huntington Ave #502	\$2,075,000
Sachidananda, Abhilash	Tabor Street LLC	10 Taber St #306	\$500,000
Diaconu, Iulia	Westnewton Rt	249 W Newton St #6	\$1,120,000
C K & Ansuya C Shah Ab Lt	Donald R Upham T	922 Beacon St #14	\$471,000
Pauwels, Koen	Lopez, Ernesto	4 Charlesgate E #706	\$1,267,500
Barrie, Sarah	Clark, Theodore J	1-3 Claremont Park #1	\$1,200,000
Giarrusso, Timothy	Seng Hing Cheng RET	12 Cumberland St #12-4	\$1,500,000
John M Ferrara li RET	Schmidt, Stacey N	17 Dwight St #1	\$1,975,000
New England Housing LLC	Tsai, Huei-Ling	108 Gainsborough St #205W	\$950,000
Antonelli, Judith	Kobb Hoefle Ft	22 Hanson St #1	\$1,375,000
32 Hanson Street LLC	32 Hanson Street Rt	32 Hanson St	\$2,200,000
Atlantic Ink Block Nt	Quinn South End LLC	370-380 Harrison Ave #12D	\$1,150,000
Posawatz, Anthony L	Visnick, Cora L	370-380 Harrison Ave #1121	\$1,005,000
Seah, Darren	Tardif-Vaughn Ft	370-380 Harrison Ave #1108	\$2,370,000
Peters, Amy T	Gerrish, Mark	485-495 Harrison Ave #303	\$1,775,000
Jaark LLC	358 Marlborough LLC	358 Marlborough St	\$10,000,000
365 Marlborough St Unit 3	Sutton, Benjamin	365 Marlborough St #3	\$1,950,000
Dutton, Tyler J	Bottomly, H K	582 Massachusetts Ave #4	\$1,600,000
Chung, Harry	Wilens, David	120 Mountfort St #503	\$1,050,000
Darrow, Keith N	Lalehpour, Nejat	131 Park Dr #11	\$385,000
Grigalaityte, Giedre	15-35 Park Drive LLC	15 Park Dr #35	\$421,000
Charla, Oksana J	51 Park Drive Unit 26 Rt	51 Park Dr #26	\$425,000
Correia FT	Farrington, Nancy W	40 Traveler St #210	\$915,000
Ade Ft	Walton, David	645 Tremont St #3	\$1,295,000
Randall, Elizabeth	Blum, Amelia	673 Tremont St #3	\$1,250,000
Jakubowski, Paul	Seah, Darren	30 Union Park St #503	\$2,400,000

Rose Kennedy Greenway Conservancy announces two new board members

Special to the Sun

The Rose Kennedy Greenway Conservancy, the non-profit organization responsible for the management and care of The Greenway, is proud to announce the addition of two new members to its volunteer Board of Directors: Luz Arregoces and Christopher Loh.

"The Rose Kennedy Greenway is a treasured Boston landmark," said Governor Maura Healey, who appointed Loh. "It is really important that we preserve and enhance our urban greenspaces like the Greenway because they are critical pieces of our economy, our communities and our climate resiliency plans. I am confident that Chris will contribute to these important conversations and advance the Conservancy's mission."

Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs, Rebecca Tepper, who appointed Arregoces to the Conservancy Board highlighted the connection between The Greenway and Boston's waterfront.

"The Greenway is a beloved gathering space for our community that serves as a connec-

tor between the city and our waterfront," Tepper said. "The strength of our urban parks lies in their ability to create vibrant community spaces where all are welcome. Luz's vision and leadership experience will ensure The Conservancy parks remain equitable. I am confident she will continue to bring diverse programming and dynamic public art to Boston's residents and visitors."

The 21 members of the Greenway Conservancy's Board of Directors are nominated by community groups, government agencies and officials, the Greenway Business Improvement District, and the Conservancy.

Driven by a shared enthusiasm for The Greenway, these volunteers collaborate to use their diverse expertise and viewpoints to actively support the Conservancy's mission and its sustainability goals.

"We are delighted to welcome Luz and Christopher to the board," said Hilina D. Ajakaiye, Chair of the Greenway Conservancy Board and Executive Vice President at Meet Boston. "Their years of experience serving the

greater Boston community and advocating for inclusivity and accessibility throughout their work will greatly serve the mission of the Conservancy."

