CSTO Celebrates
Black History Month, Chinese New Year

By Michele D. Maniscalco

The Castle Square Tenant Organization’s (CSTO) 8th annual Black History Month and Chinese New Year celebration, held on Friday, February 24 at the Benjamin Franklin Institute of Technology (BFIT), 41 Berkeley Street, was a very homey affair, showcasing Castle Square residents, programs and performers.

Over 200 Castle Square residents and guests attended the event, which featured live music, a poetry reading, and a variety of performances. The event kicked off with a welcome speech by CSTO President, followed by a reading of the CSTO’s annual Black History Month and Chinese New Year celebration program.

The highlight of the evening was a presentation by the Boston Chapter of the National Association of Black Accountants (NABA). The chapter presented a financial literacy workshop that covered topics such as saving, investing, and budgeting.

The event also featured a dance performance by the Boston chapter of the National Association of Black Accountants (NABA), a poetry reading by the Boston chapter of the National Association of Black Accountants (NABA), and a concert by the Boston chapter of the National Association of Black Accountants (NABA).

The evening ended with a community dinner, during which participants were able to share their experiences and learn from one another.

HOT Fun in the Winter

By Michele D. Maniscalco

Dear Dog Lady,

Dear Dog Lady,
My seven-month-old black lab named Soxty who is a dog lover’s dream comes true. He is smart, fun and loves to play. We go out every day and he loves to go on walks and play fetch. He is a joy to have around and brings a lot of happiness to our lives.

Thank you for your advice on how to keep my dog happy and healthy.

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The Ellis women’s event spotlights female entrepreneurs

By Michele D. Maniscalco

About 55 women packed the back room at Freschies wine bar, 560 Tremont Street, after work on Monday, February 27 for a women’s gathering sponsored by the Ellis South End Neighborhood Association.

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South End street cleaning is NOW

Read the SIGN!

The South End, North End, and Beacon Hill are participants in the City’s early street sweeping program.
Castle
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residents and South End neighbors enjoyed a hot meal and entertainment reflecting both cultures in the auditorium at BFTI. City Council District 2 hopeful Michael Kelley was among the guests, circulating among the guests to introduce himself and hear the community's thoughts and concerns.

Shortly after 6:00 PM, a group of youth from Castle Square performed the Lion Dance, shaking and winding through the audience and costume to mark the Chinese New Year. Singer Vivian Cooley-Collier performed "Lift Every Voice and Sing", the Black American National Anthem, accompanied by the Boston Children’s Orchestra. Cooley-Collier is known locally for her decades of performances in the “Black Nativity” and has also performed in the June tenth celebration at the National Center of Afro-American Artists and at the Boston Parks and Recreation Department’s Park Arts Festival.

Following greetings by CSTO executive director Deborah Backus and president Ann Moy, guests viewed a slide presentation narrated in English and Chinese on the history of Castle Square Apartments, from the complex’s construction as a low-income housing complex; its expansion over time from 192 to over 500 units; its pivotal year in 1987 when a developer bought the complex and CSTO was formed to preserve the complex’s affordability for the future; and a major renovation in 2011 that added a teen and community center with a restaurant-grade kitchen and technology center and a Deep Energy Retrofit throughout the residences of the complex that cut energy costs by over 30 per cent.

While last year’s CSTO celebration brought in dance and musical troops from around Boston, this year’s festivities emphasized homegrown talent. Children from the Square Roots after school program for grades K2 through 8 recited poetry and sang a story of the Chinese Zodiac in a video called “What the Rat Told Me: A Zodiac Story”.

The CSTO Teens Program offered presentations on black history and the traditions of Chinese New Year and a Castle Square-based troupe performed the elegant Fan Dance. The entertainment concluded with Cooley-Collier singing “This Little Light of Mine” and African drumming by Darius Ware and Stephen K. O’Neal.

During the program, CSTO volunteers served dinner, consisting of salad, chicken with gravy, mashed potatoes, green beans, corn, corn bread and stuffing followed by a selection of cupcakes and Asian-style sweet rolls for dessert. Moy and Backus went from table to table greeting guests, Backus regaling them with an African-inspired dress and head wrap by Mataphan-based designer and entrepreneur Natasha Williams.

