

Wellspring connection



The Newsletter of Wellspring House, Inc., Gloucester, Massachusetts
VOL. 36, NO. 1 SPRING 2017

Welcoming All

Since our earliest beginnings, Wellspring House has understood without a doubt that we welcome all. Our organization's vision says it well:

Wellspring is guided by the vision of a society where all are welcomed and everyone has the opportunity to live a full and positive life. Believing that each life touches every other life, we work toward this vision of caring for the earth and her people by sharing our resources in a spirit of hospitality.

We are at a important time in history and in the evolution of communities on Cape Ann when "Welcoming All" is critically important. Wellspring, in partnership with the Sawyer Free Library, has operated a successful English Language Learning program in downtown Gloucester for more than 15 years. This winter, we observed that some students who normally would come for evening tutoring had a lapse

in their attendance. From conversations with colleagues and friends in the community, we were hearing that families throughout the North Shore are concerned about recent events and news surrounding immigration. In light of this, a letter went out to our students reassuring them that Wellspring House and the Sawyer Free Library both are places where students are free to learn in peace, confidentially, and without fear. We are proud to provide English classes to each and every person who wants to learn English and it is important to us for everyone to feel safe.

We have much more to learn about the experiences and concerns of families on Cape Ann. The communities of newly arriving families for whom



Melissa Dimond

English is a non-native language are diverse to say the least. Students in Wellspring's ELL Program represent more than fifteen countries and four continents. In the spirit of "understanding more" and gearing up to respond sensitively, Wellspring is in active conversations with the Sawyer Free Library, Gloucester

Public Schools, Mayor Romeo-Theken's office, ECCO (Essex County Community Organization) and others. If you have a particular interest in volunteering to support the needs of newly arriving families and students, please contact Wellspring House's Volunteer Coordinator, Mary Hardwick, at (978) 281-3559 ext. 300.

Melissa Dimond
President & Executive Director

College Prep Math at Wellspring

Many students entering college are required to take a prerequisite math class because they do not have the math proficiency to "place into" college credit math. In this case, students would need to pay out of pocket to take a developmental course that is not covered by financial aid. For low income students, this added financial set-back can be a frustrating barrier in the start of their academic pursuits.

Wellspring offers a college prep math class designed to prepare students to

place at college level on the national Accuplacer exam, eliminating the need and cost of a non-credit math class. Wellspring's College Prep Math Class is also helpful for students interested in taking the high school equivalency exam.

Beyond learning math, passing exams and fulfilling the prerequisite, Wellspring's College Prep Math Class is designed to help student identify their personal learning style, which can be used for future academic success.



Laura Pedone, Wellspring's Adult Education Coordinator, conducts classes at the Sawyer Free Library.

WELLSPRING HOUSE AND BROOKWOOD SCHOOL

The 1st Grade class at Brookwood School recently hosted their third annual Empty Bowl dinner: a cross-curricular presentation for parents to learn more about the class relationship with Wellspring House.

Presented were the six ways in which the class helps Wellspring House over the course of the academic year. In the fall Brookwood First Graders plant bulbs on Wellspring's grounds. In November the class donates a Thanksgiving dinner to Wellspring's shelter guests. In December the class donates toys for the Holiday Store. And in spring the class compiles Leaving Baskets – baskets of household items to for those moving out of shelter and into permanent housing. The final event of the year is the Empty Bowl Dinner presentation to share their work.

At the dinner each student shared a sentence or two about their part in the effort. For example the group that



Brookwood's 1st Graders help out at Wellspring's Holiday Store in December.

donated for Thanksgiving relayed the story of how they, "thought of what makes a good Thanksgiving Day dinner," "made a shopping list," "rode the school bus to the grocery store," "carried the ingredients back to Brookwood," and "delivered the meal to Wellspring House." This story concluded that, "It felt good to give food to Wellspring's shelter guests."

In attendance at the event were Camilla Blackman, Director of Job Training Initiatives, Allison Mueller and Caroline Hovey, both Wellspring Board members. Ms. Blackman spoke to the

audience about Wellspring's purpose. Ms. Mueller spoke about how she came to be involved with Wellspring House as a Brookwood parent and how her involvement has grown into a role as Board member.

