

NEW CREW MAINTAINS BHA LANDSCAPE

While his fellow crewmembers likely relaxed at home on a recent sunny Saturday, Landscape Crew Leader Bobby Burgess sat in an Arnold Arboretum classroom. The class was one of several attended by Boston Housing Authority Landscape staff throughout the spring, and covered topics such as planting and transplanting. “It was interesting,” Burgess said of the four-hour session. “But I didn’t think it was that practical.”

Such acknowledgments are as frustrating as they are helpful to the BHA’s newly established Landscape Crew. But, with nine crewmembers and a Crew Leader responsible for all aspects of landscape maintenance at the Federal Program: Region One’s eight developments, a few growing pains are to be expected. In the case of this particular class, Burgess’ opinion happened to differ from that of his colleagues in attendance. As with all new ventures, Landscape Management Coordinator Linda Fahy said, these trials serve as opportunities to learn and ultimately improve on a crew still in its infancy.

The Landscape Crew, launched in January of this year, was essentially born of budget constraints imposed on the Region One sites. “When staff in Program One were told that we would have to reduce our budget, we developed a committee...to talk about how we could continue to provide better services to our residents and reduce our budget,” Denise Murphy, Assistant Director of Property Management, said. “We identified centralizing staff throughout the program as a way to be more efficient, and we were able to identify funding in last year’s budget that could be used for start-up equipment.”

According to Fahy, staff at the Region One sites – Franklin Field, Franklin Hill, Alice Taylor, Whittier

Street, Lenox, Camden, Cathedral, and West Newton – identified one to two members of their staff, depending on the development’s size, to participate in the pilot program. Candidates were selected based on their interest in the program, although those with strong landscape backgrounds and those who had previously participated in a landscape-training program were also considered, she said. In addition to Burgess, the Crew Leader, the final nine selected were: Ricky Ortiz, Whittier; Edward Curren and George Cartegena, Franklin Hill; Tony King and Brutus Vital, Franklin Field; Jason Neff, West Newton; Mayda Rodriguez and Warren Stewart, Alice Taylor; and Gralyn Hart, Lenox.

The Crew works as a team five days a week, regardless of weather conditions, performing landscaping duties at the sites. Specifically, the crew is responsible for lawn maintenance, spring and fall cleanup, mulching, pruning shrubs, planting and maintaining flowerbeds, incidental tree work, weed control, and transplanting. In adverse weather, the Crew is assigned other tasks, which can include janitorial work such as hallway and basement

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The Landscape Crew takes a break during a recent day at Franklin Hill.

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DIABETES: IT CAN BE CONTROLLED!

The first in a series of health tips aimed at the BHA's elderly population.

It seems today that everyone knows someone who has diabetes, and it's no surprise. Almost 16,000,000 people in the United States have "the sugar disease," possibly a member of your family or a friend. Unlike in the past when people with diabetes had a terrible time, the good news is that today, people with diabetes can live full and happy lives. It isn't easy. You do have to think about what and when you eat, how you exercise and when you take medication (if you need to), but diabetes can be controlled. The bad news is that many people don't know that they have diabetes and if it goes untreated it can cause many serious health problems.

What is diabetes and who gets it? The food you eat turns into a kind of sugar (called glucose) in your stomach. Glucose is the fuel for your body, just like gasoline for a car. Without it, your body would not be able to function. Glucose enters the bloodstream but then needs to get out of the bloodstream and into all the body's cells. It does this with the help of insulin, a chemical produced by the pancreas, an organ in your body near the stomach. Without insulin, the glucose would just stay in the bloodstream.

In Type 2 diabetes, the most common type (90% of people with diabetes have Type 2), the body does not make enough insulin or the insulin that it makes does not work well enough to help get all of the blood sugar into the cells. As a result, the body doesn't get the fuel it needs and the level of sugar in the blood stays high. Too much blood sugar over time can cause blindness, kidney failure, heart disease and stroke, and loss of toes, feet, and legs. If it is not controlled, diabetes can shorten life and

make your later years hard. But again, the important thing to remember is that diabetes can be controlled.

