Focus is on disparities as viral infections rise to peak

The following article was compiled by Reporter staff and the State House News Service and written by Bill Forry, the Reporter’s editor.

The city of Boston mounted a new effort to identify potential health disparities associated with race and neighborhood this week as Massachusetts entered what public health officials expect to be a peak period for new COVID-19 infections and patients requiring acute care in hospitals.

In Boston – as of Tuesday – there have been 4,286 known confirmed cases of COVID-19, 87 deaths, and 547 recoveries. The state reported 1,296 new COVID-19 cases, and 113 new deaths, but said no single day’s numbers indicate an overall trend because of “day-to-day variability” in reporting by testing labs.

The total of confirmed cases statewide was put at 28,163, and the number of deaths at 957. A total of 109,551 people in Massachusetts have now been tested for the virus through Tuesday. Race and ethnicity data remain missing or unknown for a large percentage of confirmed cases and deaths statewide. There is also incomplete data available about race and ethnicity related to COVID-19 cases in Boston. The figures are known for only about 62 percent of the identified positive cases in the city so far.

But preliminary data released last week by the city’s Public Health Commission indicated that of the 62 percent for which race and ethnicity are known, 42 percent are black.

Last week, Mayor Walsh formed a task force to fo-

(Continued on page 13)

‘We are in survival mode’

Health centers thankful for federal funding, say they need much more

By Bill Forry and Kate Trojano

The leader of one of Dorchester’s front-line health centers said on Saturday that recent federal funds promised to community health centers are “steeply “helpful” – are not going to relieve the massive financial and supply-chain burden that has put her facility and staff and others like it in “survival mode.”

Sandra Cotterell, CEO of Codman Square Health Center, said Thursday that news reports, including one in the Reporter, that relayed “accurate” information about forthcoming federal funds released to centers like Codman through the CARES Act may leave people with the wrong impression “to the detriment of health centers, their patients, and our community.”

“The headline gives the appearance that community health centers have received millions and are rolling in cash, have been made whole, and we are all set,” said Cotterell. “This could not be further from the truth.

“In fact we, and other community health centers, are dire straits,” she added. “We’ve furloughed significant staff, our volume has materially dwindled, and we are in survival mode – solely focused on addressing COVID-19.”

On Wednesday, the state’s congressional delegation issued press statements highlighting the funding from the CARES Act, which totals $365.5 million statewide. Every health center will get a cut of that allotment. In Codman Square Health Center image

“We are in survival mode”

Health centers thankful for federal funding, say they need much more

By Bill Forry

The coronavirus outbreak has disrupted what is normally the busiest season of the year for realtors everywhere. In Dorchester as elsewhere, agents and brokers are adjusting by using online platforms that allow them to continue to “show” properties for sale while holding their usual open houses.

“The truth is that we don’t know how long this will last or exactly what the impact will be on our market. Ultimately, it will come down to consumer confidence when the dust settles,” said Kerry Dowlin, real estate associate at Gibson Sotheby’s International Realty on Savin Hill Ave.

“I am hopeful that once we get past this, our typical spring market, that would normally be happening in full stride now, will happen this summer. I don’t think it will look exactly the same – but we are preparing for a very busy June, July, and August.”

Last month, the Warren Group – which tracks property transactions across the state – reported that the median sale prices for single-family homes and condominiums had increased to all-time highs for the month of February.

(Continued on page 12)

For realtors and their clients, ‘the show must go on’

By Kate Trojano

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(Continued on page 12)
COVID-19 CASES

The city has recorded 4,296 confirmed cases of COVID-19 (confirmed and presumptive) through April 14. So far, 547 of these residents have fully recovered. There have been 87 COVID-19-related deaths of Boston residents.

PRECAUTIONS

Stay home. If you must go outside, practice physical distancing from others (6 feet apart); avoid crowded places. Wear a face covering if you absolutely must go outside. They help reduce the risk of people spreading the virus, especially if they are asymptomatic. Visit CDC guidelines on face coverings for more information and guidance. Observe the curfew recommended for everyone in Boston except for essential workers: 9 p.m. to 5 a.m.

Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If you cannot wash your hands, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol; avoid shaking hands. Cover your coughs and sneezes; clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces; and avoid close contact with people who are sick.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

• Donate supplies to first responders at bostonunitedknockoutcovid-19-donation-in-take-formations.

NEWS AND INFORMATION

• The city is working with the Whittier Street Health Center in Roxbury to help make testing more accessible to residents. Starting last Monday, Whittier is offering scheduled rapid testing result to all. Testing is by appointment only and patients must be at least 18 years of age. Please visit whi

 capitalize on more for info.

• School lunch – In partnership with Fresh Bread, YMCA of Greater Boston, Boston Centers for Health and Partners and other community organizations, the city has served more than 161,000 meals since schools have closed, averaging 13,000 meals per day. Free breakfast and lunch will be provided within the schools’ closure including on April 20 (Patriots’ Day) and April 21-24 (April vacation). Meal distribution sites serving BPS include:

  • Garvey Elementary
  •Rectangle
  •Perkins
  •Kling
  •Meadowview
  •Parkland

• The city has created a Small Business Relief Fund for local businesses at risk of shutting down permanently due to the crisis. We received almost 3,000 applications. While this round of funding is not permanent, the city will make an announcement if and when more funds become available. Any business needing guidance can review the Small Business Relief Handout or reach out to the Economic Development Department at boston.gov/sma

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April 16, 2020

MCAS testing suspended under new law; state panel eases graduation protocols

By Chris Lisenski State House News Service

MCAS testing requirements for the school year are suspended, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education will modify or waive graduation requirements for students set to complete high school this summer, and due dates for district improvement plans will be pushed back under a bill Gov. Charlie Baker signed last Friday.

Baker signed the law the one day after the Legislature sent it to him, implementing immediate changes in school districts that have been closed by executive order since March 15. The legislation also postpones the MBTA’s budget timeline and makes housing assistance benefits easier to acquire remotely.

“Cancelling MCAS testing for the remainder of this school year will enable our teachers and students to focus on learning and personal well-being as we continue to navigate the current public health emergency,” Sen. Jason Lewis, co-chair of the Legislature’s Education Committee, said in a statement after the branches had agreed to the bill Thursday. “Legislators heard loud and clear from teachers, parents, and superintendents that this was the right thing to do.”

The new law requires Education Commissioner Jeff Riley to vacate the annual requirement for a standardized test in public schools amid disruptions caused by the coronavirus pandemic. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education will also be instructed to modify or waive MCAS competency standards typically required to acquire a high school diploma.

The law also grants districts breathing room on filing plans to close achievement gaps, which originally were due by April 1 under a seven-year, $1.5 billion education funding reform law signed last year. Language in the law Baker signed sets the new deadline as May 15 while giving Riley authority to delay it again.

If schools are unable to approve fiscal year 2021 budgets by June 30 because of ongoing social distancing, they can implement stop-gap monthly spending plans at one-twelfth the amount of the fiscal year 2020 budget, under the new law.

