



Rebuilding Lives

Stories from Caritas Communities ■ Spring 2019

Preventing Homelessness. Improving Lives. One Room at a Time.



William Hopkins, speaker, former Caritas resident, and current employee



Donna Murray, resident speaker



2018 honoree, Rick High, with dinner co-chairs Maura Murphy and Andrew Gnazzo

“What All of You Do Is a Beautiful Thing.”

– William Hopkins, former resident

Our 33rd Annual Dinner was a moving night of stories from Caritas residents who, with your help, are overcoming the devastating challenges of poverty to live healthier, happier lives.

Donna told us about raising four children as a single mom, and working at Shaws until her health failed her. William shared his story of a rough childhood, the shame of poverty, and facing debilitating health problems that robbed him of his ability to work. Donna and William were able to turn their lives around with stable housing in a Caritas home with the help of our **Supportive Services** program, as well as our **Homelessness Prevention/Emergency Rental Assistance** program, both of which received generous funding from you at the dinner.

Dr. Thea James from the Boston Medical Center connected the dots between the housing and health often experienced by our residents. “I’ve learned that one thing never changes: As humans, when patients have to make hard choices ... health and healthcare will always be ranked secondary to survival. Housing is foundational to everything.”

This year’s recipient of the P Leo Corcoran Humanitarian Award, Rick High, was recognized for his professional commitment to affordable housing, as well as the personal support he and his wife, Anne Perkins, offer many charities responding to poverty in Greater Boston. Quoting his mentor Leo Corcoran, Rick asked, “If not us, who?” You responded with incredible generosity, helping us reach our goal of over \$1M to prevent homelessness and improve lives. ■

Groundbreaking on O’Connor Way: Your Support Brings New Homes for Seniors

Caritas and our partner, South Boston Neighborhood Development Corp. (SBNDC), have begun construction on what will become our 32nd property in service of our mission. Built on a vacant lot donated by the Boston Housing Authority, located next to the Mary Ellen McCormack Development in

South Boston, the new building will provide 47 units for low-income seniors over age 62, as well as a community room, a laundry room, a management office, a patio, and supportive services from the South Boston Neighborhood House.

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Mayor Marty Walsh, U.S. Rep. Stephen Lynch, Mark Winkeller, Donna Brown, and other dignitaries break ground on new affordable senior housing in South Boston.



Dear Friends,

As many of you have heard by now, as of April 1, I will officially be stepping down as Executive Director of Caritas Communities.

When I was privileged to take the leadership role in 1997, my goals were to elevate our presence in the community, grow our portfolio, and secure the financial health of the organization through fundraising, healthy cash reserves, and the avoidance of cost overruns. Today, I am proud of the work we have done, having achieved all of these goals and more.

Caritas has undergone a tremendous period of growth in these past 22 years, and by 2020, we will be managing 975 units in 32 properties. At this point in my career, I find I am ready to hand over the day-to-day management of the organization and focus on my true passion—creating new housing to serve the marginalized people in our community. In my new role as Director of Acquisitions, I will be able to put all my energy into adding to our portfolio.

The future holds many exciting opportunities for low-income housing. Recently, I traveled to California where The Center for Community Investment convened a national working group, including hospital staff, public officials, and a variety of affordable housing organizations. Attendees participated in a series of meetings and seminars focused on “Accelerating Investments for Healthy Communities.”

The prospect of partnering with hospitals as a way to improve community health is just one of many exciting new areas in which Caritas can be an innovator in affordable housing expansion. I look forward to continuing to pursue these varied opportunities.

I am very proud of the successful efforts that Caritas has made to combat homelessness by expanding quality affordable housing in Greater Boston. It has been my great honor to lead Caritas Communities, and I thank the board, staff, and many community partners who have invested in the success of this organization, and supported me throughout my years as Executive Director.

