

# THE LYNN JOURNAL

Tuesday, December 22, 2020

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## HAPPY BIRTHDAY



Past Grand Night Salvy Tavernese of the Knights of Columbus received a surprise 80th Birthday greeting from many friends and family members as a 30 vehicles caravan tooted horns, showing Birthday signs, and waving colorful Birthday balloons Birthday Boy, Salvy, who turned 80 years old, was totally amazed seeing so many cars drive by him. He said, "I had no idea what my family planned for me. I am so thankful for everyone extending a Birthday greeting to me." Shown above Tavernese Family Grandchildren: Nicole, Dennis, and Anthony; Dennis and Salvy's daughter, Angela; Karen, Marc, and Salvy Jr.

## Covid-19 express testing site to open Dec. 23

Special To The Journal

The Project Beacon COVID-19 Express Testing Site at the Blossom Street Extension was scheduled to open Wednesday, December 23, after set-up delays caused by last week's snowstorm. The site will be run

by Project Beacon which specializes in high-volume appointment only testing through at least March 31.

Due to the one-day delay of the opening of the high-capacity express testing Project Beacon site, the "Stop the Spread" testing sites located at Lynn En-

glish High School and behind the Western Avenue Lynn Fire Station have been extended another week and will now hold their last full day of testing on Monday, January 4. The Lynn Community Health Center testing site will continue to remain open by appointment and walk-up through March 31.

Due to the holidays, all four testing sites will be closed starting at noon on December 23 and completely on December 24 and 25, and again be closed starting at noon on December 30 and then completely on December 31 and January. Please check with City of Lynn COVID-19 Resources Testing page for the most up

## Four Lynn groups receive NEFA grants

Special To The Journal

Lynn Museum/Lynn Arts and Creative Collective, Raw Art Works, and artist/collaborators Tara Argaba and Estrella Diaz, and Cinda Danh and Michael Aghahowa have received grants from the The New England Foundation for the Arts (NEFA). The grants are awarded to Massachusetts-based artists and collaborators to imagine and create public art that fosters more just, vibrant, and welcoming public spaces.

Lynn Museum/Lynn Arts and Creative Collective and artists Agaba and Diaz were the recipients of Collective Imagination for Spatial Justice (CISJ) grants that support teams of artists, creatives, culture bearers, cultural organizers, and community-based collaborators to do the important work of imagining public art that fosters and contributes to more just futures for our public spaces and public culture. The grants range from \$2,000-\$5,000.

Raw Art Works, a youth arts organizations based at 37 Central Square ("Love Letters to Lynn" and artists Danh and Aghahowa ("Food for Thought") were the recipients of

Public Art for Spatial Justice (PASJ) grants that support artists and artistic collaborations to create public art in Massachusetts that fosters public imagination and contributes to more just futures for our public spaces and public culture. The grants range from \$5,000-\$10,000.

Following are the descriptions of the projects:

Grant Recipient Details  
CINDY DANH AND  
MICHAEL AGHAHAWA  
GRANT AMOUNT  
\$10,000

Cinda Danh and Michael Aghahowa are artists and activists, born and raised in Lynn, MA. Cinda and Michael are working in collaboration with Ernie's Harvest Time, a mid-sized grocery in downtown Lynn and youth from The Food Project ([www.thefoodproject.org](http://www.thefoodproject.org)) to create a wraparound mural at Ernie's that celebrates voices from within the Lynn community who are doing the important work of imagining, dreaming and growing a more resilient food system. In a moment when rapid development and displacement is happening in Lynn, this mural aims to cen-

Please see GRANT Page 3

**Wishing you & your families  
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The office will be closed Thursday Dec. 24 and Friday, Dec. 25 & Thursday, Dec. 31, and Friday, Jan. 1.

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Weds. Dec. 23

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Please see TESTING Page 3

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# EDITORIAL

## THE TRUE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS

The Christmas season usually is the most wonderful time of the year.

But Christmas, 2020, is anything but wonderful.

We are undergoing a degree of hardship unlike any that we have experienced in our lifetime. More Americans are dying each and every day from the coronavirus than perished in any of our wars or on 9/11. As the cumulative death toll inexorably continues to climb, the total number of Americans who will have been killed by the virus likely will exceed all of the combat deaths in all of our wars against a foreign enemy.

The death count from the pandemic only tells part of the story, however. Those who have survived a bout with the virus face an uncertain future because of the serious long-term health effects on their vital organs.

The burden that has been placed upon our doctors, nurses, and other front-line workers has been enormous and continues to grow as the virus relentlessly attacks our populace and fills our hospitals to overflowing.

In addition, the economic impact of the pandemic has been profound for the millions of Americans who have lost their jobs, their businesses, and their homes. Millions of Americans, including one in five children, do not have enough to eat. The lines of cars at food banks stretch for miles.

For our nation's young people, the virus has disrupted their lives to such an extent that economists say the effects upon their education and future job prospects will linger for years to come.

The pandemic has eviscerated the usual holiday celebrations that bring together family, friends, and colleagues, adding to the mental health and anxiety issues, especially for older Americans, that are a by-product of the constant stress in our lives.

