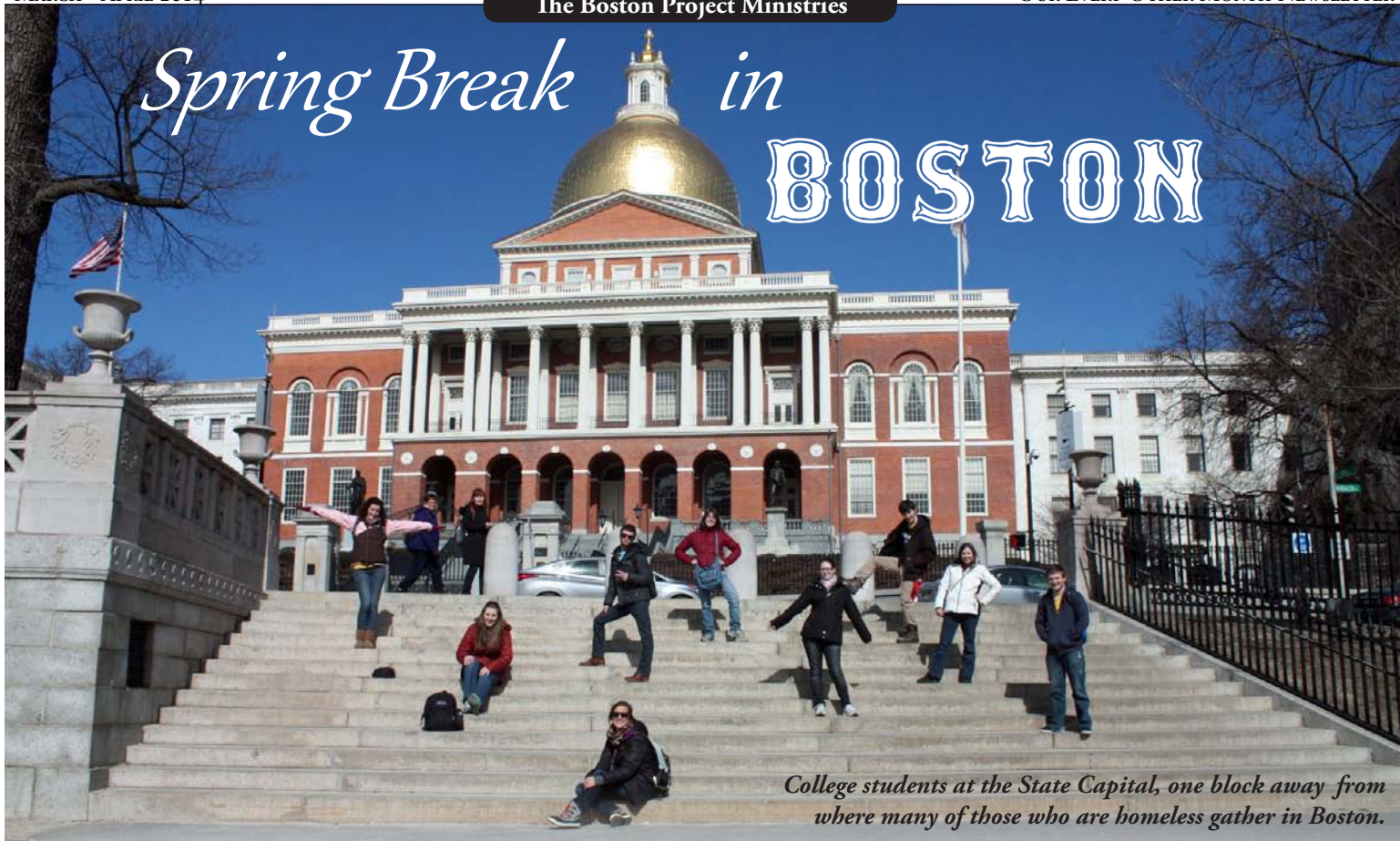


# Spring Break in BOSTON



*College students at the State Capital, one block away from where many of those who are homeless gather in Boston.*



~ by Kristi Ellens

**“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, for he has anointed me to bring Good News to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim that captives will be released, that the blind will see, that the oppressed will be set free, and that the time of the Lord’s favor has come.”** ~ Jesus’ mission statement (Luke 4:18-19)

Just three years ago, I scrambled into a van filled with eager Calvin College students heading to Boston for their spring break service-learning trip. Little did I know what God had planned for me as I came to volunteer with The Boston Project.

