

# Boston Alliance *for* Community Health



*"I grew up in South Boston and I really love my neighborhood...and part of the reason I became involved with the HCC initiative is to help build a community in South Boston."*

~Joseph Kebartas, South Boston  
Healthy Community Champion

## BACH *Notes & News*

July 2015

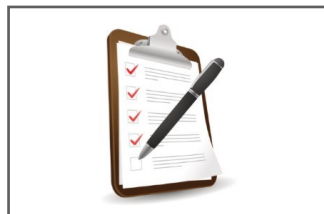
### *Summer is in full swing and many exciting things have been happening at BACH...*

...We are halfway through the first year of implementing our five strategic issues; and with the assistance of the Health Planning and Improvement Committee will soon assess the City's progress towards reaching those goals at the neighborhood and citywide levels. PICH, Partnerships to Improve Community Health, BACH's partnership with BPHC has officially kicked off with Healthy Community Champions beginning training for their work over the next two and a half years. The "Making Healthy Connections" initiative has successfully engaged new individuals in BACH's work and we are looking forward to developing more partnerships and opportunities to discuss community health with Boston residents. Be sure to check us out on **Facebook** and follow us on **Twitter**, where we discuss community health issues.

### In This Issue

- Age-Friendly Boston Initiative: City of Boston Elderly Commission embarks on a five year initiative to make our neighborhoods more inclusive and accessible to older adults.
- Healthy Start at Home: Nuestra Comunidad works in Roxbury and neighboring communities to improve resident health by improving financial success and housing stability.
- Get to Know Your Healthy Community Champions

## What's Happening in BACH?



#### **BACH Update**

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



#### **PICH Update**

BACH and BPHC's new partnership around chronic disease begins training Healthy Community Champions.



#### **Resident Engagement**

BACH continues to engage Boston residents in racial justice and community health events and trainings.

# Age-Friendly Boston Initiative

## City of Boston Elderly Commission embarks on a five year initiative to make our neighborhoods more inclusive and accessible to older adults

In late February of 2015, 100 residents gathered in the Great Hall at Quincy Market to kick-off the Age-Friendly Boston Initiative (AFB), a five-year initiative that challenges the city's public agencies, businesses, cultural, educational and religious institutions, community groups and individuals to consider how changes to policy and practice can create a more inclusive city for older adults that is attentive to their needs. Led by the Commission on Affairs of the Elderly, Boston is one of over 30 U.S. cities signed on to this initiative through the AARP, the American partner with the World Health Organization.

Ten years ago, the World Health Organization (WHO) became interested in the accelerating urbanization and the rapid growth of aging populations, and the opportunities and challenges it presents for global health. After analyzing 33 cities in 22 countries across the globe, WHO released a guide in 2007, "Global Age-friendly Cities," which highlights current trends and models to stimulate action in cities through eight domains: 1) housing, 2) transportation, 3) public spaces and building, 4) Social participation, 5) civic engagement and employment, 6) health services and community support, 7) communication and information, and 8) respect and social inclusion.

Andrea Burns, Director of Age-Friendly Boston at the Elderly Commission says that AFB is at the beginning stages of the planning process, with the end goal of identifying priorities and drafting an action plan to become certified as an age-friendly city under those domains. After assessing community strengths, assets, mapping, as well as reviewing existing data from the U.S. Census, Boston Public Health Commission and a recent report released by the Elderly Commission, the next step is to hear from the community. They are focused on building strong partnerships with key organizations and relationships with residents over the age of 50, hearing feedback from the community through listen and learn sessions facilitated by the Gerontology Institute at University of Massachusetts Boston, and connecting with ongoing planning processes, such as Go Boston 2030, transportation planning, Vision Zero, decreasing street fatalities and accidents and BACH's Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnerships.

"It is important that the many planning efforts going in Boston have symmetry and reflect each other's goals," states Burns. "It is important that the many planning efforts going in Boston have symmetry and reflect each other's goals," states



Community resident from Civic Academy speaking at a listen and learn session facilitated by Gerontology Institute at University of Massachusetts Boston.

Burns. "It's a new philosophy, new way of life, so going forward it is important that planning for the City includes every age group."

Within the next year, AFB hopes to complete 20 listen and learn sessions throughout Boston's 23 neighborhoods, with an additional three held in the dominant languages: Spanish, Chinese and Haitian Creole. They hope to reach 5,000 residents, about 5% of the older adult population, through the sessions or a survey that was recently released in those languages (Andrea Burns can also be contacted to have stacks delivered). The Elderly Commission wants to ensure that older people are well represented in the plan,

***"As people get older they can start to feel invisible and it is important they stay engaged and active in the community..."***

ethnically and geographically. Six sessions have already been completed in Beacon Hill, Down-

town, East Boston, Hyde Park, Jamaica Plain and Mattapan.

