



Spring 2021 | *Home Is More Than 'Housing'*

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A NOTE FROM MATT PRITCHARD, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

This has been a very challenging year for all of us, and particularly for those who live paycheck to paycheck –or who have no paycheck– to cover their essential needs, starting with housing. We at HomeStart have been overwhelmed by the attention, generosity, and compassion with which this community has responded.

Because HomeStart's work is grounded in the person-to-person relationship between client and advocate, we've had to pivot from a low-tech, in-person approach to one that creatively uses technology to stay in touch. All year I've watched my colleagues go above and beyond to support their clients, while managing their own families' needs.

This is what gives me hope and pride to be here at HomeStart. Thank you for your support and please continue to stand with us. Although emergency governmental assistance has been a critical lifeline, it will not last. The wheels of eviction and housing instability are beginning to pick up their pace; through your support our advocates will be there to prevent homelessness and its far-reaching personal and societal impacts.

In this newsletter, you will read more about our game-changing solutions and deeply compassionate care of our clients. Your engagement in our work is what inspires all of us to do our best on behalf of our clients. If you would like to learn more or know anyone who needs help, please don't hesitate to reach out.

Thank you for reading!

Warm regards,

Matt Pritchard
President & CEO

MA DHCD, HOMESTART PARTNER TO REPLICATE EVICTION PREVENTION SERVICES ACROSS MASS.

Back in 2019, HomeStart first partnered with a Southeastern Massachusetts-based service agency to replicate HomeStart's innovative fee-for-success landlord-reimbursed eviction prevention model in that region.

Today, we're working in partnership with the Baker administration and the MA Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) to lay the operational groundwork for **replicating our eviction prevention services in Northeastern Massachusetts**. Looking ahead to when COVID-related emergency federal assistance for households in crisis dwindles, they reached out to request that HomeStart expand its efforts to identify and address the most pressing needs left by current gaps in the system across Massachusetts. We have executed a contract with our Northeastern Massachusetts service partner to begin providing services in May of 2021, prioritizing the tenants of "mom and pop," small landlords as the segment in most need of our services/resources. Small landlords like these provide much of the housing for Section 8 voucher holders, but have more difficulty accessing state-led relief funding than larger corporate landlords.



HomeStart President Matt Pritchard with partners from Father Bill's & Mainspring of Southeastern MA, Bank of America, Combined Jewish Philanthropies (CJP), and United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimack Valley at the 2019 launch of the replication of HomeStart's eviction prevention model in Brockton, Fall River and Quincy.

In parallel with our Northeastern expansion, HomeStart is also helping the City of Boston to prepare its response to the anticipated increase in evictions that will occur when the moratorium expires. We are already providing the first line of defense for households facing COVID-related evictions in Eastern Housing Court (e.g. Boston Housing Court), where we pivoted our data collection and evaluation team to collect real-time data of every household entering the housing court system in Boston. This data collection allows the City of Boston to understand the efficacy of its efforts to reduce evictions. **It also allows us to individually contact every household prior to their first court appearance to ensure that they understand the resources available to them: identifying and solving for potential bottlenecks in resolving their situation, as well as either providing direct service ourselves or facilitating coordination with another organization to serve**

the family. This comprehensive approach limited the number of post-moratorium evictions in Boston to an unprecedented level– only five evictions in the months of January and February.

HomeStart’s eviction prevention model is already a vital, effective tool for preventing homelessness by way of eviction in our cities. After the first eviction moratorium was initiated, we reached out to every major institutional property owner in Boston to identify households within their portfolio who they felt were most likely to experience eviction once the moratorium was lifted. **HomeStart prevented the evictions of nearly 200 households whose cases were filed prior to the eviction moratorium being instituted and worked with more than 200 households in the second half of 2020 and early 2021** to identify resources and services for them so that they would not be in an eviction situation when the moratorium is lifted.

RUN FOR TEAM HOMESTART IN THE 2021 BOSTON MARATHON®



For more information go to www.homestart.org/marathon.

HomeStart has two entry bibs for the 2021 Boston Marathon!

This year's marathon will be held in-person on October 11th, following its classic route. For more information and to apply, [click here](#). This is a tremendous opportunity for you or someone you know to run the Boston Marathon in a way that has a lasting impact on the city.

Deadline to Apply: Monday, May 31st, 2021 (Memorial Day)

"THANKS FOR YOUR ORGANIZATION!"

A landlord working with the Eviction Prevention program to resolve back-due rent recently reached out to HomeStart with this heartwarming message. Services and programs of all sorts have ground to a halt during the pandemic, making our network of advocates and case managers an even more vital through-line connecting neighbors in crisis with the resources they need.

