

Brookview House, Inc.

Winter 2005



Mission Statement

Helping Families Achieve Personal and Economic Self Sufficiency

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Brookview House, Inc.
2 Brookview Street
Dorchester, MA 02124

617-265-2965

www.brookviewhouse.org

Brookview House Participates in First Night 2005

By Dianne Zimbabwe, *Art Specialist*

Working with the teens at the Brookview House Above and Beyond youth development program on the "My Dream House" project was an experience in creative teamwork. The "My Dream House" project was a highly structured assignment with dual goals. First, individuals worked to design a model of one of their basic needs (a home); second, everyone in the group would have to keep to a project timeline.



I had excellent mentoring from Lois Roach of First Night, Inc., who helped me way back in July to envision Brookview House's teens and families bringing an important message to all of Boston on December 31, 2004.

And with the faith and leadership of Mayumi Brooks, the Director of Youth Programs for Brookview House, as well as the keen involvement of the teenagers and the Moms who participated in the workshops and in the procession, I stayed organized throughout. If it weren't for Mayumi and Jeanette Cutts, Brookview's Child Resource Specialist, I don't know what would have happened.

The students were exciting and inspiring to work with. At times I felt like Harriet Tubman's great-great granddaughter, my grieving children depending so trustingly on me to lead them away from their disappointments when their dream houses didn't quite measure up to what they were hoping. To distract them from indulging in negative vibes, I challenged them to become on-the-spot carpenters, architects, interior designers and decorators who were spontaneous, and directed me to bring in specific supplies for their home improvements. Items such as Popsicle sticks, hot glue, and postage mailing tape because it doesn't cause the paint to flake off, were always in high demand.

A couple of really cool techniques that we stumbled on as an artistic team were one, making clapboard siding out of oak tag art paper and popsicle sticks and two, refocusing one's attention on a different aspect of their house such as the interior rooms, when the outside of the house was making that person want to give up in the middle of the project. Etta's willingness to forego abandonment of her project in favor of making the inside more beautiful and dreamy was a rich reward for me as her mentor. Shameika's clapboard siding and balcony were significant highlights in our after-school workshops. Justin's solar-powered "Scientist of Roxbury" house rolled along in the procession

Brookview House Announces Participation in the Family Opportunity Network

Recently Brookview House announced its participation in the Empowerment Zone Family Opportunity Network. The Empowerment Zone is a federal designation for communities beset with drug addiction, domestic violence, homelessness, and delinquent children. The Family Opportunity Network (The Network) is a collaborative of agencies providing services in the Empowerment Zone that seeks to address these issues that make dysfunctional families and remove barriers to employment.

As part of The Network, Brookview House will provide affordable youth programs and free Educational Workshops at our sites in Dorchester and Roxbury. These workshops will include: Financial Literacy, Credit Counseling, Health Improvement, Strengthening Families, Parenting, Massage Therapy, and a Support Group for men facilitated by Victor Rodney, M.Ed. Free technology courses will also be provided onsite every Tuesday starting in February 2005.

Brookview House will be doing public service announcements and other advertising to promote this initiative. Brookview House hired Deborah St-Rose, a marketing specialist, specifically to publicize The Network to

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First Night... continued

with 4-wheel drive. Moriah's beautiful studio featured the paintings of a great master-artist on the walls and complemented the sweet and carefully designed dream house of her brother Mateus and their mother, Diane.

Even though they routinely underestimated their talents and underrated their works, Shameika, Etta, Denzel, Otis, Quanzale and Justin showed so much initiative, creativity, commitment, and perseverance in their work, that I naturally felt as close to them as an artist among colleagues. Shauna, Myesha, and Lashanda showed the greatest spirit in their teamwork by designing and building a collective Dream House where they will someday live together. Although Destinie seemed to be lost in space during much of the workshop time, she actually grounded herself in her piece, which featured a deep-sea blue exterior studded with seashells, a "starry night sky" wall on the interior, and two long yardsticks to help her "hitch her wagon to a star".

As with all profound experiences, there were parts of our project that I just could not convey to the students ahead of time. While many of the students expressed reluctance to being a part of the parade that hesitation vanished by the time we arrived at the Hynes Convention Center and stood behind Samba Tremeterra and their irresistibly danceable drumming. Mayumi and I are already talking about First Night 2006.

Opportunity Network... continued

residents of the Empowerment Zone.

The Family Opportunity Network is funded by Boston Connects, Inc., which also oversees the Empowerment Zone initiative.

Reclaiming Lives: Moving On

By: Susan

When I found out that I had gotten an apartment and had to leave Brookview House I felt all kinds of emotions. On one hand, I was so excited to finally be moving on my own. On the other hand, I was so sad. When I got my unit at Brookview, I considered it to be my home. I had just spent a year at a substance abuse program and was happy to be "free". I could finally get all of my things out of storage and bring them "home". I hooked my little apartment up over there. I got custody of both of my children back, and we were all finally home.

