

# The CONNECTOR

FOCUSING ON NONPROFITS AND THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE COMMUNITY

Winter 2010  
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## No place like home



Liz Carrero plays with her year-old daughter, Jazlyn, in their new home.

### NDA helps family realize dream of homeownership

By PAUL HALLORAN

When Neighborhood Development Associates purchased at auction the lot and foundation at 103 Washington St., it envisioned creating an opportunity for first-time homebuyers.

Based on what has transpired,

it's hard to imagine the plan coming to fruition any better.

Sisters Sandra Suarez and Liz Carrero are the co-owners of the two-family home located at the corner of Loughton Street. Suarez lives on one side with her mother, Alicia, and daughters Bellasmine

and Bianca. Carrero lives on the other side with her daughter, Jazlyn.

Suarez and Carrero bought the home from NDA, a not-for-profit housing development corporation, and the City of Lynn through the

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# Committed to quality care

BY MEAGHAN CASEY

For All Care Visiting Nurse Association (VNA) and Hospice nurses, therapists, certified home health aides and homemakers, the home health care profession isn't merely a job; it's a way of life.

As its 100th anniversary approaches, All Care remains dedicated to providing the best health care and hospice care at home, keeping its patients safe and enabling them to live their lives at the highest quality possible. The patients are what motivate its staff every day. Getting to know them personally, and caring for them in the comfort of their own homes, keeps them connected to what's really important in life.

No one understands that better than Valerie Picuch, who serves as the manager of All

Care's Bridge to Hospice program and who has 38 years of nursing experience.

"It's a calling," said Picuch. "I've always had a passion for end-of-life care. It's a privilege and an honor to be able to care for patients in their own homes. They do so well in their own environment."

Picuch joined All Care as a case manager 11 years ago and went on to serve as clinical manager and then hospice manager before branching out to the new Bridge program, which was launched in July 2008. The program aims to create an integrated system and continuum of care between All Care VNA and Hospice, serving patients and their families from the time of diagnosis throughout the course of the illness. As manager of the program, Picuch is responsible for the outreach in the communities All Care serves throughout Greater Boston and Eastern Mass.

"I love building relationships with the

patients," said Picuch. "At All Care, we take great pride in our ability to treat each patient, the person, as well as any medical condition, and to work with each family to provide a comprehensive home care plan. My job is to support them when they're making these choices about home care and to inform them, early on, about what hospice can provide. Working closely with the VNA clinicians allows us to provide the best possible care to our patients and their families

"We at All Care all share the same commitment to meeting the goals of our patients," she added. "We treat our patients like our family and care for them in the way we would like to be cared for ourselves – with respect and dignity."

*If you know someone who is sick, being discharged from the hospital or rehab, or simply needs extra care to live safely, visit [www.allcare.org](http://www.allcare.org) or call All Care at 1-800-287-2454.*



*All Care's continuum of quality patient care includes:*

**All Care Visiting Nurse Association** – offering skilled services for recovery from illness or hospitalization.

**All Care Resources** – providing supportive care for health and independence at home.

**All Care Hospice** – symptom and pain management for comfort, compassion and support at the end of life.

**Bridge to Hospice** – transitioning patients from VNA to Hospice when appropriate.



Bridge to Hospice manager Valerie Picuch, far left, visits with All Care VNA staff at the Lynn office including, back row, from left, Diane Soslak, Donna Field, Liz Costello and Loretta Chwaliszewski; front, Susan McKinnon, left, and Cindy Garland.

# Dynamic duo

## KIPP grads are on a path to and through college

Principal Josh Zoia and the rest of the dedicated staff at KIPP Academy Lynn know their school will ultimately be judged by the quality of the graduates it produces.

So far, so good.

Meet Wildy Duran and Leandro Diaz, two of the original KIPP students, who are thriving in high school and well on their way of “climbing the mountain to college” a promise made by all KIPP students, parents and teachers.

Duran, a sophomore honor roll student at St. Mary’s High School, remembers Zoia and another teacher visiting her home when she was in the fourth grade at Ingalls Elementary School. She had heard about KIPP at St. Joseph’s Church and the Lynn YMCA and expressed interest in the school.

Next thing she knew, they were all signing the KIPP Commitment to Excellence promising to do everything in their power to help her succeed and go to college.

Diaz, a native of the Dominican Republic, had only been in the U.S. for a year when he first heard about KIPP. Unable to speak, write or understand English, Diaz was nonetheless set to be promoted to middle school. After a visit from Zoia, Diaz knew KIPP was for him.

“I had a feeling this school was going to help me get where I am,” said Diaz, a freshman at Malden Catholic.

Both Duran and Diaz said KIPP’s 9½-hour school day and two hours of homework (and, the first few years, going to school on Saturday – it is now optional) took some getting used to. Both said they were made fun of by their friends, who had already been outside playing for a few hours by the time they got home from school.

“That was getting to me,” Diaz admitted, “but I would tell them I am getting more time to get educated and taking advantage of school more than them.”

Despite the peer pressure, Duran stuck with KIPP because “I knew it was going to help me in the future,” she said.

“Academics at KIPP is not just about taking notes,” Duran added. “It’s hands-on. The teachers bend over backwards to help you. You can

always go for extra help. Some days I did not get home until 6:30 or 7 at night.”

Diaz said he appreciated the discipline instilled in KIPP students, citing as an example the SLANT philosophy, by which students are prompted to Sit up, Listen to the person speaking, Ask and answer questions, Nod their heads, and Track the speaker.