But amidst all of the chaos and danger that society is facing, this holiday season has provided us with an opportunity to discover a new-found appreciation for the things that really matter in our lives.

With the usual holiday frenzy of parties, gift-shopping, vacations, and other self-indulgent pursuits no longer viable, we have a unique opportunity to reflect on what is really important: The health and safety of ourselves and our loved ones, as well as the urgent need to assist those who find themselves in dire straits this holiday season.

We hope that all of our readers will heed the warnings of our public health officials and that those with the means to do so will help the vast numbers of our less-fortunate fellow Americans.

If we do these things, we will come to a true understanding of what the Christmas season really is all about.



GUEST OP-ED

## Our Christmas Spirit

Dr. Glenn Mollette

Years ago, our church group was out Christmas caroling. We weren't far from the church and our leader led us out to the back of Mr. Castle's house to sing to he and his wife. His wife came to the door and greeted us with a smile and was gracious. We sang to her when suddenly through the window we saw her husband appear in the family room with a big towel around his body. He obviously had just gotten out of the shower. He came into his family room unknowing that 20 carolers had all eyes on him. Several of the women began to chuckle. I just knew we were all about to see something we had not planned on. Sitting down on his sofa he put his feet up and was preparing to relax. The volume of laughter from a couple of his adult friends grew louder when Mr. Castle looked up and saw us. He immediately made an "Oh no" expression while shaking his head a bit and jumped up and departed to another part of the house. We sang to his sweet wife and moved on down the street with a new visual that I still remember to this day. I'll always

remember what a good spirit he and his wife had and that we all left feeling uplifted by them.

This week I walked to the back of a local nursing home to look through a window to see a friend. Ms. Southard is 99. My wife and I visited in her home recently. She was agile, mentally sharp and dancing around like she always does. Her attitude always lifts us up. She did say on that very day we were there, "I don't want to end up in a nursing home. "I told my son I don't ever want to be in one," she said. Two weeks later while closing her curtains she made an awkward step, fell and broke her leg. Surgery was required and also rehabilitation. Her insurance plan would not pay for her to go to the local rehabilitation hospital but instead put her where she never wanted to be, a nursing home.

I found out from a nurse which room she was in and how to find the right window to look through. The nurse said she would meet me at the window and let Ms. Southard know I was there. I dreaded what I might see but wanted to wish her a Merry Christmas. Knocking on the window I was delighted that

she was sitting up and started laughing and waving at me. We exchanged Merry Christmas the best we could yelling through a window. While I almost wanted to cry seeing her there, I was so encouraged by her good spirit.

The spirit of Christmas is inside you. This spirit is greater than you and I and pulls us through the awkward and the very difficult times of life.

The Christmas season we celebrate is one of hope and celebration. The story of Jesus is the story of God's hope coming to us in the little baby a long time ago. 2020 has certainly been a year we've needed hope.

2021 is going to be a better year. Vaccines for Covid-19 are coming. May your spirit be rekindled. Share your spirit with others and may the year ahead be one of the best ever for us all.

Glenn Mollette is the publisher of Newburgh Press, Liberty Torch and various other publishing imprints; a national columnist – American Issues and Common Sense opinions, analysis, stories and features appear each week in over 500 newspapers, websites and blogs across the United States.

## THE LYNN JOURNAL

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# City of Lynn COVID-19 update

The Lynn Public Health Department has confirmed that as of Dec. 21, the number of active, confirmed positive COVID-19 cases is 1,715 with 64 new cases on Dec. 21. 8,421 Lynn residents have recovered and 150 have died. The total number of confirmed positive COVID-19 cases in Lynn since March 21, 2020, including those who have died and recovered, is 10,286. Please visit the City of Lynn COVID-19 Data Dashboard which is updated daily.

If you missed last Thursday's COVID-19 Tele Town Hall, you can listen to the audio recordings in English and in Spanish at the following links:

ENGLISH: <https://bit.ly/3h-3k7dR>

SPANISH: <https://bit.ly/37ucXfr>

Please visit [http://www.ci.lynn.ma.us/covid19/resources.shtml#p7GPc1\\_2](http://www.ci.lynn.ma.us/covid19/resources.shtml#p7GPc1_2) for more information and updates on how you can get a free COVID-19 test in the City of Lynn.

We will continue to provide regular updates on COVID-19 and any Snow Emergency Parking Bans through the City website ([www.lynnma.gov](http://www.lynnma.gov)), social media, and the Smart 911 emergency notification system (sign up at [www.smart911.com](http://www.smart911.com)).

Actualización de COVID-19 de la ciudad de Lynn del 21 de

diciembre de 2020.

El Departamento de Salud Pública de Lynn ha confirmado que a partir de hoy, el número de casos activos, confirmados positivos de COVID-19 es 1,715 con 64 casos nuevos hoy. 8,421 residentes de Lynn se han recuperado y 150 se han muerto. El número total de casos positivos confirmados de COVID-19 en Lynn desde el 21 de marzo de 2020, incluyendo los que murieron y se recuperaron, es 10,286. Por favor, visite el nuevo registro de data de COVID-19 de la ciudad de Lynn que se actualiza diariamente.