Today, I am serving here full-time through Americorps as the Volunteer Outreach Coordinator!

Spring break mission trips are filled with service, time with Jesus, after-school programs, wacky games, a sunrise on Boston’s harbor, and beautiful friendships. **That trip literally changed my life.** My heart immediately connected with The Boston Project’s vision, which seeks to make Jesus Christ known right where we live, work, worship, and play alongside our neighbors.

In the book *Making Neighborhoods Whole*, contributor Bethany Dudley writes; “It felt like I was coming home. The people spoke the language of my heart. They put into words the thoughts and feelings I did not know how to express.” Suddenly, ministry for me was not limited to Bible stories or “getting people saved.” The conversation had been expanded to include not only individuals, but also seeing God transform entire communities. The Boston Project showed me Christian community development done right with the heart of Christ.

This spring, a team of students from Grand Valley State University (Michigan) came to serve on their spring break. I want to share with you Kaila’s experience at The Boston Project:

**“One of my favorite parts of the week was working with three different homeless ministries. So many people in Boston truly have a heart for the Lord and serving the homeless population there. Our team was able to help prepare a meal for hundreds of men and women at a shelter as well as work directly with those on the streets. Many students on our trip had never interacted**

*(continued on back)*



*Students started their week in Boston worshipping with local churches on Sunday (top). Every weekday, they served at after-school programs around the city (bottom).*



with those who were homeless before. I saw God work in amazing ways and transform students' hearts as they started to understand many of the circumstances and situations that led to their unique life stories.

At Starlight Ministries, we had the opportunity to serve those who needed clothes and personal items, hear their stories, and pray for them. Then we were able to join Hope Fellowship and Streetlight Ministries in Harvard Square where we handed out food and started conversations with those on the streets. By the end of the week, I think everyone on our team had a new perspective of what it meant to be homeless. Many of our initial stereotypes and naivety were shattered as we formed relationships with people. We learned that there is much more to a person's story than earthly belongings, witnessed incredible joy and peace despite hard circumstances, and encountered people with stories we will never forget.

I am so thankful for the partnership we were able to form with The Boston Project throughout the week. God used our time in Boston to speak to everyone on our team and many have come home with a desire to serve people in Grand Rapids." -Kaila

It's hard for me to believe that I came as a student, too, and now help host hundreds of volunteers each year. My passion is to see people's lives changed like mine was. **I want to thank you for your investment in The Boston Project.** Your support impacts neighbors and our neighborhood, students who come to serve and learn, and young adults practicing what it means to love our neighbor faithfully. It's pretty amazing to think about what next volunteer, church partner, local teenager or child will be part of the future Boston Project ministry team living out Jesus' mission everyday. *Maybe it's you!*



(above) Students serve at New England Seafarers Mission reaching out to crew members of ships at port. (below) The team bakes cupcakes as a snack for Starlight Ministries' outreach.



## news around the block



### SUMMER YOUTH JOB INTERVIEWS

This summer, The Boston Project is planning to employ 40+ youth. Each young person must submit an application, resume and interview (pictured above). As part of a new initiative called the Youth HUB ("Helping Urban Businesses"), we are placing 10 youth in jobs at local small businesses. We provide training, mentoring, and accountability for each youth.

### YOUTH LEADERSHIP ACADEMY (YLA) LAUNCHES

12 of our middle-schoolers now gather every other Saturday to develop leadership skills, practice teamwork, and have fun while improving our community through YLA. This pilot program funded by the Church Home Society, complements our high school Youth Council, and supports young people during critical development years of 11-14 years old.

### BOSTON MARATHON FOR YOUTH JOBS

A huge SHOUT OUT out to Tyler Parady, who ran the Boston Marathon to raise money for summer youth jobs. She raised enough money to hire 2 teenagers for an entire summer. We are blessed by the creative ways people support our ministry!



