

WASHINGTON BEECH

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DEMOLITION AND GROUNDBREAKING: BITTERSWEET CELEBRATION

After years of planning and months of preparation, on April 16th, the Washington Beech community witnessed the end of one era and the start of a new one, as demolition crews began taking down the first vacant buildings. Many residents remarked on the bittersweet mix of sentimentality for the old Washington Beech and excitement for the new development.

Within a month, nearly the entire phase one site had been leveled, opening up a broad vista at the intersection of Washington and Beech Streets and inspiring the community with a vision of the future.

Mayor Thomas Menino joined Washington Beech residents and Boston Housing Authority officials in hosting a Groundbreaking event on May 12th to mark the new beginning. With demolition equipment rumbling in the background, BHA Deputy Administrator Bill McGonagle welcomed to the community the many partners who have made the redevelopment of Washington Beech a reality.

Mayor Menino spoke fondly about Washington Beech and the years of dedicated work by neighbors committed to their community. In particular, he recognized the tireless efforts of the late **Mercedes Cash**, a long-time tenant leader. With members of the Cash family looking on, Mayor Menino announced that the first new street to be built at Washington Beech will be named Mercedes View, in honor of Ms. Cash and her vision for the future at Washington Beech.



Above: Demolition underway.

Below: **Nury Nieves-Cruz** and **Meena Carr** at Groundbreaking on May 12th. Meena is holding a brick from one of the original buildings.

“My daughter came in from dropping off her son to school very excited. ‘Mami, the final hour has come.’ I was anxious because of how she sounded, so I said, ‘What do you mean?’ She said, ‘They are taking down the building. The tractors are here.’ I said, ‘Go get some pictures.’ It was a sad but happy day for Washington Beech.”

Meena Carr, Chair of WB FFUN Committee, speaking about the first day of demolition

CELEBRATING GOOD FOOD, GOOD HEALTH

Fried Chicken. Empanadas. Mandazi. Enchiladas. Shuugar. Grilled Chicken, Potatoes, and Cauliflower. Dalpur Roti and Curried Chicken. Macaroni and Cheese. Wheat Pasta with Broccoli and Shrimp.



Those were among the many dishes prepared by Washington Beech residents and served up banquet style to eagerly awaiting family, friends, and neighbors at the Healthy Cooking event on April 2nd. More than a dozen cooks participated, and many more shared in the feast. Washington Beech's rich cultural variety was on display in the form of mouth-watering dishes from a range of traditions: Caribbean, Central American, Somali, American, and African American.

Special guests were **Kathy Cunningham**, a registered dietician from the Boston Public Health Commission, and **Bea Morse**, a chef whose career has ranged from business owner to consultant and instructor in the field of nutrition and human services. Kathy

and Bea tasted each of the dishes and spoke in detail with each of the participants about their cooking styles and traditions. Kathy and Bea later led a general discussion about nutrition and healthy cooking.

The true focus of the evening was eating. Everyone who attended the event left satisfied from the delicious foods they had the opportunity to sample. The cooks who prepared dishes were all awarded as parting gifts a variety of cooking tools donated by **Winn Residential**. The evening was a wonderful success as the first in a series of events and workshops around nutrition and good health.



Washington Beech residents **Rossana Melendez** (left) and **Florencia Ortiz** (right) showcase the dishes they each prepared for the April 2nd Cooking Event.

Center: Special guests at the event were Kathy Cunningham and Bea Morse, who sampled each dish and shared tips about nutrition and healthy cooking.

TIPS FOR HEALTHY COOKING

- ◆ Cook with low-fat methods such as baking, broiling, boiling or microwaving rather than frying
- ◆ Choose low-fat or fat free milk products, salad dressings, and mayonnaise
- ◆ Serve fruit instead of cookies or ice cream for dessert
- ◆ Add salsa on a baked potato instead of butter or sour cream
- ◆ Eat fruits canned in their own juice rather than syrup

Source: **We Can!** Program of the U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

INFANT AND TODDLER PLAYGROUP



Several Washington Beech parents and their small children have joined the Family Nurturing Center's Infant and Toddler Playgroup, which meets Tuesdays from 10:00 am to 12:00 noon at Stony Brook Commons.

