



victories

VICTORY PROGRAMS **OPENING DOORS TO HOPE, HEALTH AND HOUSING**

Beyond the Boston Living Center

What's New at New England's Largest Community Center for Individuals with HIV?

For nearly 30 years, Victory Programs' Boston Living Center (BLC) has been a unique community center for those living with HIV/AIDS. The Center was founded at the height of the AIDS epidemic as a place where those with HIV could find support, resources and comradery in a warm and welcoming community. Today, the BLC meals program serves approximately 33,000 nutritionally-balanced meals made from quality ingredients to more than 1,000 BLC members every year. With the advent of new treatment regimens and HIV no longer a death sentence, the services

offered by the Center have grown and expanded to remain relevant and essential. In addition to the meals program, support groups and health and wellness services the Center has long been known for, the BLC offers numerous education and career services for members. Members who wish to improve their job prospects, advance their education or participate in on-site art and performance activities have the opportunity through the Center's newest offerings.

BLC Academy encompasses the BLC's new education and career services. The services

include workshops for job seekers such as "Finding the Right Career for You," "Jobs and the Internet," "Resume Writing," "Social Media and You," "Interviewing Skills" and others designed to teach members valuable skills for finding and keeping a job or improving their on-the-job performance. The BLC Academy education services include HiSET (formerly called GED) classes, computer classes and general life skills classes. In addition, staff work closely with members one-on-one to help them define their education and career goals and build their confidence as they work towards these goals.



Due to the generosity of our supporters Victory Programs will open the "New Joelyn's Home" residential recovery program for women next spring.

RECENT GIFT AND GRANT HIGHLIGHTS

Thank you!

Because of your generosity, thousands of individuals and families will receive the housing and health services they need to reclaim their lives and get back on their feet.

Supporting ReVision Urban Farm

Cedar Tree Foundation
The Doe Family Foundation (also supports Chamblet and ReVision Family Homes)
Gisela B. Hogan Charitable Foundation
Krupp Family Foundation
Santander Foundation
Wells Fargo Foundation

Supporting the Boston Living Center

Alice Willard Dorr Foundation
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BNY Mellon/Alice P. Chase Trust
The Boston Foundation Food and Fuel Fund
Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS
Bushrod H. Campbell and Adah F. Hall Charity Fund

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Bank of America, N.A. Trustee
Liberty Mutual Foundation
MAC AIDS Fund
Robert and Helen Hardman Foundation
Stackpole-Hall Foundation

Supporting Victory Health & Victory Housing

Bank of America Foundation
Eastern Bank Charitable Foundation
Franklin Square House Foundation
Greater Boston Council on Alcoholism
Julian A. and Louise G. Brodsky Foundation
Lawrence Model Lodging Houses Trust
Liberty Mutual Foundation
TJX Foundation

Supporting New Women's Recovery Capital Project

Charlesbank Homes
Cummings Foundation
The Janey Fund Charitable Trust (also supports Portis Family Home)
Mabel Louise Riley Foundation
MassHousing/Center for Community Recovery Innovations

Supporting Victory Programs Operating Expenses

de Beaumont Foundation
Esmond Harmsworth 1997 Charitable Foundation
MassHousing/Center for Community Recovery Innovations



Victory is Par for the Course!

Victory Programs' fourth annual **Drive for Victory Golf Tournament** was held on Monday, June 27, at Oakley Country Club in Watertown. This year's event was the biggest and best yet, raising \$53,000 for hope, health and housing! Each year, more and more golfers return to enjoy the beautiful grounds and amenities of a private, members-only course; a fun raffle and silent auction; a delicious lunch and dinner; on-course contests complete with an awards ceremony and giveaway swag bags full of golfer treasures. Thanks to all the golfers, sponsors and donors who make this fundraiser a success year after year!

Please save the date - Monday, June 26, 2017 - the fifth annual Drive for Victory tees off at Blue Hill Country Club in Canton.

Twice the Luck with the Cummings Foundation!

For the second time in our history, Victory Programs was chosen as one of the recipients of the **\$100K for 100 Grant Program** from the Cummings Foundation of Woburn.

This magnanimous \$100,000 grant will be used for capital renovations for our women's recovery homes. Specifically, the Cummings' funds will support the renovations of our New Joelyn's Home in Roxbury, and the second phase of our New Victories for Women program in Dorchester. Together, these facilities will serve 38 women in recovery at a time. These projects, together with the expansion of our existing Shepherd House facility by seven beds - six of which will be available to pre and post-partum mothers - will recapture 96% of women's recovery beds lost when our original Joelyn's Family Home on Boston Harbor's Long Island was evacuated permanently in October 2014 with the sudden closing of the Long Island Bridge.