## Grant/ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

ter the stories of the people who have been here, are still here, and hopefully will be here for the future of Lynn.

Grant Recipient Details:

RAW ARTS WORKS

LOCATION

Lynn, MA

PROJECT TITLE

Love Letters to Lynn

FISCAL YEAR AWARDED

2021

GRANT OR PROGRAM

Public Art for Spatial Justice

GRANT AMOUNT

\$10,000

Tapping the Lynn Museum, Faces of Lynn Magazine and Harvard artist/researcher Raquel Jimenez, Raw Art Works' public arts group for high school womxn, WAMX, led by art therapist Laura Smith, will create Love Letters to Lynn, an interdisciplinary public art testimonial to the voices of womxn in Lynn, Massachusetts. Following the model of participatory action research and seeking to create uplifting art "for the people, by the people," eight high school WAMX artists will interview their adult counterparts by exchanging letters with them, then convert the knowledge gained into a public display of original art at the Lynn Museum and in Lynn shops that have closed as a result of COVID-19.

Grant Recipient Details:

LYNN MUSEUM/LYNN

ARTS AND CREATIVE

COLLECTIVE

Location:

Lynn, MA

PROJECT TITLE

N/A

FISCAL YEAR AWARDED

2021

GRANT OR PROGRAM

Collective Imagination for Spatial Justice

GRANT AMOUNT

\$5,000

BIPOC artists in Lynn are integral to the social fabric of our city. Currently, barriers to collaboration exist between BIPOC artists and municipal and organizational leaders who are the stewards of funding, visibility and permissions. BIPOC artists, in collaboration with the Lynn Museum/Lynn Arts and Creative Collective, will examine these barriers and reimagine opportunities to foster trust and accountability with municipal and organizational leaders. By centering the voices of BIPOC artists from Lynn, this collective imagination journey aims to envision ways for diverse artistic and cultural expression to not only exist, but to truly thrive in Lynn.

Grant Recipient Details:

TARA AGABA AND

ESTRELLA DIAZ

LOCATION

Lynn, MA

PROJECT TITLE

N/A

FISCAL YEAR AWARDED

2021

GRANT OR PROGRAM

Collective Imagination for Spatial Justice

GRANT AMOUNT

\$5,000

Tara and Estrella are exploring concepts of rest as a communal practice of healing. How does rest intersect with public space? How are public spaces designed for rest? Who is allowed to rest in public? Who's rest is policed in public? How might we question these social norms, and

come together, reclaim our time, drink tea, rest, and heal together? Exploring radical and communal self-care could be a path to our liberation. Together we are exploring the use of art and digital media for healing and organizing for rest and world-building.

"In the midst of the global health pandemic, economic downturn, and continued racial injustice that 2020 has made more apparent, we are reminded that public spaces are not neutral and public art made in public spaces is not neutral either. As we reckon with complex histories and continued legacies of racism and white supremacy culture, we refocused our public art grant-making towards spatial justice." said Kim Szeto, NEFA public art program director, "Public art has the ability and responsibility to creatively engage important and timely conversations, bring healing to space and place, and foster public imagination for a more just version of what is possible."

NEFA's Spatial Justice grants are made possible with funding from the Barr Foundation. "This moment is crying out for artists who can help us imagine a better world," said Giles Li, the Barr Foundation's Senior Program Officer for Arts & Creativity. "We are proud to partner with NEFA to support these important artists and vital communities; their work forces us to confront our own assumptions about who feels welcomed in public spaces and reaffirms what the Foundation deeply believes: that all people deserve the honor of being heard, seen, and valued."

## Testing/ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

to date information at: <https://www.lynnma.gov/covid19/resources.shtml>

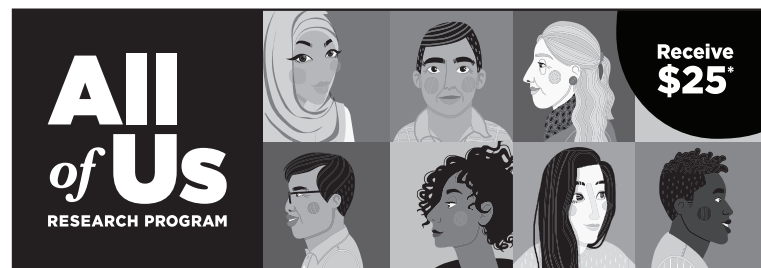
As previously announced, the Project Beacon Express Testing Site at the Blossom Street Extension parking lot, commonly known as the Lynn Ferry Terminal, will have the capacity to perform up to 2,000 tests per day once the site reaches full capacity in early January. Residents will be able to schedule their test appointment in advance, drive up to the site at their assigned time, be tested from the comfort of their car, and receive their results within 24 hours. There will be no pedestrian, walk-up access allowed at this site. For all Massachusetts residents, there is no cost for this test, no health insurance is required, and you will not be asked about your immigration status.

