



CODMAN SQUARE

NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT CORP.

Rekindling Community

2022-2023 ANNUAL REPORT
JUNE 2023



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A MESSAGE FROM OUR LEADERSHIP

Dear Friends,

Our 20-month long strategic planning process got going at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic and was ratified by our Board in early 2022. It sets CSNDC's direction for the next 3-4 years. Despite all the challenges presented by the pandemic and the enormous toll it has taken on our community, we have begun to make important progress on our two "North Star" strategic priorities:

1. Scale-up CSNDC's real estate development efforts to significantly increase the number of affordable housing units in our service area; and
2. Significantly expand our base of active and engaged residents to effectively influence, develop, and advocate for policies that address the root causes of racial and economic inequity.

As the first section of this Annual Report details, we have several large-scale real estate projects underway which will significantly expand our real estate portfolio over the next several years. We are confident these properties will go a long way toward counteracting ongoing concerns of gentrification and displacement in our community.

In addition, we have taken important steps toward the development of a powerful "Equity Army" of residents and key stakeholders. By training and activating citizens as leaders in collective action and transformational change, CSNDC is enabling ground-up campaigns to effect change in policy, programs and resource allocation decisions that have historically been rooted in racial, social and economic injustice. This will create concrete and increased resources to directly impact socioeconomic mobility in our service area.

Although we are still feeling the impacts of the pandemic, we have great faith that we are moving forward in the right direction. Having experienced significant staff turnover in the COVID-driven staff migration, we have rebuilt our team and are very excited about the new leaders emerging at CSNDC. Our staff is talented, passionate and ready to lead us into a future of making a real difference in the lives of the residents in our community.

We hope you enjoy reading this Annual Report and we thank you for your support.

With warm regards,



LeRoy Gibson
Co-Chair



Latishia Crosby-Muturi
Co-Chair



Gail Latimore
Executive Director

ABOUT CSNDC

Serving Our Community for More Than Four Decades



Founded in 1981, Codman Square Neighborhood Development Corporation is a grassroots community organization committed to developing affordable housing and fighting for racial and economic justice by building community power, especially of low- and moderate-income communities of color in Dorchester. Through developing resident leadership, organizing in the community, promoting economic mobility services, and advocating for local environmental justice, we build collective resident power to effect systemic change and transform society.

Throughout our history, we have concentrated on physical development in our service area, but in the face of growing concerns about gentrification and displacement – and now the unrest caused by longstanding racial disparities and injustices, which are presenting in disproportionate COVID-19 health impacts, economic insecurities and police brutality – we have become increasingly focused on social, economic, political and racial inequities in our neighborhood.

CSNDC serves a two square mile area of Dorchester that is bounded by Columbia Road and Geneva Avenue to the north, Gallivan Boulevard and Morton Street to the south, Blue Hill Avenue to the west, and Dorchester Avenue to the east.



OUR IMPACT

- **400+** units of affordable housing currently in the pipeline or undergoing renovation
- **150** people served in Homebuyer Education classes, with **13** graduates purchasing homes in the past year
- **23** residents enrolled in FSS Family Self Sufficiency (FSS) services
- **30** residents enrolled in a no cost rent reporting platform to positively impact their credit score
- **58** students graduated from the DotBiz Small Business training program
- **25** businesses supported with in-depth technical assistance and approximately **50** small business owners attended Small Business Breakfast events
- **348** students graduated from the Tech Goes Home (TGH) program in 2020-2022 — and another **42** thus far in 2023
- **48** job seekers enrolled in the Ready, Set, Work program at the Computer Learning Center, **14** of which have secured full-time or part-time employment
- **~100** residents came out for Family Fun Day and the Caribbean Jerk Festival
- **4,557** calls made by CSNDC volunteers to registered voters in our service area encouraging them to vote “yes” on the Fair Share Amendment
- **10** participants in CSNDC’s Community Action 101: Advocacy Training Series advocated for change with Boston’s legislative delegation on Beacon Hill
- **70** air conditioning units distributed to needy families to offset urban heat island

REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT

*Every resident deserves affordable and secure housing
for themselves and their family*

Helping people secure and maintain affordable housing is CSNDC’s first and primary job. We do everything we can to address housing instability, especially in the face of growing concerns about gentrification and displacement. In 2022-23, we advanced these ongoing efforts with several important development projects:

Waldo Homes

CSNDC is in the final stages of renovations to the Waldo Homes project, which consists of 59 affordable units in two locations:

- 24 one- to three-bedroom, family-oriented apartments on Orlando Street in Mattapan
- 35 one-bedroom units on Waldeck Street in Dorchester. Some of these units will be designated for homeless patients who are frequent users of emergency healthcare services, and the building will be operated as a Housing First Supportive Health site, integrating services from partners that include Boston Medical Center, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, and Codman Square Health Center. This approach combines housing and supportive services to improve resident health and well-being and reduce the need for emergency room visits.



Orlando Street



Waldeck Street

CSNDC acquired these distressed properties from bankruptcy court in 2016 with existing tenants in place. The tenants supported our proposal for Walando Homes and the judge granted ownership to CSNDC. Our goal is to preserve as many tenancies as possible while renovating the properties because they were in such poor shape.

This is being accomplished through a comprehensive occupied rehabilitation process. Relocation and renovations began in late 2021. Working with our relocation consultant, we have successfully relocated tenants while their units are being renovated.

“It’s going to be transformational,” says Marcia Thornhill, CSNDC’s VP of Operations. “It’s unbelievable some of the things this landlord was able to get away with, and we’re so glad we can help these residents.”

The project is now about 80% complete and we’ve been able to move 25 families back to their homes. We expect the project to be fully completed by October 2023.

