

# COMMUNITY COUNTS



A quarterly newsletter  
of the WMCC

West Medford Community Center, Inc.

September 2017

## BRICK BY BRICK DEDICATION

A chilly Saturday morning didn't deter dozens of community friends, family and supporters from coming out on May 13th for our 4th Annual WMCC Community Breakfast (see page 2). The first order of business for the day, however, was the official unveiling and dedication of 88 individually inscribed bricks which now sit in the Center's portico and call attention to just how much this venerable institution means to West Medford and its surrounding communities. Folks were thrilled with both the installation, skillfully done by local brick mason Richie Horne, and the permanent impact they have on the property. A lot of "oohs and aahs" punctuated the short ceremony in which the bricks were presented by members of the board and WMCC staff. If you haven't seen them yet, stop by for a look. We hope to be announcing another round of Brick-by-Brick fundraising in the coming months...Can we bake one for you?



*Skilled Mason and community son Richard Horne expertly sets each brick in place.*

## 2017 ANNUAL APPEAL RAISES STAKES FOR WMCC GIVING



The annual appeal letters went out several months ago and the response has been both steady and generous. We're not quite done yet for 2017, but we're happy to announce that the reinvigorated WMCC Annual Appeal has raised close to \$2000 for the operational budget of the center. We want to sincerely thank everyone who contributed to this appeal. We are only able to do what we do because of the kindness and generosity of our "Community Center" family. We continue to strive to be as responsive to this people of Medford (and beyond) and every dollar donated goes towards developing and sustaining the programs, projects and events that make this place special.

### Also in This Issue

- West Medford Open Studios is a feast for the senses in year 2...
- Hoops and Hope returns for a second successful year...
- Gentle Dragon Pre-School comes on board, as Petits Bouts departs...
- Health and Wellness at WMCC
- Seniors take in a Spa Day at MVTHS' Mystic Waves

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## Letter from the Executive Director

From the desk of Bill Hager:

### Why We Matter

In my travels, I am often asked why I do what I do (meaning, why I chose to work for the West Medford Community Center.) My simple answer is that building community matters. When we give people the opportunity to feel a strong sense of identification with a "Community," good things happen. People who feel connected as a community are (as a group) healthier, happier, have higher levels of personal and family success, and are more willing and able to contribute back to the larger community.

Whether you look at this need for interpersonal connectedness from a spiritual or secular perspective, the conclusion is the same: Healthy human beings need the opportunity to come together to share with other human beings.

This is what makes the work of the West Medford Community Center unique and important; the reality that we belong to each other and that we are stronger, healthier, and more complete when we can come together. We, here at the Center, are gifted with the opportunities to provide opportunities to make this happen.

## Rain moves annual LABOR DAY block party to Monday

In a tradition that goes back longer than many of us can remember, the WMCC joined with community partners West Medford Community Spirit and others to help host the neighborhood's annual Labor Day Block Party and end of Summer celebration. There was food, games, and fun throughout the day which ended up happening on Monday, September 4th, rather than Sunday the 3rd, due to the threat of inclement weather. Monday's weather was great at our traditional Dugger Park location and this was a day to meet up with friends, enjoy some back porch cooking, listen to some tunes and grab hold of these last, best memories of a "too short summer." The Labor Day Celebration also played host to the Francis Cooper Berry Memorial Girl's Basketball Tournament. This tournament was the culmination of a summer long Girls basketball league, organized by the West Medford Community Center...Hey, see y'all next year!



**WMCC Labor Day Block Party, Sept. 2017**



(above) A couple of memories to hold on to from the Summer of 2017 courtesy of our annual Labor Day Block Party...





A few candids from our spa date at Mystic Waves and our lunch at Café Electra...Excellent service and what a bargain! (above)

## Seniors get a Spa Day at Mystic Waves

On May 3rd, our seniors took a leisurely field trip just up the road to the Mystic Waves Salon and Café Electra at the Medford Vocational Technical High School (MVTHS) for a spa date. Everyone was on board for a little pampering under the gentle care of salon instructors Sandy Giannino and Janice DePace. There were manicures provided by the Cosmetology students of the Salon and a nice lunch catered by the Culinary Arts folks at the in-house restaurant, Café Electra. Under the guidance of Bob Drobneck and Dennis Moriarty, the students served us elegantly and the food was well-prepared and very tasty. Medford City Councillor and friend of the program Rick Caraviello provided swanky limousine transportation for our group of ten seniors, and a wonderful time was had by all. Sponsored by the WMCC Department of Elder Services and MVTHS, it was a day we all gave a hearty "thumbs up" to and we're looking forward to another visit soon.

