

## MBHP clients receive free legal help

On April 28, MBHP partnered with Lawyers Clearinghouse to offer free legal advice to MBHP participants, with volunteer attorneys from Ropes & Gray and State Street providing legal advice. Over the course of the morning, more than 10 people, including clients and property owners, received guidance on matters such as immigration, taxes, lease review, and landlord responsibilities.

Two of the clients who received advice were Tameeka Golson and Maximino Iraola of Dorchester. “The lawyer we met with was very interested in our case, they were very helpful,” said Golson. Iraola emphasized the importance of the program, saying in the past he felt unsure of how best to represent himself in a courtroom. “It felt good, like someone was there to help you through the process and sort out all the legal wording. To a person



Attorneys from Ropes & Gray and State Street volunteered to provide free legal counseling at MBHP’s Legal Clinic on April 28.

without that type of education, they were really helpful.”

“With so many facing homelessness and housing insecurity, we are pleased to be able to partner with MBHP to help those in need,” said Maribeth Perry, executive director at Lawyers Clearinghouse. “Pro bono attorneys can make such a difference in the lives of people facing legal barriers that prevent them from

improving their lives. We look forward to continuing to work together to provide free legal services and access to justice.”

Through our extensive network of partners, MBHP is able to connect clients with legal advice year-round through our Housing Consumer Education Center. For more information, contact 617.425.6700 or [ResourceLine@mbhp.org](mailto:ResourceLine@mbhp.org).

### MBHP unveils new Strategic Plan

In December 2015, the MBHP board of directors approved a plan to set the organization’s strategic vision for the next five years. The new strategic plan has three overarching priorities that will guide the work of the organization for the next five years. The priorities focus on MBHP’s programmatic work, our role as a leader and public policy advocate, and the organizational goals we must achieve to reach our community-wide vision. Both the full strategic plan and an executive summary are available on our website at [www.mbhp.org/our-leadership](http://www.mbhp.org/our-leadership).



## Mission statement

MBHP's mission is to ensure that the region's low- and moderate-income individuals and families have choice and mobility in finding and retaining decent affordable housing; all of our programs and initiatives are designed to encourage housing stability, increase economic self-sufficiency, and enhance the quality of the lives of those we serve. To achieve our mission and to promote efficient service delivery, we work collaboratively with a broad array of service providers and neighborhood-based organizations.

## MBHP's programs

MBHP empowers families and individuals to move along the continuum from homelessness to housing stability. Serving more than 20,000 households annually, we work seamlessly to bridge the gaps among government, nonprofits, and corporations to continually increase our impact. With more than 30 years' experience piloting and implementing housing programs, we have solidified our position as an industry-leading expert on navigating the affordable housing field.

Our broad array of programs and services, as well as our extensive network of property owners and fellow service providers, allow us to address a wide range of housing-related issues, from preventing evictions and homelessness, to helping people find suitable homes, to making rent more affordable.

For more information on the many programs and services we administer, visit online us at [www.mbhp.org](http://www.mbhp.org) or call our Housing Consumer Education Center at 617.425.6700.

## Need housing assistance? MBHP speaks your language



RAFT Case Manager Jamila Aden offers language assistance to MRVP participant Hawa Ibrahim, who speaks Somali. Aden has provided language assistance to Ibrahim since 2013. "She knows my whole story. It's like talking to my brother or my sister," says Ibrahim.

If you speak Vietnamese and need housing assistance, where do you turn? If you live in Boston or any of its 32 surrounding communities, you turn to Metropolitan Boston Housing Partnership. Russian? Check. Spanish? We have that too.

"Our staff offers clients in-house translation and interpretation services in 18 different languages," said Chris Norris, MBHP executive director. "It's all about quality customer service."

The added benefit of having staff members provide language services is that the system makes sense financially. MBHP used to spend nearly \$15,000 annually to translate documents and interpret for clients. Bringing the work in house saves scarce funds. Last year, MBHP only spent \$3,025 for outside language services.

"We provide language assistance because it's a civil right, but more than that, we provide it because no one should go without the housing assistance they need due to a language barrier," said Barbara Chandler, MBHP senior advisor on civil rights and fair housing. "MBHP's Language Assistance Program makes translation and interpretation available for those who need it."

## LAP by the numbers

**84** MBHP staff interpreters in **18** different languages

FY 15: **2,909** clients served

FY 16 (as of April 21): **2,959** clients served

## MBHP and partners awarded \$600,000 to assist families in motels

MBHP, along with our partners Boston Health Care for the Homeless Program and Urban Edge, have been awarded a \$600,000 grant by The Boston Foundation to fund an innovative approach to assisting families to move out of emergency shelter motels.

Called “Building Bridges to Better Health,” the pilot program will focus on Waltham, the site of the state’s largest motel shelter, and the health outcomes of children under age 11. Health screenings will be conducted by BHCHP, who will also coordinate transition plans to ensure that children continue to receive the care they need once a family moves to their new home. Through an online tool provided by Urban Edge, families can find out quickly and efficiently which programs they are eligible for, ensuring they get the assistance they need.