Upcoming sessions include:

- Thursday, August 13th in South Boston, 1:00-2:30
- Thursday, September 10th in Dorchester at Codman Square Health Center, 5:30-7
- Thursday, September 17th at Roslindale Public Library, 5:30-7

After the sessions or survey is complete, they AFB hopes to keep older adults involved in the initiative through volunteering for and organizing future efforts. Burns states, "As people get older they can start to feel invisible and it is important they stay engaged and active in the community and this is one way they can stay engaged."

For more information about Age-friendly Boston Initiative, please contact Andrea Burns, Director of Age-Friendly Boston at [andrea.burns@boston.gov](mailto:andrea.burns@boston.gov).

# Get To Know Your Healthy Community Champions



**Edna de Paula**

**Age:** 62

**Organization:** Allston Brighton Community Development Corporation

**Neighborhood:** Allston/ Brighton

**Topic Area:** Healthy Food and Beverage Promotion

**Why did you become involved with the Healthy Community Champions program?** I became involved because I love my neighborhood, but we don't have access to healthy food choices. The quality of food available has decreased since fast food is quick and people are eating too much junk food. I want to help educate people on how to eat healthfully and promote changes that are good for the community.

**What are you hoping to accomplish?** I would like to learn more about nutrition myself so that I can educate others. I would also like to promote our local Farmer's Markets and let people know that it's affordable.

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**Shayna Holloway**

**Age:** 28

**Organization:** Codman Square Neighborhood Council

**Neighborhood:** Dorchester

**Topic Area:** Smoke Free Housing

**Why did you become involved with the Healthy Community Champions program?** I became involved because I want to make a healthier community both currently and in the future. I think it's important to get involved and do something about making your community a healthier one.

**What are you hoping to accomplish?** My big goal is to get all of Dorchester to become smoke free. As a first step, I'm hoping to promote smoke free housing in Dorchester.

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**Joseph Kebartas**

**Age:** 66

**Organization:** South Boston Collaborative Advisory Network

**Neighborhood:** South Boston

**Topic Areas:** Active Transit, Healthy Food and Beverage Promotion, and Smoke-Free Housing

**Why did you become involved with the Healthy Community Champions program?** I grew up in South Boston and I really love my neighborhood. Unfortunately, there's not much community left in South Boston, and part of the reason I became involved with the HCC initiative is to help build community in South Boston. I would like to see more integration between the housing projects and the residential area. I also volunteer a lot with different organizations in South Boston, and I think this journey of becoming an HCC will help me connect all the different groups which I belong to.

**What are you hoping to accomplish?** Obesity is a terrible problem in Boston. I'll be working to promote healthy foods and beverages with the hope of getting people to eat healthier and reduce the impact of obesity on our

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**Brianna MacDonald**

**Age:** 20

**Organization:** Harbor Health Services/ Neponset Health Center

**Neighborhood:** South Dorchester

**Topic Area:** Active Transit

**Why did you become involved with the Healthy Community Champions program?** As an exercise and health science major, I've always really enjoyed helping people achieve healthy and active lifestyles. I hope to share knowledge about overcoming barriers to eating healthfully and staying physically active. I want to teach people that making minor modifications, in their diet or physical activity, can lead to major changes in their overall health.

**What are you hoping to accomplish?** I'm hoping to get to know my community better, as this is my third year living here as well as going to school at UMass Boston. I'm also hoping to get more involved in my community as well as better the lives of my neighborhood members. I feel passionate about learning about the struggles of living in South Dorchester and want to make changes in my community to lessen those struggles.

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**Raul D. Perez**

**Age:** 15

**Organization:** Mattapan Food and Fitness Coalition

**Neighborhood:** Mattapan

**Topic Area:** Active Transit

**Why did you become involved with the Healthy Community Champions program?** I want to help my community and make society healthier. I want to help others learn the benefit the community has given them.

**What are you hoping to accomplish?** I'm hoping to help my community and gain knowledge about healthy behaviors.



# Healthy Start at Home

## **Nuestra Comunidad works in Roxbury and neighboring communities to improve resident health by improving financial success and housing stability.**

Affordable housing is a proven, effective platform for long-term success for children and families, and has a strong impact on both individual and community health. Not having enough money to pay for housing costs is linked to increased stress levels and many other associated health issues, including chronic diseases like diabetes and heart disease. Nuestra Comunidad Development Corporation is working with families living in its more than 700 apartments to improve their health by improving their financial success and housing stability.

