Victory Programs’ Boston Living Center Honors Larry Kessler
More than $110,000 Raised to Support Programing for Members Living with HIV/AIDS

Boston, MA (November 16, 2015)—On Tuesday, November 10, 2015, Victory Programs’ Boston Living Center hosted its annual Celebration of Life: Thanksgiving Dinner at the Hynes Convention Center in Boston. The event served a traditional Thanksgiving meal to more than 600 guests, members of the HIV/AIDS community and their loved ones. Additionally, guests had the opportunity to visit the annual Resource Fair and learn about services offered by 32 partner organizations.

This year the event honored former Boston Living Center (BLC) Director, Larry Kessler, with the Peter Daniel Clark Award for his long service to the HIV/AIDS community. Larry retired from his position at the BLC in August of this year. In addition to his role at the Center, Larry is a legendary activist and advocate for the HIV/AIDS community. He is known for founding the AIDS Action Commission of Massachusetts during the height of the AIDS epidemic, among many other accomplishments.

Emcee Liz Walker kept the evening, which featured live performances by Michael O’Connor and Wozza Moya and the Boston Gay Men’s Chorus, festive and fun. Every year guests at the event share a meal with family, friends and other members of the HIV/AIDS community. One guest shared this feedback with Victory Programs’ President and CEO Jonathan Scott after the event: “On behalf of myself and the many people who enjoyed an unexpectedly incredible evening we give our thanks to you, your staff and the many many volunteers who helped make this such a wonderful event.” The guest went on to say: “Thank you once again for a fabulous evening and everything you do throughout the year.” Throughout the night, guests were treated to the holiday spirit of giving, raising up a bit during Larry Kessler’s speech or the final performance by the Boston Gay Men’s Chorus, and generally enjoying a wonderful meal and beautiful night.

In addition to being a moving community event with a long history, the annual Celebration of Life is also Victory Programs’ largest fundraising event of the year. This year the 2015 Celebration of Life Thanksgiving Dinner raised more than $110,000 through corporate sponsorship, individual donations and funds raised by volunteer servers to support the Boston Living Center. In addition to sponsorships from Partners HealthCare and year-long corporate sponsors Walgreens, Macy’s, Eastern Bank and many others, our volunteer servers also played a key role in raising funds for the event bringing in more than $40,000 of the total. The servers raise “TIPS” in the form of donations from their friends, family and networks in the vein of charity walks and runs, and are consistently responsible for bringing in thousands of dollars in support of the Boston Living Center and the Celebration of Life Thanksgiving Dinner.

Special guests at the event included David Brown, Director of Advancement at the Massachusetts Association for the Blind; State Senate President Stan Rosenberg; Massachusetts State Representatives Russell Holmes, Adrian Madaro and Elizabeth Malia; Dawn Fukuda, Director of the Office of HIV/AIDS at the Massachusetts Department of Public Health; NECN Broadcast Meteorologist Nelly Carreno; and Ray Magliozi of NPR’s Car Talk.

About The Boston Living Center
The Boston Living Center (BLC), located
fosters the wellness of all HIV positive people and responds to the changing needs of the HIV/AIDS community. Through peer leadership and support, the BLC strives to enhance and enrich the lives of its members by providing education, treatment information, and support services with the goal of empowering members to live productive lives and participate within their families and communities. The BLC officially merged with Victory Programs on March 1, 2012.

About Victory Programs

2015 marks Victory Programs’ 40th year of opening doors to hope, health and housing for individuals and families in need. Since its inception in 1975, the agency has expanded to 17 housing and health programs providing shelter and recovery services to 2,300 people annually. Victory Programs has a storied history of responding to emerging needs in the community - from being one of the first agencies in Massachusetts to allow HIV positive clients in its addiction recovery programs in 1981 to opening Chamber Family Home in the midst of a surge in family homelessness in 2014. Throughout its organizational growth, Victory Programs’ commitment to those struggling with homelessness, drug and alcohol addiction and chronic illnesses like HIV/AIDS always remains its top priority.