



METRO HOUSING|BOSTON

helps families and individuals address their housing needs across the continuum toward economic security.

OUR MISSION

Metro Housing|Boston mobilizes 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.



MEET LANAII TOLENTINO

Lanaii Tolentino leads her colleagues to deliver winter coats to Metro Housing families. (L-R): Keith Williams, Latawnda Brown, Lanaii, Lacynda Lawton, Sasha Clements.

In a booming economy where helping families who are homeless transition out of motels to a home can be challenging, Lanaii Tolentino takes a different approach.

“The worst part of the job is when you can’t help someone as quickly as you want to,” says Lanaii, a seven-year veteran of Metro Housing.

Finding housing for some of the area’s most vulnerable residents is a daily activity for the Metro Housing Program Manager. Utilizing the HomeBASE program which is designed to get families out of motels and stably housed, Lanaii and her team are responsible for working with the 35 families at the Waltham motel shelter, part of the state’s shelter system. Metro Housing has made great progress in reducing the number of families housed in motels; Metro Housing was working with 572 families in August 2012.

“Finding permanent homes for these families is the most important part of the job we do, yet it is also the most challenging. But once a family is housed, it is vital that they become stable. Families need employment and child care options. They need beds and clothing for themselves and their children. And during the holiday season that we just concluded, with the help of many local corporations, we help families get access to coats and Christmas toys and gifts.”

Lanaii’s eternal positive attitude might be the key to her success.

“No matter where my life’s journey takes me, it will always be something that can have a positive influence on someone else’s life. The families I work with are people who just need a hand. My attitude is, I have two hands, so why not use one to help them get up?”

In 2012, Metro Housing worked with **572 FAMILIES** IN MOTEL SHELTERS that has been REDUCED TO **35 FAMILIES** in 2019

A CLOSE LOOK AT INSPECTIONS



Joe Palange, Metro Housing inspector, checks out the electrical wiring during a recent home inspection.

THESE TIPS ARE GOOD PRACTICES FOR ALL OWNERS:

- Test **smoke and carbon monoxide detectors** to be sure they are working.
- Verify that **doors and windows** are weather-tight and insulated.
- Make sure that **windows open and shut** without being propped up and that there are **locks and screens** on all windows.
- **Handrails** are required where there are four or more steps, both inside and outside.
- **Bathrooms** must have a window or a working ventilation fan.
- **Doors** cannot have locks that prevent a person from exiting a room.
- **Floors** must be free of trip hazards. Bathroom and kitchen floors must be waterproof.
- The **heating system must** be working and available between September 15 and June 15 at a minimum of 68°F. Hot water must be available at all times and heated to not less than 110°F and not more than 130°F.
- **Plumbing** should not leak.
- The **stove** should be clean and all burners and the oven must work properly.
- **Lights** should be present and working on the exterior of the building, both front and rear.

The eight inspectors who perform 19,000 inspections each year to ensure that homes are safe and habitable for our Section 8 participants are among the unsung heroes of Metro Housing. Using their knowledge of the latest building codes and regulations, the inspectors work closely with property owners to ensure the safety of thousands of family members across the region.

“The job of our inspectors is to make sure people are safe in their homes,” says Kevin Donaher, Director of Inspectional and Property Owner Services. “Families deserve to feel secure where they live.”

Inspections play a critical role in the well-being of families who rely upon rental assistance to lease apartments. To make

sure that an apartment is safe for tenants, the apartment must meet both federal and state standards.

Apartments are inspected either once a year or every other year depending on the owner’s maintenance history. Inspections also occur any time a tenant moves into a new apartment, or when a tenant or property owner has made a complaint.

Tenants are advised to prepare for their inspection by checking the items on the list at right.

For more information about Metro Housing’s inspection process, contact Howard Wensley, Inspections Manager, at howard.wensley@metrohousingboston.org or visit <http://bit.ly/MetroInspection>.



LONG TIME PROPERTY OWNER PUTS TENANTS FIRST

Gerry Snierison has been renting his apartments to Metro Housing families for 25 years – and some have been tenants of his for that long. He currently rents to 32 families through Metro Housing.