Warm regards,

Mark Winkeller, Ph.D

PROFILE: MARK WINKELLER



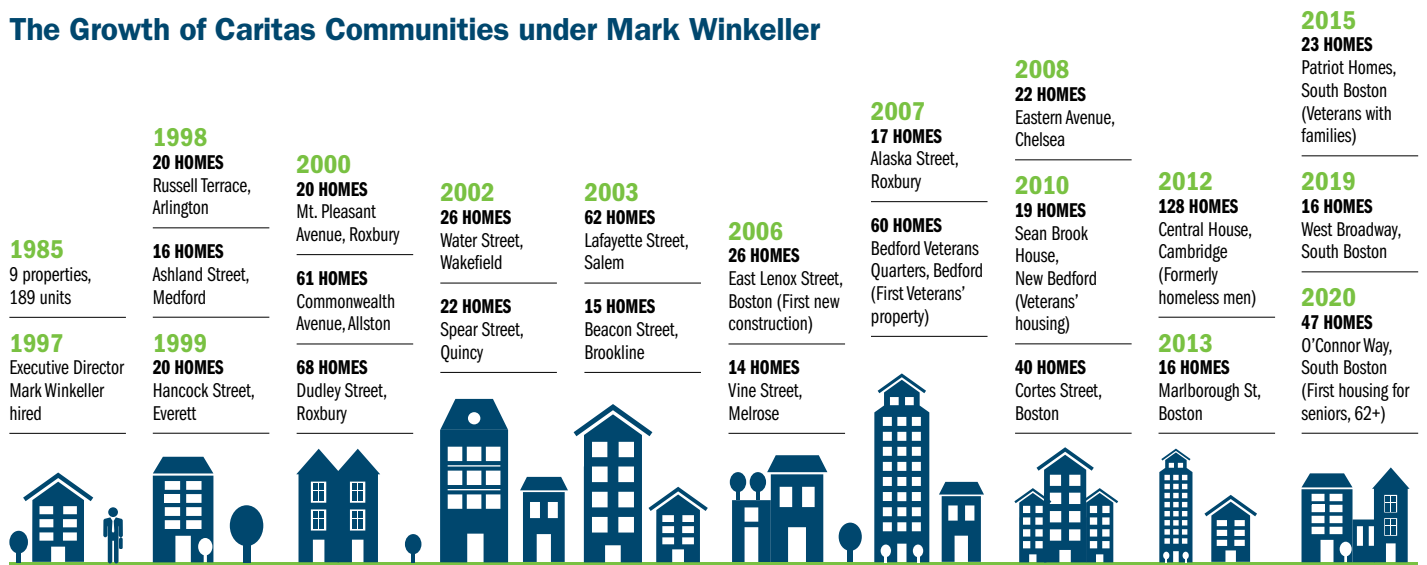
“Why not use my skills to serve poor people?”

While Mark was working on his PhD in Social Welfare Planning at Brandeis, he did an internship at Harvard Medical School. The school was growing, acquiring and developing new properties in Cambridge and Boston. Mark was intrigued. While most of his colleagues would end up in academia, teaching or writing public policy briefs that might “end up on a shelf,” Mark was attracted to the tangible nature of housing. He worked for a company that was helping to design the Section 8 rental assistance program before moving on to for-profit real estate.

Following a highly successful stretch in property acquisition, development, and management in the for-profit sector, Mark began to feel the call of his educational roots. “Why not,” he thought, “use my skills to create housing for poor people?” Caritas Communities was the perfect fit—allowing him to channel his passion for bricks-and-mortar development to serve underprivileged people of Greater Boston. ■

Above: The ribbon-cutting ceremony of Russell Terrace in Arlington, 1999.

The Growth of Caritas Communities under Mark Winkeller



“Having a home has bettered my life in a thousand ways.” – Justin, Caritas resident

Justin left home when he was young. He and his mother’s boyfriend didn’t see eye to eye, and he wanted to let his mother be happy, so he left. He got himself locked up when he was only in high school, and after serving his time, he had nowhere to go.

For many years, he went from couch to couch and shelter to shelter. The winters

He admitted that during that time, he went to jail on purpose for “three hots and a cot.”

were brutal, and the stress of shelter life was exhausting. He admitted that during that time, he went to jail on purpose for “three hots and a cot.” That’s how bad it was. “It is impossible to build your life when you don’t know where you are

going to sleep the following night,” he shared. “When you are homeless without money or a job, you do things you normally wouldn’t do to survive.”

But those days are behind him. When he found a home at Central House in Cambridge, he was surprised that someone was willing to take a chance on him. “Home is a beautiful thing. Home means having family come and visit. It’s a shower and a washing machine so you have clean clothes to put on. It means a place to cook my food. It is being a responsible person—learning to pay rent. It’s having a key to your own door and coming and going as you please. It’s the promise of getting that GED and finding a permanent job because I now have an address and a mailbox.” ■



“This is a blessing for me to be able to share my story with you,” said Justin. “Thank you for getting me off the streets and allowing me to show myself and others that I could maintain housing and find stability and a second chance at a good life.”



O’Connor Way Groundbreaking *Continued from page 1*



Above: Mayor Marty Walsh; Right: TD Bank’s Steven Fessenden and Lisa Joiner with Donna Brown and Mark Winkeller; Inset: Rockland Bank’s Heidi Yates, Richard Muraida, and John Quintal, with Mark Winkeller.