Nuestra Comunidad is a nonprofit working in the Roxbury community and nearby Boston neighborhoods for over 34 years on developing high quality affordable and mixed-income

rental and homeownership opportunities, financial resiliency, community organizing and economic development. David Price, Executive Director, sits on the Steering Committee and Chairs the Racial Equity Committee at BACH.

In the Roxbury community, about 30% of families live below the poverty line, 84% rent, while on only 16% own homes. With this new initiative, they are able to help families increase their income, as much as \$100 a month through public benefits screening and other financial capabilities counseling, thereby

***“Not having enough money to pay for housing costs is linked to increased stress levels and many other associated health issues, including chronic diseases like diabetes and heart disease.”***

increasing housing stability and improving health outcomes. Staff screen eligibility for 18 separate public benefits covering housing, child well-being, and energy costs. Staff also offer ongoing household budgeting and credit repair counseling.

In addition, Nuestra Comunidad provides a number of food and fitness activities for its residents and neighbors, including healthy cooking classes and Zumba classes. Through Fair Foods, Nuestra Comunidad is able to offer very affordable fruits and vegetables. The organization is also part of Mattapan Food & Fitness and a Mattapan partnership with Walk4Life. Nuestra Comunidad also advocates for “Complete Streets” urban design that promotes walking and public transportation.



David Price, Executive Director of Nuestra Comunidad, discusses social determinants of health with residents.

For more information about Nuestra Comunidad Development Corporation, please contact David Bresnahan, Director of Resource Development and Marketing, at [DBresnahan@nuestracdc.org](mailto:DBresnahan@nuestracdc.org).

## Get Involved!

Contact:

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Communications Manager

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617.279.2240, x508

[www.BostonAlliance.org](http://www.BostonAlliance.org)



# PICH Update



Healthy Community Champions engage in a leadership activity during orientation.

## ***BACH and BPHC's new partnership around chronic disease begins training Healthy Community Champions.***

**Partnerships to Improve Community Health (PICH)** is a partnership between BACH and the Boston Public Health Commission. Boston PICH aims to create sustainable changes in the neighborhoods and organizations where Bostonians spend their daily lives so that healthier choices are the easier choices for individuals to make. Boston PICH is environment level that can be achieved through focusing on improvements at the policy, systems, and ugh voluntary (non-regulatory) changes made by organizations and businesses within specific sectors.

### **Healthy Community Champions Initiative**

A key part of PICH's community engagement strategy is mobilizing community members, through an initiative called Healthy Community Champions, to be grassroots ambassadors and educators at the neighborhood level. In order to increase community ownership of the initiative, the Healthy Community Champions have been recruited by community-based organizations and coalitions that are familiar with the residents, resources and culture of their individual neighborhoods to support Boston PICH goals. This will build a sustainable and vital network of community residents trained in public health issues and ways to improve their daily lives and those of their families and neighbors.

78 individuals from 9 different Boston neighborhoods and 12 neighborhood organizations have been recruited to participate in the Healthy Community Champions Initiative. The champions are supported by coordinators from their organization.

### **PICH's Healthy Community Champion Grantees and their topic areas:**

- Allston Brighton Community Development Corporation (Healthy Food and Beverage Promotion, Active Transit)
- Black Ministerial Alliance of Greater Boston (Healthy Food and Beverage Promotion)
- Codman Square Neighborhood Council (Smoke Free Housing)
- Codman Square Neighborhood Development Corporation (Active Transit, Smoke Free Housing)
- Dorchester Bay Economic Development Corporation (Active Transit, Healthy Food and Beverage Promotion, Smoke Free Housing)
- Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative (Active Transit, Healthy Food and Beverage Promotion)
- East Boston Social Centers (Active Transit, Smoke Free Housing)
- Harbor Health Services/ Neponset Health Center (Active Transit)..cont.pg 6

## Resident Engagement

### Healthy Community Champions Orientation

On May 28th, after weeks of recruitment, we officially welcomed our champions and their coordinators to the Healthy Community Champions Initiative. Two orientation sessions were held, where the HCCs were congratulated and inducted into the program, the BACH and BPHC staff were introduced, and all participants were able to interact and get to know each other. Shown in the picture above is the group activity in which the HCCs participated, called "I am a Leader." The champions were asked to reflect upon a person whom they admire for his or her leadership capabilities, and share some of the reasons why they believe that person to be a leader. The champions then recognized which of these leadership qualities they possess themselves and can utilize in the work in their community. This exercise served as a reminder as to why these individuals have been chosen to become Healthy Community Champions in their neighborhoods.