The Cummings Foundation's gift to Victory Programs is essential in restoring vitally needed women's treatment services to Boston.



Beyond the Boston Living Center (continued from page 1)

In addition to BLC Academy, the BLC offers a number of creative outlets for members who would like to express themselves and share their talents. For a number of years the BLC has offered art classes to its members.

More recently, **POZ Vibes Café** at the BLC has offered a unique space for HIV+ youth, young adults and their friends under the age of 29 to gather and participate in an open mic event where participants can showcase poetry, music and spoken word performances while they share coffee, food and community. This September, POZ Vibes Café celebrated its one year anniversary with an open mic, delicious food including cupcakes, and community. POZ Vibes takes place every 4-6 weeks and generally draws a crowd of between 20-30 people. It is a collaborative effort between the BLC, BAGLY, Fenway Health, Boston GLASS, BMC Peer Services and Codman Square Health Center. The planning committee meets twice a month and includes three HIV+ youth who receive a small stipend to help plan POZ Vibes Café, do outreach and work the night of as MC's. Since this new program began, the BLC has enrolled six young adults as members.

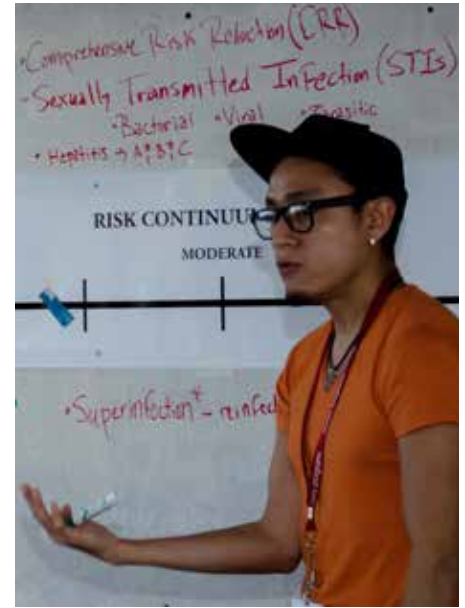
Viral Hepatitis

Victory Programs has a long history of addressing emerging community health issues like substance use disorder, HIV/AIDS and family homelessness. We've recently expanded our services for individuals struggling with viral hepatitis.

Victory Programs is a member of the Massachusetts Viral Hepatitis Coalition (MVHC), a coalition instrumental in this year's groundbreaking legal case by the AIDS Law Project to lower insurance restrictions on Hepatitis C treatments. This makes new medications more affordable to those denied access. Currently we are collaborating with our coalition partners to take on more of the leadership and organizing involved in coordinating the on-going MVHC's initiatives.

Many people who have viral hepatitis aren't aware of their infection status. An individual can unknowingly carry the infection for decades. Injection drug users and their sexual partners face an alarmingly high risk of contracting Hepatitis C.

Hepatitis C is curable; however, we must still work to ensure everyone who needs treatment has affordable access to medication. Victory Programs, alongside dedicated health activists in the MVHC, will expand our work. Together we will lead the efforts to eradicate viral hepatitis in Massachusetts.



Victory in the Community Meeting People Who Need Help Where They Are

In 2015, Victory Programs recognized a unique opportunity to expand our quality of care into the community and help individuals and families who may not otherwise be able to access services at a residential program or shelter. Thus a new division, Victory Prevention, was created, encompassing our already successful Boston Living Center and the only Mobile Prevention Team of its kind in Massachusetts. The prevention team consists of a talented group of staff who do outreach in the community and meet individuals and families who need help to provide them with education, high-quality guidance and aftercare to support on-going health, stability and recovery.

Our Mobile Prevention Team currently has three primary intervention/prevention areas: Drug User Health, Primary Prevention and Positive Prevention.

The Drug User Health Project provides education, navigation and risk management services for active drug users, newly abstinent individuals and their friends, families and professionals who serve as a support network for individuals struggling with substance use. The team also conducts community trainings on how to use the overdose reversal drug naloxone and distributes naloxone, safer injection kits and other supplies to community members.

The Primary Prevention Project provides sexual health risk reduction education, navigation and assessment services related to sexual health and preventing the transmission of HIV, viral hepatitis and other STIs through sexual contact. The team also offers individualized risk assessments and harm reduction plans for high-risk community members and distributes safer sex supplies.

