

Our Mission

We mobilize wide-ranging resources to provide innovative and personalized services that lead families and individuals to housing stability, economic security, and an improved quality of life.

Our Programs

Metro Housing|Boston's personalized programs and services help residents of Greater Boston bridge gaps in the homelessness prevention and affordable housing system. Working with individuals and families who are homeless or at risk of losing their homes navigate available services, we empower them to move along the continuum from homelessness to housing stability.

For more information, visit metrohousingboston.org or call our Housing Consumer Education Center at 617.425.6700.

Metro Housing Honors Property Owners

Celebrating its gratitude to property owners and managers for their continued commitment to providing quality affordable housing, Metro Housing|Boston hosted 50 people at the 16th Annual Property Owner Appreciation Night on April 12.

The partnerships that Metro Housing maintains with property owners are critical to ensuring that families and individuals move along the continuum of housing instability toward economic security and an improved quality of life. Metro Housing could not accomplish our goal without these partnerships.

Chairman Jeffrey Sánchez of the House Ways and Means Committee shared a series of reflections about Metro Housing's work and its new home in Roxbury Crossing while celebrating the role of property owners in their support of families with low incomes who need safe



Chairman Jeffrey Sánchez of the House Ways and Means Committee speaks at the Property Owner Appreciation Evening.

and affordable homes. Representative Sánchez serves as Massachusetts State Representative for the 15th Suffolk/Norfolk District, which includes Mission Hill, Jamaica Plain, Roslindale, and a part of Brookline.

Three owners/managers were cited for exemplary service to tenants that are served through Metro Housing.

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Genevieve Nadeau, Ivan Espinoza-Madrigal and Ethan C. Crawford speak to Metro Housing staff to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Fair Housing Act.

Commemorating 50 Years of Fair Housing Act

In commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the passage of the Fair Housing Act, Metro Housing|Boston hosted a fair housing panel for all staff on April 24th.

Headlining the panel were **Genevieve Nadeau**, Chief of the Civil Rights Division in the Office of Massachusetts Attorney General Maura Healey, **Ivan Espinoza-Madrigal**, Executive Director of the Lawyers' Committee on Civil Rights & Economic Justice, and **Ethan C. Crawford**, Enforcement Advisor, Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination.

The speakers outlined the positive steps that their respective organizations are taking to utilize fair housing and economic justice tools to create and maintain inclusive, respectful, and, most importantly, strong communities.

"One of the significant barriers to housing for our clients is discrimination. That is why Metro Housing established the Fair Housing Project ten years ago," said Barbara Chandler, Senior Advisor on Civil Rights & Fair Housing at Metro Housing.

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New Graduates Achieve Economic Self-Sufficiency

For many, graduations recall a transition from one stage of a young life to another. Those graduations typically involve teenagers completing high school or young adults embarking on a career with a professional certificate or college degree.

However, the graduation of 52 graduates of Metro Housing Boston's Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) program on February 26 marked a completely different kind of transition. FSS participants' graduation marks a transition not just for them but for their entire families.

FSS is designed to help families achieve increased economic self-sufficiency over a five-year period, involving a tremendous commitment and sacrifice by the participants.

Lori Liggins, this year's graduation speaker, became a single mother at age 17. After an abusive relationship, she spent time in a shelter. But Lori's commitment to changing her life never wavered.

"Without FSS, I'm not sure if I'd be here today," said Lori. "It taught me the importance of setting goals and how to take care of myself so I could live independently. My advisor Max was so supportive and understanding that I don't know what I would have done without him by my side."



FSS Graduates with Metro Housing|Boston staff.

One of the most striking elements of FSS is the opportunity for participants to save up to \$25,000. As a participant's earnings increase, money is placed in an escrow savings account for the participant. When the participant successfully completes the program, he or she receives those funds which can then be used for any purpose, including reducing debt, homeownership or higher education.

For more information about FSS, please visit our website at <http://bit.ly/FSSCommitment>

DONOR SPOTLIGHT: Tufts Health Plan Foundation



As the only regional funder exclusively focused on healthy aging, Tufts Health Plan Foundation is driven by its mission to improve

the health and wellness of the diverse communities they serve. The Foundation has given more than \$27 million to Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island non-profits that support work focused on healthy living with an emphasis on older adults.