"I am glad that Lynn was selected for one of the four express testing sites being established across the Commonwealth. This new site at the Blossom Street Extension, along with maintaining the critical Downtown site at the Lynn Community Health Center, will expand our testing capacity and allow our residents to receive test results back more quickly to assist our Public Health officials in identifying

COVID positive cases to stop the spread sooner," said Mayor Thomas McGee. "We expect this appointment-based system to be a faster process overall for our residents who will no longer need to wait in long lines to be tested making it as easy as possible to access a test as we continue to take a multi-pronged approach to fight this virus."

Residents can create an account, make appointments, and view their test results all through one, online platform for the Project Beacon COVID-19 Express Testing site at the Blossom Street Extension by visiting [app.beacontesting.com](http://app.beacontesting.com). If you have questions about getting tested or issues regarding appointments or results at Project Beacon, please go to [www.mass.gov/express-testing](http://www.mass.gov/express-testing), call Project Beacon's Call Center at 617-741-7310, or email at [help@beacontesting.com](mailto:help@beacontesting.com). Appointments will become available several days in advance at a time.

In the event of a City of Lynn snow emergency, testing may be cancelled or limited based on the weather conditions. Please check the City of Lynn website at [www.lynnma.gov](http://www.lynnma.gov) for information about possible testing cancellations due to inclement weather.



### Why have some communities not been a part of medical research?

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\*All participants will receive \$25 after completion of their visit. To complete the visit, participants must create an account, give consent, agree to share their electronic health records, answer health surveys, and have their measurements taken (height, weight, blood pressure, etc.), and give blood and urine samples, if asked.

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# Vocational School students help out at My Brother's Table

Special to the Journal

When Northeast Metro Tech prepared to transition to hybrid learning this month for the first time since the COVID-19 pandemic began and schools nationwide began holding remote learning last March, Culinary Arts Instructor Liz Beals saw the change as an opportunity for her students to help members of the community facing hardship.

Hybrid learning began at Northeast Metro Tech on Dec. 3, and in the weeks leading up to that time, Beals formed a relationship with My Brother's Table, a hospitality based nonprofit in Lynn which provides free meals to anyone in the community. There are no prerequisites to accessing the services at My Brother's Table, a principle of the organization meant to ensure anyone in need of help feels comfortable and welcome to visit.

My Brother's Table has seen

a significant rise in the number of people accessing its services amid the ongoing pandemic, and served more than 600,000 meals from January through November of this year.

To help support this work, students in the Culinary Arts program at Northeast Metro Tech will be preparing a meal for the nonprofit approximately once a week for the foreseeable future. The first donation was made on Friday, Dec. 11.

To watch a video about the effort, click here.

"Initially, when the pandemic first started there were a lot more income supports for people and now as we've seen some of those disappear, it has become harder for people," said My Brother's Table Executive Director Dianne Kuzia Hills. "There is so much need and we're seeing all kinds of folks that we've never seen before here. It is virtually impossible for us to keep up with that

demand by ourselves so we really turn to community partners and other folks to help us out, and having young people be a part of that has been great."

Culinary Arts students at Northeast Metro Tech prepared a brisket for the Dec. 11 donation, which Beals delivered to My Brother's Table.

"When I discovered we were doing a project where we would donate a bunch of food to My Brother's Table in Lynn, it made me want to do even better. It gave me even more motivation to come back and really help out that cause, and prepare the food for the people that really do need it right now," said Connor Ayers, a Culinary Arts senior from Saugus.

"I am so proud of the students," Beals said. "This is an experience that contributes to who they are as a person, their humanity, who they are as a professional. I really want students



(COURTESY PHOTO NORTHEAST METRO TECH)

Students in Culinary Instructor Liz Beals' class are preparing meals approximately once a week for My Brother's Table in Lynn.

to understand that a vast majority of our food production would, could or should go to people that need it, that need access to it, that need it to be affordable for them."

## LOCAL STUDENTS IN THE NEWS

### TWO LYNN RESIDENTS NAMED TO HONOR ROLL AT BC HIGH

Boston College High School is proud to announce that the following students from Lynn have been named to the school's First Quarter Honor Roll.

First Quarter High Honors Recipients

For High Honors a Sophomore, Junior, and Senior must have at least a 3.80 quality point average and all grades "C+" or higher. Freshmen need a 3.6

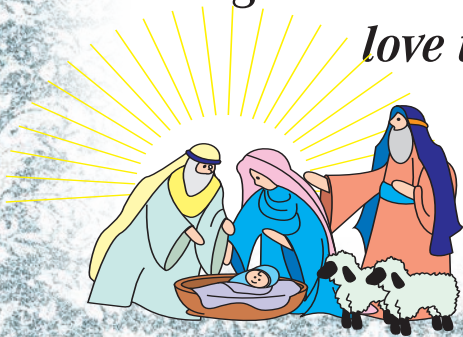
quality point average and all grades "C+" or higher.

- Richard Rowe
- Alpha Barry

About Boston College High School: Boston College High School is a Jesuit, Catholic, college-preparatory school for young men in grades 7 to 12. Founded in 1863, the school enrolls approximately 1,500 students from more than 140 communities in eastern Massachusetts. For more information please visit [bchigh.edu](http://bchigh.edu).

