



# HomeStart

## **Summer 2022 | Partners in Hope**

- **"Two Years Later: Homelessness, COVID, and HomeStart's Response"- A Letter From Matt Pritchard, Executive Director**
- **Cambridge Realtors Rally for the Community Housing Assistance Fund (CHAF)**
- **HomeStart Awarded \$100,000 over 4 years from Cummings Foundation's \$25 Million Grant Program**
- **The 2022 ICycle Cup Winner is...**
- **News & Views: Protecting Seniors from Eviction, Racially Disparate Mortgage Lending, MA State House Discusses a Real Estate Transfer Fee and other stories**

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### **"TWO YEARS LATER: HOMELESSNESS, COVID, AND HOMESTART'S RESPONSE" - A LETTER FROM MATT PRITCHARD, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

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Dear Friends,

HomeStart was founded 28 years ago to fill a gap in homeless services that had never been met: working directly with people living on the street and in shelters for the explicit purpose of quickly finding permanent housing and doing whatever it took to make sure their housing was stable.

Since then, HomeStart has walked beside more than 20,000 individuals on that journey of housing stability, and as our cities and world change, HomeStart is evolving to meet these shifting needs, adapting to fill new gaps.

**So where are we now? How is COVID and the "post-COVID" economy changing homelessness? How is HomeStart responding? What can we all do to help?**

There are a few key themes that are informing our answers to those

questions:

1) **Federal emergency resources are nearly expired, all eviction moratoriums are over, and the impact of economic downturns to homelessness often have a "lag effect."**

All eviction moratoriums are now expired. Applications for the \$819M federal emergency assistance funds allocated to Massachusetts are now formally closed, and most of that money has been distributed. After the downturn of 2008-9, the primary impact on the shelter system didn't surface until mid-year 2010– when households' personal emergency funds and close interpersonal support systems had run dry.

2) **Inflation is making homelessness worse.**

Rising housing costs, combined with persistent inflation for basic necessities like gas and food, have left many Americans newly homeless and millions more fearing they'll soon lose their homes. In June 2021, the Census Bureau found that an estimated 200,000 Massachusetts renters were behind on rent, including more than a third of Black renters, a quarter of Asian renters and a fifth of Latino renters. With emergency resources disappearing, many of these families will not be able to sustain their housing, and every \$100 increase in median rent is associated with a 9 percent increase in the estimated homelessness rate, according to a 2020 report by the U.S. Government Accountability Office. This is particularly troubling as rents continue to soar to unprecedented highs.

3) **Shelters are overcrowded and hundreds of Bostonians are choosing to camp outdoors rather than take a bed in a shelter where they feel unsafe and alone, or navigate the complexity of securing transitional housing or a treatment bed.**

This is where our state's affordable housing crisis, long-standing systemic inequities, and pandemic-amplified challenges with opioid use, trauma, and mental health all meet, leading to situations like we have seen most poignantly at the corner of Mass Ave and Melnea Cass Boulevard in Boston.

HomeStart's response has been rapid and multi-pronged:

- **We have a team dedicated to working with those seeking to exit homelessness after sleeping outside in the Mass and Cass neighborhood.**
- **We are privately funding a team at housing court to make certain that households who could be protected from eviction and sustain their housing are stabilized.**
- **We are continuing to expand our market-driven eviction prevention program into other regions, strengthening these communities by providing a solution for the unmet needs of residents and landlords.**

Moreover, we are building our capacity to engage with community partners (like you!) who are looking for additional ways to provide for the material needs of our unhoused and newly-housed clients. These include a ["Welcome](#)

**Home"** package program for groups who want to create gift boxes of household essentials to welcome someone transitioning from homelessness, as well as emergency funds like our new **John Connolly Dignity Fund**.

Our effort to evolve and fill gaps that are otherwise unmet isn't done in isolation, and the more of us who are able to help, the better ALL of us will be. Please contact us at **info@homestart.org** if you have any questions and/or ideas of how we might be able to fill more gaps and meet more needs!

With Warmest Thanks,



Matt Pritchard  
President & Executive Director

## CAMBRIDGE REALTORS RALLY FOR THE COMMUNITY HOUSING ASSISTANCE FUND (CHAF)



In Mid-May, HomeStart co-hosted an Appreciation event with the Denman/Drapkin Group at Compass in Cambridge to thank all of the amazing Realtors who supported the Community Housing Assistance Fund (CHAF) last year – in a community effort which raised over \$100,000 to help families and individuals who work with HomeStart to transition out of homelessness!