Although a lot is now known about Diabetes, it is still not clear exactly why some people with the same risk factors develop diabetes and others do not. You can protect yourself from having untreated diabetes by knowing the risk factors and knowing the signs and symptoms of the disease. Symptoms include:

- Always being tired even though you may be getting enough rest
- Being very thirsty even though you are drinking a lot of water
- Urinating frequently, especially at night
- Always feeling hungry, especially after eating
- Losing weight even though you're not trying to
- Noticing blurry vision even if your eyeglass prescription is up to date
- Having numbness and tingling of your feet or hands
- Noticing that cuts and bruises take a long time to heal
- If you're a women, having frequent vaginal and urinary infections
- Sexual problems (especially difficulty with erection)

Of course, any of these symptoms could be caused by conditions other than diabetes and remember, a person can have diabetes for years before these symptoms appear. The most effective way to know if you have diabetes is to have a simple blood test. This should be done routinely as part of your annual physical or sooner if you notice any of the symptoms.

If you don't currently have a primary health provider and would like more information, feel free to call Cindy Engler, RN, MPH, at Martha Eliot Health Center, 617-971-2210.

This story was submitted by Stephanie Yesner, RN. Yesner is a Diabetes Nurse Specialist at the Martha Eliot Health Center, Jamaica Plain.

Diabetes Risk Factors:

- Being overweight
- Little or no exercise
- Family history of diabetes
- Over 40 (although type 2 is appearing in overweight teens)
- Women who have had a baby weighing more than nine pounds at birth
- Smoking

BHA CELEBRATES ASIAN PACIFIC HERITAGE

The BHA celebrated Asian Pacific Heritage Month in May. Weekly informational pieces on Asian Pacific history, culture and

contributions were included in the Authority's weekly email news bulletin throughout the month, in addition to a May 17 event.

Held at 52 Chauncy Street, the event included a demonstration of Indian dance performed by Aparna Sindhoor, a Chinese dulcimer performance by Kenneth Chan, and a variety of pan Asian appetizers. Participants were given bookmarks on which their names were written in Chinese calligraphy by professor C.C. Fu. Additionally, some of the decorations for the lunch-hour event were donated by China Arts Gallery, Inc., a local fine arts store.



Professor Fu provides participants with a souvenir of the month's events.

"...We're all very pleased by how many people came to support the event. We also hope the information being provided in each week's Bulletin has been informative and useful," said Maya Hasegawa, member of the Asian Pacific Heritage Month Committee. "It's very likely that we'll do this again."

The celebration was sponsored by the Committee, which included BHA employees

April Hui, Bill Cai, Vincent Chok, Carmelo Calderon,

Elaine Ng, Kan Kem, Lake Seri, Raul Solano, Wendy Ng, Chu Le, Michelle Lindsey, and

Eric Hom. Hasegawa worked with Siew Mey Tam and Reema Khan to lead the Committee.



Committee member April Hui (right) and Linda Phillips enjoy the festivities.



GREENSPACE INITIATIVE AWARDED GRASSROOTS GRANT

The Community Services Department's Greenspace Initiative was recently awarded a \$6,500 Grassroots planning grant from the City of Boston's Department of Neighborhood Development. The funds will be used to revitalize the community garden at the BHA's Franklin Field development in Dorchester. CSD's Andrea Taaffe, Program Manager for the Greenspace Initiative, and Al Davis, Program Director for Resident Services, worked with staff at the development to apply for the grant.

This grant will allow for the design of an irrigation system, as well as the addition of a system of pathways and plantings to the existing garden. The Boston Natural Area Network and 4-H will provide input and support, in addition to the development of a resident board structure to govern the garden. The group, called the Franklin Field Gardeners Collaborative, held its first meeting in April.

JOB WELL DONE

Correction: In “The Unproject Development,” a profile story about the BHA’s Gallivan development, which appeared in the April 2002 issue of *BHA Today*, Communications Staff failed to mention Maintenance Superintendent **Rupert Wolcott** (seen here with Gallivan Manager Judith Shields). Communications regrets the error and would like to take this opportunity to recognize Wolcott for his hard work.



annually honors individuals and organizations for their significant contributions to the resolution of current social issues.

The Legal Department’s **Helene Maichle** would like to thank **Jerome Curreri**, Project Manager in Capital Construction, for his help during a recent police/excessive force trial.