Baker’s current executive order requires all K-12 schools to remain closed through at least May 4, and while the governor has resisted keeping them shuttered through the end of the academic year, extensions are possible if public health risks continue.

The federal government allowed states to cancel testing requirements if they filed waivers, and at least 40 have done so, according to the Massachusetts Teachers Association.

“Once the governor ordered schools closed until at least May 4, it was obvious to educators and parents that Massachusetts should join the many other states that have already canceled their test-administration requirements this spring,” MTA President Merrie Najimy said shortly before Baker signed the bill.

Najimy reiterated past criticism of the MCAS system and said the pause “provides all of us with an opportunity to rethink the testing requirements.”

The new law also delays statutory budget dates for the MBTA, which has seen ridership drop more than 75 percent and revenues fall by tens of millions of dollars per month during the pandemic.

The Fiscal and Management Control Board now has until May 15 to approve a preliminary budget and until June 15 to submit a final spending plan to the MBTA Advisory Board, rather than March 15 and April 15, respectively.

Before the pandemic moved into Massachusetts, the focus had been on investing more money into the T to ensure its capacity to more efficiently move scores of travelers. For now, the debate around the T has changed.

The new law also allows Massachusetts residents seeking housing assistance without completing in-person verification in a state office, enabling people to avoid COVID-19 exposure risks.

Towns cannot terminate essential services offered to residents, including water, electricity and trash collection for failure to pay taxes or fees due after Baker declared a state of emergency on March 10, so long as the constituent demonstrates a financial hardship stemming from the outbreak.

“This legislation helps a wide variety of entities deal with the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic,” House Ways and Means Committee Chair Rep. Aaron Michlewitz said. “Whether it’s aiding our cities and towns with the needs of their school districts, to helping homeless providers have greater flexibility in protecting those most in need, the Legislature stands ready to help those most affected by this public health crisis.”
IBEW Local 103 responds to pleas: 20,000 masks for nurses’ group to distribute at Brigham and Women’s

By Katie Trojano
Reporter Staff

Responding to the statewide shortage of critical medical supplies, Dorchester’s IBEW Local 103, the region’s largest electrical workers’ union, last week donated 20,000 medical-grade protective masks to the Massachusetts Nurses Association (MNA) for direct distribution to front-line caregivers at Brigham and Women’s Hospital.

“I want to thank the Massachusetts Nurses Association for their tireless work, and IBEW Local 103 for generously stepping up to provide this much needed equipment that will strengthen our collective response and save lives,” said Mayor Martin Walsh.

“Our nurses are working around the clock on the frontlines of Boston’s COVID-19 response,” Walsh said. “The tremendous outpouring of support we have seen every single day since the start of this public health crisis makes me so proud to be mayor of the city of Boston.”

Laura Dayton, a nurse at Brigham and Women’s, helped coordinate the logistics of the IBEW’s donation with the help of her father, a retired Local 103 member. They got the masks from Source Squared owner Paul Kenney, one of Local 103’s go-to PPE vendors.

“Words can’t express how grateful I am, and how grateful all my colleagues are for these supplies,” said Dayton. “They’re going to help ensure that we can do our jobs safely and effectively, for everyone’s sake. IBEW Local 103 didn’t hesitate to do all they could to help, and it means the world to have their support through this incredibly difficult time.”

She added: “My father has always been so proud to be a part of IBEW Local 103, and today it’s especially easy to see why. It’s a really special moment for me.”

Lou Antonellis, IBEW Local 103 business manager and financial secretary, said: “Whatever our nurses need, we’re there. The bravery these caregivers are showing, and the sacrifices they are making are incredible and we need to honor and support that. IBEW Local 103 is a community-focused organization, and we’re going to continue to support them in every way possible.”

Last weekend, IBEW Local 103 also donated thousands of additional masks to First Responders in surrounding cities and towns, coordinating trips to fire stations in Billerica, Methuen, Lawrence, Salem, Woburn, Somerville, Quincy, Weymouth, and Milton.

“The 12,000 plus members of the Professional Fire Fighters of Massachusetts are forever grateful to the leadership, and membership, of IBEW Local 103, for their ongoing efforts to provide PPE to first responders and nurses who are battling this pandemic,” said Rich MacKinnon, Jr., president of the group.

Trish Powers, the MNA’s chairperson at Brigham and Women’s Hospital, appealed to the larger community to do its part in collecting urgent supplies.

“The MNA is working around the clock to support our nurses in any way we can, but this needs to be a community effort,” she said. “Sourcing these supplies needs to be our collective priority, and any and all donations will literally help save thousands of lives. IBEW Local 103 has stepped up to the plate and shown our nurses that they are not alone in this battle. Our gratitude for their support is truly boundless.”

To donate funds or supplies to front-line caregivers, visit: Boston Resiliency Fund at boston.gov.

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For realtors and their clients, ‘the show must go on’

(Continued from page 1)

ary – $380,000, up 4.1 percent from $365,000 in February 2019, for single-family homes and a 16.6 percent increase to $400,000 for condos. Data for March – not yet available – will likely show fairly normal and consistent trends, according to Warren Group CEO Tim Warren, because it will mostly reflect homes that went under contract before the coronavirus pandemic.

“A slowdown is inevitable,” Warren said. “People who feel that their jobs are at risk, have also been seeing their investments and retirement accounts shrink. Those people are not going to be home shopping aggressively in the second quarter.”

The disruption has been particularly tricky for people who were already in the middle of selling or buying a home.

“People who need to move or are relocating to the area as well as sellers who have made plans to move. So, for them, the show must go on,” Hollenback said. “We’ve seen purchases happening ‘night and day.’”

For most realtors in Dorchester, adapting to the crisis has meant a bigger dependence on tools that had increasing become part of their arsenal even before the health emergency: virtual tours, video walkthroughs, interactive floor plans using drones, even robotics.

Leslie MacKinnon, a realtor at Compass Real Estate, has been using Zoom and FaceTime to help sellers prepare their properties for the markets.

“I have to be literally talking to people, like where to point the camera so I can see different things. It’s strange,” she said with a laugh, “but it’s working.”

Hollemback said she has one condo unit in Dorchester that’s currently under agreement. The two-bedroom condo on Stoughton St. in Jones Hill, listed at $789,000, is expected to close in the beginning of May, she said.

Marlea Mesh, a realtor at Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage, hosted an open house the weekend of March 14 and 15 at 48 Juliette Street on Jones Hill. The three-bedroom, two-bath property is currently listed with Coldwell Banker for $999,000.

“It was heavily attended and we did take precautions,” Mesh said. “The property generated multiple offers.”

Charlie Maneikis, real estate agent and owner of The Maneikis Companies, noted market data shows that people are still buying. “The interest rate environment is definitely supporting the market,” said Maneikis. “If you’re a highly motivated buyer or a highly motivated seller, there’s still an opportunity to buy and sell,” he said.