“At KIPP, they teach you at a young age how to act,” he said.

Both students are thrilled with their choice of high school.

“Freshman year was a little bumpy. I had to adjust to having so much free time,” said Duran, who is involved with softball, track, community service and step dance. “KIPP prepared me so well for St. Mary’s.”

Diaz, a standout basketball player who drew the attention of several schools, said he chose MC because the people there talked about academics first and basketball second.

“Everything is going very well,” said Diaz, who was one of six winners of the 2009 Doris Fisher KIPPster of the Year Award, a \$10,000 scholarship open to more than 1,000 KIPP eighth-graders nationwide. “Working hard can take you anywhere if you put your mind to it.”

Both Duran, who has a brother in the seventh grade at KIPP, and Diaz frequently return to help out in a variety of ways – tutoring, office work, coaching – as do all KIPP students who go to private high schools and receive scholarships. (Students who attend public high schools can actually get paid for coming back to KIPP to do homework and get tutored.)

College is definitely on the horizon for both students. Duran is interested in studying law and is thinking about Boston University as a possible choice, while Williams and Harvard are on Diaz’ radar screen.

The top of the mountain to college is in sight and no one will stop them from reaching the summit.

For more information about KIPP visit [www.kipplynn.org](http://www.kipplynn.org) or call 781-598-1609.



Wildy Duran, left, and Leandro Diaz, two of the original KIPP Lynn students, are thriving in high school.

### Remarkable results

Despite having been open for only five years, KIPP Academy Lynn has posted some remarkable results.

When the current eighth-graders came in, only 14 percent of the class had scored advanced or proficient on the MCAS math exam. Three years later, 82 percent scored advanced or proficient, ranking KIPP in the top two percent of

all middle schools in the state in that category.

In English Language Arts, only 29 percent of current eighth-graders had scored advanced or proficient prior to arriving at KIPP. Last year, that number had improved to 79 percent.

While many people attribute subpar standardized testing results to demographics, KIPP has made this progress despite 87 percent of its students being at or below the poverty line.

2009 MCAS Advanced or Proficient	KIPP		State		
	Grade	ELA	MATH	ELA	MATH
	4th*	29%	14%	50%	40%
	5th	51%	39%	63%	51%
	6th	58%	75%	67%	56%
	7th	79%	82%	70%	49%

\* Fourth-grade scores reflect students’ performance prior to arriving at KIPP.