Congratulations to **Joyce Tognacci** on her promotion to the position of Director of Human Resources. Tognacci has been with the BHA since 1997 and has over eight years of experience in human resources.

A special thanks to Old Colony’s **Moe Morad** for singing at the March 20 memorial service for **Frank O’Leary**. O’Leary, a Service Program Coordinator for the Operations/Emergency Response Department, passed away February 19.

MIS’ **Debbie Sullivan**, and Occupancy’s **Marilyn O’Sullivan** would like to thank all who contributed to the recent implementation of the new Admissions and Continued Occupancy Policy (ACOP), including: **Gladys DiChiara, Daniqua Hamilton, Raul Leon, Gloria Meneses, Nancy Otero, Joe Sawicki, Hollis Young, Dan Casals, Diane Khoury, DaVonne Bolton, Hattie Hunter, and Sandi Henriquez.**

Congratulations to all BHA employees who ran in April’s Boston Marathon, including **Jamie Heggie** and **Will Roa**, both of Civil Rights, and **Raul Solano** of the Community Services Department.

CSD’s **Laurel Newson** and **Gloria Johnson** would like to thank **Davey Burns** of Washington Beech for his recent donation of furniture to a resident at Codman Apartments. Additional thanks go to **John Moses** for helping to move the furniture.

In a recent letter to BHA Administrator **Sandra Henriquez**, **Richard Fitzgerald**, Executive Director of the Boston Society of Architects, announced the BSA Board of Directors’ plans to nominate the BHA for the Whitney Young, Jr. Citation, a national American Institute of Architects honor. The AIA

Charlestown Manager **Kellie Dean** would like to thank her maintenance staff for responding to a recent fire at the development. Dean and her staff were called to work at midnight and worked until 6 a.m. cleaning soot, debris, and water in several units. Many thanks to **Jesse Stokes**, Maintenance Superintendent; **Peter Saulis**, Carpenter; **Michael Lydon**, Laborer; **Ben Nazario**, Laborer; **Derric Peddy**, Laborer; **Robert Woods**, Laborer; **Bob Burgess**, Laborer; **Billy Walker**, Electrician; and **Chris Cafferky**, Electrician. Special thanks to **Bob Franklin, Carol McCaffrey**, and the BHA’s Public Safety Department for their quick response and attention.

Congratulations to Civil Rights Specialist **Michelle Ekanem** on recently being honored by the National Lawyers Guild for her “never-ending commitment to equality and justice.” Ekanem, who has been with the BHA for more than a year, investigates Civil Rights cases and works toward eliminating discrimination in BHA communities.

Amory Street Manager **Kevin Davis** would like to thank the following individuals for their help during a recent flood at the development: **Gregory Lawson, Jerry Aughe, Junior Valentin, Mike Maher, Miguel Diaz, Paul Frazier, Walter McCloud, James Mervin, Carl Foster, Merville Crowe, James Fenton, Ed Roth, Ricardo Ortiz, Carmen Ayala, and Ervan Fuller.**

TODAY STAFFER SAYS GOODBYE

BHA Today staff bid farewell this month to Communications Assistant Byron Calamese, who has written and reported nearly 100 stories for the newsletter, since its December 1999 inception.

Calamese, who holds a B.S. in Journalism from Northeastern University and is presently completing an M.A. in Integrated Marketing Communications at Emerson College, joined the BHA's Communications team in January 2000 as an intern. He'll be studying international communications and the European Union in Paris this summer.

"During my time here, I've learned a tremendous amount about public relations and how to conduct myself in a professional manner," Calamese said. "More importantly, I've met so many fascinating people and established great friendships that will last a lifetime."



Calamese leaves Communications Department for summer abroad.

New Employees:

Kevin Shaw, *Codman* • Patrick Cronin, *Leased Housing* • William Doherty, *Mary Ellen McCormack* • Paul Torres, *Mary Ellen McCormack* • Barbara Badgett, *Community Services* • Migdalia Lopez, *Community Services* • Fardowsa Suldan, *Community Services* • Yvette Mathieson, *Leased Housing* • Omega Brimage, *Capital Construction* • John Dicalogero, *Orient Heights* • Mary Beth Murphy, *Occupancy*



Protecting the Authority's Assets continued from page 8

realize how big the BHA is; it is huge and there are a variety of things that can happen," he said.