Data from Multiple Listing Service (MLS,) a database of real estate listings, shows that from March 15 through April 14 in Dorchester andMattapan zip codes (02121-02126) there were a total of 74 listings, including single families, multi-families, and condos. Of those, 21 have accepted an offer or are under agreement. One listing had sold, a multifamily property at 27 Radford Lane in Dorchester.

Four single family properties were listed on March 15. Of those listings, it took an average of 9 days for an offer to be made. The average sq. footage of those properties was 2,045, and the average listing price was $578,000. A total of 19 condos were listed, averaging offers within 7 days, average price listing of $507,000 and an average footage of 1,190 sq. ft.

The remaining multifamily unit listings saw an average of 6 days to receive offers, an average price of $276,000, and a total average of 3,035 sq. ft.

“Agent are going to be less willing to push the envelope on anything that’s on the market for more than 14 days,” said Maneikis. “Things are going under agreement within 10 days. once it hits the 14-day mark in the past agents might have been willing to lower prices a bit. Now i think there’s a better chance that they’ll say to their clients, let’s wait this out. Let’s withdraw.”

“In terms of my own clients, I am tempering some expectations and being very realistic that the market is the market,” Maneikis said. “But buyers are also going to respond to a well presented product in a great location.”

Mary Kelly, of Jack Conway Realty, is also still seeing activity.

“The market here is driven by inventory and people are still desper- ate to buy properties,” she said, adding that closings already in the pipeline are continuing while noting that fewer people are calling to list their properties. But because rates are low and lower interest rates “why think that the market will come back around in June,” she said.

“This is an industry of relationships, so a lot of what I’m doing personally is picking up the phone and calling people. I’m trying to be a calm voice and share any comforting or essential information and services that I can,” she said.

Lynn Hollemback of Seaport Realty has seen a slowdown in business.

“We are not fortunate tellers as realtors. I don’t think it’s possible for us to completely rebound. Spring is usually a huge surge and we’re missing it.”

Her advice for people who need to sell their properties: “It’s better to list now than to wait and see what happens if the economy doesn’t re-bound. On the other side, buyers are really hoping for a market crash.”

Hollenback is still actively working and showing properties to prospective buyers.

“I have appointments this afternoon,” she said while noting that “vir- tual tours are great, but you can’t really get a grasp for a property unless you’re physically in it. A lot of the time I find myself giving virtual tours and then in-person tours for people. It’s a new world, but it’s necessary. Nobody really wants to buy a property without ever seeing it.”

One thing that Hol- lenback said she hopes will stay in place after the state of emergency lifts is e-signing tools.

“It makes life so much easier for so many peo- ple. I don’t know if the registry will allow e-signing to stay in place but if they do, I think it’s an awesome tool for us.”

For her part, Dow- lin says she is positive that the neighborhood’s market will prove to be resilient.

“I know that it will adjust and a new normal will evolve, but the buyer demand has been high, interest rates are still amazing, and inventory is lower than we have seen it in years,” she said.

“I have been in this Dorchester market for 20 years and saw the ‘08 crash up close,” she added. “The conditions today are vastly differ- ent. Prices may level off a little, but with so many people entering the market down about 28 percent from this time last year, there is still strong demand for properties.”

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Proprietors Michael Vaughan & Raymond Butler

To our friends, neighbors and loyal customers – we’ll see you soon.

At left, Dorchester artist Elizabeth Rouse painted a message to medi- cal workers and first responders on the front windows of the Banshee last week.
The ties that bind: Big Tim, Little Curtis – an enduring match of love and respect

By Daniel Sheehan

The bond formed between two young men and women in the Big Brothers Big Sisters program of Eastern Massachusetts is often strong enough to surmount obstacles like distance and time. In the context of coronavirus-driven social distancing, Tim Dibble of Concord, and Curtis Blyden of Cambridge are proof of that strength.

They were matched when Blyden was eight years old and Dibble was older. Blyden lived in Dorchester with his grandmother and sister. He has since served as the best man in Dibble’s wedding and become an honorary son and big brother in the Dibble family.

“It was awkward when we first met until we discovered what we have in common – sports, music, a curiosity in the world around us. We celebrate holidays and milestones together – like his son’s upcoming college graduation. And we check in every week by phone, which is now more important than ever.”

When Blyden was young, he and Dibble, who is 54, played basketball, soccer and baseball, had dinners together, took field trips to local parks and museums, and cheered for the Boston Celtics. When his grandmother passed away in 2000, Blyden moved in with the Dibbles to finish school at Concord-Carlisle Regional High School. He credits his mentor for pushing him to pursue post-secondary education at Curry College, serve in the Peace Corps, and earn a master’s degree from Suffolk University.

“Tim has been a tremendous role model in my life,” said Blyden, who is paying it forward to kids with childhoods less than or equal to lowest cost window or patio door in the project. Subject to credit approval. Interest is billed during the promotional period but all interest is waived if the purchase is paid in full prior to the expiration of the promotional period.

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The Dorchester Reporter is proud to have the support of the Martin W. Richard Foundation, which works to advance the values of inclusion, kindness, justice, and peace.

The Dorchester Reporter Staff

Since in-person classes began to fall victim to the coronavirus pandemic weeks ago, educators across the country from preschool through the university level have turned to the internet as a new medium for instruction.

Savín Hill resident Emily Gaylord, who works as a teacher’s aide at St. John Paul II Catholic Academy’s Lower Mills campus, has carved out a space on the web where she can continue to instruct and help her students perform at their best.

Gaylord’s YouTube channel, titled “Ms. Gaylord,” is filled with short video clips in which she leads sing-alongs, reads aloud from children’s books, and teaches crafting activities for the school’s students. She said she anticipated the transition from classroom to digital instruction as the need to shut down schools to counter viral spread gradually became apparent weeks ago.

“The day we found out the school was going to be shutting down, I took home a bunch of books from our curriculum,” explained Gaylord. “I’ve been reading two books a week, as well as singing songs the kids would enjoy.”

Singing and playing her ukulele is something Gaylord, an alumna of Boston City Singers, occasionally gets to do with students during diurnal time at the end of the school day. Now, she sees her ample at-home time as a chance to engage and entertain St. John Paul kids with music, serenading them to the tune of “Hey Bitty Spider,” “Baby Shark,” and other fan favorites.

“With the singing I’ve just been focusing on being silly, fun, and light-hearted, you know, just doing my best to ease any anxieties and worries that these kids might be experiencing,” she said. “I can’t imagine having to deal with this situation as a four year old.”

As a teacher’s aide, Gaylord primarily washes in-classroom support to the K1 teachers, she said. But the leap away from the classroom has paradoxically given her a chance to “enjoy the day”.

“While I sometimes do the read-aloud and sing-along stuff, a lot of the time I’m doing other things to help out, like sweeping and wiping down tables...this has been a good opportunity to do myself and have more in-person time with the kids.”

