MLK Day of Action
There are times when you must take a stand

By Lea Steinhauer
St. Stephen’s Youth Program

In a country increasingly divided by race, war, and wealth, people are desperately seeking leadership that speaks of love. This intersection of times is not only what we are facing in Boston in 2020, it is also what the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was facing when he stepped to the podium in Atlanta to give his 1967 speech often called, “The Three Evils of Society.”

King addressed the challenge.

Continued on page 5

BMC Turns TEDx
Submitted by BMC

TEDxBeaconStreet hosted its first healthcare-focused event on January 7 on the Boston Medical Center and Boston University School of Medicine campus — a hub of Boston’s medical innovation. With a group of 15 world-class speakers from around the country, the forum highlighted new perspectives and innovative ways to tackle the healthcare crisis, from policy reform and economic impact to a focus on what it means to be a patient and the social determinants of health at.

Continued on page 7

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Dog Lady
Continued from page 1

Dear Eliza,

Thank you for your letter, which is a great topic to start the New Year-- even if you disagree with "Ask Dog Lady" for the wilder advice. Dog Lady dispenses when dealing with a walking friend who does not pick up after her dog. Actually, Dog Lady realizes her initial response should have been stronger and liken your "put me on prisoner" approach. Dog Lady would only add this: Pick up always and always pick up with a biodegradable bag so we don't pollute the planet with dog poop wrapped in plastic. Dog Lady uses BioBag, a very good disposable bag brand available through chewy.com.

Dear Dog Lady,

My parents have a Shepoo (cross between a poodle and a Shih Tzu) that has these humps on her. The vet says these are veins that burst. This doesn't seem right. These humps are small and circular, they break open and bleed. She is groomed regularly and they have tried watching her food thinking that it is she and also are one of those dogs that are dander-less. My parents do give her human food once in a while. Any thoughts on what this may be?

— Eliza

Dear Eliza,

Shouldn't the dog be called a Shihpoo? Actually, if you have to write "Ask Dog Lady" about bleeding bumps on a cute little dog, you are breaking up the wrong tree. Dog Lady is not a vet nor does she play one in any medium. You need to steer your parents to see their veterinarian pronto. Also, tell them to stop giving her humans food immediately. Find dog food that is anti-allergenic. Dog Lady recommends two brands: Solid Gold and Newman's Own Organics. There are others, of course, but these two are dependable good. This little dog needs an intervention. You're in a great position to help.

Dear Dog Lady,

The other day, I was sitting at Starbucks and overheard a woman urging her friend to "walk your inner dog." That got me thinking. Do all of us have inner dogs? If so, what are they telling us?

— Betsy

Dear Betsy,

Naturally, we all have inner dogs. (Can we what would

Commonwealth Care Alliance (CCA) Senior Care Options Program (HCOS SNP) is a Coordinated Care plan with a Medicare contract and a contract with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts/EOHHS Medicaid program. Enrollment in the Plan depends on contract renewal to provide benefits for both programs to enrollees. CCA complies with applicable Federal civil rights laws and does not discriminate based on race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, gender, gender identity, age, age, mental or physical disability, health status, claims experience, medical history, genetic information, evidence of insurability or geographic location. ATENCIÓN: Si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Llame al 866-610-2273 (TTY 711). ATENÇÃO: Se fala português, encontram-se disponibilizadas serviços linguísticos, gratuitos. Ligue para 866-610-2273 (TTY 711).

Dog Lady say? These inner dogs tell us to finish everything in our bowls, sniff out possibilities, keep at the moment, and leave our mark all over the world. "Walk your inner dog" means to step out into the world confidently and happily, although "unleash your inner dog" sounds a more exultant note. And this reminds Dog Lady of wish "Happy New Year" to all dear readers.

Write: askdoglady@gmail.com.

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The Blackstone/Franklin Square Neighborhood Association General Meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 21st, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. at DH Police Station, 2nd Floor Community Room, 650 Harrison Avenue.