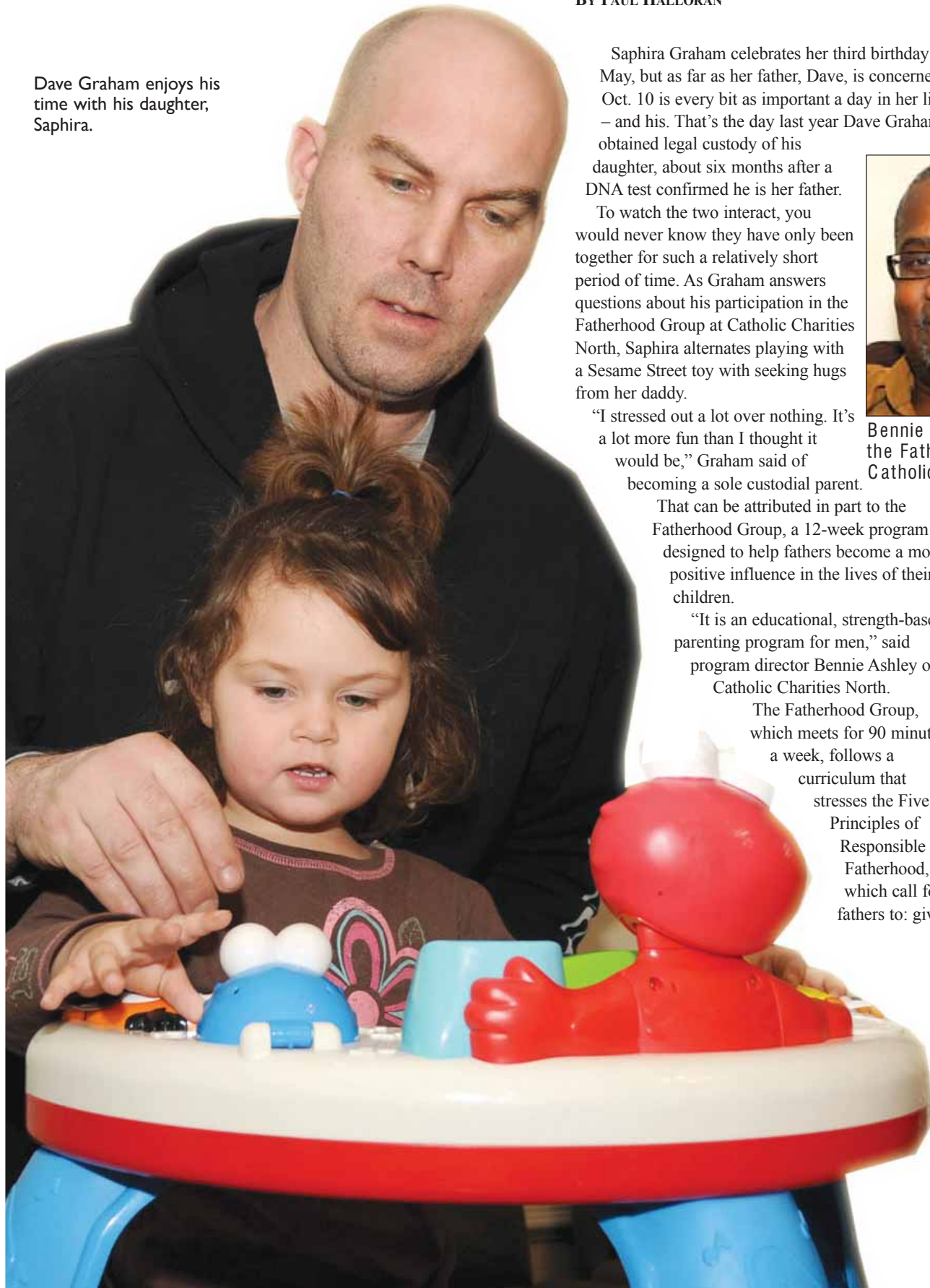


# Blessed with fatherhood

Catholic Charities North program helps dads become better parents

BY PAUL HALLORAN

Dave Graham enjoys his time with his daughter, Saphira.



Saphira Graham celebrates her third birthday in May, but as far as her father, Dave, is concerned, Oct. 10 is every bit as important a day in her life — and his. That's the day last year Dave Graham obtained legal custody of his daughter, about six months after a DNA test confirmed he is her father.

To watch the two interact, you would never know they have only been together for such a relatively short period of time. As Graham answers questions about his participation in the Fatherhood Group at Catholic Charities North, Saphira alternates playing with a Sesame Street toy with seeking hugs from her daddy.

"I stressed out a lot over nothing. It's a lot more fun than I thought it would be," Graham said of becoming a sole custodial parent.

That can be attributed in part to the Fatherhood Group, a 12-week program designed to help fathers become a more positive influence in the lives of their children.

"It is an educational, strength-based parenting program for men," said program director Bennie Ashley of Catholic Charities North.

The Fatherhood Group, which meets for 90 minutes a week, follows a curriculum that stresses the Five Principles of Responsible Fatherhood, which call for fathers to: give

affection to their children; provide their children with gentle guidance; provide financial support to the mother and children; demonstrate respect for the mother and children; and set a proud example by living within the law and without the taint of alcohol or drug abuse.

"We spend two weeks on each principle," said Ashley, adding that the program includes videos, guest speakers and group discussions. "We get the guys very involved." Each session averages 8-10 participants, and the program is offered in Lynn, Peabody and Salem.

Last year, Catholic Charities North provided services to almost 300 fathers, through the Fatherhood Group and community outreach.

Graham was referred to the program through the Mass. Department of Children and Families (DCF), from which custody of

Saphira was transferred to him. He was a reluctant participant at first, but quickly saw the value in the program.

"I agreed to do it, but I didn't really want to do it at first," he said. "As each week passed I was more and more glad that I did. You feel like you're alone, so it's good to hear from other guys who are in the same situation."

Graham, an auto mechanic who lives in Woburn with Saphira, has two older children (age 12 and 8) from a former marriage. He said Saphira resulted from a brief relationship he had after his divorce, though he was told he was not her father. When DCF took custody of Saphira, Graham went to court, had the DNA test and learned the truth. At that point, she was almost 2 years old.

"I was psyched," he said. "It was a major adjustment that came a lot easier than I thought it would. There has been only minimal crying on both of our parts."

Ashley, who has been directing the Fatherhood Group since 2002, said Graham is one of the many success stories to come out of the program.

"The demand (for the program) is definitely there," he said. "Guys are realizing they are important in the lives of their children. They come in with some reluctance, but after two or three meetings they realize it's informational, educational, and helpful. They learn how to be involved fathers in the lives of their children and it becomes exciting for them."

Dave and Saphira Graham would agree.



Bennie Ashley directs the Fatherhood Group at Catholic Charities.

For more information about Catholic Charities North visit [www.ccab.org](http://www.ccab.org) or call 781-593-2312.

# It's their time at the Y

## Life-skills program a big hit with girls

# Y

BY PAUL HALLORAN

Thanks to a program geared specifically to them, girls are having the time of their lives at the Greater Lynn YMCA.

My Time, a program for girls age 10-14, stresses the importance of physical fitness while teaching girls life skills. Each session runs for 10 weeks, with up to 15 girls meeting twice a week for two hours each session.

"We seek to develop the physical, social and emotional well-being of the girls," said Audrey Jimenez, Branch Executive Director of the Lynn YMCA and coordinator of the My Time program.

The first hour of each meeting is dedicated to physical fitness, with coached workouts developed by Fitness Director Sharon Dobbyn, who conducts a physical assessment of each participant at the beginning and at the end of each session.

The second hour focuses on teaching life skills and exposing the girls to the community and the resources available to them. This has included trips to a restaurant, community-service projects, hikes in Lynn Woods and other state parks and walks along the beach.

"Our intent is to expose the girls to creative venues that they may not have had the opportunity to experience," Jimenez said. "Our goal is to highlight the many different components of a healthy lifestyle."

As with any initiative, some people are going to get more out of it than others, and My Time is no exception. Meet Jennifer Bello.

Bello, 12, is a sixth-grader at Breed Middle School and has been a YMCA youth member for the last two years. According to Jimenez, she is a poster child for My Time.

"Jennifer is a model for what this program stands for," Jimenez said. "Last year, her grades needed improvement and her attitude needed a point in a positive direction. Now, we are extremely proud of her accomplishments as a peer leader and significant improvement on her report card. She has a lot to be proud of and it shows."

