

Boston Alliance *for* Community Health



Shopping on a Budget: One BACH member's experience with food access at the Daily Table in Codman Square

BACH *Notes & News*

January 2016

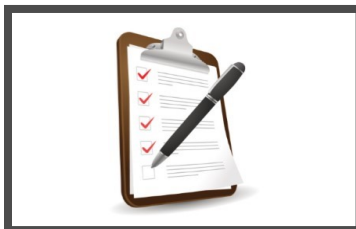
As we begin 2016, we want to take a moment to look back at the last six months and discuss the exciting public health initiatives that BACH and our partner organizations have been working on ...

We are now one year into our strategic issue implementation and are currently assessing our progress. PICH, recently renamed to Let's Get Healthy, Boston! has trained 75 residents as Healthy Community Champions who are working on issues of active transportation, healthy food and beverages, and smoke-free housing. Our Community Engagement and Membership Planning Committee is working hard to plan the 2016 cycle of free public health workshops, which will kick off on January 28th with "Stop the Stigma: The Intersection Between Mental Health & Addiction." This year we will be partnering with the Boston Public Health Commission's REACH Coalition to put on the workshops, and hopefully increase our resident engagement. We are very excited about 2016 and hope that it will be the healthiest year yet for Boston residents! Be sure to check us out on [Facebook](#) and follow us on [Twitter](#), where we discuss community health issues.

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What's Happening in BACH?



Director's Note

Highlights of BACH supported neighborhood and citywide initiatives in alignment with MAPP strategic issues.



LGHB! Update

Healthy Community Champions lead smoke-free housing, healthy food and beverages, and active transportation initiatives.



Resident Engagement

BACH continues to engage residents in events and trainings through BachLEARN and "Passport to Public Health."

Resident Engagement

Community Engagement and Membership Committee (CEMC) remains committed to diversifying community partnerships and increasing resident involvement in our efforts to support healthy communities through education, communication, and collaboration.

This past fall, we (in cooperation with neighborhood coalitions and partners) wrapped up a 10-workshop series, which provided educational opportunities to our membership. The topics ranged from stress management to immigrant leadership.

Our September workshop, which focused on tenant rights, was facilitated by Michael Kane, Director of Mass Alliance of HUD Tenants. About 20 residents gathered at the Josephine A. Fiorentino Community Center in Brighton to learn more about public housing, section 8 vouchers and HUD affordable housing. We heard personal stories reflecting gentrification and the rise of evictions in our neighborhoods. The workshop concluded with a Q&A session and discussion around new legislation.

This is just one example of the many informative workshops we held throughout 2015. Overall, we attracted more than 150 new members into the BACH community. In 2016, the workshop series is entitled, "Passport to Public Health," where we will move across neighborhoods with new topics to engage our membership.

We were also able to implement some new programs, including BachLEARN and member scholarships. BachLEARN, (Leadership, Education and Activism Resource Newsletter) is a bi-monthly listing of local training opportunities that closely align with BACH's strategic issues. In conjunction, we hope to make these trainings more accessible by offering scholarships and stipends to our members.

Currently, our budget allows for up to \$250 scholarships for fees, and \$35-\$70 daily stipends. We hope this will assist our members with gaining skills to be successful advocates with public health issues.

Please check out the [Community Engagement](#) section of our website for more details.

Director's Note



LGHB! Community Engagement Manager, Tamika Francis, presenting at Act FRESH Regional Convening in December.

The beginning of 2016 marks the start of my sixth year as Director at BACH. We have gone through tremendous changes in these five years:

- BACH's Steering Committee expanded to include a broader array of community-based and health organizations in recognition of the importance of addressing the social determinants of health. It is now comprised of a majority of people of color, reflecting the population of Boston.
 - The Health Planning and Improvement Committee chose the Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnership process which engaged over 2000 people and resulted in a plan for improving the health of residents with an emphasis on equity that has become part of the City of Boston's community health improvement plan.
 - The Community Investment Committee designed a process for soliciting proposals for funding through BACH that supported the MAPP process and, in the past year, has funded some groundbreaking initiatives addressing the strategic issues including equity, leadership development, clinical and prevention integration, trauma and resilience, and social determinants policy and practice to improve health outcomes. BACH distributed over \$200,000 in grants to community coalitions and organizations in the past 18 months, and over one million dollars over the past 5 years.
 - BACH staff and volunteers have been active "Planning Partners" in priority-setting and decision-making processes to distribute Boston hospitals' Community Health Initiative funds to community-based organizations throughout Boston, including the development of an on-line game, "What Matters for Health" that engaged over 900 people to assist Brigham and Women's Hospital's process.
 - BACH is an active partner with Mass Public Health Association in advocating for public health policies through their Act FRESH campaign and with a cross-organization group advocating for certification and sustainable funding for Community Health Workers
 - BACH worked with Roxbury organizations and residents to address diabetes prevention and management through Roxbury Rising Against Diabetes.
 - BACH is partnering with the Boston Public Health Commission on a 3 year federal grant to address causes of chronic illness, called Let's Get Healthy, Boston!. Ten community coalitions and organizations recruited 75 residents whom we trained and are now working in Boston's neighborhoods to increase the number of smoke-free housing units, improve access to healthy beverages
- (continued on following page)*