The focus on online engagement has also been helpful for Gaylord, who is currently pursuing a secondary degree in education, more of a taste of the duties and responsibilities of full-time teaching.

“I do think that what I’ve been doing has given me a taste for when I become a full-time teacher,” she said. “It’s not necessarily to do a bit more and see what that’s like.”

Gaylord added that seeing how other teachers have adapted to online education has given her some direction: “It’s been amazing to see all the other educators all over doing amazing things for their students.”

That’s been encouraging, and it’s pushing me to do a lot more with my videos,” she said.

Saint John Paul II Catholic Academy’s ‘Ms. Gaylord’ helps pupils stay connected

BY DANIEL SHEEHAN
REPORTER STAFF

On Thursday, April 2, around 700 friends and families of the Catholic Schools Foundation (CSF) gathered virtually to celebrate Catholic Schools Foundation’s 50th anniversary. The virtual event was at-
tended by the Catholic Schools Foundation’s 22 semifinalists.

Guests of the virtual event were asked to vote on where they thought they’d like to attend college.

At 4 p.m., a poll at the virtual event asking guests to vote on where they thought they’d like to attend college was available for the first time. The poll was held at the end of the virtual event.

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The Dorchester Historical Society

Three Centuries of Needlework

Today’s illustration features a piece of decorative needlework stitched on silk, likely the creation of 17-year-old Jane Withington, a student at Mrs. Saunders’s Boarding School for Girls in Roxbury. Born in Roxbury on May 3, 1790, she was the daughter of the famed preacher Jacob Howe in Dorches-
ter on Aug. 20, 1812. His brother was also named Jacob, and his sister Eunice.

The Dorchester Historical Society includes examples of needlework and samplers from the centuries of Dorchester history. Many of these pieces were worked by young women as part of their education to show their proficiency with needle and thread. Much of the following is taken from “American Samplers,” by Ethel Stanwood Bolton and Eva-Johnston Coe. “Boston needlework was the big event: the Society of the Colonial Dames of America, Massachusetts.”

“The curriculum at Mather’s School, and at the Saunders and Beach Academy included decorative needlework as one of the courses of study. Of the popular uses of needlework created by young women was teaching. Samplers began as a way of recording examples of stitches; therefore, a sampler was an exemplar of the various stitches that a young woman had mastered and wanted to remember.

“In the 20th century, we have come to call any needlework signed and dated by the maker by the name of sam-
pler. Perhaps the secret behind the popularity of samplers was that they were distinctly the expression of the mind of the girl or her mother or her teacher, and they are pretty nearly as varied as the mind of man. In the sec-
ond half of the 18th cen-
tury, samplers became more original pieces of work incorporating im-
ages of leaves and flow-
ers, houses, dogs and birds, and other scenes from nature.

“Most of the known surviving needlework pieces were created by schoolgirls... Both finishing schools and academies offered need-
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thering education in the basics of the English language.
Parade’s cancelled, but Dot Day lives on

Far worse than any news we’ve ever seen, the coronavirus pandemic has claimed the lives of thousands. It’s claimed the lives of many of our neighbors. It is claiming the lives of people right now. It is stopping us from doing the things we love. It is shutting down entire economies. It is reminding us that we need to be more thoughtful and considerate of one another.

Because of the pandemic, Dorchester Day has been cancelled. We’re not sure if we will have a parade again, or if we will have a ceremony again. We’re not sure if we will have a celebration again. But we do know that we will celebrate with our households — the way many of us were advised by Mayor Walsh to hold off on congregating this year. If it’s not safe — and we’re being honest with ourselves — there’s no way that Dorchester Day will not be postponed.

There is no way that the attendant chief marshal’s dinner won’t be plated, alone in the corner of a room. There is no way that the march up the avenue is certainly the event that convenes us in the most tangible way. It’s a celebration of a neighborhood that we all call home, and one that deserves a day to call its own. And while the parade may not be staged and the attendant chief marshal’s dinner won’t be plated, there’s no way that Dorchester Day will not be celebrated. The Parade withdrew their application for a permit for the event that was set for Sun., June 7. It’s a celebration of a neighborhood that we all call home, and one that deserves a day to call its own. And while the parade may not be staged and the attendant chief marshal’s dinner won’t be plated, there’s no way that Dorchester Day will not be celebrated.

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State begins to wrestle with serious budgetary matters

House Ways and Means chairman weighs issues

By Bill Walczak
Reporter Contributor

The Massachusetts economy went into free fall one month ago. As a result, tax revenues for the final quarter of FY20 (April-June) will likely be $500-$750 million below budget. In addition, the Commonwealth is spending millions of dollars on hospitals and other health care organizations, supporting public transit and other state and regional entities, and will probably need to invest to keep the unemployment trust fund solvent.

Still, between the $2 trillion federal aid program and our state’s rainy day fund, we should be able to balance our books for the end of the fiscal year, June 30. But what about FY21, which starts on July 1? Although there is talk of another federal aid or “stimulus” program, it is not a certainty that Congress will pass another package. As a result, our Legislature and the governor have launched an effort to study the economic impact of COVID-19 and to play out scenarios on what FY21 could look like, depending on how long the Commonwealth needs to be shut down.

To start the process, a virtual “Economic Roundtable” hosted by the House and Senate Ways and Means chairs and the Executive office of Administration and Finance was held on April 14. One forecast at this event predicted that state sales tax collections in 2020 will plunge 20 percent and unemployment will soar to 14.7 percent, with the state’s gross domestic product this year declining by 7.2 percent.

One of the leaders of the roundtable is the House chair of Ways and Means, Aaron Michlewitz, an East Boston Democrat who represents downtown Boston from the North End to the South End. He was elected in 2009, and is in his first term as chairman of the panel. He said that the roundtable will be an effort to get some answers as Massachusetts economists and budget experts “delve deeper into those numbers.”

One of the problems they need to deal with is the impact of delaying the deadline for filing state income tax returns until July 15, two weeks after the end of the fiscal year. He said it was a “$3.5 billion revenue piece,” and that the state is considering borrowing in anticipation of this income. He also expressed his concern about the unemployment trust fund with half a million unemployed in Massachusetts.

Michlewitz anticipates that the state may pass “a temporary budget,” and that they “have to be innovative in their approach.”

“We don’t want to use up the rainy day fund before we even have an idea of where we’re headed,” he said, adding that “keeping flexibility alive is important. [The federal government] will play a major role on what we’re able to take on, including federal aid and that state tax collections had to take on providing wrap around services traditionally provided by schools. The state has a role to play in being helpful.”

He further noted that the Legislature is questioning whether deductibility of charitable donations should be implemented on July 1, as that would reduce tax revenue by $300 million.

Legislators are also considering an “accelerated sales tax,” which means that the state would collect sales tax revenue in the month it is generated rather than, as is currently the case, one month behind. Essentially, this means that there could be 13 months’ worth of sales tax revenue during the 12-month period FY21, though Michlewitz expressed concern about that action’s impact on small businesses.