## West Medford Open Studios Dazzles at WMCC

The annual artistic festival known as West Medford Open Studios once again sought out the WMCC as a host and performance hub for a diverse array of artists and creative spirits here on Arlington Street. Throughout the afternoon on April 30<sup>th</sup> and May 1<sup>st</sup>, there were rousing performances by native West Medford poet Terry E. Carter and several of his artistic friends and favorites, including singer Sonia Chimentao, and fellow West Medford poet Cheryl White Middleton...Along with a craft exhibit by the West Medford Senior Club Knitters and the artisan baked goods of "Cher Delights" (also courtesy of Cheryl White Middleton) was the fabulous artwork of renowned painter and West Medford "old-timer" Hilton "Sonny" Parham, as well as the West Medford legacy portraits of photographer Otha Sonnie. As one of the close to thirty different intimate home-based venues, WMCC's participation added a separate note of artistic distinction and uniqueness to the weekend proceeding and folks in attendance really loved seeing it all! Special thanks to Monique Doherty and Anita Jackson for facilitating the WMCC's inclusion in this annual creative showcase. (pictures to the right..)



Artist Hilton "Sonny" Parham, the sweet treats of Cher Delights', the Brown-Skinned Poet, and the WMCC Senior Knitting Club all had their artistry on display!!!

# 2017 Annual Community Breakfast Galvanizes Links between City, State and Community

On the morning of Saturday, May 13th, the Community Center held two separate major events. As discussed in a previous account we held the formal dedication of the first stage of our Brick by Brick project. Following that ceremony, more than 70 folks attended our annual “Community Breakfast.”

**This was a great morning where we both “filled the hall” and celebrated what it means to be a “Community.”**

The West Medford Community Center has, from its inception, assumed the neighborhood responsibility for providing forums where those who make public policy can meet and interact with Medford citizens in safe environment, where questions can be asked and concerns voiced. One way we do this is to hold an annual “Community Breakfast” where local elected officials can both meet their constituents, engage them in healthy discourse and respond to their issues. This year, the Medford City Council, School Committee, Mayor’s Office, and Public School System were all well-represented. Likewise, State Rep. Sean Garballey, and State Senator Pat Jehlen were also in attendance. Conversation with these public officials was spirited and filled the two-hour session. Folks were able to discuss such pressing issues as road and street repairs, parking concerns, public health, diversity in school and municipal hiring, block grant funding, and numerous others. Many one on one conversations followed the formal session. This felt like a very healthy follow up to our Public Policing forum held earlier in the year.



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The WMCC and its staff were publicly commended for the work being done at 111 Arlington Street and assured that this agency was a priority for our public officials at both the city and state levels. We hope to take advantage of this good will and continue to do good work for our youth, our seniors, and all local families who consider the Center as their “second home.”

## QUOTE OF THE DAY...

“We’d like to have a political partner in obtaining the land between our patio and the street on Mystic River Road. Then we’d like to be able to pave out to the street and have on-site parking. The land isn’t being used by DCR and we have a compelling need for dedicated parking that doesn’t disrupt the lives of our neighbors on Arlington Street. We actually want to “pave paradise and put up a parking lot.”

Terry E. Carter—WMCC





## SUMMER SENIOR BARBEQUE serves it up hotter than JULY!

It just wouldn't be summer without the West Medford Senior Club's annual BBQ, which took place on July 15th...The grills are all cold now, but this year's "special sauce" did not disappoint, as a record number of neighbors, friends, and cook-out fans converged on 111 Arlington to "eat-in" and "take-out" tasty plates of BBQ ribs, chickens, burgers, hot dogs and all the fixin's. Todd Miller and Bill Tanner manned several grills and smokers, while the ladies executed "kitchen patrol" with precision and efficiency, turning out over 150 delicious meals to a delighted audience of all ages. Through this highly-anticipated annual fundraiser, the newly-incorporated West Medford Senior Club was again able to make a substantial donation to the WMCC coffers. Thanks to the officers and members of the Club for making it all possible, as well as to our outstanding volunteers for getting the job done once again. With apologies to KFC, major kudos go out to our "Grillmasters" for making that meat "finger-lickin' good."



Ruth Youngblood and SCATV'S  
Yvette Wilks get ready to sample  
the goods!

