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About Project Hope

Project Hope is a multi-service agency at the forefront of efforts in Boston to move families past homelessness and poverty. We provide low-income women with children access to education, jobs, housing, and emergency services. We also foster personal transformation and work with the community and state for broader systems change.



The reasons for Project Hope's existence lie in some sobering statistics. Many residents in the Dudley neighborhood and surrounding areas struggle to overcome the disadvantages of poverty. In the neighborhoods of Roxbury, Dorchester and Mattapan, **42% of children live in poverty**, and **50% of residents lack a high school diploma**. Based on data from participants, over **50% of the participants at Project Hope enter the program earning less than \$15,000 per year**, well below the federal poverty level for a family of four; **40% earn less than \$10,000 per year**. In addition, **61% are unemployed**, and the **median income for participants who are working is \$17,116**.

Employment opportunities in the area are limited and, while many employers are interested in hiring from within this community, they need assurance that residents are well-trained and have the necessary support systems in place to hold down a job. Residents need entry-level employment in settings which offer benefits and career pathways. They need to find employment in order to meet specific goals of transitioning off of welfare, becoming re-employed after extended periods on unemployment benefits, or advancing from being underemployed in part-time or unstable positions. And that's where Project Hope enters the picture.

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Project Hope Programs



Adult Educational Services (AES)

Adult Educational Services offers a basic adult education to more than 80 low-income women a year. It combines full time, intensive academics with creative programming to foster each woman's empowerment and self-development in mind, body, and spirit. Basic literacy, GED preparation, career advising, transition to college support, case management, leadership development, and English for Speakers of Other Languages are among the program's offerings. Since its foundation, the program has provided quality adult education for homeless/formerly homeless and low-income women whose average educational level is 6th grade.

Children's Center

The Children's Center is a high-quality, nationally accredited child care center for 26 homeless and low-income children, ages 0-6. Only 18% of Boston centers achieve this rigorous standard of national accreditation. The center promotes the whole child's physical, social, emotional and intellectual growth; targets children in crisis and with special needs; involves parents in promoting family literacy and kindergarten-readiness; and works for better access and quality child care in the broader community.

Family Child Care Business Enterprise (FCCBE)

The Family Child Care Business Enterprise is an innovative venture that oversees a network of 20+ home-based family day care businesses. Licensed providers are assisted with their professional development and business success. Women gifted in caring for children gain the skills and support to run their own businesses. Ongoing college-level child development coursework, and business support is offered throughout the year.

Family Shelter

The Family Shelter was one of the state's first homeless shelter for families and remains a model for its empowering approach. Approximately 20 women and their children are sheltered each year. The women are assisted to secure permanent housing and to connect with Project Hope's adult education and career development opportunities.

Housing Services

The Housing Services Department assists Dorchester/Roxbury families with various housing issues. A team of experienced staff provides housing counseling, landlord negotiation, housing search assistance, budgeting advice and training, emergency rental funds, and more. Project Hope is in the process of growing its homelessness prevention activities and better integrating them with our career development services so women can improve their economic conditions in order to keep their families housed long-term.

(MORE)

Workforce Development & Employer Partnerships (WDEP)

WDEP was founded in 2004 to assist women—single mothers predominantly—and other community members in the Dudley neighborhood who found that without adequate training and an accessible path to employers their dreams of living wage jobs were out of reach. WDEP provides the link between community residents and work, supporting them with:

- Job readiness training
- Access to career ladder job opportunities
- Ongoing case management support for a full year after job placement

WDEP serves 130 people each year, primarily single mothers who support their families while earning just over \$10,000 each year. WDEP has a formal agreement with Partners HealthCare, one of the area's biggest employers, which offers interviews and the potential for employment for graduates from our continuum of training tracks. Through classroom instruction, job placement services, and case management, WDEP ensures participants have the skills and supports necessary to obtain and retain employment and achieve self-sufficiency.

WDEP's distinct edge lies in the continuum of job training and job readiness tracks offered to support participants' varying skill levels:

- **Partners in Career & Workforce Development (PCWD)** is the highest level, providing advanced training, internships, and placement into mid-level administrative positions in Partners HealthCare hospitals
- **Community Partners in Health Professions (CPHP)** is the mid-level pre-employment training program that prepares graduates for entry-level administrative positions at Brigham & Women's Hospital or further training through PCWD
- **Professional Readiness & Employment Program (PREP)** is our mixed-level track, designed to develop soft skills participants need to succeed in the workplace, with graduates entering general service positions at Brigham & Women's Hospital or PCWD or CPHP.

To reach a more vulnerable population, WDEP developed the Collaborative Shelter Referral (CSR) program, a collaboration with shelters in the Boston area designed to help mothers in shelter access job training and education programs. WDEP provides assessment, referrals to internal and external training and adult education programs, case management and career coaching to homeless women with children in shelter.

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Project Hope History

Project Hope was founded in 1981 when the Little Sisters of the Assumption opened the doors of their Magnolia Street convent so homeless women and children could live with them. Over the years, Project Hope's mission expanded beyond sheltering families and providing childcare to a multi-service agency at the forefront of efforts in Boston to move families up and out of poverty. This is our journey through Project Hope's history:

Hope Heals, 1947-1979

The Little Sisters of the Assumption arrive in Dorchester providing home health and social work services in neighborhood residents' homes and assisting families who were experiencing crisis.