The program is funded by The Boston Foundation as part of their Health Starts at Home initiative, in partnership with the Kresge Foundation, the John

### More families moving from motels to stable homes

MBHP is working hard alongside families placed in emergency shelter motels in our region to help them find stable, permanent housing. For the remainder of the fiscal year, working with the Department of Housing and Community Development and ABCD, we will identify families who may be able to access enhanced funding, in combination with HomeBASE Household Assistance, to move out into market rate units.

July 2015: **357 families** placed in **7 motels**

March 2016: **285 families** placed in **5 motels**

Between July 1, 2015 and April 30, 2016, **178** families were successfully re-housed.

D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Blue Cross Blue Shield of MA Foundation, and Partners HealthCare.

## Welcome back, Maura Pensak!

MBHP is happy to welcome back Maura Pensak to serve once again as Director of Housing Supports. As the Director of Housing Supports (formerly Client Services) from 2006 to 2013, Pensak expanded MBHP’s work with homelessness, focusing on an area that was largely overlooked: implementing intensive, individualized housing first for chronically homeless individuals and later, piloting a program to assist families in emergency shelter motels. The motel pilot project led to the statewide adoption of the HomeBASE program, which MBHP administers in our region to this day.

After three years away, Pensak is very happy to be back at MBHP. “MBHP is a really exciting and special place to be,” said Pensak, “Because of the people here and because of the work we do.” Pensak is eager to get to know her new team and get to work on initiatives like new ways to address homelessness prevention and expanding the



Maura Pensak returned to MBHP as Director of Housing Supports in March

colocation program. She remains as confident as ever in MBHP’s ability to meet these challenges. “When it comes to housing,” she said, “If MBHP doesn’t have the answer, there is no answer—yet. And we will work with you on solving it.”

## DONOR SPOTLIGHT:

### United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimack Valley

A financial crisis can strike anyone, at any time. For people living on low and moderate incomes, one financial crisis can be the difference between having and losing their home. Fortunately, MBHP has programs available for these families to help them get past a crisis and stay stably housed, and partners like the United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimack Valley who help make these programs possible.

Over the past 10 years, the United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimack Valley has contributed more than \$586,000 to MBHP, including more than \$165,000 in Emergency Assistance Funding. This funding is used to help families and individuals who have experienced a medical emergency, an unexpected job loss, or other emergency that has threatened their housing situation. The funds can also be used to pay for a bed, dresser, or other basic furniture to help someone get the essen-



United Way President and CEO Michael Durkin

tials they need to settle into a new home.

In addition to this support, the United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimack Valley has been a long-time supporter of MBHP's Founders Celebration. President and CEO Michael Durkin regularly sits on our Leadership Committee for the event.

"For families, a stable home is the foundation for success in school, work and life," Durkin says. "So much begins at home. That's why preventing and ending homelessness will continue to be our focus. We are proud to support best-in-class partners like MBHP that utilize the practices and interventions that are proven to be the most effective. Together, we can do more than any of us can alone."

Recently, MBHP was happy to solidify our partnership further by participating in a grant from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Health and Human Services, for which the United Way of Massachusetts Bay and the Merrimack Valley was the lead agency. United Way is leading efforts to develop and sustain a regional coordinated system across Greater Boston to help homeless and at risk families and unaccompanied youth achieve housing stability, and MBHP is proud to be a part. We look forward to our continued work together.

### Thank you to our recent grant funders

- Bader Philanthropies
- Boston Private Bank and Trust Company
- Glendon/Tung Fund
- Lawrence Model Lodging Houses Trust
- People's United Community Foundation
- Procter and Gamble Corporate Giving Fund
- Sailors Snug Harbor Foundation
- Santander Bank Foundation
- State Street Foundation
- The Boston Foundation
- United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimack Valley



## Taking appointments in Chelsea, now twice a week

**MBHP is expanding its efforts to make it easier for the residents of Chelsea and surrounding communities to receive the housing assistance they need.**

Through a partnership with CONNECT, MBHP staff members have been traveling regularly to offer office hours in Chelsea since 2012. In May, MBHP increased these hours, now sending staff to Chelsea on Mondays and Thursdays, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

“By moving to twice a week, we are able to see more people in the community where they live, making it easier to travel or take time off work,” said MBHP Outreach Case Manager Matthew Gibson.

Working out of another office, which we call a colocation, also gives MBHP clients the chance to learn about some of the other resources available to them in their community. Chelsea is one of nine colocations MBHP operates at this time, thanks in part to funding from the Bank of America Charitable Foundation and The Boston Foundation.