Four Corners Plaza (FCP)

Located at the intersection of Washington and Bowdoin Streets in the Four Corners neighborhood of Dorchester, this project has seen many evolutions of development planning and visioning with CSNDC and the community for over 25 years. What began as a commercial development project has shifted over the years into a \$25.4M mixed-use development. After many starts and stops, this new construction project finally gained traction about five years ago. We broke ground in October 2022 and expect to be done with construction in May 2024. When completed, this rental housing development will be home to 35 families of low and moderate income means. Additionally, the project includes approximately 3,900 square feet of commercial space that will be available to local entrepreneurs or existing businesses looking to expand. We envision FCP as a catalyst for further development opportunities to help revitalize this corridor.



Talbot Commons II

TCII is the second phase of the Talbot Commons I project developed by CSNDC.

Both phases include multifamily housing developments along the Talbot Avenue corridor. This \$28.1M new construction

project will consist of two sites that will house

42 affordable rental units — 19 on Spencer Street and 23 on New England Avenue.

Having already been awarded City funds, in May 2023 we received notice of the awarding of funds from the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development, which is the last remaining major funding needed for the project to proceed. We plan to begin construction in the spring of 2024 with an anticipated completion date in the fall of 2025.



FCP and TCII are both part of CSNDC's transit-oriented urban village development strategy along the Fairmount commuter rail line. These properties will increase new affordable housing opportunities in our Dorchester neighborhood while removing existing deteriorating buildings and land that have been vacant for many years.

On the Square Housing

We have begun the planning process for a new project that will help to transform the Codman Square business district by incorporating residential development into existing commercial properties to create a mixed-use development. We are starting with the redevelopment of our On the Square commercial building (OTS), into a vertical development which will create 45

affordable rental properties on three floors above the commercial property that currently houses CSNDC's offices and four other commercial retail businesses. We anticipate this project will jumpstart the revitalization efforts in the Square by creating more vitality and healthy activity.



Boston's population is growing, but our supply of buildable land is not. By building above an existing building, we plan to make good use of resources while providing quality, affordable housing for families of moderate means. Construction is scheduled to begin in 2026.

Washington Columbia I

In 2024, we plan to begin the process of renovating one of the largest developments in our portfolio – Washington Columbia I, which includes 151 rental units in low-rise apartments buildings located near Geneva Avenue and Columbia Road in Dorchester. We are hoping to have this project completed by the end of 2025.



Saint Matthews Project

Saint Matthews is a campus consisting of a church, rectory, school buildings and several parcels of vacant land nestled on Stanton Street, a quiet residential street in the Norfolk Street neighborhood of Dorchester. This mostly vacant site is currently owned by the Archdiocese of Boston and was until earlier this year under a purchase agreement by a private, for-profit developer. When that deal did not advance, CSNDC saw an opportunity to develop additional affordable housing in our catchment area. We entered into negotiations with the Archdiocese this past winter and signed a letter of intent to acquire the property in March of this year.

CSNDC’s redevelopment plan includes 62 units of rental and 20 units of homeownership housing, all of which will be affordable, and 8,000 square feet of commercial space, which will accommodate the existing daycare, and food pantry, as well as community meeting space. We presented this conceptual plan to the community in May, and it was positively received.

Over the course of the next three years or so, we will continue to work with the community, elected officials, and other key stakeholders to perfect a vision for this site that will transform the blighted, vacant buildings to a vibrant, re-purposed campus for affordable housing opportunities and services.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

*Every Resident Deserves Financial Stability
to Enable the Pursuit of Their Life Goals*

The COVID-19 pandemic has taken an enormous toll on our community and our local economy. As we have begun to emerge from this public health crisis, CSNDC's Economic Development Department has renewed its focus on fostering a healthy economy to enhance the prosperity and quality of life for all residents of our service area. Now more than ever, we are committed to helping our neighbors and neighborhoods flourish through programs that promote and protect home ownership, improve financial stability, support local business development and growth, and enhance digital literacy.

Homebuyer Education

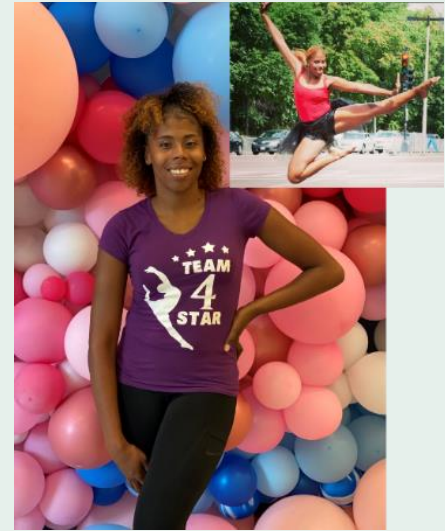
Since July 2022, we have served 150 individuals in Homebuyer Education classes online. For an additional group of clients, we also provided access to the Framework virtual platform, a HUD-approved online platform which supports self-paced learning. Going forward, we plan to continue teaching via a virtual platform as we attract a larger volume of participants, while also revisiting the in-person training format and exploring a hybrid option.

Thirteen graduates of this program purchased homes in the past year, with a value of over \$5 million. Rising real estate prices and interest rates coupled with scarce supply of affordable homes continue to be a deterrent for many of our graduates.

Thanks to generous support from an individual donor, CSNDC can now offer clients financial support in the form of down payment assistance (DPA) grants. In 2022/2023, we supported three homebuyers with DPA grants, providing an average grant of \$7,000 and helping community members access homes with sale prices totaling over \$1 million. As interest in these funds grows, we will continue to try to raise additional funding from private donors to help potential homeowners bring their dreams to fruition.