This is our third partnership with SBND, which is under the leadership of Donna Brown. When O’Connor Way is complete, we will have created 87 units of affordable housing at three South Boston locations. We hope to complete construction in February of 2020. ■

“This is a great day for the people of South Boston,” said Mayor Walsh. “As the city grows, it’s critically important that our older adults and longtime residents have the chance to stay and thrive in the communities where they have lived for much of their lives.”



How We Get It Done

Financing came from MassDevelopment issued bonds purchased by Rockland Trust, the mortgage lender. Boston Capital is the Tax Credit Equity Investor. Funding came through the Inclusionary Development Program (IDP) contributions from Tishman Speyer and the Cronin Group, and the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit program through the Department of Housing and Community Development. We also received grants from TD Charitable Foundation and the Charles H. Farnsworth Trust at the Bank of America. The architect is Davis Square Architects of Somerville. The general contractor is Bilt-Rite Construction Inc. of Boston.

Steak and Lobster in Everett

Joe Kennedy and Citizen's Energy hosted a lobster and steak dinner for residents in Everett last fall. Citizen's Energy has generously made grants to offset energy costs at Caritas homes for the past seven years. They have provided the grants through their Shelter Heating Assistance Program, which is designed to free up funds for supportive services that help people at risk of homelessness. ■



Inset: Joe Kennedy prepares steak and lobsters for residents in Everett; Mark, Caritas resident, and Joe Kennedy.

New Laptops for Veterans

In December, in honor of Veterans Awareness Month, Comcast donated laptops and one year of free internet service to 20 residents of the Bedford Veterans Quarters through their Internet Essentials program.

"This generous gift of laptops and internet access to our Veteran residents will help them build skills and connect to the larger world," said Mark Winkeller, Executive Director, "and the timing is perfect. We have recently partnered with Middlesex Savings Bank, a generous funder of the Bedford Veterans Quarters, who is providing volunteers to help our veterans with basic technology skills."

We are grateful for this generous donation from Comcast, which was facilitated by the Greater Boston Coordinated Veterans Services network (www.coordinatedvetservices.org), managed by Brighton Marine. ■



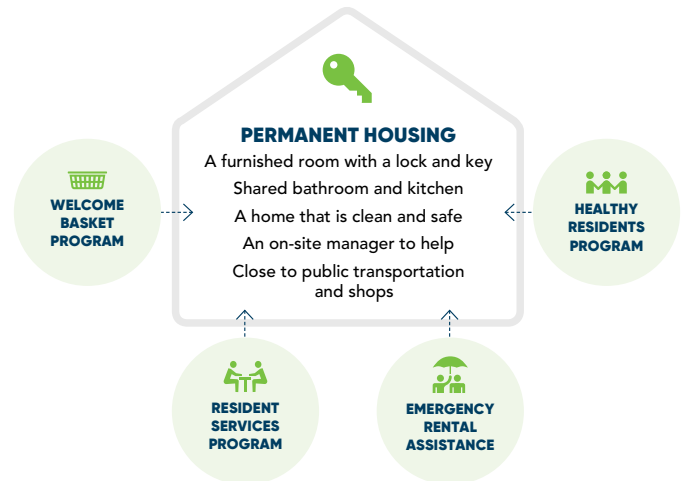
Representatives from Caritas Communities, Brighton Marine, Comcast Community Impact, Veterans Northeast Outreach Center, and Veteran residents of the BVQ.

The Caritas Experience

WHERE RESIDENTS COME FROM:



OUR MODEL FOR SUCCESS:



Save the Dates:

34th Annual Dinner

Tuesday, November 19, 2019

Westin Boston Waterfront Hotel

Stay tuned for more details.

6th Annual Young Leader's Event

Tuesday, June 4, 2019

Tia's On the Waterfront

For more information, contact wprice@caritascommunities.org.

Give the Gift of a Home.

Please support Caritas Communities. Contact Karin Cassel Mitterando at kcassel@caritascommunities.org, 781.843.1242 or visit www.caritascommunities.org

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This newsletter is published twice a year for supporters and friends of Caritas Communities. For information about Caritas or to arrange a tour of our properties, please contact Karin Cassel Mitterando, Chief Development Officer and Director of Communications at 781.843.1242 ext. 23 or kcassel@caritascommunities.org. Mark Winkeller, Executive Director. Amy Meneely, Writer and Editor. Wendy Price, Contributing Writer. One Visual Mind, Design. Romana Vysatova, Photographer. Caritas Communities = 25 Braintree Hill Office Park, Suite 206 = Braintree, MA 02184 ■ www.caritascommunities.org = 781.843.1242 Copyright 2019