The Daily Table: Healthy Food Available to All

By Nermeen Tahoun, BACH Intern

Former Trader Joe's President, Doug Rauch, introduces an innovative low-cost grocery store to address Dorchester's food desert and food insecurity issues.

When I heard of a grocery store that subsidizes its food and produce to lower the cost for customers, I had to check it out. The Daily Table in Codman Square, Dorchester, is a not-for-profit store that purchases and/or receives donated produce at a reduced cost from local grocery stores to provide wholesome nutritious foods at affordable prices. The building has posted signage showing its love for the community. Upon entering, I found friendly staff and the general environment felt similar to a Whole Foods or Trader Joe's. It is no surprise since the store was founded by Doug Rauch, former president of Trader Joe's.

The store's mission is that *"...wholesome and affordable food should be available to all. We are on a mission to help communities make great choices around food by making it easy for them to choose tasty, healthy, convenient and truly affordable meals and groceries. And we do this in a respectful manner that honors our customer, engendering dignity."*

The prices seemed too good to be true; organic whole wheat bread for just \$1.50, pre-made salads for \$1.29, entrees for \$2.99. On-site cooks prepare healthy, nutritious meals that range from \$2.00-\$4.00. I signed up for a membership on the spot.

As a graduate student with a tight food budget of \$200/month, access to healthy foods is limited when shopping at the standard grocery store. For the first time in many years, \$200 will provide me with a whole, complete diet.

The next day, I purchased 4 bags of food for under \$40. The cashier greeted me with a smile and responded to my disbelief with excitement and asked me to spread the word. Leaving the store, I ran into a small family whom had checked out before me. "These were under \$40! I can't believe it!" I said with continued shock.

They replied, "Yes, we come here every week!" I bought pre-made salads, rice and beans, and a few entrees. The Jamaican entrée was amazing; freshly made by their in-house chefs that day, it felt as though I was eating gourmet restaurant food. I will definitely be going back for more!

To buy food, you must become a member. However, there are no restrictions for eligibility and memberships are free. Signing up is quick and easy. Upon checkout, members provide their phone number to the clerk. The store uses customer zip codes to track the neighborhoods they are benefiting, ensuring that the low-cost food initiative targets low-income communities.

BACH has been working with a cross-sector group of stakehold-

"As a graduate student with a tight food budget of \$200/month, access to healthy foods is limited when shopping at the standard grocery store."

ers to improve the food system in Codman Square. The Daily Table is an essential part of the AHEAD project (Aligning Health Equity and Development). Learn more about [AHEAD](#).

Located at 450 Washington St in Dorchester Center, the Daily Table is MBTA accessible via the 17 bus, the Talbot Ave stop on the Fairmount line, and the Shawmut stop on the red line.



and food, and generate more opportunities for safe walking and biking (including a Safe Routes to School program with 26 elementary and middle schools).

- The Community Engagement and Membership Committee held informative health related forums in neighborhoods around the city and produced a wonderful 7 minute video, "Boston: Making the Connections" which explains the importance of achieving health

equity and addressing social determinants of health in order to achieve our vision of a healthy Boston. See here: <https://www.youtube.com>.

- The Racial Equity Committee coordinated a multi-month consultation and training for BACH leadership on racism and ways to improve BACH's functioning to achieve racial equity.

I invite you to read about some of these

issues in this newsletter and to explore our website at www.bostonalliance.org, "like" us on [Facebook](#), "follow" us on [Twitter](#) and contact us about ways you and your organization can join our collective efforts.

May the next year bring us renewed hope that, together, we can build an equitable, just, and healthy community.

