



mbhp@home

Information and resources for program participants and their families

Metropolitan Boston Housing Partnership **SPRING 2008**

Teens: It's Time to Think about Summer Jobs, Volunteering, and Camp!

Although the summer may seem like a long way off, it's never too early to start thinking about summer options for teens. Boston has many resources and options available, but it is best to do the leg work early.

MBHP will be offering a paid summer internship program for teens. For the past several years, our Tenant Youth Mentoring Program has helped tenants' children to develop skills in leadership, communication, customer service, and time and behavioral management. Our program can help students gain valuable work experience and job skills. For more information about this program, please contact Ellie Martin at 617-425-6630.

The ABCD SummerWorks program is for Boston youth ages 14 to 21. It is a job, education, and mentoring program that last year provided jobs to 1,100 teens at 175 community organizations. Teens work at sites like schools, hospitals and clinics, summer camps, and child care facilities and

receive job tips, guidance, and mentoring. SummerWorks also offers workshops on college and career counseling, time and money management, and violence prevention. For more information about the SummerWorks program, please call 617-348-6546 or visit www.bostonabcd.org/programs/youth-development/summerworks/index.html

Many other places also offer jobs for teens, such as grocery stores, retail stores, and restaurants. Just make sure you check out the Massachusetts labor laws before you apply. Depending on your age, labor laws determine what jobs you can perform, how late you can work, what kind of supervision you need, and whether you will need a work permit. Visit www.mass.gov/dos/youth/summary_of_laws for more information.

The Boston Youth Zone is a great online resource for youth and teens who want to get more information about summer jobs, résumé-writing

tips, after-school programs, sports leagues, and much more! This site also has a section especially dedicated to teens, the Teenzone. Visit www.bostonyouthzone.com.

There are also other summer opportunities such as volunteering, summer camp, and exploring the city. You can visit the following sites for more information.

Volunteering

www.bostoncares.org

Summer Camp

http://find.acacamps.org/finding_a_camp.php

Exploring the City

www.bostoncentral.com/events.php
www.bostonnavigator.org/search.aspx

No matter what you decide to do this summer, be sure to add it to your résumé. You always want to be prepared for the next opportunity that comes along. And finally, enjoy!

MBHP Runs the Marathon

MBHP was awarded five charity runner spots in the 112th marathon in Boston to be held on April 21, 2008. This is the world's oldest annual marathon and one of its most prestigious road racing events. This is MBHP's second year participating in the event and we are pleased to have Scott Woefel on the team for his second time. The other runners are Cristo Banda, Sean Carraher, Idaliz Santos, and Craig Todaro.

Charity runners do not need to "time-qualify" for this event, but they must finish the race and also raise a

minimum of \$3,000 which supports MBHP's many affordable housing and homelessness prevention programs. In their first two weeks of fundraising, the runners had already raised more than \$1,500. Last year, Scott Woefel raised almost \$4,000 for MBHP; his goal this year is to raise \$6,000. To contribute to the runners, go to www.firstgiving.com/mbhp.

In preparation for the marathon, MBHP runners have been training extensively both on their own and with trainer Domenick D'Amico.

continued on mbhp@home page 4



2008 Marathon runners (left to right): Domenick D'Amico (trainer), Cristo Banda, Sean Carraher, Idaliz Santos, Craig Todaro (not shown: Scott Woefel)

Fun Facts

Arlington

- The Town of Arlington was originally settled in 1635 as a village under the name of **Menotomy**. In 1807, the Town and a section of what is now Belmont were set off from Cambridge and incorporated as West Cambridge. In 1867, the name was changed to Arlington in honor of the heroes buried at Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, VA.
- In 1688, Menotomy's 24 taxpayers petitioned for the right to build the first school. The school, located at what is now the cemetery on Pleasant Street, was completed in 1693 and stood there for more than 100 years.
- In 2007, Arlington celebrated the 200th anniversary of the town being incorporated.