"The Greenway attracts millions of visitors to Boston each year through their vibrant and dynamic programming and beautiful park spaces," said Rebecca A. Lee, Vice Chair of the Conservancy and Chair of the Conservancy's Nominating Committee. "Welcoming new Board members like Arregoces and Loh is essential to advancing the missions of community engagement and public service, both of which are essential to The Greenway."

Luz Arregoces

Luz Arregoces is Director of



Community Engagement at the New England Aquarium. In this role, Luz leads the Aquarium's effort to create a downtown waterfront that is resilient, inclusive, and accessible. She focuses on making genuine and meaningful connections throughout the community and creating trust with visitors, families, and local government.

Previously, Luz worked as Director of Programs at the Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce. While overseeing the planning and execution of over 100 annual programs and events, Luz's specific portfolio of programs focused on government affairs and urban planning. Luz has a Bachelor's degree in Communication from the University of Massachusetts Amherst and her Master's degree in City Planning from Boston University. Originally from Cape Cod, she now resides in Quincy.

Christopher Loh

Chris joined M&T Bank in September 2023 as Senior Vice President, Media Relations, and in January, transitioned into his new role as Head of Government



Relations – New England.

Starting his career as a newspaper reporter in Greater Boston, Chris served in the press office of Mayor Thomas M. Menino and in 2012, he joined the Massachusetts Attorney General's Office as press secretary for Attorneys General Martha Coakley and eventually Maura Healey. Before joining M&T Bank, Chris was Director of Global Medical Communications for Fresenius Medical Care. He lives in Dedham with his wife Maggie, his two daughters, Eleanor and Charlotte, and the family beagle, Brewer.

For a complete list of the Greenway Conservancy's Board of Directors, visit www.rosekennedygreenway.org/board.

FRESH AND LOCAL

Small Menus

By Penny & Ed Cherubino

We've noticed a welcome trend emerging in this area: small, specialized menus with just one or a few items. These businesses have been encouraged by food halls, pop-ups, food trucks, and food carts. Small menus have the potential for increased profitability, better-quality food, and reduced food waste.

Matt Goulding, in his book "Rice, Noodle, Fish," wrote an ode to specialization. "The concept of shokunin, an artisan deeply and singularly dedicated to their craft, is at the core of Japanese culture." "In the west, where miso-braised short ribs share menus with white truffle pizza and sea bass ceviche, restaurants cast massive nets to try to catch as many fish as possible but, in Japan, the secret to success is choosing one thing and doing it really well. Forever."

Some Specialists

The perfect example of this dedication to one food is Flake in

Coolidge Corner. They make one thing: pastéis de nata — Lisbon's beloved egg custard tarts. And they do it perfectly. When they run out of freshly baked pastéis de nata, they close!

An example of long-term success in specialization is Galleria Umberto in Boston's North End, which opened in 1974. There are nine items on the menu, but their pizza is the draw! They limit their hours and have been known to close for the month of July. It was named an America's Classic by the James Beard Foundation in 2018.

This concept has even spawned a national chain, Medium Rare. They recently opened a Watertown location. The dinner menu is a prix fixe menu of steak frites, accompanied by a salad and artisan bread.

From Pop-up, Food Hall, or Food Truck to Brick-and-Mortar
Bow Market in Union Square is known as a pop-up testing ground. They invite entrepre-

neurs to "Test your concept in one of our rotating food and retail spaces." The marketplace website even has an "Alum" map with flags to the brick-and-mortar businesses that began at Bow.

Food Halls are the perfect creative space for small menu concepts. These formats help gather an audience for an idea that might not be sustainable in a separate setting; they are a win-win for both vendors and customers.

At High Street Place in Downtown Boston, you can gather a Pennypacker's porchetta sandwich, a glass of sparkling wine from Bubble Bath, and a dessert from Noble Castella, a Japanese bakery. What's more, every member of your party can put together a meal from different stalls.

Other Boston Food Halls include the Boston Public Market, The Lineup on Federal Street, Time Out Market in the Fenway, Hub Hall next to North Station, and The Charles River



Lan Feast in Coolidge Corner made us appreciate a well-executed menu of authentic Chinese Lanzhou dishes, including hand-pulled noodles.

