



*Tommy and Richard: These Victory House residents interviewed each other, sharing both joyous and painful memories, their struggles with addiction, and the plans they have for the future.*



*"Our approaches and journeys are so different, but we do have the ability to look at each other from those different perspectives and say 'Yes, I respect what you're doing,'" Diandra Blackwood, MPT Drug User Health Coordinator told her interview partner Jane Westgate, BLC Peer Advocate. Both agreed the experience brought them closer.*

## StoryCorps and the Voices of Victory Programs

Since 2003, the StoryCorps project has given a quarter of a million Americans the chance to record interviews with one another, to pass experience and wisdom from one generation to the next, to leave that legacy. Many have been broadcast on NPR stations across the country. You may have heard some. All are archived in the Library of Congress, comprising the largest single collection of human voices ever gathered.

This February, eighteen people from Victory House and Boston Living Center paired up — staff and client; staff and staff; client and client — and added their voices to this unprecedented affirmation of the implicit value of everyone's story, of every life. In their nine conversations, those eighteen people express what Victory Programs can only try to convey so well: the life-changing potential of our mission.

The participants talk about their lives, discuss their work, reflect on what they've experienced, on what others have experienced, on what they are experiencing now. With honesty, feeling, and insight, they explain and exemplify what brought them to our red doors and what happens behind them.

The discussions are sometimes difficult to listen to. They are at least as inspiring to hear. Perhaps someday, one or two will be on the radio. We hope so. And we cannot help but believe that these voices, when they are heard, will draw countless numbers of those who have ears to hear to join in our mission.

As soon as these nine revelatory human encounters are available to the public, we will let you know. We will urge you to listen — and to ask someone else, as you are moved to, also to lend an ear. Hearing, they, too, will surely know our task, its reason, and its urgency.



*"My StoryCorps experience shed an important realization: I never have to drink again. I am now sober 4 months and enjoying the fruits of waking up sober each day..."*

— Joe H., Former Victory House resident, StoryCorps participant, and recently employed.

Stay tuned to find out when and how you can listen to our StoryCorps segments. To learn more about StoryCorps visit [www.storycorps.org](http://www.storycorps.org).

# Boston Living Center Volunteer Finds the “Perfect Flow”

Qi Yu loved volunteering for Thursday Night Dinners at the Boston Living Center. But when the pandemic hit, and these dinners were put on hold, Qi decided to hang up her apron and try on a new volunteer role: Yoga Instructor.

While Qi is currently on the path to medical school, she found pockets of time in 2020 to complete her yoga instructor training. She thought the training would help her better understand the reasoning behind the different poses and flows, and how to best modify everything based on different peoples’ physical conditions.

The training experience also helped her realize the inequity of the practice: “Yoga has this image of being a very privileged exercise. No matter the yoga studio, classes are very expensive. I think it should be something accessible for everyone, but it’s not. That’s why I wanted to teach yoga at the BLC.”

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, Qi’s class is a hybrid model, allowing two members to join in-person each session, with others following along virtually. “Doing yoga over Zoom can be challenging because each person is so different. When I teach yoga to the members, I often have to modify many of the positions based on their joints or range of movement in order to keep them safe,” explains Qi. But that hasn’t stopped her students. Qi says, “It feels great to see people coming back [to my class]. Living with HIV takes a toll on the members, so it’s great to see them coming in so happy, staying as healthy as they can, and being able to do different kinds of activities.”

Qi’s goal is to help members physically and mentally. “You really have to open up to the teacher,” Qi told us, “and it can make you



*Volunteer yoga instructor Qi says she loves being able to help Boston Living Center members improve and maintain their health.*

feel very vulnerable, which can be challenging for anyone. My students seem to really enjoy the class and I think that is what pushes me to continue teaching.”

For Qi, this has become more than just volunteering. For one hour a week, she is able to build meaningful bonds with the BLC community: “I feel like I am not only teaching yoga, but I am making friends. I feel like they’re my family.”



*Staff from Walgreens Pharmacy spent the day volunteering as part of their Let’s Do Lunch! Sponsorship.*

## Let’s Do Lunch!

At the Boston Living Center, we believe that food is medicine. Please consider a Victory Programs’ Let’s Do Lunch! Sponsorship. Your company, organization, or community group can underwrite nutritious, free breakfasts and lunches for Boston Living Center members, the vast majority of whom depend on the BLC as their primary food source.

Many thanks to our current Let’s Do Lunch! Sponsors:

- Alnylam Pharmaceuticals
- Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center
- Boston Medical Center
- Eastern Bank
- eHana
- Gilead
- Macy’s
- Walgreens

For more information about Let’s Do Lunch!, please contact Corporate & Community Engagement Manager Eve Rabinowitz at [ERabinowitz@vpi.org](mailto:ERabinowitz@vpi.org).