Regarding the new “Student Opportunity Act,” he said that the Legislature was in the process of “putting together a strong first year,” but it “has to be realigned and reconfigured because of the circumstances we’re in.” He hopes to have some implementation in FY21, and in the years following, he said, there may be “some things that come down the pike (to help with funding) like the million-dollar tax.”

On public transit, “We passed in the House a major transportation revenue package. I don’t know what the Senate will do at this point … raising taxes in a pandemic is certainly very difficult to do. The idea of implementing a better transportation structure, including the MBTA, is still a hope.”

Asked what has been learned about having to deal with the pandemic, Michlewitz said, “We didn’t have resources immediately to be able to combat this issue – PPEs and ventilators – so we had to rely on outside resources for us to survive the turmoil and chaos, which has been a wake-up call for many of us in state and local government. We used to feel more comfortable relying on the federal government in a number of areas, but I’m not sure the case the way Washington is operating now. “We had to chase after masks and PPE, it has been an eye opener.”

“These are unprecedented times,” said Michlewitz. “The state government slowed the economy down to stop the public health crisis and it is unknown how or when to wake up the economy. And we don’t know how long it’s going to take.”

While he said he has concerns about social problems that could become exacerbated from a lengthy shutdown, he said that well all the parts of our Massachusetts government have been working together in these difficult times.

To the Editor:

During these challenging times, United States Postal Service employees are working hard to ensure that residents stay connected with their world through the mail. Whether it's medications, a package, a paycheck, benefits or pension check, a bill or letter from a family member, postal workers understand that every piece of mail is important.

While service like this is nothing new to us, we need our communities’ help with social distancing.

For everyone’s safety, our employees are following the social distancing precautions recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and local health officials. We are asking people to not approach our carriers to accept delivery. Let the carrier leave the mailbox before collecting the mail. With schools not in session, children should also be encouraged to not approach a postal vehicle or carrier. If a delivery requires a signature, carriers will knock on the door rather than touching the bell. They will maintain a safe distance, and instead of asking for a signature on their mobile device, they’ll ask for the recipient’s name. The carrier will leave the mail or package in a safe place for retrieval.

We are proud of the role our employees play in processing, transporting, and delivering mail and packages for the American public. The CDC, World Health Organization, as well as the Surgeon General indicate there is no current evidence that COVID-19 is being spread through the mail.

With social distancing, we can keep the mail moving, while keeping our employees, and the public, safe.

Mike Rakes
District manager
US Postal Service
Greater Boston District

East Boston Savings Bank is here for you.

As a 172-year old Boston Bank, East Boston Savings Bank has a rich history of servicing the City of Boston and its surrounding communities. The foundation that we honor are integrity, strength and hard work for all our customers. It is our tradition to be responsive to the needs of people like you and businesses like yours during good times and challenging times.

We have seen and been through past events that have affected the world and the world economy. As residents, together, please know that we are here for you. I assure you that East Boston Savings Bank remains your strong neighborhood bank, supporting you, your family, your business and your community. It’s because of your trust in us - and our faith in you - we will make it through these events together.

Trust that we are in this for the long haul, right by your side. Our branch office doors will remain open as long as we can assure the safety of you and our employees. Online Banking, Mobile Banking, ATMs and our Automated 24-Hour Telephone Banking System (866-774-7705) are always an alternative banking option for you – visit ebsb.com for more information. Keep your deposits 100% guaranteed by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation and the Depositors Insurance Fund.

I understand there are a bunch of unknowns with this pandemic but knowing East Boston Savings Bank has endured many devastating events in the past and has come through each of these stronger and more committed to our customers than ever.

Thank you for trusting in East Boston Savings Bank. Stay safe and we look forward to continuing working hard for you.

Sincerely,

Richard J. Gavagnano
President, CEO and Chairman
East Boston Savings Bank

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April 16, 2020

THE REPORTER

Page 9
The Team at Mattapan Community Health Center is committed to keeping our patients, community and staff safe and healthy during these most challenging times.

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Dental – Emergency Visits

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Monday- Thursday  9:00am – 6:00pm
Friday           8:30am – 5:00pm
Saturday         Closed

It is during these challenging times that we come together.
We Salute our Neighborhood Heroes

Thank you Doctors, Nurses and Hospital Support Workers

Thank you First Responders - Police, Fire & EMTs

Thank you Essential Workers - MBTA Drivers, Postal Workers Grocery & Pharmacy Employees

Thank you Food Service workers who prepare our takeaway meals

Thank you to all our neighbors who look after people in need

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Union workers step up to serve at ‘Boston Hope’

By Daniel Sheehan
Reporter Staff

Teri Trotman of Dorchester has worked intermittently at the Boston Convention and Exhibition Center (BCEC) since 1994. As a member of the UNITE HERE Local 26 food service workers union, Trotman is a veteran of the industry, having logged countless hours at the center preparing banquets in addition to some hands-on bartending work.

Last week, after the South Boston facility was temporarily transformed into the “Boston Hope” COVID-19 field hospital, Trotman didn’t think twice about returning to a workspace that was now on the front lines of the pandemic. “They gave us the opportunity, and I figured it would be something I felt this is what I wanted to do,” she explained. “Sometimes you just feel that you need to do something. We’re all humans, you know, these are all our people. Everybody needs to chip in somehow if they want to, even if it’s just staying at home to not spread anything...I felt this is what I wanted to do.”

Trotman, 56, is an essential worker—one of thousands across the city who continue to provide crucial services during this national health emergency. These essential service industry workers—many of whom are from our neighborhood—assume a level of risk as they go about their jobs. But so far, Trotman told the Reporter, she feels safe.

Trotman said that while a few of her colleagues were nervous at first about working in the same building as COVID-19-positive patients, those fears dissipated when they saw the slew of safety measures being taken on site. “They’re really taking precautions,” she said. “They’re not playing around. When we come in, they take our temperature with this eye instrument and they give us plenty of masks and gloves. They even have a special sanitizer station where they sanitize all kinds of things.”

Trotman added that she and her coworkers are “nowhere near the patients,” who are being treated in the “Ground Zero” first-floor showroom area while food service workers stay in the loading dock and on the second floor. “They know what they’re doing. They’re trying to control this thing,” she said. “They’re thinking about our well-being, too. They need us. They don’t want us to get sick.”

Trotman sees herself as providing important behind-the-scenes support to the doctors and nurses doing their best to save lives. “We provide breakfast, lunch, dinner, snacks, coffee, off-ice,” she noted. “We provide that for them; they need those things to keep their spirits up, keep their energy up.”

As for Local 26, Trotman said the union has been “really helpful. They’ve been sending us emails with resources and different things for different people...If they don’t have it, they’ll go out and find the solution and then call back and check on you.”

And while she’s happy contributing to the cause, Trotman said that at the convention center, “it’s going to be some time before we get back to normal,” estimating the effects of the crisis will last “good into the summer.”

