Michael Weekes to step down as Providers’ Council President/CEO

When Michael Weekes was first hired as President and CEO of the Providers’ Council in January 1998, the human services sector in Massachusetts was only a few decades old – emerging from the deinstitutionalization movement – and received grossly inadequate state funding and policy support as providers replaced draconian institutions with better, more empowering systems of care.

A decade later, Weekes was leading the passage of Chapter 257, the landmark rate-setting legislation that has transformed the state’s human services sector and resulted in hundreds of millions of dollars of new spending for community-based providers and a transparent purchase-of-service system.

Prior to Chapter 257 being fully implemented, Weekes and the Council led efforts each year for a reserve to increase salaries for the lowest-paid workers, which resulted in more than $250 million going to direct care staff from FY ’97 through FY ’14. Additionally, the Chapter 257 Reserve to ensure fair funding for human services rates was funded at $470 million over the three most recent fiscal years.

“The single most important element in our provider community today, as it was then, is the human services workforce. These selfless women and men remain stalwart and deserving of our appreciation and livable wages,” Weekes said.

Council opening applications for scholarships in mid-March

As part of its continuing commitment to advancing the human services sector’s workforce in Massachusetts, the Providers’ Council is opening the application process in mid-March for its 2023 Graduate Scholarship, Foreign-Born Leader Scholarship and Master of Public Administration Scholarships.

Offered in partnership with Suffolk University, the educational scholarships total more than $20,000 to help four human services workers further their education at local colleges.

The Graduate Scholarship is a one-time award of $10,000 for a Council member employee who is entering or is currently enrolled in a Massachusetts-based master’s degree program.

The Foreign-Born Leader Scholarship, created in partnership with African Bridge Network, also seeks to support one dedicated human services employee with $2,000 towards their graduate education. Specifically, this scholarship is for a foreign-born Council member employee who is entering or is currently enrolled in a master’s or doctoral degree program.

Most accredited master’s programs are eligible for the two scholarships, provided the applicants demonstrate in their personal statements how the program is clearly related to their future contributions to the human services sector.

“One of my goals is to complete my graduate education with as little debt as possible, and by reducing my financial burden this scholarship allowed me to focus on my coursework, rather than applying for student loans and working 40-hours/week,” said Chris White, president and CEO of Road to Responsibility. “The human services infrastructure is crumbling before our eyes. Please support a livable wage for human services workers so that we can begin attracting more people to this critical field.”

The first bill filed, An Act relative to a livable wage for human services workers, seeks to eliminate the pay disparity that exists between the current salaries of community-based human services workers and state employees holding similar job titles who perform similar work. Sponsored by Sen. Cindy Bilkis, the bill was filed in January and a hearing date has yet to be set.

Council members recognize Black History Month through a wide range of events

In celebration of Black History Month (BHM), numerous members of the Providers’ Council held events in February honoring and promoting the Civil Rights Movement, the countless achievements of African Americans and the opportunities to improve diversity, equity and inclusion efforts in organizations across Massachusetts.

“We at the Council are tremendously proud of our members for hosting events that provide Massachusetts residents with the opportunity to recognize and celebrate this tremendously important time in our history,” said Council President & CEO Michael Weekes. 

Providers’ Council President & CEO Michael Weekes speaks to the crowd at the Council’s 47th Annual Convention & Expo: Celebrate Our Strength.
Northeast Arc elects Dr. Nate Bryant to board of directors

Officials from Northeast Arc, a Danvers-based nonprofit, announced in February that Dr. Nate Bryant had been elected to the organization’s board of directors.

Bryant is the vice president of student success at Salem State University, where he oversees the areas of enrollment management, The Center for Academic Excellence, marketing and communications, public relations and student life. He was recently named one of the 50 Most Influential People of Color in Higher Education in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

“I am honored to join the Northeast Arc’s board of directors,” Bryant said. “I have seen firsthand the incredible work the organization does to help people living with developmental disabilities. The programming that Northeast Arc has developed through innovative and creative thinking is making a true difference in the lives of the people they serve and their families.”

Doc Wayne Youth Services appoints Shalini Kasida as board chair

Doc Wayne Youth Services, a nonprofit provider of sport-based mental health therapy for youth, announced in early February that Shalini Kasida was selected to serve as the organization’s chair of the board of directors.

Kasida has served as a Doc Wayne board member since 2018. Previously, she was the operations director at Parents for Peace, a nonprofit that focuses on prevention, intervention and rehabilitation of individuals moving toward a path of violent extremism.

