

BOSTON SENIORITY

City of Boston
Issue 5

Age Strong Commission
May 2026

Mayor Michelle Wu
Vol. 50



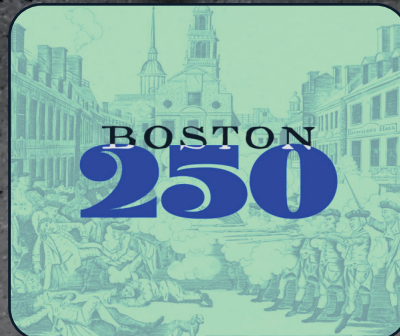
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CITY of BOSTON



FREE PUBLICATION



AGE+ | Age Strong
Commission

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COMMEMORATION

BOSTON SENIORITY MAGAZINE

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MAYOR'S LETTER

MAY 2026

Hello Boston!

May—Older Americans Month, ALS Awareness Month, and Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) Heritage Month—is full of reasons to gather and connect across our city. In this issue, we highlight the communities we celebrate this month and every day in Boston.

We mark Older Americans Month with the theme “Champion Your Health.” In that spirit, we’ve gathered dozens of free activities to help you stay on top of your wellbeing. On Mondays and Wednesdays, join us at Roxbury’s Dewitt Center for fitness, arts and crafts or catching up with neighbors over coffee. If you’re interested in trying a new outdoor activity like bocce or archery, the Parks and Recreation Department hosts the weekly Forever Young program at select parks across the city. And we are especially grateful for the dedicated Age Strong volunteers who help care for our older residents—including Boston senior Rosamond Howard, featured in this issue.

As we celebrate the joy and resilience of our AAPI community, we include a curated cultural reading list from the Boston Public Library and a piece on the proposed Vietnamese Diaspora Memorial in Dorchester’s Fields Corner. Supported by Age Strong’s Expanding Engagement grant, the public art project aims to honor Boston’s Vietnamese families impacted by the Vietnam War. To inform the memorial’s design, public meetings were held, including one for Vietnamese community elders.

Last but not least, in commemorating ALS Awareness Month, we’re honored to spotlight retired Boston firefighter Tom Berninger. We thank Tom for his years of service to our city and for sharing his story with us.

We hope this issue helps you find new ways to engage with our community this spring.

Looking forward to seeing you there!
Mayor Michelle Wu



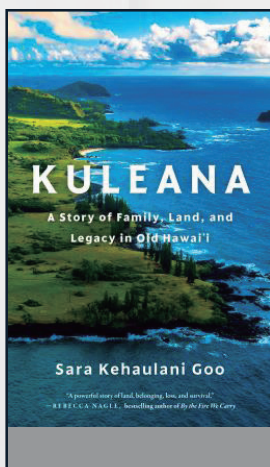
Michelle Wu

▶ BOOKS

BPL BOOK PICKS

Source: Boston Public Library

Check out these books to celebrate AAPI heritage month!



Kuleana by Sara Kehaulani Goo

When a stratospheric increase in property taxes forced her family to consider selling land in

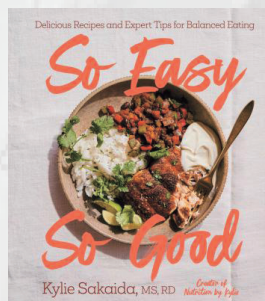
Maui that they had held for almost 200 years, mainland-born journalist Goo returned home to investigate.



The House of Beauty by Arabelle Sicardi

Drawing on real examples like supply chains, labor, and brand history, Sicardi

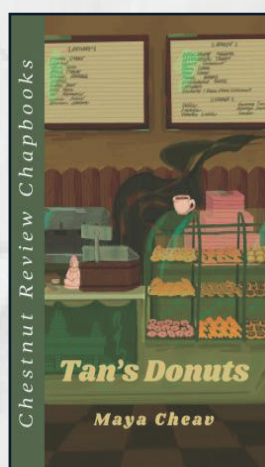
illustrates how beauty myths are based on racism, transphobia, and exploitation, and encourages readers to imagine a kinder idea of beauty.



So Easy So Good by Kylie Sakaida

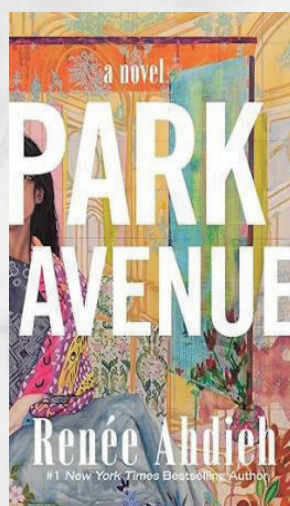
Registered dietician Sakaida focuses on making nutrition accessible by creating

easy, balanced meals, many of which draw on her Japanese Hawaiian heritage by incorporating Asian ingredients and techniques.



Tan's Donuts by Maya Cheav

Through heartwarming and heartbreaking prose poem vignettes, Cheav's chapbook tells the story of a Cambodian war refugee who opens a donut shop.



Park Avenue by Renée Ahdieh

Junior lawyer Jia Song, who dreams of luxury and the ability to support her immigrant parents in comfort, finds herself entangled in the family strife of her firm's most important clients, the

ultra-wealthy Park clan.



For more titles or BPL info, visit bpl.org or call 617-536-5400.

SCAM CORNER: BEWARE OF FAKE PARKING TICKET SCAMS

By Sophia Wang, Age Strong Staff

The Boston Police Department (BPD) has issued a warning about an increase in scams using fake parking violation citations. There are “official-looking” notices telling residents to pay fines immediately or appear in court.