Bello said My Time "teaches you to take care of your body and how to eat healthy." One of her favorite trips was the time they went to the Porthole restaurant, not only to eat, but also to practice table etiquette. The Porthole was very supportive of the group and they were the buzz of the restaurant that night.

The girls-only aspect of the program is also a big hit with the participants. "Boys tend to be more aggressive than girls and you can't really discuss certain topics comfortably in front of boys," Bello said.

As an example of the leadership role she has undertaken at the YMCA, Bello, along with youth member Carlos Suriel, wrote, produced and directed a Thanksgiving play put on by participants in The Core program based at the Lynn YMCA Youth Center. They wrote the script, obtained props and built the set. By all accounts, it was a 4-star performance.

"The younger kids came to watch us perform, and we had a cast reception afterward," Bello said. "We had a lot of fun." The girls are planning a fashion show for the spring.

"You get the biggest buy-in when the kids take the lead," said Gregg Ellenberg, Youth and Teen Director at the Lynn YMCA.

My Time is a free program open to all girls in the community (not just YMCA members). The next session is scheduled to start the week of January 18.



Above photo, Jennifer Bello, center, exercises with her friends, Christalis Mateo and Alina Lee. At left, Bello and Mateo work on an art project.



For more information about the Greater Lynn YMCA visit [www.lynnymca.org](http://www.lynnymca.org) or call 781-581-3105.

# Taxing situation

## SPIN's VITA program offers free tax preparation

By PAUL HALLORAN

With tax season upon us, the staff at the United Way Financial Stability Center, powered by SPIN (Serving People in Need), want people to know that help with filing tax returns is available, it doesn't cost anything and it might pay to take advantage of it.

The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program offers free tax returns prepared by volunteers trained by the Internal Revenue Service. The returns can be filed online directly from the Financial Stability Center, so those who file will receive refunds more quickly.

Individuals who participate in the VITA program will also be assured they do not miss out on any Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) for which they may be eligible. EITC is a federal credit based on income that is designed to assist lower-income workers by returning to them a percentage of what they earned over the course of the year. The IRS estimates that \$3.2 million in EITC money was not claimed by eligible workers in Lynn last year.

"So many people are eligible for the Earned Income Tax Credit and are not aware of it," said June Blair, coordinator of the Financial Stability Center. "In some cases, they can increase their income by as much as 25 percent."

Blair said since the Financial Stability Center opened last year, there has been an effort to spread the word about VITA and EITC.

"We have been letting people know that these programs

are available," she said. "Our goal is to help families increase their income, increase their savings and build assets. We offer financial-education classes to help people manage their income."

Financial education classes at the center meet once a week for 10 weeks. Participants are counseled on VITA, EITC, matched savings accounts, credit repair, computer and job-related skills, housing services referral, foreclosure prevention, and basic banking information.

The Financial Stability Center started offering GED classes in January.

Blair said volunteers are needed to prepare tax returns and review completed returns. Volunteers will be trained by IRS staff.

The organizations partnering with SPIN in the United Way Financial Stability Center, located at 270 Union St., Lynn, include: Affordable Housing

Associates of Lynn, Catholic Charities, Community Credit Union, Compass Working Capital, Internal Revenue Service, Lynn Housing Authority & Neighborhood Development, Neighborhood Legal Services, North Shore Career Center of Lynn, North Shore Community College, Project COPE, Project Safe and Willow Labs and Medical Center.

For more information about the SPIN Financial Stability Center visit [www.spinlynn.org](http://www.spinlynn.org) or call 781-598-9417.

### Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)

#### 2009 income threshold amounts:

- ◆ \$13,440 (\$18,440 if married filing jointly) if you do not have a qualifying child
- ◆ \$35,463 (\$40,463 if married filing jointly) if you have one qualifying child
- ◆ \$40,295 (\$45,295 if married filing jointly) if you have two qualifying children
- ◆ \$43,279 (\$48,279 if married filing jointly) if you have three or more qualifying children

#### Maximum EITC for 2009

- ◆ \$5,657 with three or more qualifying children
- ◆ \$5,028 with two qualifying children
- ◆ \$3,043 with one qualifying child
- ◆ \$457 with no qualifying children
- ◆ Investment income must be less than \$3,100



# Girl power on the rise

## Plenty of reasons for girls-only environment

By MEAGHAN CASEY

When asked, "Why girls only?" it doesn't take long for the people at Girls Inc. of Lynn to make a strong case for their single-sex programming, where bonding, risk-taking and leadership training are not only encouraged, but required.

Lynn was established in 1629; 380 years later it elected its first female mayor, one year after appointing its first female superintendent of schools. Only 17 of 100 U.S. senators are female, and only 15 of the nation's Fortune 500 companies are managed by female CEOs. Women earn 78 cents for every \$1 a man makes (Center for American Progress, 01/06/09).

According to a nationwide poll conducted by Harris Interactive:

More than half of high school girls reported being dissatisfied with the role gender stereotypes play in their lives.

Girls who are involved with sports, clubs or organizations and receive high levels of support from adults are more likely to want to go to college, be satisfied with their image, have a high quality of life and overcome the effects of gender stereotypes.

Girls who participate in all-girl environments tend to be less willing to settle for second-best when they re-enter a co-ed classroom, the playground, an athletic field or a part-time job.