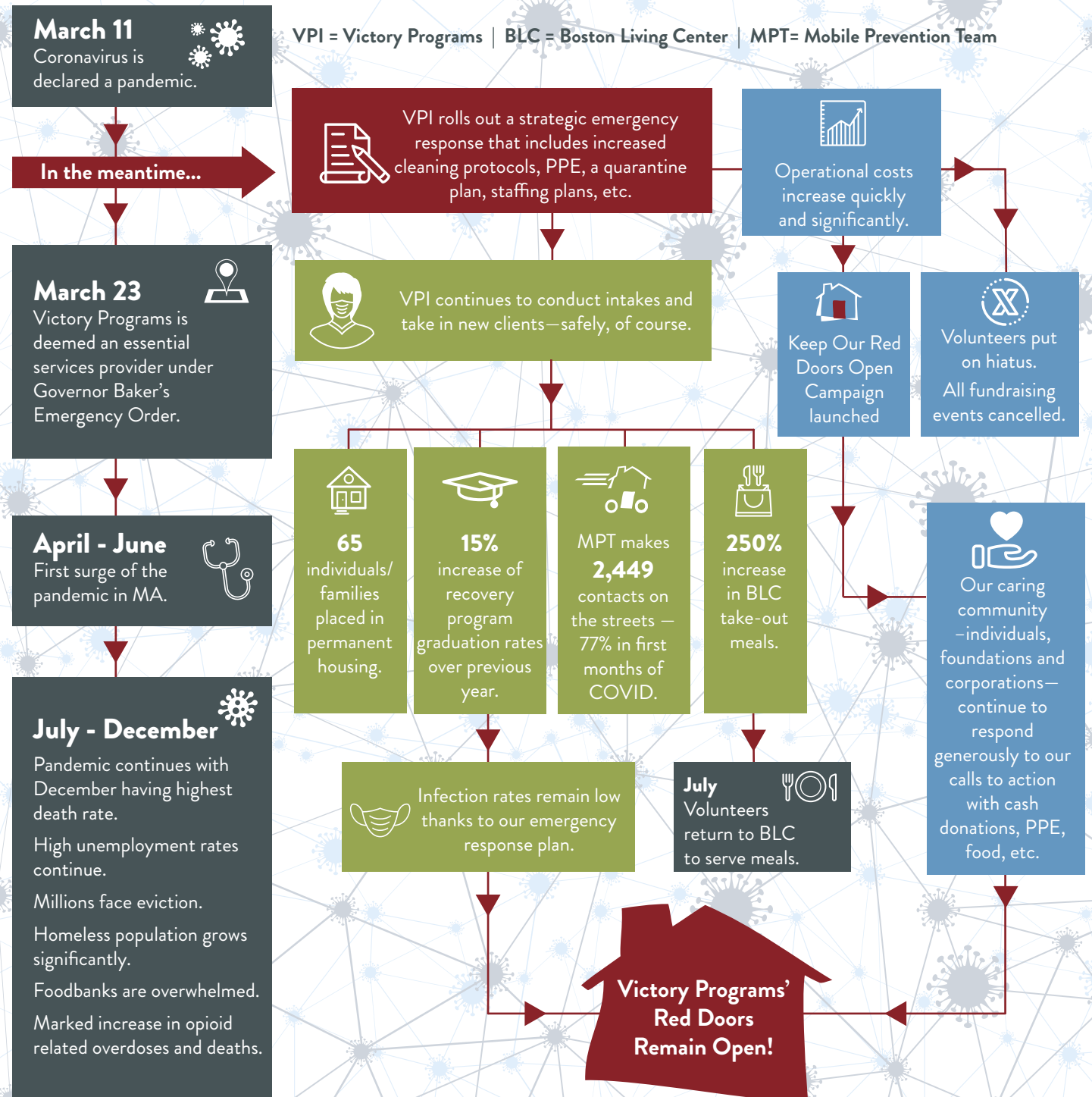


# Victory Programs through the Coronavirus Pandemic

Your trust and investment in Victory Programs has literally saved lives. Thanks to the rapid and generous response from our community – individuals, foundations, and corporations – we have managed to keep our Red Doors open to all.

What we could not imagine a year ago is happening: Victory Programs clients and staff are getting vaccinated. Hope is in the air. But it's also clear that the health and economic impact of the pandemic will reverberate for years to come, especially for our clients.

Thanks to our generous community, Victory Programs has and will continue to be there for those in need.



# ReVision Urban Farm: Let's Get Growing!



Victory Programs' Revision Urban Farm in Dorchester, MA, grows and provides access to affordable, nutritious, and culturally appropriate produce to residents of Victory Programs' ReVision Family Home, a shelter for homeless families, and to our extended community.

Here's how you can help:

**Seedlings Sale:** Stop by The Farm on May 1st to purchase our easy-to-grow, high-yield seedlings. Visit our website and download our 2021 Seedling Catalog to see this year's offerings and to preorder.

**Community Supported Agriculture Subscriptions:** Our affordable CSA's brimming over with fresh produce are available for pick-up at The Farm and at the DotHouse Farmers' Market (see below).

**Purchase Our Produce:** We sell our fresh vegetables, herbs, and flowers directly at DotHouse Farmers' Market, 1353 Dorchester Ave, every Tuesday, July to October, 11:30 AM to 1:30 PM. We hope to add more farmers' markets as points of purchase. Follow ReVision Urban Farm on social media for updates.

**Volunteer:** Individual and group (10 max.) and volunteer opportunities vary with the season – from preparing growing beds in the spring to harvesting in the summer and fall. Shifts are weekdays from 9AM – 12PM and 1PM – 4PM, with the option to sign up for the full day. Email [volunteer@vpi.org](mailto:volunteer@vpi.org).



@ReVisionUrbanFarm

Visit [www.vpi.org/revision/](http://www.vpi.org/revision/) for more information. ReVision Urban Farm: 38 Fabyan St., Boston, MA.

## DONATE

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## VOLUNTEER

Visit [www.vpi.org](http://www.vpi.org) to learn more or email [volunteer@vpi.org](mailto:volunteer@vpi.org)

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