

## Marc A. Slotnick Community Center Opens at Warren House

Marc Slotnick devoted his life to improving the lives of others through the development of affordable housing. He was one of the pioneers of the movement and was known throughout his life as a man of integrity who embodied the highest ethical standards. On November 9, 2023, Newton Community Development Foundation dedicated the new Community Center at Warren House in his memory. More than 80 guests attended the dedication, including Marc's wife Marsha Slotnick, her three married daughters, who reside respectively in New York, Israel and Needham, three of her six grandchildren and several other members of the family.

Alan Schlesinger's generous donation to NCDF in memory of Marc spurred the plan, and last year, NCDF earmarked its own funds to renovate the former Communities United childcare center into a community center for Warren House residents. The Slotnick Family also contributed to the creation and enhancement of this first-ever community space at Warren. Donations after the dedication helped to complete the furnishings.

Alan spoke of Marc at the dedication: "His enthusiasm knew no bounds. He was passionate about affordable housing and particularly about NCDF, and when Marc was passionate he was a whirling dervish of activity, creativity and drive to get things done. He was also a person who cared very, very deeply for a lot of people and for strangers. Marc would undertake every possible problem with passion and intensity



and concern for people at a personal level. NCDF owes its start and its continuing existence to Marc Slotnick."

When asked what Marc might have thought about having this community center named after him, Marsha Slotnick replied: "Marc would be humbled by it and appreciative. He was a very tenacious person and when there was a job needing to be done, he wanted to get it done. I'm proud of the work he did over his lifetime and know that he would see this as a great honor." Marsha expressed her own great pleasure at knowing that the Warren community now enjoys a great multifunctional space for people to gather, both individually and in groups.



*The Slotnick Family gathered to celebrate the dedication of the Marc A. Slotnick Community Center. Left to right, front row: Marsha Slotnick's twin granddaughters Zoe and Bella Shimshak. Middle row: Marsha's daughters Nancy Slotnick and Rebecca Shimshak; Marsha Slotnick; her daughter Debbie Garner; Marsha's sister Charlotte Gruber; Rebecca's mother- and father-in-law Marcia Shimshak and Dan Shimshak. Back row: Rebecca's husband Steve Shimshak; Marsha's grandson/Nancy's son Juní Aferiat and friend Calder Biele.*

The Marc A. Slotnick Community Center opened to Warren House residents on November 13, 2023. Much anticipated, it offers an attractive environment for residents to socialize and participate in group activities. The space includes a kitchen and sitting/dining area, computer stations, a popular coffee cart and lounge area with a wide-screen TV and WiFi connection. NCDF Resident Services offers structured programming in the space. Yoga is held weekly and well attended, while other classes such as Muscle Conditioning are offered periodically according to interest. Other recent programs include Paint & Sip and Coffee Talk, a breakfast discussion group. The center provides a perfect spot for community holiday celebrations, as well as meetings and presentations. Residents can arrange to hold independent programming for their neighbors, rent the space for private functions, or simply enjoy a pleasant sitting area while doing laundry.

*(continued on page 5)*



*Paint & Sip at Warren House.*

Newton Community Development Foundation (NCDF) is a private, nonprofit organization founded in 1968 to foster economic and cultural diversity in the City of Newton through the development and management of affordable and mixed-income housing communities. NCDF now owns and manages six well planned, carefully administered properties, two being designed primarily for senior living. NCDF fosters opportunities to thrive by providing high-quality housing for residents across the economic spectrum, exceptional property management and comprehensive, fully integrated resident services. We foster a culture of caring, respect, and open communication, and embrace and practice diversity, equity and inclusion in all we do. NCDF also provides property management and consulting services to other community organizations, and proactively pursues opportunities in real estate development on its own or in partnership. Although NCDF receives local, state and federal funding, it relies greatly on foundation and corporate grants as well as contributions from individuals and local businesses.

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## Passing the Baton

Judy Weber has been serving on the NCDF Board of Directors since 1996, many of those years as Vice President. In September 2023, she was elected to President, taking the reins from Bob Engler, who retired from the Board after nearly four decades of service, 31 years as President. We have been, and continue to be, in very good hands, and are deeply honored to have such dedicated leaders sharing their consummate knowledge in the area of affordable housing development and management.