The Foundation funds programs that promote healthy living across the life span with an emphasis on the most vulnerable, including older adults.

In 2016, the Foundation awarded Metro Housing|Boston's Center for Hoarding Intervention (CHI) a three-year grant to address policies in Boston and Cambridge focused on hoarding intervention. Thanks to this support, CHI has worked to make significant policy and practice shifts that benefit older residents and neighborhoods feeling the effects of hoarding.

"The Metro Housing|Boston initiative is a great example of systems change. Their innovative program is multifaceted.

It educates property owners and first responders while also offering interventions for older people who need help to remain safely in their homes," said Nora Moreno Cargie, president of Tufts Health Plan Foundation and vice president for corporate citizenship at Tufts Health Plan.

Jesse Edsell-Vetter, Program Manager of CHI, led trainings on Metro Housing's hoarding intervention model to housing authorities, elder service organizations, housing providers, property management companies, and the Cambridge Police Department. These meetings resulted in new policies and referrals of hoarding cases to CHI.

"Thanks to the support of the Tufts Health Plan Foundation, within a year, we saw a decrease in the number of cases referred for eviction due to hoarding," said Edsell-Vetter. "More residents are maintaining their housing and learning methods to reduce clutter and manage their homes."

"We know that our hoarding intervention model is effective, changes the lives of individuals, and benefits communities," said Metro Housing|Boston Executive Director Chris Norris. "Thanks to the multiyear commitment from the Tufts Health Plan Foundation, we have made and will continue to make positive changes in these two cities."

Team Metro Housing Makes it Rain

The six members of this year's Team Metro Housing—AJ Burckhardt, Mia Friedman, Diana Lane Jensen, Michael Lara, Dana LeWinter, and Dan Rosen—took to the 26.2 mile Boston Marathon course on April 16th with a sense of accomplishment even before the starting gun went off.

Though conditions were not ideal for running—wind and a steady rain were the order for the day—all members were enthusiastic as they left Hopkinton headed to Boston. Equally impressive, the team surpassed its fund-raising goal of \$60,000.



"I've been training hard and felt that I was in the best condition I've ever been in prior to a marathon," said team member Diana Lane Jensen.

"I was incredibly motivated to get to that finish line this year since I had to drop out near the end of last year's race. I was not going to let the rain stop me."

Michael Lara, Program Manager at Metro Housing, was running his first ever marathon. Did he have any regrets? "No regrets whatsoever. The money we raised is truly for a great cause and will improve the quality of life of those we work for."

Funds raised by our marathon teams support intensive services delivered by experienced case managers to people who face extraordinary obstacles. More than 96% of the residents with the highest needs remain safely housed throughout the year. These results save millions of dollars in eviction procedures, expensive clean outs, emergency shelter, healthcare, and other costs.



Left: Diana Lane Jensen with her parents after the marathon.

Top: Team Metro Housing at their pre-race pasta dinner. (L-R): A.J. Burckhardt; Michael Lara; Dan Rosen; Dana LeWinter; Mia Friedman.

Above: Dan Rosen at mile 20.

Building Relationships and Impacting Budgets on Beacon Hill and Capitol Hill

As budgets are deliberated at both the State House in Boston and in the halls of Congress in Washington, DC, Metro Housing staff have been advocating for policies and funding that supports affordable housing and homelessness prevention.

Executive Director Chris Norris and Director of Policy Steve Farrell were in Washington, DC, when the 2018 federal omnibus budget passed with an increase in the HUD budget. For the first time in many years, affordable housing and homelessness programs realized a substantial increase in federal dollars.

