



"Recognition Day" at the Melnea A. Cass Recreational Complex in Roxbury on April 6, 2019, honoring the first class to participate in the Moran & Associates mentorship program. Photo credit: Lou Jones

Winthrop Center Construction Promotes Diversity and Equity

By Carrie Klein

Developer Millennium Partners (MP) is working with Boston nonprofit Bill Moran & Associates to attract and sustain a diverse workforce in construction of Winthrop Center, a \$1.3 billion skyscraper forecasted for completion in Boston's Financial District by 2023.

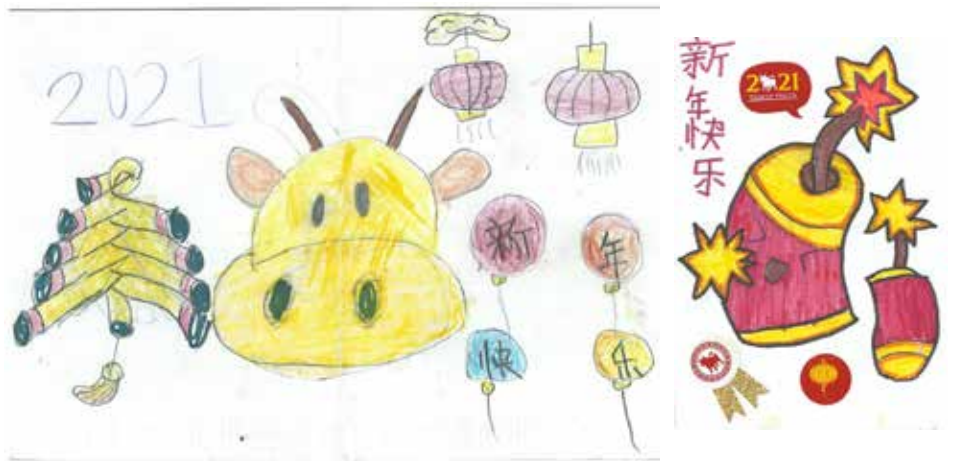
Bill Moran and Sean Fontes, President and Vice President of Bill Moran & Associates,

met on the basketball court. They were both point guards, not the tallest players, says Moran, but the ones who act as facilitators of the game.

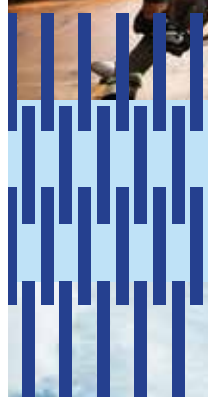
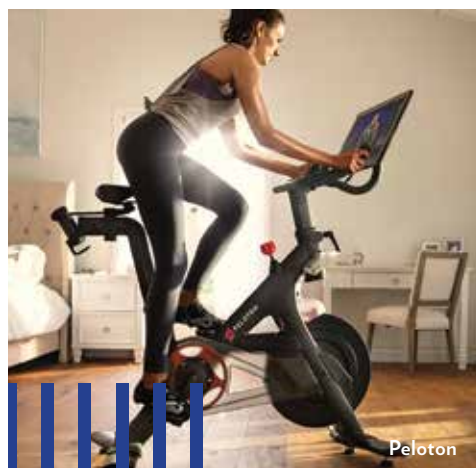
Moran, an educator, and Fontes, a labor attorney, got to talking about something they had both noticed, which is the lack of diversity in the construction and development fields in Boston.

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Happy Ox Year



It's been a lonely time for seniors. This year, 20 families from Chinatown's Neighborhood Center created Lunar New Year postcards to send to seniors at the Greater Boston Golden Age Center.



YOUR DAILY

DISCOVERY

BACK BAY
PRUDENTIAL CENTER
 prudentialcenter.com | @pruboston

Blue Bottle Coffee

@bostonfoodjournal
 @eatyloboston

SEPHORA

Earl's Kitchen + Bar

Millennium

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Around the same time, a study published by the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston reported that Black Bostonians have a median net worth of \$8,000—a fraction of white Bostonian's \$247,500 net worth.

“The study essentially validated what we had already been feeling, but now we had the numbers and data. It was like a clarion call for us,” Fontes said.

Along with 13 other Black men all born and raised in Boston,

Fontes and Moran launched a mentorship program in 2017 to recruit and guide young Black men and women to enter highly skilled unions.

With support from Millennium Partners, 73 participants have gone through the mentoring process, with 51 accepted into the IBEW Local 103 JATC electrical apprenticeship.

Gregory Burgess, an original mentor with Moran and owner of Access Painting, Inc., helps mentees prepare for union tests, get connected with tutors, and learn about the workforce culture

they'll be entering.

“It's about helping kids in the community and giving them the opportunity to make a career,” Burgess said.

Millennium Partners is playing a role in providing that opportunity in a field where Black workers nationally hold just six percent of construction jobs. In accordance with Boston requirements,

MP has committed to employing a workforce of 51% Boston residents, 40% people of color, and 12% women to build Winthrop Center. “MP made a promise and they're keeping their promise to

help minority firms get started and thrive downtown,” said Burgess. “I didn't go looking for MP, they came knocking on my door and that's a first.”

In addition to fostering a diverse workforce, Winthrop Center will also have top of the line environmental design as the largest Passive House certified office building in the world.

“We always envisioned this building's impact would extend beyond improving the lives of its residents and office tenants,” said Kathy MacNeil, Principal at MP. “We want it to touch the larger

Boston and even global community as a legacy building rooted in visionary principles.”

Sophia Maria Shepard looks forward to starting on the project as an electrician. Shepard was recruited by Moran to join the mentorship program in 2016 and is now in her third year of apprenticeship with IBEW Local 103.