“Access to quality healthcare is a human right and so is the opportunity for everyone to live up to their full potential,” Kasida said. “That is why I was immediately drawn to Doc Wayne and its mission of providing access to brighter futures for youth around the world through mental healthcare.”

Kasida replaces outgoing Chair Christopher Ernest, who has served on Doc Wayne’s board since the inception of the organization.

Bridgewell announces addition of Jessica Almeida to key leadership role

Bridgewell, a Peabody-based human services nonprofit, announced in February that Jessica Almeida had joined the organization as vice president of day habilitation and community engagement.

In this role, Almeida will oversee all of Bridgewell’s day habilitation and community engagement programs, including employment and community-based day services programming. This includes Bridgewell’s Family Support Center, recreational programming and four-day habilitation programs.

Almeida has a MBA in Nonprofit Management and 12 years of experience in disability services, including supervision of residential and day programming.

“We are very excited to have Jessica Almeida join the Bridgewell team and bring her extensive experience to our programs,” said CEO Chris Tuttle. “Her knowledge and leadership allow us to continue developing programs that improve the lives of people who utilize our services.”

Square One preschoolers get ice skating lesson

Preschoolers at Square One were treated to an ice skating lesson at the MassMutual Center in February, compliments of the Springfield Thunderbirds, former U.S. Olympic figure skater Tiffany Scott Pryor (right), the Olympia Ice Center and the City of Springfield. Pryor, who competed in the 2002 Winter Olympics, and members of the Springfield Thunderbirds organization led the children in the on-ice lesson, teaching them the basics of figure skating and hockey.

Lifeworks welcomes new lead psychiatrist for Harbor Counseling Center

Officials from Lifeworks, a Westwood-based human services nonprofit, announced in January that psychiatrist Dr. David Christopher Freeman will serve as the new medical director providing psychiatric services to individuals served by the nonprofit’s Harbor Counseling Center.

“We are excited to welcome Dr. Freeman to the center,” said President and CEO Dan Burke. “This is an opportunity for our entire agency to benefit from his clinical expertise and to increase our ability to support the people with disabilities we serve, their families and their other professional support staff.”

Freeman is the executive vice president of Integrated Psychiatric Consultation in Worcester, specializing in treating dementia, acquired/traumatic brain injuries, autism and other neuropsychological disorders, epilepsy, MS, stroke, mood and psychotic disorders.

Center for Human Development issued a $3M bond to build four group homes

The Center for Human Development (CHD), a nonprofit serving families throughout Western Massachusetts and Connecticut, in February was issued a $3 million tax-exempt bond from MassDevelopment and will use proceeds to buy four residential group homes in Chicopee and Springfield.

The group homes will house 24 individuals with developmental disabilities and behavioral health care needs. The bond was purchased by PeoplesBank.

CHD will also use proceeds to buy and renovate a commercial building at 55-69 Union St. in Easthampton to be used for behavioral health outpatient services, including urgent care. The projects will help CHD meet increased demand and better serve the needs of clients.

“This financing empowers our work and enables us to develop services to fulfill our mission and meet community needs,” said President and CEO Jim Goodwin.

Hirsch Roberts Weinstein attorneys know and understand the nuances of the human services industry and provide practical and sensitive advice. Since 1986, we have proudly worked with human services organizations and their leadership teams to provide tailored human resources guidance and leadership training for executive, managers, and supervisors. For more info, please contact Jeffrey Hirsch at 617-348-4300 or jhirsch@hrlwlawyers.com.
Advocates partners with individuals, families, and communities to help people thrive. The nonprofit provides a broad range of services for people of all ages facing challenging issues related to addiction, aging, autism, brain injury, in-tellectual and developmental disabilities, and mental health.

Each year, Advocates and its affiliates serve more than 42,000 community members at locations throughout eastern and central Massachusetts.

Advocates was founded in 1975 as a coffee shop on the grounds of Westborough State Hospital, run by and for state hospital patients, supporting their employment and social skills. The organization began with the core value of supporting people in the communities in which each person has a full life, decent and affordable housing, meaningful work, satisfying relationships and good health. The Advocates motto – First, we listen – represents the agency’s goal of authentic engagement with and respect for people supported, their families and the communities where services are provided.

Advocates continues to grow, and recent affiliations with non-profits HMEA and Family Connections were added to the scope and depth of its offerings.

At Advocates, listening first.