Judy brings a wealth of experience to the role of President. In 2002, She co-founded VIVA Consulting, LLC, where her work spans a wide array of organizational, property and asset management initiatives in the realm of affordable housing across the country. She assists federal and state sponsored initiatives to find greater efficiency and effectiveness in their affordable housing policies and/or legislation. Judy is the governor's appointee to the Newton Housing Authority Board of Commissioners, currently serving as Treasurer and its representative to the Newton Community Preservation Commission and NCPC's liaison to the Newton Affordable Housing Trust. She holds Certified Property Manager® designation and is an Instructor Emeritus for the Institute of Real Estate Management. Past positions include Senior VP of The Community Builders, COO of The Shoreline Corporation, and Management Officer at MassHousing, as well as interim executive leadership positions for organizations going through significant transitions.

Having consulted for decades with scores of affordable housing organizations, Judy feels that one of the biggest challenges at NCDF is “fostering a culture where Board, staff, residents and our myriad stakeholders are aligned around mutual goals. My job as President is not that tough because that alignment on what’s most important – creating and sustaining an environment where our residents can reach their fullest potential – has always been strong. My challenge is to follow the road map of our recent, and first, strategic plan to expand our lines of business and bring our governance up a notch.”

Judy focused her first several months in office on issues of governance: increasing the number of Board meetings to three times a year; reviving a Nominating and Governance Committee; updating the Articles of Organization and ByLaws; and exploring more analytical ways of monitoring and expanding NCDF's lines of business. A Board handbook has been compiled, and the Executive Committee now includes the NCDF Executive Director and Committee Chairs for Financial and Asset Management, Community Advisory, Fundraising and Community Relations, and Nominating and Governance.

While she initially questioned whether she would be able to commit the time necessary to take on the leadership role, Judy appreciates the response of Board and staff members to her scheduling limitations and procedural revisions. She says that her main goal is to find her successor in the next couple of years. “My secondary goal,” she states, “is to keep pushing on process improvements identified in the strategic plan to position NCDF for growth.” Judy wants to broaden awareness of NCDF's existence, feeling that those aware of the organization's high standards are very impressed. In addition, she is encouraging the Board to become more active members of the greater Boston community development affordable housing community.

Judy holds a BA from New York University and an MBA from Boston College. When asked what some might be surprised to learn about her, she replies that she was a synchronized swimmer in college. In Judy's free time, she likes to sing. She helped found the Newton Community Chorus in 1981 and performs in two concerts annually. For the past three summers, she has participated in Berkshire Choral International's performances in venues that range from Tanglewood to Barcelona and Vienna. She admits that her lifelong fantasy has been to be a back-up singer for Bruce Springsteen!

Judy and her husband Bob Weber have been residents of Newton Corner since 1977. Bob is a retired attorney whose practice focused on mental health, adoption, guardianship and family law matters. Their older son Sam lives in London with wife Jennifer Hruza and two young daughters, Esme and Margot. Son Alexander and wife Tara, who live in Canton, MI, have four children ranging in age from 25 to 6: Savannah, Alexandria, Jackson and Charlotte. Judy travels a great deal for work but says that her favorite destinations are to visit her grandchildren.

# NCDF Scholarship Program Awards First Round of Grants

Recognizing many residents' need for financial support in order to pursue higher learning and/or career training to increase their potential for financial growth, NCDF initiated an in-house Scholarship Fund. The program is open to high school seniors transitioning to their next level of education or adult residents pursuing further educational opportunities. Eligibility extends to those living in an NCDF-owned property and enrolled in one of the following accredited programs: high school equivalency courses, trade schools, certificate programs, and two-year, four-year or graduate college/university programs.

A selection committee was convened in 2023 consisting of Board members Max Ebb, Susan Paley and Liz Seeley and staff members Grace Connolly and Joanne Fuentes. In its inaugural year, nine residents from four properties submitted applications, noting career goals, confirming program admission from an accredited institution, and detailing associated expenses, including income gaps due to program attendance.