How It Works

- Scammers text a fake notice for traffic violations which may include a case number, a judge’s name, a hearing date, or QR code.
- The notice directs targets to scan the QR code & pay their unpaid balance to avoid penalties.

What To Do

- **Do not scan the QR code or submit payment information on the notice.** Unsolicited parking or traffic violation notices that include a QR code are likely a scam.
- **Look for mistakes or fake sounding names on the notice.** The judge’s name may be common like “John Smith,” or the notice may be from a state you haven’t been to in years.

- **Verify if you have a parking violation through the legitimate source.** Visit the City of Boston’s official parking page to confirm: boston.gov/departments/parking-clerk/how-pay-parking-ticket

If you received a fraudulent parking violation notice or have been a victim of this scam, report it to the Boston Police Department. You can also submit information anonymously by calling **1-800-494-TIPS**, or text the word “**TIP**” to **CRIME (27463)**.

To see past Boston Seniority articles on scam prevention, and other resources, visit boston.gov/departments/age-strong-commission/boston-seniority-magazine.

Source: Boston Police Department



MAY IS MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

By Sarah Smith, Age Strong Staff



May is Mental Health Awareness Month – a time to spread awareness about mental health and help to reduce the stigma around getting help. Age Strong’s Behavioral Health Grant funds non-profit organizations, entities, or licensed professionals that provide direct services, training, and/or capacity to increase behavioral health support to Boston’s older adults (55+) to better serve both underserved and marginalized communities.

One grant recipient is the Greater Boston Chinese Golden Age Center’s (GBCGAC) Behavioral Health Navigation and Support Program’s new "Caring

Connections" program. “We provide case management, health education, and onsite clinical services with two clinicians,” says Behavioral Health Program Manager, Kande Li.

“We really appreciate the grant – it’s allowed us to expand the program, meeting the needs of older Asian Americans and to raise awareness of behavioral health support. We’ve been able to hire staff to provide screenings, assessments, one-to-one clinical counseling, and support groups.”

GBCGAC’s Be Heart Center, located blocks from their regular day program, allows older adults



to see their clinicians without being seen by their peers. It offers discrete mental health services for those who are nervous about taking the first steps. “We often get clients through referrals, but we also do a lot of outreach to different housing communities, organizations, and hospitals. We also accept self-referrals,” says Clinical Director, Megan Cheung.

“There’s a large need for behavioral health services for older adults, especially within the Chinese speaking community,” Cheung explains. “First, there’s a large stigma around mental health, in general. They usually come in with physical pain or family issues. They don’t really share the extent of their emotional distress,

due to their culture. We help them understand what’s going on beneath the surface. We take time to build a trusting relationship so we can better understand them and help.”

Cheung continues, “there’s often the language barrier, creating even bigger issues, as they’re already nervous about the subject. Our program helps provide emotional, educational, and language support that’s missing from other programs.”

For more information on the Greater Boston Chinese Golden Age Center’s behavioral health programs, visit gbcgac.org.



AGE STRONG PARTNER HIGHLIGHT: HAWTHORNE YOUTH & COMMUNITY CENTER

By Jordan Rich, Age Strong Staff

Hawthorne Youth and Community Center (HYCC) is a grassroots, non-profit organization responsive to community needs for over forty years. What started in a converted coal cellar with a small group of concerned Roxbury residents in 1967, was formally incorporated as Hawthorne Youth and Community Center by 1973.

Located at 9 Fulda Street in Roxbury, HYCC offers a range of culturally-responsive programs and services to support the well-being and social-connectedness of Boston's older adults. Age Strong spoke with HYCC Community Chair Doris Morales and Program Manager Luisa Siniscalchi to learn more about HYCC's contributions to Boston's community.

Which programs/services does HYCC offer Boston's older adults?

We offer fresh produce food distributions to address food insecurity, a walk/run club for women, arts and crafts, quilting and sewing, and community gardening. These programs promote creativity, skill-building, and opportunities for social

engagement. In addition, HYCC's open outdoor space and garden beds serve as a welcoming, intergenerational hub where older adults can gather, learn, and build community with neighbors of all ages.

Where is HYCC's programming offered and how do older adults attend?

Programming takes place at the Hawthorne Youth and Community Center in Roxbury. Older adults can view our upcoming activities on social media channels and neighborhood flyers. Most activities don't require registration.

Is HYCC's programming free and open to the public?

All programs are offered at no cost and are open to the Roxbury community ensuring access for low-income and historically underserved residents.

Now that spring is here, are there programs that older adults should keep in mind?

Women's Walk/Run Club
Weekly, Thursdays 5:30-6:30PM
Spring Flower Arrangements

May 16, 11AM-1PM
Gardening Workshops
May 30, 11AM-1PM
June 20, 11AM-1PM

Why is it important for older adults to participate in outdoor programming?

Many older adults spend a lot of time indoors, often due to safety concerns or limited access to safe outdoor spaces. Participation in outdoor activity supports both our physical and mental health. Time outside encourages movement and provides opportunities for meaningful social interaction, which can reduce isolation and loneliness. Fresh air, sunlight, and green space help reduce stress and improve our mood. Creating safe, accessible outdoor programming ensures that older adults can stay active, connected, and engaged in their communities.

Can you tell us how Hawthorne Youth and Community Center uses Age Strong grant funding to support its work with older adults?

Age Strong funding supports direct program costs like supplies, food, and personnel that support arts and crafts activities, gardening workshops, walk/run club for older adults in Roxbury.

Are there any barriers to providing services to older adults? Is there stigma about aging or accepting support? Yes, there can be stigma around aging and accepting support. Some older adults value independence and may feel hesitant to participate in activities specific to seniors.