### MISSION TRAINING RETREAT

Damaris Taylor, Director of Volunteer Engagement, spent a weekend with 160+ youth and adults from Grace Chapel to help training teams going on summer mission trips. Damaris led large-group gatherings and workshops about theology of missions, prayerfully encountering poverty, and cross-cultural experiences. *\*Contact us for a staff to speak at your church, youth group, or event.*



### SUMMER IMPACT FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN

This month we are launching our "Summer Impact" Campaign. If we meet our goal of \$20,000, we are able to share the Gospel without restriction in a number of our outreach programs (that's another reason churches and individual partners are so important to us!). The number, pace, and reach of our programs explode in the summer as we work with over 500 neighbors and volunteers. \$20,000 covers 25% of our overall summer program costs (\$80,000), making possible daily children's programs at Elmhurst Park, jobs for 40+ youth, Family Fun Nights, and teen Bible study. Help us reach our goal by June 15<sup>th</sup>.







# RELOCATION



relocation | reconciliation | redistribution | leadership | listening | church-based | wholistic | empowerment

The Boston Project is a member of the Christian Community Development Association (CCDA). Each newsletter we will highlight one of the eight key biblical principles, which anchor our ministry.

In the Bible, John writes “The Word (Jesus) became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighborhood” (John 1:14, *The Message*). Jesus’ example inspires us. Relocation is about being present. It is neither paternalistic nor about moving people, rather it is an “unconditional commitment to a particular neighborhood.” Pastor Wayne Gordon\* writes, “relocation entails desiring for our neighbors...what we desire for ourselves.” Jesus came from heaven to earth to share in our suffering and pain, while also being the Good News, touching every area of our life.

I first came to Dorchester in 2006. I grew up outside of Boston so my picture of the city was mostly Fenway Park, the Boston Common and Harvard Square (which isn't even in Boston). My eyes were opened to many new realities when I arrived in Codman Square for a summer internship. I ate delicious Caribbean food, learned new styles of worship, and met amazing people. I witnessed the strength of community and a spiritual depth I hadn't known. I also heard real stories about educational injustice, racism, and the impact of violence and trauma.

I knew living in Dorchester was the right thing for me. I had fallen in love with the community, and believed the best way to “love my neighbor as myself” was to have a personal stake here. I joined many other Christians who had always been in the community (remainers), or those who went away, but choose to come back (returners). For some, we need to be careful because “it is possible to relocate our houses but not our lives.” Relocation welcomes all who put down roots and pursue the shalom of the city together.

Some days after work it can take me an hour to get home even though I live around the corner. Stopping to hear about neighbor's victories, challenges and newest gardening advice is part of the journey. Living and being fully present as Christ was is possible in any community. The challenge is whether we are willing to invest ourselves long-term in the community God has called us to.

\* Quotes from *Making Neighborhoods Whole*, by Wayne Gordon and John Perkins - by Liz Cressy



Service Day with St. John's Episcopal Church

Team-building with the Youth Leadership Academy



Service Day with Newton Junction Baptist Church

Damaris gets to know some youth at the Missions Training Retreat



## Ways You Can Pray For The Boston Project

**PRAISE GOD** for our new weekly neighborhood Bible study, impactful spring break trips, for Dayna - our new Youth Employment Coordinator, opportunities to visit several church partners this year, spring service day volunteers, launch of the Youth Leadership Academy, and for YOU - our faithful encouragers and supporters.

**FIELD DAY FOR PEACE.** Pray for our TNT Youth Council as they lead this peace event on Saturday, May 24.

**SUMMER OUTREACH.** We are **EXCITED** about the summer! Pray for all the program planning, staff hiring, and logistics that need to be tackled in May and early June. Pray for the Mission Teams coming to Boston.

**NEW PARTNERSHIPS AROUND TEENS.** Pray as we explore with local churches and Christian neighbors how we can best come together to care for our local teenagers wholistically (spiritually, academics, jobs, etc.).

**DIRECTOR OF YOUTH & FAMILY MINISTRIES.** Pray for the right person and fundraising needs to hire a person to invest in our elementary age students and oversee our Youth & Family Ministries by December 2014.