*At the 2024 Community Event, from left to right: Mayor Ruthanne Fuller, 2023 scholarship recipients MJ Kim, Jackie Fustamante and Winnie Wang, and Board member Susan Paley.*

The first round of scholarship recipients were announced in December 2023: Winnie Wang and MJ Kim, residents of Warren House; Jackie Fustamante from Weeks House, LaKansa Sitcheron from Houghton Village and Elizabeth Monroig, resident of The Homes at Auburndale Yard. Board member Susan Paley recognized the awardees at this year's Community Event: "In this inaugural year, the NCDF Scholarship Selection Committee awarded \$2,000 scholarships to five outstanding individuals who exemplify the spirit of the program, demonstrating dedication to personal growth, community betterment, and the pursuit of their educational aspirations." Recipients are required to provide on-going documentation related to the program, such as grade reports and institutional letters, and must notify the committee upon its successful completion.

The 2024 funding cycle is now underway. Applications were due on August 23, 2024. Contact Marissa Wheeler in Resident Services for more information about the program ([mwheeler@ncdfinc.org](mailto:mwheeler@ncdfinc.org) or 617.467.6069).

*At right: Youth Program participants visit Weeks House residents for an intergenerational Trick or Treat party.*

# Youth Program Update

## • INTERGENERATIONAL PROGRAM

A major emphasis of the Youth Program is placed on community. Programming that brings young residents together with seniors at Casselman House and Weeks House encourages kids to get to know members of the larger NCDF community, and promotes discussions and mutual discoveries about experiences in lifestyle and popular culture from one generation to another. Resident Services initiated the Intergenerational Program in 2023 through a \$1,000 grant from the Rotary Club of Newton. Youngsters and seniors start out by introducing and relating a bit about themselves. Themes at Weeks House have ranged from a boba tea tasting to a game of Name That Tune, with mixed generational teams listening to and trying to identify songs from the 50s and today's top hits. In October, Trick or Treat was the premise, where kids could visit any senior at Weeks House that displayed a ghost sign on their door. During April Spring Break, Casselman House residents hosted a pizza party and intergenerational scavenger hunt throughout the property.

## • NEWTON PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS' STRIKE

Resident Services rose to the occasion in January 2024 when news broke about a potential Newton Public Schools Teachers' Strike. Seeking to support NCDF families in any way possible, the staff shifted gears, adjusted schedules and announced that the Youth Program would be open extended hours, Monday through Thursday 11 am–4 pm for the duration of school closure, serving lunch daily and offering structured activities. Approximately 20 school-age residents dropped in at the Houghton Village Community Center each day. Every evening Resident Services staff updated parents by email as to whether the Youth Program would be open the following day, and offered parents structure and guidance about the objectives behind the 11-day strike.

## • ELOISE'S CLOSET

Acknowledging that children transitioning from elementary into middle school are at a stage of growth when their bodies are changing, Resident Services Coordinator Yessica Fuller and Youth Services Coordinator India Arnold saw a greater need for attention to personal care. While India had been offering guidance and "goodie bags" of personal care products on an individual basis, she decided to stock a cabinet in the restroom of the Houghton Village Community Room with items such as deodorant, toothbrushes, toothpaste, body wash and hair products – purchased or donated – and designate it as a place where kids can go on their own and take what they need. Eloise's Closet has garnered a great deal of interest since its introduction in April.



# NCDF Board and Advisory Committee News

As a nonprofit community organization, NCDF is governed by a Board of Directors and enjoys the added benefit of a professionally based Advisory Committee. NCDF's leadership team aims for both diversity of perspective and depth of expertise. These dedicated volunteers contribute their time and energy to directly impact our community and our organization.

Paul Doherty has been a staunch advocate for affordable housing in Newton and a part of NCDF's history from its beginnings, serving on the Board and leading as its President from 1987 to 1992. He later joined the Advisory Committee, where he remained active for many years, while also volunteering for Resident Services, working with seniors on memoirs and other writing projects, and leading a book discussion group. Paul retired from his long-standing affiliation with NCDF this past year. A Newton resident since 1966 and Weeks House neighbor, Paul's career spanned 48 years as Professor of English at Boston College. We are indebted to, and deeply appreciative of, his deep-seated devotion to NCDF and his kind-hearted spirit of service to others.

