The Mt. Washington Miracle!

The Mt. Washington community turned out to march with the Mt. Washington Alliance (MWA) in the 54th Annual VFW Santa Parade on November 18 in Haverhill. The theme, “Miracle on Merrimack Street”, reflected the Alliance’s goal to promote Mt. Washington neighborhood pride and celebrate community.

Christine Soundara Borchers, MWA Initiative Director, said, “I would like to extend my appreciation to all of those involved in helping make our first appearance in the parade a success. We had a great turn out of almost 60 people including Mt. Washington residents, community partners, children, and youth.”

“The afternoon was filled with joy, laughter, and pride as the entire team including Mt. Washington’s Q-mascot marched and shouted “MWA, Mt. Washington Alliance!” and “Q- for Quality, Quality of Life”. We also

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CAI Receives Franklin Square Grant for Newburyport Center Improvements

Community Action, Inc. recently received a 2018 Franklin Square House grant for renovations and improvements at the CAI Early Learning Center in Newburyport. The mission of the Franklin Square House Foundation is to help women and families by making bricks and mortar grants for the provision of transitional and permanent housing primarily for women and the support of daycare centers that are accessible to all.

Pictured right are CAI Director of Planning and Development, Kerri Perry; FSH Executive Director, Robert Goldstein; CAI Seacoast Center Director, Cathy Johnston and CAI Director of Children’s Services, Chris Espinola.
Early Head Start Child Care Partnership Highlights Belkys Segura as Educator of the Month

In December, the CAI Early Head Start Child Care Partnership (EHS-CCP) highlighted Family Child Care Educator, Belkys Segura, as their educator of the month. Belkys is part of CAI Family Day Care’s community-based network of Family Child Care Educators who offer care and education to children 8 weeks to 12 years old in a home setting licensed by the MA Department of Early Education and Care. She has provided care for fourteen years through the Family Day Care network.

Deborah Linett, CAI Associate Director for Family Development, said, “Belkys is an invaluable resource to our program and to her families. Her strength is evident in everything she does. She consistently goes the extra mile to help her families. Belkys is always up for a challenge and meets new opportunities with a smile on her face!”

Through the Early Head Start Child Care partnership, CAI is able to provide quality childcare and additional support services, such as case management and parent engagement opportunities, to low-income families with infants and toddlers. Early Head Start is a federally funded community-based program.

Parent Marie Deviuex recently said, “Belkys has been both of my kids provider since they were 3 months old. Sémyn is now 2 & Aymarah-Leé is 4. She is patient, firm, & extremely loving. I have no clue who else takes their job as serious and loving as she does. Not only has she been more than a great provider but also an awesome mother figure to my husband and me. Even though we are parents to two children we still look up to her and value the advice she gives us as a mother herself. We thank God for her every single day and we definitely wouldn’t have survived every obstacle without her wisdom and comfort”.

CAI Family Day Care Director, Kathie Cote, added that Ms. Deviuex’s feedback, “comes as no surprise”. “Belkys provides a caring, nurturing as well as educational environment for the children enrolled in her home and is respectful and considerate of the needs and differences of families. She displays a sincere concern for others and treats each individual with dignity and respect. She is an asset to the FDC program.”

To learn more about childcare and preschool services offered through CAI Head Start, Early Head Start and Family Day Care, please visit: www.communityactioninc.org. These programs serve families in Amesbury, Boxford, Georgetown, Groveland, Haverhill, Merrimac, Newbury, Newburyport, Rowley, Salisbury and West Newbury.

Children & Families

Christmas Tree Santas Donation Brings Joy to 150 Local Families

The Community Action, Inc. Fox Center received a generous donation of 150 holiday trees from Christmas Tree Santas on November 30. The Fox Center serves low-income children and their families enrolled in the Head Start/Early Head Start and Family Day Care programs.

CAI staff and volunteers distributed the trees during a family event on Saturday, December 1, that included food, activities and a visit from Santa. CAI thanks our staff, volunteers and Christmas Tree Santas for making this family event possible each year and for bringing joy to the families we serve during the holiday season.

