

# Boston Seniority

## Elderly Commission

Thomas M. Menino, Mayor of Boston



**FREE**

**2011  
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Issue 2**

# February

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### Note from the Editor:

Starting January 1, 2011 any pictures taken by Elderly Commission photographer at Elderly Commission events may either be printed in Boston Seniority and/or be posted on Elderly Commission website and/or Facebook page.

If you do not want your picture in either of these mediums please step out of the picture frame.

We thank you for your consideration in this manner.



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**[www.cityofboston.gov/elderly](http://www.cityofboston.gov/elderly)**

**Commission on Affairs of the Elderly**

**Main number (617) 635-4366**

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# *Boston Seniority*

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# Mayor's Spotlight

## Mayor Menino urges caution for extreme cold weather and snow storms this winter

Mayor Thomas M. Menino reminds residents to prepare for any dangerously cold weather and snow storms as they fall upon us this winter. In such dangerous conditions, Mayor Menino reminds people to take precautions to stay warm and to take their time when traveling in snowy weather.

Everyone is reminded to dress warmly in layers and cover all exposed skin when outdoors. When there is a forecast expected to dump heavy snow remember that the City of Boston will announce parking ban in order to clear roadways to provide wider access on all streets.

The Mayor also urged residents to check on the well-being of their elderly or disabled neighbors, be mindful of homeless individuals that may need assistance, and practice caution when using portable heating devices such as space heaters. The Emergency Shelter Commission continues to work with other city agencies and non-profit organizations to actively seek out individuals and help them find shelter during this cold snap. People who encounter homeless individuals are encouraged to notify public safety officials by calling 9-1-1 or the Mayor's 24-hour Hotline at (617) 635-4500.



In preparation for any snow storm, the City has over 500 pieces of snow removal equipment at the ready and nearly 25,000 tons of salt at depots across the city.

### **Avoid Cold Weather Dangers - The Boston Public Health Commission advises the following precautions to stay warm and avoid the dangerous effects of extremely cold weather:**

- Keep moving if working or playing outside and avoid getting wet.
- Avoid walking on frozen ponds or lakes as ice may not be fully frozen.
- Drink warm, non-caffeinated fluids.
- Keep Pets Indoors.

### **“No Heat” Calls and Heating Assistance:**

- Rental units should be heated to 68 degrees during the day and 64 degrees at night.
- Tenants should alert their landlord first to correct any issues with their heat and if a landlord is unresponsive residents are encouraged to contact the Mayor's 24-Hour Hotline by calling (617) 635-4500. The Inspectional Services Department (ISD) will investigate situations and

work with landlords to fix any problems.

- For heating assistance, contact ABCD (Action for Boston Community Development) at (617) 357-6012.

**Cold Weather Safety Tips - The City advises residents to follow these general heating safety tips for winter weather:**

- Never use your oven for heat.
- Electric powered portable heaters should never be left on while sleeping and should be kept at least three feet away from combustible materials..
- Never leave candles unattended.

Prevent Frozen Pipes - The Boston Water and Sewer Commission can be contacted at (617) 989-7000 for residents with questions regarding frozen pipes.

**To avoid frozen pipes:**

- Let warm water drip overnight in faucets, preferably from a faucet on an outdoor wall and leave cabinet doors open to allow heat to reach un-insulated pipes.
- If your pipes freeze, remove insulation, completely open all faucets and use rags soaked in hot water on pipes where they are the most exposed to the cold.

**Snow Emergency Information:**

- During a Snow Emergency, parking is prohibited on all major arteries in Boston. These streets are posted with "Tow Zone No Parking During Snow Emergency" signs.
- A listing of major arteries and alternate parking can be found at <http://www.cityofboston.gov/snow/parking/>.
- On streets other than major arteries, do not park within 20 feet of an intersection or further than one foot from the curb, as this impedes access for both emergency vehicles and snow plows.
- Older residents or those with health conditions should refrain from shoveling heavy wet snow.
- Do not throw snow back into the street. "Throwbacks" force the city to remove snow from the same street twice.
- Property owners are reminded to shovel snow from sidewalks that abut their homes and businesses and any handicapped ramps close to your homes or business.



# RSVP Boston

## Volunteer Opportunities:

The Boston RSVP Program has an array of volunteer opportunities to choose from. Call us today to receive an informational packet on the RSVP Program, a volunteer opportunities booklet, and directions on how to sign up for the program.

**Take the time, make the call, help out in your community.**

For more information on the RSVP Program or to sign up, please call Anique Langlois, RSVP Administrative Assistant at 617-635-3988

### **Faulkner Hospital Volunteer Program**

- Information Desks
- Rounders at Patient/Family Resource Center or Dana Farber Cancer Institute (Receive special training to interview patients about their hospital stay, or experience with care and services.)

Requirement: No less than four hours per week. Hours are flexible. Benefits include free parking, meals, and on-the-job training.

