



DEHC Newsletter

Volume 2, No. 2

February 2004

MISSION: To tackle urban environmental health concerns with community-based education and organizing, leading to measurable improvements and a healthy environment for people who live and work in Dorchester.

Members/Partners

- Alternatives for Community & Environment
- Alliance for a Healthy Tomorrow
- A.N.G.E.L.S.
- Ashmont-Adams Neighborhood Association
- Ashmont Hill Association
- Boston Greenspace Alliance
- Boston Public Health Commission
- Boston Urban Asthma Coalition
- Breath of Life: Dorchester (BOLD) Teens
- Bowdoin Street Health Center
- Cedar Grove Civic Association
- Civic Health Institute, CSHC
- Clam Point Neighborhood Association
- Clean Water Action
- Codman Academy Charter School
- Codman Square Health Center
- Codman Sq. Neighborhood Development Corp
- Codman Square Neighborhood Council
- Columbia Savin Hill Civic Association
- Columbia Washington St Neighborhood Assoc.
- Dorchester Center for Adult Education
- Dorchester House Multi-Service Center
- City Councilor Maureen E. Feeny
- Fields Corner Main Street
- Four Corners Main Street
- Friends of Ronan Park
- Greater Bowdoin/Geneva Neighborhood Assoc
- Greater Four Corners Action Coalition
- Greenwood Family Life Center, Inc.
- Health Services Partnership
- State Senator Jack Hart
- John Snow Institute
- Jones Hill Association
- Lead Action Collaborative
- Mattapan Community Health Center
- Mattapan Community Development Corp
- MassCOSH
- John W. McCormack Civic Association
- Melville Park Association
- Richard J. Murphy School Parent Council
- Park Partners of Wainwright Park
- Pope's Hill Neighborhood Association
- State Representative Marie P. St. Fleur
- St. Marks Area Civic Association
- St Marks Area Main Street
- Technology Goes Home/TGH Alumni, Inc.
- Torrey Street Neighborhood Group
- The Urban Ecology Institute
- Viet-American Initiative for Development
- State Representative Martin Walsh

Plant Yourself in the Park Day, Saturday, June 5th

Even though the outside world is still gray and dead-looking, exciting plans are underway for a city-wide event June 5th, when thousands of volunteers will be raking, painting, mulching and generally sprucing up local neighborhood parks.

Dorchester's green spaces—parks, playgrounds, urban wilds—are essential for recreation and relaxation, and to support healthy trees and plantings that filter air pollution. Trees and other plants help offset the exhaust emitted by the heavy traffic congestion in Dorchester's commercial districts. Even the public shade trees planted along Dorchester's sidewalks can contribute to pleasant, shady streets that inspire walking and biking, and help reduce household energy costs

The Boston GreenSpace Alliance's Plant Yourself in the Park Day will bring thousands of vol-



unteers into neighborhood parks to accomplish clean-up work, but also will help supplement the Boston Parks Department's limited resources, make folks aware of the needs of the park in their community, and help build a constituency to advocate for parks in the future. A number of Dorchester parks, including Ronan Park and Dorchester Park, are already signed up.

For information on how your group can get involved, call DEHC, 617.474.1478, or visit www.bostonparks.org

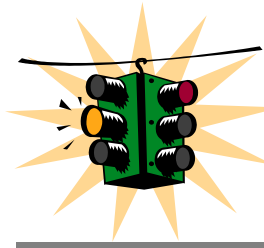


Traffic Calming (second in a series, from the Conservation Law Foundation)

Speed Kills... A pedestrian is more likely to be struck, and if struck, more likely to be killed or severely injured, when a vehicle is moving faster. The probability of a fatality is 3.5 % with a vehicle traveling 15 miles per hour (mph), and increasing more than ten-fold to 37 % at 31 mph. The likelihood of fatality increases to 83 % at 44 mph.

Willingness to Walk or Bike— Although over 25% of the trips taken by car in this country are no more than one mile long, a walkable distance, and almost 50% of trips are less than three miles long and thus fit for bicycling, Americans walk and bicycle relatively little. Danger, road conditions, and lack of facilities are reasons frequently given in

surveys for not bicycling, and "safer routes" or "improved facilities" tops the list of changes that folks surveyed say would encourage them to bicycle.



Walking and bicycling are preferred forms of transportation for many reasons. Walking or biking to accomplish local errands, rather than using a car, helps reduce traffic congestion and air pollution, with the added benefits of weight control and energy conservation.

As mentioned above, faster roads are more dangerous roads for non-motorists. But pedestrians and bicyclists need more from streets than an assurance they won't be killed. They need and deserve travel space that is convenient and congenial.