A publication produced by the United Way of Massachusetts Bay held similar findings. It concluded the assumptions about the distinct abilities and interests of boys and girls can limit

their opportunities. The all-girl option allows girls to plunge into activities without worrying about whether they "belong" or not and to focus on their real interests, at their own pace, free from distractions and comparisons.

That's why it's a girl's world at 50 High St., the new home of Girls Inc. of Lynn. The organization has created an environment where similarities and differences between girls are valued, respected and celebrated. At Girls Inc., girls are the leaders. They are empowered in an environment that has high expectations of them, as well as high levels of support. True to its name, for this organization, it's all about the girls.

For more information about Girls Inc. of Lynn visit [www.girlsinlynn.org](http://www.girlsinlynn.org) or call 781-592-9744



**Denelis Acosta**  
Cobbet Elementary School  
Age: 9

"I like that there are so many ways to connect with other people here. You're not alone. Because it's all girls, you can concentrate better. You don't have to worry about the boys laughing or judging you."



**Bolanle Odusanya**  
Lynn Classical High School  
Age: 16

"It's like a family here. It gives girls encouragement and ways to confront how society views them. It makes us feel strong, smart and bold."



**Selena Garraud**  
Pickering Middle School  
Age: 11

"I like all of the programs and how it keeps you busy. I like that you can talk to everyone here. You don't have to be nervous. The other girls can help you because they've probably already gone through what you're going through."



**Carrisa Sacherski**  
Lynn English High School  
Age: 16

"I came here for summer camp when I was 8 and fell in love. Since then, I've become a peer leader for the substance abuse prevention program, La Verdad, helping teens to choose the right path in life. Because it's solely based on females, we can talk about any subject."



Guest lecturer Carol Lewis of the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston discusses banking and credit with a student in a financial education class at SPIN's Financial Stability Center.



## Lynn lends a hand



Judith Flanagan  
Kennedy

Our city has a well-earned reputation for lending a helping hand to those who need assistance, and enhancing the quality of life in the community. We are fortunate to have a plethora of agencies which embrace this

mission and accept it as a responsibility.

In carrying out their mission, these nonprofit organizations also employ thousands of people, stimulating our local economy.

*The Connector* serves to familiarize all of us with the yeoman's work that is being undertaken by nonprofits in the city. The stories will give you insight into the agencies, their staff and, most importantly, their clients, who are on the receiving end of the caring and goodwill. The nonprofits that operate here have advanced the city's reputation as a place where those in need of services are well taken care of.

Government is charged with providing services for citizens in a compassionate, professional manner. In Lynn, we are assisted in carrying out this mission by a dedicated group of nonprofits who are committed to serving others, first and foremost.

*Judith Flanagan Kennedy is mayor of Lynn.*

## The nonprofit balance: need and money



Mark S.  
Kennard

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the second edition of *The Connector*. Great things are happening in the nonprofit sector of our community, and we are delighted at the opportunity to highlight our many services, programs and successes.

Nonprofit organizations face a challenging year in 2010. On one hand, the demand for our unique services has never been greater, while the funding environment has never been more volatile. Unlike for-profit companies which lose business in an economic recession, the nonprofit sector gains "business" due to the same economic forces. People need the services of the nonprofit sector now more than ever, and the challenge for every nonprofit is

how to meet increasing needs during a time of reduced funding.

Despite the economic challenges that all nonprofit organizations have faced over the past two years, a recent national research study conducted by Johns Hopkins University is showing that nonprofit organizations are a counter-cyclical force in the economy, actually adding workers in times of economic downturn. In two previous U.S. recessions (1990-91 and 2001-02), nonprofit employment nationally increased by an average of 2.4 percent while for-profit employment declined by 2.2 percent.

Part of this trend has to do with the fact that many nonprofits receive substantial portions of their income from public sector programs which are designed to protect citizens from economic downturns. Perhaps a more significant rationale is the resilience, determination and business sense of nonprofit

leaders and those who support them in the public and private sectors through increased volunteerism and monetary donations.

As impressive as this data may be, there are still many needs unmet and many organizations under severe strain, especially smaller, more specific-mission-driven nonprofits. Within the next year, many of these organizations, often borne through grass-roots community efforts, will be gone or merged with larger entities.

The key watch words for 2010 will be persistence, patience, due diligence, and balance, according to nonprofit leaders. The balance between maintaining good business practices and sound fiscal footing while being able to support the ever-increasing needs of our citizens will be a delicate one.

*Mark S. Kennard is president of the Lynn Nonprofit Business Association.*

## A season of opportunity in 2010



Steven M.  
Walsh

A new year brings a new season of opportunity. The recession has undoubtedly touched us all. From Wall Street to Main Street, nearly every facet of American society has been affected by the downturn in the economy. Those particularly affected include nonprofit organizations. Nonprofits are battling to stay afloat with slashed budgets due to decreased personal donations and reduced corporate giving.

Simultaneously, the economy has caused the demand for services to be greater than ever. More and more families are turning to their local nonprofits for assistance while struggling to put food on the table, pay the bills and warm their homes.

While the economic crisis has placed a burden on these valued organizations, we as a community have the opportunity to support them with time, energy and expertise. Whether it is preparing a meal at one of our local soup kitchens, helping Habitat for Humanity put the finishing touches on a family's new home, spending afternoons mentoring, or mornings listening, we can all

find a little extra time to help. Giving of time, energy and talent is often more needed and cherished than monetary donations. It is an investment in human kind and almost always benefits the giver as much, if not more, than the receiver.