Executive Leadership

Advocates President and CEO Diane Gould grew up in a family that valued service to others, which greatly influenced her life and career path. She received her bachelor’s degree from UMass Amherst and her Master of Social Work degree from Simmons College, and began her career as a live-in counselor in a group home for adults with disabilities in Central Massachusetts.

Gould began working at Advocates in 1985 and was appointed President and CEO in 2013. Through her tenure, she has held many clinical and leadership roles and directed a range of clinical, residential and support services providing her government, inclusion and health equity.

Gould’s community recognitions include the 2011 Deborah Blumer Community Health Advocate Award from the MetroWest Health Foundation, the 2015 MassPRA Public Advocacy Award, and The Providers’ Council’s 2020 CEO Award and 2022 Chair’s Award.

Under her leadership, Advocates was recently named one of the Top 100 Women-Led Businesses and one of the Top 100 Place to Work in Massachusetts by The Boston Globe.

Provider Profiles

Advocates

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At Advocates, listening first.

The Caring Force

Saluting the Caring Force

Osei Asibey always brings a smile

Ernest Osei Asibey has worked as a live-in overnight counselor for Vinfen since June of 2018 and is responsible for implementing support plans, providing physical and emotional needs of the individuals served and ensuring the overall safety and well-being of the program where he works during the overnight hours.

Thanks to Osei Asibey’s hard work and dedication, he was recently recognized by Vinfen as a Transformer of the Quarter, an award given to a select number of employees per quarter who go above and beyond to fulfill Vinfen’s mission.

Osei Asibey was nominated for the award by one of his coworkers, Jessica Price, who in her nomination described Osei Asibey as one of the hardest working people she knows. “He is a father and husband and is also very respected and helpful to everyone in the community. With all he does outside of work, he still comes to work with a positive attitude and is very interactive with the clients, making them laugh and feel comfortable through very circuitous ways,” Price said. “He is also very well loved by his coworkers and a great asset to Vinfen.”

Their sentiments were echoed by Program Director Lesha Elias, who said that Osei Asibey is always willing to help his coworkers and he has a positive attitude.

“Ernest Osei Asibey tries to help everyone at Vinfen that he can,” Elias said. “He always puts the people we serve first and foremost.”

The native of Ghana, Osei Asibey said that he was raised by a pastor and while growing up was always taught the importance of helping others and serving those in need. He is a native American Sign Language speaker and is a major reason why families keep bringing their infants to Cooper.

“I love to work here and come here early. I like everyone that I work with,” said Al-
varez, who continues to grow as a teacher by developing and honing her skills, not just through experience but by continuing her education. Alvarez is taking classes like Child Growth and Development and Infant and Toddler Curriculum at Urban College and is sharpening her skill set by taking Observing and Recording at Roxbury Community College.

Alvarez immerses herself into her teaching, bringing a zestful passion for her work that is adopted by the children she regularly cares for. She currently cares for the children, families and her co-workers and takes the time to get to know them.
Life’s most persistent and urgent question

When I announced that I would be stepping down as the Council’s president and CEO, it was undeniably bittersweet and with mixed emotions. I want to thank the Council’s board that chose and supported me through this journey, as well as our incredible staff and our indelibly markable members, who create miracles every day for those who too often face life’s unfair challenges.

With one chapter of my life’s work soon to end and another to begin, I reflect on Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s seminal quote in 1957: “Life’s most persistent and urgent question is, ‘What are you doing for others?’” This question remains at the core of my morals and values. Fortunately, I am not alone in this assertion, as many of you also use this as a guide on the journey for true justice for all. This single question has an infinite amount of positive responses, and I remain in pursuit of my own.

I have been fortunate to have authored over 250 editorials for this newspaper, and I am grateful to my editors and their shaping of the guardrails. While I know some readers may disagree with certain positions and philosophy of mine, I hope there is an appreciation of my objective to promote equity and justice for human service providers, their staff who perform important jobs and those within our society that benefit from them. This is not the first time I’ve asked myself and our readers Dr. King’s seminal question. It is a question that transcends vocation, ideology and perception. It is particularly germane to those of us in public service and at mission-driven organizations who advance the public good in a myriad of ways, be it teaching our children, protecting those with disabilities or special needs, feeding our hungry or eliminating housing insecurity. It is about service to others, which binds collective respect for all humanity.