What’s his secret?

“I know all of my tenants well and make sure I have personal contact with all of them,” says Gerry. “If there is ever a problem, I work to

accommodate them. I’ve had one tenant (non- Metro Housing) that has been with me for nearly 40 years.”

Gerry grew up in Chelsea and has chosen the city to be the home of his company – New Chelsea Realty. He is proud of the fact that he rents mostly to voucher holders, helping families remain in safe and affordable homes. “Renting to voucher holders through Metro Housing means that I am assured of a fair rent and my apartments are inspected every year, which I think is very valuable.”

Inspections are a very important part of Gerry’s business. “If you don’t keep up with maintenance, you’ll never get fair value for your unit. I think Metro Housing does a very thorough job with their inspections and their team there – including Kevin Donaher, Howard Wensley and Carlos Hoffens- have always been responsive.”

A few years ago, a four-family home that Gerry owned in Chelsea suffered a devastating fire and the building was a total loss. No one was injured but four families were now

homeless. “I had one available unit in another building and Kevin and Carlos at Metro Housing sprang into action to help me house a mother and her ten-year-old daughter who were Section 8 voucher holders,” says Gerry. “They conducted an inspection the same day and completed all of the paperwork necessary. Within 48 hours after the fire, my tenants were back in a safe home. It brings me to tears when I think about it and it was all due to the inspections team at Metro Housing.”

GIVING BACK TO OUR COMMUNITY

Volunteering Highlights from Metro Housing



Volunteers from Plymouth Rock Assurance and United Way helped to prepare an apartment for move-in for a single mother with three children.



Gerson Lehrman Group and United Way volunteered to help prepare "Welcome Home" baskets for Metro Housing families moving into affordable and stable homes.



Metro Housing staff donated more than 3,000 individual food items during the holidays to Action Boston for Community Development's (ABCD) Parker Hill/Fenway Neighborhood Services Center.

DONOR PROFILE: JOE RETTMAN

Managing Partner, NEI General Contracting

Founded in 1998, NEI provides general contracting and construction management services. In addition to NEI's role as general contractor of the building that Metro Housing now calls home, Joe has been a long-time friend, partner, and donor. He served as co-chair of the 2018 Champions of Housing event.

Joe recently spoke about his interest in affordable housing and Metro Housing's work.

Why does affordable housing and homelessness prevention matter to you?

"Some people are spending close to 100% of their income to house themselves and their families. Without a stable home, families don't have a chance to advance their dreams and goals and build the fabric of family."

Why did you first decide to support Metro Housing?

"The mission of keeping people in their homes who are experiencing hard times and providing supportive services for families that are one step away from homelessness is truly God's work. Metro Housing not only helps those in need, they help them find a path back to more stable housing. For me, supporting Metro Housing's mission was a no-brainer."

What do you find most challenging about the housing situation for low-income families in Boston?

"Housing costs in Boston continue to rise at a meteoric rate and the cost of construction is through the roof. The financial resources needed to make a true dent in the situation simply are not available in the amounts needed. High rents and barriers to entry continue to be a major concern for families. On



NEI is the donor for one of the conference rooms at Metro Housing. Pictured here at the ribbon cutting are (L-R) Chris Norris of Metro Housing, Brandt Wajda and Joe Rettman of NEI, and Anne Rousseau of Metro Housing.

the last affordable housing project NEI completed, there were 3,200 applicants for only 28 units. If that doesn't represent the crux of the issue, I don't know what does."

Metro Housing thanks Joe and NEI for their continued support. For more information on donor recognition opportunities, please contact Carla Beaudoin at carla.beaudoin@metrohousingboston.org.

Metro Housing's

CHAMPIONS OF HOUSING

35th Anniversary Celebration Thursday, November 1, 2018



Champions of Housing honorees (L-R): Eric Shupin, Leslie Reid, Patricia Flaherty, and Donald Conover.