Due to the Authority's size, there are many cases of damage that are beyond the BHA's control. "It is frustrating to work in an atmosphere where (it is assumed that) anything that happens on BHA property is the fault of the BHA," said L'Europa. "Simply because something happens on our property doesn't mean it is our fault.

"I feel that the BHA takes a bad rap because you have a lot of people working very hard with limited resources. It is very gratifying to work with the claims against the Authority and show that the BHA isn't as negligent as everyone thinks it is."

The department has also established safety committees, which meet every two months, to

address specific safety concerns and the need for new equipment at developments, and throughout the Authority. Committee members include employees from the trades, laborers, maintenance supervisors and managers.

Working with so many individuals and families, said L'Europa, adds an emotional component to their work. "I have a lot of personal feeling with what I see and from the losses that these people suffer," added L'Europa. "Employees and the BHA are our clients. We listen. We advise. We challenge. We initiate. We strive to succeed and we communicate."

To report any damage to BHA property, BHA vehicles or on the job injuries please contact the Risk Management department at (617) 988-4179.

Risk Management asks that you report all damage to BHA property and vehicles and any on the job injuries immediately.

CIVIL RIGHTS DEPARTMENT CONDUCTS SECTION 8 APPEALS

The Office of Civil Rights is now conducting appeal hearings for the Leased Housing Department. Any Section 8 applicant, whose application has been denied, is entitled to appeal the decision to a hearing officer who did not participate in the original decision to deny the application. In addition, current Section 8 participants whose subsidy has been terminated due to alleged program violations, have the right to request a hearing with the Civil Rights department. Since January, more than 200 hearings have been conducted. For more information on administrative hearings conducted by the BHA, please contact the Office of Civil Rights at 617-988-4383.

BHA TEAMS UP TO OFFER SECTION 8 UNITS TO HOMELESS ELDERS

A joint venture between New Atlantic Development, New Communities and the Committee to End Elder Homelessness to develop Uphams Corner Market includes 14 units for homeless elders subsidized through the BHA's Section 8 program.

The redeveloped market in Dorchester brings a total of 45 new units of housing, 15,000 square feet of retail and commercial space and a home for the City School.

The development of the studio-style apartments for homeless elders is the first of 13 new Project Based Voucher projects slated to come online this year, thanks to a joint effort by the BHA and the City's Department of Neighborhood Development to combat the City of Boston's affordable housing crunch. More than 300 affordable units are expected to be created through this partnership.

A ribbon cutting was held in April to celebrate the project with hundreds of people in attendance. To further assist the new residents of Uphams Corner Market, the Committee to End Elder Homelessness will provide on-site supportive services for the elderly residents who will pay approximately 30 percent of their income towards rent.

The site is historically significant as it was the site of the first supermarket in the United States.

New crew maintains BHA landscape *continued from page 1*

cleaning, as directed by management at the site the crew is working in that day. Crewmembers also attend various landscape-related classes and workshops.

Additionally, a corresponding Landscape Committee is in place to direct the Crew's work. Murphy, Fahy, and Burgess serve on the Committee with Program Maintenance Superintendent Bill Wuschke, Franklin Hill Manager Jim McCarthy, Alice Taylor Manager Lynda Cunningham, Franklin Field Maintenance Superintendent Donald Graham, Lenox/Camden Maintenance Superintendent Paul Neves, Budget Analyst Reema Khan, and Workers' Compensation/Safety Manager Barney Murphree.

The Committee meets every two weeks at rotating sites throughout the Region One portfolio. At these meetings, Committee members discuss the Crew's performance, workload, schedule, as well as specific projects and issues that arise. Presently, the

Committee is in the process of ordering new uniforms for the Crew. The process has been sluggish, according to Committee member Wuschke, due to several crewmembers' unwillingness to divulge their clothing sizes.



Crewmembers performing spring clean-up while trying to keep warm.

In any case, the Landscape Crew and Committee have pressed on despite this and other obstacles associated with a new endeavor. Doing so, the Crewmembers have developed respect for one another, as well as an immense pride in their work. "I have to cut every

blade of grass or I'm not satisfied," Burgess said.