Speedway in Brighton.

Slightly Larger, But Still Specialized

Finally, we love restaurants that may have more items on the menu but serve excellent versions of their specialty. A recent visit to Lan Feast in Coolidge Corner made us appreciate a well-executed menu of authentic Chinese Lanzhou dishes, including hand-pulled noodles.

We love Thai food and recommend Pad Thai Cafe on Hemenway Street in the Symphony area for their separate and more authentic Thai menu. And, we found another distinct flavor of Thailand at Mahaniyom in

Brookline Village.

The next time you decide you want ramen, pizza, Chinese food, Vietnamese food, or a great dessert, consider trying a specialist who only makes food from a specific region. You may find you love Yunnan, Sichuan, or Hunan cuisine. Or, that you prefer the less sweet types of desserts offered in Asian bakeries. Exploring world cuisines is fun, and going to a specialist can help you find the best examples of what's available.

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

Wu announces expansion of free swim lessons for youth

Special to the Sun

Mayor Michelle Wu, the Office of Human Services (OHS), and Boston Centers for Youth & Families (BCYF) marked yesterday's International Water Safety Day with the award of \$230,000 in grant funding to support free youth swim lessons and \$10,000 for the launch of a MBTA bus campaign that highlights the importance of water safety. In 2024, Swim Safe provided lessons to over 6,000 youth, and since its launch under Mayor Wu in summer of 2023 has provided lessons to 8,100 kids. Swim Safe is part of Mayor Wu's Connect, Learn, Explore: Commitment to Youth, a commitment to giving Boston youth an opportunity to explore and discover their passions. The Swim Safe initiative affirms Mayor Wu's commitment to ensure all Boston kids learn to swim and can safely enjoy the City's coastline and pools.

"This International Water Safety Day, Boston is working with our partners to make it easier and more affordable to teach

our kids to swim," said Mayor Michelle Wu. "As warm weather returns, we're investing in free Swim Safe lessons and making progress in renovating our City pools to ensure families have a safe, fun way to cool off and enjoy the summer."

The \$230,000 in grants funded in BCYF's annual operating budget will support free swim lessons for Boston youth, ensuring families have access to affordable, beginner-level swim lessons. This year's grantees include the YMCA of Greater Boston, Boys & Girls Clubs of Boston, Boys & Girls Club of Dorchester, and West End House, among others. Additional recipients of this year's grant include summer camp programs that will use the funds to incorporate beginner swim lessons into the camp curriculum. For more information, families can visit the website of participating organizations to learn more about swim lessons.

"We are excited to partner with many of our existing Swim Safe providers to offer swim lessons to youth," said Chief of

Human Services, José F. Massó. "I am also thrilled that there is a new group of grantees who will be offering lessons as part of the summer camp experience."

Mayor Wu, the Public Facilities Department, BCYF, and Boston Public Schools have prioritized investing in the city's pool infrastructure and streamlining processes to prevent the deferred maintenance that has caused closures in recent years. The BCYF Draper and Curtis Hall Pools reopened in April. The outdoor, seasonal pools (BCYF Clougherty and BCYF Mirabella) are expected to open Saturday, June 21 for the summer. The new Clougherty Bathhouse will be completed early this summer, and the BCYF Condon Pool is expected to finish renovations and reopen in the coming months. Despite national challenges, BCYF has hired lifeguards to fully staff City pools for the summer season.

"Given Boston's prime waterfront location and the wealth of recreational opportunities it presents during the summer months, ensuring equitable

access to water safety education for all young residents is crucial, empowering them to confidently and safely engage with our city's pools and beaches," said Marta E. Rivera, Commissioner of Boston Centers for Youth & Families.

"I didn't think my kids would be as excited and happy as they are – I thought they would be scared, [but] all they want to do is go to class and learn," said Ericka Rodriguez, mother to Ezrael (5), Emir (7), Elianna (8) and Erik (10) who are learning to swim at the YMCA of Greater Boston. "They have learned so much already. I am so thankful for the Swim Safe program."