Katy O'Neil, Vice-President, Business Development & Client Relations, Northeast of Suffolk, and Josef Rettman, Managing Principal of NEI General Contracting, were co-chairs of the event. Bank of America was the presenting sponsor of the event, which was held at John Hancock Financial's building in the Boston Seaport. Eastern Bank and The Peabody Companies served as Gold Sponsors while State Street and



Bertha Frazier, a Metro Housing participant, is flanked by employees Darnell Williams (L) and Cody Tracey (R).

NEI served as Platinum Sponsors. Thank you to all of our sponsors and auction donors for your generous support

We honored the accomplishments of leaders who share our passion and commitment to ensuring that everyone in Greater Boston has a place to call home. Honorees were Eric Shupin of Citizens' Housing & Planning Association, Leslie Reid of Madison



Auctioneer John Terrio prepares attendees for our live auction.

Park Development Corporation, Patricia Flaherty of Mission Hill Neighborhood Housing Services, and Donald Conover, of Conover & Associates, LLC .

Champions of Housing raised more than \$350,000, a new record for this annual event. The funds raised help support case management for the thousands of families facing a housing crisis that Metro Housing works with every year.



FOUNDATION
MASSACHUSETTS

\$75,000 GRANT AWARDED

Metro Housing & Boston Medical Center receive data capacity-building grant from Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation

Building upon several exciting organizational changes, Metro Housing has been awarded a \$75,000 grant from the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation to support the collection of real-time data in a new partnership with Boston Medical Center (BMC).

Known as Metro Housing at BMC, this cross-sector initiative began last year within the Pediatrics Department at BMC and connects patients at BMC with critical supportive housing services at Metro Housing. As part of Metro Housing's expanding colocation program, a case worker is on site to receive referrals from BMC medical and social services staff so that at-risk families can have access to homelessness prevention resources, crisis intervention services, and long-term stabilization strategies without leaving the hospital.

This grant will support the development of cutting edge, two-way, real-time communication to allow for proactive responses to the participants' current status, ultimately improving health outcomes. This grant is awarded just as Metro Housing is preparing to launch an organization-wide outcomes and data upgrade later in 2019.

"As a pediatrician who serves patients and families in our safety net hospital, I am unfortunately familiar with the adverse effects of homelessness and housing instability on child and parent physical and mental health," said Dr. Genevieve Preer,

Pediatrician at BMC. "This grant addresses another fundamental aspect of our collaboration—how to gather, share, and use data across sectors and silos in a way that makes our service provision more effective and meaningful."

"We greatly appreciate the support of the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation for this generous grant," said Chris Norris, Executive Director of Metro Housing. "This grant will help us realize our vision for a data management solution that allows all providers to have access to comprehensive information on all services a patient receives."

"We all know that the medical care that a person receives is but one factor in their overall health, and that social conditions like housing or food access have a significant impact," said Audrey Shelto, President of the BCBSMA Foundation. "We are excited to continue our work in addressing the social determinants of health with this new grant program, which will foster cross-collaboration between human service and health care systems and improve both health and social needs for our populations."

The mission of the BCBSMA Foundation is to expand access to health care low-income and vulnerable individuals and families in the Commonwealth. The Foundation was founded in 2001 with an initial endowment from Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts. It operates separately from the company and is governed by its own Board of Directors.

Metro Housing's

COMINGS & GOINGS IN BOSTON AND DC

CAPITOL HILL

Welcome & Congratulations



We congratulate and welcome newly elected **Ayanna Pressley**, the first African-American woman elected to Congress from Massachusetts. Based

on our strong working relationship during her time on the Boston City Council, we look forward to working with her as she takes on a new role in Congress.

Promoted



We also congratulate Congresswoman **Katherine Clark** in her new role as the vice-chair of the House Democratic caucus, making her the fifth-highest-

ranking Democrat in the House. During her six years in Washington, D.C., Congresswoman Clark has proven herself to be an adept and capable legislator, and a true ally of affordable housing causes.

