MBHP releases Hoarding Training Manual

Since 2006, MBHP has helped hundreds of people with hoarding disorder maintain healthier homes.

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Preventing Homelessness: Helping families stay out of shelter

Latest MBHP Housing Matters Forum covers best practices for homelessness prevention

On September 15, MBHP.com convened a panel of industry experts for the latest installment of our Housing Matters Forum Series. The topic was Preventing Homelessness: Front-line solutions to help families stay out of shelter. The panel was moderated by Rose Evans, deputy commissioner of the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development.

Participants included Regina Chrin of MBHP, Lynn Delkowitz, also the manager of Maloney Properties; Gail Livingston, deputy administrator of the Housing Programs for Boston Housing Authority, and MBHP RAFT participant Lisa Grullon.

Chrin, who manages MBHP’s Housing Consumer Education Center, spoke about one resource the RAFT program: last year, in three years of the program, out of the 3,000 families who have participated, only 15 families have received funding for all three years. This report also demonstrates that in Metro Boston RAFT potentially saved the state an estimated $20 million dollars last year. The report also illustrates the important role that MBHP’s work in the field has in implementing the RAFT program: last year, families from 28 cities and towns (93 percent of MBHP’s region) received RAFT funds.

RAFT at local events

MBHP staff members meet people at the following locations to assist them with RAFT applications. Visit www.mbhp.org/RAFT to learn more about our work in the field, see Page 4.

MBHP housing matters forum panels and reviews

MBHP has been designated as one of the lead agencies for Mass LEAP, a new five-year program to help people increase their incomes and become more self-sufficient.

MBHP’s Mass LEAP enrollment (as of September 1, 2015):

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MBHP Inspectional Services is utilizing technology to enhance inspections and efficiency.

Robert Whittlesey has been a driving force throughout the past 50 years around the country to help them share information and build up each other’s work. This work gives him a unique perspective on the changing and current role. It’s part of the reason he continues to contribute to the organization.

“There’s a vast need in this country for housing for people with low income,” said Whittlesey, “and what MBHP is very special. You touch a lot of families in the housing field and do any other partnership in the country that does what MBHP does.

At 94 years old, Whittlesey shows no signs of slowing down. He currently serves as Chairman of the Board of the Acting Housing Authority, which last year marked its 50th anniversary. He named Whittlesey Village, in honor of the longtime affordable housing leader.

Whittlesey sees what MBHP was able to accomplish in Boston and wondered if it was happening in other parts of the country. In 1992, he started the National Association for Housing Partnership Organizations, which links MBHP and other organizations with the funding to help get kids ready to go back to school.

Back to school help

MBHP works with partners and clients to help kids get ready to go back to school.

Since 1995, the employees at Rogers & Gray have come together to support homeless families. This year, once again, staff members volunteered to purchase backpacks and fill them with school supplies. In total, the firm donated 200 backpacks for kids to attend school.

“Families placed in motels face so many challenges,” said Laura Mary Walsh, MBHP’s Director of Public and Resource Development.

Through the backpack program, Rogers & Gray is proud to be a part of many projects and programs. “The more we can do to help families placed in motels gain the financial knowledge and skills they need to secure safe housing they can afford,” said Santander Vice President and New England Regional Manager Sonia Alleyne.

Through our Motel Re-Housing program, MBHP case managers are also available in motels across our region, working side-by-side with families placed there as part of the state’s Emergency Assistance program. Thanks to support from Santander Bank, MBHP is also able to offer free computer classes and other programs to help clients enhance their skills and increase their job prospects.

“Santander is proud to partner with MBHP once again to help families placed in motels gain the financial knowledge and skills they need to secure safe housing they can afford,” said Santander Vice President and New England Regional Manager Sona Alleyne.

On June 3, Representative Kevin Honan, House Chairman of the Joint Committee on Housing, stopped by one of our workshops to encourage attendees. “It’s really wonderful that you’re over here,” said Chairman Honan, “I encourage you to continue to learn the important skills that today’s job market requires.”

Going digital

MBHP is also utilizing secure cloud-based technology to enable inspectors to share files when they are away from the office. This eliminates the need for their morning commute to downtown Boston, thus increasing their availability in the field and allowing them more flexibility to schedule inspections around tenants’ needs. It also allows inspectors to share files when they are away from the office. This enables the use of online system to email reports, sending information to property owners and MBHP staff in real time that the reports can access.