Although we have just wrapped up the hustle and bustle of the holiday season and ushered in 2010 with resolutions for a happy and healthy new year, let us also resolve to support these vital organizations all year long.

*State Rep. Steven M. Walsh was a founding member of the Lynn Nonprofit Business Association.*

### CONNECTOR

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Bridgewell

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PRODUCED BY:  
Grant Communications  
Consulting Group  
85 Exchange St., Suite 218  
Lynn, MA 01901  
781-598-8200  
www.grantgroup.com

For information contact:  
Jansi Chandler  
jansi@grantgroup.com



## NDA helps family realize dream of homeownership

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Lynn Housing Authority & Neighborhood Development (LHAND), which worked with them on financing and other details. They are extremely appreciative of LHAND's assistance.

"They were so helpful," Suarez said. "The house was originally listed as two separate condos, which made it very difficult to get financing. They changed the listing to a two-family and lowered the price. They helped us in so many ways."

"It is a tough market to finance condo units," said LHAND Executive Director Charles Gaeta. "The sisters were the right fit from the start, so helping them get into the house was a win for everyone involved. Sandra and Liz have worked hard to save for their dream home and we are happy to be a part of their success."

Each unit of the 4,300-square-foot, two-story home includes three bedrooms, 2½ baths and a study. The

structure was built to resemble the home that formerly stood on that site before being demolished.

"It's very spacious," Carrero said. "I had been living in an apartment on Boston Street that I was dying to get out of. This is a blessing."

"This is another great example of a successful collaboration between LHAND and Neighborhood Development Associates (NDA) that led to the development of a foreclosed property in one of LHAND's target areas," said Peggy Phelps, LHAND Assistant Director of Neighborhood Development.

NDA board member Wascar Deleon said the agency is very pleased with the development at 103 Washington St., which also marked the completion of the St. Jean Baptiste Neighborhood Revitalization project.

"We are committed to creating housing opportunities and having a positive impact on neighborhoods throughout the city," said Deleon, a

resident of the St. Jean Baptiste neighborhood. "We're thrilled that Sandra and Liz and their families have this beautiful new home. And the NDA is appreciative of the administrative support from LHAND and the City of Lynn."

Suarez, who works as an administrative support manager for Greater Lynn Senior Services, was a participant in the Compass IDA (Individual Development Account) program, a matched savings and financial-education program designed to help working, low-income families build assets. Participants commit to saving a minimum amount per month for at least a year and attending Financial Fitness workshops, while Compass provides a 3:1 match on the money saved.

"They went above and beyond," Suarez said of Sherry Riva and Rachel Page of Compass Working Capital. "From day one when I told them I wanted to put an offer in on this house, they worked on our behalf with NDA

### NDA



and the bank."

For Carrero, who works at Rose Displays in Salem, moving into her new home in mid-November was the perfect end to a year that started off in uncertainty. Last January, she delivered Jazlyn about seven weeks premature. The baby weighed only 2 pounds, 11 ounces and was in the hospital for a month. Fortunately, everything has worked out well so far.

"I was 110 percent blessed in 2009," Carrero said. "I had a baby and purchased a home, which was not in my plans. I'm very fortunate. It's a story with a happy ending."

Those are the best kind.

*For more information about NDA visit www.lhand.org or call 781-477-2800.*



Rehabilitation aide Ora Buris works with a patient.



Medical Director Dr. Elisabeth Broderick checks in on two ESPNS participants.

# Is my aging loved one in need of assistance?

Today, families are busier and more geographically diverse than ever. Returning home for the holidays may be the only chance they spend extended, quality time with an aging loved one. At times the physical and cognitive changes that occur during this visit can be reason for concern. Other times, the changes may be slight but are important indicators of health and independence.

Elder Service Plan of the North Shore is happy to provide families with this checklist. This is not to provide a formal assessment; rather to help families begin to address these issues and spur discussion about getting professional assistance in caring for an aging loved one. Often-times, involving geriatric professionals early on, nursing home placement can be delayed or avoided.

## Overall Appearance

As someone who is seeing a loved one for the first time in many months, you may have a perspective on gradual changes that others do not. Take the opportunity to observe their outward appearance and to inquire about other areas of their day to day lives. Ask yourself:

- ◆ Has there been noticeable weight loss?
- ◆ Do they dress appropriately for the time of day and in clean clothes?
- ◆ Is their home up to their usual level of cleanliness?

## Physical Health

Assessing the physical health of a older adult is often difficult because they may have one or more chronic conditions such as high blood pressure or diabetes that are not easily noticed, but there are telltale signs that you need to watch for that may suggest a condition exists or is not being managed well. Questions to consider include:

- ◆ Do they have vision or hearing problems?
- ◆ Do they have issues with walking and balance?
- ◆ Do they have problems with incontinence or toileting?



Nurse practitioner Kathy Savage visits with a patient.

- ◆ Have they been hospitalized or visited the emergency room recently?
- ◆ Do they complain of chronic pain?

## Mental State

Being cognizant of changes in a loved one's mental state is as important as noticing their outward appearance or physical health. However, because there is significant commonality with physical issues oftentimes only a trained professional is able to notice important yet more subtle signs. In spending time with a older adult consider:

- ◆ Are they showing signs of confusion, being disoriented or forgetfulness?
- ◆ Have they become isolated?
- ◆ Are they having trouble sleeping?