Until then, Trotman and her colleagues will continue serving the folks at Boston Hope, where she said a feeling of community is developing. “We’re all in the same boat. Everybody’s just trying tocope with whatever situation they’re in. We’re all here trying to do what we can do.”

‘We are in survival mode’

(Continued from page 1) Typically treats about 23,000 people per year, making it a critical link in the city’s health care system, but one that has proven vulnerable in this crisis. The center is also a catalyst for civic life and an economic engine in the neighborhood.

“We’ve been reaching out to individuals and organizations for financial and supply [PPE] donations,” said Cotterell. “All the while continuing to provide the care that we’ve been providing to our patients and community for over 40-plus years, albeit through the addition of a new model of care – telehealth.

“Cotterell is currently working with the city on additional testing and contact tracing efforts to combat this virus,” she said.

Harbor Health Services, Inc., which includes the Daniel Driscoll Neponset Health Center and Geiger-Gibson in Dorchester, will receive $1,101,650 in federal funds.

Chuck Jones, president and CEO of Harbor Health, said that he and his staff are grateful for the funds, but they will not be enough to cover a full month’s worth of losses. “The CARES Act funding will help to alleviate some of the financial strain that the current crisis has caused for community health centers. Harbor has had to make some very difficult decisions and major changes over the past month,” said Jones. “For safety we had to stop offering dental services and furlough a quarter of our staff. We had to respond to needs of our patients with a new option for having an appointment over the phone or through video.

He added: “Community health centers are especially important during this crisis because COVID-19 is having a disproportionate impact on the communities we serve. Continued support from private and government sources is absolutely essential to sustaining our work and delivering care when the people in our communities need us most.”

US Sen. Ed Markey agreed that more must be done to secure additional funding. “I will continue to push for the next round of economic relief to include additional funding for community health centers so that they can care for patients during this public health emergency,” he said.
Focus is on disparities as infections rise

Boston Resident COVID-19 Cases as of April 8, 2020

Race/Ethnicity Known Cases in Boston Total Cases in Boston
Asian or Pacific Islander 15 4.8%
Black or African-American 531 10.3%
Hispanic or Latino 23 12.9%
Other 18 24.4%
White 267 96%
Total Known Cases in Boston: 1,587
62.4% of total COVID-19 cases have race/ethnicity data. 87.7% of the unknown cases are classified as "missing" for race/ethnicity data.

Test results of residents of nurs- ing homes and long-term care facilities—which account for 45 percent of all COVID-19 cases—have tested more than 3,700 people on-site at more than 220 facilities.

The MBTA’s subway system is carrying roughly 8.5 percent of its typical ridership and the peak commuting times have shifted to align with shift changes at health care facilities, General Manager Steve Poftak said Monday. That drop in ridership is going to impact the T’s fiscal year 2020 budget, and the agency is expecting its coronavirus pandemic to pump up $231 million hole in its revenue forecast.

The T’s ridership data only counts subway stations but shows that ridership as of April 9 was down about 92.7 percent compared to the week of Feb. 24. Bus ridership, Poftak said, is down to 22 percent of its usual level and the commuter rail system is serving about 6 to 7 percent of its typical ridership.

Officer Jose Fontenez

so it is possible the high rate reflects increased testing in April 9, as the numbers reflect a particular outbreak of Covid-19 among the city’s homeless population, or both.

On Monday, Walsh announced that the city is setting up a testing center at the Whit- tier Street Community Health Center in Dorchester, a total of 613 COVID-19 cases were reported through April 9 out of the total number of known city-wide cases— 2,848. Matte- tan had 169, according to the city analysis.

The Dorchester zip codes 02125 and 02123 had a rate of known infor- mation of 5.4 per 10,000 residents, according to the city. The zip 20215 and 20217 were slightly lower at 4.9 per 10,000 residents. That compares to the citywide rate of 41.9/10,000.

On Tuesday, veteran Boston Police officer Jose Fontenez, a 53-year- old Boston resident, from COVID-19. Mayor Martin Walsh announced his death at a press briefing at City Hall. The mayor was joined by Commissioner William Gross.

Fontenez had been assigned to Area E-3, the district that includes Hyde Park and Jamaica Plain, since 1996.

“We lost a hero today from this virus,” said the mayor. “He made the ultimate sacrifice.”

Commissioner Gross said that 67 members of BPD have tested positive for the virus and that 53 officers “are still here” as they recover from or battle the illness.

Fontenez is near- ly midway through what public health experts believe is the most likely period for the peak in CO- VID-19 hospitalizations to Massachusetts, but Health and Human Serv- ices Secretary Marylou Sudders put it another way during a press brief- ing on Monday: “This is just the eye of the storm.”

Sudders said hospitals are currently at about 50 percent capacity, with just 36 patients at the Boston Convention and Exhibition Center field hospital and 200 ventilators from the federal government, which are being inspect- ed and could be deployed as soon as Monday night, officials said.

This came as President Donald Trump said he could be ready to reopen the economy by May 1. Governor Charlie Baker said Monday that he has been told to think that Massachusetts from its “self-induced coma,” but he said he could not provide any details as he worried that people might start to leave their homes.

“We have had conversa- tions with a variety of public and private health care commu- nities, and in our public health community, we don’t really know what it might look like once we get past this, and I think it’s really important to talk about some point, but I really don’t want people to start to think today that this is over,” Baker said.

The governor also re- minded that the daily COVID-19 case counts indicate that “the days and weeks ahead will be difficult ones” as he continued to highlight his admin- istration’s efforts to help manufactur- ers transition to make crit- ical personal protective equipment like gowns, masks and swabs.

The governor did, how- ever, lay out some flag- ger posts and guidelines for residents to look for as they wonder when life might start to return to some semblance of normal. “I don’t think anyone can honestly say that you can just flip the switch at any point in the not too distant future, given the fact that the surge is actually not the same ev- erywhere,” he said. “It’s a wave that’s going to play out across the country at different points in time.”

On Monday, Baker visited the governors in New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, and Delaware as they an- nounced that they would work together within the next week to determine the argument about when to begin a return to normalcy.

On the topic of testing, Baker also said that the number of tests available in the state has deployed

Alien, 62, contracted the COVID-19 disease while he was recuperat- ing from a medical proce- dure last week, according to his friend and fellow photographer, Bill Brett, who first posted news of Alien’s death on Monday.

“Sad news: Our friend Steve Alien, edi- tor and photographer of the Neighborhood News and lifelong Dorchester resident, died tonight,” Brett wrote. “Our prayers to his family on this loss at such a tough time. This coronavirus is vicious.”

Mr. Alien was a longtime contributor to the Dorchester Argus-Citizen and the South Boston Tribune. After those weekly newspapers ceased publication, he launched his own newspaper—initially the Southie Photo News. It later was named Neighborhood Photo News with con- tent that focused mainly on South Boston and Dorchester.

His daughter, Lisa Brown, said her father had a “good heart.”