The City's efforts to expand swim lessons is a public health issue. Statistics from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention show that drowning is the leading cause of accidental death in children and that the risk of drowning is higher for children of color. Black children are more than twice as likely as white children to die of drowning. For every child who dies of drowning, there are seven non-fatal

drownings, which are traumatic and can lead to health issues later in life. Swim Safe Boston seeks to improve water safety in Boston, address the public health threat posed by drowning, and increase access to swimming for Boston families.

To mark International Water Safety Day on May 15, the City launched an ad campaign, featuring water safety ads on MBTA buses that travel through Boston. The information reminds parents and caregivers of important water safety tips in advance of summer. First, lessons are a great way to reduce drowning risk. Second, people should never swim alone. It is better to swim in a pair and to swim only in designated areas where a lifeguard is on-duty. Finally, if a person gets in trouble in the water, experts advise bystanders to call 9-1-1 for help and throw a float to the person rather than trying to attempt a water rescue, due to the added risk of drowning during a rescue attempt.

To learn more about Swim Safe Boston and water safety, visit boston.gov/swim-safe.

NFPA provides top grilling safety tips for Memorial Day and beyond

Special to the Sun

For many of us, Memorial Day weekend marks the unofficial start of summer, when many people dust off their grills to celebrate the holiday and prepare for

outdoor cooking in the warmer months ahead. As they do, the National Fire Protection Association® (NFPA®) offers important safety tips and guidelines to help ensure that the grilling sea-

son remains fire-safe.

"Cookouts and outdoor grilling can be a great way to spend time with friends and family, but they do present potential risks," said Lorraine Carli, vice president of Outreach and Advocacy at NFPA. "Over Memorial Day weekend and throughout the summer, we want everyone to be aware of where and when grilling fires tend to happen, along with steps they can take to help prevent them."

NFPA data show that between 2019 and 2023, gas grills were involved in an average of 9,287 home fires per year, including 4,682 structure fires and 4,605 outdoor fires. In roughly one-fifth (20%) of these fires, the grill had not been cleaned. In addition, an annual average of 21,682 patients went to emergency rooms because of grill-related injuries between 2020 and 2024, according to data from the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission.

Here are NFPA tips, recommendations, and resources for using outdoor grills safely:

- For propane grills, check the gas tank for leaks. (Watch NFPA's video on how to check for leaks.)
- Keep your grill clean. Make sure to remove all grease and fat buildup from the grills and the trays below.
- Place the grill far from your home, deck railings, eaves, or overhanging branches.
- Before lighting your gas-powered grill, always make sure the lid is open.

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LEGAL NOTICE

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA COUNTY OF WAKE CIVIL DISTRICT DIVISION SUMMONS FOR DIVORCE Docket No.

25CV009004-910 Sulmi M. Lopez-Berganza Plaintiff vs. Jose Antonio Sandoval Defendant To the Defendant:

The Plaintiff has filed a Complaint for Divorce requesting that the Court grant a divorce for Irretrievable Breakdown. The Complaint is on file at the Court. An Automatic Restraining Order has been entered in this matter preventing you from taking any action which would negatively impact the current financial status of either party. SEE Supplemental Probate Court Rule 411. You are hereby summoned and required to serve upon: Sulmi M. Lopez-Berganza 4816 Hallam Way Raleigh N.C. 27616, your answer on or before 05/29/2025. If you fail to do so, the court will proceed to the hearing and adjudication of this action. You are also required to file a copy of your answer, if any, with the Clerk of Superior Court in the County of Wake.

L. Ngwenso Clerk of Superior Court Wake County 05/23/25, 05/30/25, 06/05/25 BS

BPL announces \$1 million grant from Lego Community Fund U.S.

Special to the Times

The Boston Public Library (BPL) and LEGO Group have launched a new partnership setting in motion a citywide initiative that leverages play to address urgent early literacy challenges and ignite creativity and agency in Boston's youth.

Funded through a \$1 million grant from the company's LEGO Community Fund U.S. to the Boston Public Library Fund, this flagship collaboration between these two institutions will unlock the potential of children through joyful, hands-on learning. Timed with the opening of LEGO Group's new U.S. headquarters in Boston and aligned with the release of BPL's Strategic Plan 2025–2030, this two-year project will deliver interactive programs to more than 150,000 children ages 0–13 and their caregivers across Boston's neighborhoods.