Kaleisha Chance Dances to New Heights as First-Time Homeowner

Kaleisha Chance is the proud owner of one of the affordable homes developed by CSNDC on New England Avenue as part of the “New England Heritage Homes” project. “I came here and fell in love with the property,” she recalls. Her godmother, Licia McLean, who Kaleisha refers to as her aunt, had won the affordable housing lottery through the City of Boston in 2000, so she gave her the confidence to pursue this dream. Only 26 years old at the time, Kaleisha was hesitant. She had completed the First-Time Homebuyer Program through the city, but still didn’t feel ready. “I was nervous because I just didn’t have the money at the time, but my aunt helped me learn how to begin saving,” she says. Soon enough, she was submitting an application to the Boston Home Center and meeting with a bank for pre-approval on a loan. After several months of paperwork, she was able to purchase her new home in July 2021. “They gave me the keys and I came in here with an air mattress and made it work,” she says proudly. Kaleisha also credits her godmother with helping her build her life around dance. Licia has owned and operated Four Star Dance Studio in Codman Square for twenty years. Kaleisha teaches there under her mentorship — that is, when she’s not serving in her role as Director of Arts for Codman Academy Charter School in Dorchester, taking care of her daughter Kennedy and a foster child, or pursuing her master’s degree in arts and teaching at Mount Holyoke College. “Growing up, I struggled with academics and dance was the way I could show I was also good at something,” she reflects. “Dance saved my life.”



Foreclosure Prevention

CSNDC continues to provide foreclosure prevention services using a hybrid model, based on client preferences and availability, meeting most clients in person and also counseling via telephone and/or Zoom video conferencing as needed. Since July 2022, we have worked with eight homeowners attempting to cure their delinquencies by qualifying for a modification of their loan with their servicer. Some have been successful in obtaining affordable modifications, while others are still waiting on the outcome of their application. We encourage homeowners to reach out to us for help.

Client Still in Her Home Ten Years After Foreclosure Threat

A 70-year-old mother with a disabled son was facing possible foreclosure when she began working with CSNDC's Economic Development Department in the summer of 2011. Although she was employed for a few hours per week and receiving social security, a small pension and unemployment payments, she was still struggling to make her monthly payment of \$1,911, which included taxes and property insurance. So, she sent a check every month in the amount of \$1,100, which was all she could afford. When the mortgage company stopped accepting these checks as payment, she applied for loan modification, but her application was denied in December 2011 because she did not fulfill investor requirements/guidelines. That's when CSNDC stepped in. We worked with the client to reapply for loan modification, but she was again denied in April 2012. We helped her explore a short sale and a reverse mortgage, but she did not qualify for either. At this point, her file was assigned to her mortgage company's escalation resolution team, and she was scheduled for foreclosure in June 2012. Happily, we were able to get a stay through the Division of Banks and the foreclosure was postponed for a few months. Working with the escalation team and the Attorney General's office, we were able to get a loan modification approved in July 2012. The new loan included a stepped payment of principal and interest on a fixed rate note with extended maturity date, and an interest rate of 2% for the first 5 years, 3% for year 6, and 3.75% for years 7 to 38. The client was happy with her new payment of \$1,153, which included taxes but not insurance. Now, ten years later, she is still living in her home, and her niece is living with her to share expenses and help around the house.

Financial Capability Education and Coaching

CSNDC continues to promote financial capability/coaching as a long-term strategy to enable financial health and stabilize low-moderate income renters and homeowners in the City of Boston and beyond. We offer one-on-one financial coaching as a client-centered service tailored to meet the needs of individual community members to achieve their goals. We also offer Financial Capacity workshops designed to equip participants with the knowledge, capacity and tools to make sound financial decisions to help reduce their debts and other liabilities and increase their assets. These workshops continue to be mostly virtually, with some in-person workshops offered in partnership with the Boston Public Health Commission's Healthy Baby Healthy Child Healthy Start in Housing program for pregnant and parenting families beginning in January 2023. We served more than 80 people through these programs in the past year.

CSNDC also strives to serve our affordable housing tenants with one-on-one coaching, as well as special initiatives aimed to help them improve credit and build assets. These include:

Rent Reporting and Credit Building

Through a program sponsored by the Credit Builder Alliance, CSNDC offers tenants of our 1,000-unit rental portfolio the opportunity to report their on-time rent payments to the credit bureau to positively impact their credit score. We have enrolled 30 residents and hope to enroll a total of 70 tenants in this program by the end of 2023.

Family Self Sufficiency

In partnership with Compass Working Capital, CSNDC is supporting a subset of tenants to have rent increases put into a savings account for the tenant to use for their financial well-being. The Family Self Sufficiency (FSS) program allows tenants to escrow rent payments for up to five years. They can use the funds to buy a home, car or other purposes. Currently, 23 residents are enrolled in FSS, and last year we had our first homeowner from the program. With new HUD rules we hope to significantly increase enrollment this year, working closely with Compass and Winn Residential.

Small Business Development

CSNDC offers a variety of services to help existing small businesses thrive and entrepreneurs who are just getting started succeed in today’s challenging environment. This includes training programs, technical assistance and support, and community events where local businesses can promote their products and services.

Training Programs

CSNDC offers small business workshops at the Computer Learning Center – 14 two-hour classes that combine the DotBiz curriculum with the Tech Goes Home curriculum customized for small businesses. Participants learn about the requisite components of a business plan and the steps necessary to launch or grow their business, along with business-focused digital skills for entrepreneurs.