“He loved Dorchester and tried to help a lot of people,” said Brown. “We are very sad and shocked that he is gone.”

She added: “Please encourage your readers to continue social distancing and follow Mayor Walsh’s request to wear masks and help stop the spread.”

In a statement on Twitter on Tuesday night, Mayor Walsh said: “Sad to hear of the passing of Steve Alien, a man who loved nothing more than showcasing his community and his neighbors through his photography and his newspaper. He will be sorely missed in Boston.”

Alien was active as a member of the Dorchester Day Parade Committee and the Dorchester Board of Trade. Details on arrangements for Mr. Alien’s funeral were not available when the Reporter went to press this week.

— BILL FORRY

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— BILL FORRY
By Mary Nee

As I reflect on my nearly eight years as president of the Animal Rescue League of Boston (ARL), I keep coming back to something that is vital for any nonprofit organization—the power of volunteering.

This is usually one of my favorite times of the year, as normally ARL would be poised to celebrate National Volunteer Appreciation Week (April 19-25). During this week, we typically gather at our Boston, Dedham, and Brewster shelters to salute the amazing accomplishments during the past year, as normally more than 550 volunteers.

Unfortunately, we are not living in typical times. For health and safety reasons, a handful of volunteers are still pitching in each day at our locations and we have a dedicated network of foster families who continue to make tremendous contributions.

Community service is of utmost importance to ARL during this health crisis, and in this spirit, ARL has placed approximately 160 animals into the loving care of ARL’s foster care network. Removing these animals from a shelter environment has tremendous benefits for the animals in our care and also allows ARL to free-up kennel space in the event that animals need to be surrendered or temporarily housed by those affected by COVID-19.

Animals in foster care receive a respite from the shelter environment, can recover from a medical procedure in a quiet, calming space, and can benefit from one-on-one interaction to help overcome behavioral challenges. Additionally, animals in foster care give ARL’s animal care associates a better idea of how animals behave and act in a home setting.

For the humans involved, fostering is a wonderful way to give back, and offers the opportunity to help an animal in need and to enjoy the pleasure of having an animal in the home, if only for a short while.

About 63 million people, or 25 percent of the population, donate their time and talents to worthy causes. In addition to making a difference in the community, volunteering has been shown to improve a person’s health by increasing physical activity, enhancing your mood, and decreasing stress. Another bonus? The majority of hiring managers nationally see volunteering as an asset in candidates seeking employment.

You have read here about the impact that volunteers have on ARL, being able to fulfill its mission. If you are able, I would certainly encourage you to consider donating your time to a worthy cause like ARL, or any cause that you are passionate about. The benefits are endless!
so, when she saw an opportunity to help, she applied to be a resident. Her first responder. He’s a firefighter, and she’s a captain in the National Guard, who’s been activated as a first responder unit, so he’s been working a lot, keeping us all safe,” she explained. “My mom is a nurse, a nurse, and she’s in health care treating patients. Every- one who’s working on the front lines is important...they’re the heroes.”

City Councillor An- nissa Essaibi-George has known about Rouse’s artistic gifts for years. So, when she saw an opportunity to get creative with the win- dows at Stitch House, her business on Dot Ave, she knew whom to call.

“I reached out to her and asked could we do a little fire mural for folks on the front lines, just to express some sort of gratitude for the work they do,” said the councillor.

Days later, the Stitch House window was adorned with the of- fi- cial seals of the Boston Police, Fire, and EMT departments, along with the words “thank you.” Said Essaibi-George, who has been spending her time between city council meetings sewing protective face masks at home: “It’s a message of thanks, it’s a public display of gratefulness, and it’s also uplifting. I would hope that any doctor, nurse, EMT, firefighter, or police officer that drives or walks by feels relieved, you know, that they don’t feel forgotten, and that they’re appreci- ated for the sacrifices they’re making every single day.”

To learn more about Elizabeth Rouse’s work, visit her on Facebook @ Windowntypelizabeth.

Mother’s Day Walk for Peace goes virtual

BY DANIEL SHEEHAN
REPORTER STAFF
The Louis D. Brown Institute for Peace an- nounced today it will hold a Mother’s Day Virtual Walk-a-thon for Peace in place of its annual Walk for Peace event on May 11.

The Fields Corner- based educational and healing center is a cru- cial asset for families and communities across the city who are working through their responses to homicide. The institu- tion provides important resources, literature, and healing services for those impacted by ho- micide and helps them navigate their grief, trauma, and loss. The center holds a fundraising walk every Mother’s Day as a way to honoring loved ones who have been murdered.

This year, some of that walking may be done virtually. Acknowl- edging that the community won’t “be able to gather physically on Mother’s Day,” the center is ask- ing participants to reg- ister and donate online. The institute, which is still operating and pro- viding services during the current shelter in place directive, hopes to reach its $400,000 goal with the help of social media and internet com- munities.

The COVID-19 out- break has impacted all of our daily lives, and for those of us who’ve experienced murder, trauma, grief, and loss, social distancing can add to an already stress- ful and overwhelming time,” wrote organiza- tion founder Tina Cherry in a newsletter. “Many of us feel isolated now more than ever that we join together virtually.” Those interested in participating can reg- ister as an individual or as a team, make a donation, and become a sponsor at mothersdaywalkforpeace.org.

At Codman Square Health Center, we are committed to keeping our patients, community, and staff safe and healthy.

We are converting our scheduled in-person visits to visits by phone, screening everyone who enters our health center, and reducing our hours.

Our Urgent Care department remains open 7 days a week with reduced hours:

Monday – Friday: 9 am – 7 pm
Saturday: 9 am – 3 pm
Sunday: 9 am – 1 pm

Call 617-822-8271 with any questions.

Codman Square Health Center
637 Washington Street, Dorchester, MA 02124 | 617-822-8271 | codman.org

Windowfront artist a messenger of gratitude to front-line workers

Elizabeth Rouse of Dorchester is shown outside the BanShee on Dorchester Ave. in front of her mural.

State Officials Response to COVID-19

Over the past several weeks, the COVID-19 outbreak has upended our daily lives, stressed our economy, and threatened the wellbeing of our communities. It has also presented unprecedented challenges to our city and state. From record- setting unemployment applications, to surge demand for hospita- lities, and vast racial disparities across identified cases that threaten our most vulnerable neighborhoods, this is a time for us to keep our faith and band together as a Commonwealth to protect all families.

As your state legislators, we have taken many steps to alleviate the burden on taxpayers, homeowners, renters, seniors, low-income residents, and everyone in our communities. At the outset of this crisis, we passed an emergency $15 million supplemental budget to invest in our healthcare system, and since then we have worked with the Administration to dedicate another $1.6 billion to hospitals, community health centers, and frontline healthcare providers.

Our offices have been fielding record-high inquiries for assistance with unemployment, and we have been taking steps with our federal colleagues to expand access and expedite service from the Department of Unemployment Assistance (DUA), including waiving the one-week waiting period, adding an extra $600/week for claimants, expanding access to self- employed individuals, independent contractors, gig economy workers, and others who otherwise would not qualify, and expanding benefits an additional 13 weeks, or 50%.