Elizabeth Pagan, who attends weekly with her sons Jairone and Jayden, spoke about the benefits of the program:

“ This program has helped my kids in every way. They are learning how to communicate and share with other kids; they were very shy before, and now they are very outgoing.

It has helped me to breathe and relax at least for a few minutes. I have felt without pressure with this program. It also has helped me to communicate with other parents that are or have been in the same situation that I have been. It helps me feel that I am not alone.

It would help them to learn from the different lives of others. Here, you learn from the other people and children. Parents can feel secure that their child is doing something good. ”

EDUCATION AND CAREERS

- WB residents have been enrolling at one-stop career centers like the Work Place and Boston Career Link.
- Sixteen residents have enrolled in ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) classes at Roxbury Community College.
- Two residents have enrolled in entrepreneurship training at UMass Boston.
- **Eugenia Diaz, Sherdain Carter, and Naomi Almestica** attended a recent career fair “dressed to the nines” with clothing provided by **Dress for Success**, a non-profit organization that assists job seekers with professional attire (photo below). The three women met with recruiters from Brigham & Women’s Hospital and Boston Medical Center among others.



RESIDENT SPOTLIGHT YUSEF MOHAMMED

This fall, 18-year-old **Yusef Mohammed** will be heading to Brandeis University on a full four-year scholarship. Yusef is receiving his high school diploma in June from Charlestown High School, where he was a member of the National Honor Society. At Brandeis, he plans to major in Economics.

Yusef’s proud father, **Madhi**, summed up his feelings about his son’s achievement: “We like that he is a very successful boy. We came from Somalia and are grateful to the U.S. government and the people of America.”



NEIGHBOR TO NEIGHBOR

Westlyne Bruno prepared this dish for the cooking event on April 2nd.

Below: Westlyne poses for the camera at the close of the event.



Wheat Pasta and Broccoli with Shrimp

Ingredients:

1 Box of Wheat Pasta
 2 Tbsp Butter
 2 Large Broccoli Crowns
 1 Green Pepper
 1 Red Pepper
 1 Onion
 2 Tbsp Olive Oil
 1/2 lb Shrimp
 Salt (to taste)
 1 Clove of Garlic (crushed)
 Maggi cube
 Pack of Sazon
 1 Tbsp of Parsley
 Dash of Hot Sauce

Directions:

1. Cook pasta using box instructions; when water for pasta is boiling add salt and butter to taste, if desired
2. Cut broccoli and steam with 2 Tbsp butter
3. Chop onion and peppers
4. Heat olive oil in large sauté pan and cook onion, peppers and shrimp with pinch of salt, garlic, Sazon and Maggi cube until begin to soften. Cook until shrimp is pink
5. Add parsley and dash of hot sauce to shrimp mixture; and combine with steamed broccoli
6. Drain pasta and put in large bowl; pour broccoli and shrimp mixture over it and serve

Serves 6-8 people

Congratulations to ...

- **Danielle and Steven Boyd** (and proud grandmother **Deb Wilson**) on the birth of daughter **Safia Amina** on March 20, 2009.
- **Nadia Wolff**, sister of **Anastasia Curry**, who is graduating from Dorchester High School. this June. Nadia has been voted her high school prom queen and will be attending college this fall, where she will be majoring in fashion design. Nadia is the manager of Final Touch boutique in Mattapan, where she designs her own clothing line.
- **Tasha Thompson**, who is graduating in May with a certificate in Medical Assisting.

WASHINGTON BEECH JOB FAIR



Over 40 people participated in the Washington Beech Job fair on May 21.

Photo: WB resident **Joshua Almestica** (right) speaking with **Bob Remeika**, the manager of job seeker services at Boston Career Link.

SMOKE-FREE HOUSING

The Resident Advisory Committee is exploring the possibility of creating some "Smoke-Free" housing at the new Washington Beech.

One or more buildings may be designated as "Smoke-Free" meaning no one would be permitted to smoke inside or near those buildings.

In order to gauge interest among WB residents, Yolanda Ramos and Amelia Smith have begun going door to door to survey their neighbors and to explain what "Smoke-Free" means.

Yolanda explains the purpose of their efforts:

“To see how many people want smoke-free apartments, especially people who have kids, any kind of sickness, or who just want to stay healthy.”