AGENDA

Join us for our next general business meeting. Bring your friends and neighbors, and participate in the discussion. Our agenda will include the following:

7:00 p.m. Welcome and announcements (BFSNA Board)

7:10 p.m. Recordkeeping (Matt Macs), Treasurer's Report

7:15 p.m. Public Safety update (BFD and Jonathan Alves)

7:20 p.m. Introducing the Alexandria-Ball Neighborhood Association. The “Alexandria-Ball Neighborhood Association” is a brand-new organization formed to advocate for residents living on the other side of Mass Ave, from us, in the area bounded by Harrison and Shawmut avenues and over to Ball Street (next to Join Rice Field) and the city of the Boston Water & Sewer Commission building. ABNA representatives will talk about concerns and issues in that part of the neighborhood and we'll discuss shared priorities.

7:35 p.m. Update from the City on "Maso/ Cas 2.0" (Chief Marty Martinez). City of Boston Health & Human Services Chief Marty Martinez will be back to discuss progress to date on the City’s "Maso/Cas 2.0" initiative to address the challenges of homelessness and addiction in the South End, including heightened services for people afflicted and better mitigation of public safety and quality of life impacts on residents. As always, questions and comments will be welcome.

Note: The City of Boston's Mass/Cas Task Force (an advisory group to the City, representing services providers, institutional stakeholders and residents in the South End, Newmarket and environs) had its first session in December and will meet monthly going forward. BFSNA has a seat on this panel and plans to be there, so let us know of any questions or concerns you'd like raised there.

https://www.facebook.com/blackstone-franklin

Cake

Continued from page 1

Della’s Sweets—well-crafted and visibly designed by Matt Whiton—would certainly insist that any novice baker make sure to use all of the ingredients as she does and follow the directions."

Much as there are several fine elements in director Courtney O'Connor's mixed-Lynne Stage effort, the belongs couple's wedding cake-centered play needs a stronger consistency and more essay about the intersection of love and understanding with that baking.

Inspired by a case involving a baker’s unwillingness to create such a wedding cake, Bronteletter (“This Is Us” 2015 play righty presents its four characters—the couple Jen and Mary, and Della and her plumper, brash new Tim—as characters rather than types. Della in particular possessses a degree of unaffected charm that sometimes offsets her Christian fundamentalism-based bigotry. Speaking about her showcased Noah’s Ark cake, she says "What she asked me is a hanging from heaven. She also naively believes that her confection could conquer ISIS where armies and governments struggle to do so. Meanwhile she hopes to win the Great American Bake Off and assure its (beard but unseen) handmade host (think of his counterpart on the Great British Baking Show).

Ultimately, though, Della’s greatest challenge is that she did not make the cake that Jen—the daughter of her best friend—would like for her upcoming wedding to African-American Macy. While the gregarious baker claims “I don’t see color,” she unequivocally does have a serious problem with sexual orientation as does Tim—who admits he “can’t pick and choose.” What all comes to laws about gays. At this point, an alliance in the play to Somlom and Gornorza would have done well to bring in the city’s clear hatred of strangers a factor as striking in the usual homophoria explanation.

Bronteletter does provide balance with considerable dialogue about both Jen’s complicated family dynamics and Macy’s back story. The wedding day approaches, though, the plotting and Della’s decision-making seem less convincing. Is Della really open to change? Does Tim’s surprise for Della constitute genuine queer pro quo or a predictable device? Noticeable missing, can there be a real understanding between Della and Meg if the latter fear that the former hates her? These questions are likely to prove nagging for some theatergoers.