We know small businesses are suffering, and we have collaborated with our city and federal colleagues to secure several grant, loan, and assistance programs, giving Massachusetts businesses the opportunity to keep staff on their payroll, pay their bills, and relieve their debt burden. Recently, the State Legislature acted quickly to allow restaurants to deliver wine and beer or sell it for takeaway, allowing these businesses to continue moving inventory and generating revenue. We are also working on legislation to require business interruption insurance to cover the disruptions associated with the pandemic, allowing businesses to collect in their time of need.

Individuals, families, renters, and homeowners are in distress too, and we understand the magnitude of the crisis. That’s why we recently passed a bill to place a moratorium on evictions and foreclosures, so no one will end up on the street as a result of this virus. That legislation allows landlords to offer property owners interest-free rerefinancing on their mortgages, not paying for several months now and simply adding those bills of mortgage payment without additional fees or costs. And we have extended the state tax filing deadline to July 15th, while empowering cities and towns to defer collection of local taxes too, putting more money back in taxpayers pockets when they most need it: right now.

Working together we are helping connect seniors and at risk individuals with basic necessities to get through these challenging times. We are partnering with local businesses and providers to get more Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to the hands of our front line healthcare workers.

We are leading the fight on legislation to protect our first responders, and get them the insurance they need to be covered in this crisis. We are advancing legislation to provide $10 million in emergency funds for homeless populations, and allocate emergency payments to low income families receiving state assistance.

The days ahead will be extremely difficult. If you are a first responder, a front line health care worker, a MBTA employee, a grocery store clerk, someone delivering, an essential worker or anyone who is still reporting in person to work - we thank you and we are indebted to each of you.

These are truly unprecedented times. While significant, none of these pieces of legislation we have passed is itself a singular silver bullet. They do represent our continued collective and tireless efforts to deliver as many resources as possible to our communities. Our offices pledge to continue doing all we can to be a resource to you, and to the community at large. If you need assistance, please call us at (617)-722-2000 or visit MALegislature.Gov, and we will be happy to advocate on your behalf to get any issues resolved.

In the meantime, stay home as much as possible, and stay safe.

Sincerely,

Representative Russell Holmes
Representative Dan Cullinane
Representative Dan Hunt
Representative Liz Miranda
Representative David Biele

State House
24 Beacon Street
Boston, MA, 02133
(617) 722-0000
www.malegislature.gov

April 16, 2020    THE REPORTER
Reporter, six other Mass. news outlets get Facebook grants

By Daniel Sheehan
Reporter Staff

Seven local news outlets in Massachusetts, including the Reporter, each have received grants of $5,000 from the Facebook Journalism Project (FJP). The new funding initiative is meant to aid newsrooms covering the COVID-19 crisis on a local level.

In addition to the Reporter, the Bay State Banner, Daily Hampshire Gazette, Hull Times Media Group, Inc., MasTV/EI Planeta LLC, O16 LLC, and the New Bedford Guide were among the 400 North American publications tapped by Facebook and partners the Lenfest Institute for Journalism and the Local Media Association (LMA) to receive aid in navigating the economic impact of the outbreak.

After announcing the first round of 50 grant recipients in March, Facebook quickly doubled the pool money to $2 million for an additional 350 newsrooms after more than 200 publishers applied in the first 48 hours after the application was made available.

Josh Mabry, Local News Partnerships Lead at Facebook, said the program came about as a way to address an “immediate need” in local journalism that was highlighted by the rise of the pandemic.

“This is really important because Facebook is all about community, staying connected, and being informed, and I think right now a lot of people are realizing how important their local news sources are,” said Mabry.

“It’s one thing to be following the COVID outbreak on national news,” he added, “but it’s a different story when it hits home and you want to know how it’s affecting your friends and family, people and places in your backyard. Having local news organizations who are telling those stories is critically important.”

Each grant is meant to “help fulfill immediate needs such as increasing frequency of publishing, tools to work remotely, combating misinformation, and serving vulnerable and at-risk groups.” The $2 million sum is part of $100 million total in funding that the social media corporation is investing globally to support local news organizations.
April 16, 2020

BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS OF DORCHESTER

WELCW

CONNECT THE DOT:

BGCD Hosts Drive Thru Easter Bunny Experience: On Saturday, Boys & Girls Clubs of Dorchester hosted a drive thru experience to see the Easter Bunny.

Our families and members were able to drive up to the Marr Clubhouse to wave and say hello to the Easter Bunny. Those who came by were then surprised with a fun Easter basket that was put together by our Early Ed Staff.

Thank you to all the staff and to everyone who made this possible and who took the time and effort to brighten our families day. Little things like this go so far and really help keep us connected.

We hope you all had a wonderful Easter. We miss seeing you very much and can’t wait to see you soon.

FIND OUT WHAT’S INSIDE:

BGCD Serves Frozen Meals for Harbor Point Community: Last week, Boys & Girls Clubs of Dorchester was able to deliver 500 frozen meals to the Senior Housing Center at Harbor Point, and families who we help serve at our Walter Denney Youth Center (WDYC) Clubhouse who live in our community.

A special thank you to Mayor Martin J. Walsh, the Boston Resiliency Fund, the Metropolitan Boston Building Trades Council and Community Servings for providing the meal packages.

Thank you to our Queenie Santos, Unit Director of the WDYC and Mike Joyce, VP of Programming who coordinated and delivered the meals.

For more information on our “Grab and Go” sessions, please contact Mike Joyce at mjoyce@bgcdorchester.org

BGCD Serves Frozen Meals for Harbor Point Community:

See details below.

DID YOU KNOW:


Boston 25 interviewed Director of Program Development, Brendan McDonald, as well as one of BGCD’s families. We were so excited to hear about how the series came about and how much it meant to our members during this time.

You can watch BGCD’s “The Masked Singer” Season 1 on our Facebook and Youtube pages now! Don’t forget to keep an eye out for Season 2, coming soon!

Please follow and like our pages to join in on the fun!

#WeAreDorchester

UPDATE

Due to the COVID-19 Crisis, all 3 of our Clubhouses will remain closed. For the most up to date information on Club activities and resources or to make a donation to our Clubs, please go to our website at bgcdorchester.org.

For those in need of assistance, please call our Club Community Hotline @ 617-288-7120 ext. (4444) or email us at info@bgcdorchester.org.

Thank you to our community and friends, we will get through this together!

#WeAreDorchester

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Pricing information and maps available online at:

www.BostonCemetery.org

617-325-6830

info@bcca.com.net

Caring for your life’s journey...
WHEN YOU’RE ON YOUR OWN, WE ARE THERE WITH YOU.

Chris Lazana, manager of the Lower Mills Apartments, with a copy of last week’s Reporter, which was delivered to the building’s residents. Photo courtesy Dave Mareira

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