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Boston Public Health Commission
Boston Biosafety Committee Members

The Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC) is seeking new community members for its Boston Biosafety Committee (BBC) from the South End/Roxbury, Fenway, and/or Chinatown neighborhoods. The BBC provides technical assistance and advice on issues related to regulation and permitting of biological research laboratories in the City of Boston. Community members should be able to commit to two years on the committee.

BPHC permits and regulates research laboratories in Boston and the BBC has a role in advising the Executive Director of BPHC. Community members of the BBC have a role in communicating information on biological safety to the public and providing input on community concerns.

The BBC meets when required for review of research projects, laboratory permit applications, or other times requested by the BPHC Executive Director. The time commitment will average five hours a month, with some months having no meetings and some months having meetings with materials to review in advance.

Community members interested in being on the BBC should contact Julien Farland, Boston Public Health Commission Director of Biological Safety, at jfarland@bphc.org or 617-534-2814.

(Center) Deborah Backu (Bottom) Square Roots youth. Photos by Michele Maniscalco
Crowdfunding For Peters Park Graffiti Wall

The Peters Park Art Wall, located at 1301 Commonwealth Avenue, will be a public mural created by local artists in collaboration with the ALA Collective. The project aims to raise funds to purchase materials and paint for the mural, which will be located on the side of the building. The mural will feature a variety of art styles and will be open to the public, providing a space for community members to interact with the art and each other. The project is being coordinated by the ALA Collective and is seeking donations to cover the cost of materials and paint. Donations can be made online through the ALA Collective's website or by contacting them directly. For more information, please visit the ALA Collective's website or contact them via email at info@alamural.org.
Ellis

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ition (ESENA, The Ellis), to mix and mingle or socialize. It was an opportunity to hear three female South End business owners and residents share their experiences, ideas and concerns for the future. ESENA holds women's gatherings three to four times a year to give local women a chance to connect with each other and with the neighborhood organization.

ESENA President Betsy Hall explained, "Our primary goals for the Ellis women's events is to create opportunities for casual interaction and connection between women of all ages and backgrounds. The women who attended met friends and made new friends, which is our primary gauge of success."

After some introductory socializing, the ladies gathered in a circle to hear these successful entrepreneurs. Hadley Douglas, who owns M. Flynn, jewelry boutique at 46 Waltham Street, in her native Maine. Davis, owner of Olives and Grace at 623 Tremont Street, shared her experience as a former chef and restauranteur in her native Maine. Davis also mentioned the skyrocketing rents and property prices in the South End.

In her remarks, Douglas talked about moving and planning to continue offering opportunities for small businesses to open and thrive rather than being squeezed out by larger entities. "We are looking for opportunities for small businesses to open and thrive rather than being squeezed out." She also mentioned the need for small businesses to keep the South End the South End. "We can't do it without you!"

Flynn chimed in, "Rent is a big issue for small businesses right now. You can already find a space and then be squeezed out by a real estate agency." Madison added, "Something that is difficult for me but important is to be transparent about asking all of you for your support for our businesses. As business owners, we try to be as strong for the community. As the rents are getting higher, we are starting to come in bordering this neighborhood, we might need to have this conversation more often, to feel empowered to preserve this neighborhood."

A guest from the Union Park Neighborhood Association (UPNA) and that UPNA decided not to include the large apartment buildings in their membership to avoid being overwhelmed by their numbers, and wondered whether zoning for large residential development could be tied to including small businesses rather than large chains in their commercial spaces.

Douglas responded that she has been working with city councilor at large Avene Pressley, whom she called "A champion of small business and women-owned businesses," and a problem they have identified is a lack of zoning in the South End. Douglas pointed out that the Beacon Hill has an extremely strong neighborhood association and consequently, it is very difficult for large chains to open on Charles Street.

The speakers also discussed the support of local volunteer groups, Urban Gape and the South End Community through with Urban Gape works with a single community non-profit for two months at a time. The current non-profit partner is Haley House, and Urban Gape is publishing Haley House's programs on their blog, selling Haley House cookies, donating a

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Washington proposals put survival of Head Start at stake

ABCD fighting for future of poor children, families

Submitted by Action for Boston Community Development, Inc.