Caren Silverlieb transitioned from Advisory Committee to the Board, where she is very active on the Community Advisory Committee. Marjorie Pearson, LICSW, has joined the Board representing Riverside Community Care, a longtime NCDF partner. She is Program Director at Riverside's Newton Outpatient

Center and a highly experienced psychiatric clinician. Newton resident Gena Nevo brings her background in communication and media relations to the Board, serving as a great resource on the Fundraising and Community Relations Committee. Anne Priestly, a clinical social worker for Riverside Community Care, has moved from the Board to the Advisory Committee.

NCDF has a unique practice of representing its properties on the Board. Casselman House resident Dianne Reddy joined the Board in May. She has lived in Newton for 55 years, working for the U.S. Postal Service for 21 of those years, and since retirement, has been a crossing guard in Newton, all of which has given her a unique perspective of the community. Sara Asmeron, also on the Board since May, has lived at Houghton Village with her four children for over ten years. She is Boston Regional Coordinator for Family TIES, a federation for children with special needs, and is very involved with the NCDF Youth Program. Originally from Eritrea, Sara offered a "Taste of Eritrea" in April, treating the youngsters to delicious East African dishes.

Michael Malec and Ted Ritchie recently retired from the Advisory Committee, both having been involved with the NCDF Board and Advisory Committee since the 1970s. Sandy Kelly, who kindly volunteered her time representing Casselman House on the Board, has also stepped down. We extend heartfelt thanks to our outgoing members and welcome our new members.

## Welcoming a New Neighbor

FamilyAid is renovating the former Chetwynde Nursing Home at 1650 Washington Street in West Newton, next door to Warren House, and will soon be opening a Family Navigation Center. In September 2023, Jeanne Strickland sent a letter to Mayor Fuller expressing the NCDF community's strong support for the project. "With a long history of our own in the City of Newton," Jeanne wrote, "we believe this type of program is a necessary steppingstone for many families and will provide the tools needed for successful tenancies and the foundation for further upward mobility." NCDF was happy to provide FamilyAid President and CEO Larry Seamans use of the community center space at Warren House last March to host a luncheon for FamilyAid's program leadership group. Operating more than 150 temporary and permanent housing units throughout Greater Boston, FamilyAid (formerly Travelers' Aid Society) ensures that parents



*At the Community Event, left to right: FamilyAid President/CEO Larry Seamans, Susan Paley, Kathy Laufer, Jeanne Strickland, Josephine McNeil.*

and caregivers facing homelessness have the resources, training, education and tools they need to achieve self-sufficiency and secure and sustain housing in order to build strong foundations for their children's futures.

## Kudos to State Representatives Ruth Balser and Kay Khan

Kay Khan and Ruth Balser, both retiring at the end of the year, were recognized for their deicated service to the Newton community at the 50th annual Mayor's Community Breakfast on May 22, 2024. Ruth Balser has represented the 12th Middlesex District for 25 years (1999–2024), where her focus was on environmental issues, mental health and healthcare, and fire safety. Prior to that, Ruth was an elected alderman in Newton and worked as a clinical psychologist.

Kay Khan has represented the 11th Middlesex District since 1995, dedicating much of her efforts to mental health, criminal justice reform and disability services. The longest-serving member of Newton's delegation, she worked as a psychiatric mental health nurse for two decades before running for office. With great appreciation for your service and support, NCDF wishes each of them a healthy and happy retirement!

## Wrapping Up an Amazing Career

Susan Paley's last day of work as Senior Vice President of Community Relations at The Village Bank was June 7, 2024. Before her retirement, she led the Bank's community commitment efforts in support of the region's civic life, safety net and cultural vitality for nearly two decades. Susan joined NCDF's Board of Directors in 2019 and is active on the Fundraising and Community Relations Committee. Executive Director Jeanne Strickland admires the passion with which Susan has served the entire nonprofit community and is particularly grateful for her dedication to NCDF, stating, "We are fortunate and extremely pleased that Susan will continue to serve on the NCDF Board in her retirement."

