



nerej

The Hamilton Company Charitable Foundation pledges \$1 million West End House in Allston

May 28, 2015 - Front Section

The Hamilton Company Charitable Foundation, founded by real estate icon Harold Brown, has pledged \$1 million to the 109-year-old West End House in Allston to support expanded programs and facilities for at-risk youth throughout Boston.

The Hamilton Co. gift will support development plans that call for both renovations to the existing facility and the construction of a two-story, 5,000 s/f addition. Andrea Howard, West End House's Executive Director since 1999, said that when completed, the renovations will provide for a performance space, a teen wing dedicated to academic preparation and college success in addition to social activities, a larger fitness facility, and an expanded Kids In Motion Café.

"We are proud to provide innovative and responsive programming for our young people," said Howard, who has 27 years of experience in youth development. "The West End House eliminates all barriers to participation in our programs and actively seeks out youth with the greatest need."

Hamilton vice president Jameson Brown, chairman of The Hamilton Charitable Foundation and Board Member Maura Brown, described the West End House as "a very special place, and we are glad that we are able to contribute to its ongoing and future success."

Harold Brown said, "They do a great job there. There are few places that have a history as rich as Boston itself." Brown, now in his 90s and celebrating his 60th year in the real estate business, has been a big supporter of the West End House over the years.

The West End House is an independent Boys & Girls Club that supports children and teens as they prepare for success in school, work and life. Membership has grown 50% over the past five years to more than 1,500. The organization's citywide reach has also expanded with 52% of its young members from Allston-Brighton, 22% from Dorchester, Roxbury and Mattapan, and 26% from other Boston neighborhoods. The majority live in Boston Housing Authority residences or other subsidized housing, and many come from single-parent households.

With the doubling of membership, space at the West End House is at a premium. "We serve an average of 262 youth each day in space designed for 200," said Howard. The increase in membership reflects a growing trend of high school teens joining for the first time. "We are now in the top 2% of Boys & Girls Clubs nationwide serving teens," said Howard.

As Harold Brown noted, the West End House has a storied history that reflects both its origins and Boston's population shifts over the past 112 years.

In 1903, a group of immigrant boys in the densely packed West End neighborhood of Boston banded together to form a club dedicated to the moral, mental and physical advancement of its members. The boys met on the Boston Common, in alleyways and in abandoned buildings to exercise, study history and literature and to forge the bonds of friendship that would insure survival in a rough urban neighborhood. Philanthropist James J. Storrow, for whom Storrow Drive is named,

was so impressed by their motivation, unity and strength of character that in 1906 he funded a clubhouse for the boys, which became known as The West End House Boys Club.

For nearly seven decades, the Club served as the cornerstone of the West End neighborhood, serving immigrant boys from Russia, Poland and other eastern European countries. Under the leadership of its first executive director, Mitchell Freiman, and later Jacob "Jack" Burns and Allie Coles, the West End House played a pivotal role in the lives of generations of boys.

In the 1950s, urban renewal replaced the West End neighborhood with luxury high-rise apartments and an expanded Massachusetts General Hospital. By 1960, the neighborhood of more than 7,000 people ceased to exist.

Although there were no boys left to serve in the West End, the Club's leadership was determined to live up to the West End House motto - The Spirit of the House Will Never Die. A study commissioned by the West End House revealed that the Allston-Brighton area was home to the largest population of children of immigrant families in need of services; and in 1971, the West End House moved there.

In 1976, the Club proudly became one of the first in the nation to include girls as full members and went on to become the West End House Boys and Girls Club.

The Hamilton Company, Inc. is one of the largest privately held, full service real estate companies operating in New England. Founded in 1954 with headquarters in Boston, the company has continuously provided leadership in the real estate community by following its mission: "To be a real estate industry leader providing quality services focused on the needs of our tenants, clients, and associates."

Hamilton Company Charitable Trust board member Fred Lebow and board chairman Jameson Brown (back row far left to right) join West End House executive director, Andrea Howard (back row 2nd from right) and Hamilton Company Charitable Trust board member Maura Brown (back row far right) in announcing Hamilton Company's \$1 Million donation to the West End House in Allston-Brighton.

New England Real Estate Journal - 17 Accord Park Drive #207, Norwell MA 02061 - (781) 878-4540