David Aronstein, MSW
Director

Resident Engagement

Let's Get Healthy Boston! Launch

On Saturday, September 19, over 300 Boston residents, along with Congressman Michael Capuano; Boston Chief of Health and Human Services Felix Arroyo; City Councilor Tito Jackson; and BPHC's Interim Executive Director Dr. Huy Nguyen, celebrated the early success of Let's Get Healthy, Boston! with a healthy and fun event at the Roxbury YMCA.

The event provided a space for partners, organizations, neighborhood residents and HCCs to network, have fun and reflect on the great work happening in Boston. Congressman Capuano talked about his support for this initiative and the significance of federal funding to improving the health of local communities. Chief Arroyo emphasized that addressing health disparities is a priority of Mayor Walsh and projects like this one support that aim.

Dr. Nguyen talked about the importance of addressing policy and systems changes to make an impact on the health of Boston's residents, and thanked the Champions for their work. Two of our HCCs, Esther Medina and Vivian Ortiz reflected on the importance of the work of Let's Get Healthy, Boston! for their neighborhoods.



LGHB! Launch event brought out over 300 residents.

Let's Get Healthy, Boston!

Eat well. Be active. Go smoke free.

A Partnership to Improve Community Health initiative

New LGHB! Logo and slogan, rebranded from Partnerships to Improve Community Health (PICH).

Boston PICH project has officially rebranded itself to Let's Get Healthy, Boston! (LGHB). This name reflects the vision for our city, as well as a call to action.

Since July, the 75 Healthy Community Champions (HCCs) participated in a 10-week training program with an over 75% completion rate. Of 12 grantees, 10 groups have continued to work with us. The teams develop and implement neighborhood-specific work plans with BACH and the Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC). Below are updates on each of the LGHB initiatives!

Smoke-Free Housing

Goal: Increase the number of housing units in the city that are designated smoke-free, reaching up to 62,000 residents.

In collaboration with BPHC's Division of Healthy Homes and Community Supports, LGHB gained ground on transforming the landscape of smoke-free housing in Boston. So far, three Community Development Corporations, two management companies and 15 landlords have transitioned 3,800 units with almost 10,000 residents, to smoke-free.

Two of our HCC grantee community development corporations, Dorchester Bay Economic Development Corporation and Codman Square Neighborhood Development Corporation have also become smoke-free. Approximately 26 HCCs have been trained to engage landlords in their neighborhoods about the benefits of smoke-free housing and are involved in public-process discussions to

support smoke-free housing throughout Boston.

Healthy Food & Beverage Promotion

Goal: Increase the number of people with better access to healthy food and beverages, reaching up to 600,000 residents.

Boston Bounty Bucks (BBB) is a nutrition incentive program that helps make healthy food more affordable by providing a **dollar-for-dollar match of up to \$10**, each time a Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) client shops at a participating farmers' market. The program experienced rapid growth and needed a system upgrade to sustain its infrastructure.

To do so, LGHB partnered with the Mayor's Office of Food Initiatives (OFI) to launch a new digital system. LGHB's BBB Digital Pilot purchased existing technology and trained market managers. We found that 81% of SNAP users prefer the new system. LGHB is also working with OFI on BBB *(continued on following page)*

Get Involved!

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617.279.2240, x508
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Bartlett Place: A New Look for Roxbury?

By Ellen Kenny, BACH Intern

One of BACH's partners, Nuestra CDC, is partnering to develop the largest housing development in Roxbury's history, in the center of Dudley Square

Nuestra CDC, one of BACH's partners, along with Windale Developers, are behind the new and exciting Bartlett Place. Bartlett Place is a large, mixed-use development complex, which will begin construction in Dudley Square, Roxbury, early this year. Once completed, Bartlett Place will be the largest home development in Roxbury's history. As such, it will greatly impact the community.

Bartlett Place will replace an old MBTA bus lot that has remained unoccupied for years. Throughout this time, Roxbury residents have made use of the lot as a graffiti park—turning it into an artistic haven that many cherished and were sad to see torn down. Before demolition, Nuestra CDC sponsored a summer of art events including concerts, food trucks and a mural festival. The developers

“Bartlett Place will no doubt bring employment and housing opportunities... however a development of this size has generated conflicting opinions from the community...”

have promised to keep an artistic emphasis on Bartlett Place. The “creative village” will incorporate a public plaza for performance and public art in addition to a performing arts charter school.

The developers' goal is to create opportunity and growth for the neighborhood through energy efficient and environmentally sustainable building practices. The building will additionally employ over 400 construction workers and create permanent jobs for over 200 retail/office jobs. The developers have pledged to hire local workers. Among market-rate prices, there will also be low-income and affordable housing opportunities available for local residents.