Contact: Alphonso Westley or Debbie Cole at 617-522-5800 x 7424

### **Generations Inc.**

#### **Literacy mentors needed!!**

- In Dorchester, Roxbury, the South End, South Boston, Jamaica Plain, and Revere schools.
- Make a difference building a strong mentor relationship!
- You will see verifiable results while also participating in a larger movement called Experience Corps.

For more information, please contact Dan McConvey at 617-399-4668 or email him at [dmconvey@generationsinc.org](mailto:dmconvey@generationsinc.org)

### **Friendship Works**

Friendship Works serves elders and adults with disabilities in Boston and Brookline. Training provided. One-time opportunities, ongoing flexible opportunities, and ongoing opportunities with a commitment of 1-2 hours a week.

Friendly Visiting: Lois Lord Waller: [lwaller@fw4elders.org](mailto:lwaller@fw4elders.org) or 617-482-1510 x 24

Strong For Life: Jeanne Martin: [jmartin@fw4elders.org](mailto:jmartin@fw4elders.org) or 617-482-1510 x 25

PetPals: Ellen Kirchheimer: [ekirchheimer@fw4elders.org](mailto:ekirchheimer@fw4elders.org) or 617-482-1510 x 29

Medical Escort/Short-Term Assistance: Jacqueline Gallagher: [jgallagher@fw4elders.org](mailto:jgallagher@fw4elders.org) or 617-482-1510 x 26

## SCP Volunteer Highlight:

### Ahn Vuong

By: Kerrin Gibbs

Ahn was born and raised in South Vietnam and made the decision to move to the United States on January 27, 1986. In her early years in the country, Ahn lived in Salem, MA where she made a living by working for a medical supply company. Six years ago, she decided to retire and move to Boston. She was here for a year before she heard about the Senior Companion Program through one of the staff members at the Kit Clark Service Center. In the year of 2006, Ahn began her volunteer work and has been committed ever since.

In her time as a Senior Companion, she has built a relationship with many of the elders at the Kit Clark Service Center. On a weekly basis, Ahn visits as many as 12 Vietnamese elders in the Dorchester, Chelsea and Quincy areas and assists them with several tasks. She escorts them to the hospital and the welfare office, translates from Vietnamese to English and vice versa, helps them with any problems they have, and shows constant dedication.

In addition to visiting her clients, Ahn voluntarily helps with the weekly food pantry at Kit Clark for the Vietnamese people in the area. Every Monday, she fills out paperwork for

about 250 Vietnamese residents in order for them to get their food.

In the past 4 years, Ahn has made a lasting impact on many of the senior citizens of the Boston area. Below is a story Ahn shared about an impact she made on a client.



**“I remember helping a client who lost his housing. He had been living in his house for a few years and in 2008 he went back to Vietnam to visit his family and he stayed for 6 months. When he got back to Boston, he lost his housing. I was assigned to escort him to his housing apartment and helped him reapply for a place to live. A few weeks later he was approved to move back in his apartment. It was a relief and I was glad.”**

When Ahn is not spending her time at Kit Clark or volunteering with her seniors, she spends time with her family. She is a caring mother and loving grandmother of six. She enjoys watching them grow and helps to raise them.

When asked why she is involved with the Senior Companion Program, Ahn stated, “I just love my job! I love my seniors!”



# “TERRIBLE” TEDDY

By: Mike Flynn

Athletes these days are much bigger, stronger and faster than those that preceded them. The games have changed, rules and equipment altered to protect the participants. Still the world of sport is often a violent one where injuries can sometimes be life altering and in rare instances, life ending. And then there are the stories of miraculous returns to glory from near catastrophes. Such is the story of ex-Boston Bruin Ted Green.

Edward Joseph Green was born in Manitoba, Canada in 1940. He displayed a talent for hockey at a young age and grew into a strapping six footer. Never one for finesse, Teddy was rock solid and as tough as they come, which is why the defensive position suited him perfectly. If you tried to get around him to the outside you were most likely in for a trip to the boards and it was not going to be a pleasant one. In a league with only six teams at the time, making the National Hockey League was a dream for most young Canadians (young American players were not skillful enough to play at this level back then), but few were chosen. Teddy played junior hockey for the Winnipeg Braves where he was on the winning Memorial Cup team in 1959 and he became the property of the Montreal Canadiens. When he was not brought up right away, his rights were claimed by the Boston Bruins, who were perennial cellar dwellers.

Green anchored the Bruins blue line for six long losing years but then came 1967 and an 18 year old whiz kid from Parry Sound Ontario named Bobby Orr was drafted by the Bruins. Everyone had heard of the kid, but none of the Bruins had seen him play. Orr was the first hockey player to hire an agent to negotiate a contract and was rewarded with a two year 50,000 dollar deal with a 25,000 bonus, unheard of at the time. At the first training camp that year, Green looked on in amazement as Orr showed his stuff. After the first practice Teddy skated over to Orr and said, “Hey kid, I don’t know what you’re getting but it isn’t enough.” A new hockey era in Boston was beginning with Orr and Green anchoring the blue line.