◆ Depression in the elderly is a widespread problem that is often not diagnosed and frequently undertreated. Signs to look for include:

- Abnormal thoughts about death
- Change in appetite (usually a loss of appetite)
- Unintentional weight loss (most common)
- Despondent or increasingly irritable
- Fatigue or trouble sleeping
- Loss of interest or pleasure in daily activities

## Nutrition

Sound nutrition continues to be important throughout the aging process. In many instances the way in which older adults approach their nutritional needs overlaps with other important areas including Physical Health, Mental State, and Social Life. Observations to consider:

- ◆ Are they eating balanced meals regularly?
- ◆ Can they get to a grocery store? Do they have food in the house?
- ◆ Are they able to prepare meals or do they need assistance?

## Social Activity

The ability of older adults to engage with others and participate in the instrumental activities of daily living is important to allowing them live independently. Issues to consider include:

- ◆ Do they see or talk with friends frequently?
- ◆ Are they engaged in social activities or hobbies?
- ◆ Can they still drive safely?

*If you would like to learn more about maintaining your health and independence with the team of geriatric specialists at Elder Service Plan of the North Shore, visit [www.pacenorthernshore.org](http://www.pacenorthernshore.org) or call 1-877-803-5564.*



**LynnMuseum**  
& HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## SAVE THE DATE

On Thursday, Feb. 18, Lynn Museum & Historical Society President Steve Babbitt will conduct a behind-the-scenes tour of the museum from 4-6 p.m.

The tour will include a glimpse at some of the museum's vintage photographs, which run the gamut from the worker above to the elegant woman at right. Visitors will also enjoy a rare look at the fascinating spaces that are usually off-limits as well as paintings, objects, textiles and an entire archive of Lynn history waiting to be discovered.



# Famous Lynn eagle to land in Philadelphia

BY MEAGHAN CASEY

In a historic turn of events, Lynn's most celebrated eagle is taking flight.

Carved from gilt wood in 1804 by famed architect and woodcarver Samuel McIntire, the eagle — property of the Lynn Museum & Historical Society — will be on display from Feb. 19 through Aug. 1 at the National Constitution Center in Philadelphia. It will be part of an exhibition entitled Ancient Rome & America — the Classical Influence that Shaped Our Nation. The Center has worked for three years to develop the multi-million-dollar, artifact-rich exhibition that showcases the cultural, political and social connections between the lost world of ancient Rome and modern America.

For years, McIntire's eagle adorned the cupola of Lynn Academy, until the school's closing in 1852. It was donated to the Lynn Museum & Historical Society in 1913. While it never traveled beyond state borders until now, the famed eagle was on display from Oct. 2007 through Feb. 2008 at the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem in an exhibit honoring McIntire's legacy.

"McIntire was a very well known name in this area at the time, much the way [Charles] Bulfinch was to Boston," said Sandy Sheckman, interim director of the Lynn Museum & Historical Society. "He transformed the city of Salem and had a significant influence throughout the North Shore."

McIntire was among the first to carve eagles in wood to ornament buildings, furniture and other decorative art objects. The familiar pose of the eagle's talons grasping a globe or sphere came to signify the power of the nation. His eagle was highly sought after by the National Constitution Center to represent early American culture. It will be displayed alongside a Roman military eagle head, courtesy of the Museo Archeologico Nazionale in Florence.

Established in 1897, the Lynn Museum & Historical Society is the only organization in the city devoted to collecting, preserving and fostering an appreciation of Lynn's rich history. The McIntire eagle is just one object in the museum's vast collection, which includes more than 17,000 artifacts. Among them are numerous examples of shoe-making equipment, from the smallest finishing tools to the largest machines, which celebrate Lynn's role as a major industrial center during the 19th and 20th centuries. The textile industry was also a prominent one and, today, thousands of examples of dresses, hats, shoes, jewelry and other accessories spanning 250 years can be found at the museum. In addition, the collection includes works of art from the Lynn Beach Painters, folk art, samplers, historic portraits, photographs, furniture, fine silver, clocks and other decorative art pieces.



An eagle carved from gilt wood in 1804 by Samuel McIntire will be on display in Philadelphia for six months.

For more information about the Lynn Museum & Historical Society visit [www.lynnmuseum.org](http://www.lynnmuseum.org) or call 781-581-6200.



# Hope for the homeless

## Bridgewell program gets people back to work

BY MEAGHAN CASEY

For many individuals battling homelessness and/or substance abuse, the road home isn't always an easy one. But for Andrew Maier, the guiding light has been Bridgewell's Vocational Interest Program (VIP).

VIP provides job training for individuals in Lynn who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. Funded through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) McKinney homeless services program, VIP is provided through the Continuum of Care, which is coordinated by Lynn People Acting as a Collaborative Team (PACT). The program services approximately 120 individuals per year and provides them with the opportunity to develop and refine skills needed to re-enter the workforce.

The VIP center, located on Silsbee Street, offers classes, workshops, Internet access and one-on-one assistance with résumé preparation, job searches and job-readiness training. Bridgewell payee services also help transition homeless individuals to permanent housing situations and teach individuals money-management skills needed to maintain a dwelling. Staff members provide assistance in locating suitable housing and are contracted to assist in the management of finances, paying rent, utilities and other bills.

"The ultimate goal is for people to get employment to obtain and maintain stable housing," said VIP director Andrea Liberti. "The most rewarding part of this job is seeing the success cases; it's watching people reach their dreams."

Case in point: Maier, who entered the program one year ago.

"I went from being a person with little hope for a stable future to one with a secure roof over my head and a new sense of empowerment," he said.