Wellspring House has been extremely fortunate to have had a strong partnership with Brookwood School for so many years. Many thanks to this year's first grade class!

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If you are connected with a local school and are interested in getting involved with Wellspring House, please contact Mary Hardwick at (978) 281 3558, extension 300.

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Many thanks to all who organized toy drives for Wellspring's Holiday store in December! This year's Holiday Store served 644 children from 284 homeless and low-income families from our region. We couldn't do it without your support!



Wellspring's 19th Annual Women's Luncheon Welcomes Maura Healey; Honors Local Women

Wellspring House is proud to announce that the keynote speaker for this year's Women Honoring Women Luncheon will be Massachusetts State Attorney General Maura Healey. Honorees will include Margo Casey, Rose Evans and Joan Whitney. This year's participant speaker will be Jill Brown.

Maura Healey has served as the MA Attorney General since January 21, 2015. Since taking office, Healey has tackled issues touching the lives of residents across Massachusetts including the heroin and prescription drug abuse epidemic, escalating health care costs, workers' rights and student loan costs. She has focused on strengthening consumer protections and on improving our criminal justice system.

Building on her promise to run an office that serves people across the state, Healey launched the Community Engagement Division in May 2015. The first-of-its-kind division brings the Attorney General's Office and its work into neighborhoods and communities across the state. The Division has launched community office hours and has assisted with the rollout of several policy initiatives including the Earned Sick Time law and Domestic Workers' Bill of Rights.

Healey is an advocate for a more equal and inclusive workplace. In May 2015, she announced that her office would provide six weeks of paid family leave for all employees—making the AG's Office the first state agency to offer paid parental leave. The office has also helped shape state legislation that would expand opportunities for women in the workplace including Pay Equity and Pregnant Workers Fairness bills.

Margo Casey's enduring talent and commitment to improving quality of life include work with New England Home, Department of Youth Services, HAWC, Eliot Community Human Services, the Geiger Gibson Community Health Center, and most recently with the United Way of the North Shore. Under her leadership, the UWNS created innovative programs serving youth on the North Shore, launched the Women



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in Action initiative to support access to healthy food, sound nutrition and physical activity for children and families in need, and partnered with several fledgling programs including Backyard Growers in Gloucester and the Beverly Children's Learning Center.

Rose Evans has worked on behalf of children and families for over 35 years. For the last four years Rose has worked at the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) serving as Deputy Undersecretary. Guided by the Department's mission to prevent homelessness and to

provide emergency shelter, Rose's work focuses on the Commonwealth's programs to rapidly rehouse those who are homeless and prevent homelessness. Rose's deep knowledge of the housing and homelessness field has made her a critical agent of change as the state successfully moved all families out of the shelter units in motels and into situations of stabilized housing.

Joan Whitney has served as Director of Healthy Gloucester Collaborative for the past nine years where she fosters the theme that "Partnership Matters" to create sustainable solutions that matter. Joan has directed this approach toward issues ranging from youth substance use, to saving lives, increasing treatment access and recovery support. Joan now supports the growth of Healthy Gloucester Collaborative as a regional leader through the formation of Healthy North Shore which brings Cape Ann, Beverly, Ipswich and Danvers.

Jill Brown graduated from NSCC in May 2016 with an Associate's degree in Health Science. In September she matriculated into the first class of the Health Professions Bachelor's program at Salem State University. The former small business owner, widow and single mother of three is a One Family Scholar sponsored through Wellspring's affiliation with the One Family Foundation. One Family is a college scholarship program that covers the cost of college for low-income single parents.

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Wellspring's Women Honoring Women Luncheon takes place from 11:30 am - 2:00 pm at the DoubleTree by Hilton, located at 50 Ferncroft Road, Danvers, MA. Tickets can be purchased online at www.wellspringhouse.org.

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UPCOMING EVENT

Monday, May 1st



19th Annual Women Honoring Women Luncheon

11:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

DoubleTree By Hilton,
50 Ferncroft Road, Danvers, MA

See page 3 for details.



Many thanks to the Academy at Penguin Hall for their donation of 8 fleece blankets for Wellspring's shelter guests. Students made the blankets as a part of a service learning project.