Still the team would not really reach greatness until rookie sensation Derek Sanderson joined the team and a year later the blockbuster trade for Phil Esposito, Ken Hodge and Fred Stanfield was finalized. Added to that list was Orr’s old teammate from the Oshawa Generals, the rock solid Wayne Cashman. Following the lead of the toughest man on the ice, “Terrible” Teddy Green, Boston became the Big, Bad Bruins.

The Black and Gold went on to win the Stanley Cup in 1970 and 1972, as Boston became the hockey capital of America.

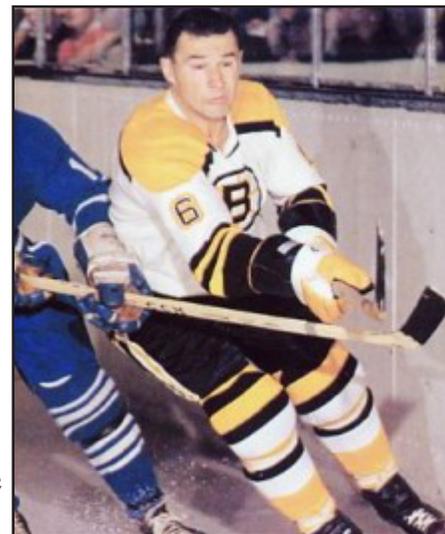


Teddy Green would have his name engraved on the Cup both times but without playing a single minute in 1970. In one of the ugliest and most dramatic incidents in professional sport, Green was lost for the season and he almost lost his life.

Back in those days, protective hockey gear was in its infancy. It was not until goaltender Jacques Plante had his face split open with a puck that a hockey goalie donned a mask. Still it took years for other goalies to follow suit. As for as position players wearing helmets? Yeah, right. Forget about it. Facial stitches and lost teeth were common occurrences in this game played by very tough men. Sure there were concussions, but you just “shook it off” and went back in.

In a 1969 exhibition game, the Bruins were taking on the St. Louis Blues in Ottawa. In a seemingly innocuous play, Green collected the puck behind his own net and was skating it out when he was checked by Blues forward Wayne Maki. Maki went down but not without first spearing Green who retaliated with a slash which got Maki high on the shoulder. Up jumped Maki with his stick swinging and caught Green square on the head. Teddy collapsed in a heap. Orr jumped over the boards and leveled Maki. When the dust cleared Green was still on the ice, his face contorted grotesquely and immediately everyone knew this was really serious. At the

hospital they found that Maki’s stick had fractured Teddy’s skull and blood clots had formed in his brain. His life was now in the hands of the surgeons. In a grueling three hour operation, a portion of Green’s skull was removed and after giving the swelling in his brain time to subside, a steel plate was inserted. He would survive but the left side of his body was paralyzed.



His career was obviously over, but... Because of his tremendous physical condition and mental determination and torturous months of therapy, the next season “Terrible” Ted Green was back on the blue line for Boston and in 1972 helped that team to its second Stanley Cup in three years. A remarkable comeback rarely repeated in the world of sport.

In 1972 a new league was formed, the World Hockey Association, and like many, Teddy jumped to the new league, playing for the New England Whalers for three years before finally heading north to finish his playing days with this home town Winnipeg Jets. He ended his hockey career as a coach for the Edmonton Oilers winning five more Stanley Cups.

After a 20 year professional hockey career and his name etched on Lord Stanley's Cup a total of seven times, Ted Green remains one of the most stellar defensemen and enforcers hockey has ever seen. Yet when thinking of Teddy, one cannot help but remember that night in Ottawa.

As tough as he was on the ice, Ted was that much of a gentleman off it. He refused to allow his teammates get revenge against Wayne Maki, who ironically died of brain cancer in 1974. He has even joked about the steel plate in his head saying it helps his golf game because it is so heavy it keeps his head down.

Ex-Boston Bruin coach Don Cherry still longs for the good old days. He claims he has never seen anything as beautiful as Guy LeFluer flying down the wing, his long hair flowing, the days when you knew every player because they weren't obscured by helmets and masks. Those were absolutely the golden years of hockey, at least in this town. But to go back there? I don't know. With the major advancements in technology, isn't it better to be safe than pretty.

## Do you want to be on TV?

The ***DON'T RETIRE, INSPIRE*** show invites you to share your life's story with us and inspire others.

How have you changed the course of your life?

Survived in spite of yourself or your situation?

Come Share Your Story on TV...

**If you are interested contact:**  
Tula Mahl at 617-635-1922 or  
email: [tula.mahl@cityofboston.gov](mailto:tula.mahl@cityofboston.gov)

## The Elderly Commission Seniors are you eligible?

Food Stamp requirements have changed for most senior applications.

The Department of Transitional Assistance no longer counts -

- \* savings or retirement accounts
- \* your car
- \* your home
- \* or other assets

For more information or to complete an application contact:

Shannon Murphy  
617-635-3745

Lorna Pleas  
617-635-4335

# Pain in Seniors

Pain affects more people than cancer, heart disease and diabetes combined. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimate that about 26% of the population – or 76.5 million Americans – report issues with pain that lasts for more than a day. This translates to roughly 167,000 people in the city of Boston.