MBHP’s programs

MBHP empowers families and individuals to break the cycle of homelessness.

In 1964, Whittlesey served as the founder and executive director of the organization known as the Community Builders, where he and his team worked on landmark affordable housing developments. It was during this experience there that made him a natural fit for a nonprofit organization.

It was a time when business people saw the stress of these urban neighborhoods and realized that they had to be a part of the recovery,” said Whittlesey. “Back in 1964, job growth was the most effective strategy. During his tenure as executive director, they created more than 2,000 affordable housing units.

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Thank you to donors who have supported Back to school help

Back to school help

MBHP has branched out of our Boston office to meet where they are.

Thanks to partnerships with local agencies and funding from the Bank of America Foundation, MBHP staff members are able to travel to locations that are more convenient for our clients, essentially extending housing case management in other parts of the country.

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MBHP in the field

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Since 2012, MBHP has increased the number of inspections we conduct annually by more than 100%. In September, MBHP began providing technical assistance to other regional administering agencies so that this system can be implemented across the state.

Compass Family Self-Sufficiency Program Update

May marked the end of the first year of the Compass FSS Program. This partnership with Compass Working Capital enriches MBHP's existing FSS program by providing financial coaching with an increased focus on asset building and debt reduction.

First year accomplishments:
- Receiving 615 applications, enrolled 79 new participants
- 51 percent reduced their total debt.
- 54 percent of participants increased their credit score.
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A fresh start for Nikia
MBHP helps a new mother find a home for her and her son.

Last winter, MBHP began issuing more than 70 state rental assistance vouchers that had been set aside for families on the newly-created Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program waiting list. As part of this process, MBHP works closely with clients to ensure they are able to move into new homes where they can thrive. Sometimes that means leveraging relationships we have with property owners in our region and mitigating credit issues or other issues that are deal-breakers for many landlords. Other times, it can mean educating property owners who are unfamiliar with MBHP’s programs. The story below is just one example of how MBHP was able to help Nikia utilize her voucher to secure a new home and begin a new chapter of her life.

Nikia was living with her mother, sharing a bedroom with her 12-year-old sister and 2-month-old son, when she found out she was selected to receive an MBHP voucher. She knew just where she wanted to move: a two-bedroom apartment in a complex in Braintree with utilities included in the rent, which would help her stay on budget. But then she faced an unexpected barrier that would have prevented Nikia from utilizing her voucher to rent there. Fortunately, MBHP’s Hoarding Team intervened.

Once the property owner was informed of their fair housing responsibilities, the company agreed to move forward with the proper paperwork without MBHP having to file a formal complaint. Nikia says it was a relief to know that MBHP was handling things. “I had so many other things to worry about,” the new mother said. “It was very comforting to know I had so many people working for me.”

Nikia moved into her new home in August. Now, she says, she can focus on saving money and improving her credit, working toward her goal of eventually buying her own home. “Right now it is hard,” she admits. “But with the MBHP program it’s going to get better.”

For MBHP, the EVI Manual released earlier this year is another example of the bigger picture of the work we do. As the example above shows, MBHP helps people who are facing a housing crisis. Sometimes it is a case of preventing someone from losing their home; in other cases it is finding creative solutions to help families stay out of shelter. The EVI Manual helps us do that work.

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- 31 Public Housing residents
- 15 Nonprofit Housing and Community Development
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- 11 Business/Industry
- 65 Other

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MBHP’s Mass LEAP enrolls (as of September 1, 2015): 40 MRVP participants 23 Public Housing residents

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EIGHTH ANNUAL FOUNDERS CELEBRATION

MBHP to Honor Amy S. Anthony and Helene Solomon on November 12

MBHP’s driving mission is to connect the residents of Greater Boston with safe, decent homes they can afford. For us to be able to do this work, the creation, promotion, and preservation of affordable housing is vital. At this year’s Founders Celebration, MBHP will honor two outstanding individuals who have championed this cause.

Amy S. Anthony, former president and chief executive officer of Preservation of Affordable Housing will receive the Founders Award.

Helene Solomon, founder and chief executive officer of Solomon McConigey & Company will receive the Lowell L. Richards III Award.

The event will be held on Thursday, November 12, and will once again be hosted by State Street, the event’s Presenting Partner. To R.S.V.P., contact Mary Jo Kane at maryjo.kane@mbhp.org or (617) 425-6705. More information is on our website at www.mbhp.org/donate.

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