Finally, on a list that is not exhaustive by any means, is initiative. It’s common for all of us to face challenges to our courage and leadership, and face setbacks and disappointments. If anyone with accomplishments tells you they haven’t had to persevere through adversity, they should write a book about it and teach. Failure brings lessons and opportunities to proceed with courage, albeit differently if you assume initiative. Too many times we let our failures prevent us from starting something new, sapping the initiative for social justice. Arthur Ashe, along with his worldwide achievements in tennis, exhibited leadership and courage in the civil rights movement, the anti-Apartheid movement, through his support of gender equality and in his fight with AIDS. As he once said, which I’ve frequently extolled in editorials, “Start where you are. Use what you have. Do what you can.”

So, as I prepare for a transition this summer, I intend to use “What I have and do what I can.” Have you started?

— Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

And so I wish to briefly share some thoughts on what I believe are three of the most important touchstones of our sector.

First, as Poet and incredible Philosopher Maya Angelou proclaimed, “Courage is the most important and urgent question because without it one cannot practice any other virtue with consistency.”

Many good ideas have failed or never even materialized due to a lack of courage. Courage does not mean having a reckless or ill-thought-out pursuit, driven by personal ambition, but making hard decisions strategically and with commitment. Some may respond with comfortability, but trying to please everyone all the time may lead you to being immobilized with fear and succumbing to self-doubt. The Council and its allies would have not accomplished the most important reform in the history of our sector – Chapter 257 – if we followed the advice of naysayers who often say “the time isn’t right now.” Wheels up for tailwinds and hold steady for headwinds, there may be turbulence ahead.

The next most important touchstone is leadership. To not only embrace leadership, but to exercise it. You don’t have to be an appointed or elected leader to exercise leadership. Leadership is an activity and often pursued without formal authority. It is mobilizing people to tackle challenging problems. Dr. King, perhaps the most influential leader in my lifetime, didn’t have the nonexistant title, Ruler of Civil Rights. But that didn’t stop him, a Southern Baptist preacher, from transforming his role from the pulpit and elevating our collective respect for all humanity.

Finally, on a list that is not exhaustive by any means, initiative.

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Common sense warns nonprofits to start getting prepared

By Jim Cassetta

It is time to support the passage of two pro-workforce bills that act relative to a loan repayment program for student workers (SD. 512 & HD. 78) and an act relative to a livable wage for employers that hire individuals with disabilities (SD. 1120 & HD.1014) – as well as WORK Inc.’s an act relative to employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities (SD. 2451 & HD. 3191).

These two bills impact the individuals and staff of our sector and must be looked at more closely than they have been in the past. Wouldn’t you want the person caring for your loved one to earn enough to live? Shouldn’t individuals with disabilities be able to work like all of us? If we require higher education for po-

sitions that do not pay a livable wage, shouldn’t we help them succeed?

Pay equity means compensating private or public employees with similar job functions as state employees with the same wages. For example, similar job titles and roles exist for individuals employed by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and those employed at private, community-based human services organizations. In fact, the National Council of Nonprofits has circulated these proposals as potential model legislation for other states to consider.

Furthermore, guard against the perennial threats by localities in Massachusetts to tax-exempt charitable contributions to nonprofit organizations. In this year’s SD. 761, including this year’s SD. 761. Expect nothing from Congress, get prepared, and work in the sector to defend their right to exist.

When employees are forced to work overtime or different shifts, the individuals we support are negatively impacted. Employers are tired and overworked. The end result can be that they do not receive the best care they can. Simply put, turnover is high in the private, community-based human services sector due to the low wages for work required.

By Monalis Smith

T he past few weeks have been an extraordinary time, including the U.S. presidential election and the recent example. We watched Tyre Nichols’ murder cry out for justice for the murder of her 13-year-old son, Tyre Lawrence, who was murdered while walking to the store on a Sunday morning for no reason other than blackness. The world made no noise at the wrong time.

We watched Tyre Nichols’ mother for his mother as he was taken to death by police officers who were sworn to protect and serve him and his community. Together, we grieve with the mothers of Nichols and Lawrence as they call out for justice. However, human- ity has received another call that we must not ignore. Both mothers join others throughout history to face the responsibility of humanizing the public. Having their children’s deaths as the burden of defending their son’s right to live is on the shoulders of the same women who have lost their child to senseless violence. Black mothers not only bear the burden of grief, but unfortunately, are often ignored by family, friends and society.

We stand together to encourage our elected officials to improve diversity, equity and inclusion among decision makers through votes and through our actions. It is time to hold them accountable for real change.