- Susan commented on the many changes that have taken place in the industry:  
"Wrapping up an amazing 44-year career in the banking industry, I've seen many banks come and go, and change their focus. But the role of the smaller community banks like The Village Bank has remained constant: to strengthen and lift up the communities in which they operate. That's why I made the move 17 years ago from working for large regional banks to The Village Bank. There, I was given the opportunity to design a job that interfaced with the rich nonprofit community here in my own hometown, Newton, as well as build a culture of volunteerism within the bank. It was a great experience."
- Susan offers advice for those considering retirement:  
"Have a plan for what you want to do in your 'next chapter.' One thing that the bank did that was spot on was to offer a multi-part retirement seminar for folks contemplating retirement. I took it for the first time around 6 years ago because it gave me focus. It made me think about how I wanted to use my time after retirement. It also began to prepare me for the nitty gritty parts

of retirement like Social Security and Medicare. It can be daunting! For those not fortunate enough to have an employer that offers such a seminar, I would encourage people to look for one elsewhere. But don't wait till retirement is imminent: prepare! And when you get close, reach out to your local SHINE counselor for help with Medicare. They are free, but worth their weight in gold. Most local Councils on Aging offer this service."

- For Susan, retirement is not a time to slow down:  
"I plan to stay very involved here in Newton with most of the nonprofit boards on which I have proudly served. But of course, my husband Martin and I want to do a bit more traveling. We've done a lot more international travel in the last several years, so now we want to see more of the United States. In the fall, we are headed to New Orleans and taking a riverboat cruise up the Mississippi, which we are really excited about. Before that, we will do our usual Cape Cod vacation. We just got back from two of our favorite places, Maine and New York City, and we plan to visit our daughter and her husband more often in New Haven. My other two passions are gardening and my awesome rescue dog, Phineas. I'm hoping to work with him to get his canine good citizen designation in the fall."
- Having both grown up in Newton, Martin attended Warren Junior High and Susan attended Weeks Junior High:  
"It is an honor to serve on the Board of NCDF and see the impressive reuse of these two venerable buildings! I am constantly impressed by the NCDF staff and the care they take to ensure that their residents have full and quality lives. The Youth Program, run by India Arnold, is a true treasure."



## Slotnick Community Center (continued from page 1)



Marc Slotnick became NCDF's first Executive Director in 1969 – when he and Marsha were only in their 20s. He held the position until 1975, and was elected to the Board of Directors the following year, serving until 1992. At that point in his career, Marc's passion to keep serving those in need, coupled with his expertise in real estate development, led him to 15 years of public service as Associate Director of the Massachusetts Department of Communities and Development. After completing his government service in 2008, Marc resumed his position on the NCDF Board, always an active, ardent patron and champion of the organization. He was key to planning NCDF's 50th anniversary celebration, but sadly, died just before the event in 2018.

Despite the many challenges NCDF faced during its early years, Marc always persevered. He worked to change restrictive zoning regulations and to engage the entire community. As a result, Newton is a more diverse city and a better place to live. NCDF's Board and current Executive Director Jeanne Strickland have pledged to uphold the legacy of Marc Slotnick by continuing to manage, preserve and maintain quality affordable housing in the City of Newton.



*Yoga Class at Warren House*

# College Bound

Chelize Foster, whose family has lived at Houghton Village since she was a baby, grew up participating in the NCDF Youth Program. She graduated from Newton South High School in June, and was off to Washington, DC in August to begin her studies at Howard University. She had always wanted to attend one of the Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) and the amount of scholarship funding and financial aid that Howard University offered helped clinch her decision.

Chelize admitted to having mixed thoughts about leaving home. How would she afford it? How would she make new friends or adjust to new places? And yet, she looked forward to moving away for college. “It was always my plan. I just didn’t know how realistic that would be for me.” Before leaving for Washington, Chelize was “nervous but excited!” Having visited Washington twice before, she knew that she would really like the area with all its historic sites and monuments.