Elders are among the most undertreated for pain. Research has found that of the community-dwelling elder population, up to half can expect to suffer pain. Among seniors living in nursing homes, 71-83% report at least one pain problem.

“It’s a common misperception that pain is just a normal part of getting older,” says local pain advocate Cindy Steinberg. “People with pain have a right to timely and appropriate pain care,” she continued. “No one should feel like they have to suffer in silence.”

Older people tend to be stoic, or be fearful that reporting pain problems to their doctors will make them look like “complainers.” They may also be concerned that reports of pain will distract their providers from treating their underlying condition. People with pain and their families might also have fears of addiction or abuse of prescription medication, like opioids. Even over-the-counter pain medications, generally regarded as safe, have special concerns for seniors.

Talking openly with your doctor, caregivers

and family members can help keep the management of pain on the agenda, and can help overcome barriers to treatment. The American Pain Foundation recently launched a program called PainSAFE, designed to educate health care professionals and consumers and to address safety concerns surrounding pain treatments.

Pain is best managed using a combination of treatment options. These options may include medications, emotional support, physical therapy, complementary and alternative medicine, injection/infusion therapies and implantable devices or surgical interventions. This is referred to as a “multi-modality” approach to pain care.

“I encourage people with pain to learn how to advocate for their own pain care and access to care for others,” says Cindy, who is a Board member and an Action Network leader for Massachusetts for the American Pain Foundation. “This might mean helping to raise awareness, helping to educate neighbors and friends, or even standing up for your own right to effective pain care.”

## Tips on Talking to your Doctor About Pain

The American Pain Foundation offers some tips to ask your health care professional when talking about your pain.

- Don’t be afraid to speak up! Only you know the extent of your pain and how it affects your quality of life.

- Knowledge is power. There are a variety of drug and non-drug therapies (e.g., physical therapy, yoga, meditation) available to effectively control pain; these are typically used in combination. Ask your health care professional about ways to relax and cope with pain. Your pain may feel worse if you are stressed, depressed or anxious. And conversely, the suffering and isolation caused by pain may lead to depression and anxiety.
- Set realistic goals with your health care professional for things you most want to do, such as sleeping, working, exercising or enjoying sexual relations. Begin with the easiest goals first.
- Tell your health care professional what over-the-counter medications, vitamins and supplements you take, at what dose and how often. Also let him or her know about other personal health habits (e.g., smoking tobacco, alcohol use), which can interfere with some pain treatments and increase pain levels.
- Keep a pain journal to record the frequency and intensity of your pain. Use descriptive words, such as sharp, crushing, throbbing, shooting or tender in assessing pain. Also, take note of how well your treatment plan is working and what makes your pain worse or better.
- Write down questions you have before each appointment, and tell your health care professional if there is something you don't understand.
- Bring a relative or friend to your appointments for support and to help take notes and remember what was said.
- Find out about support groups and educational programs in your area or online.
- Reach out to supportive friends and family members when you need them.
- Know there will be good and bad days.

**Source:**

American Pain Foundation,  
[www.painfoundation.org](http://www.painfoundation.org)

**Pain Resources:**

American Pain Foundation,  
[www.painfoundation.org](http://www.painfoundation.org), (888) 615-PAIN (7246)

Massachusetts Pain Initiative,  
<http://masspaininitiative.org>, (508) 270-4653

American Chronic Pain Association (ACPA),  
[www.theacpa.org](http://www.theacpa.org), (800) 533-3231

The ACPA has a local Boston-area support group/chapter that meets in Arlington, MA at the Robbins Library, 700 Massachusetts Ave., accessible by public transportation the second Friday of every month from 11am – 12:30pm. Meetings are free and are open to anyone with chronic pain and their families. The group has been meeting continuously, year round, for 10 years. More information is available at [www.ArlingtonACPA.org](http://www.ArlingtonACPA.org).

As we get older, everyday chores can become a challenge.

Major surgery slows us down more. Arthritis slows us down more. The children are grown and moved away. There is no one to bring the clean laundry upstairs, shovel the front stairs, empty the trash or cook dinner when you are too tired because you may still be working.

Is your kitchen user friendly?

I have listed some good ideas that may make your life easier. You already know most of these recommendations. You can save yourself a lot of energy.

1. Trouble gripping your kitchen cabinet and drawer knobs? Ask the hardware staff to show you some U shaped handles. They are easier to grip than those small round knobs.
2. If possible, purchase a 3-4 tiered shelf so you can place things you use frequently at eye level, i.e., loaf of bread, tea bags, canned vegetables, electric knife, telephone, medications, the Bible. Everyone's list of most frequently used items is different.
3. If you are in a wheelchair, partially blind or need to sit down frequently,

you may need a lower shelf for your everyday items. Wheelchair bound people (broken leg, stroke, etc) often have a physical therapist or occupational therapist come to the house to help them get accustomed to using their kitchen effectively.