## DANCE CALIENTE presents Classic Retrospective for WMCC Seniors

For the fourth straight year the *Dance Caliente* partnership of Eileen Herman-Haase and Raul Nieves performed a marvelous retrospective of ballroom-style dance from the 1800's through the present at our genial neighborhood home. "Dancing Through the Decades" came for another exuberant visit on the afternoon of September 14<sup>th</sup>, 2017. The event was hosted by the WMCC Elder Services office and thoroughly entertained a mostly older audience of more than 25 attendees, who all felt the passion, experienced the energy, and remembered the joy of partner dancing as they engaged with the talented duo. Herman-Haase and Nieves performed and taught such classic dances as the Waltz, Cumbe, Charleston, Swing, Argentine Tango, and Salsa! "Dancing Through the Decades" featured a one-hour highly interactive dance performance in which the *Dance Caliente* team artfully blended skillful dance performances with great costumes, humor, nostalgia, and loads of personality. The program was supported in part by donations from the West Medford Senior Club, Inc., Attorney Thomas Colonna, Kiwanis Cub if Medford and a grant from the Medford Cultural Council, a local agency which is supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency.



# Words and Music Events highlight the talk and talent of the neighborhood...

On July 7, 2017, the West Medford Community Center began a series of events we're calling "First Friday Words and Music." This is a monthly gathering (held on the First Friday of the month) where we sponsor an hour of public affairs conversation, followed by live music. It's our hope that folks interested in the discussion topic will hang around for the music, and that folks interested in the music will come early for the conversation. So far, we've held three of these events, and we're looking forward to continuing throughout the year.

"First Friday Words and Music" is part of a very productive partnership we've developed with Somerville Community Access Television (or SCAT.) This partnership allows us to both stream these shows live on the internet, and to have them archived on the "Somerville Live" YouTube channel. These first few shows have also been supported by the generosity of the Medford Arts Council and the Tufts University Neighborhood fund.

The live audience is a key part of this experience, so we hope to see you soon at one of the upcoming events. We will be posting our upcoming discussion topics and musical performer(s) both on our web site and Facebook pages. Kudos to Yvette Wilks, Crystal Chandler and all the staff at Somerville Community Access Television for helping us make this happen.

The first airing of "Words in Music" was in July and got off to a fantastic start with a public health presentation on "Living with Sickle Cell" by Lisa Ward. When she finished, R & B man Elliott Johnson's "J Street Band" took the floor and cooked for over an hour...There was plenty of clapping and finger-snapping by an enthusiastic local audience...First Fridays had launched and it was good!



The August show featured moderator Terry E. Carter hosting West Medford friends in an intimate discussion on their memories and impressions of life in "the Ville". Later on, local flutist and jazz singer Rick Silberg killed with classic tunes and jazz standards.



September's episode featured a panel discussion on the arts scene in Medford moderated by Terry once again and featuring Allie Fiske from the Mayor's office, Sarah Beardslee of the Medford Arts Center, and Gary Roberts of West Medford Open Studios. The musical entertainment was provided by "Funkmaster" Bili Sparrow, who took viewers on a journey through the contemporary history of the Ville's amazing street music scene.





## HOOPS and HOPE Year 2: a smash hit at Dugger Park!!

On Saturday, August 26, the West Medford Community Center partnered once again with a team of dedicated Medford residents to provide "Hoops and Hope, a celebration of Medford Youth." Building on the history of the neighborhood's "Brandon Bolden" basketball tournament, Andy Beck and Sammy Newman-Beck developed "Hoops and Hope, a day long event focusing on Youth, Sports, and Community. Hoops and Hope 2017 featured sports clinics provided by NBA and NFL pros, as well as motivational speakers on topics specific to Medford Youth, Food, Sports Memorabilia, Fun, and both a Men's and Women's Basketball Tournament. Literally hundreds of kids and their families took part in the day, and we're already planning on how to make **Hoops and Hope 2018** even bigger and better.



Brandon, a 16-year old Medford, Massachusetts native, was an up and coming basketball star who tragically passed away while playing the game he loved, on the court in the summer of 2000. In honor of his memory there is a memorial plaque located at Dugger Park in West Medford. Brandon was a staple of the West Medford community and was a budding star on and off the court. Since his passing the community has run an annual summer basketball league and tournament in his honor.



# A Meditative State...

## Meditation quietly going strong, Every Sunday Morning

You might not hear much if you arrive at WMCC at 9 AM on a Sunday morning but you will see a sign on the front door that directs you upstairs to the dance studio. This is where you will find friends and neighbors gathering for our weekly, 35-minute silent, un-guided meditation. We gather chairs in a circle (some people bring their own cushions). The structure is this:

9 AM – doors open

9:10 – bell rings, silent meditation begins

9:45 – bell rings, end of silent meditation

Based upon the feedback, this has been a wonderful resource to help with stress, physical pain, and personal spiritual inquiry. Sitting quietly with yourself, with the support of others, is proven to have a host good benefits for the body and mind. While the experience of meditation is not always calm, we learn how to be gentle and less reactive with whatever we are experiencing right now. This 'practice' helps us act more wisely in this difficult world.