### Healthy Community Champions Training Institute

As of June 8th, the Healthy Community Champions Training Institute is up and running. The nine week training program empowers the champions to become health ambassadors in their community, working to create change on the policy, systems, and environment level. The champions will be focusing on the areas of active transit, healthy food and beverage promotion, and smoke-free housing. The training program covers topics such as the social determinants of health and racial and ethnic equity and inequities; provides content training in the areas of active transit, healthy food and beverages, and smoke-free housing; and hones the champions' ability to enact change with leadership development workshops. The champions are working diligently to attend these training sessions and learn the material, anticipating the start of their hands-on work in the community later this summer.



# PICH Update (continued)

## PICH's Healthy Community Champion Grantees and their topic areas (cont.):

- Mattapan Food and Fitness Coalition (Active Transit, Healthy Food and Beverage Promotion, Smoke Free Housing)
- MGH Charlestown HealthCare Center (Smoke Free Housing)
- Sociedad Latina (Healthy Food and Beverage Promotion)
- South Boston Collaborative Advisory Network (Active Transit, Healthy Food and Beverage Promotion, Smoke Free Housing)

## Policy, Systems & Environment Changes

While the Healthy Community Champions are being trained to promote change, the PICH Team at BACH and BPHC continue their efforts in each of the three topic areas by collaborating with other organizations to move forward in the three areas of focus.

- Active Transportation: Boston Bikes is our main partner, working to increase opportunities for cycling in the City – primarily through expanding the use of Hubway – the city's bike share program in low- moderate income neighbors.
- Healthy Food and Beverage: Boston Bounty Bucks (BBB): The BBB digital pilot, a project that will replace paper based BBB coupons with a digital card reader, went live in six farmers markets as of the week of July 6th. The farmers

markets are: Dorchester House, Charlestown, East Boston, Dudley Common, Fields Corner and Mattapan. Customers who access federal food benefits such as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP) and therefore have an Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card, may use this card at a farm vendor's checkout and take advantage of the BBB program. PICH staff and sometimes Healthy Community Champions will be onsite to serve as customer experience experts, helping customers familiar with the previous system to navigate the new system.

- Smoke Free Housing: The PICH team is continuing to recruit Community Development Corporations (CDCs) and large management companies to sign onto Smoke Free Housing policies and participate in trainings

## Welcome Tamika and Caroline

Tamika R. Francis is the Community Engagement Manager for PICH. She has sound Caribbean heritage, having lived or worked on several islands. She moved to Boston ten years ago, where she immediately found herself connected to social justice issues and community organizing. Her role as volunteer and working with several

youth and community development nonprofits across Boston led her to spearheading resident engagement on the PICH project. Tamika has a strong passion for the outdoors, farming, wholesome food and a reverence for tradition and indigenous practices. She earned her BA in Geography from the University of the West Indies in 2003, and her Masters in Sustainable International Development from the Heller School for Social Policy and Management at Brandeis University where she focused on conservation and capacity building in the context of small island states. When she is not working on PICH, she can be found discovering conservation landscapes or enjoying delicious food in Boston's neighborhoods or a foreign city.

Caroline Hone was hired as the BACH Community Engagement Intern for the summer. Caroline is a rising senior at Boston College studying psychology and medical humanities. She is supporting the Healthy Community Champion training sessions. Caroline began work with us in mid-May and will continue to support HCC coordination through mid-August.

*For more information about PICH, please contact Tamika R. Francis, Community Engagement Manager, at [tfrancis@hria.org](mailto:tfrancis@hria.org).*



Healthy Community Champions Training Institute.

# BACH Update

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

BACH and its members and partners have been busy taking action on the strategic issues that the community identified through the Mobilizing for Action Through Partnership and Planning process we completed in 2014. Some highlights include:

The Health Planning and Improvement Committee reconvened the working groups for each strategic issue on June 12th, which is focused on continuous assessment of a range of initiatives from numerous organizations who are working on these issues:

### **Strategic Issues #1 and #5: Racial and ethnic health equity, and increasing the number of immigrants and people of color in community leadership positions and decision-making processes**

- BACH's video Making the Connections Boston: Race, Place, and Your Health.
- East Boston's Social Center's initiative to mentor Latinas community leaders funded by BACH
- Boston Racial Justice and Equity Initiative's advocacy to create a city Racial Justice and Equity Committee that would guide every city department in addressing racial and ethnic equity in all their work.
- Initiation of BACH's Healthy Community Champions program – 12 community-based groups who have recruited 75 residents who are being trained in health and advocacy skills to push for policy and environment changes that promote health in their neighborhoods.
- Center for Community Health, Education, and Research's trainings of youth, community development corporation staff and residents, and other community residents in equity, social determinants of health and advocacy skills, funded by BACH.

