

HIGHLIGHT

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The Newsletter of the High Street Hill Association

December 2006

Join your neighbors

CHRISTMAS EVE CAROLING ON THE GREEN

LED BY

CORNELIA MCMURTRIE



DECEMBER 24 AT 5:45PM

BRING FAMILY AND FRIENDS AND A WIND-
PROTECTED CANDLE TO THE UPLAND ROAD GREEN

Foley's not (we hope) Follies

After receiving neighborhood criticism several months ago for a proposal for a mixed development on top of and behind Foley's Liquor Store at 228 Cypress Street, the applicants have submitted a revised set of plans to the Building Department. The design calls for expansion of the existing stores with two floors of housing above and parking for 11 cars off Wellington Terrace. The plans can be viewed in the Building Department at Town Hall along with the Town's denial letter that lists the proposal's zoning code violations. The next step in the process is for the applicants to file an appeal.

At least one of the Cypress Street area neighbors has been approached by the architect to sign a petition in favor of the project. We would encourage everyone to carefully scrutinize the plans and the relief being sought before signing any petition. There will be multiple public meetings concerning this project. A hearing in front of the Planning Board could be held sometime in January with a hearing before the Board of Appeals shortly thereafter. We encourage you to attend these reviews to understand fully how this complicated project will impact our neighborhood. For more information contact Polly Selkoe, Brookline's Assistant Director for Regulatory Planning, at (617) 730-2130 or neighbors Linda and David Hamlin at 617-277-6542.

Extreme Makeover:

Final Edition

The final draft of the Gateway East Public Realm Plan is currently available at the Town website:

<http://www.town.brookline.ma.us/Planning/PDFs/GatewayEast.pdf>

Developed by the 25-member Citizen Action Committee with consultants hired by the Town, the document lays out plans for the area around Route 9 from High Street to the Boston line including removal of the pedestrian bridge, extending the east end of Walnut Street and creating new crossings and traffic patterns on Route 9. A presentation to the Board of Selectmen is scheduled for January 9.

Step up for *Steps to Success*

In the 48 years since the HSHA was founded, neighbors have helped neighbors by sponsoring social events, speaking out on local issues and lobbying for our parks. Lately, however, the HSHA Board has learned of a worthwhile way that neighbors can extend their commitment to the neighborhood. At last month's board meeting, Janet Selcer, Director of the **Steps to Success** (STS) program, was invited to describe what STS is, how it works, and ways that HSHA residents can get involved to make a difference in the neighborhood.

In recent years it was recognized that only 30-50% of Brookline High students residing in public housing went on to higher education compared with more than 80% of BHS seniors overall. Steps to Success was founded to "level the playing field" for these low-income and recent immigrant students by identifying and breaking down the barriers and attitudes that stand in their way. STS brings together schools, parents and members of the community to help make school achievement and college education a goal and a reality for these students.

Beginning in 4th grade, a staff advisor works with each child, develops a "Student Success Plan" and involves them in STS after school enrichment programs, homework support, and visits to the campuses of STS's college partners. As they enter middle school, STS

students work with graduate student mentors, apply for one of STS's 80+ paid summer internships with area employers and take regular "transition to high school" trips with STS staff. Then in Brookline High, STS becomes a regularly scheduled weekly class focused on their high school progress. Finally, in senior year, STS students and families are coached and supported throughout the college application process.

Because STS believes the program must involve the whole family, it also offers free English language classes for parents and provides a resource and referral program for adult family members who wish to write a resume, seek job training or finish their own education. With parents and guardians gaining skills they want in their own lives, STS families are better able to involve themselves in the educational issues their children face.

The results have been dramatic. This past June the first STS cohort of students graduated high school. 89% were enrolled to go to college and one was off to trade school for plumbing. Tardy-from-school records have improved and parent and teacher conferences are up 70%.

The members of the High Street Hill Board asked STS Director Janet Selcer how neighbors could help out:

- Ask your workplace (large or small) to provide internships for students
- Be an after school tutor for students who need homework help
- Visit with STS students to describe your profession
- Volunteer to teach a skill after school to STS students, grades 5-6 or 7-8.
- Support STS with a donation.

Raising funds for youth in Brookline is not an easy task. After six strong years STS the federal grant that supported much of the program has come to an end. And since most foundations don't see Brookline as a needy community, STS is relying more than ever on local neighbor contributions.

For more info, please contact Steps to Success Director, Janet Selcer, at 617-879-4638 or call Rob Daves at 617-566-7334.



SHOVEL OUR SNOW PROGRAM

The Brookline Recreation Department Shovel Our Snow (SOS) program provides residents of Brookline with the names of young people who are willing to shovel snow this winter. Shovel Our Snow is strictly a referral program that connects residents who need their walks and driveways shoveled with young people who are looking to earn extra money over the winter. It will be the responsibility of the youngster and/or the youngster's parent or guardian to negotiate an appropriate fee with the resident seeking snow shoveling services. If you need further information, please call 617-739-7590 or 617-730-2069.