I've been working with your agent Roseanne K. for the last 2 days. I'm so impressed by what she has done for only 2 days.

For the past year due to Covid 19, government agencies have closed, courts closed, it's so hard for tenants and landlords to talk or email with any authorities. We are used to waiting and waiting forever. That's the new normal.

But when I worked with Roseanne, just in 2 days, she had resolved everything that my tenant Amanda and myself had encountered for almost one year. She not only helped my tenant for her rent arrears applications and payments, but also helped her for section 8 future payment and potential job searching for her. What a surprise to all of us!!

I believe if every agent were like her, the leftover problems from Covid-19 can be resolved in a very short period of time.

We really appreciate her effort and dedication! You as her manager, she is exceptional and commendable. I'm proud that you have her as one of your employees!

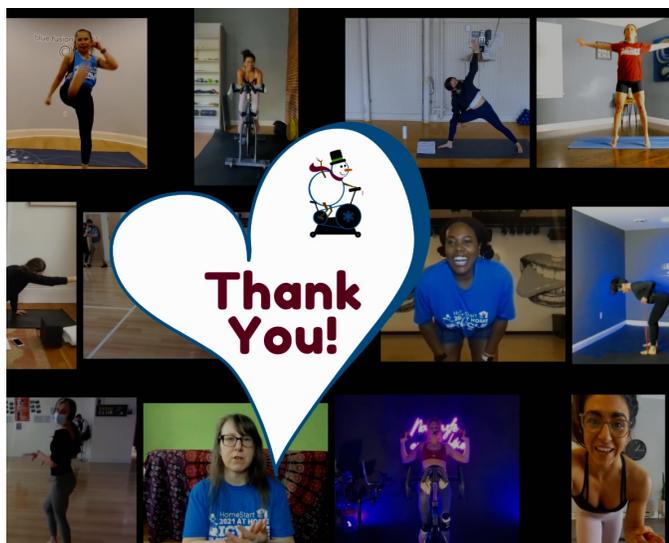
Great Experience! Thanks for your organization!

*Names altered to protect privacy

ICYCLE 2021: BY THE NUMBERS

At this year's ICycle, **273 supporters** participated in **49 classes** led by **22 local instructors**, raising over **\$150,000** for HomeStart's work!

Thank you to everyone who helped to pull off the seemingly impossible: adapting HomeStart's iconic outdoor spin-a-thon into a week of at-home virtual fitness and wellness classes. Your compassion and commitment will enable HomeStart's innovative, wrap-around services to reach more people experiencing homelessness and housing instability than we ever could have alone.



Congratulations to Team ICON Architecture, winners of the 2021 ICycle Cup, for their indomitable enthusiasm and spirited participation in an ICycle unlike any other!!

[LEARN MORE ABOUT ICYCLE](#)

GETTING TO KNOW...

HOMESTART'S HOUSING STABILIZATION SERVICES

Home isn't just the place we live, it's also the community of support that surrounds us. HomeStart's Housing Stabilization team works together to ensure that clients moving out of homelessness have the personalized, culturally-responsive supportive services they need to stay in their homes and to reintegrate into the community.

What does a community of support do when a pandemic hits? Jump into action! With the help of emergency donations made by hundreds of individuals and local businesses, Housing Stabilization advocates were able to help homebound clients secure medication, PPE, and groceries.

The Housing Stabilization team also doubled-down on helping clients to stay connected. Within the first month, they distributed prepaid phones to clients who didn't have them so that they could safely stay in contact with their support networks, including medical and behavioral health care providers.

Declaring that everyone deserves the right to a safe, affordable place to call home is one thing, but how do we make it a reality? Connecting people experiencing homelessness with affordable housing is the start, but it also requires making sure each person has the unique support they need to maintain a stable home.

Housing Stabilization advocates provide that support, whether through daily check-ins, accompanying a worried client to a medical appointment, serving as a liaison to other service agencies, or working with clients each month to manage their finances.

News & Views: The Importance of Home and the Impact of Homelessness, Housing Instability

Matt Desmond, HomeStart Advisory Board Member and Principle Investigator at Princeton's *Eviction Lab*, lends his perspective to a conversation about the increased importance of home:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/23/realestate/what-does-home-mean-to-us-not-the-same-thing-it-did-before-the-pandemic.html?referringSource=articleShare>

Recent eviction data reveals the pandemic's disparate impact on communities of color:

<https://www.wbur.org/news/2021/04/16/city-life-vida-urbana-massachusetts-eviction-data-race>

A recent study demonstrates how supportive services for formerly chronically homeless individuals lower healthcare costs, highlighting the role of these services in helping connect individuals to a network of care:

<https://www.wbur.org/news/2020/12/22/permanent-housing->

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