Is there anything you want Boston Seniority Magazine readers to know about Hawthorne Youth and Community Center?

We are a trusted, community-rooted organization fostering connection across generations, promoting equity, and providing accessible programs that support healthy aging, food access, and social well-being for Roxbury residents. To learn more visit hyccroxbury.org or call (617) 427-0613.





**FREE PROGRAMMING FOR
BOSTON'S OLDER RESIDENTS:
DEWITT CENTER IN ROXBURY**

By Age Strong Staff



Age Strong provides free programming for Boston's older residents at our senior centers, through funding community organizations, and at neighborhood sites across Boston. Sites include The Codman Branch of Boston Public Library and The Holland Community Center in Dorchester, Spontaneous Celebrations in Jamaica Plain, Union Church in the South End, The Elks Lodge (in partnership with Ethos) in West Roxbury, and the Dewitt Center in Roxbury.

On Mondays and Wednesdays Age Strong offers a variety of drop in activities and classes including Bollywood Dance, Toni Morrison Storytelling, cards/board games, knitting/crocheting, and guest speakers on topics like energy savings, consumer services, and others.

Mondays

- Bollywood Dance, 11AM
- Card & Board Games, 12PM
- Tony Morrison Storytelling 1PM

Wednesdays

- Various Speakers 11AM
- Cards & Board Games, 12PM
- Knitting/Crocheting, 1 PM

The Dewitt Center is located at 122 Dewitt Drive in Roxbury and can be reached by phone at **(617) 541-3900** or madison-park.org/what-we-do/resident-community-services/dewitt-center/.



AN INTERVIEW WITH ROSAMOND HOWARD, SENIOR COMPANION PROGRAM VOLUNTEER

By Edzani Kelapile, Age Strong Staff



Rosamond Howard has called Dorchester her home for over 20 years, but she's lived in the City of Boston for a much longer period of time, including Jamaica Plain and Roxbury.

Born in Boston and raised in Atlanta, she and her family moved back to Boston when she turned ten. Before she retired, Rosamond was an ophthalmology technician, checking patient's eyes and performing diagnostic tests.

Service has always been a

constant in her life. Before volunteering with the Age Strong Commission, Rosamond volunteered with "Women in Transition," supporting women reentering society and the workforce after drug rehabilitation. "While my kids were growing up, I joined as a volunteer," Rosamond explains. "Drug abuse was on the rise, and I wanted to help these women to get their lives back on track."

Upon retiring, Rosamond found new ways to give back through the Age Strong Commission AmeriCorps Seniors Senior Companion Program (SCP). "The companion part of the program is what really hooked me," she said. "I felt fortunate. I can get up and move around and not everyone can. Helping people stay in their homes and neighborhoods felt good to me."

Today, Rosamond escorts older adults to medical appointments through the SCP and partner

organization FriendshipWorks. She accompanies clients to and from medical procedures, which can often be a source of anxiety for those living alone. “We’ll take whatever ride we have available, whether it’s public transportation, a taxi or the Age Strong Shuttle. The important thing is to be with the client the whole time,” she says. Rosamund also enjoys attending meetings with other volunteers. “It’s so fulfilling seeing other seniors get together to help other older residents,” she shares.

For Rosamond, the work is about more than just transportation. It’s about dignity. She is acutely aware of how isolated older adults can feel as they begin to require more assistance. “It just plain sucks! You basically feel invisible,” she says candidly. “Helping folks continue to live in their homes helps them keep their dignity.”

When she’s not helping her neighbors, Rosamond is a reader and crafter. Once the weather becomes warmer, you’ll find her doing water aerobics at her local

community center. “It’s good for the old bones,” she jokes.

Rosamond encourages volunteering to anyone who can spare the time. “It makes me feel good to help someone get home safely after a tough medical procedure. Helping others actually helps ourselves,” she says.

To become a Senior Companion or to learn about the various Age Strong volunteer opportunities, call 617-635-4366.



BOSTON 250: CELEBRATING AMERICA'S 250TH BIRTHDAY AT THE BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY!

By Age Strong Staff

This year marks the 250th anniversary of the founding of our nation, and Boston is taking center stage. Boston 250 is a yearlong commemoration honoring the city's role in the American Revolution and its legacy of activism and innovation woven throughout the history of the city and its people.

Boston is celebrating in a big way with many events and activities throughout the year.

The Boston Public Library just opened a new exhibition called "Declarations: Printing a New Nation," now on view through September at the Leventhal Center gallery, located at the Central Library, 700 Boylston Street, in Copley Square. This exhibit is free and open to the public.

On July 4, 1776, the Continental Congress ratified the Declaration of Independence in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The next day, the first printed copies were sent off and began to circulate through the

thirteen colonies, which were now, on paper, independent states.

Throughout July and August of 1776, the Declaration was reprinted in newspapers and as broadsides, large, single-sheet posters designed for public viewing. Interestingly, many of these versions were circulating throughout the colonies long before the delegates to the Continental Congress even sat down to sign the official handwritten Declaration in early August.

These early printings of the Declaration were created at a time when the independence of the future United States was anything but certain. When viewed through the eyes of those reading it in the summer of 1776, we can see the Declaration of Independence in its original form: not yet a famous founding document, but as a bold and risky piece of breaking news.