The impact of the Crew is not lost on the Landscape Committee. McCarthy commends the group for the enthusiasm, dedication, and commitment they show each day. "While numerous obstacles and new challenges would have discouraged most, they all continue to move forward in order to reach their goals," he said.

DEVELOPMENT STREETS NAMED AFTER NOTED RESIDENTS

The following story recounts the naming of three streets at the Boston Housing Authority's Lenox Street housing development. The piece appeared in the March 8, 1941 edition of the *Boston City Record*, and is printed here as it originally appeared.

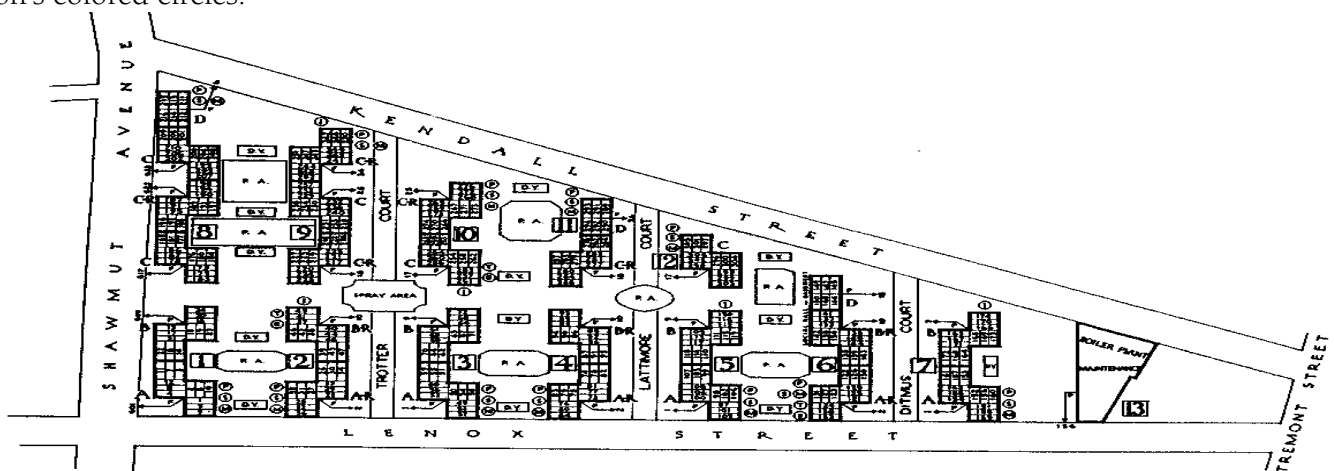
Chairman John A. Breen of the Boston Housing Authority announced on February 26 that the memory of a Civil War veteran, a militant journalist, and a beloved physician, all late residents of the Lenox street district, are to be honored by the naming of thoroughfares in the new housing project in that area.

The three thoroughfares within the project extend from Lenox street to Kendall street, between Shawmut avenue and Tremont street.

Running parallel with and nearest to Shawmut avenue is Trotter court, named in honor of William Munroe Trotter, founder of the *Boston Guardian*, one of the foremost negro newspapers of Boston. He served in the capacity of editor of this publication from its beginning in 1901 until the time of his death in 1934. Mr. Trotter, a Harvard graduate, achieved national fame as a champion of the cause of his race and was regarded as a man of great influence in Boston's colored circles.

Bisecting the project between Shawmut avenue and Tremont street is Lattimore court, which will perpetuate the name of Dr. Andrew B. Lattimore, a physician whose practice was conducted primarily in the area of the present site. Doctor Lattimore endeared himself to his neighbors not only as a capable physician and personal advisor, but also as a man of extreme charity. Much of his great work in that district was done with full knowledge that his patients could not compensate him, but he was impelled by a deeply rooted charity toward his fellow men and gave freely of his services.