Cambridge

- Cambridge is home to one of the oldest African American communities in the nation. Famous African American residents of Cambridge include **W.E.B. DuBois**, who achieved national prominence as the father of Pan Africanism and founder of the NAACP. In 1895, he became the first African American to receive a Ph.D. from Harvard University. **William H. Lewis**, a graduate of Harvard Law School and an All-American football player, was the first African American to serve as assistant attorney general of the United States. **Bishop George A. McGuire**, an Episcopal priest, founded the African Orthodox denomination, which was the religious arm of Marcus Garvey's Back to Africa movement.
- Cambridge was founded by European settlers in 1630 as Newtowne, changed its name to Cambridge in 1638, and incorporated into a city in 1846.

Somerville

- **Prospect Hill Castle** is an important part of Somerville's history. Built in 1902, the mansion is located at Prospect Hill Avenue and Munroe Street. On this site on January 1, 1776, General George Washington ordered that a new flag be raised on a 76-foot schooner mast placed on Prospect Hill. Representing the 13 united colonies during the Revolutionary War, this was the first true "American" flag flown in what is now the United States.
- The **Old Powder House**, located at the corner of College Avenue and Broadway, is considered the most distinct ruin in Massachusetts. Built in approximately 1704, it was used to store arms and ammunition during both the Indian and Revolutionary Wars. In 1890, the Powder House was presented to the City of Somerville by the descendants of Nathan Tufts, who owned the land at that time. The public park surrounding the monument is known as "Nathan Tufts Park."
- Everyone's favorite marshmallow cream, Fluff, was invented here! In 1917 a Somerville man by the name of Archibald Query began making the sticky treat in his kitchen and sold it door to door. (Although the Marshmallow Fluff Co. is in Lynn, MA, the people of Somerville celebrate an annual **What the Fluff?** festival in September in Union Square, where Archibald Query's home was located.)



Free Family Fun

Minuteman Bike Path

Runs from the Alewife MBTA Station in Cambridge and crosses Massachusetts Avenue in Arlington Center

The Minuteman Bike path is a fun way to travel from Cambridge through Arlington, Lexington, and Bedford. Families and individuals can enjoy biking, running, walking, pushing strollers, and rollerblading along this well-maintained path. (Cross-country skiing is an option in winter!) In addition you can stop off in downtown Arlington and browse the many shops, or enjoy a stroll through downtown Lexington where you can grab a piece of history at the Visitors Center or just grab an ice cream and relax on the town green. For more information go to www.minutemanbikeway.org.

Sing-a-long Hour at Stella Bella Toys

Saturdays 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
1360 Cambridge Street, Cambridge
617-491-6290

Children of all ages are invited to join local musicians to sing songs and play games at the Inman Square location. Sing-a-longs are free and open to the public.

Harvard Coop for Kids—Story & Crafts Hour

Saturdays 11:00 a.m.—Stories & Crafts for Children under 7
Tuesdays 11:00 a.m.—Stories for Preschoolers

1400 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, 617-499-2000

The Coop for Kids has two story times during the week. On Tuesdays, preschoolers are invited to hear a selection of engaging stories. New parents are encouraged to bring their babies along to join in the fun; it's a

continued on back cover

A Day on the Job with Margaret Gibson

Q: *What do you do at MBHP? What are your responsibilities?*

Margaret: I am a Lead Program Representative in Rental Assistance here at MBHP. I serve the towns of Boston, Burlington, Lexington, and Quincy. My tasks include performing annual and interim re-certifications as well as subsequent data entry, answering and returning an average of 15 to 20 phone calls per day, interacting with tenants and property owners on a daily basis, and conducting referrals and providing resources as needed. I also assist in the hiring and training of new employees; processing rental increases, repayment agreements, and subsidy terminations; solving problems as they arise, and fielding incoming complaints.