Under director O’Connor’s careful guidance, there should be no question that the pacing is sharp and the cast fantastic. Karen MacDonald—always one of the Old’s premiere actresses—is a true standout. In body language and accent as well as a blend of familiar cutting and cheekiness, she provokes commandingly watchable as a kind of flawed Everywoman. Fred Silverman, Jr. has all of Tim’s judgmental posture and coarseness. As master performers, they improve upon the couple’s otherwise somewhat conventional bedroom scenes. Chelsea Dickh captures Jen’s heart as well as her frustrations. Kris Siddley finds all of Macy’s fire and feeding. Dickh and Siddley have all the naturalness of soon-to-be newlyweds.

Near the end of the play, Della quotes the First Corinthian’s observation that “Love is always kind.” In that light, “The Cake” needs stronger structure and more satisfying attention to the lose the title confection represents.

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MLK
Continued from page 1

legions of racism, poverty and militarism, saying, “And there are times when you must take a stand that is neither safe nor polite nor popular, but you must do it because it is right.”

On Monday, January 20, members of the St. Stephen’s community along with dozens of partner organizations will be following King’s example by taking a stand during their tenth annual MLK Day of Action. Close to 200 volunteers from the South End neighborhood, suburban churches and synagogues, professional groups and non-profit organizations will come together with Blackstone School faculty for a morning of work projects to shower love (and some paint) on the school. There will also be projects to improve St. Stephen’s afterschool program space.

Following a brunch of tasty food, stimulating conversations about King’s legacy, and inspirational words from City Councilor Ed Flynn, there will be a teach-in focused on the issues faced by immigrant students in the Boston Public Schools. Trainers from Unafraid Educators and the Student Immigrant Movement, alongside teams from St. Stephen’s, will be equipping participants to work together to ensure immigrant BPS students both feel safe and are safe.

The Blackstone Elementary School is just this sort of loving community, a place where all students feel safe and can focus on learning and academic achievement. This is largely thanks to the dedicated work of the school’s administrators, teachers, and staff, many of whom will be coming to the MLK Day of Action on what would otherwise be a day off from work. Teachers and volunteers will be beautifying classrooms. Parents of students will be sorting through donations for the school’s compassion closet of clothes, food, and hygiene products. College students will be painting murals with inspirational messages on walls and classrooms.

By the end of the day, there will be many more images of the school’s mascot, Shrunkwatt the Shark, around the hallways of the school.

The Blackstone’s Family and Community Engagement Coordinator, Lauren Blonde, sees the day builds up a community of love. “MLK Day is an opportunity for volunteers and participants to bring to life our school’s guiding principle of Ubuntu, which means ‘I am because you are. We are all connected because we value equality and we want our students to succeed,” said Blonde. “We are honoring King’s legacy with what we will do on this day,” she added.

Recently, it became public that BPS has shared the information of more than 130 students with Immigration Customs and Enforcement (ICE), jeopardizing these young people’s safety and futures. To help our schools be safe havens for students, trainers will be asking participants to sign and spread a petition that will ask BPS to have clear communication with families before their information is shared with the Boston Police Department, which often leads to reports to ICE. The petition also requests more training for administrators and Boston School Police, among other demands. The petition can be found at bit.ly/NoICEinBPS.

St. Stephen’s Youth Programs Teen Organizer Nikki Jean-Charles is among those excited to be part of the MLK Day of Action. She believes caring for students by making their classrooms sparkle is one of the right things to do. So is taking a stand to protect immigrant students.

“I want to surround myself with a community that is ready to learn and spread peace the way King taught,” said Jean-Charles. “I want to be part of the new generation of leaders, educating others to build a better future and continuing the fight for civil rights.”

To join this community of leaders at the MLK Day of Action, which starts at 9:30am at the Blackstone Elementary School, 380 Shawmut Avenue, sign up at tinyurl.com/syplk2020. For more information, contact heart@swboston.org.

To learn more about St. Stephen’s Youth Programs, visit www.swbostontogether.org by 419 Shawmut Avenue.

We are grateful for the Massachusetts Service Alliance, which is helping to fund and support the MLK Day of Action.

SSYP staff person Lashiki Scott with new friends at the 2019 MLK Day of Action at the Blackstone Elementary School.
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