4. Organize your pots and pans. Your older pots, pans and frying pans may be too heavy to lift now. Purchase a few of the newer lightweight pots. Be sure they have 2 handles. It will be easier to lift foods that are strained in the sink. Also, the new silicone spoons and spatulas are easier to use, bright colors and wash nicely.
5. Sit down when you are peeling potatoes. You can rest your elbows and arms on the kitchen table. When it is time to put the potatoes on the stove to cook, put the potatoes and pot on the burner then bring a container of water to the stove. It is less wear and tear on your back and arms and less chance of dropping a pot full of water and vegetables. When the vegetables are cooked, you may want to empty most of the water out of the pot, then bring the vegetables to be strained to the sink. This is when a two handled pot is convenient and practical.

**6.** Trouble cutting roast beef or turkey? Invest in an electric knife. The knife cuts meat evenly and it puts less stress on your joints.

**7.** Cooking for one or two? Too many pots on the stove for clean up? Purchase a bamboo steamer. Bamboo steamers have been used by the Asian community for years. The bamboo steamer also cuts down on unnecessary fats, oils and calories.

**8.** Neatness. Eliminate much of the clutter on your counters. Put the canisters away. You may only use tea bags now. The bread box, eliminate. Put the loaf of bread on your new 3-4 tiered shelf in easy reach. You don't need 6 kitchen chairs every day. Put 4 chairs stacked in your bedroom. Take them out when company comes! If your kitchen mats/rugs do not have rubber backing, throw them away! Even a slightly curled edge can be a tripping hazard. Only rugs with rubber backing should be on your kitchen floor.

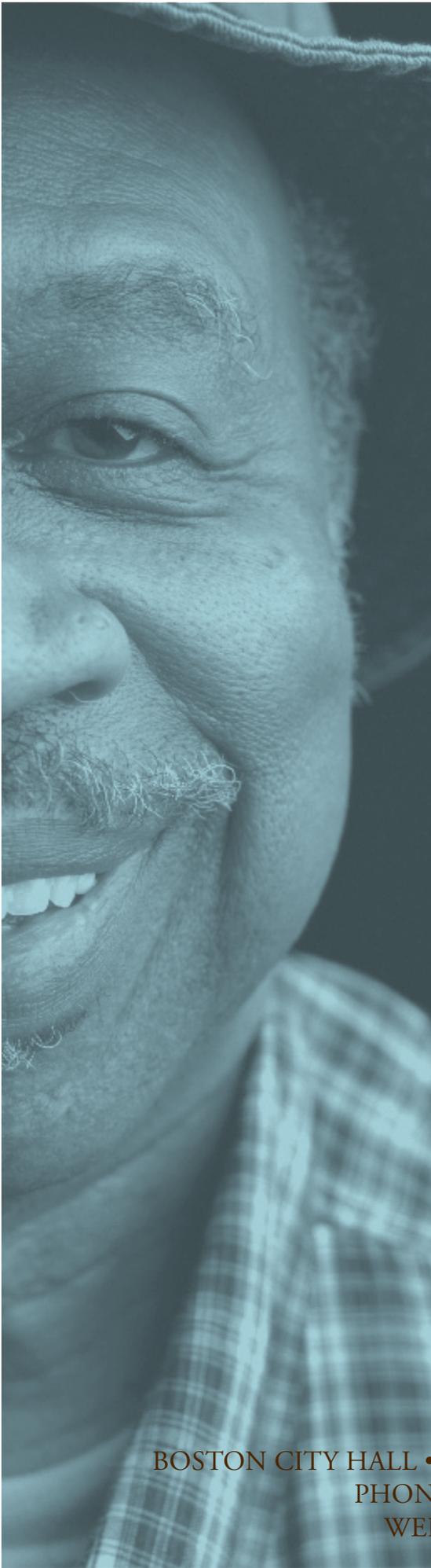
**9.** Eliminate the large trash can in your kitchen. It filled up quickly when you had a full house. Now it takes too long to fill it up when there are only one or two people in the house. The kitchen may develop odors that will be hard to eliminate. Purchase a smaller trash can at your local discount store. There are many different sizes and colors to

choose from. Also, it is easier for you to carry a 3 pound bag of trash rather than a 7 pound bag out to the back yard barrels.

**10.** How about a crock pot or a simple food processor for your birthday? Meals are easy to cook, slow and simple. Food processors cut up fruits and vegetables in perfect shapes. You can cook and freeze several meals this way. You will always have several meals or soups in the freezer. Importantly, these machines come with simple directions and menus for you to follow... for the days when you don't have the energy or the interest to cook. Be sure to label your foods with dates and contents. Then there is no guesswork on what is in the container!!

Not interested in having a user friendly kitchen? Call the Elderly Commission to find information about home delivered meals or sites. Local restaurants drop flyers at your doorsteps. Your local restaurants may deliver, many with no delivery charge. Their foods are often ones that you would not normally cook at home. Try them for a change.