### **Strategic Issue #2: Better integration and coordination of clinical care and community-based prevention**

- Multiple organizations advocating for the implementation of reimbursable community health worker services;

- Project AHEAD (Aligning health Equity and Development) a cross-sector planning process convened and funded by BACH in Codman Square, Dorchester that involves, hospitals, health centers, community development corporations, city departments, and funders;
- BACH working with the Boston Public Health Commission through a federal grant to increase the number of smoke-free housing units, improve access to healthy food and beverages, and better access to safe walking and biking including a Safe Routes to School initiative with Boston Public Schools and charter schools.

### **Strategic Issue #3: Building resilience in communities impacted by trauma**

- The development of the All Hazards Psychological Trauma Network led by the BPHC's Office of Emergency Preparedness that links community-based trauma responders such as those from South Boston Collaborative Advisory Committee;
- Violence intervention and prevention work such as the North Dorchester Coalition's Peace Makers initiative which is training youth in mediation skills to be used at social events, funded by BACH;

### **Strategic Issue #4: Improving health outcomes by focusing on education, employment, and transportation policy and practice**

- A BACH-funded initiative based in Jamaica Plain to enlist community health centers to advocate for bus transit equity;
- Youth Hub's employment mentoring program to increase neighborhood employment in Dorchester, funded by BACH

These are just a few of the many efforts around the city that are helping to implement the Action Steps. View the MAPP report where you can see ideas about how you and your community can contribute to improving the health of your neighborhood. You can also join us at monthly "Making Healthy Connections" events that address health concerns in your neighborhood.

## Resident Engagement

### **Making Healthy Connections**

In March, Community Engagement and Membership Committee (CEMC), hosted three resource fairs to give residents the opportunity to learn more about BACH, healthy behaviors, and systemic issues that impact Bostonians. These events were held in East Boston, Mattapan and South End, with resources ranging from housing to immigrant services. These events also highlighted the release of our video, "Making the Connections Boston: Race, Place and your Health," about community health and racial inequities in Boston. In addition, residents can continue to engage with the initiative by attending our monthly CEMC meetings on the 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of the month, where we have covered such topics as: domestic violence, healthy and affordable foods, and stress management.

### **Stand Against Racism Day**

On April 24th, BACH participated in YWCA Boston's "Stand Against Racism" for the third year in a row. This year, we screened the film *Flag Wars*, which is one story about a community in Columbus, Ohio, undergoing gentrification and the inevitable clashes between residents. The event was held in partnership with South End Healthy Boston Coalition at the historical Tent City, which is a community symbol of unity and power. While Urban Renewal threatened to displace neighborhood residents in the South End, Tent City was born from the pitched tents protests in 1968. The film sparked a great discussion around issues of racism, affordable housing, the intersections of class, which was facilitated by Susan Naimark, Racial Equity Educator, and Dejanira Seale, BACH MSW Intern from Boston University School of Social Work.



**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND  
MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE**

**TENANT  
RIGHTS**

**WHEN**

**Thursday, September, 24 2015  
6pm - 8pm**

**WHERE**

**Josephine A. Fiorentino  
Community Center  
Multipurpose Room  
123 Antwerp Street, Brighton MA 02135**

**SESSION 9: TENANT RIGHTS** **Unsure if your rights as a tenant in Boston housing are being respected? Join us for a workshop led by the Director of Mass Alliance of HUD Tenants, Michael Kane. Together we'll address relevant topics such as public housing, Section 8 voucher program, HUD affordable housing, and other issues related to tenant rights. We hope to see you there!**

**FREE EVENT. DINNER PROVIDED.**

**[www.bostonalliance.org](http://www.bostonalliance.org)**

BACH is a partnership of neighborhood coalitions, hospitals, nonprofits and community-based organizations, health centers, government agencies, and residents.

**Community Learning  
Opportunities**

CEMC's mission is to diversify community partnerships and increase resident involvement in BACH's advocacy and health planning through education, communication, and collaboration that support healthy communities. CEMC provides educational opportunities for residents, coalitions, and organizations about community health, health equity, and systemic racism.

Month	Topic
All meetings are from 6-8pm	
Sept 24	Tenant Rights
Oct 22	Women's Health

Contact Olivia Larkin to  
RSVP or ask questions!

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