Students leave the class equipped with an “elevator pitch” about their business, increased business acumen, and knowledge of key concepts, such as market analysis, startup costs, time management, bookkeeping, and how to write a business plan. Upon completion, the DotBiz graduates have the opportunity to work one-on-one with CSNDC staff to refine their business plan and launch their business.

58 students have graduated from the Small Business program since July 2022. Graduates of the program receive a free laptop and mobile hotspot to support their entrepreneurial pursuits.

Technical Assistance and Support

To help local business owners establish and grow their businesses or address specific challenges, CSNDC offers individualized technical assistance and support. CSNDC business professionals and our partners work with business owners and entrepreneurs to develop a plan to address whatever challenges the business may be facing. This support is usually focused on tasks such as writing a grant application, applying for a loan, developing a business plan, acquiring legal assistance, seeking incorporation, and creating a marketing plan. Since these undertakings are often daunting for small business owners and entrepreneurs, CSNDC staff offer the expertise to streamline the process and stay focused on their goal. The process involves a comprehensive intake procedure, an assessment of baseline data, counseling sessions to develop an individualized action plan, and follow-up. Once the action plan is set, clients work with CSNDC staff to implement the plan on an agreed-upon schedule with regular check-ins.



CSNDC has provided 25 businesses with in-depth technical assistance since July 2022. Since January of 2023, we have helped entrepreneurs in our service area apply for over \$240,000 in grant funding.

Business-Oriented Community Events

CSNDC's Economic Development Department sponsors events throughout the year that create exposure and "market access" opportunities for local businesses to promote their products and services. Here are some examples:

Holiday Market Craft Fair

To help generate holiday business for local vendors, CSNDC hosted our first Holiday Market Craft Fair in December 2022. About 35 local vendors, artisans, and crafters displayed their handcrafted and custom goods at a two-day community event at the Black Box Theater in the Codman Square Health Center. The event also featured a few child entrepreneurs exhibiting their wares. More than 100 people visited the event to support these local upcoming entrepreneurs. Many of them also enjoyed delicious food from the Fresh Food Generation Food Truck parked on Epping Street, which was closed off for the event. Most importantly, we were able to connect vendors with other business resources within our Economic Development Department and had a few sign up for our small business classes and for technical assistance support.



Small Business Breakfasts

Earlier this year, CSNDC hosted three get-together events for small business owners to meet each other and share information about grant and educational opportunities designed to help small businesses succeed. The first one was held at Bank of America in February, the second was at Thumbprint Realty in March, and the third was at Taste of Eden Caribbean Restaurant in May. Overall, approximately 50 merchants and entrepreneurs engaged in these events. City Councilor, Brian Worrell, attended the breakfast in March, along with members of the City of Boston's small business department and representatives from Mass Growth Capital.

Caribbean Jerk Festival

On June 3, 2023, we were thrilled to bring back the Caribbean Jerk Festival after a two-year COVID-induced hiatus. Despite the rain, visitors were treated to a great day of family-friendly activities, spirited performances representing unique Caribbean cultures, delicious food, and crafts and products offered by local merchants. Most importantly, the event created a unique opportunity for visitors to appreciate the people, cultures and businesses that make Codman Square so special.



Sonia Satchell Serves Up Small Business Success

The IRIE Jamaican Style Restaurant is one of the recipients of CSNDC's small business technical assistance. "If I didn't have CSNDC helping me, I think it would have taken me much, much longer to learn the things that I've learned about how to run this business," says Sonia Satchell, who, along with her sister, Donna, owns and operates the restaurant at 1450 Dorchester Avenue. Sonia runs the business side of things while Donna runs the kitchen. Their landlord pushed them out of their original spot on Bowdoin Street near St. Peter's Parish, where they had thrived for 17 years. After briefly relocating to a space on Washington Street in Codman Square, they decided to move again to their current location on Dorchester Avenue, which is big enough to support their growth and serve as a community-building space. "I want us to be known not just as a family-oriented Jamaican restaurant, but as an outlet for our community," Sonia says. That's one reason the restaurant is a mainstay participant in CSNDC's Caribbean Jerk Festival. Through it all, CSNDC has been a constant support to Sonia, connecting her to people and resources to help her find funding and support her business goals. "CSNDC's small business services department has been an invaluable resource to our expansion, growth and development," Sonia says.



Sonia (left) with Donna at the Grand Opening of their new location

Computer Learning Center

In the face of deep digital inequity along racial and ethnic lines, the CSNDC Computer Learning Center (CLC) offers a portfolio of programs that empower individuals to access and use digital tools that can help them overcome systemic barriers, achieve personal success, and enrich their lives.

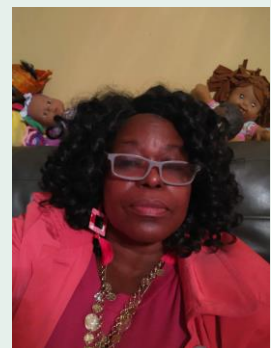
Our programs cater to people without the means to connect to, and engage with, the online world at home. Graduates receive new laptops, internet service and training. These resources enable students to do homework, adults to search for employment and manage finances, seniors to connect with loved ones, and for all to access telehealth.

“The need for our services only increased during the COVID-19 pandemic, which highlighted the existing inequities in our community’s access to technology,” says Prince Charles, CSNDC’s Computer Learning Center Coordinator, who has trained well over 1,000 residents/students in the CLC/Tech Goes Home program over the past decade.