The Positive Prevention Project uses a holistic approach to health and wellness tailored to the needs of people living with HIV/AIDS to manage their physical and mental health by providing education and resources to help them manage their health choices. The team provides personalized support and services for individuals living with HIV/AIDS to navigate around the physical, emotional, systemic and social barriers their clients face in their efforts to access quality care and remain compliant with their medication adherence.

The Mobile Prevention Team officially launched in 2015 and has served a total of 565 new clients. The Drug User Health Project has distributed nearly 900 doses of naloxone, the overdose reversal drug, into the community since February and regularly conducts community trainings on how to use the drug.

Our Mobile Prevention Team is dedicated to improving health outcomes, reducing mortality and enhancing the overall quality of life for all by seamlessly connecting clients to resources and knowledge through navigation, outreach and education. For more information please visit our website, www.vpi.org.





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Making Room for Mothers in Recovery

The road to recovery is challenging for most people struggling with substance use disorder, and especially challenging for new and expectant mothers. Pregnancy can be a turning point on the road from addiction to recovery; however, specialized treatment options for women who are pregnant or currently caring for young dependent children are few and far between. The few that do exist often have long admission waitlists.

For many expectant and new mothers the choice to temporarily give up custody of their children in order to enter a residential recovery program is a traumatic and painful decision. Yet finding a treatment center where a young mother can be admitted with her newborn, a facility specializing in pre- and post-partum care and support, not only eliminates a major barrier to accessing the right kind of care, but also gives new hope in keeping a family together. In Massachusetts "Family Sober Living Programs," like Victory Programs' Portis Family Home, offer the dual advantage of experienced on-site professional teams and a community of mothers who can help each other both in their recovery and in child development. Finding creative ways to expand this model to the current Massachusetts' residential treatment program system will offer more young mothers a chance at recovery in a safe, therapeutic environment.

To this end, Victory Programs is expanding our Shepherd House, a six-month Residential Recovery Program, to include six new dedicated recovery beds for expectant mothers and mothers with newborns. Shepherd House has long been a pioneer among women's alcoholism and drug treatment programs in the Commonwealth. The recovery home was founded 45 years ago in Dorchester and will soon be licensed to admit pre- and post-partum mothers who wish to access all of the advantages of a supportive recovery environment. This will allow our mothers to focus on their recovery goals and learn parenting skills with the experience and support of staff and others in recovery in a safe, stigma free home.





Remembering John Michael Gray

Half of Boston's Famed "Hat Sisters"
& Beloved Friend to Victory Programs

For over 30 years in Boston and Provincetown, the outlandish-vibrant-elegant-extravagant-happy-zany and anti-femme fatale sensations known and cherished by all as "The Hat Sisters" (aka: real life husbands John Michael Gray and Timothy O'Connor) painstakingly stitched and sewed, glue-gunned and velcro-ed, molded and melded their endearing, unforgettable hats inspired to razzle, dazzle and mostly incite sheer, ecstatic pure joy.

Their entrances into countless charity events where the packed crowds would part a path like Moses to the sea were always a spectacle of awe and exuberance. The never ending paparazzi flashing of selfies, group Vogue glamour shots and the waves of ooos and ahhs and riotous laughter followed them everywhere.

On Saturday, September 24, when the heart-breaking, unbearable news raced like a giant wave of electricity through the internet: John Michael Gray had after a short illness peacefully died in the arms of his husband Tim - it was as if all the rainbows faded away. The once big colorful sky they gave us washed out to a somber, pale grey.

They were deeply part of our own coming out. They were everywhere in our time and life in Boston and our favorite "home at the end of the world" we call Provincetown. They are indelibly traced in all our own histories, etched in our stories that make us who we are today.

In a class by themselves, yet they are surrounded by ineffable love. They are our very dearest friends. They are forever our very own beloved. "The Hats."



THE BEST OF dinnerfest 2016

On Sunday, April 24, more than 200 guests gathered at the stunning Red Lantern to attend the most successful **Dinnerfest RED Party + Auction** in the event's 26-year history! This foodie-centric event featured a phenomenal live and silent auction, specialty cocktails and hors d'oeuvres, a fun photo booth and raised nearly \$125,000 to support Victory Programs.

The Dinnerfest Host Committee included Honorary Co-Chairs Attorney General Maura Healey and Flour Restaurant's founder and impresario Joanne Chang. We were also supported by auctioneer Kathy Kingston; our corporate friends which included our yearlong sponsors Eastern Bank, Macy's, Walgreens and other notable supporters from the business community; in-kind donors; our terrific guests and Jen, our client speaker who inspired guests by sharing her moving story of addiction and subsequent recovery with the help of Victory Programs.