# The Elderly Commission

Mayor Thomas M. Menino

Attention Seniors:

## Memoir Project coming to **Allston & Brighton!**

### The Memoir Project

aims to capture the stories of Boston seniors systematically and over an extended period of time by teaching senior residents the rudiments of memoir writing. Learning these skills will give seniors a practical and meaningful way to turn memories into coherent narratives with lasting value. A book will be published!

By capturing these stories, we intend to document the living history of Boston and, by doing so, provide a greater understanding of the city's past and present for all its residents.

The class will start in **March**, will be held at the Veronica B. Smith Center and will meet one day a week (on Thursday) for eight weeks from **10:15 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.**

No writing experience necessary, just life experience!

Space is limited call to RESERVE a seat

Tula Mahl at **617-635-1922**

Sponsored by Mayor Menino, Grub Street, Inc.  
and the Elderly Commission

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WEBSITE: [www.cityofboston.gov/elderly](http://www.cityofboston.gov/elderly)



**FREE**



**FREE**

**Introductory computer classes at Suffolk University. For more information call Kate at 617-573-8251**

## **Need a Ride?**

**Senior Shuttle 617-635-3000**

Scheduling Available  
Monday - Friday  
8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Please give at least 3 days advanced notice. Priority is given to seniors scheduling rides for medical appointments. (Some restrictions may apply)



## **Basketball**



Seniors over age 60 who are interested in playing Basketball are welcome to join us every Thursday from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Roslindale Community Ctr, 6 Cummings Hwy.

You can just shoot around or you can participate in 3 on 3 Half Court games.

**For more information, please call Ed Conway at (617)327-6831 or e-mail him at edconway14@yahoo.com**

**DON'T MISS**

*The Elderly Commission*

**On Radio**



**Tune into:**

**Zumix Radio**

on Wednesday at 2:00 p.m. and Monday at 9:00 a.m. streaming on the internet at

**[www.zumix.org](http://www.zumix.org)**

**WJIB 740 AM** on Sundays at 7:30 a.m.

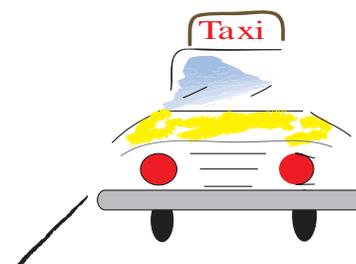
For more information please contact:  
Deputy Commissioner Tula Mahl  
at 617-635-1922

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at **1/2** Price

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Call **617-635-4366** to find a location near you.



# Making the **LEAP** to Retirement

Financial planning for retirement is regularly featured in newspaper and television ads and although critical, it is not the only thing for which couples should consider and plan for when thinking ahead to retirement. Once happy couples, while one or both was working outside the home, may become so unhappy when they retire that they actually divorce. Changes in their lifestyle can impose so much strain that couples find it easier to split up.

One very common situation that arises among retiring couples is different expectations about how to spend retirement; one may want to travel while the other is content at home reading and gardening. A 2004 study by the Center for Retirement Research at Boston College found that less than one in five couples retired in the same year. This leads to another common source of discord-when a partner who continues to work expects the now-retired partner to pick up additional chores at home, but it does not happen.

Partners, who previously did not get involved in the other's daily routine, may make suggestions about how things should go, now that one of them has time on their hands. This can lead to frustration and often anger from the one who has been doing it all along for years without interference.

The reason for retirement, voluntary or involuntary, affects an individual, and may affect the partner as well, depending upon their level of empathy and understanding. The psychological and emotional effects of retirement, even when planned, can be surprising. After years of working, one may find they feel useless, unproductive, and simply lost-especially if no hobbies or relationships outside of the workplace have been developed. Income may be negatively affected, which leads to its own set of concerns.

Finally, issues related to aging and failing health contribute to stress and strain, which can be exacerbated if the healthier, more vibrant partner feels stuck taking care of the other person. Here are some tips to help avoid these types of problems and ensure the happy retirement couples envision.

## **Plan together**

**Communicate:** Effective communication is critical in all relationships and it is no different for couples who have been together for years. Retirement is a major milestone that requires planning, and planning for two requires two-way communication. Couples should talk about their respective hopes and dreams and realize that each may have to give a bit to reach a happy medium. Consider who should retire first, if there is a choice. Look at the effects on income and benefits, particularly medical coverage. Consider the best time to collect Social Security benefits (e.g. do you need to begin claiming at age 62 or can you wait until you receive maximum benefits at a later age).

**Prepare for the Transition:** Start talking well in advance to prepare for impending retirement. Consider how you might divide household responsibilities post-retirement, regardless of whether one or both are retiring at the same time, and reach an agreement. Try living on a reduced budget to see how that feels and what changes need to be made to your lifestyle. Check out the availability of part-time work in your current job to ease into retirement. Look for part-time jobs available in your geographic area. Volunteer opportunities can help fill time and afford the opportunity to engage in activities that help maintain your sense of purpose and accomplishment.