CHAF was created and continues to be sustained by a local coalition of community banks and Realtors working with HomeStart to provide emergency assistance for neighbors seeking to move out of homelessness across Cambridge and Boston. Thanks to our gracious host and CHAF fundraiser extraordinaire, Debbie Lewis of the **Denman/Drapkin Group at Compass**

## BE PART OF THE SOLUTION

### Community Campaign for C·H·A·F

FROM HOMELESSNESS  
TO HOME-AT-LAST

JOIN OUR **COMMUNITY CAMPAIGN FOR CHAF** AND RAISE MONEY FOR THIS VITAL EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE FUND THROUGH A SUPER SIMPLE PEER-TO-PEER FUNDRAISER!

TO SIGN UP, VISIT [WWW.BIT.LY/CCCHAF](http://WWW.BIT.LY/CCCHAF)

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT CARRIE NEFF AT [NEFF@HOMESTART.ORG](mailto:NEFF@HOMESTART.ORG) (857.415.2242)

[Click here to join the Community Campaign for CHAF and learn more](#)

## HOMESTART AWARDED \$100,000 OVER 4 YEARS FROM CUMMINGS FOUNDATION \$25 MILLION GRANT PROGRAM

This June, the Cummings Foundation announced HomeStart as one of the recipients of its \$25 Million Grant Program. It was a heavily-vetted process, with 90 volunteers reviewing over 580 applications to select 140 recipients.



The grant totals \$100,000, distributed over four years. This comes as incredible news at a time when households across Greater Boston are struggling with increased economic hardship and housing instability. The grant will be used to support families and individuals throughout Greater Boston who are experiencing homelessness or threat of eviction by providing housing search to those who are currently homeless, housing stabilization to those who are newly-housed and formerly homeless, and eviction prevention to households who are on the brink of displacement and homelessness.

"We are so fortunate in greater Boston to have such effective nonprofits, plus a wealth of talented, dedicated professionals and volunteers to run them," said Vyriotes. "We are indebted to them for the work they do each day to provide for basic needs, break down barriers to education and health resources, and work toward a more equitable society."

## THE 2022 ICYCLE CUP WINNER IS...

### **Congratulations Team Northland for bringing home the 2022 ICycle Cup!**



Each year, the ICycle Cup is awarded to celebrate a team whose spirited impact goes above and beyond.

In 2021, ICycle was held as a virtual event and Team ICON Architecture took home the ICycle Cup for their undaunted enthusiasm and participation.

This year's ICycle spin-a-thon was back in person, spanning across two days and two locations, and it was our highest-fundraising ICycle ever! Teams riding outside under a tent in the middle of winter raised over \$325,000 to help neighbors experiencing homelessness obtain a warm, safe place to call home.

This year, Team Northland stepped forward with a novel approach that paid off- asking partnering businesses to donate to ICycle in lieu of sending a gift basket at the holidays. Their combined efforts raised over \$180,000! Not stopping at their own success, Northland launched a "Northland Cares" Valentine's Day match- doubling donations made to other teams, up to \$10,000.

To keep things competitive, the ICycle Cup can only be won by the same team twice in a four year period. Since Northland already won the ICycle Cup in 2020, it's anyone's guess who will rise up to claim the cup in 2023!!

If you're interested in participating in ICycle 2023 as an individual rider, a new team or an ICycle Spin Instructor, please contact Carrie Neff, HomeStart's Director of Community Engagement, at [neff@homestart.org](mailto:neff@homestart.org) or by phone at (857) 415-2242.



## News & Views:

- [GBH Launches new series on housing in MA, "Priced Out: The fight for housing in Massachusetts"](#)
- [MA State House Discusses a Transfer Fee for Real Estate Holdings over \\$1 Million](#)
- [Advocates Rally to Protect a Tenant Facing Eviction in Roxbury](#)
- [Group Calls for Laws to Protect Seniors from Eviction](#)
- [Local Study Shows Racially Disparate Mortgage Lending](#)

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**DONATE TO HOMESTART**

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