During the pandemic, the CLC pivoted programs to online learning through Zoom. Despite these challenges, we were able to graduate 348 students through the Tech Goes Home (TGH) program in 2020-2022 — and thus far in 2023, have graduated an additional 42 students. In addition, since July 2022, we have supported 48 job seekers enrolled in the Ready, Set, Work program at the CLC, and 14 of these people have secured full-time or part-time employment

Mary White Leverages Computer Literacy for Asthma Advocacy

“My job is to provide education and resources for families,” says Mary White, a Dorchester resident who leverages her lifelong experience as an asthmatic and mother of asthmatic children to help families with similar challenges. She was one of the graduates of the Tech Goes Home program at CSNDC’s Computer Learning Center during the pandemic. Mary says that not being computer savvy was holding her back both personally and professionally. She was finding it increasingly difficult to manage multiple doctors’ appointments for herself and her mother, husband and children. She was also feeling increasingly hampered in her advocacy work. “These days, it’s totally impossible to do anything without the computer,” she says. When she learned about the program at the CLC, she prayed she would get in. “You can’t imagine how it has changed my life,” she says. “I feel so blessed to have this laptop and this knowledge. I’m now able to stay in tune and in touch with individuals, and that has meant the world to me.” Next, Mary plans to apply her new-found computer confidence and skills in a new business she will be launching to support families like hers. “When you have knowledge, it’s so important to not keep it to yourself,” she says.



COMMUNITY ORGANIZING and RESIDENT ENGAGEMENT (CORE)

*Every Resident Can Be Part of Something
Bigger Than Themselves in Their Community*

CSNDC's Community Organizing and Resident Engagement Department is focused on building an Equity Army through leadership development. Our model is to develop leaders through training programs that enhance and activate their leadership skills, and then engage these leaders in advocacy campaigns focused on an anti-racist agenda, as well as in recruiting other leaders. This work helps to strengthen the community by building a base of engaged leaders, encouraging civic participation, and increasing community influence in decision making and resource allocation.

Anti-Racism/Equity Army Academy Launched

A second group of recruits completed CSNDC's Anti-Racism/Equity Army Academy class in April 2023. This in-depth, interactive course was co-created by CSNDC and Cambridge College Professor, Tahia Bell-Sykes, and her partner, Abigail Francis, who teach the class. The program focuses on the facts and history of racism and how to be an anti-racist.

The class was first offered in the summer of 2022 and was then repeated with a new cohort of participants in the spring of 2023. A third group is scheduled to start in July 2023. One of the members of in the second group was Laurene DaRosa, CSNDC's Executive Assistant and Special Projects Manager.

"The idea is to give people the tools they need to go out, whether it be in their jobs or in their community, to be activists and civil leaders in the face of racism," says DaRosa.

The Anti-Racism/Equity Army Academy is part of CSNDC's effort to create an "Equity Army," a group of engaged grassroots constituents committed to dismantling racism by getting informed and educating others about its origins and why it exists. The goal is to take concrete action to dismantle racism via engagement in legislative, resource allocation and other locally developed campaigns.

A core idea for the Equity Army is the concept of being an “anti-racist.”

“When I first heard about this program, I thought ‘Why do I need to take this class as a woman of color? I know I’m not racist,’” says DaRosa. “But I learned that it’s not enough just to not be racist. Being an anti-racist is about action. It’s about when you see something wrong, speak up and say something or do something that can help. You have to understand the systemic racist policies that are in place and how they came to be in order to even think about dismantling them.”

This is just the beginning for the Anti-Racism/Equity Army Academy. More courses are being planned for the summer/fall of 2023 and we look forward to engaging and deploying more recruits!

Resident Leadership: Darlene Harrison Builds Community at Talbot Bernard Homes

“I’m a people person. Everywhere I go, I meet people,” says Darlene Harrison. That’s one reason why Darlene was chosen to be the designated “Resident Leader” at Talbot Bernard Homes, a 44-unit affordable housing project built in 2003 by CSNDC. “I guess they saw something in me,” Darlene recalls. Darlene has lived at Talbot Bernard for 20 years, since the buildings were first constructed. Like all of CSNDC’s resident leaders, Darlene is a graduate of CSNDC’s Resident Leadership Institute, a comprehensive training designed to ground resident leaders in the fundamentals of community organizing, policy advocacy, asset mapping, and facilitation of community-building initiatives. “I got to meet a lot of people from different states and different nationalities,” she recalls.

“It was a beautiful thing because they put you in groups, so you really get to know each other and learn different strategies about what worked for them and what can work for us. And even if it doesn’t work, you don’t give up.” Darlene has taken that knowledge and attitude to heart in her role as Resident Leader. “We’re just looking out for our neighbors,” she says. “I think a lot of communities have lost those values. If more people do this, it’ll be a better place.”



Family Fun Day

Among the many impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, one of the greatest has been the disruption it has caused in the natural course of relationship building in our communities. In an attempt to rekindle the spirit of community among people who live in and around CSNDC-owned properties, CSNDC hosted Family Fun Day on August 14th, 2022, at the Dorchester LOVE Field.

Six resident volunteers and two community members assisted at the event. Approximately 100 families came out to meet other community members and CSNDC staff while learning about programs and opportunities and enjoying some festive food. Vendor tables gave participants the opportunity to learn about climate justice, foster care opportunities, and voter registration. Residents also learned about the Fair Share Amendment and were given the opportunity to pledge to vote YES on election day.

Special visits from City Councilor at-Large Julia Mejia and Representatives Russell Holmes and Nika Eduardo made the event even more impactful and relevant. Residents danced to the sounds of DJ Justice and walked away with raffle prizes, gift cards, and many new connections to their community. Meanwhile, CSNDC recruited four new volunteers in our Equity Army who helped us get the Fair Share Amendment passed.