A native of North Dartmouth, Mass., Maier was orphaned at age 12. Before their passing, his father managed a dairy farm and

his mother ran a small motel, instilling in Maier a belief in hard work and entrepreneurship. Persevering, Maier went on to earn his high-school diploma and general contractor's license and start his own company buying, repairing and managing foreclosed properties during the housing crisis in the late 1980s. At the peak of his career, he was managing 18 properties, including a 13-unit apartment building.

Yet, Maier was also battling substance abuse. In 1988, he entered a treatment program at the Salvation Army Harbor Light Center. From there, he was hired as a night engineer at the Park Plaza Hotel, where he was employed until 2005. In 2008, he entered the Moving Ahead Program (MAP), a 14-week recovery and life-skills program. He was placed in a transitional living program for homeless substance abusers in Lynn. After completing MAP, he opted to stay on at the transitional housing program, paying rent.

Last January, Maier became a VIP participant. Over the last 12 months he has come a long way with the help of VIP including obtaining subsidized housing earlier this month. He is now 19 months clean, living in his own apartment and on his way to re-entering the workforce.

"Part of it was because I was coming here [to Bridgewell] regularly," said Maier, speaking about overcoming his addiction. "It was a place where I could talk to people and not feel like I was on my own. The staff here is professional, friendly,

accommodating and always willing to take the time to lend a hand.

They're a team of individuals I am grateful to have available."



Maier worked closely with Liberti and employment specialist Paul Monaci. With their guidance, he was able to complete applications for a Section 8 housing voucher, which he secured. He worked diligently with Monaci on a new business plan and hopes to start another repair and property-management company. He has also been taking a course on weatherization at Roxbury Community College in hopes of converting his future properties into more energy-efficient buildings.

"Andrew is really driven and self-motivated," said Liberti.

"The work I've accomplished here in a year, I didn't think it could happen," Maier said. "The housing and job training have to work hand-in-hand. Combined, they've built up my self-esteem and given me the motivation to continue."

For more information about Bridgewell visit [www.bridgewell.org](http://www.bridgewell.org) or call 781-593-1088.

Bridgewell VIP participant Andrew Maier, center, works with VIP director Andrea Liberti and employment specialist Paul Monaci.





# MIRACLES

## on North Common St.

BY MEAGHAN CASEY

Twenty-two women, one commonality – a motivation to become clean and sober mothers.

United under one roof, the women are participants in Project COPE's Women's Residential Program. The unique inpatient program, serving as a home for recovery and, ultimately, a haven of hope, combines individual and group counseling for substance abuse, vocational planning and guidance on becoming a mother.

"It was about me needing to get better and learning to parent," said Jessica Hayslett, the mother of an 8-month-old girl and 2-year-old twins. "I'd do anything I have to do for my children. If it took me 10 years, I'd do it. Thanks to COPE, I'm getting the right advice; it's where I need to be."

Hayslett is now 17 months clean and cherishing her new lease on her life and motherhood.

"I've been able to thrive, not just survive here," she said. "They transformed me into a totally different person –

a teachable, open-minded person. They taught me to control my addiction. Anything I'm going through, it passes. I can get through it and be strong."

Hayslett isn't alone. Since its start in 1985, the Women's Residential Program has served hundreds of women ages 17 and older who are substance-abusing as well as many who are pregnant or post-partum. The program incorporates in-depth house groups centered on mother and child, counseling, alcohol and drug education, job training and planning, Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous meetings and recreational activities to provide structure and encourage individual responsibility.

"Today I participate in my life," said Kristen Bell, nine months pregnant. "Before, I just waded through it."

Bell is the mother of four other children, ages 5-13, put into open adoption. Though painful for Bell, the adoption process was a wake-up call and Project COPE was the answer.

"I needed something that was parenting-based and recovery-based," said Bell. "I knew I should do it the right way and I knew this was a place that would help

and challenge me. They have patience with me; they're willing to work with me. They don't give up. These people care."

Another mother, who wished to remain anonymous, agreed.

"They push you do it," she said. "They believe in you, so you believe in yourself. They love you, so you can love yourself."

Currently in phase III, which involves aftercare and relapse prevention, she is moving into Project COPE's transitional housing – available for those who may not have found affordable housing upon their emergence from the program.

For others at the start of their journey, Project COPE staff members also provide the necessary supplies, such as diapers and cribs, to allow them to care for their newborns on site. Located on North Common Street, the program can house up to 20 single women and four women and their babies at one time.

Because of the close quarters, a natural camaraderie often forms.

"You develop friendships," said Bell. "You're never alone; there's always someone to talk to and to get strength from."

The same can be said about the bond between the residents and staff members.

"They invest themselves

into this place and we become emotionally involved, too," said Hayslett. "The counselors and the other women here – they've been the family I needed."

"I see them walk in like broken little girls and walk out as responsible self-respecting grown women," said counselor Christine Leavitt. "It's like watching miracles on North Common Street."

In the near future, those miracles will be housed in a new home, located at 66 Johnson St. The building is currently undergoing extensive renovations to better meet the needs of the women and babies who will live there. The facility will have a large living and dining area, a library with computers, office space on each floor and bedrooms that will house only 2-4 residents, as opposed to the current site's dormitory-style setup. The new space will also offer private interim placement housing on the third floor for women phasing out of the program.

For more information about Project COPE visit [www.projectcope.com](http://www.projectcope.com) or call 781-593-5333.



From left, Kristen Bell, Jessica Hayslett and her daughter, Clara, and Christine Leavitt of Project COPE.