

# THE VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE

Boston Health Care for the Homeless Program

www.bhchp.org

A Small Victory p2 AmeriCorps & BHCHP p3 April 2011

**\* Our Mission:** The mission of Boston Health Care for the Homeless Program (BHCHP) is to provide or assure access to the highest quality health care for all homeless men, women and children in the greater Boston area.

**We Offer:** Primary Care, Behavioral Health, Oral Health, Family Services, Case Management, Medical Respite Care, and Outreach



**We Are:** Physicians, Dentists, Registered Nurses, Social Workers, Building & Maintenance Staff, Physician Assistants, Nurse Practitioners, Administrative Staff, Psychiatrists, Mental Health and Substance Abuse Counselors, Food Services Staff, Case Managers, and Dental Assistants

## YOU MIGHT NOT EVEN REALIZE THE IMPACT OF YOUR GENEROSITY

A message from BHCHP's Executive Director, Bob Taube, PhD, MPH and President, Jim O'Connell, MD

**It is our goal**, each day, to be both compassionate caregivers for our patients and careful stewards of your generosity. In that dual role we want to share with you some details you might not even know. We do this because we want you to know more about the important ways in which your generosity reaches our patients, our caregivers and, through them, so many of Boston's remarkable safety net organizations:

- Because BHCHP maintains a simple mission\* while it develops protocols to address the very complex medical needs of Boston's homeless men, women and children when they are both homeless and sick, **your generosity reaches** beyond pain to reduce delay in treatment, to manage complex medical, psychosocial and oral health issues, to control costs and to help develop a body of knowledge that is replicated in many other cities throughout the country.
- Because BHCHP employs the professional medical staff that delivers the health care and manages the clinics at just about all of greater Boston's adult,

family and domestic violence shelters, **your generosity reaches** deeply inside of Boston's safety-net. It widens the delivery of primary care, facilitates access to specialty care, eliminates duplication of services and develops the efficiency of a medical home for Boston's homeless adults and children. (see partial partner list on page 5)

- Because BHCHP's caregivers are the face and hands of health care for over 11,000 homeless adults and children at sites as diverse as Horizons for Homeless Children and the crawl space under the Longfellow Bridge, **your generosity reaches** suffering, restores health and rekindles hope in over 90,000 separate encounters on all 365 days and nights of the year.

Generous people like you have reached out to make this work possible for over 25 years. You truly make such a big difference in ways you might not have realized. Our caregivers and our patients all reach back to you from over 80 different locations to say, **"Thank you. You make every day possible."** ■

**"...your generosity reaches beyond pain to reduce delay in treatment, to manage complex medical, psychosocial and oral health issues, to control costs..."**

## OUR STORY

\* **A partial list of BHCHP's partners includes:** Above & Beyond/Brookview, Anchor Inn, Asian Task Force Against Domestic Violence, Boston Family Shelter, Boston Living Center, Boston Medical Center, Bridge to Recovery, Brookview House, Cardinal Medeiros Center, Carolina Hills Shelter, Casa Esperanza, Casa Nueva Vida, Church of the Advent, Crittenton Women's Union, Crossroads, DOVE, Entre Familia, Families in Transition, Father Bill's & Mainspring, Finex House, Hildebrand Family Shelter, hopeFound, Horizons for Homeless Children, Housing Families, Inc., Joelyn's Family Home, Kingston House, Latinas & Ninos, Lindemann Center, Long Island Shelter, Margaret's House, Mass General Hospital, Massachusetts Mental Health Center, Millenium House, Nazareth Residence, New England Center for Homeless Veterans, Paul Sullivan Housing, Pilgrim Shelter, Pine Street Inn, Portis Family House, Project Hope, Queen of Peace Shelter, Renewal House, Revision House, Rosie's Place, Safe Harbor, Project SOAR, Sojourner House, South End Community Health Center, St. Francis House, St. Mary's Women's & Infant Center, St. Ambrose, The Eighth Pole at Suffolk Downs, Women's Lunch Place, Woods-Mullen Shelter

**Founded in 1985**, BHCHP **employs** the professional medical staff that **manages** the clinics and **delivers** the comprehensive health care at most of greater Boston's adult, family and domestic violence shelters (Pine Street Inn, The New England Center for Homeless Veterans, St. Francis House and more than 80 others).\* BHCHP is the hands and face of health care for over 11,000 homeless adults and children each year at sites as diverse as Horizons for Homeless Children and the crawl space under the Longfellow Bridge. BHCHP has operated in-the-black while delivering medicine that matters to Boston's most vulnerable population for over 25 years.