At colocations, MBHP staff members meet with clients to



MBHP Outreach Case Manager Matthew Gibson meets with Johana Barahona of Stoneham at CONNECT to discuss her housing situation.

learn more about their housing situations and provide guidance on what resources are available to help them. This could include financial assistance to avoid being evicted or to pay utilities, help with your housing search, or questions about tenants’ rights and landlord responsibilities.

“The partnership between MBHP and CONNECT is a great opportunity to bring more resources to the area,” said Chelsea City Manager Tom Ambrosino. “I am pleased to see their relationship

deepening, which makes housing services more accessible to the residents of Chelsea and the neighboring communities.”

“I am thrilled that MBHP is partnering with CONNECT to provide further resources to the people of Chelsea and the surrounding communities,” said Representative RoseLee Vincent. “Knowing the great work MBHP and CONNECT do in our communities already, it is a perfect match which will help and serve more people.”



### Congrats and best wishes to Pat Centanni

Pat Centanni, MBHP Board member since 2013, is retiring from State Street Corporation after 32 years. Pat was instrumental in deepening MBHP’s relationship with State Street, continuing in the tradition of our founding Board Chair and former State Street CEO Bill Ederly. Throughout Pat’s years of service with MBHP, he served on MBHP’s Executive Committee, and more recently participated in the Capital Campaign Committee. MBHP thanks Pat for his dedication and service to MBHP and all of the families who we have helped over the years.

## Team MBHP sets new fundraising record

MBHP's 2016 Boston Marathon runners have crossed the finish line. All five completed the race, and all five surpassed their fundraising goals, raising a grand total of \$41,817—more than any previous MBHP team. Many thanks to all the runners and their donors, whose contributions help support MBHP's work.

For the tenth year in a row, thanks to the generosity of the John Hancock Nonprofit Marathon Program, MBHP had a team running the Boston Marathon and raising funds and awareness for MBHP. This year, Team MBHP included three current staff members: RAFT Case Manager Lourdes Lopez, FSS Advisor Maksim Sigal, and Program Representative Siomara Sanchez-Logo. Rounding out the team were Mairead Kean and Rus Lodi.

Leading the team's record-breaking year, Rus set a new individual fundraising record, bringing in \$15,934. This year was Rus's third year as a member of Team MBHP, and his final Boston Marathon run. MBHP honored his efforts by "retiring his number" at our third annual Marathon Celebration—the number was his personal fundraising total, which has increased since that night to \$39,278.



Top row: Lourdes Lopez, Maksim Sigal; Middle row: Siomara Sanchez-Lobo, and Mairead Kean. Below left: Rus Lodi at the third annual Marathon Celebration.



### Marathon Celebration Sponsors

On May 5, MBHP held our third annual Marathon Celebration to recognize our runners and their donors. Our thanks goes to all our event sponsors who helped Team MBHP reach their goal.

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## A “surge” of support

MBHP and partners help long-time homeless get vouchers



Thanks to the coordinated efforts of all our partners, MBHP was able to issue 22 MRVP vouchers in a single morning

At 5:30 a.m. on May 5, 28 chronically homeless individuals arrived at MBHP’s office. A few hours later, 22 of them left with a Massachusetts Rental Voucher.

The “surge,” as the process was called, was the result of a collaboration between MBHP, the City of Boston Department of Neighborhood Development, and several service providers. The goal was to take a process that normally takes weeks, even months, and shorten it significantly, getting the clients in and out the same morning.

The vouchers were allocated to the City of Boston by the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community and Development especially for chronically homeless

individuals—individuals that have been homeless for at least one year—to assist them in moving into permanent housing. The surge helped meet the needs of this unique population, facilitating the process of securing paperwork, documentation, and identification that are typically not readily accessible to people who have been without a home for so long.

“Thanks to the efforts of our partners, we were able to secure the vast majority of documentation prior to the clients coming into the office, which allowed us to pre-screen many applications in advance,” said Susan Nohl, MBHP deputy director. “This process required a great amount of coordination, but we were glad

to do it if it meant ensuring that these clients were able to take advantage of this vital resource.”

The surge would not have been possible without the efforts of service providers at Boston Public Health Commission, Children’s Services of Roxbury, HomeStart, Pine Street Inn, and Shattuck Shelter.

Service providers were also assigned to each client to assist with housing search and provide supportive services to help them get settled into their new homes. The City of Boston also provided funds to help cover security deposits and is securing donations of basic furniture.



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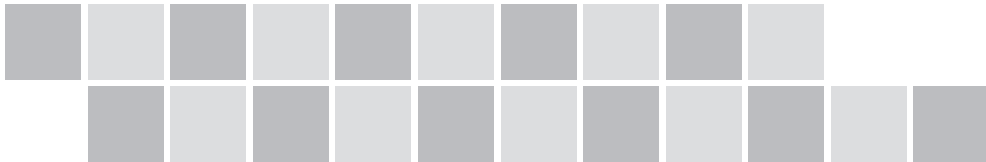
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