**FINANCIAL PROVISION.** Ask God to move on people's hearts to support our missionary staff, and to help meet our “Summer Impact” campaign goal of \$20,000 by mid-June.

Please Pray



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/bostonproject



Updates from...

# The Boston Project Staff Team

2014 is off to a great start and full of many changes. We are excited to explore new church partnerships and collaborations with a number of you around youth ministry and volunteerism. At the same time, we are tightening our internal operations so we are ready for growth. We launched a new adult Bible study in the neighborhood, which has been refreshing and much needed for many neighbors. **And of course, we look forward to when we get to see YOU again.** Contact us.



## NEW STAFF: Dayna Hollinquest - Youth Employment Coordinator

God is definitely moving in our youth! One young man just started a 12-week electrician training program and I am already hearing awesome things about him. Another youth was accepted into the Harvard Crimson Academy (a 3-year college prep program), one of 30 chosen out of thousands. I have also assisted youth in the filling out job applications, creating resumes, and training them with skills necessary to succeed in any field. A lot of our youth are striving for excellence and I am happy to assist them in attaining their goals!



## The Malkemes Family - Executive Director & Curriculum Director

God is giving us new opportunities to serve pastorally in our community. For us, this creates a new tension between the biblical roles of Nehemiah and Ezra. It's the difference between being directors of a non-profit, inner-city ministry versus serving as neighborhood pastors. Both are full-time callings. We invite your prayers as God teaches how to live in balance; and "we know that God causes everything to work together for good for those who love God." (Rom. 8:28)



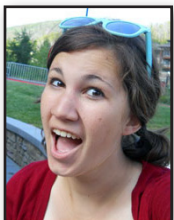
## Damaris Taylor - Director of Volunteer Engagement

God is constantly reminding me that He is at work through the many faithful churches in our neighborhood. One church in particular captures my attention regularly. Every couple of weeks, there seems to be a weeknight where the church is packed, God-glorifying music is bursting from the building, and I can hear someone proclaiming God's good news. I haven't had the privilege to worship with my brothers and sisters yet, but I look forward to gathering with them soon. God is at work!



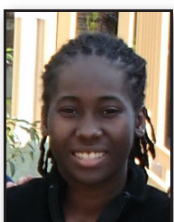
## Liz & Ben Cressy - Director of Finance; Community Development

(by Ben) When Liz and I experience suffering in our own lives, and share these stories with neighbors, we are no longer simply good neighbors or Christian service providers. We are brothers and sisters supporting each other on our journey toward peace and wholeness with God. There is no experience like realizing you and your neighbors are experiencing God's healing of the heart and soul while seeing your neighborhood transform physically.



## Kristi Ellens - Volunteer Engagement Coordinator

Christmas to May marks the longest I've ever been away from home. I'm thankful that Boston is feeling more and more like home, though I am sometimes a bit homesick for Michigan. Throughout this time of independence, I've noticed God's inexplicable provision. From providing finances that weren't supposed to line up to providing an amazing community of women from church, God has supplied both material and spiritual needs in a short period. Thank you for your prayers for God's continued provision for me in Boston!



## Sherimon Harris - Youth Leadership Coordinator

This spring, God really showed me what it means to be patient and trust in Him. Our youth are planning an awesome event called *Field Day for Peace*. About a month out, we got news that the location we requested was no longer available. It put a dent in our spirits and definitely sent me into panic mode. One night, I reached my breaking point and just lifted everything to God. Within a few days, we were permitted another location which is bigger and better than the previous site. Practical example of 'Let go and let God!'



## Keith & Sarah Riddle - Homework Center Director

The first three months of this year felt out of control. Sarah and I began a simple fast from things we had come to depend on to "get through" (such as coffee and chocolate), and God refreshed our spirits in new ways that we have not experienced in years. He even threw in some unexpected surprises: We have put an offer on a house (prayers appreciated!), and Sarah will be published in *HomeLife* magazine this summer with an article on our family in ministry.

March - April 2014



Neighborhood Ministry House



1) It's gardening season again! Youth work on a local urban farm. 2) Dayna connects with teenagers at a youth job fair. 3) Youth Council visited the State House. 4) Ben leads a discussion about traffic-calming. 5) Homework Center UNO showdown.