**Plan for "Me" Time:** Set boundaries to allow for private individual time. Many couples find that there is such a thing as too much togetherness. Making time for meeting with your own friends can help in the long run by ensuring that your entire social life isn't dependent only on your partner. When your partner passes on, you will be comforted by the support system you have established and maintained over the years.

**Try New Things:** Retirement offers a great opportunity to identify and explore both individual and couples activities. If you enjoy dancing, now might be the time to take dance lessons. If your budget is limited, look at free activities organized by your local community center, such as nature walks. Many seniors meet at their nearest mall for "mall walking." There are free e-classes that can be taken online.

Preparing in advance and being open about expectations can ensure your retirement years are happy and fulfilling!

### **Additional Resources -**

[www.couplesretirementpuzzleblog.com](http://www.couplesretirementpuzzleblog.com) - Dorian Mintzer, M.S.W., Ph.D. and Roberta K. Taylor, RNCS, M.Ed., experts in adult development and life planning, have written *The Couple's Retirement Puzzle: 10 Must-Have Conversations for Transitioning to the Second Half of Life*, due in spring 2011. They also write about retirement issues on their blog at this site, which has helpful information, including a short quiz to help you determine if you and your partner are viewing retirement in the same way.

[www.mynextphase.com](http://www.mynextphase.com) - This membership site measures the seven personality traits which influence how you handle decisions and transitions. The process will actually adjust to your personality, so you can better plan a retirement that meets your individual needs.

[www.retirementlifematters.com/relationships/couples-transition-into-retirement](http://www.retirementlifematters.com/relationships/couples-transition-into-retirement) - Retirement Life Matters provides information and support compiled by a group of experts to help you successfully make the transition from paid work to what's next.

Permission to reprint given by Merritt Mulman, President of Senior Helpers, Caring In-Home Companions. Email: [BostonNorth@SeniorHelpers.com](mailto:BostonNorth@SeniorHelpers.com), website: [www.SeniorHelpers.com/BostonNorth](http://www.SeniorHelpers.com/BostonNorth), Phone: 781-569-6700

# CELEBRATE BLACK HISTORY MONTH

with

Mayor Thomas M. Menino

&

*The Elderly Commission*



To mark February as Black History Month, the **Boston Public Library** offers activities for all age groups focused on black history, folk art, music, and more. In addition, the BPL has published its annual “Black Is” booklist and invites users to view materials from its Anti-Slavery Manuscripts Collection – both in person at the Central Library in Copley Square and online via its ever-growing Flickr page.

The Black Is booklist is a compilation of recent works by and about African Americans. The 2011 booklist contains nearly 60 fiction and nonfiction works, including biographies of Barack Obama, Condoleezza Rice, and Henry Aaron; and novels by renowned authors as Walter Mosley and Terry McMillan. The published list is available in every Boston Public Library branch and online.

**To see story times, discussions, concerts, and films planned at BPL locations across the city, visit the Boston Public Library’s online calendar at [www.bpl.org](http://www.bpl.org). A sampling of BPL programs during Black History Month includes:**

- Come see the film “Martin’s Big Words” and more short films based on stories from the African-American tradition. Monday, February 14, at 6:30 p.m. at the Connolly Branch Library
- Riffs & Raps: Jazzin’ the Generations concerts are for people of all ages. The ageless trio of Arni Cheatham, Bill Lowe, and Kevin Harris will take audiences on a journey from the roots of jazz in blues and spirituals, through the Great American Songbook, and right on to the sounds of jazz today. These concerts will take place on Saturday, February 19 at 3 p.m. at the Hyde Park Branch Library and on Saturday, February 26, at 2 p.m. at the Grove Hall Branch Library.
- Families will gather at the Parker Hill Branch Library to create textiles with Adinkra symbols and learn the meanings of these images created by the Ashanti people of Ghana on Thursday, February 24, at 2 p.m.



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## “The Reinforcing Universe”

## “Don’t Retire, Inspire”

By Augusta Alban



It was Friday afternoon. Most of the occupants of the office were wishing each other the best in the new year and excitedly collecting their belongings for a premature escape. Bonnie was sad and angry at herself as she stood by her huge window watching the office people fleeing into the open plaza below. Sheets of icy rain smashed against the window. Bonnie shivered as she reached for the beautiful cashmere cardigan draped over her black leather desk chair. What would it take for her to stop repeating these old destructive habits of treating those around her better than she treated herself? Less than three months ago, she had promised her dying friend she would “get a life.” Here she was alone, cold and filled with loss and despair, a sense that nothing at all had really changed. Why couldn’t she be like one of those people in the plaza? Why was she the one to always stay late? Why was she the one to finish the work others should be doing? She truly wanted the best for everyone; she treated her associates with respect and understanding. Could she not treat herself in the same way she treated them? Why could she not allow herself to have fun?