Hope Welcomes, 1980-1989

The Sisters open their doors to homeless women and children establishing themselves as Project Hope, House Open People Enter. Project Hope became one of Boston's first family shelters providing housing services, a food pantry and childcare.

Hope Happens, 1990-1994

Continuing to respond to the issues impacting the shelter residents, Project Hope establishes new programs to address education, affordable housing and childcare needs.

Hope Empowers, 1995-1999

Working in collaboration with families and community partners, Project Hope further empowers families by providing career exploration, job development programs and opportunities for higher education.



Hope Builds, 2000-2006

Project Hope expands its housing and job training services to the community. As the needs of families grew, so did Project Hope; moving its programs to a new location at 550 Dudley Street increased the ability to expand programming and improved the presence in the community.

Hope Continues, 2006-2008

Project Hope built its new, green Community Building from the ground up and opened the doors in October 2006. The Community Building is its public site, where residents throughout the community take basic education and ESOL classes, learn job readiness and resume writing skills, sign up for financial literacy and affordable housing workshops, and earn the credentials needed to start their own childcare business. The former convent on Magnolia Street is a private residence for 11 women and their children, and is home to the Project Hope Children's Center.

(MORE)

Project Hope History (cont.)

Hope for the Future

Project Hope established the Speakers Bureau in 2008 with current and former participants who want to develop their communication skills and use those skills to educate the community about issues of poverty and homelessness. Project Hope continues to work with families to develop stronger programs to ensure a better path out of poverty.

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Project Hope Speakers Bureau



The Speakers Bureau is composed of present and former participants who want to develop their communication skills and use those skills to educate the community about issues of poverty and homelessness and the programs at Project Hope. These women, our Ambassadors, attend ongoing communication workshops and are ready to share their stories publicly, relating just how Project Hope programs helped them attain their educational, career, and financial goals.

Project Hope Ambassadors are available to travel to various venues in the greater Boston area to speak about their growth and development at Project Hope. There are many occasions that could benefit from a Project Hope Ambassador -- a luncheon with a group of Ambassadors or a keynote speech by one of the women at your next Board or Staff meeting? Or create a Community Engagement Project at your Company by encouraging families to donate Gift Cards to families-in-need or participating in our Life Tool Kit project. An Ambassador could prepare the way for such an endeavor.

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Project Hope: Success Stories

Nakira M.



Nakira's life was turned upside down in 2002 when she became a mother...of triplets. Nakira worked as a medical assistant until giving birth to her children. Her once comfortable budget was stretched in every direction. She decided to work as a preschool teacher. This option provided her a job along with childcare. Taking care of children all day then going home to her own "childcare center" proved to be exhausting and it wasn't providing her with the income she needed to take care of her family.

When her children were 4, Nakira decided that she needed to get a job that paid a living wage and offered a career track. She found a flyer for Project Hope's Workforce Development Program and knew instantly this program was exactly what she needed. After finishing the program, Nakira completed an internship and then found full-time employment at a Boston area hospital.

Nakira has held her full time job since 2006. She credits Project Hope for helping her in more ways than one. "I have become gainfully employed and can now support myself and my three children. I've received help with childcare and other resources for my children as a direct result of having been associated with Project Hope," Nakira said. Nakira stayed the course, despite the twists and turns along the way.

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Project Hope: Success Stories

Maria V.



Maria V., a single mother, moved to Boston from her native Peru in 2005 to create a life of opportunities for her two children. She was faced with many challenges when she first moved to the United States, but the one that held her back the most was her struggle to understand and speak English.

The biggest impact the language barrier had on her life was on her employment. She was only able to find employment at a local hotel and in the lunchroom at an elementary school. Despite these two jobs, she was struggling to afford her market rent apartment. Maria knew she needed a higher paying job to afford housing in Boston, and to get a better job, she needed to improve her English skills.

Maria's friend told her about Project Hope and she quickly enrolled in Project Hope's ESOL program. After two years in Project Hope's ESOL program, Maria's English and confidence had dramatically improved. While in the program, she spoke with her Education Counselor about her housing situation and careers for a better job. Maria received support from Project Hope's Housing Support Services and Workforce Development & Employer Partnerships program. She was able to maintain her rent and worked to improve her resume, interview and computer skills.

Her determination and the support she received paid off when she was offered a position at a Boston area hospital in July. She is bursting with pride because she has finally provided her children with the opportunities she had always dreamed: Her daughter is beginning her freshman year at Northeastern University on an academic scholarship and her son is enrolled at Boston Latin School.

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Project Hope: Success Stories

Laphen W.



In 2009, Laphen and her family migrated from Jamaica to Boston. She was unemployed and struggling to take care of her family. Laphen came to Project Hope to find a career that would support her family. She entered one of Project Hope's job training programs. This six-week training program helped improve her customer service skills, resume writing and basic medical terminology. When Laphen completed the program, she was hired as an Administrative Assistant in a Boston area hospital.

Laphen also joined the Project Hope Speakers Bureau to improve her public speaking and expand her communication skills. She was impressed by how personable everyone was at Project Hope. They were always willing to listen, offer suggestions and were very supportive.

Laphen was recently promoted at the hospital and has started to take classes to complete her degree in Business Administration. Upon completing her degree, she hopes to obtain a managerial position within the healthcare industry. With Laphen's determination and positive attitude, we know that she will reach this goal.

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