Candidates Forum

CSNDC's Men at Home and Brothers Building programs partnered with FICC's Climate Justice team, Keeping Codman Affordable, ABDC, Union of Minority Neighborhoods, 365 Dads, Lena Park and LISC to plan and successfully host a forum for the 2nd Suffolk Senate Race event at the Lena Park Community Center on August 24, 2022. The event was moderated by CSNDC's CORE staff, who did an excellent job.



The forum included candidates Dianne Wilkerson, Liz Miranda, Nika Elugardo, Miniard Culpepper and James Grant. The candidates were given questions prior to the event to help them respond with answers quickly. The questions asked their position on housing-related issues, transportation and the proposed bus route changes, climate change, the “cliff effect,” and more.

It was a great event with participation from the live audience and questions coming in from the virtual chat as well. More than 60 people attended in person and another 20 attended virtually.



Advocating for the Fair Share Amendment

CSNDC recruited ten volunteers to make calls to local residents to encourage them to vote “yes” on the Fair Share Amendment (Question One), leading up to the November 8, 2022, election. MassVOTE provided training and access to an automated calling system to support these efforts. CSNDC’s volunteers made 4,557 calls to registered voters in our service area. We were thrilled that the amendment passed because we believe these funds will help make important contributions to infrastructure, education and more.

Solar Born Brings Light to Brothers Building

“I don't live for anything other than purpose. If it doesn't align with my mission and my purpose, I probably won't even show up.” These words succinctly capture the passion and commitment of Solar Born, a 43-year-old resident of Dorchester who, along with CSNDC’s Community Organizer James Mackey, has led Brothers Building since 2017. An extension of CSNDC’s programming for men of color which began around 2013, Brothers Building is a bi-monthly forum focused on the health and well-being of Black men in the community. Each session is different, according to Solar. Sometimes they exercise together, sometimes they go on outings, sometimes they coach each other on healthy lifestyle. But no matter the specific activity, the true impact is in the group’s experience of being together. “My main drive and passion is to help change the lives of others that I don’t want to go through the same thing I went through,” he says. That piece of Solar’s story began when, at age nineteen, he was sentenced to 8 ½ to 15 years in prison for armed assault. “I was already on the path to righteousness prior to that,” he reflects. “But I didn’t have alternatives to violence in my toolkit yet.” From the moment he got to prison, Solar began searching for programs where he could teach and lead individuals that were in similar situations to his, so that he could help them not befall the same fate. Now he brings his passion and life experience to his Brothers Building encounters. “The camaraderie that has grown among the individuals in this space, it's been very, very impactful on us all as individuals,” he says. “Each of us in different ways. However, one thing that's been indelible is the bond we’ve formed. We are truly brothers.”



ECO-INNOVATION

Every Resident Can Help Preserve a Livable Environment for Future Generations

CSNDC has been a leader in environmental and energy sustainability, especially along the Fairmount commuter rail line. Our work helped to launch Boston's first neighborhood Eco-Innovation District (EID) in the Talbot Norfolk Triangle neighborhood of our service area. The EID's focus is on resident leadership development and systems change advocacy as it relates to environmental and climate justice. The EID department also facilitates resident access to energy efficient homes, improved air quality, and green job training and placement.

Local Residents Learn Then Live Activism

CSNDC is doing its part to encourage and prepare local residents to engage in activism and advocacy. Through a joint effort with the Dorchester Bay EDC and the Southwest Boston CDC, as part of the Fairmount Indigo CDC Collaborative (FICC), 25 residents attended a course called "Community Action 101: Advocacy Training Series" on three consecutive Thursday evenings in February and March. The program was supported through a grant from the Kresge Foundation and funding from M&T Bank.

"The energy in the room was tangible and powerful," says Meredith Geraghty, CSNDC's VP of Base Building. "People were excited to be there and learn things they never knew before."

Participants learned about the Massachusetts legislative process and how to take action for change in their community. The program also included ongoing support to help participants put what they've learned into practice. Ten of the participants did just that on April 14, when they presented to the Boston legislative delegation, the group of state elected official who represent Boston, advocating for the FICC's two top legislative priorities:

- **The Housing and Environment Revenue Opportunities (HERO) Bill**, which aims to help protect families and communities from rapidly rising housing costs and climate change by doubling the current Deeds Excise Tax and allocating revenues raised to support affordable housing and climate adaptation projects.
- **The Fairmont Bill**, which calls for the MBTA's Fairmount Line Commuter Line to be electrified, along with other service improvements to reduce wait times on the line.

“We’re building an equity army in Codman Square,” says Geraghty. “This program is an important piece of that effort because it gives our residents the knowledge and skills they need to effectively engage in activism.”

A second day of activism occurred on May 3, when a group of program graduates were brought to the State House on Beacon Hill to speak directly with their representatives. And to keep the momentum going, CSNDC has made additional funding available as “mini-grants” to support local residents who have their own ideas for how to put their climate-related projects and advocacy goals into action.



Marlena Carter-Diaz Discovers How to Advocate for Herself and Others

The roots of Marlena Carter-Diaz's community activism began to form in an ongoing dispute with a neighbor at her Dorchester home where she and her family have lived for over 20 years. Despite her best efforts, she was unable to get her issues resolved to her satisfaction and was left with the sense she did not advocate effectively for herself. "I didn't get results," she says. "I felt like nobody was hearing me."

When she received an email promoting CSNDC's Community Action 101 program, she immediately jumped on the opportunity. "I needed help," she says. "Obviously, I was not doing something correctly. There are proper channels for how to be heard." The course taught her how to build relationships with her local representatives. "I learned that it should be a transfer of energy and camaraderie to build solid laws that

actually make and enforce accountability and change throughout our community," she says. "You need to state your 'why' and ask what you can do for them as well." Marlena was recently given her first opportunity to put these skills into action when she and other members of the class met with their state representatives on Beacon Hill. "It was very humbling and empowering," she says. "Once I got that connection of human to human, I felt like there's hope." The real reward for Marlena, though, will be when she gets to use her new-found knowledge to help others through a similar situation to what she experienced. "That's my 'why,'" she says.