If you are new to meditation, thirty-five minutes can be surprisingly difficult! It is recommended to start with short guided meditations that can help orient you to the experience. Just like with exercise, starting too fast and hard can actually cause injury --in this case, un-necessary mental anguish or stress. Below is short list of meditation options.

New to Meditation? We'd like to gauge interest in offering a beginner meditation class. If you would like more information about Sunday mornings or about a beginner class, please feel free to email Wendy Barrett – [wendbar@aol.com](mailto:wendbar@aol.com)



## THE WORD ON THE STREET...

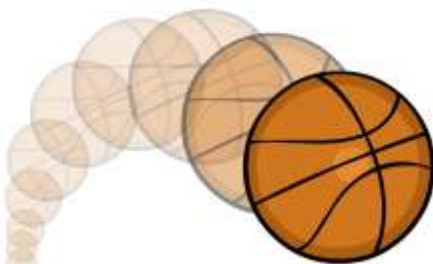
Chanting the sound OM brings us into harmonic resonance with the universe – this is a scientific fact! OM is said to vibrate at 432 Hertz, which is the natural musical pitch of the Universe, as opposed to 440 Hertz, which is the frequency of most modern music.



## WMCC Girls Hoops Bounces Back for a 4th straight year...

This past summer saw the tradition continue with our 4<sup>th</sup> year of the WMCC Girls Summer Basketball League. This year we saw nearly 40 girls between the ages of 10 and 17, who participated in practices, drills and full court games (our biggest turnout to date.) The Frances Cooper Berry GBL is run totally by volunteers and the league was free to any

interested girls and kids. Players with all levels of experience and skills were encouraged to participate. We sincerely want to thank those volunteers who made this possible, and thank all the girls who participated and made this our most awesome summer yet. We also want to thank the Zonta organization in Medford for their generous sponsorship and support of the league and its young ladies.





## Relax, Relate, Release...

West Medford resident Judy Scribner-Moore offers a yoga class suitable for all levels of experience on Monday evenings from 6:30 to 8:00 in the Dance Studio. With more than 30 years of teaching experience, Scribner-Moore offers a unique blend of stretching, strengthening and restoration with breath-based meditation for calming and focusing the mind. Class size is limited so pre-registration is required. For more information about the classes or to register visit [www.yogawithjudyscribner.com](http://www.yogawithjudyscribner.com) or call Judy Scribner-Moore at 781-488-7664.



## Staying Fit, Firm and Fierce at the Center...



*Zumba Classes are  
coming to the  
West Medford  
Community Center!!!*

*Classes Held at  
West Medford Community Center  
(111 Arlington St, Medford MA)*

*Dena D. is a certified Zumba instructor with a love for music and dance since she was a child. She has lived in West Medford her whole life and loves it. She loves teaching Zumba because she gets to meet amazing people all while dancing. She loves how you can let loose and just be yourself, no judgment, just lots of fun, kindness and respect. It really is for everyone. It's your chance to just shut off reality and have some time to just be carefree.*

*For more information, please  
contact us at:  
781-483-3042  
[wmccbill@gmail.com](mailto:wmccbill@gmail.com)*



### **Rape Aggression Defense (RAD) Training Empowering Women Through Self-Defense**

- Discuss **risk avoidance** and **reduction** methods
- Practice **techniques** to defend yourself & disable assailant
- Develop a **defensive mindset**



**Sundays: October 15-November 5, 2017  
3:30-6:30 pm**

**West Medford Community Center  
111 Arlington Street, Medford, MA**

**\$50** (sliding scale, some scholarship money available)

**For women age 14+** (under age 18 with parental consent)

To register, contact Julie: [RAD@jkdance.com](mailto:RAD@jkdance.com) 781-306-0642

Sponsored by



# Candidates Come Calling...All Politics Are Local

David McKillop and Ann Marie Cuhno, candidates for Medford Mayor and City Council respectively visited with the Seniors during their afternoon lunch program on two successive weeks during the current primary season. McKillop, running as a Republican, treated the Seniors to a tasty pizza and calzone lunch on September 6th and Democrat Ann Marie Cugno, a current Medford School Committee member, dropped by for a “meet and greet” during lunch on September 13th. McKillop talked about improving Medford’s infrastructure and upgrading the main police and fire stations. He also suggested that the city’s controversial electronic parking program must be addressed and that an accommodation needs to be reached with the contracted

vendor soon. Ann Marie stated that her work on public school issues has prepared her well for taking this next step in serving the people of this city. We wish them both well as they pursue these important civic opportunities.