Q: *How long have you worked at MBHP?*

Margaret: I have worked at MBHP for eight years. I started at MBHP as an Administrative Assistant, was first promoted to a Program Representative, and then was promoted again to my current position as a Lead Program Representative.

Q: *What previous work experience(s) led you to your position at MBHP?*

Margaret: I have always had a passion for housing. In 1990, I took a temporary position as an Office Manager at Maloney Properties. I worked there for four years providing similar services as I do here at MBHP. I later took on a position as a payroll clerk at a health services organization but over time my job description changed and I lost interest in the work. In 2000, a friend referred me to MBHP and I have been here ever since.

Q: *What advice would you give to someone who wants to work in Rental Assistance? What skills are needed?*



Margaret: First and foremost, you need to be a “people person.” You also need basic knowledge of computer programs such as Microsoft Word and Excel. Here at MBHP it is important that you are willing to work with a multicultural diverse population. Lastly, it is very important to have a lot of patience. Every day is different, and you’ll have your ups and downs.

Q: *What are some of the challenges that you face in your work?*

Margaret: My biggest challenge is dealing with people at risk for homelessness, fire victims, people seeking refuge from abuse, and tenants who are facing eviction. In these cases, I work closely with our Housing Consumer Education Center (HCEC), which has the resources and information to make meaningful referrals for people in crisis.

Q: *What do you enjoy most about working at MBHP?*

Margaret: I enjoy the company of the people who I work with. I take pride in the fact that I can leave my house knowing that I’ll be making a difference in people’s lives that day and every day.

Q: *I have a mobile Section 8 voucher and would like to move to a new apartment. How do I go about the process of relocating?*

A: There are some standard procedures to use. You must give your current Property Owner and MBHP a proper “notice to terminate” the tenancy in writing. (You can get a copy of MBHP’s “Notice to Terminate” form at our reception desk or by calling 617-859-0400; you can also write up your own.) Notice to move requirements are specified in your lease.

You then provide your Program Representative with a copy of the notice so he/she can forward your file to the relocation department. (If you work with a Supported Housing Program Representative, he or she will handle your relocation.) Then your Relocation Representative will send out your “Relocation Packet.” The packet will contain guidelines for the relocation process and the Request for Tenancy Approval (RFTA), which needs to be filled out and signed by both you and the new property owner. The packet also contains a W-9 form that you must give to the property owner. Once you have found a suitable apartment, you submit the RFTA, the completed W-9 form, and a Letter of Lead Compliance, if there are children under age six in the household, to your Relocation Rep. He/she will request an inspection of your potential new home; MBHP’s Inspection Department will in turn contact the new property owner to set up a time to inspect the new unit.

Once the home passes inspection and the negotiated rent has been approved by MBHP’s Market Analyst, whose job is to ensure that your rent is fair, your Relocation Representative will contact you to make an appointment for the lease signing. Your tenant rent share will be calculated at that lease signing appointment.



metropolitan boston housing partnership

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Don't Forget to File Your Taxes by April 15th!

If you still need help preparing and filing your taxes this year, MBHP is offering free tax preparation by appointment only for individuals who have worked and earned less than \$40,000 in 2007. File and get your refund in 7-10 days. MBHP volunteers have already returned more than \$93,000 in federal and state tax returns to members of the community. Call 617-425-6607 for information and to set up an appointment.

Boston Marathon

continued from mbhp@home cover

D'Amico brings many years of running experience to the MBHP team and caters to the training of average runners who want to accomplish the inspiring goal of running the Boston Marathon. D'Amico has many connections in the Boston running world and in turn offers our runners access to daily running courses, physical therapy, and education on the equipment needed—like the right pair of running shoes—to run a marathon.

MBHP is delighted to be participating in the 2008 Boston Marathon and is grateful to John Hancock Financial Services for providing us with this wonderful opportunity. In 2007 more than 20,000 runners completed the race. Good luck to our runners!