Green Workforce Development

CSNDC has been offering the National Green Infrastructure Certification Program (NGICP) as a workforce development effort since 2020. We graduated 13 students from the program in 2022/23. We are working to assess other ways that we can supplement this program with other skills training to make our graduates even more attractive to prospective employers. Toward that end, we have secured a planning grant from Liberty Mutual. We used some of those funds to get our Environmental Justice Specialist, Ronak Sathyanarayana, and our Farm Manager, Apolo Catala, certified to teach the course. We expect to be pursuing an implementation grant to help us offer the Green Infrastructure class in the fall of 2023 and to expand the program from a course to a more comprehensive employment development program in 2024.

Ballou Farm to Come Back Better Than Ever

It has been eight years since OASIS on Ballou Farm opened and transformed a long-neglected and vacant 20,000 square foot lot in the Woodrow-Mountain neighborhood of Dorchester into a unique agriculture project that produces about 7,000 pounds of fresh produce each year for the local community. After all those years, despite its many successes, Ballou was ready for some capital and beautification improvements to make it even more bountiful.

CSNDC has received \$500,000 through Community Preservation Act funding to implement some much-needed upgrades to the farm. The key improvements will expand the farm's growing area and make it more accessible as a location for engagement with the public. Currently, the back third of the farm cannot be used for planting because the land slopes up too significantly. A retaining wall will be added to enable this section of the land to be terraced, which will allow for more growing areas, thus making approximately 50% more of the farm's surface area suitable for planting.

Apolo Catala, the farm's manager, believes making this additional farmable space will one day result in the farm approaching 20,000 pounds of produce per year. Other improvements to the farm include:

- Adding a curb cut to make the site more accessible for service vehicles
- Creating a multi-purpose driveway with permeable pavers that can double as a plaza for community events and gatherings
- Building a new amphitheater and shade area
- Addressing drainage issues

“Our vision is to make the farm more of a space for community engagement and learning,” says Catala. “What’s special about CSNDC is that our approach to community development is comprehensive. Beyond the bricks and mortar, which are important obviously, Ballou is driven by a commitment to promoting individual, community and environmental health.”

The farm closed for renovations after the 2022 growing season and will begin harvesting again in the summer of 2024.



Boston Mayor, Michelle Wu, and Deputy Secretary of Agriculture, Jewel Bronaugh, tour Ballou Farm on October 17, 2022. Boston Mayor's Office photos by Mike Mejia.

Staying Cool in the Summer

In the summer of 2022, we distributed 70 air conditioning units to families with children under five years-old, elderly residents, and households with someone who has a chronic health/respiratory problem, recognizing that extreme heat is a serious threat to health. This was part of CSNDC's ongoing response to the COVID pandemic, which required social distancing, as well as to ensure climate justice in our community, which is considered a heat island. With continued support from the Barr Foundation, we hope to offer the same program in the summer of 2023 and expect to help 100 families in need.

Recruiting Energy Ambassadors

CSNDC partnered with the West of Washington Neighborhood Association to recruit seven Energy Ambassadors, who were trained on energy-saving programs — including MassSave's Energy Assessment, Resonant Energy's Solar Access Program, and All In Energy's Utility Bill Check Up program — and are responsible for encouraging people in the community to get involved in these initiatives. Thus far, they've educated 165 people about these programs.

The Economic Development Department is offering rehab grants to homeowners to implement energy and other upgrades to their home, in return for these homeowners agreeing to become Energy Ambassadors. As a result, we expect our ranks of Energy Ambassadors will continue to grow in 2024, and the number of residents who know about and take advantage of low/no-cost home energy improvements will grow, thus saving residents money while improving their homes and their health.

OUR WONDERFUL STAFF

Trudy Benoit	<i>Community Organizer</i>
Tim Caplice	<i>Director of Real Estate Development</i>
Jodi Case	<i>Asset Manager</i>
Apolo Catala	<i>Farm Manager</i>
Prince Charles	<i>Computer Learning Center Coordinator</i>
Vanessa Cine	<i>Lead Organizer</i>
Kelsie Daniels-Jackson	<i>Eco-Innovation Director</i>
Laurene DaRosa	<i>Executive Assistant/Special Projects Manager</i>
Sonia Desrose	<i>Administrative Assistant</i>
Jacynda Espenshade	<i>Eco-Innovation Department Ray Fellow</i>
Marilyn Forman	<i>Director of CORE</i>
Meredith Geraghty	<i>Vice President of Base Building</i>
Toney Jones	<i>Real Estate Project Manager</i>
Gail Latimore	<i>Executive Director</i>
Linda Lee	<i>Accountant</i>
Vincent Lo	<i>Director of Administration and Finance</i>
James Mackey	<i>Community Organizer</i>
Heather MacLean	<i>Special Senior Assistant</i>
Kiele Mauricio	<i>Real Estate Project Manager</i>
Carolyn McGee	<i>Economic Development Specialist</i>
Liya Mindaye	<i>Case Manager/ Men @ Home Coordinator</i>
Michelle Nettles	<i>Accountant</i>
Marcus Rogers	<i>Community Organizer</i>
Keyna Samuel	<i>Financial Literacy Specialist</i>
Ronak Sathyanarayana	<i>Environmental Justice Specialist</i>
Marcia Thornhill	<i>Vice President of Operations</i>
Kiera Witzeman	<i>VISTA Volunteer</i>