Pictured below: CAI Head Start and Early Head Start Staff help unload trees donated by Christmas Tree Santas this past December.

Playgroups & Early Learning Activities for Families with Children 0–8 Years

The CAI Family & Community Connection offers playgroups and early learning activities for families with children 0-8 years old. Most activities are held at FCC, 346 Broadway in Haverhill (unless otherwise indicated) and there is no cost to participate.

Activities include weekly playgroups for 0-3 year olds and 3-6 years olds; the Kindergarten Ready program, STEM activities, Learn & Move, story times at local libraries and more! Visit www.communityactioninc.org or call (978) 914-7893 for more information and to register your child.
“Make It Haverhill”
Set to Open in Early 2019

A new collaborative makerspace is coming to the Mt. Washington Neighborhood in Haverhill.

“Make it Haverhill”, a partnership between Community Action, Inc. (CAI), a local non-profit agency and Urban Kindness, the Mt Washington neighborhood group, are collaborating to open a creative new space for area residents to gain employment, education and entrepreneurial skills. The 2,000 square foot space will be located at 301 Washington Street, said Keith Boucher of Urban Kindness.

Plans are underway for building renovations. The space will open in early 2019.

“Make it Haverhill initially plans to offer creative space for computers, 3D printing, sewing stations for tailoring, job training, fashion design as well as various classes and networking opportunities for residents”, Boucher said. “We also may develop a visual arts community (painting, sculpture etc.).”

John Cuneo, president and CEO of CAI said Make it Haverhill will operate on a volunteer basis. “We are developing additional collaborative partnerships that focus on employment and the education and skills necessary to match job seekers with employers. These partnerships include local schools, higher education institutions, local businesses and other public and private agencies.”

“Our focus will be on the Mt Washington neighborhood but the space will be open to all Haverhill residents,” said Cuneo. “For the initial start-up period there will be no charge to use the space.”

For additional information on the Make It Haverhill space contact Keith Boucher at 603-203-4917 or John Cuneo at 978-373-1971.

Newburyport High School Students Hold Food Drive for CAI Amesbury Center

CAI thanks students and staff from the Newburyport High School Student Council and Setting Sail Post Grad Programs for organizing a food drive to benefit the CAI Amesbury Center’s food pantry during the holiday season. Volunteers delivered the food to the center and also helped stock the shelves.

Amesbury Center Coordinator, Julie DeMarco LaPorta, said, “Many thanks to the Student Council and the Setting Sail Post Grad Program who organized the efforts to stock our shelves with much needed food items. Students and staff made multiple trips to the Amesbury Center to drop off food items including soup, cereal, pasta, and they even made time to stock the shelves in our pantry and reception area during their delivery trips”.

The Amesbury Center, located at 44 Friend Street in Amesbury provides crucial services to the low-income residents of Amesbury, Merrimac, Newburyport, Newbury, West Newbury and Salisbury.

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Community Action, Inc. and Soundara Borchers thank the Mt. Washington Miracle Committee who planned, organized, and coordinated outreach, donations, and volunteers. We also thank BJ’s Wholesale Club, Demoulas Market Basket, and Mt. Washington’s High Street Market/Bodega for donating candy and Northern Essex Community College and Walmart for donating Santa hats. A special thank you to the administrators, faculty, and students at the Mt. Washington Neighborhood Schools, including: Consentino School, Moody School, Silver Hill School, and Tilton School – who not only marched with the MWA, but also thank BJs Wholesale Club, Demoulas Market Basket, and Mt. Washington’s High Street Market/Bodega for donating candy and Northern Essex Community College and Walmart for donating Santa hats. A special thank you to the administrators, faculty, and students at the Mt. Washington Neighborhood Schools, including: Consentino School, Moody School, Silver Hill School, and Tilton School – who not only marched with the MWA, but created phenomenal posters for the parade showcasing their school pride. Lastly, thank you to all the participants, individuals, groups, and community partners for your time and continued support. Congratulations to all for putting Mt. Washington in the spotlight! We look forward to participating in the parade next year.

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A message for our volunteers and supporters. Thank you for your ongoing and much needed support. Your assistance allows us to continue to provide crucial services to our local communities.

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