Meanwhile, at the State House in Boston, Metro Housing has been advocating for programs that positively impact individuals and families with extremely low incomes. The most recent focus has been the FY'19 state budget which will take effect July 1. Last month, the House Committee on Ways and Means passed a budget that preserves and expands emergency homeless assistance programs, while



Housing Committee Co-Chairman Senator Joseph Boncore (second from left) with (L-R) Metro Housing staff Steve Farrell, Darnell Wallace, and Nora Pile.

also making substantial investments in homelessness prevention and affordable housing options for both families and individuals. In fact, all of Metro Housing's budget priorities—including the Massachusetts Rental

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New Partnership with Boston Medical Center Launched to Combat Homelessness

Metro Housing|Boston and Boston Medical Center (BMC) are connecting families at risk of homelessness with resources to help them stabilize their housing and avoid eviction. Adults who are unable to afford rent are more likely to report being in fair or poor health, having mental distress, delaying doctor visits, and lacking enough sleep compared to those who never or rarely worry about affording housing expenses.¹ This is Metro Housing's first partnership with a medical institution that incorporates homelessness prevention services.

This new initiative, called *Metro Housing at BMC* is focused on residents of Boston who are patients of BMC's Pediatric Department. *Metro Housing at BMC* is comprised of



Staff from Boston Medical Center and Metro Housing|Boston at the inaugural meeting of Metro Housing at BMC.

homelessness prevention resources, crisis intervention services, and long-term stabilization. More than \$800,000 will be available to assist families thanks to the support of Massachusetts' Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD).

"Affordable, stable housing positively impacts the health of families and children," said Christopher Norris, Executive Director of Metro Housing. "We are looking forward to helping more families have a place they can call home."

With case managers located onsite at BMC, Metro Housing continues its efforts to make its services available to all in the greater Boston region, particularly those who may not live close to the Roxbury Crossing office. This is the 11th location where Metro Housing staff work from the office of a community partner at least part of each week.

"Housing is one of the most significant social determinants of health that we encounter at Boston Medical Center," said Dr. Megan Sandel, Associate Director of the GROW clinic at Boston Medical Center. "With the critical resource that Metro Housing will provide, we are confident we can show how integrating housing services into health-care can improve housing stability and health together."

1. Stahre M., VanEenwyk J., Siegel P., Njai R. *Housing Insecurity and the Association With Health Outcomes and Unhealthy Behaviors*, Washington State, 2011.

Program Updates

In addition to Metro Housing's new partnership with BMC, staff is actively engaged in managing two additional homelessness prevention programs with new resources from existing partners.

First, the state has expanded the eligibility for **Rental Assistance for Families in Transition (RAFT)** to include single person households. RAFT has been a significant tool that Metro Housing and other regional nonprofits have used to prevent homelessness. RAFT funding for individuals is currently in the state budget and Metro Housing and other housing advocates are requesting up to \$4 million in funding for this expanded population in the FY'19 budget being debated at the State House.

Second, the City of Boston is partnering with Metro Housing to utilize their homelessness prevention dollars a little differently this year. Utilizing funds through the **Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG)** program, the Department of Neighborhood Development has consolidated \$300,000 in eviction prevention dollars with Metro Housing in an effort to more efficiently provide this program to residents of Boston. The ESG funds assists homeless households and households at risk of homelessness with up to \$6,000 available to families or individuals experiencing housing crises such as rental arrears or a utility shut off.

Building Relationships and Impacting Budgets *(continued from page 3)*

Voucher Program (MRVP), Residential Assistance for Families in Transition (RAFT), and the Housing Consumer Education Center (HCEC)—received increased support in this version of the budget. The full House, Senate, and Governor Baker will each have a say on the budget before it is finalized at the start of the new fiscal year.

To highlight the importance of homelessness prevention, in December Metro Housing released a report, *RAFT in Review*. In Metro Housing's region alone, more than 1,400

families' housing was stabilized with an average payment of only \$2,600 during FY'17.

At the end of February, Metro Housing staff joined other members of the Regional Housing Network for the release of a statewide RAFT report. Housing Committee Chairmen Representative Kevin Honan and Senator Joseph Boncore hosted the event at the State House as RHN members visited their elected officials to feature the impact of RAFT on families across the state.