In addition, BHCHP staffs, manages and delivers comprehensive health care at 2 hospital-based clinics on the campuses of Massachusetts General Hospital and Boston Medical Center and at a clinic on the backstretch at Suffolk Downs Racetrack. BHCHP also staffs, manages and operates our own Barbara McInnis House at Jean Yawkey Place, a 104-bed medical respite facility for homeless adults with complex conditions like cancer, heart disease, pneumonia and diabetes who are too sick to live in a shelter or on the street and would

otherwise require prolonged and costly hospitalization in the acute care rooms of Boston's hospitals.

Your support of BHCHP reaches children and adults throughout greater Boston's entire safety net community when they are not only homeless but also sick. ■

**"When you support BHCHP you reach children and adults throughout greater Boston's entire safety net community when they are not only homeless but also sick."**

## MAKING NEWS WHILE MAKING A DIFFERENCE

### ► **Sox/Orioles Saturday, July 9 and Sunday, July 10**

**The Red Sox Foundation and NESN** will team up for the seventh year in a row to collect new white athletic socks for BHCHP's patients. The **Sox for Socks** games have become a source of great fun and great benefit to BHCHP, with thousands of socks collected and distributed over these 7 years. Our caregivers and patients send a heartfelt thanks to these two great organizations, NESN and the Red Sox Foundation.

### ► **Travis Baggett, MD** is the lead author of an article titled "Food Insufficiency and Health Services Use in a National Sample of Homeless Adults" published in the *Journal of General Internal Medicine*. Dr. Jim O'Connell and Dr. Monica Bharel are co-authors.

### ► Reuters photographer Brian Snyder captured BHCHP's **Pat Perry, MD** working the central city one afternoon in January.



## YOUR SUPPORT WILL BRING...

the **Dignity** of reconstructive dentistry to a 31-year-old mother living in a domestic violence shelter with her 3 children.

the **Trust** of a therapist to a deeply depressed 46-year-old man who can't stop crying and is being cared for in our Pine Street Inn clinic.

the **Hope** of a respite bed and medical care to an 81-year-old man dying from cancer at Barbara McInnis House.

the **Healing** comfort of a nurse's visit to a mother and her 6-year-old boy spending their sixth month in a motel room.

[Donate Now](#)

[www.bhchp.org](http://www.bhchp.org)

# “THE COMMUNITY OUTREACH BOARD” BRIGHTENS BHCHP’S FUTURE!

“The Community Outreach Board is focused on aiding BHCHP’s work through fundraising, networking, volunteerism and the sponsoring of educational events.”

**What does an organization do** when it knows that its impact in the future depends, in large part, on its relevance to the region’s next generation of professional leaders?

BHCHP is very fortunate to have a growing group of these leaders; smart, talented, compassionate women and men who offer their diverse body of professional experience in service to BHCHP’s present and future.

**The Community Outreach Board\*** unites a wide variety of professional backgrounds – health care, marketing, community relations, athletics, finance – and is focused on aiding BHCHP’s work through fundraising, networking, volunteerism and the sponsoring of educational events. The Community

Outreach Board is seeking to expand its reach into the world of Boston’s future leaders and is currently adding new members who will bring additional skills of influence and knowledge to BHCHP – medicine, the law, social media and communications to name but a few.

BHCHP is keenly aware that the hands that will help shape the future are already laboring to ease the pains of the present. This generous gift of time and talent is already supporting the present and enlightening the paths of change that lie ahead.

Interested in learning more? Contact Alyssa Brassil at [abrassil@bhchp.org](mailto:abrassil@bhchp.org) or 857.654.1044. ■

\* The list of board members is on page 4

## THIS MIGHT SEEM LIKE A SMALL VICTORY BUT...

Events like this get repeated all day long at BHCHP’s 80 clinic sites throughout Boston’s safety net community.



Feet often give access to the patient’s heart.  
The Foot Room at Saint Francis house

**9:18 am** Outside on Boylston Street, it’s bone chillingly cold. Inside at BHCHP’s Saint Francis House Clinic the exam rooms and every chair in the “foot clinic” are occupied.