Free Family Fun

continued from mbhp@home page 2

great spot to meet other parents and make new friends. On Saturdays, stories and crafts for children under 7 often tie in with seasonal themes. Cookies and juice are offered at both story times. Unless otherwise noted, Coop for Kids events are held in the lower level of the Harvard Square Book Building and are free and open to the public.

Boston Museum of Science—Stargazing Nights

Every Friday at approximately 8:30-10:00 p.m., weather permitting Science Park, Cambridge 617-589-0267

The Gilliland Observatory, located atop the Museum's roof is open for free viewing on Friday evenings. Visitors are encouraged to attend the Friday, 7:00 p.m., showing of "The

Sky Tonight" as background for the viewing session (may have separate cost). Call the Observatory Hotline for viewing status and times. The Science Museum is a world-renowned educational institution with over 400 interactive participatory exhibits featuring live animal and physical science demonstrations, courses, traveling exhibits, a computer center, the Mugar Omni Theater, and Charles Hayden Planetarium.





FSS Update

SPRING 2008

INFORMATION AND RESOURCES FOR METROPOLITAN BOSTON HOUSING PARTNERSHIP'S FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY PROGRAM

CAREER SPOTLIGHT: Truck Drivers

What Do They Do?

All types of organizations rely on truck drivers to deliver goods from one location to another. Truck drivers are responsible for delivering cargo as quickly, safely, and efficiently as possible. Before starting a job, a truck driver must thoroughly inspect his/her vehicle and cargo and subsequently record all findings. A truck driver's responsibilities and assignments vary depending on numerous factors such as the size of the vehicle, the type of load being carried, the distance to be traveled, and the organization for which they work.

Who Should Explore Becoming a Truck Driver and Why?

If you enjoy driving and are interested in traveling, commercial truck driving may be a suitable career for you. You must be prepared to work long hours and spend a significant amount of time away from home. Employers tend to look for responsible, friendly, and self-motivated individuals.

How Does Someone Become a Truck Driver?

A commercial driver's license (CDL) is required to drive large trucks. Some states require that prospective drivers complete a training course in basic truck driving before getting their CDL. To qualify for a CDL, an applicant must have a clean driving record, pass a written exam, and demonstrate the ability to safely operate a commercial vehicle. In order to drive between states, an applicant must be 21 years of age and pass a physical examination. Physical qualifications include but are not limited to good hearing, at least 20/40 vision with glasses or corrective lenses, a 70 degree field of vision in each eye, and normal blood pressure. Drivers may not be color blind, must have normal use of arms and legs, and be free of epilepsy and/or diabetes.

What is the Earning Potential?

Opportunities may vary from year to year since the output of economy dictates the amount of cargo to be

moved. Median hourly earnings varied in May 2006 from \$7.02 to \$18.38 depending on experience, cargo carried, average distance traveled, and the size and type of the truck driven.

Other Considerations

Truck drivers on long runs face boredom, loneliness, and fatigue; they also often travel on nights, weekends, and holidays. Heavy lifting and over-time is often required. On the other hand, many truck drivers enjoy the beauty and freedom of the open road.

Information on professional truck driving was obtained from the information sources listed below:

Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles: www.mass.gov

Massachusetts Highway Department: www.mhd.state.ma.us

New England Tractor Trailer Training School: www.nettts.com

U.S. Department of Labor: www.bls.gov

Employment Resources

- **JOBNet** 210 South Street, Boston, phone: 617-338-0809, website: www.bostonabcd.org/jobnet
- **Boston Career Link** 1010 Harrison Avenue, Boston, 617-536-1888, www.bostoncareerlink.org
- **Community Work Services** "At Your Service" offers an 8-week hospitality and hotel training program. Graduates receive a certificate of completion issued by the

American Hotel and Lodging Association and job placement support. They have weekly information and assessment sessions every Friday at 10:00 a.m. at 174 Portland Street, Boston, or call 617-720-2233 with questions.