Shepard plans to become a mentor. “The saying I always love is ‘reach one, teach one,’” Shepard said. “I want to keep giving back to the community and reaching out to people who do not know about electrical work or this opportunity.”

Covid Numbers

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If there is a spike from new variants of the virus, which would be expected by mid or late March, Martinez said he hopes the strain on city health systems will be diminished by the downward trends seen over the past month.

As of Tuesday, there are 10 recorded cases of new Covid-19 variants in Boston, according to Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC) data. But public health experts believe the new strains are much more widespread.

When might the city return to “normal”?

“Late summer or into the fall,” Martinez

said. “The further we get into vaccinations, the better likelihood that we'll see things be able to open that aren't open [now].”

With vaccine eligibility slowly expanding, Martinez is hopeful that Covid-19 numbers will soon start to reflect that increased immunity.

Downtown neighborhoods have some of the highest vaccinations rates in the city. As of February 1, the most recent available data showed that Back Bay, Beacon Hill, West End, Downtown and North End had the third highest number of administered doses after the South End and West Roxbury.

By February 1, 44,000 Bostonians had received at least one dose of a vaccine, all of which require two doses. As of February 18, the state has sent 405,600 doses to

Suffolk County. “With all the talk about vaccines we just need to make sure that people don't lose sight of all the precautions that we're taking now. Face masks and social distancing are still critically important,” Martinez said.

The neighborhood vaccination data, which has not yet been publicly released, shows that Asian American Bostonians have the highest population-based rate, followed by whites, Black residents, and Latinos.

Racial disparities in vaccine distribution, which are severe at the state level, are “not as stark in the city,” Martinez said.

Still, the city's Covid-19 disparities have continued, with much higher positivity rates in Dorchester, Roxbury and Hyde Park than in downtown neighborhoods.

“Those neighborhoods have higher rates of essential workers who've been working nonstop throughout Covid, a disproportionate number of folks living in overcrowded housing, [and] a history of health inequities,” Martinez said. “Those things play themselves out.”

From February 8 through February 14, downtown neighborhoods were averaging 2.2% positive tests, while Fenway and the South End were averaging 2.5% and 2.8%, respectively. The positivity rate in parts of Dorchester was 6.7% over the same period.

Last week there were 2,827 active cases in the city, with a cumulative total of 57,031. There have been 2,619 hospitalizations and 1,241 deaths.

Lee Pool Legislation

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Since then the site has been used for waste and park equipment storage.

“There were wood chips in the deep end, and boats and all kinds of crap,” said Livingstone.

The pool buildings also deteriorated, with uncontained asbestos in the ceilings. A study in the 2000's concluded that the pool complex would need to be entirely demolished and rebuilt in order to return to public use.

“Outdoor space has become so much more appreciated, and the need for outdoor recreational space is so crucial in this area, where no one has a yard,” said Livingstone.

According to the legislation, the Esplanade Association would be a tenant, while the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) would own the property and maintain any pathways.

The Esplanade Association would pay the costs of rebuilding and maintenance, and would retain revenues from usage and programming fees, naming rights, and special events. If the Esplanade Association

ever ceased to use the property for those purposes, custody would revert to the commonwealth.

The bills would enable plans for the site's reuse to move forward with fundraising.

Planning for a total rebuild began in 2017 and included a 10-month community engagement process.

A new vision for use of the sight emerged which included a soccer field, bathrooms, community space, and enhanced riverfront pavilion. The buildings would be the first new construction on the Esplanade in over 50 years, according to the DCR.

A waterfront trail will remain in place, which the Appalachian Mountain Club is recommending be enhanced for the use of ducks and geese by the addition of new shoreside plants. The existing concrete trail is too close to the shore for optimal waterfowl access.

The Lee Pool facilities were demolished in 2019 and temporary grass was planted. The area awaits a changeover of management and the planned improvements.

St Stephen's

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For Yrmaris Matia, a parent organizer at Orchard Gardens, the classes and workshops have been essential. “They help me think about something else, get distracted and get some time for myself,” Matia said.

Most programs are currently virtual, but SSYP also offers in-person support for youth.

“A few weeks into the pandemic, we started hearing that parents wanted a place for their kids to be during the day

with good internet and support for their learning,” explained Tim Crellin, Founder and Executive Director at St. Stephen's.

Strict policies, like social distancing, temperature screening, air filters, and open windows make the space as safe as possible for young people to receive support in their virtual learning. SSYP also offers virtual programming for youth, including professional support and college and career mentoring.

“Our model is really based on long-term relationships with families and the community. That's been our theory of

change,” said Crellin.

Each summer, SSYP runs B-SAFE, an academic and enrichment program held at six locations across the city. B-SAFE was put on hold last summer, but plans are in the works to offer programs this summer at limited capacity.

As SSYP looks forward to more in-person programming, “We're really focused on the trauma aspect of this,” Crellin said.

“There's been so much fear and there's been so much loss. We're thinking about how we can support kids and families as we hopefully come out of this time.”

Neighborhood News

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- \$400,000 for rehabilitation and restoration of the historic 1857 League of Women for Community Service building for stabilization repairs to the masonry facade at 558 Massachusetts Avenue.
- \$200,000 to fund the

preservation of the complex of historic 1880s and 1908 St. Augustine and St. Martin buildings including selective repairs to the roofing of the complex and selective masonry repairs to 29 Lenox Street and 23 Willard Place.

- \$250,000 to fund phase one of site improvements and hardscape construction to create a plaza/park space to honor Allan Rohan Crite, an internationally acclaimed African American artist.

More Lab Space

The office development at 321 Harrison Ave and 1000 Washington Street will be converted to lab use.