DORCHESTER ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH COALITION

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This monthly newsletter is compiled, written and edited by Rosanne Foley, and available via email, and at any of the Boston Public Library Dorchester and Mattapan branches, and on the www.codman.org website. Send brief articles and event notices, by fax or email by 3d Monday for inclusion in next issue.

Upcoming Events

Mushing the Greenway, Sunday, February 15, 11 to 2, Pope John Paul II Park. Learn about Alaskan sled dogs, go for a ride. Reservations required. Free. Leave the family dogs at home, please. SNOW IS NOT REQUIRED FOR THIS EVENT. Pre-registration required, call 617-542-7696.

Save the Harbor, Save the Bay event, Tuesday, February 17, 5:30 - 7:30 pm, Children's Museum, 300 Congress St. If you want to know why Boston beaches are still unsafe for swimming nearly 1 out of 5 days each summer, get the facts from Save the Harbor's Science Advisory Committee. Speak up about how clean you think our beaches and harbor should be. For more, call Save the Harbor 617.451.2860, www.savetheharbor.org

Winter Tracking, Feb 19, 11 am, Ventura Playground, Butler MBTA trolley stop. Learn to identify tracks and make a cast, on the Neponset River salt marsh. Pre-register, call 617-542-7696, or www.bostonnatural.org.

SAVE THE DATES! ~ Gardeners Gathering, March 20th, and EJ in the 'Hood, April 24th.

BOLD Teens Speak Out... Look for their newsletter, coming soon. For more information on BOLD TEENS, call 617-822-8189.

Would you like to learn how to identify environmental problems? What are some of the issues that influence decisions on how land in your neighborhood is used? There is a FREE program at UMass Boston - the **Environmental Citizenship Academy**, classes are Tuesday evenings from 6:30 to 9, plus 2 Saturday field trips starts March 2nd (NOTE: participants must agree to attend all classes.) For more info, contact Nancy Wong, 617-287-5570, or email: environmental@umb.edu or visit www.eca.umb.edu.



Move, Boston! Strategies for Youth Fitness and Nutrition

Free conference - Friday, February 27, 9am - 2:30pm at Greater Boston YMCA Roxbury Branch, 285 Martin Luther King Boulevard.

How to design and implement programs to increase physical activity and improve healthy eating habits of Boston youth. If you work with children and families every day, join us at Move, Boston! and make important connections with schools, health and community-based organizations. There will also be a Jump Rope Team Demonstration by Dorchester YMCA.

Who Should Attend: Educators, youth workers and fitness and health professionals. Continuing education: Six (6) contact hours for nurses attending this program. Ten (10) Professional Development Points (PDP's) for Boston Public School teachers (follow-up workshop required).

Seating is limited. Please register by calling Laura Melbin at Move, Boston! 617-534-2030 or email lmelbin@bphc.org or get a registration form at www.bphc.org.

Traffic Calming (contd. from page 1)

Surveys indicate links between more and better places to walk and people's willingness to walk. One study found that an improved walking environment, where crossing the street is easier and safer for pedestrians, could reduce the amount of driving by 10% in suburban Portland, Oregon. Providing decent conditions for pedestrians is a matter of fairness and civic responsibility, too. Anyone who chooses to go out for a walk should find reasonably attractive and safe conditions.

This is the second in a three-part series on traffic calming, with excerpts taken from the Conservation Law Foundation's website www.clf.org.

Traffic calming helps neighborhood quality of life by reducing

speed and enhancing the street environment for non-motorists. The counterpart to traffic calming is to encourage walkable/bikable neighborhoods, for a healthy daily lifestyle. As seen in the Nov 2003 newsletter, DEHC is involved in a Boston Public Health Commission-supported community mobilization effort called Boston STEPS. We are mobilizing to reduce diabetes, asthma and obesity in our community. To help improve community wellness, we are looking for walk (or bike club) leaders to help coordinate and inspire, each group will receive a stipend of \$2,000. Please contact DEHC if you are interested in coordinating a club in your neighborhood or workplace. 617.474.1478, Rosanne.Foley@hspnetwork.org.

Who is DEHC? The Dorchester Environmental Health Coalition (DEHC) is a network of community organizations, environmental leaders and individuals who are concerned about environmental health threats to Dorchester residents and are committed to identifying and addressing local environmental problems.

The Coalition is supported by funding through the Boston Public Health Commission, Jessie B. Cox Charitable Trust, Merck Family Fund and the Massachusetts Environmental Trust.