Bartlett Place will no doubt bring employment and housing op-

portunities, among overall improvements for the area, however a development of this size has generated conflicting opinions from the community (voiced at a recent meeting for the project).

Over the past decade, Roxbury has noticed the strong impact of gentrification. Long-term residents have expressed their frustration with rising rental prices. Many residents worry that Bartlett Place will further drive more local residents out, with the majority of units being offered at market-rate values.

However, developers argue that Bartlett Place is addressing gentrification in the area through adding housing for Roxbury families earning a range of incomes. In addition, the development will create new business opportunities for Roxbury entrepreneurs, including Accelerate Boston, Future Boston and LISC.

Bartlett Place is replacing old with new. It will bring further economic development, housing, arts and education to the area. Although some residents fear further gentrification, the development's goal is to support the local, hard-working residents of Roxbury by improving the area and creating opportunities.



A projected design for the Bartlett Place residences and shops.
Photo courtesy of Nuestra Comunidad CDC

sustainability and determining LGHB's support role. At this point our plan is to digitize more markets next summer, and align with city/state plans for healthy food access.

Sugar Sweetened Beverages (SSBs)

Goal: Decrease consumption of SSBs and increase water consumption.

LGHB is reaching out to local pharmacies to join in efforts to promote healthier beverages. As of the end of 2015, BPHC continues to communicate with Walgreens and CVS corporate offices to identify strategies for promoting healthy beverages in Boston-

based stores.

HCCs have visited 80% of their neighborhood pharmacies to assess the retail space and educate the store managers. Two pharmacies have taken the first step of participating in the collection of baseline data. This will help set priorities for proposing healthy changes in signage and merchandising.

Access to Physical Activity Opportunities through Active Transportation (Walking and Biking)

Goal: Increase the number of people with opportunities to walk or bike safely as part of

their commute (including to school); reaching up to 185,000 residents.

When we started our work in May, a person/family of low wealth could only sign up for a subsidized [Hubway](#) membership through City Hall. As of December, six Hubway Satellite Sites are in advanced planning stages. Because of the efforts of the HCCs, in partnership with Boston Bikes, many more families will have access to Hubway memberships. For more information about subsidized Hubway membership, visit [Boston Bike's](#) website.

Get To Know Your Healthy Community Champions



Kerry Cameron

Age: 26

Organization: Neponset Health Center

Neighborhood: South Dorchester

Topic Area: Active Transit

What are you hoping to accomplish? Because not everyone has access to the same resources, I hope we can provide community members with the resources they need and then motivate them to take advantage of those resources to increase their physical activity level through biking.



Tiffany Cogell

Age: 46

Organization: Talbot Norfolk Triangle / The Boston Project Ministries

Neighborhood: TNT/Codman Square/Dorchester

Topic Area: Active Transit

Why did you become involved with the Healthy Community Champions Program? Now I have the privilege of raising awareness about the importance of Active Transit – whether it be walking, biking, or just finding a way to be active every day – physical activity is essential to a healthy lifestyle. It is my pleasure to participate in an initiative to serve my neighbors in this way.



Michelle Harrison

Age: 33

Organization: Allston Brighton Community Development Corporation

Neighborhood: Allston Brighton

Topic Area: Healthy Food & Beverage Access and Active Transit

What are you hoping to accomplish? I'm hoping to bring more awareness about these organizations and their missions to the community. I want the community at large to realize that they have a voice and they can impact change.



Hugh Roach

Age: 65

Organization: Mattapan Food and Fitness Coalition (MFFC)

Neighborhood: Mattapan

Topic Area(s): Active Transit and Healthy Food & Beverages

Why did you become involved with the Healthy Community Champions Program? I read an article in the Bay State Banner in reference to the state of health in the “Black” community and I was surprised to learn that the incidents of diabetes, Hypertension and obesity was highest amongst residents of Mattapan... When I met Vivian Ortiz (MFFC) and she asked if I would be interested in being involved in this program, I said yes for the stated reasons. Also I felt that I would have access to information that could broaden my scope of understanding of these issues.



Denise Roman

Age: 23

Organization: Dorchester Bay Economic Development Corporation

Neighborhood: North Dorchester

Topic Area: Smoke-Free Housing and Safe Routes to School

Why did you become involved with the Healthy Community Champions Program? I became involved with the Healthy Community Champions program because I was born and raised in Boston and I loved the idea of becoming part of a good change to Boston.

CHW's are Vital to Improving Health Outcomes

By Holli Childs, BACH Intern

Community Health Workers are proven to improve health inequities. However, their utilization is made stagnant by a state regulation freeze.