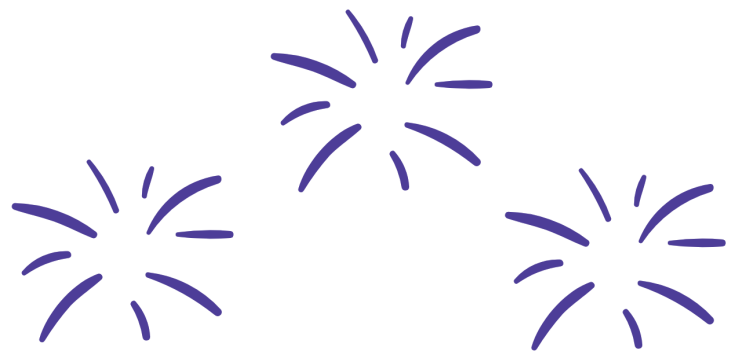
Through a collection of rare maps, early printings, books, and artifacts

from the period, the exhibit transports visitors back to a time of uncertainty. The exhibition explores the document's journey across the fledgling United States and beyond, carried through print networks while the ink was barely dry and the promise of independence was far from guaranteed.

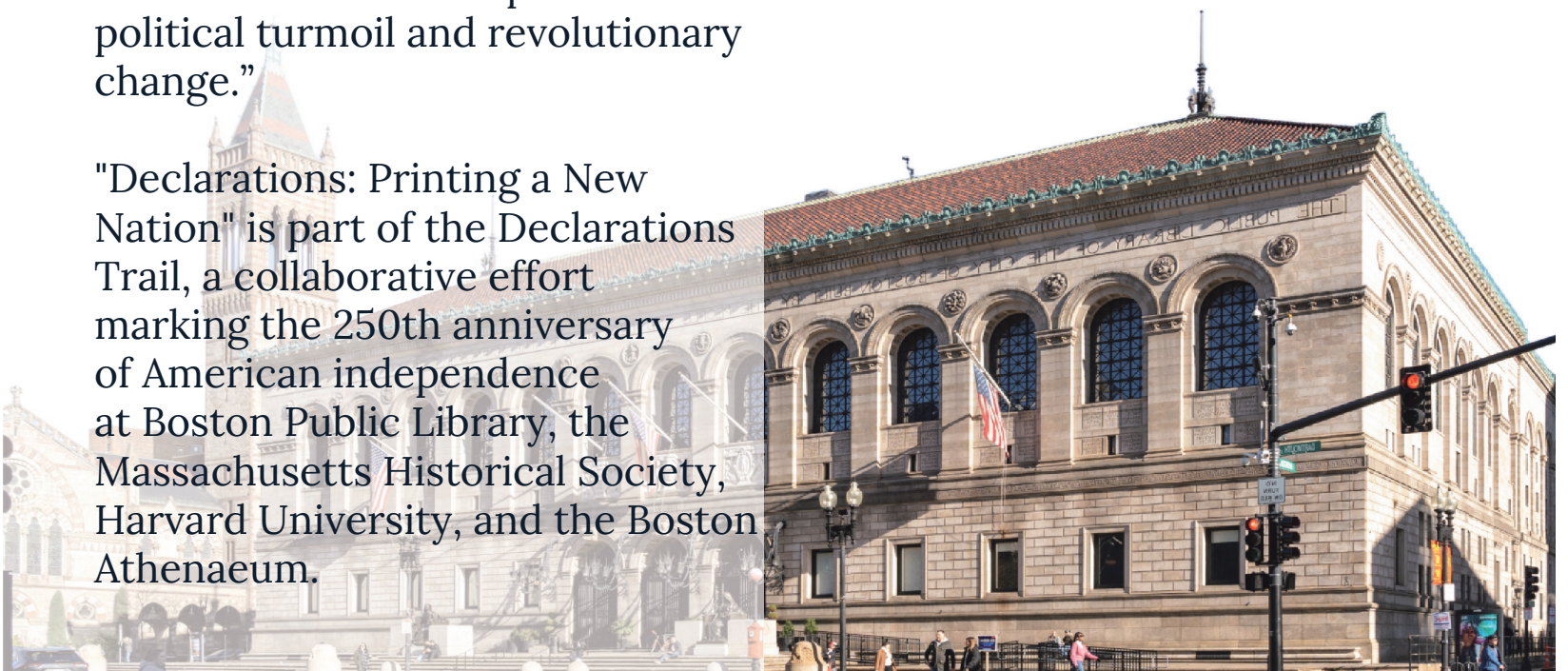
"This exhibition focuses on what the world felt like to people living through the summer of 1776," says Garrett Dash Nelson, President and Head Curator at the Leventhal Center. "We think of this moment as the birth of 'the United States,' but that term was only a vague political proposition at the time. By pairing documents like the Declaration with maps and other materials, we invite visitors to dwell on the actual experiences of political turmoil and revolutionary change."

"Declarations: Printing a New Nation" is part of the Declarations Trail, a collaborative effort marking the 250th anniversary of American independence at Boston Public Library, the Massachusetts Historical Society, Harvard University, and the Boston Athenaeum.

BPL Central branch is open daily and may be reached by calling **(617) 536-5400**. To view some of the documents online, visit leventhalmap.org/digital-exhibitions/declarations/contents. To learn more about Boston 250, visit boston.gov/boston-250.



BOSTON
250





BOSTON'S TREE CANOPY IS GROWING!

By Age Strong Staff

Boston is getting a little greener and a lot cooler. This month, Boston's Parks and Recreation Department released a new Tree Canopy Assessment showing that Boston has added 151 acres of tree canopy over the last five years—bringing Boston's total canopy coverage to 28.5% (excluding the airport). This growth is worth celebrating as we all play a role in protecting our urban forest. Here's a look at where we are and the challenges we still face in building a more resilient Boston.