We look forward to seeing everyone at the 2017 Dinnerfest event: Sunday, April 23, back at the Red Lantern. Details will be posted on our website, www.vpi.org, in early 2017.

Client Stories

When José came to Victory Programs' Living and Recovering Community (LARC), he was struggling with homelessness. LARC is a 90-day recovery program that provides specialized substance use disorder treatment and stabilization services for men and women who are at high risk of relapse and also may have a diagnosis of HIV/AIDS. Like José, many LARC clients also struggle with homelessness. Growing up, José never learned how to stick with his plans or work towards goals. Entering LARC was a turning point for him.

"LARC helped me learn how to commit to my goals, which was something I needed to do to stabilize my life," José said. "Since I completed the program at LARC, I've been able to get my learner's permit, finish my high school diploma and I've enrolled in a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) certificate program." José is on track to graduate and plans to continue his education, with the goal of becoming a Registered Nurse.

"LARC taught me that there were people who cared about me and wanted me to succeed, and that helped me learn to believe in myself, to never give up," José shared. "There was a Chinese Proverb at the front desk at LARC, 'If you fall down seven times, you get up eight.' That really speaks to me."



JOSÉ
LARC Alumni



SHERELL
Chamblet Alumni

Sherell lost her housing while she was pregnant with her second child. Despite the difficulty she faced, Sherell said "It was for the best." The support she received from the staff at Victory Programs' Chamblet Family Home helped her think through how she made decisions. "Here," she shared "I've learned that I am responsible for how my life turns out." While at Chamblet, Sherell found a job as a supervisor with the housekeeping department of a local hotel and met the father of her third child. In May 2016, she moved out of the room at Chamblet she and her children lived in for seven months and into an apartment the program's housing stabilization staff helped her and her fiancée find. "Being [at Chamblet] helped me," she said. "Everything happens for a reason. If I hadn't had my falling out with [the father of her first two children] I wouldn't have had the chance to grow up myself and become the best parent I could be."

When Sherell thinks about the future with her soon-to-be husband and their children, she sees a house. "A NICE house," she said, "with enough bedrooms for everyone, a big yard for the kids to play in and maybe a pool." She's not sure about the pool, but she knows she is committed to giving her family a nice, safe home to call their own.

"I was diagnosed five years ago. Honestly, looking back, I'm surprised something didn't happen sooner," Marco shared, explaining how his HIV diagnosis was the wake-up call he needed to commit to working on his recovery from addiction. "I had to want to get sober and get control of my life," Marco explained. "I looked at my life and I wondered how much more of this can I do? How much more grief can I cause my parents? How many more second chances will I get?"

Now a year into sobriety, Marco has discovered a new sense of strength and inner peace. He was moved by Reverend Judy Mannheim's invocation at Victory Programs' annual Celebration of Life last year. The Celebration of Life is a free community meal for individuals with HIV and their guests featuring a traditional Thanksgiving dinner and is also Victory Programs' largest fundraiser for the Boston Living Center. Marco explained how exploring his spiritual side has given him the kind of fulfillment he was looking for when he turned to sex and drugs in his youth. "Eventually, I'd like to do missionary work through my church community," he shared.

In the meantime, Marco plans to pursue higher education. "I'm enrolled in the GED program through the Boston Living Center, and I'd like to go on to Mass Art to study photography." Marco spends a lot of time at the BLC where he is both a member and a volunteer. "They have tons of resources and support for things like education and housing. The meals program is like having Thanksgiving five days a week!"

"The party is over for me," Marco said. "I'm lucky enough to be ok with medicine and - so far - no side effects." Staying active with the BLC community helps Marco get out of his own head. "I can concentrate on my recovery."



MARCO
BLC Alumni



OPENING DOORS TO HOPE, HEALTH AND HOUSING

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Victory Programs opens doors to hope, health and housing for individuals and families facing homelessness, substance use disorders and chronic illnesses.

4 Ways to Support Victory Programs:

- 1 Make a contribution**
Visit www.vpi.org or send donations to:
Victory Programs, Inc.
965 Massachusetts Ave Boston, MA 02118
- 2 Donate new items to our clients**
Our clients are always in need of items to start their own homes, specifically linens, toiletries and kitchenware.
- 3 Volunteer!**
Victory Programs offers many volunteer opportunities for individuals and groups looking to get more involved with the community we serve. For more information, contact Tammy at 617-236-1012 or tblocker@vpi.org.
- 4 Spread the word!**
Tell your friends, family and coworkers about our programs and ways they can get involved.

Please visit our website, www.vpi.org, to learn more about Victory Programs.

