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VICTORY PROGRAMS' BOSTON LIVING CENTER GIVES THANKS WITH ANNUAL CELEBRATION OF LIFE EVENT

Event Will Feature Liz Walker, Mayor Thomas M. Menino, and One Love Chorus. Community Leaders Will Serve the Traditional Thanksgiving Meal to Members of the HIV/AIDS Community

Boston, MA (November 12)—Every November, for the past 23 years, the Boston Living Center (BLC) has gathered people living with HIV/AIDS and their loved ones together to celebrate the joy of life. Almost two years after merging with Victory Programs, the BLC and its most heartfelt tradition live on.

On Tuesday, November 19, 2013, at 5:30pm Victory Programs' Boston Living Center will host the Celebration of Life Thanksgiving Dinner at the Hynes Convention Center in Boston. When the BLC was founded in the midst of the AIDS epidemic, those gathered never knew who would be around for their next holiday. Today, guests celebrate the advances in HIV/AIDS medicine and healthcare that allow them the opportunity to live long, healthy lives.

"The Boston Living Center's annual joyous Celebration of Life dinner is one of the most beautiful, spirited and important events in our city of Boston," says Victory Programs' President and CEO Jonathan Scott. "Of the near 1,000 attendees—guests and volunteers—each has in some way endured loss in the history of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, and each participates in giving comfort and support. In the true spirit of celebration, this dinner gathering creates a sparkling room of hope and community. There is no better place to be as we begin the holiday season."

As many as 700 people, those living with HIV/AIDS—and their loved ones, will gather for a full Thanksgiving meal. All of the food, including 500 pounds of turkey and 120 pies, decorations and technology has been generously donated by local businesses and nonprofits, making the event free and open to anyone living with HIV/AIDS in the Commonwealth.

This year, Victory Programs' Boston Living Center will pay special tribute to Mayor Thomas M. Menino in honor of his 20-years of advocacy for people living with HIV/AIDS. "The Celebration of Life dinner is where we find the true spirit of the holiday season," Mayor Thomas M. Menino

says. "The Boston Living Center is an organization that makes a real difference in our city. It's a place where people living with HIV and AIDS can always find a good meal, a helping hand, and the dignity, compassion and respect they deserve. I'm looking forward to another Thanksgiving dinner with this amazing community."

The winners of the 2013 Peter Daniel Clark Award, co-owners of Boston's Club Café Jim Morgrage and Frank Ribaldo, will also be recognized for their commitment to the HIV/AIDS community.

The event will feature entertainment by Lakia Mondale, Michael O'Connor and Woza Moya, and One Love, a chorus of HIV positive youth. Liz Walker, former WBZ newscaster and current minister at Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Jamaica Plain, will serve as Mistress of Ceremonies. Other local celebrities and community leaders on hand to serve the Thanksgiving meal include Boston Mayor Thomas M. Menino, State Senator Sonia Chang-Diaz, AIDS Action Committee Executive Director Rebecca Haag, Doug Berman and Ray Magliozzi of NPR's Car Talk, Massachusetts Department of Public Health Commissioner Cheryl Bartlett and State Representatives Gloria Fox, Liz Malia and Jay Livingstone.

The Celebration of Life is Victory Programs' largest fundraiser, raising more than \$100,000 to ensure vital HIV/AIDS programming is preserved.

About the Boston Living Center

The Boston Living Center (BLC), located on Stanhope Street in Boston's Back Bay, is a nonprofit community and resource center that 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

Victory Programs, now in its 38th year, is a human services organization with 18 individual programs offering a variety of health and housing services to people dealing with issues of homelessness, substance abuse, and mental and chronic illnesses like HIV/AIDS. Find more at www.vpi.org.