My children became close to everyone at Brookview. They wouldn't leave for school in the morning without going into the office to kiss Adrienne and Angie goodbye. They were like a part of our family.

When I found out I got an apartment, I asked Adrienne and Angie to tell everyone that I hadn't gotten the unit so that I could stay at Brookview. But they told and I had to go. I was scared to go out into the world and have to pay rent. At first I was scared because everyday when I came home, I couldn't go in to see Adrienne and Angie. Who was I going to talk to? What was I going to do without them? I spent a lot of time in that office!! They both told me that it was time for me to move up and out. My journey had to continue and for me to continue to grow, I had to go. It was very emotional. I cried a lot. (but don't tell anyone that!). They helped me so much and now it was time to take what they taught me and use it.

Well, I have been out on my own for over a year now. I still attend workshops at Brookview's Community Learning Center. I go for a couple reasons. I am very grateful for the things I have learned. I never want to forget where I came from. And I want the other women to see that you do move on, and its okay. Listen to the staff, they know. Take advantage of the help and the love that they show every one of you. Brookview House is a very special place. I would do anything for anyone involved in that program.

The staff at Brookview House goes above and beyond their job descriptions everyday. I miss living at Brookview. I am grateful for where I am today, but I am also grateful for where I have been.

Kids Love Santa Claus!

Over 100 children received gifts from Santa Claus at the Annual Brookview House Christmas Celebration.



President's Letter

Dear Friends of Brookview House,

This winter marks the 15th year of Brookview House responding to the effects of poverty and homelessness in our community. Your support has helped us achieve this important milestone and for that we thank you.

I am often asked why I have been so intensely involved with the agency since its inception in 1990. To put it simply, it's because I see an organization that makes a difference in families' lives year after year.

Like you, I believe that the courageous people Brookview House assists deserve our help. Your past support indicates that you too are committed to the



health and well-being of those affected by homelessness. That you are committed to helping people make positive choices and transition to a life of self-reliance and stability.

For 15 years, Brookview House has been providing programs for thousands of people who are committed to improving their lives. These programs provide after school, weekend and summer programs to homeless youth, teach computer and clerical skills, supply transitional housing and affordable rental housing, and connect more than 500 homeless and low-income individuals with job training and educational opportunities.

This year, more families than ever are in need of the compassionate and expert assistance that Brookview House offers. Let's make sure that Brookview House continues its very important mission – *'to help homeless families break the cycle of poverty'*.

Your financial contribution will help make this possible.

Sincerely,



Ann R. Maxwell
President, Board of Directors



Web links

For general information, upcoming events and newsletters:
www.BrookviewHouse.org

To make an on-line donation via Wainwright Bank's CommunityRoom.net:
<https://www.communityroom.net/NPOMission.asp?269>

To view a clip about Brookview's transitional housing program:
http://www.boston.com/news/necn/Shows/ne_dreamhouse/

To donate to the Brookview House Capital Campaign through the Catalogue for Philanthropy:
http://www.catalogueforphilanthropy.org/ma/2003/brookview_house_1009.htm

For Commonwealth 5's profile of Brookview House and an in-kind donation wish list:
http://cf.thebostonchannel.com/bos/sh/charity/front_charity.cfm?count=41

To view Board and Committee openings:
<http://www.boardnetusa.org/public/home.asp>

For basic information and a financial snapshot:
<http://www.guidestar.org/>

To see an article about the Above & Beyond youth programs participation in the First Night parade:
<http://www.dotnews.com/firstnight2005dotstyle.html>

For on-going volunteer opportunities:
<http://www.volunteersolutions.org/boston/org/3566132.html>



Congratulations

Congratulations to Valina Jackson, our Clinical Director. On January 16th of 2005 Valina received the *Testimonial of Appreciation Award* from the Caribbean Foundation of Boston at their 21st Annual Gala. This event is held to recognize, honor and celebrate those whose dedication and commitment have made a difference in the community. "This award means a lot to me," Ms. Jackson said afterward, "And I appreciate the consideration."



In the News

"Sundays with Liz Walker" WBZ-TV – **Aired:** Sunday, October 17, 2004

Host Liz Walker presented an overview of Brookview House and homelessness in Boston.

Neighborhood Network News: **Aired:** Friday, October 15, 2004 at 5:30 pm, 9 pm and 11 pm.

Footage of the dedication ceremony and Brookview House

"Siglo 21" - **Ran:** October 13, 2004 – English section page 26

Article highlights Brookview House, the dedication ceremony, cuts to Section 8 rental subsidies and the increase in homelessness in Boston.

"Bay State Forum", WMJX - **Aired:** Sunday, October 31, 2004

Interview with host Gay Vernon presenting an overview of Brookview House and homelessness in Boston.

"Dream House", NECN – **Aired:** December 19 at 10:30 am and 7 pm; December 20, 21, 24 at 3 pm; December 29 and 30 at 3 pm.

Highlights the design community's contributions to the new addition.

Brookview House, Inc.



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***"Helping Families Achieve Personal
and Economic Self Sufficiency"***

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