Ditmus court, on the Tremont street end of the project, honors the memory of Edward A. Ditmus, who was the last of many veterans of his race from the district who distinguished themselves in the Civil War. He was a former commander of the Robert E. Bell Post, G. A. R. Enlisting at the outbreak of the Civil War in the 29th Connecticut Infantry, Ditmus saw service on many battlefields and was discharged after the cessation of hostilities with the rank of sergeant. He had been a resident of Windsor street, in the South End, for many years before his death a few years ago and was a well-known personality of the district.



The Boston Housing Authority provides affordable housing to tens of thousands of residents in the City of Boston through its public housing and rental certificate programs.

The Mayor of the City of Boston, Thomas M. Menino appointed Sandra B. Henriquez to serve as the BHA's Administrator in 1996.

The BHA's Mission Statement is:

- ◆ To provide stable, quality affordable housing for low and moderate income persons;
- ◆ To deliver these services with integrity and mutual accountability; and
- ◆ To create living environments which serve as catalysts for the transformation from dependency to economic self-sufficiency.

PROTECTING THE AUTHORITY'S ASSETS

A profile on the Risk Management department

It was early on a Friday morning in May as I prepared to interview Dick L'Europa, Director of Risk Management. There sat his office, filled with small piles of documents and manila folders, but with no trace of L'Europa himself. I did a little poking around, chatted with other 10th floor Chauncy Street staffers, until L'Europa raced by me, "Hi, I'll be right with," he said. This, I decided was a man and a department that placed significant value on time, or the lack thereof.

Just minutes into our interview, I realized how little I knew about the department. Risk Management encompasses much more than training manuals and proper lifting procedures; it's more like a dramatization, where one, three-person department plays the role of skeptical watch dog, concerned parent and honest confidant to protect the housing authority and its assets.

"We look, on a continual basis, at all the exposures to risk that the authority faces on a day-to-day basis," said L'Europa. "We have physical, human and intangible assets and exposures include anything that can happen to these assets."

Risk Management's team of three, which also includes Barney Murphree (Workers' Compensation/Safety Manager) and Michael Williams (Risk Management Associate), are responsible for all tort claims against the BHA, management of the worker's compensation and training and safety programs, field safety inspections, and action against

those who damage BHA property. "Something most people do not know about Risk Management is that it is not just buying insurance or supplying band aids, but Risk Management is the guardian of all of the BHA's assets including its' employees, buildings, cars, etc, and it is our job to manage risk at all levels to protect those assets," said Murphree.



Dick L'Europa, Michael Williams and Barney Murphree from the BHA's Risk Management department

The enterprise risk management approach embraced by the team delivers risk services at many levels. Some examples of that are CPR/First Aid Training, improving job safety through enabling the authority to meet OSHA standards by upgrading equipment, researching and cataloguing desired equipment purchases and meeting record keeping standards.

The Risk Management Department is responsible for the Authority's Self Insurance Program which is for all tort claims against the BHA and includes hundreds of claims brought against the Authority by its residents, visitors, and the myriad number of persons who are on our property on a daily basis.

Beyond these specific duties, Risk Management includes two basic techniques: Risk Control, which involves stopping or reducing the frequency or severity of accidental losses, and Risk Financing, which includes paying for losses that do occur and paying for the steps taken to prevent them.

Often overlooked, added L'Europa, is the enormity of the housing authority. The BHA is the largest landlord in the City of Boston, housing 10 percent of the City's residents and occupying nearly 350 acres of City land. In addition, the BHA employs approximately 1000 staff members. "Many don't

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The BHA Communications Committee advises the editor, guides content for BHA Today and works on other BHA communications related issues. Active committee members are *Declan Breslin*/Public Safety; *Byron Calamese*/Administration; *Brenda Cora*/Elderly; *Christine Curry*/Elderly; *Barbara Donovan*/Purchasing; *Morris Flood*/Budget; *Peg Kennedy*/Elderly; *Jim LaCroix*/Elderly; *Steve Melia*/Public Safety; *Bernice Ryner*/Leased Housing Inspections; and *Cheryl Simons*/Administration.

Comments and story ideas are welcome and should be mailed to **Lydia Agro, Boston Housing Authority, 52 Chauncy Street, 11th Floor, Boston MA 02111** or faxed to **617-988-4133**. BHA Today staff may also be reached by calling **617-988-4380** or **617-988-4109**.

Visit the BHA on the web at www.bostonhousing.org.