

# Boston Alliance *for* Community Health



The 2016 Healthy Community Leadership Awardees at BACH's Annual Meeting in December: (from left to right) Michelle Cook, Edna de Paula, Lisa Melara, EJ Slater and Raheem Baraka.

## BACH *News Highlights*

Winter 2017

*"BACH's work requires that we be a cross-sector alliance that brings all sorts of people and organizations together. So our members include dedicated neighborhood coalitions, hospitals, health centers, community development corporations, community-based organizations, policy advocacy groups, city and state health departments and residents from many of Boston's neighborhoods. We have been taking a hard look at what and how we do our work and the value it adds to the health of Bostonians now and in the future. Our BACH Strategies for 2017 – 2019 fall into four buckets: Convening, Aligning, Engaging, and Sustaining for Impact. BACH and our members and partners are committed to making our vision real" -David Aronstein, BACH Director*

### Resident Engagement Update

Throughout 2016, BACH supported over 20 residents in attending trainings, conferences and other learning opportunities through our scholarship program. We also engaged over 250 Bostonians through our workshop series, Passport to Public Health, which consisted of 10 workshops that addressed a variety of public health issues ("Stop the Stigma: Mental Health & Addiction" workshop in Charlestown pictured below). We concluded 2016 with our Annual Meeting, touching on important public health discussions and celebrating our Healthy Community Leadership Awards, given to 5 inspiring individuals (pictured above). In 2017, BACH will pilot our new initiative, Ambassadors, designed to raise awareness on public health policy efforts directly affecting neighborhoods and encourage resident participation in advocacy related to community health. The first cohort of Ambassadors will decide specific issues to work on and develop a shared agenda for the year. BACH will also continue resident engagement through our BachLEARN newsletter, our Learning Community sessions, and our upcoming free public health programming.



## Let's Get Healthy, Boston! Updates

### Healthy Food & Beverage

HCCs have enlisted 30 corner stores in 6 neighborhoods to participate in the Rethink Your Drink campaign to increase awareness and demand for non-sugar sweetened beverages, reaching an estimated 2,500 residents. HCCs & City Councilor Mark Ciommo (pictured below) recognized 5 corner stores in Allston-Brighton that have participated in the Rethink Your Drink campaign.



### Active Transportation

HCCs hosted a successful Walk to School Day with 11 schools participating across the city to encourage and normalize walking safely to school. LGHB! also supported 3 Boston women to gain a national licensure that permits them to teach cycling to different kinds of learners and augment the capacity for neighborhood based, bicultural or bilingual cycling instructors (pictured below). This spring, there will be a city wide Biking Forum to discuss and establish a Boston bike agenda, speaking to intersection of health, equity and biking.



### Smoke-Free Housing

The Healthy Community Champions (HCCs) have helped transition a total of 9,148 units to smoke free, 2,956 units over our projected target. HCCs will now focus on story telling and interpersonal communications amongst neighbors and peers in an effort to normalize smoke free housing as the gold standard and norm in new and existing homes.

### Community Highlight: HCCs Bring New Enthusiasm to the Fairmount Greenway Efforts

The Fairmount Greenway Task Force (FGTF) has been working on this 9mi route project that loosely follows the Fairmount Rail Line through Dorchester, Roxbury, Mattapan & Hyde Park since 2008. There is a continuous need for new energy and enthusiasm to sustain a greenway effort for so long, which the Healthy Community Champions (HCCs) brought to the FGTF. The active transit HCCs in Uphams Corner, Codman Square & Mattapan joined together with FGTF to make an explicit connection between healthy communities, active transit and the greenways efforts. The FGTF and HCCs have worked together on planning bike events, conducting field work to evaluate conditions for walking and biking, working with the Boston Transportation Department's new Slow Zones initiative, and painting a pavement mural (pictured below). HCC's are not slowing down in 2017 and have more work planned for this winter!



### Community Highlight: Criminal Justice Reform is a Public Health Issue

Jobs NOT Jail Coalition's (JNJ) goal is to redirect costly prison spending towards jobs, training and support for MA low income communities. BACH is committed to supporting JNJ because it is an important way to move towards racial and ethnic equity and can improve health outcomes for families in Boston's most vulnerable neighborhoods, which are predominantly people of color and immigrants. According to a recent report, the incarceration rate in MA has tripled since the 1980's. There is an enormous human cost to families and neighborhoods of caging so many of our people. The advent of mass incarceration has also meant more of our public resources are being consumed by the prison budget. For the first time, MA now spends more on prisons than on higher education. If we do not take action now, this trend is only going to get worse. JNJ is working to channel funding from a failing system towards education and jobs, which are key predictors for healthy communities.

Want to get involved?

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