*The greatest wish for ourselves is to live in the Spirit of Christ.*

*The greatest wish for our Neighbors is to love them as we love ourselves.*



*A Blessed Christmas and new Year to All*

*Rev. Bill & Peg Simpson*

**LYNN HOUSING AUTHORITY & NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT**

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*Charles Gaeta, Executive Director  
Laura Walsh, Chairperson*

*Board of Commissioners Susan McGinnis-Lang,  
Steve Martin, Robert Muise, & Frederick Russell*

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# McGee joins other leaders in asking State House for Small Business Relief

Special to The Journal

Mayor Martin J. Walsh, together with more than 50 Massachusetts municipal leaders, including Lynn Mayor Thomas McGee, is calling on State House leadership to provide immediate relief for small businesses struggling during the COVID-19 pandemic. The coalition of 53 officials representing cities and towns throughout Massachusetts signed a letter urging the Legislature to help small businesses bridge the gap toward an equitable recovery. The call comes after several communities, including the City of Boston, temporarily returned to earlier stages of the Commonwealth's reopening plan this week, amid rising COVID cases and worsening hospital capacity.

"Boston along with other cities and towns across the state continue to find new and creative ways to support our small businesses, which have faced unprecedented challenges this year, but we need our state and federal partners to leverage all the tools at their disposal to further our local efforts," said Mayor Walsh.

"As municipal leaders, we're united in our message to the state: please pass the economic development bond bill now and provide relief to small business, restaurants, and their employees at this critically urgent time."

The Massachusetts House and Senate currently have several economic relief options under consideration: an economic development bond bill which includes funding for small business grants and loans, and a supplemental budget filed by Gov. Baker which requests an additional \$49 million in small business support.

Municipal leaders are calling on the Legislature to pass these measures, and to also consider other creative funding mechanisms that would support small businesses, employees and restaurants. Of the 16,000 restaurants in Massachusetts, 3,400 never re-opened after mandatory closures in the spring, and more of them close every day as the pandemic wears on.

Small business relief funding and programs provided by the state, unlike those that might come in a federal stimulus pack-

age, could be deployed immediately.

"Small businesses and their employees are facing extreme financial distress, especially restaurants, which are facing a mass extinction, and there is every reason to believe this will get worse over the winter," said Metropolitan Area Planning Council Executive Director Marc Draisen. "Additional resources from both the federal and state government are urgently needed."

"Immediate passage of the economic development bond bill is critical for communities across Massachusetts," said Pittsfield Mayor Linda Tyer. "Economic relief for small businesses, restaurants and their hard-working employees is an essential element for sustaining and recovering our economy."

"Our restaurants and small businesses are a big part of the vibrancy of our city, providing much-needed jobs and revenues to our local economy" said Salem Mayor Kimberley Driscoll. "These small business owners are not anonymous chains, but rather hardworking neighbors

and friends who have been doing all they can to stay afloat in the midst of a public health crisis. They need our help now because every day that goes by without relief will mean more business closures. We know that vaccine distributions will be happening soon, we just need to help folks get through to Spring."

"Cities and towns are on the front lines protecting the public from the deadly coronavirus threat and providing a lifeline to the local businesses that have been hammered by the COVID recession," said Massachusetts Municipal Association Executive Director Geoff Beckwith. "Communities need assistance from our partners in state government, and we are urgently asking for immediate passage of the tools and resources in the economic development and budget bills, so that local leaders can protect our citizens, shore up our economy, and ensure a swift, equitable recovery for everyone."

Read the full letter and list of signatories online.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the City of Boston has been steadfast in its commitment

to supporting the small business community. The Reopen Boston Fund, still accepting applications, has issued \$3.1 million to more than 1,700 businesses to help with the expenses of safely opening and operating businesses, and is still accepting applications. In total, nearly \$6.7 million in debt-free grants have been distributed to over 1,850 small businesses in every neighborhood across the City of Boston through the Office of Economic Development's Small Business Relief Fund. Last month, the City launched three new funds totaling \$6.3 million that will support small businesses in Boston that have been affected by COVID-19, focusing on commercial rent relief, supporting certified women, minority, and veteran owned small businesses, and restaurant relief. And to further assist the City's small businesses, the City of Boston has created a list of suppliers to help businesses source the personal protective equipment (PPE) and cleaning supplies required to ensure the safety of employees and customers as industries reopen.

## FRESH AND LOCAL

# Resolve to Dine!

by Penny & Ed Cherubino

As of this writing, we haven't dined out since the first week in April. We have picked up orders from favorite restaurants within walking distance. Mostly we've had home-prepared meals. Early on, we tried to turn those restaurant meals into dining occasions. We would carefully plate the food, pour a glass of wine, and sit down to enjoy dining together. Occasionally, we'd do the same for a special occasion or special treat we had prepared in our kitchen.

As we face the second year of the pandemic, we resolve to dine more often. Canadian Chef Laura Caulder inspired this resolution. For six months, she shared "Fancy Friday" meals on social media. The "fancy" part was that she and her partner dressed up to enjoy a meal.