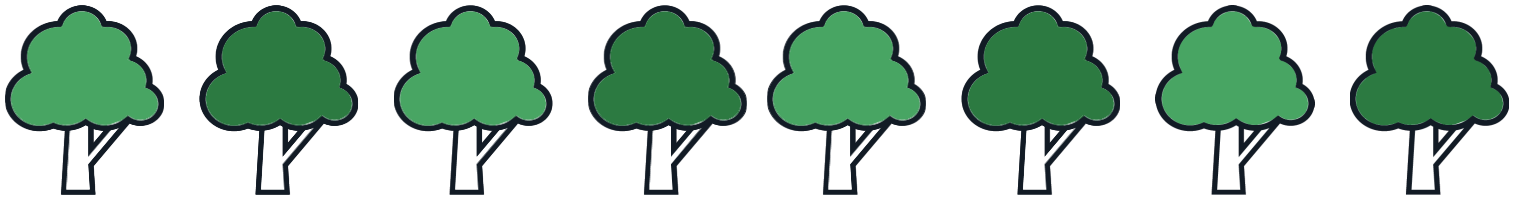
Trees help shade our streets, keep our neighborhoods cool, improve air quality, reduce flooding, and strengthen Boston's climate resilience. Every five years, Boston's Urban Forestry Division collects data across the city outlining

successes in expanding and maintaining Boston's tree canopy, in addition to highlighting challenges where new strategies or more resources may be needed.

“This gives the clearest picture yet of how Boston's urban forest is changing and where our efforts are making the biggest difference,” said Cathy Baker-Eclipse, Interim Commissioner of Boston Parks and Recreation. “Since 2019, we've increased tree planting in priority neighborhoods, and expanded proactive canopy management.”

Highlights include:

- Boston's canopy coverage increased by 0.5%, or 151 acres—the equivalent of 114 football fields!
- There are over 496,600 individual trees across the City of Boston.



- There is a large distribution of tree heights across the City.
- A diversity of tree height and age supports a more resilient canopy over time.
- Gains of tree canopy on public land more than offset losses on private property.
- Neighborhoods with the largest net gain: East Boston, Jamaica Plain, South Boston, and West Roxbury.
- Neighborhoods that showed a net loss: Hyde Park and Mattapan

While we saw growth on public land, residential land, which accounts for 35% of the city's total tree canopy, saw a loss of 116 acres. This loss highlights the need to engage with homeowners to maintain the City's tree canopy. Even with the net loss, there was still growth on some private property. The Boston Tree Alliance has also been a critical component working with residents to increase tree canopy on private property.

The data shows that the gains of tree canopy on public land more than offset losses on private property. These insights will guide the Urban Forestry Division's

execution of the Urban Forest Plan, offering a 20-year framework for improving our tree canopy. While the canopy change assessment shows that there has been net growth, there's still work to be done.

Many community partners have contributed to the tree canopy success, including non-profits, civic associations, and community groups. An invaluable partner in our work has been Bill Masterson, Executive Director of Tree Eastie, who said, "through this collaboration, the work of Tree Eastie has evolved to include bilingual community outreach, tree planting in private yards, fruit tree maintenance, increased tree planting in public parks, and targeted maintenance for young trees. Publishing this data reinforces the City's commitment to transparency and providing data-based information about the value of trees in our community."

Learn more, explore the canopy data, and see how you can get involved at boston.gov/trees.

FIXIT CLINICS: LEARN TO FIX FOR FREE

By Age Strong Staff

Boston's Environment Department, in partnership with community groups, offers free Fixit Clinics across neighborhoods. Fixit Clinics are free workshops where people bring their broken stuff—from bikes to blenders to blazers—and volunteer coaches share their tools and know-how to help troubleshoot and (hopefully) repair items.

These meet-ups build hands-on skills, confidence, community, and a culture of reuse and repair. Residents can bring a broken gadget, small appliance, computer, toy, textile good, or other items. Also bring along useful tools and parts, if you have them.

Fixit Clinics in May:

- **May 3, 11am-2pm**
Artisans Asylum, 96 Holton Street, Allston
- **May 30, 11am-2pm**
Boston Public Library, Central Branch, 700 Boylston Street, Copley Square

Fixit Clinics are family-friendly and open to all. Interested in becoming

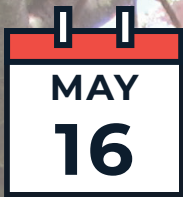
a Fixit Coach yourself? Come lend a hand. For more information visit boston.gov/news/upcoming-fixit-clinics.



▶ **EVENTS + ACTIVITIES**

MAY HAPPENINGS

** Please note events are free and are subject to change*



Plant Felting Workshop
1:30 PM – 3:00 PM
BPL Hyde Park
35 Harvard Ave,
Hyde Park
(617) 361-2524
RSVP Required



**Spring Sewing Class
Clothing Alteration**
12:00 PM – 4:00 PM
BPL Uphams Corner
500 Columbia Rd,
Dorchester
(617) 265-0139



Zine Making
10:00 AM – 11:30 AM
BPL Central Library
700 Boylston Street,
Back Bay
(617) 859-2043



Tea Time
12:00 PM – 2:00 PM
BPL Codman Square
690 Washington Street,
Dorchester
(617) 436-8214



Crochet Club
11:00 AM – 12:30 PM
BPL Lower Mills
27 Richmond Street,
Dorchester
(617) 298-7841



Fixit Clinic
11:00 AM – 2:00 PM
BPL Central Library
700 Boylston Street,
Back Bay
(617) 536-5400

- ♥ **Facebook:** @AgeStrongBos
- ♥ **Twitter:** @AgeStrongBos
- ♥ **Instagram:** @AgeStrongBos
- ♥ **Bluesky:** @agestrong.boston.gov

Do you have a story to share?
We want to hear from you!