Proposals in Washington, DC to eliminate America’s Head Start program threaten our nation’s neediest children and families. Advocates fear dismantling of the long-term, effective anti-poverty initiative that has put millions of low-income children and their families on the road to economic stability.

“The survival of Head Start is at stake,” said John J. Drew, President/CEO of Action for Boston Community Development, the Boston-area anti-poverty organization that provides Head Start services in greater Boston, including Mattapan and Everett.

“We are angry and frustrated at proposed cuts, but we remain hopeful. Conveniently, some members of Congress and conservative think tanks who will do anything to harm Head Start became the ‘voice of reason.’ They recommended to废掉 an effective program that is life-saving to more than a million poor children and their families. The national commitment to America’s poor children and families must not be lost!”

Drew, a former Head Start parent, noted that another million children are facing cuts. In a letter to Head Start because this valuable program embodies America’s commitment to low-income children and families is undermined.

“Are we going to sacrifice our children to grow the military in America? Do we really need to make this choice?” asked Drew.

He noted that 2015 census figures show that 47 million children, 21% of all children under age 18 are living in poverty in one of the most affluent industrialized countries in the world. “It’s time to change that, not make it worse,” he said. “Are the rich and powerful just going to get more rich and powerful, tumbling aside those with so much less? Head Start is desperately needed, now more than ever.

“It may be time for Head Start children and parents in Boston, in Massachusetts and across the country to march to tell our political leaders to stop doing damage to their fellow Americans who were born 75 yards behind the starting line,” said Drew. “If we can’t stop this attack on the poor, then it is time to go to the streets.”

Investing in America’s future

Head Start serves more than a million poor children and families nationwide, providing comprehensive education, health, dental, nutrition and social services for children from birth to age five along with intensive parent engagement. The program has documented track record of lifting families out of poverty and revitalizing communities.

A recent NECU national news report on early education cited Head Start’s longevity, research-supported positive outcomes in low-income communities, including reductions in crime and police Department, high school drop-out rates and teen pregnancy.

A 2016 study by Nobel Laureate economist James Heckman showed that early childhood education can rival the benefits of parenting.

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Ellis

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poor of the profits from certain wines to Haley House and organizing a volunteer group for the Haley House soup kitchen. Flynn said that M. Flynn has a budget allocation to assist with the needs of local non-profits.

Since two of the three speakers/business women work in family partnerships, they spoke a bit about the effect of working together in their personal relationships. Flynn, whose business partner is her sister, Morin, and that she and her sister have different business specialties: marketing and finance, respectively, which works out well for them. She added, “When things happen, they’re handled together and it’s pretty good. But one good thing is, at the end of the day, you’re sister, and you have to get over it.”

Flynn said she recently vacationed with her sister and “It was so great to just be out and that the two of us are the business part ner.” Douglass, who works with his husband, said, “Every single night I have to go into bed with my business partner whether I like him or not. Most times I love him,” she said with a smile. “But it’s challenging!”

Peter’s Park

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business of any size are encouraged to get involved. Interested parties can participate by donating on Instagram or reaching out directly to Jenny Effron (jenny@gateway mainstreet.org) at Washington Gateway Main Street for additional information about the program as well as partnership and sponsorship opportunities.

For more information, please visit www. peterspark.com

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Guest Opinion
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Dr. James Heckman found that for every $1 invested in Head Start there is a $13 return to society.

"Head Start is a key element in closing America’s inequality gap," said Drew. "But right now there is only enough funding to serve 10 percent of eligible children. It should be expanded, not cut.”

Nationally, Head Start is an economic engine in distressed, low-income communities, employing more than 125,000 teachers and staff members, providing low-income parents with education and job opportunities, and partnering with small businesses and non-profit organizations to provide important services.

Head Start has served more than 35 million children and their families since 1965, providing pathways to success in school and life. Yesterday’s Head Start children are today’s lawyers, doctors, business executives and elected officials. The stories of hundreds of Head Start providers across America carry the success stories of these Ivy League graduates, professionals, working parents contributing to their communities.

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