Thomas has been coming to the “foot clinic” here at Saint Francis House since 2008. He came just once a week for the first 2 years. Now he comes 3 times a week. A diabetic with schizophrenia, he does not always stick to either his diet or his meds. Thomas finds the welcome here reassuring, the soak calming and the quiet time gives him a chance to reorganize. On his “foot clinic” days he takes his meds and does a much better job with his diet. The caregivers who care for his medical care, his insurance coverage and his appointments, (Maria Paige, RN, Cecilia Ibeabuchi, RN, Frazell Bryant, Cheryl Forrester and Meredith Davis, an AmeriCorps member) make this clinic run with striking efficiency. They all know that 3 days are very much better for Thomas than none. They’ve been encouraging him to come in 5 days a week. Eventually he will. They will work with him and he will eat better and take

his meds 5 days a week instead of 3. This might seem like a small victory but it is really quite large. They are helping him stay out of the emergency room and the hospital and, in the process, helping him to save his life. You play an important role in events like this all day long all across this city. ■

“The caregivers are helping him stay out of the emergency room and the hospital and, in the process, helping him to save his life.”

# AMERICORPS: MODEST STIPEND BRINGS GREAT RETURN TO BHCHP TODAY AND TO HEALTH CARE IN AMERICA TOMORROW.



Top: BHCHP member, Romy Lee, provides health fair information to a Spanish-speaking patient. Bottom: AmeriCorps 2011 Members "on retreat" – March 2011

**"This corps of extraordinary women and men is making an unequivocal impact on the scope and quality of our patients' care."**

**Carrie Eldridge-Dickson,**  
BHCHP's AmeriCorps Coordinator

**"Life has been rewarding,** trying, challenging (and of course FUN) these past couple years in med school. I think back positively of my time with BHCHP. It truly was a defining point in my life and will be remembered as a major impetus in my decision to pursue medicine," writes Mike Zavaski, AmeriCorps class of 2008, from the University of Connecticut School of Medicine.

Through AmeriCorps, BHCHP is able to expand key services to more patients and, at the same time, make an enduring connection with the next generation of health care professionals. Without exception, each of the 29 AmeriCorps members who have given a year of service to BHCHP over the past 5 years has brought valuable skills, focused energy and contagious motivation to our patients and staff.

This year's team of 7 AmeriCorps members is serving at many BHCHP locations, including our clinics at St. Francis House, Anchor Inn, hopeFound and Woods Mullen shelters. They provide direct and vital services to some of our most complicated patients – services that could not be offered without their involvement,

such as expanded and enhanced support for individuals who are:

- living with mental health issues,
- struggling to adhere to complicated HIV and AIDS medication regimens,
- seeking substance use treatment,
- working to stop smoking by meeting one-on-one and in support groups.

By providing these and other core services such as case management, health education, tobacco counseling and housing support, AmeriCorps members are making a clear and measurable difference.

"AmeriCorps members receive a truly modest stipend that comes in part from federal subsidy and in part from matching BHCHP funds. In a world where every dollar is stretched to meet ever growing needs, the return on this investment is unparalleled. This corps of extraordinary women and men is making an unequivocal impact on the scope and quality of our patients' care." Carrie Eldridge-Dickson, BHCHP's AmeriCorps Coordinator. ■

**From time to time we will feature a story from a patient. This story is the first in what we hope will be a long and interesting series.**

## BHCHP – PEOPLE WHO REALLY CARE ABOUT PEOPLE

BHCHP caregivers have worked with **David**, providing his medical care since 2006, when he was homeless, living on the streets, staying at the Boston Night Center. David has lived in Paul Sullivan Housing since 2008 and continues to receive both clinic and at home care from our BHCHP providers. He is "a magnificent, kind, soft spoken gentleman" notes nurse Denise Petrella, who makes care visits to David's home. Born in Boston, David has worked in bands and written for newspapers since graduating high school.

**I am a patient.** My name is David. If not for BHCHP I believe that I would not be here today to be able to tell about the great care and support that was given to me.

When I was homeless, my health went down so low to a point I got very ill. Walking the streets for hours at a time, braving the elements, took toll on me. BHCHP provided a clinic once a week at The Night Center. I received check-ups and medication when needed...a good meal and also clothing. When I attended a shelter, they came to the shelter to check my vitals and to give meds.

The dedication of BHCHP people is to be admired. They work very hard. I have housing now and I still get support from BHCHP. I get therapy and medical needs cared for.

BHCHP serves hundreds of people including me. I hope to someday be able to return the good deeds back to BHCHP people that they have done for me. All I can do for now is thank them for saving my life. ■

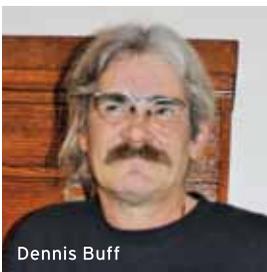
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## DID YOU KNOW?