Email us at:
Bostonseniority@boston.gov

1975: A VIETNAMESE DIASPORA COMMEMORATION INITIATIVE

By Age Strong Staff



The year 2025 marked the 50th anniversary of ending the Việt Nam war. Despite the war being a critical chapter in global history, the stories and lived experiences of the Vietnamese Diaspora remain relatively unknown. These truths are often marginalized in the discourse of the war, and silenced in media and history textbooks.

Ngoc-Tran Vu, a Vietnamese-American artist, activist, and organizer launched 1975: A Vietnamese Diaspora Commemoration Initiative to fill the void. Working alongside community members and partners, Tran felt compelled to act. “I grew up seeing memorials honoring American veterans, not the Vietnamese refugee experience, or the names and stories of people like my father, reflected in Boston. Our community needs a living public space where

honor, grief, resilience, migration, and belonging can be held together with dignity.”

At the heart of the initiative is a vision for public artwork rooted in cultural memory and intergenerational healing. The central symbol is the banyan tree, which represents deep roots, shelter, and growth. “It would be a place to gather, remember, leave names and messages, and more,” Tran says.

For Tran, the mission is personal. “My family’s story is one of war, survival, and rebuilding,” she shares. “After the fall of Saigon, my father, a veteran of the South Vietnamese Army, was imprisoned in re-education camps. He survived years of forced labor and was later able to come to the United States through a humanitarian pathway

for former war prisoners. Growing up with that history shaped me deeply. It taught me that what is passed down in a family is not just trauma, but also endurance, responsibility, and love.”

The project includes many voices and partners, including Boston Little Saigon, the Vietnamese American Community of Massachusetts, VietAID Community Center, Bruner/Cott, the Asian American Studies Program at UMass Boston, Fields Corner Main Street, Fields Corner Public Library, Illuminus, Louis D. Brown Peace Institute, and Boston’s Mayor’s Offices of Arts and Culture, Immigrant Advancement, and the Age Strong Commission. “The project is shaped by an intergenerational community of elders, youth, cultural advisors, small business owners, and residents in Dorchester,” says Tran.

“Town Field Park is the right location for the memorial,” Tran says, “because it sits in the heart of Boston’s Little Saigon Cultural District, the neighborhood that has carried so much of this community’s life, labor, memory, and cultural continuity. It’s the heart of the Fields Corner community, where people already

gather, celebrate, protest, and socialize. It’s home to the largest number of Vietnamese Americans in New England. A memorial like this should live with the community.”

From the beginning, this project was centered on intergenerational dialogues. Vietnamese elders serve as vital memory-keepers, cultural guides, and co-shapers of the vision. While seniors influence the memorial’s direction through their lived experiences, younger generations are helping to record oral histories to carry those legacies forward.

Boston’s older adults are invited to participate by:

- Sharing stories, memories, photographs, and family histories
- Attending public dialogue nights, design gatherings, and commemorative events
- Helping guide how this memorial will serve future generations.

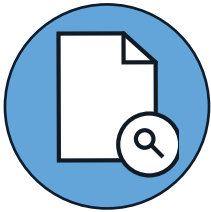
“We need elders not only as witnesses to the past,” Tran says, “but as active voices in shaping how Boston remembers, teaches, and honors this history.”

To learn more, visit 1975vietdiaspora.com.

▶ IN BOSTON, WE AGE STRONG.

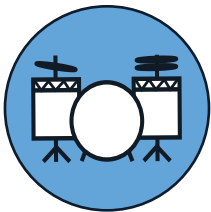
As part of Boston's Human Services cabinet, Age Strong aims to enhance the lives of older residents with meaningful programs, resources, and connections so we can live and age strong together in Boston. *Call us at (617) 635-4366 or visit boston.gov/age-strong.*

We can help with:



AGE STRONG ADVOCATES

Our Advocacy & Benefit Specialists connect older adults to resources, benefits & information including health insurance counseling, food access, referrals to fuel assistance, tax relief exemptions, protective services & more.



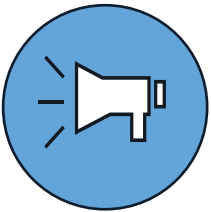
EVENTS & PROGRAMMING

Age Strong hosts dozens of events & programs for older residents, including celebrations for Black Heritage, Hispanic Heritage, LGBTQIA+ Pride & more. We host programs in community spaces across Boston including wellness, fall prevention, fitness, arts & more.



TRANSPORTATION

We help older adults connect to all transportation options available, like our Age Strong Shuttle, Taxi Coupons, and more.



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

We connect older residents to many volunteer opportunities based on your interests, location & preferred time commitment.



AGE & DEMENTIA FRIENDLY BOSTON

Our Age & Dementia Friendly work helps create a Boston where residents can live & age well in community. We host Memory Cafes for those with memory loss and support groups for care partners to share resources & experiences.



HOUSING SUPPORT

Our housing advocates can help older residents learn about tenants rights, eviction prevention, navigate housing eligibility & assist with housing applications.

FOREVER YOUNG SPRING PROGRAM: CORNHOLE, BOCCE AND ARCHERY IN BOSTON PARKS

By Age Strong Staff



Boston's Parks and Recreation Department, in partnership with Boston Centers for Youth & Families (BCYF), announces the return of the Forever Young Program this spring. This free program for older adults (age 55+), offers a welcoming space for fun and fitness, with activities like bocce, cornhole, and archery.

Sessions will be held weekly on Wednesdays from 11:00am to 1:00pm, running April 1 through June 25 at various City parks. With a new activity featured each month, it's a perfect opportunity to try something new while staying active and connected with the community.

