Plan ahead! Summer camp registration

If you have school-age children, spring is the time to start planning for summer camp, as camp programs tend to fill up quickly. Below are some suggestions for affordable summer camps.

Boys and Girls Club of America

There are multiple Boys and Girls Clubs in and around Boston that offer summer programming. Find a club near you at bgca.org/where-we-are/Pages/FindaClub.aspx.

Camp Harbor View

A four-week summer camp on Long Island in the Boston Harbor. $315 tuition covers round trip transportation, apparel, three meals a day, and access to school year programming and social services. Open to Boston residents ages 11–14, a limited number of slots are available for each neighborhood on a first come, first served basis. Learn more at chv.org.

Cambridge Camping

Since 1955, Cambridge Camping has served children from under-resourced families. They offer affordable day camps and overnight camp programs. Learn more at www.cambridgecamping.org.

Boston Centers for Youth and Families

BCYF offers dozens of neighborhood-based summer day camps and programs. Their summer guide is now available at boston.gov/health-and-human-services. Visit bgca.org/whoweare/Pages/FindaClub.aspx for more at www.cambridgecamping.org.

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Meet Team MBHP

For the past 11 years, thanks to the generosity of John Hancock, MBHP has helped a team of volunteers run the Boston Marathon to raise funds for MBHP—and this year you will talk to Thong Phan, our Fair Housing Client Advocate. Thong’s days are spent helping people navigate housing issues and following up on cases by reaching out to real estate agents, property owners, and clients with the goal of resolving those issues.

Hometown. I was born in the Philippines, which I have no memory of, I grew up in a suburb of Columbia, South Carolina, where I went to college.

Hobbies. I keep up with political news and social justice issues. I enjoy playing chess and listening to music.

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Values. I try to be thoughtful and I try to be as ethical as well. I also have a really sharp sense of humor if people get to know me.

Motivation. I am motivated by the belief that gross inequality is not inevitable. I believe there are affordable solutions to some society's most pressing issues.

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Personal life, Prince, Malcolm X, Bruce Lee, and Barbara Chandler—not necessarily in that order.

Civil rights resources

MBHP is committed to protecting the civil rights of all residents in our region. Below are some resources for anyone who feels themselves victim of a hate crime or discrimination.

For complaints of housing discrimination, contact MBHP, 617.425.6681 or barbara.chandler@mbhp.org

Filing a civil rights complaint:

For legal help: www.mass.gov/ago (search for Civil Rights Complaint Form)

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RAFT helps families stay afloat

After experiencing a financial emergency, such as a temporary job loss, health problem, or a little help, a small help is all some people need to catch up on the rent. For others, a few thousand dollars is all that stands between them and moving to a new home. For situations like these, the Residential Assistance for Families in Transition (RAFT) program may be able to help.

Additional resources

RAFT is just one tool of MBHP's Residential Assistance Consumer Education Center (HCIE).

When families work with HCIE staff, they do not simply apply for RAFT. An HCIE staff member will document the family's housing situation and develop the best response depending on the specific situation. Applicants may be referred to funding sources other than RAFT such as fuel assistance, unemployment, utility assistance, food stamps, THAPD, MassHousing.

Families seeking financial assistance should contact MBHP's Housing Consumer Education Center (HCEC). When families work with HCEC staff, they do not simply apply for RAFT. An HCEC staff member will document the family's housing situation and develop the best response depending on the specific situation. Applicants may be referred to funding sources other than RAFT such as fuel assistance, unemployment, utility assistance, food stamps, TAFDC, Medicaid.

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For complaints of housing discrimination, HCEC, Fair Housing.

For legal help: American Civil Liberties Union of Massachusetts, aclu.org, legal help intake line (617) 482-3700 ext 103

Free tax prep

FREE TAX SERVICES January to April 2017 if you worked in 2016 and earned less than $54,000.

The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program offers free tax help to people who generally make $54,000 or less, persons with disabilities, and limited English-speaking taxpayers who need help preparing and filing their tax returns. IRS-certified volunteers provide free basic income tax return preparation with electronic filing. 

In addition to VITA, the Tax Counseling for the Elderly (TCE) program offers free tax help to all taxpayers, particularly those who are 60 and older, specializing in questions about pensions and retirement-related issues unique to seniors. The IRS-certified volunteers who provide tax counseling are often retired individuals associated with non-profit organizations that receive grants from the IRS.

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Motto. My name is pronounced as Thong. (Not really. I just say so a lot and many times it feels like a motto.)

Personal heroes. Prince, Malcolm X, Bruce Lee, and Barbara Chandler—not necessarily in that order.

Civil rights values

MBHP is committed to providing the civil rights of all residents in our region. Below is some information for anyone who feels themselves victim of a hate crime or discrimination.

For complaints of housing discrimination, HCEC, Fair Housing.

For legal help: American Civil Liberties Union of Massachusetts, aclu.org, legal help intake line (617) 482-3700 ext 103

Free tax prep

FREE TAX SERVICES January to April 2017 if you worked in 2016 and earned less than $54,000.

The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program offers free tax help to people who generally make $54,000 or less, persons with disabilities, and limited English-speaking taxpayers who need help preparing and filing their tax returns. IRS-certified volunteers provide free basic income tax return preparation with electronic filing. 

In addition to VITA, the Tax Counseling for the Elderly (TCE) program offers free tax help to all taxpayers, particularly those who are 60 and older, specializing in questions about pensions and retirement-related issues unique to seniors. The IRS-certified volunteers who provide tax counseling are often retired individuals associated with non-profit organizations that receive grants from the IRS.

For legal assistance:

Meet MBHP: Thong Phan

If you are experiencing housing discrimination, you can always call MBHP and if the problem has not been resolved you will talk to Thong Phan, our Fair Housing Client Advocate. Thong’s days are spent investigating housing issues and following up on cases by reaching out to real estate agents, property owners, and clients with the goal of resolving those issues.

Hometown. I was born in the Philippines, which I have no memory of. I grew up in a suburb of Columbus, South Carolina, where the University of South Carolina is located. I have a Bachelor of Arts degree in Mathematics from the same university. I enjoy playing chess and listening to music.

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Plan ahead! Summer camp registration

If you have school-age children, spring is the time to start planning for the upcoming summer, as camp programs tend to fill up quickly. Below are some suggestions for affordable summer camps.

Boys and Girls Club of America

There are multiple Boys and Girls Clubs in and around Boston that offer summer programming. Find a club near you at bgca.org/where/Programs/FindAClub.aspx.

Camp Harbor View

A four-week summer camp on Long Island in the Boston Harbor. $500 covers round trip transportation, apparel, three meals per day, and access to school year programming and social services. Open to Boston residents ages 11–14, a limited number of slots are available for each neighborhood on a first come, first served basis. Learn more at chof.org.

Cambridge Camping

Since 1953, Cambridge Camping has served children from under-resourced families. They offer affordable day camps and overnight partner camps. Learn more at www.cambridgecamping.org.

Boston Centers for Youth and Families

BCYF offers dozens of neighborhood-based day camps and programs. Their summer guide is now available at boston.gov/health-and-human-services/summer-programs-and-events-bcyf.
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Visit buildingonmission.org to learn more.

• Large meeting space for trainings and workshops
• Accessible entrance and lobby space designed for people with mobility impairments.

• A transit-oriented location, easily accessible by walking, driving, or public transportation. Later this fall, we’ll let you know when we’re settled and you can begin visiting us in our new home.