Monalis Smith is the President and CEO of Mothers for Justice and Equality.
By Sen. Susan Moran

W hile costs of living increasing, it is stressful having to choose between filling up your gas tank, buying enough food to feed your family or paying for housing. It seems impossible to set money aside to pay for college or think big picture when immediate needs take priority. For a long time, this balancing act has been a significant barrier for families with young children and childcare providers looking to build a future.

The COVID-19 crisis compounded the existing gaps in accessibility to affordable childcare and shined a spotlight on the foundational ties that childcare has to our workforce and the economy. The lack of affordable childcare is keeping qualified employees, particularly women, out of work. Many working-class parents simply do not have the bandwidth to work full time and watch their children, which can be a full-time role in and of itself. In my district, 9% of family childcare and 6% of early education centers have permanently closed since the beginning of the pandemic, and there is a direct correlation between the lack of childcare options and the current labor shortage.

This situation is made even worse by the inequity of the state’s childcare offerings as an industry. With too-little pay and the huge responsibility of caring for the Commonwealth’s children, teachers and childcare providers are leaving the profession with no one being incentivized to take their place. The added stressors of the pandemic, long hours, and remote learning have only made early education less appealing as a profession. This creates gaps in availability, largely in the communities that are in the most need.

Rightly, the childcare crisis has grabbed the attention of the Legislature, but our attention is not enough. We need action. If we wait, we leave a family owner unable to open because they lose an opportunity for early childhood education, or after-school education, our system has failed them. When a small business owner can’t open because their employees cannot return to work due to childcare responsibilities, our system has failed them. When a child loses an opportunity for early childhood or after school education, our system has failed them. When a child loses an opportunity for early childcare system that is high quality and supportive of providers, teachers, and families at all levels. No family should have to pay more than they can afford for childcare, and no teacher should feel that their labor is undervalued.

For a long time, this balancing act has been a significant barrier for families with young children and childcare providers looking to build a future. The COVID-19 crisis compounded the existing gaps in accessibility to affordable childcare and shined a spotlight on the foundational ties that childcare has to our workforce and the economy. The lack of affordable childcare is keeping qualified employees, particularly women, out of work. Many working-class parents simply do not have the bandwidth to work full time and watch their children, which can be a full-time role in and of itself. In my district, 9% of family childcare and 6% of early education centers have permanently closed since the beginning of the pandemic, and there is a direct correlation between the lack of childcare options and the current labor shortage.

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When a mother loses the choice to work or a family must go into debt in order to care for their children, our system has failed them. When a child loses an opportunity for early childhood education, or after school education, our system has failed them. When a small business owner can’t open because their employees cannot return to work due to childcare responsibilities, our system has failed them. Our childcare system is failing us in all of these ways. We must act now to make the changes required to support families in the Commonwealth.

The Caring Force Rally is Tuesday, May 16th at the Boston State House at 10 a.m. Order your Caring Force Shirt Today!

To register, email caroline@providers.org.

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Visit providers.org/careers to learn more.

Sen. Susan Moran represents Plymouth and Barnstable Counties in the Massachusetts Senate.

A VIEW FROM THE HILL

Early education and child care reform is the future for all

By Sen. Susan Moran

W ith costs of living increasing, it is stressful having to choose between filling up your gas tank, buying enough food to feed your family or paying for housing. It seems impossible to set money aside to pay for college or think big picture when immediate needs take priority. For a long time, this balancing act has been a significant barrier for families with young children and childcare providers looking to build a future.

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Every month, The Caring Force highlights a human services worker as a Workforce Hero!

To nominate a member of your staff, email Caroline O’Neill at coneill@providers.org.
The Board has begun a process for selecting the next President and CEO and aims to have a candidate in place by more than 50,000 learners. He was instrumental in his work with colleagues to secure more benefits and value,” McCroom said.

“Michael has been a steadfast, capable and dynamic leader who has spearheaded the Council’s board over the years on the founding boards of Nonprofit Vote and the Massachusetts Nonprofit Network, in addition to serving on many other government commissions and nonprofit boards. While there were many accomplishments on behalf of Council members and the human service sector, Weekes also transformed the Council itself from a fledging organization with a deficit to the largest human services membership association in the state with a healthy balance sheet and adequate reserves.”

In just the last 15 months, Weekes has been instrumental in his work with colleagues to secure $225 million in the state economic development bill and $16.5 million to create a student loan repayment program for the sector’s workers, achieving one of the Council’s long-term goals.