## AYC Off to a Fast Start with new Program Manager...

The WMCC Afterschool Youth Club (AYC) is back up and running every day school is in session (including early release days) with a new Director of Youth Services, Daliah Haughton. Daliah has come with a wealth of experience and excitement for this program

The AYC provides space, time, and mentoring for doing homework for all the youth attending. We have access to both computers, printers, and internet access for all the children, to facilitate homework assignments. (\*)

**(\*) We utilize paid staff, as well as work study and volunteer placements from Tufts University to support the kids with their homework. Our internet usage has parent security software installed, and is always monitored by an adult assigned to our computer lab.**

Additional activities will be provided to all of the youth on a daily basis. Programming will reflect both activities that are planned by the adult staff, and those ideas the kids themselves generate, and will include (but not be limited to) sports and physical activities, cooking, arts and crafts, robotics and computer games.,

You can get more information on the Afterschool program by checking out our website: [www.wmcc.us](http://www.wmcc.us)., or giving us a call at 781-483-3042





# Gentle Dragon Pre-School Comes to WMCC...

Help us to welcome the "Gentle Dragon" Pre-School" into the West Medford Community Center Family.

Gentle Dragons is a NAEYC accredited pre-school for children between 2.9 and 5 years old, and provides a balance between age appropriate free play and structured activities while emphasizing inclusive play, cooperation, and problem solving.

Gentle Dragon's pre-school curriculum has been proven to be exceptionally effective in preparing children for entering elementary school. Gentle Dragons is also a "Parent Cooperative" which means Parents are a key component of the care the children receive.

You can contact Gentle Dragon directly by calling **781-391-2301**, or e-mailing [info@gentledragonpreschool.org](mailto:info@gentledragonpreschool.org)



## Toward a Safer City...



**Safe Medford is a grassroots group advocating for policies, services, and education to support and ensure the safety and dignity of all community members regardless of immigration status.**

We are proud Medford residents, many of whom have been here our whole lives, united through a shared desire to help protect our neighbors, especially those who are unfairly marginalized and targeted. While we formed in response to heightened threats against immigrants in 2017, our goals have been relevant for many decades and prior political climates, and will continue to be relevant in the future. We aspire to have a lasting impact on Medford and beyond.

We have two immediate goals and are working diligently to achieve them:

1. Help pass the statewide Safe Communities Act (SD.1596 and HD.3052).
2. Work with the City of Medford and Medford Police Department to pass a set of local Safe Community law enforcement policies.

Please check us out at <http://www.safemedford.org/> for more information and to get involved!

## Contact Us

Please feel free to give us a call or email us for more information about our services and programs

(781) 483-3042

[wmccbill@gmail.com](mailto:wmccbill@gmail.com)

Visit us on the web at  
[www.wmcc.us](http://www.wmcc.us)

We're on facebook too...  
[https://  
www.facebook.com/West-  
Medford-Community-  
Center-21019369888/](https://www.facebook.com/West-Medford-Community-Center-21019369888/)

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### ***“TAKE THE LEAP”***

#### **NEW CLASS comes to WMCC!**

**Workout with Weights to Music**  
**10-11:30 Saturdays, Founders' Hall, West**  
**Medford Community Center!**  
**with Barbara Freedman, Ph.D., E-RYT**  
**(Experienced Registered Yoga Teacher) &**  
**Strong Bones Certified Trainer**

Like to dance, hate to exercise?  
 Try strength training to music for great results  
 with less stress, more fun.  
 First class FREE!

- \* hand & ankle weights provided 1st time
- \* freestyle dance for cardio interval training  
 (or power walking & running-- your choice)
- \* Pilates for toning & Yoga for stretching

Have fun in this informal, fast paced, full body  
 workout. Be prepared to sweat and "feel the  
 burn"! Combat osteoporosis, weight gain, ar-  
 thritis, and depression.

Small class (10-20) with personal attention.  
 \$10 drop in; 1st time free or by donation

Wear sneakers, bring a yoga mat, a water bot-  
 tle, & any weights that you have.

Note: class meets 10 - 11:30  
 am every Saturday without breaks. Continuing  
 class, drop in only, no commitments.

## **WMCC 2016/17**

### **Board of Directors**

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