In September, she left a challenge for all of us whose spirits had been lifted by her example. She wrote about dressing up and making a meal a dining occasion, "Whenever we hit a low, let's not wait for a Friday, but instead dress

to honour the morale we're trying to uphold."

### Create Your Dining Experience

Consider adding a resolution to your 2021 goals that, on occasion, you will make an effort to dine instead of merely eat. If you once enjoyed dressing up to go out for a meal or to host a small gathering in your home, then you could dress as you would for that occasion.

Perhaps your level of fancy will be a beautifully set table complete with linens, your best dinnerware, and flowers. Some folks might switch from paper plates to pottery on a placemat. A fun and fancy dinner might be a beautifully arranged board of cheese and accouterments with a tasting of a couple of wines for someone else.

### Fancy Up the Food

A little extra care with presentation lets you begin the meal by "eating with your eyes." A great meal should satisfy all your senses.

Think about the way we taste a glass of wine. You begin by looking at it. Next, you use your

sense of smell to anticipate what the aromas you're inhaling might deliver in flavor. Then, you take a very intentional taste and slowly analyze what you like or don't like. In our case, we like to taste the wine again with food that we think will make it better.

With a meal, you can arrange the plate to please your eye. Photos of food in books, on the Internet, and from your dining experiences can serve as your textbook. Also, there are books and websites on food presentation.

You can use various components of a dish like a relish, sauce, or side dish to compose a perfect bite. If you're the cook, try to provide the opportunity for your diners to personalize their plate with favorite flavors.

One of the aspects of dining that we enjoy is good conversation. Replace the video stream with some appropriate music and talk to your dinner companions. Even those living alone can have a dining conversation by arranging a video linkup or even a phone



A fun and fancy dinner might be a beautifully arranged board of cheese, salami, and accouterments with a nice wine.

call with a friend. In 2020 we have enjoyed many meals and many a glass of wine with friends in remote places.

Dining might simply be gathering your household to sit together and enjoy a meal at the same time and in the same place. Whatever

small steps you can take to help make your meal move the scale from eating to dining will enhance the experience!

Do you have a question or topic for Fresh & Local? Send an email to Penny@BostonZest.com with your suggestion.

## NEWS FROM AROUND THE REGION

### SEEKING MORE INFORMATION ON VACCINE

**CHELSEA** - City Councilor Damali Vidot said she is calling on the medical professionals in the state and in Chelsea to provide residents with more information about the coming COVID-19 vaccines, and she said as of now, she is skeptical of it even though she has an auto-immune disorder.

Vidot said she was recently asked if – as a community leader – she would advocate for residents to get the COVID vaccines.

“I said ‘no,’” she said. “I feel it would be irresponsible for me to encourage people to go get the same vaccine that I have concerns about...I do feel if the vaccine does work and it’s safe, Chelsea should be prioritized, but at the same time right now we need to be educating people about the differences between Pfizer and Moderna and Johnson & Johnson. We need to know the data. We shouldn’t blindly go into something, and I won’t encourage that, and just have people get injected with something blindly.”

She said the fact that the Operation Warp Speed vaccine program was run by the Trump Administration brings doubts into a lot of people in the community of Chelsea, and she said having a medical professional explain what has happened would be a good way to combat that.

“In my personal experience I don’t trust the vaccine because I don’t have the research on it,” she said. “If I read the scientific studies, I won’t understand them. I need someone from the medical field to explain this to me and to the residents. I know people are tired of being at home – I get it – but we need to be careful.”

She said one of her doubts lies in the fact that the vaccine came so quickly, and she wonders how that happened. While many vaccines and therapies take years to hit the market for public use, she said some steps must have been skipped. That process is something she said people need to know about before they get in line for the vaccine in the coming months so they can weigh the risks.

Particularly, one thing she isn’t comfortable with is many people with doubts are scared to express those feelings. She said too many feel they’ll be labelled “fringe” or “anti-vaxers.”

“If our residents are too scared to say something, then that means we’re playing politics

with people’s lives,” she said. “I’m not into that...We have to be cautious. I won’t be the first in line and I’m in a vulnerable category.”

### VACCINE SHOTS ADMINISTERED

**CHELSEA** - Boston Medical Center (BMC) received the area’s first doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID19 vaccine last week, taking it into cold storage immediately and, on Wednesday, beginning the first rounds of vaccinations on staff members.

Mass General Brigham followed suit on Tuesday, receiving 9,000 doses of the Pfizer vaccine and putting it in storage as well. On Wednesday, prioritized employees began to be vaccinated.

At Mass General, the first vaccination was given to Registered Nurse Belza Betancur, a Chelsea resident, on Wednesday morning by Ellen O’Connor.

At BMC, Registered Nurse Cheryl Tull was the first BMC employee to get the vaccine around 9 a.m. on Wednesday, Dec. 16. She is also the Associate Chief Nursing Officer at the hospital. The first five vaccinations at BMC were given to Tull, a Family medicine doctor, an Infectious Diseases doctor, a respiratory therapist, and an environmental services employee whose job it is to disinfect patient rooms.

BMC said it expects to vaccinate 1,000 employees through Saturday, and a total of 2,000 by the end of next week. In the next two months, a spokesman said they expect to vaccinate 6,000 patient-facing employees using guidance from the state.