Cornhole

Edwards Playground, 10 Eden Street, Charlestown
Wednesdays, April 1, 8, 15, 29,
11am-1pm

*no class Wednesday, April 22, due to BPS School Vacation

Bocce

Langone Park, 529 Commercial Street, North End
Wednesdays, May 6, 13, 20, 27,
11am-1pm

Archery

Langone Park, 529 Commercial Street, North End
Wednesdays, June 3, 10, 17, 24,
11am-1pm

Each session is designed to encourage physical activity, mental well-being, and community engagement. Sessions are drop-in. Pre-registration is not required. Try something new and to make new friends! For more information, visit boston.gov/parks or call **(617) 635-4505**.

AGE STRONG'S COST SAVINGS CLINICS: HELPING OLDER ADULTS SAVE MONEY!

By Age Strong Staff

From January through March, Boston's Age Strong Commission held a series of in-person Cost Savings Clinics across Boston's neighborhoods. These clinics were designed to provide a one-stop shop for older residents to find out which programs they can access to help reduce everyday expenses.

Age Strong Advocates met with residents in different neighborhoods to connect them with cost-savings benefits like Fuel Assistance, SNAP, Medicare Savings Program, Water Sewer Discount, Tax Deferrals, and Tax Credits.

To ensure accessibility, the Age Strong Shuttle provided transportation for residents who needed a lift to their preferred clinic location.

Impacts by the Numbers

- The clinics provided a significant financial boost to older adults in the community. Through 24 clinics, our team served hundreds of older residents, helping them navigate complex systems and securing the resources they need.

- The impact of these savings can be life-changing. For instance, individuals enrolled in the Medicare Savings Program are now saving an average of \$202/month or \$2424/year on health insurance premiums and co-pays

“Cost Savings Clinics,” “are a high-impact, accessible way to reduce financial burden and improve stability for older adults in Boston,” says Age Strong Commissioner Emily K. Shea, “Our team is at its best when out in the community serving older residents, hands-on”

Important Dates Ahead

Many residents are eligible for savings but aren't aware. Mark your calendars for these upcoming opportunities:

- Medicare Open Enrollment: October 15 through December 7, 2026
- 2027 Cost Savings Clinics: January through March 2027

Need help now? Boston's older adults can always schedule an appointment with an Advocate by calling **(617) 635-4366**.

PREPARING FOR DEATH AND DYING: A THREE-PART SERIES TO HELP DEMYSTIFY END OF LIFE

By Age Strong Staff

Navigating the end of life can feel overwhelming, especially when facing illness, loss of a spouse, or changes to physical or mental health. That's why planning ahead can be very helpful for our peace of mind, not just for ourselves, but also for those we love. By preparing today, we can lessen confusion, stress, and fear with clarity and calm.

Age Strong invites Boston's older residents to attend a free three-part event series designed to help explain and demystify the end of life process. These sessions offer a supportive space to learn and ask questions.

Session details:

All sessions will be held at the Winter Chambers Meeting Room, 26 Court Street (conveniently located a block from Boston City Hall). You can also participate virtually. Registration is required. To register, call Becca Mayfield at 617-821-1085 or visit boston.gov/end-of-life.

Demystifying Death and Dying

Wednesday, May 27,
11:30am-1:30pm

Learn how to have important end of life conversations, make decisions, and get support.

Resources and Preparation for End of Life

Wednesday, June 3,
11:30am-1:30pm

Learn about legal documents, palliative and hospice care, and working with a death doula.

Interfaith Death and Dying Customs and Traditions

Friday, June 5,
11:30am-1pm

Join faith-based leaders to learn about end of life customs, traditions, and beliefs.

Thoughtful planning can be empowering and it allows more peace of mind for the journey ahead. For more information, visit boston.gov/end-of-life.



MAY IS OLDER AMERICANS MONTH! THIS YEAR, CHAMPION YOUR HEALTH!

By Age Strong Staff

Every May, we celebrate Older Americans Month. This year's theme "Champion Your Health," highlights wellness, prevention, and the personal steps we can take towards healthy aging. This theme encourages older adults to take an active role in managing their health, accessing preventive care, advocating for themselves, and making informed decisions that support independence.

Climbing a flight of stairs might not draw the same applause as running a marathon, but with each step - and with each extra serving of fruits and vegetables - you can help reduce your risk of illnesses. You don't have to be an athlete to champion your health, you just need to start.

Here are some ways you can be your own health champion:

Take Preventive Action: Manage chronic conditions proactively, and make informed decisions that support your long-term independence.

Prioritize Physical Activity:

Practice simple, consistent movement. Walking or bodyweight exercises are great ways to improve strength, mobility, and heart health.

Create Healthy Lifestyle Habits:

Maintain a nutritious diet, get enough sleep, limit alcohol, and avoid tobacco.

Schedule your preventive

Screenings: Stay ahead of health issues with regular check-ups, including bone density scans and cancer screenings.

Nurture your Mind and Spirit:

Cultivate social connections, keep you brain active and engaged, and manage stress for overall well-being.

To learn more about Older Americans month, visit the Administration of Community Living at acl.gov/oam/older-americans-month.