"This partnership and investment builds on the Boston Public Library's roles of lifelong learning partner and community engager, in reaching thousands of children and families each year," said David Leonard, President of the Boston Public Library. "The transformative grant will expand what's possible—introducing more playful, creative, and civic-minded experiences for young people across all of Boston's neighborhoods. By aligning the LEGO Group's global commitment to learning through play with the Library's mission to provide free, equitable access to knowledge and opportunity,



BPL President David Leonard and the staff at the Children's Library welcomed the LEGO Group team to the Central Library on Monday, May 12 to launch this exciting new partnership alongside some of the Library's youngest—and most enthusiastic—patrons.

we're opening new pathways for children to learn, grow, and feel connected to their city. May we all play well together!"

"We're deeply grateful to the LEGO Group and LEGO Community Fund U.S. for this generous investment in Boston's young people," said Paula Sakey, Executive Director of the Boston Public Library Fund. "This partnership is rooted in a shared belief that every child deserves the chance to learn, grow, and engage with their community in meaningful ways. This is what it looks like to build a city's future—together."

The partnership includes three components:

1. Early Literacy & Learning Through Play (Ages 0–9)

• Hello Hatchlings: 12,000 new parent literacy kits—including

multilingual resources, books, and DUPLO bricks—will be distributed via hospitals and community partners.

• 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten: BPL will rebrand and relaunch this campaign with digital tracking tools and LEGO Group's Learning Through Play content, reaching over 100,000 children.

• Parent Ambassadors: Ten multilingual caregivers will be trained to lead story times in neighborhoods across Boston, helping families access early learning opportunities in their native languages.

2. Tween Engagement & Build the Change (Ages 9–13)

• Build the Change x LEGO Clubs: Expanded LEGO Clubs at 11+ BPL branches will incorporate civic, STEM, and story-

telling activities supported by LEGO employee volunteers.

• Author & Music Series: Twenty interactive events will highlight creative expression through writing, storytelling, and music.

• Playful Cities Mural Challenge: A summer design competition will invite youth to reimagine Boston's public spaces, culminating in a LEGO Master Builder mural at the Central Library in Copley Square.

3. Staffing & Training

• Investment in librarians, evaluators, and musicians-in-residence to deliver high-quality programming and training on incorporating LEGO resources to engage early literacy and 9–13 audiences.

"This wide-ranging investment from LEGO Group's LEGO Community Fund U.S. allows us to meet children and families where they are, with inclusive programs that make learning joyful," said Angela Veizaga, Chief of Youth and Family Engagement at the Boston Public Library. "By embedding learning through play into everything we do—from early literacy to tween engagement—we're equipping Boston's young people with the tools to grow as readers, creators, and active members of their communities."

In addition to reaching more than 150,000 children over two years, the initiative is projected to generate over 21,000 new library card signups and more than 600,000 early literacy book checkouts. The LEGO Group employees will also have opportunities to volunteer through kit

assembly, story times, and Build the Change programming.

Established in 1848, the Boston Public Library is a pioneer of public library service in America. It was the first large, free municipal library in the United States; the first public library to lend books; the first to have a branch library; and the first to have a children's room.

The Boston Public Library of today is a robust system that includes the Central Library in Copley Square, 25 neighborhood branches, the Norman B. Leventhal Map and Education Center, the Kirstein Business Library and Innovation Center, and an archival center, offering public access to world-class special collections of rare books, manuscripts, photographs, and prints, along with rich digital content and online services.

The Boston Public Library serves nearly 4 million visitors per year and millions more online. All of its programs and exhibitions are free to all and open to the public. The Boston Public Library is a department of the City of Boston, under the leadership of Mayor Michelle Wu. To learn more, visit bpl.org.

The mission of the Fund is to provide financial support to the Boston Public Library, ensuring that it remains viable, engaging, accessible, and free to all. The Fund fulfills this mission by working in partnership with the Library, donors, and other funders in supporting BPL programs and special initiatives. Support from the Fund supplements, but does not supplant, other BPL resources, including City of Boston funding.



Felicity Hammond (6yo) from West Roxbury participate in a hands-on activity with the LEGO Group volunteers at the Central Library in Copley Square on Monday, May 12.

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