



# The Ethical Humanist

## Newsletter of the Boston Ethical Community

Ethical Society of Boston  
MEMBER OF THE AMERICAN ETHICAL UNION

Volume 62, No. 2

November 2016

### BEC Announces Grant Awards

*Fred Hewett*

The Grant Committee's months-long process of soliciting and evaluating grant proposals drew to a climax in late September with the final allocation of the grant budget. The Committee selected five applicants to receive grants in areas ranging from police-community relations to aiding homeless youth.

The five grantees for 2016 are:

### Community Legal Services and Counseling Center

JUSTICE • HEALING • VOLUNTEERISM

Community Legal Services and Counseling Center of Cambridge (\$1979). CLSACC requested funds for its training classes for people applying to Section 8 (low-income) rental housing.



**CMAA** គម្រោងជំនួយ  
CAMBODIAN MUTUAL ASSISTANCE ASSOCIATION OF LOWELL, INC.

Cambodian Mutual Assistance Association of Lowell (\$3000). CMAA requested funds for voter engagement efforts and for citizenship training classes.



Essex County Community Organization of Lynn (\$10,000). ECCO's grant

supports its innovative program to advance police-community relations in a racially-mixed community.



**YouthHarbors**  
Housing. School. Success.

Youth Harbors (Justice Resource Institute, \$7500). The Youth Harbors project of JRI serves a growing population of homeless high

school students in the Boston area.



MassVOTE of Boston (\$2500). MassVOTE is a nonpartisan voter engagement organization that does both grassroots activism as well as legislative lobbying work. They are sharing the grant with Nonprofit VOTE of Cambridge, which does data analysis and training for nonprofits around the country.

The Grant Committee members visited each of the grantees at their respective locations as part of the selection process. Without exception, the selected applicants were impressive for their operation, their vitality, and their dedication to their work.



## The Way It Is (?)

*Marvin Miller*

### Charter Schools

**T**here is a question on the ballot this November that would enable an increase in the number of charter schools in Massachusetts.

Charter schools are privately run schools financed out of the public school budget. This source of their financing enables them to claim, in advertising in favor of the ballot question, that they are public schools.

Some charter schools are locally run; others are national chains. Their administrators are not responsible to local school boards.

The students they admit are chosen from among those whose parents applied for their admission. Also, many charter schools require substantial contributions of parents' time. Statistically, this parental population is probably more concerned about their children's education than the general population from which the public school children come. This parental involvement may skew the educational performance results in their favor, in comparison to public schools.

Some of the operators of charter schools are nonprofits; others are profit-seeking corporations. For profitable

ones, the money taken as profits isn't spent for education.

Charter schools don't have to hire professional, certified teachers. Many teachers in charter schools are well-meaning, energetic, inexperienced young people for whom teaching will not be their long-term career. Most charter schools don't have union contracts, so teachers can be required to put in more time and effort than they are willing to do for many years. The extra work hours may compensate to some degree for the lack of the knowledge that comes from experience. Charter schools have been found to have a higher rate of staff turnover than public schools.

In order to be able to claim better educational success than public schools, charter schools prefer not to have to deal with children who learn more slowly, such as children with disabilities and those for whom English isn't their primary language. The schools have ways, obvious and subtle, of getting rid of students they don't want to keep. For example, they can oust students for minor infractions that would be tolerated in students they do want to keep. The expelled students then go back to the public schools.

Despite the factors in their favor, charter schools overall do not have a better record of achievement than public schools. There is wide variation in both of these groups of schools. Some charter schools have been very successful, and these are advertised as showing the superiority of charter schools over public schools. But many public schools also perform well, and some charter schools have been unsuccessful.

Money in politics is a factor in the charter school movement. Some people with lots of money support charter schools politically. It can readily be inferred that privatization of all public schools and the elimination of teachers' unions are long-term goals of such people. Teachers' unions oppose the political Right. The public schools are, to some extent, unifying institutions in American life. Privatizing them would assist a policy of divide and rule. This isn't paranoia; after Hurricane Katrina, all of the New Orleans schools were converted to charter schools by rightist politicians who controlled the government there.

I think that increasing the number of charter schools in Massachusetts would be wrong.

---

## Sunday Programs in November 2016

---

November 6

### Dave Dorvillier, Program Director at YouthHarbors

*YouthHarbors: Housing, School, and Success*

YouthHarbors is an agency that collaborates with school systems to support homeless high school youth. YouthHarbors has had success in supporting youth succeed in dealing with this challenge and its correlating factors of underemployment, under education, and chronic poverty. Everyone has the innate right to feel safe, stable, and valued.

YouthHarbors was awarded a grant by the Boston Ethical Community in its new grants initiative.

---

November 13

### Community Building

We'll gather for alternative programming. All welcome.

---

November 20



### Eloise Lawrence, Staff Attorney, Harvard Law School, Harvard Legal Aid Bureau

Eloise Lawrence is a clinical instructor in community lawyering and a Lecturer on Law. She has represented tenants and homeowners in post-foreclosure evictions and worked with community organizers as part of Project No One Leaves.

---

November 27

### Annual Thanksgiving Breakfast

We'll meet to observe the Thanksgiving holiday and enjoy breakfast together.

---

### Officers for 2016-2017

President	Brian King	(781) 581-6104
Vice President	Michael Bleiweiss	(978) 689-2874
Treasurer	Terry Goldzier	(617) 232-7704
Secretary	Andrea Perrault	(781) 593-5794

### Other Board Members

Pamela Dritt, Fred Hewett, Martha Werman

### Committees

Discussion Group	Carolyn Nalbandian	(617) 916-2229
Program Comm.	Andrea Perrault	(781) 593-5794
Caring Committee	Marline Miller	(617) 244-1471
Ethical Action	Michael Bleiweiss	(978) 689-2874
Newsletter	Fred Hewett	(617) 945-0396
	Martha Werman	(617) 497-7888
Music	Ingrid Kisliuk	(617) 332-7109
Officiant	Katrina Scott	(617) 965-3067
Publicity	John Lampert	(617) 923-8550
Website	Fred Hewett	(617) 945-0396

Website <http://bostonethical.org>



facebook.com/bostonethical



@bostonethical



~ Program Schedule for November 2016 ~	
<b>November 6</b>	Dave Dorvillier, Program Director at YouthHarbors
<b>November 13</b>	Community Development
<b>November 20</b>	Eloise Lawrence, Staff Attorney, Harvard Law School
<b>November 27</b>	Thanksgiving Breakfast
Sunday Meetings are held at 10:30 AM at 33 Garden St in Cambridge	

**THE ETHICAL HUMANIST**

Newsletter of the Boston Ethical Community

(617) 739-9050    newsletter@bostonethical.org    www.bostonethical.org

Ethical Society of Boston  
Post Office Box 38-1934  
Cambridge, MA 02238

Return Service Requested

Non-Profit Org.    US Postage Paid    Lawrence, MA    Permit No. 28