BHCHP, this time for her team-building management skills, her steadfast dedication to nursing and her carefully honed sense of responsibility to the generosity of our donors. This resilient woman is charged with maintaining the organization's mission of high quality and compassionate care in the face of state and nationwide budget shortfalls. If that was not enough, she will also be guiding BHCHP's dedicated caregivers at the Pine Street Inn clinics through major transitions in the nation's health care delivery system.

These two major challenges, diminishing funds and expanding responsibilities face, not only our BHCHP clinics at Pine Street Inn, they face all clinics, all medical practices, all community health centers and hospitals throughout the nation at this time of uncertainty and opportunity in the delivery of health care in the USA. Throughout BHCHP, clinic managers are adjusting procedures and re-examining the limits of their budgets as they plan for the remainder of 2011 and beyond. Throughout BHCHP our remarkable caregivers will deliver **medicine that matters** that will have an impact well beyond the walls of their clinics.

Because you play such an important part in our work at this time of great challenge and great opportunity, BHCHP's caregivers send a heartfelt "thank you" from all of their patients for making their care possible. ■



Dennis Buff

Can a homeless man's surprising gift lead to your support of this vital work through a bequest gift? Could your legacy endure because of this patient's inspiring story?

## THE DENNIS BUFF BEQUEST SOCIETY

Learn more about his story at [www.bhchp.org](http://www.bhchp.org)

A **charitable bequest** is simply a distribution to a charitable organization **in any amount** from your estate through your last will and testament. Please contact Linda O'Connor at 857.654.1050 or [loconnor@bhchp.org](mailto:loconnor@bhchp.org) to learn more about the enduring impact you can have through a bequest gift.

## YOU CAN MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE WITH A SMALL GIFT

**You can make a big difference** in the health and comfort of a homeless man, woman or child with a small gift. You can't imagine how much these items help our caregivers to establish and maintain contact and you can't imagine how much our patients appreciate your kindness. We can never have too many of these items:

- new white socks
- new underwear (men's and women's)
- diapers
- sneakers
- gift cards:
  - Target
  - McDonald's

**Why Socks?** Access to socks is often limited for homeless men and women living in shelters and on the streets. Common infections such as athlete's foot thrive when damp socks are worn for days at a time. Frostbite is common in colder months, sometimes resulting in toe amputations. The best way to prevent such conditions is to keep feet clean and dry – very difficult if you spend your days outside. That's why BHCHP has a daily foot clinic at St. Francis House and regularly scheduled foot clinics at other primary care sites. Contact [volunteer@bhchp.org](mailto:volunteer@bhchp.org) or call Carrie Eldridge-Dickson at 857.654.1048 for more information, to find out about other "Small Gift" needs or to make arrangements for delivery. ■

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# MEDICINE THAT MATTERS

**“I love being a nurse here. Every patient we see provides us with an opportunity to blend our medical skills with empathy and compassion.”**

**Cheryl Kane**, Director of Nurses and Clinical Services  
at BHCHP's clinics at Pine Street Inn

## DID YOU KNOW?

When you support BHCHP you are supporting the remarkable work of the entire safety-net community. All across greater Boston you impact the lives of homeless children and adults when they are not only homeless but sick...365 days a year.

**Founded in 1985**, BHCHP has evolved into the largest and most comprehensive health care for the homeless program in the country, **employing** the caregivers, **managing** the clinics and **delivering** the health care services that relieve the suffering and protect the health of more than 11,000 homeless men, women and children each year all across greater Boston. In two teaching hospitals (Boston Medical Center and Massachusetts General Hospital) and more than 80 shelters and other sites, including the primary care clinics at Pine Street Inn, The New England Center for Homeless Veterans, and Saint Francis House, as well as on the streets, down the alleys and under the bridges of the city, BHCHP is the face and hands of health care for the homeless people of Boston.

**Cheryl Kane** has seen it all. She has worked for BHCHP since 1997 as a clinic nurse, a respite care nurse, a “street” nurse, a family nurse, the development director and now as the clinic manager at the largest homeless shelter in New England. On January 1, 2011 she took on the management of BHCHP's men's and women's clinics at Pine Street Inn. Tapped by

*continued inside on page 4*



Cheryl Kane, RN, director of BHCHP's Pine Street Inn Clinics,  
blends medicine with compassion