“Up to 6,000 staff of workers that work in our state have maintained at least of year of uninterrupted employment in the sector. Applicants would be eligible for up to $6,000 to repay their qualified education loans if they have an associate degree, up to $20,000 if they have a bachelor’s degree and up to $30,000 if they have a master’s degree.”

“The board has become so strong that we need to eliminate this disparity,” said Steve Friedman, chair of the state economic development bill for human services workforce development. While there were many accomplishments on behalf of Council members and the human service sector, Weekes also transformed the Council itself from a fledging organization with a deficit to the largest human services membership association in the state with a healthy balance sheet and adequate reserves.”

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“He grew the financial health and stability of the Council through a recession, economic downturns and the recent pandemic, while continually advocating for his members’ economic stability and encouraging endorsed business partners to provide members with more benefits and value,” McCroom said.

“Over the coming weeks and months, we will, together, find ways to formally and informally acknowledge and thank Michael for all that he has done for our sector, employees and the families we serve.”

Weekes thanked the board and staff of the Council for their contributions too, crediting the unwavering support of the Council’s board over the years and having incredible staff talent supporting our mission.”

The Board has begun a process for selecting the next President and CEO and aims to have a candidate in place when Weekes departs this summer.

“Community human service workers need and deserve a livable wage and shouldn’t have to leave their current positions to get it,” said Advocate President and CEO Diane Gould. “And an education loan repayment program for human service workers will support recruitment and retention of staff who are vital to the health and well-being of the Commonwealth.”

Council members have sent hundreds of emails to legislators in support of this pro-workforce agenda, but more support is needed to secure cosponsors for the bills. To send a pre-written letter or tweet to your State Representative and State Senator asking for them to be co-sponsors, visit the Council’s Action Center page at votervoice.net/PROVIDERS/campaigns/100038/responder.

“For too long, human service workers in community-based nonprofit organizations have been compensated below their state agency peers. All human service workers deserve to earn a living wage and we need to eliminate this disparity,” said Shaheer Mustafa, president and CEO of HopeWell Inc. “In addition, loan repayment for human service workers is an essential step in paving the way for the capable and dynamic workforce we need to face these challenges.”

**APPLY: Applications for Council scholarships open this month**

Continued from Page 1

To apply for the scholarships, please email Nina Walat at nwalat@providers.org.
Continued from Page 1

EVENTS: Black History Month celebrated by Council members

important time of year and learn more about how to create a more diverse and equitable Commonwealth,” said President and CEO Michael Weekes.

Open Sky Community Services, for instance, commemorated Black History Month by hosting an hour and a half-long discussion panel on Feb. 14 on reforming the criminal justice system, featuring multiple speakers from Families for Justice as Healing and Sisters Unchained. The virtual event was held in collaboration with Central Community Health Partnership, Venture Community Services and Steward Health Care Network.

On Feb. 27, ABCD (Action for Boston Community Development) celebrated BHM through a discussion led by President and CEO Sharon Scott-Chandler about bridging the racial wealth gap, featuring Boston Mayor Michelle Wu’s Chief of Economic Opportunity and Inclusion Segun Idowu as a guest panelist.

Riverside Community Care’s yearly Black History Month celebration—this year’s theme being African American Veterans and the Civil Rights Movement—offered musical performances from the US Army Field Band and emotional reflections from Dr. Clarence B. Jones, a confidant and advisor to Martin Luther King Jr.

In addition to hosting a monthlong movie marathon highlighting Black stories at its Young Adult Access Center, Children’s Services of Roxbury (CSR) continued its “ROXTalks” series by meeting with Boston City Councilor At-Large Erin Murphy to discuss how to build a more just and equitable Massachusetts. CSR established ROXTalks as a collective effort to dismantle systemic racism and change the trajectory for communities of color.

Additionally, participants in North-east Arc’s Day Hab programs marked Black History Month with a visit to Boston to see the recently unveiled sculpture ‘The Embrace,’ which represents Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. hugging his wife, Coretta Scott King, after he won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964 and commemorates the couple’s time together in Boston in the ’60s, where they met as students.

Imari Paris Jeffries, the executive director of Embrace Boston—the non-profit that created the memorial—was also the keynote speaker at Whittier Street Health Center’s Black History Month Celebration and Annual Meeting, where he was honored with the Center’s 2023 President’s Award.

Pre-registration for these events is required unless otherwise noted.

Please visit providers.org/events to learn more and register for the event you wish to attend.

Questions? Call 508.598.9800 or email Nina Walat at nwalat@providers.org.