Metro Housing Honors Property Owners *(continued from page 1)*

George Gregoriades

George Gregoriades exemplifies the type of property owner that everyone wishes they could rent from. Two years ago, George worked quickly with members of the Metro Housing staff to rent an apartment to Jerry, a victim of domestic violence who had recently recovered from a stroke. Because of Jerry's health issues, George helped him out in multiple ways, big and small. For example, he helped Jerry get a lock box outside of his apartment for easy access for his family and caseworkers. He also helped Jerry get a disability parking placard to make it easier for him to get to medical appointments. As Jerry's birthday is July 4th, George included him in a large gathering for the holiday last year, and then made sure to make the event about Jerry's birthday. Throughout it all, George made Jerry feel welcome and safe from day one.



Honoree George Gregoriades (left), with (L-R) Metro Housing's Sylvia Kelly and Keith Williams, Honoree Joe Deignan, and Metro Housing's Kevin Donaher, Jesse Edsell-Vetter, and Chris Norris

Linda Erbeth

Linda Erbeth showed extreme empathy and compassion when a family needed a new place to call home. The Mercado family had lost their home due to a fire and was in crisis. They had temporarily moved in with a family member but she asked them to move out before they were able to secure a home. The prospect of homelessness created a severe emotional issue for their children. After showing the apartment to the family and learning about their budget limitations, Linda offered them the apartment at a reduced cost. Linda held the apartment for two months while the Mercados worked with Metro Housing staff to complete the process of applying for rent assistance. Linda even assisted the family with the RAFT application.

Joe Deignan

Joe Deignan and his employer, Homeowners Rehab Inc. (HRI) of Cambridge, regularly go above and beyond the call of duty as property owners. From late rent to problems like hoarding, HRI staff develops a plan to support the resident and address the issues at hand. HRI is among Metro Housing's most proactive partners, particularly with extremely difficult cases of tenants who show signs of hoarding disorder. Recently, Joe contacted Metro Housing about a disabled family living in an unclean unit that was infested with bedbugs. He could have stopped there, but Joe also reached out to a team of case managers and other agencies to help the family with other issues. Joe is known as one of the most hands-on property owners in the business as evidenced by his patience, kindness, and empathy for residents.

Commemorating 50 Years of Fair Housing Act *(continued from page 1)*

"It is personally gratifying to me to have such outstanding partners such as the Lawyers Committee on Civil Rights, the Attorney General's Office and the Commission on Discrimination speak to our staff on the powerful steps they have taken to make sure that equal access to housing opportunity is provided to the people we serve."

Among Metro Housing's partners in fair housing, the Attorney General's Civil Rights Division enforces and safeguards constitutional civil rights and liberties on behalf of Massachusetts residents and visitors.

We also work closely with the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and Economic Justice and the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination in protecting the people of Massachusetts from discriminatory treatment and investigating complaints of discrimination that occur in housing.



(L-R): Genevieve Nadeau from the Office of Massachusetts Attorney General Maura Healy; Barbara Chandler of Metro Housing; Ivan Espinoza-Madriral of the Lawyers' Committee on Civil Rights & Economic Justice; Ethan C. Crawford of Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination



Metro Housing B O S T O N

People First. Housing Always.

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Metro Housing Names 2018 Lowell Richards Fellow



Nour Ghadanfar of MIT has been selected as the 2018 recipient of the Lowell L. Richards, III Fellowship for Leadership and Public Service. Nour, originally from Syria, will

complete her fellowship this summer with the Massachusetts Port Authority's (Massport) Department of Planning and Economic Development, where Lowell Richards was Chief Development Officer for more than ten years.

"This was another year with exceptional and very competitive candidates," said Karen Richards, Lowell's wife. "Nour exhibited a combination of life experiences

and accomplishments that would have made Lowell proud to have her represent him with this Fellowship. In the end, I like to believe that what we knew and loved about Lowell inspired this decision."

Nour is a 2019 Master of City Planning candidate and a Research Assistant in the Department of Urban Studies & Planning (DUSP) at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. After graduation she hopes to remain in the area and launch a public service career focused on transportation.

Eventually Nour would like to go back to Syria and help to rebuild a homeland to which she has been unable to return since the start of the civil war. "I know in my heart that what I am supposed to be doing is working to ensure that people are better off—that they can have a better life."

35TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

SAVE THE DATE — Thursday, November 1 (5:30—7:30 p.m.)

John Hancock Financial, 601 Congress Street, Boston