BMC said it received 1,950 doses Monday morning and planned to equitably disperse them throughout the front-line workers at the hospital, a process that started Wednesday morning.

“Monday morning, Boston Medical Center received 1,950 doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID19 vaccine,” read a statement. “Beginning Wednesday, we will begin the first wave of vaccinations to front line health care workers, a group including doctors and nurses from our ICU and Emergency Department and patient floors that treat COVID-19 patients, but just as importantly, employees from environmental and support services, and other crucial positions that work in COVID-positive patient areas.”

The doses were put into a freezer at the BMC inpatient pharmacy.

Mass General Brigham (MGH) confirmed on Tuesday it had received its first shipment of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine. Mass General Brigham received an initial shipment of nearly 9,000 vaccine doses to be allocated proportionally across the 12 hospitals in its system. They also began vaccinating health care workers at the hospitals on Wednesday.

Meanwhile, Community Health Centers like East Boston Neighborhood Health Center has been planning for their role in receiving and vaccinating workers and the public. Community health centers are expected to play a large role in the coming weeks and months as the general population starts to qualify for the vaccine.

“We are taking important steps to prepare for the COVID-19 vaccine to ensure its equitable distribution throughout our communities,” said East Boston Neighborhood Health Center CEO and President Manny Lopes. “We have a specific team that will manage all aspects of the vaccine, from preparing for its arrival through to administering doses to our communities. Our Massachusetts COVID-19 Vaccine Provider Agreement has been approved, so we are now eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine as soon as it becomes available. This is an important step in ensuring the safety of our communities, especially our patients that have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic.”

The Chief Medical Officer for the health center, Jackie Fantes said they are awaiting direction from the state Department of Public Health. She said the health center plans to vaccinate their staff and high-risk patients first.

“The big questions about how and when we will administer the vaccine will depend greatly on the guidelines developed by our partners at the Mass Department of Public Health as well as the amount of supply,” she said. “We now serve more than 100,000 patients at our East Boston, South End, Revere and Winthrop facilities. Our priority will be to administer the vaccine first to our staff and patients at high risk of complications from COVID-19, such as the elderly and those with chronic health conditions. It is also important to us to focus on vulnerable populations like those in essential worker roles or those living in multi-generational households who cannot isolate.”

In an historic press conference

on Monday, Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar, Dr. Moncef Slaoui and General Gustave Perna – all members of the Operation Warp Speed vaccine team – reported on the first shipments of the Pfizer vaccine.

The reported that 2.9 million doses of the vaccine had been shipped and another 2.9 million would be held back for the second booster dose that will be given to those inoculated in 21 to 28 days. The Pfizer vaccine requires an initial shot and a second booster for full immunity, they said.

Those shipments would continue through Tuesday, and Wednesday and the rest of the week likely, Perna said. He said they have used a public/private partnership with the federal government, UPS and FedEx to distribute the doses, and now are entering into a “steady drumbeat” of constant shipments as the days and weeks go on.

“The point here is the initial push that we have shows we can execute,” he said. “Now we’re starting our drumbeat of continuous shipments of vaccine.”

All vaccine shipments destinations and dosage amounts are determined by each state’s governor, they said. For Massachusetts, Gov. Charlie Baker issues an initial priority list last week that is now being followed in the first dosages. There were 636 sites across the United States identified to Operation Warp Speed, with 145 getting shipments on Monday.

There were 425 that would receive shipments on Tuesday, and 66 on Wednesday.

All expected the Moderna vaccine, also a two-shot program, to get emergency use authorization by the weekend, and that would start to be shipped out by next Monday, Dec. 21. There would be approximately 100 million doses of that vaccine available initially as there has been more time to manufacture in the run-up to authorization.

They expected to be able to vaccinate 100 million people by the end of the 1st quarter of 2021. That will be bolstered if a Johnson & Johnson vaccine – a one shot program – is approved for emergency use in late January or early February. Another vaccine by AstraZeneca is also on the same timetable and could be in use before the end of the first quarter, Slaoui said.

Meanwhile, Azar said they are confident they will have enough vaccine for anyone that wants it and that no American would have to pay for the vaccine if

they want it.

“No American faces an out of pocket expense for this vaccine,” Azar said.

The Centers for Disease Control has authorized \$140 million to pay for long-term planning for the vaccine. Meanwhile, Operation Warp Speed is paying for the vaccine cost and all of the supplies, including syringes and other materials.

### EXELON DONATES COATS TO EPS

**EVERETT** - As part of its continued support of the Everett Public Schools, Exelon Generation has graciously donated 300 winter coats to our students through a collaboration with Operation Warm. This is the third consecutive year Exelon has made this generous gesture to provide warmth to hundreds of children. The coats will be distributed to students throughout the district, under the direction of principals and assistant principals, over the rest of the holiday season.

“We’re pleased to help Everett Public School students dress warmly for our cold New England winters,” said Archie Gleason, General Manager, Northeast Region, Exelon Generation. “On behalf of our district, my sincerest thanks to Mr. Gleason and the employees of Exelon Generation for this thoughtful and timely donation,” said Superintendent of Schools Priya Tahiliani. “These are very challenging times, and we are grateful for Exelon helping us endure them. These coats will certainly brighten the holidays for our students.”