- **Cambridge Bio-medical Careers Program** is a 9-month training program that qualifies graduates for entry-level jobs in biotech

companies, hospital laboratories and research institutions. Training includes classes, tutoring, and career planning and job placement. Free tuition is offered to income eligible students. For more information, contact Harriet, Brenda, or Gloria at 617-242-0562.

- **Partners Healthcare** offers a 5-week unpaid job readiness

continued on FSS News page 2

The Family Self-Sufficiency Program

Do you wish you could find a better job, make more money, go to college, or buy a home of your own? If so, the Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) Program can help you achieve these exciting goals and more!

What is the Family Self-Sufficiency Program?

Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) is about power—your power to change your life. It links Section 8 rental assistance with case management over a five-year period (that's right, five years!) to help you achieve financial independence and other major goals—such as homeownership or a college degree. As your earnings increase, the amount of money between your starting and increased rent share is put aside in a special bank account—known as an escrow account. The 54 graduates of the FSS Program in 2007 had, on average, increased their income by more than \$15,000 and saved more than \$11,000.

How Does it Work?

You work with an advisor and develop a dynamic, personalized plan of action—one that will motivate you and keep your juices flowing! To participate, you come in and sign a contract with MBHP outlining your roles and responsibilities. Whenever

you become discouraged, your advisor, who serves as a combination of life coach and personal counselor, will help you stay focused. He/she will provide emotional support, case management, and personalized assistance as you work toward your long-term goals.

What Kind of Services Can be Provided?

Depending on your situation and the availability of services, the FSS Program can connect you with job training, resource planning, credit repair resources, basic skills education, high school equivalency (GED) programs, post-secondary education, and assistance with securing meaningful employment.

Tell Me an FSS Success Story

Ama Cunningham says that FSS changed her life. She lived paycheck to paycheck, worked part-time in retail and as a hairdresser to support herself and her daughter Tatiana, and worried about what would happen if she ever became sick. Looking for a way to both stabilize and increase her standard of living, Ama joined FSS. She attended workshops on financial planning, wrote to-do lists on index cards, and talked to her advisor, Marshall James, when

things got tough. Her supervisor at the retail job was so impressed with Ama's determination that she told Ama about a promising job at the MBTA—and even gave her the application to fill out! Ama graduated from FSS in 2007; she now has a full-time career at the T and is planning to buy a home within the next year. Her daughter, now 16, attends a charter high school and plans to become a pediatrician. Ama offers this advice: "Don't daydream about what you want! Work on it and things can happen for you."

How Can I Apply?

If you hold a Section 8 voucher with MBHP, you are eligible for the FSS Program—regardless of your educational level, work experience, or current employment status. If you are interested in participating, please contact Thomas Graham at 617-425-6701 or thomas.graham@mbhp.org. Our agency also connects FSS participants with MIDAS (Massachusetts IDA Solutions Program Partner), which offers financial educational and savings programs for potential homebuyers; participants who participate in MIDAS may be eligible to receive a below-market interest rate homebuyer's loan.

Employment Resources

continued from FSS News front cover

training program for Boston residents interested in entry-level employment with one of the Partner hospitals. Participants must be 18 or older and must have GED/High School Diploma. Participants must be able to work in the United States, have basic experience level in Microsoft Word, one year consecutive and verifiable work experience, and

must be able to attend the program Monday–Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. If you are interested, contact Kurleen Patrick @ Project Home (their community based partner) at 617-442-1880, ext.233.

- **Career Collaborative** offers a free four-week job-readiness/job search program for low-income adults who are highly motivated and ready to find full-time employment and to

gain job and interview skills. Orientations are conducted every Thursday at 1:00 p.m. at their office at 711 Atlantic Avenue, Suite B2, Boston. Bring your resume or a list of all jobs/volunteer positions/military service since high school along with a list of your education and training with the correct month and year dates. If you have questions, call 617-424-6616.