OUR FABULOUS BOARD

Laquisa Burke

*Home Ownership Program Assistant,
Mass Housing Partnership*

Latishia Crosby-Muturi
(Co-Chair)

*Student Support/Operations Coordinator,
Academy of Pacific Rim Charter School*

LeRoy Gibson
(Co-Chair)

*Career Counselor/Student Support Specialist,
Cambridge Public Schools*

Annett McClanahan

Accountant, Boston Private Industry Council

Linda Monteiro

*Senior Project Manager,
City of Boston Department of Innovation and Technology*

Carla Richards

Vice President of Programs, Family Aid

Jadirah Ortiz

People Operations Intern, HubSpot

Trina Ruffin

Proposal Writer, Boston Grant Writers & Associates

Tanya Wesley-White

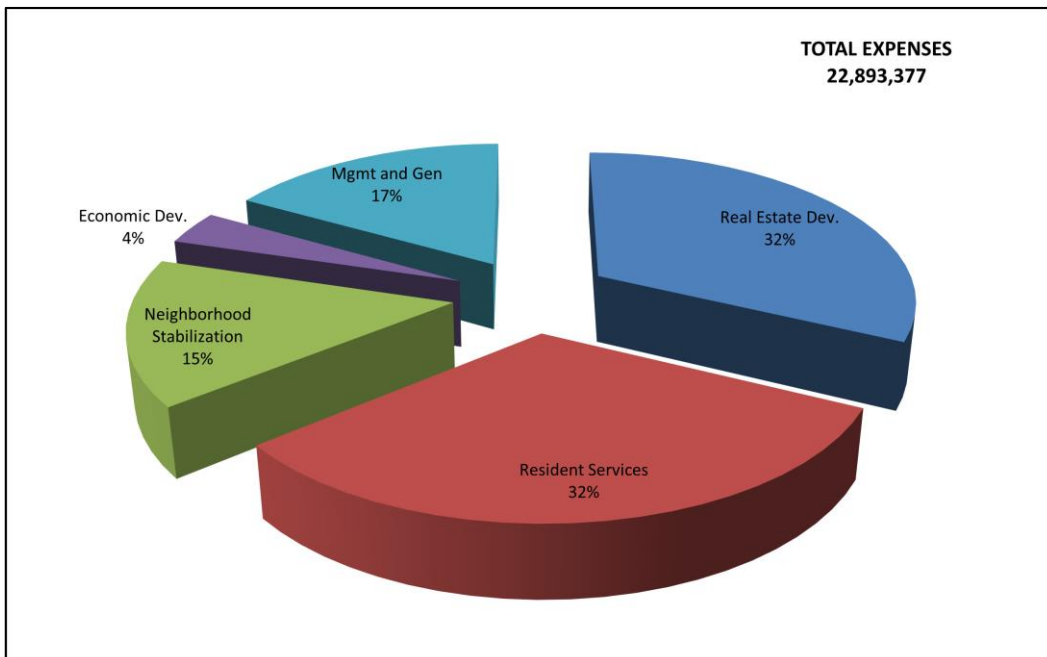
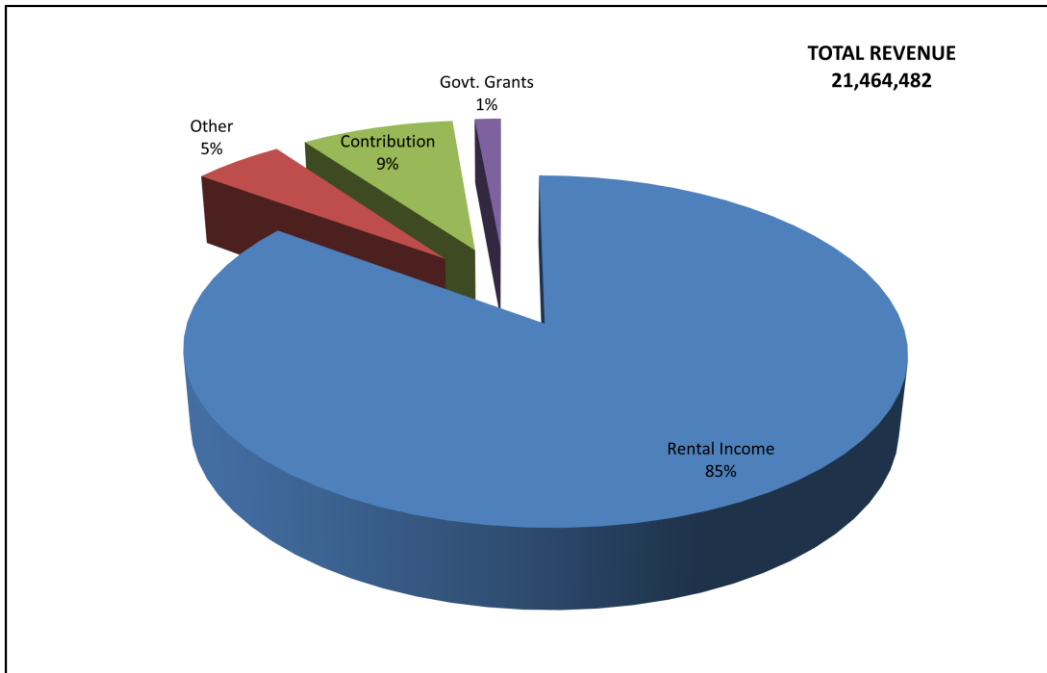
Civic Activist

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Codman Square Neighborhood Development Corporation Statement of Activities, December 31, 2022





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**United Way
of Massachusetts Bay
and Merrimack Valley**