Operation Warm is a national nonprofit that creates brand new high-quality coats for children in need. Every child, regardless of their economic situation, deserves a brand-new coat. They partner with compassionate individuals and organizations across North America to give the gift of warmth, confidence and hope to millions of children in need. Operation Warm believes a brand-new coat is more than a coat, promoting self-esteem, school attendance and outdoor play. To learn more about Operation Warm, visit [OperationWarm.org](http://OperationWarm.org).

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Region / CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

**PIERS PARK LOOKS TO FUTURE**

EAST BOSTON - In his masterpiece "The Great Gatsby," F. Scott Fitzgerald wrote "So we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past". The last lines of the novel were a metaphor of a burning desire to row against the flow of a current --even when it seems pointless.

In this era of COVID we can relate to the ending of Gatsby as many are trying to row against a negative current even when it seems useless to do so.

Some have had success while others have not, but nonprofits like Piers Park Sailing Center (PPSC) are weathering the storm and continue to row against the current--hopeful that the pandemic will be over and the world will return to normal soon.

"We have been a strong community through highs and lows," said PPSC Executive Director Alex DeFronzo reflecting on this past sailing season and looking forward to next year. "Masked up, our students socialized, learned together, had fun together, and grew together."

However, pulling off the program was a big challenge this year and it seemed the entire program was operating in those last lines of Gatsby.

"We went from a 1:6 staff to student ratio to 1:2 and many of our usual routines went out the window," said DeFronzo. "Our staff did it all with grace because one thing you'll find in every Piers Park Sailor is the ability to adapt and persevere."

The Sailing Center had 45 instructors on staff this summer with 26 teen instructor trainees.

"We had 180 Harbor Explorers and 140 Science of Sailing students this past summer as well," said DeFronzo. "That's a community of 391, where in a normal year we would have more than 2,000."

Now into the cold season PPSC is getting ready to run an in-person learning pod for high need students in partnership with Maverick Landing Community Services. This will allow students who are at home learning remotely to get the extra help they may need through the learning pod.

However, all this comes with a cost, and DeFronzo is hoping for additional community support as the pandemic continues to rage in Boston.

"Even though that's less than 20 percent of the enrollment of a normal year, our youth program

cost more to operate in 2020 than it did in 2019," said DeFronzo. "We plan to come back strong again in 2021. An inclusive harbor isn't going to happen by itself -- we need your help. Please join in and support what we are doing at Piers Park with a charitable gift today. Your past support was essential in the recovery and strengthening of our programs over the last four years. Building an inclusive community on and around the harbor is a team effort and we are asking for your help."

Donations to the Sailing Center can be made at <https://piersparkssailing.org/donate>.

"The 2020 CARES Act allows you to deduct up to \$300 in charitable contributions even if you don't itemize your taxes," explained DeFronzo. "If you do itemize, the CARES Act also increases limits on charitable deductions."

A generous matching gift made by the Piers Park Sailing Center Board of Directors and by Elizabeth and David Basile means that the first \$5,000 raised through this campaign will be doubled.

**STATE AID TO FIGHT COVID 19**

EAST BOSTON - Last week Senator Joseph Boncore and Representative Adrian Madaro joined their colleagues in the Massachusetts Legislature to pass the state's \$46.2 billion Fiscal Year 2021 (FY21) budget.

Within the state budget is direct aid to an East Boston agency that has been helping the community during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic by addressing food insecurity among residents.

At a time of widespread food insecurity in the neighborhood due to the COVID, Boncore and Madaro announced \$50,000 in funding for the East Boston Community Soup Kitchen. The earmark will allow the soup kitchen to continue their work providing essential food and nutritional aid to East Boston residents.

"Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the East Boston Community Soup Kitchen has been on the front lines serving those in need," said Boncore. "The \$50,000 secured for the Soup Kitchen will allow them to continue these critical efforts and remain a welcoming, inclusive presence in our community."

Boncore added that as the state continues towards recovery from the COVID pandemic, the FY21 budget provides critical funding: including relief for those most impacted by the public health cri-

sis. "Despite the fiscal difficulties caused by the COVID-19 emergency, I am pleased that the legislature has passed a budget which has avoided any major cuts and preserves funding for critical programs across Massachusetts, including those right here in East Boston," said Madaro. "As many in East Boston continue to suffer from food insecurity, funding for the East Boston Community Soup Kitchen ensures that it will be able to continue the necessary work providing food to local families."

In addition to COVID support the state legislature approved funding to support students and families at East Boston High School.

The budget calls for full funding for Mass Insight. This will allow Mass Insight to continue supporting Advanced Placement and STEM Programming at the High School. Last month, these programs earned East Boston High School the Josh Boger Innovative School of the Year Award from the Massachusetts Biotechnology Education Foundation.

"In addition, students at East Boston High School affected by virtual learning will continue to be fully supported in their AP and STEM programming as a result of the Mass Insight earmark," said Madaro.

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