Although Chelize played basketball in high school, she said she wasn’t sure if she’d have enough time for sports in college since nursing is a rigorous major. However, if the first two years aren’t as time-intensive as the last two will likely be, she might initially join a lot of clubs and possibly try out for club flag football or club basketball. Her plan for the future is to find a position at a hospital for her first two years of working as a nurse and then become a travel nurse. “When I am ready to settle down,” she envisions, “maybe I’ll go into pediatrics or back into a hospital setting.”

In 2021 Chelize participated in the City of Newton’s Summer High School Internship Program. Her internship at NCDF led to part-time employment as Youth Program Assistant,

working 8 to 12 hours a week, depending on her school and sports schedules, while volunteering assistance to seniors at Casselman and Weeks Houses. She also worked at CVS pharmacy, in keeping with her interest in pursuing a major in nursing. Chelize was honored at the NCDF Community Event in June and presented with a plaque in appreciation for her outstanding work with Resident Services.



Director of Resident Services Marissa Wheeler refers to Chelize as an “impressive young lady with a really unique perspective, having been a Youth Program participant. She is very comfortable with the kids, and they have such respect for her because they grew up in the same place. She is an inspiration to them.” Youth Services Coordinator India Arnold commends her Assistant’s work ethic: “Chelize is such a go-getter, super organized and super responsible. She has the level of motivation and drive that helps her grasp things instinctively. In her job at NCDF, she was very proactive and took initiative, reading the room to see what needed to be done and getting right to it. She easily gained the trust of the kids, and was extremely respectful of confidentiality and other requisites of the job.”

“Working with the NCDF Youth Program has probably been one of the best experiences I’ve had,” Chelize asserts. “It has grown to be a community and a family for me... for all the kids that attend the program.”

## Celebrating Community

NCDF’s 2024 Salute to Service Community Event took place at Casselman House on Thursday, June 13th – a warm, clear evening drawing 125 residents, staff, board members and friends. Fifteen NCDF vendors and local businesses generously sponsored the event, which included a tasty barbecue dinner and a raffle, with ticket prices ranging from \$1 to \$20, and the big-ticket item: offering a Weekend Getaway to Martha’s Vineyard, generously donated by Board member Christine Dillon.

A highlight of the evening was the presentation of the Eloise K. Houghton Awards by Newton Mayor Ruthanne Fuller, this year honoring three dedicated residents who have made significant volunteer contributions within the NCDF community, sharing time and talents with their neighbors: Maryam Ajasem from Warren House, Gloria Gagnon from Weeks House, and Milagros Reyes from Casselman House. Houghton Village resident Adonay Efreem earned this year’s Youth Award. The event also recognized the five inaugural NCDF scholarship recipients.



Residents hold their Eloise K. Houghton award certificates at the 2024 Salute to Service event. From left to right: Marissa Wheeler, Maryam Ajasem, Jeanne Strickland, Gloria Gagnon, Mayor Ruthanne Fuller, Milagros Reyes and Youth awardee Adonay Efreem.



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**Save the Date: June 12, 2025 at Houghton Village.  
NCDF's 2025 Salute to Service Community Event**

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**Newton Community  
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info@ncdfinc.org

**Resident Services and  
ADA Coordinator's Office**

c/o The John W. Weeks House  
7 Hereward Road  
Newton Centre, MA 02459  
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Fax: 617.964.0553  
TDD: 800.439.2370  
residentservices@ncdfinc.org

[www.ncdfinc.org](http://www.ncdfinc.org)



*NCDF also provides a range of property management and consulting services to other nonprofit organizations, housing authorities and condominium associations. Please contact us for more information.*

**Properties Developed and Managed by NCDF**



**Casselman House**

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casselmanhouse@ncdfinc.org



**Warren House**

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warrenhouse@ncdfinc.org



**Houghton Village**

27-80 Hamlet Street  
Newton Centre, MA 02459  
Tel: 617.244.5196  
houghtonvillage@ncdfinc.org



**The John W. Weeks House**

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**The Homes at  
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info@ncdfinc.org



**Boylston Street**

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info@ncdfinc.org