Age Strong's Neighborhood PROGRAMMING

**BCYF Holland
Community Center**
Wed & Fri | 10am-1pm
85 Olney Street, Dorchester
(617) 635-5144

East Boston Senior Center
Monday-Friday | 8:30am-4pm
7 Bayswater Street, East Boston
(617) 961-3131

Veronica B. Smith Senior Center
Monday-Friday | 8:30am-4pm
20 Chestnut Hill Avenue, Brighton
(617) 635-6120

Codman Square Library
Tuesdays/Thursdays | 10am-1pm
690 Washington St, Dorchester
(617) 436-8214

The Elks Lodge #10
In partnership with Ethos
Tues, Wed, Thurs | 9am-3pm
1 Morrell Street, West Roxbury
(617) 323-1125

Dewitt Center
Mon & Wed | 10:30am-3pm
122 Dewitt Drive, Roxbury
(617) 275-7080

Union Church
Tues & Thurs | 9am-1pm
485 Columbus Avenue,
South End
(617) 536-0872

Spontaneous Celebration
Tuesdays/Thursdays | 10am-1pm
45 Danforth St, Jamaica Plain
(617) 635-4250



MAY IS ALS AWARENESS MONTH: MEET EAST BOSTON'S MARY AND TOM BERNINGER

By Edzani Kelapile, Age Strong Staff



May is Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) Awareness Month, a time for increased visibility, honoring the stories of those living with the disease, and advocating for the research needed to find effective treatment and cure. In Boston, families like the Berningers are showing us exactly what resilience looks like.

Tom Berninger and wife Mary, married in 1984, have raised their four children in East Boston. “We have the best parks in the city, here in East Boston,” Tom says, “plus it's close to downtown.” Mary enjoys her tightly-knit community, sharing “you can meet great people, but you have to get involved,” noting her many years advocating in the neighborhood. “East Boston’s community is always changing,” Tom says, “groups of people are always coming in and out—it’s where

many get their start.”

Following in the footsteps of his father and grandfather, Tom joined the Navy after high school, as an aviation firefighter, loving every minute of his three decade career. However, in 2024, only a year after retiring from a lifetime firefighting, Tom was diagnosed with ALS.

“When I look back, I recognize that I had symptoms of ALS much longer than I thought,” Tom reflects. ALS symptoms vary, but the primary symptom is the degeneration of nerve cells in the brain and spinal cord, leading to muscle weakness, atrophy, and spontaneous muscle activity. This progresses over time, leading to mobility limitations due to lack of muscle strength and, eventually, less control over the muscles that control breathing and eating. Mary has taken care of Tom since his diagnosis, with the

help of their children. She sets up his feeding tube and breathing machine, and manages Tom's medication. Their children, Megan, TJ, Jeremy, and Marc, also help Tom get in/out of their family van, specially made for wheelchair users.

Mary's lifelong habit of getting involved took a new turn when Tom's mobility changed, Mary began advocating for ADA compliant sidewalks and other areas outside their home. She even arranged a neighborhood meeting with stakeholders and elected officials to analyze the safety and accessibility of sidewalks in East Boston. "I just asked, 'please fix it,'" she says.

Mary was a founding member of East Boston's Orient Heights Neighborhood Council and has served on many boards and committees. She advocated for improvements to East Boston parks. "You can't sit on the sidelines," she says. "You can't complain and not do anything to fix it," she continues, noting to be polite, but firm, when trying to make change.

Through Tom's ALS journey, they've shared "we have to think and plan a lot more," explaining

about the many doctors and specialist appointments. Through the Veterans Administration (VA), Tom has engaged with an ALS healthcare clinic. Both Tom and Mary want folks to know that many veterans with ALS are entitled to help from the VA.

Tom benefits from aides including a walker, wheelchair, and other machines, but emphasizes focusing on mental health as well as physical health. "You can get depressed over this very, very easily," he says, "and it's important to seek mental health assistance if you need it." This applies to Mary and other caregivers, too. Tom makes sure Mary gets out of the house and visits with friends and neighbors, too.

Despite the challenges, the Berningers choose to focus on joy. "We do make time to laugh, and our kids and grandkids make a real difference," Tom says. Once the weather gets warmer, you'll find Tom exactly where he loves to be: Enjoying the East Boston parks with the family that stands firmly by his side.

If you or someone you know is battling ALS, visit [als.org](https://www.als.org) for more information and resources that may help with treatment.

▶ SEEN AROUND TOWN





THE BUZZ: FREE ACTIVITIES FOR BOSTON OLDER ADULTS FROM AGE STRONG PARTNERS



Check out a sampling of activities from our community partners across Boston's neighborhoods. You can also view our Monthly "To-Do" calendar via email, listing dozens of free activities across Boston for older residents.



Tea Time

Last Thursdays monthly, 12-2pm
 Boston Public Library, Codman Square Branch | 690 Washington Street, Dorchester
 -Boston Project Ministries, Operation P.E.A.C.E-
Join for conversation, support & laughter.
(617) 436-8214
codman@bpl.org

Union Park Spring Social

Last May 30, 6-9:30pm
 Union Park, South End
 -Union Park Neighborhood Association -
upna.president@gmail.com



Annual Disability Community Forum

May 5, 2-3:30pm
 Suffolk University Law School
 120 Tremont Street, or via Zoom
 -City of Boston's Disabilities Commission-
Hybrid forum on Boston's disability accessibility initiatives.
(617) 635-3682
Colleen.Flanagan@Boston.gov

Spring Bird Walk at Millennium Park

May 10, 8-10am
 Millennium Park, 300 Gardner Street, West Roxbury
 -Mass Audubon-
(617) 983-8500
bnc@massaudubon.org



REGISTER HERE!



Annual Census

B Counted!



FILL IT OUT *Online*

Residents can fill out the annual census at boston.gov/census. Translations are available.



OVER THE *Phone*

Residents can call (617) 635-8683 (VOTE), Monday through Friday during business hours.



SUBMIT BY *Mail*

Residents receive a census form mailing with a prepaid envelope that can be mailed to City Hall.

CITY of BOSTON