Thank You



Metro Housing wants to thank recently-departed **Congressman Mike Capuano** for his many years of service on the Housing Finance Subcommittee in the

House of Representatives. Thank you for your service and support.

BEACON HILL

Welcome & Congratulations

Metro Housing is pleased to congratulate eight new legislators in our region as they take their seats in the House chamber on Beacon Hill. We welcome **David Biele, Michelle Ciccolo, Nika Elugardo, Richard Haggerty, Liz Miranda, David Robertson, Jon Santiago, and Tommy Vitolo.**



David Biele



Michelle Ciccolo



Nika Elugardo



Richard Haggerty



Liz Miranda



David Robertson



Jon Santiago



Tommy Vitolo

Thank You

While we say hello to new legislators, **mourn the passing of Representative Jim Miceli**, and congratulate six other state representatives that have left public service, we thank and appreciate the work of these six individuals for their long-term support of affordable housing and homelessness prevention.

- **Evandro Carvalho**
- **Jay Kaufman**
- **Jeffrey Sanchez**
- **James Dwyer**
- **Byron Rushing**
- **Frank Smizik**

IN MEMORIAM: AMY ANTHONY



Metro Housing is deeply saddened by the recent passing of **Amy Anthony**, a member of our Board of Directors from 1993 to 1996. As Secretary of the Massachusetts Executive Office of Communities and Development, Amy worked with former Metro Housing Board Co-Chair Steven Rioff to create Metropolitan Housing, Inc. which later merged with the Boston Housing Partnership, Inc. to form Metropolitan Boston Housing Partnership, Inc.

Amy was considered one of the nation's foremost experts on housing policy and finance, and in 2011 was inducted into the Affordable Housing Hall of Fame. Metro Housing honored Amy in 2015 with our Founders Award.

Amy was also the founder and former President and CEO of Preservation of Affordable Housing, and at the time of her death was on the Board of Directors of the Affordable Housing Institute. Metro Housing sends our deepest condolences to Amy's family.

MHSA HONORS METRO HOUSING

Metro Housing recently received the Cornerstone Award from the Massachusetts Housing & Shelter Alliance (MHSA) – given to 20 agencies across Massachusetts who partner with MHSA for its Home & Healthy for Good (HHG) program. HHG is a supportive housing program that prioritizes housing first as a solution to homelessness.

With access to supportive services through HHG, formerly homeless individuals no longer need to rely on public emergency services as their primary sources of care. Instead, tenants are able to utilize mainstream systems of preventative and primary health care, better coordinate with mental health providers, and maintain consistent

permanent tenancy rather than using more costly public systems, such as emergency shelters and detox facilities.

Since 2006, HHG has placed 1011 chronically homeless adults into permanent housing with supportive services, including 196 veterans.



Receiving the Cornerstone Award on behalf of Metro Housing was Yanick Denis, Case Management Specialist (center). Joining Yanick above is Sylvia Kelly, SIPS Manager (L) and Susan Smith, HMIS Program Coordinator (R).

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TEAM METRO HOUSING TAKES THE CHALLENGE

It is 5 a.m. on an early February Wednesday morning. With nine weeks to go before the big race, your training guide says you are due for a seven mile run before work. That grim – and cold – reality is what these five athletes are willingly embracing to help ensure that everyone in Greater Boston will always have a place to call home. Each runner has their own personal reason for accepting such an enormous challenge. And we honor their drive and motivation!

Team Metro Housing has been running the Boston Marathon and raising money since 2006 thanks to the John Hancock Nonprofit Program. Over the past 12 years, volunteer runners have raised a combined \$431,000 to prevent homelessness for thousands of families and individuals throughout Greater Boston. The impact made by Team Metro Housing is enhanced by the thousands of donors who have contributed over the years, thereby increasing awareness of our work and the need for ongoing support.

You can support an individual runner or donate to the team this year by visiting the team page at <http://bit.ly/MetroHousingmarathon>



Team Metro Housing, 2019 (L-R): Cece Baggott, Andrew Haas, Kate Keaney, Venice Touze, and Dina Vargo