If you look at a map of Boston that identifies the neighborhoods by their health indicators, you will see significant inequities in health outcomes. These inequities are the result of many things, but a major factor, that health care providers cannot control, is the environment in which people live. For years, the field of public health has been working to find the best solution to this problem. One method that has proven successful is utilizing community health workers (CHWs).

In Massachusetts, a lot of work has been done to prepare to effectively certify CHWs; however, due to a regulation freeze issued by Governor Baker, certification has yet to be implemented. This “freeze” means that no new regulations can be put in place until all old regulations have been evaluated.

CHWs act as a bridge between health services and residents, in the individuals' own homes and environments. The website explorehealthcareers.org describes CHWs as “front line public health workers who have a close understanding of the community they serve.” This definition highlights the most important quality of a CHW – understanding the community they serve.

We know that this quality, combined with effective use of CHWs in a health system, can improve health outcomes. In an article published by the World Health Organization, they indicate that ample evidence exists to confirm that “CHWs can undertake actions that lead to improved health outcomes ([Community Health Workers:](#)

[What do we Know About Them?](#)).” They do this by addressing environmental concerns and helping patients live a lifestyle conducive to improving health. A story, related by Dr. Rushika Fernandopulle of Iora Health, and reported by The Commonwealth Fund, illustrates this principle:

“We had a Medicare patient in Seattle. She had moved from California after her husband died to live with her daughter. The problem was the daughter lived in the suburbs and the mom couldn't get around and was getting isolated. Her diabetes and hypertension were getting worse. The health coach realized that the problem wasn't that she needed more medicine; she needed to stop being isolated. So the health coach essentially taught her to use the bus, first by riding to the clinic together. The patient figured out how to do transfers and ride the bus back. Now this has nothing to do with health care and yet it has everything to do with health care. Now she can come to us, she can visit friends. And by the way her diabetes and blood pressure are in great control. We didn't touch her medicine.” ([Transforming Care: Reporting on Health System Improvement](#))

“CHWs act as a bridge between health services and residents, in the individuals' own homes and environments.”

This story and a plethora of additional research, emphasize the value of CHWs in improving health outcomes. The Massachusetts Association of Community Health Workers, (MACHW) along with BACH and the Department of Public Health (DPH), have been working to improve the sustainability of CHWs in MA. MACHW has two major priorities they will be focusing on in 2016.

First, they will work with MassHealth as they transition to [Accountable Care Organizations](#) (ACOs), to educate them on how to maximize the role of CHWs in the health system. Second, they will work to engage CHWs through five regional chapters that will identify and prioritize the issues specific to each region and incorporate professional development for CHWs.

Additionally, MACHW and DPH have been working to create and implement a certification program. This program will insure that all CHWs are operating on the same level of competency. Once the regulation freeze has been lifted, they plan to implement this program.

With all of the progress being made toward better utilization of CHWs, let's hope that Boston's neighborhood map of health indicators will look different by the end of 2016 than it does now.



Iora Primary Care health coach, Brendalys Rosario, takes senior, Marina Haley on a tour of the new Iora practice in Hyde Park, MA.
Photo courtesy of The Commonwealth Fund.

PASSPORT TO PUBLIC HEALTH

Grab your passport and get ready to learn about issues affecting our community. Join Boston Alliance for Community Health, Boston Public Health Commission and our community partners in a series of workshops across Boston neighborhoods.

Contact Olivia Larkin to RSVP or with questions: olarkin@hria.org, 617-279-2240 ext 061. Visit www.BostonAlliance.org for further details.

CHARLES TOWN

JAN 28: Stop the Stigma: Mental Health & Addiction

EAST BOSTON

FEB 25: Survivors, Supporters and Shelters: Domestic Violence Panel

SOUTH END

MAR 24: Race, Resilience & Community Violence

CHINA TOWN

APR 28: Oh the Places You'll Go...While Using Active Transit

SOUTH BOSTON

MAY 26: Seniors Strong!

DORCHESTER

JUN 23: "The Talk:" Discussing Sexual Health with your Teen

FOX BURY

JUL 28: Behind a Username: Online Safety Panel

Jamaica Plain

AUG 25: Immigrant Rights & the Presidential Election

ALLSTON BRIGHTON

SEP 22: Community Development through Home Ownership

MATTAPAN

OCT 27: Health of Men of Color

Boston Alliance *for* Community Health

BOSTON PUBLIC HEALTH COMMISSION