The plaza was filled with rain-drenched office workers, running in all directions to meet their trains, cars and buses. Bonnie was slightly amused as she observed

airborne umbrellas, scarves, and hats totally manipulated by the strong wind and helpless to protect their owners from the icy cold rain. The entire world was going home, she thought, or at the very least having a drink at a nearby restaurant or bar at the upscale theater mall at the other end of the plaza. What was stopping her? Was it what others would say about her? She knew she was a hard worker, her title and salary proved that! Could it be she was guilty of what she had accused many others of doing, mainly that of putting up roadblocks and standing in their own way of success?

“Miss Bonnie!” It was Joe the office boy - not really a boy but he was well into his late forties. Joe was a special human being Bonnie had hired and trained against all odds. Joe was an inspiration for everyone in the office. He saw his world the way most of us try to see our’s with love and kindness. He believed life was a true gift we are all given.

“Yes Joe.” “I came by to wish you the very best in the new year Miss Bonnie.” “Thank you and the same to you Joe.” “Shouldn’t you be leaving now Miss Bonnie? Your desk will be here when you return.”

Joe went on, “I was thinking, Miss Bonnie, about my mom. She left me this

year. She would always ask me if I was happy and doing what I loved to do. You know she would say what if this was your last day here? What would you want to do?" Just then a huge piece of ice slid off the adjoining building and slammed into Bonnie's office window. Startled and without thinking, Bonnie yelled, "Get a life!" "Your mother is right Joe. What if? Perfect timing. I am going to get a life and I am starting right now."

Papers went flying off Bonnie's desk as she searched for the list of movies she had wanted to see. A bright yellow post-it note at the bottom of the pile held the information she needed. Clearly printed was the number of the theater. Her hands trembled as she dialed it. The recorded voice assured her the movie was showing and would be starting today at 4:15 pm. Bonnie had no time to delay; she pushed every button on her desk to the off position. Opening her office closet, she started to layer on the various pieces of foul-weather gear she could get her hands on. She would leave the umbrella behind; it would serve no purpose today. The last of the office staff was heading for the front exit. Fastening her heavy coat with her right hand, she grabbed her huge black leather bag with the left and started running down the hall so as not to hold up the others. She had a feeling of joy, a feeling she had long forgotten.

"Hold the elevator, please". The firmness of her voice surprised even her.

"You're leaving early, Miss Bonnie! Are you all right?"

"Never better!! Happy New Year everyone."

"Thanks Joe! Much joy to you. In your prayers, thank your mom for me!"

Once outside, the overpowering wind threw her against the very building she was trying to get out of. "Just another roadblock," she thought. "Not tonight," she screamed out loud and eagerly headed for the first of two very congested main streets that bordered the plaza. The first streetlight was in her favor. She went for it! She had nearly reached the other side before she noticed the gutter was overflowing with swirling, dirty, icy cold water. Very carefully she waded into the black liquid. Her fashion boots were knee high, but so was the murky frigid water, some of it overflowing into the top of her boot. "What an unpleasant roadblock," she thought. It made her even more determined. Turning around to get a better look, she muttered out loud, "Never again. Next time, I will jump it." She looked to see if someone had heard her. No one had even noticed her. They were all too busy taking care of themselves. "Good one!" she thought, "first take care of yourself and then you

can truly care for others.” She laughed out loud, what a perfect night to treat yourself. Only one street to cross and she’d be there. The relentless downpour had swallowed up the area ahead with a continuous river that covered the street and sidewalk in an inky, roiling blackness that lapped against the front of the mall in miniature ocean waves. Crossing this last hurdle would be tricky.

The streetlight changed. It gave Bonnie a rush of energy. Rushing traffic eager to get out of the city was causing the dirty icy water to swell and splash all around her. Her first step off the curb would put Bonnie into the path of an unbroken chain of cars waiting impatiently to make a right turn at the red blinker.

Cars in the right turn lane were hulking at her; they were turning with total disregard for her safety. Bonnie was overwhelmed. “Get a life, take action,” she told herself, “there is no turning back now.” She looked down at her feet, looked up at a landing point and back down at her feet. She lowered her head, bent her knees and inhaled a huge gulp of icy cold air. “Go for it,” she said under her breath. As she was about to become airborne something in the swirling dirty water caught her eye, it was paper money. With one continuous action, and a sound similar to that of a black belt breaking boards, Bonnie swooped up the bill, leaped in the air and landed safely

on the other side. Clutching the bill in her very wet glove, she ran quickly up the moving steps, through the mall and to the ticket window of the movie theater.

Breathless, she said, “Hi, I would love a ticket to the 4:15 showing. How much is that please?” “The last show of the day for matinee prices, lady. That will be \$9.75.”

Bonnie opened her water-soaked glove to see the bill she had picked up in the water. “How much did you say, Sir?”

“Matinee prices lady, \$9.75.”

Bonnie looked once again at the money in her hand. “Will this do?” she asked. Taking the bill, the young man studied it for a moment, smiled and replied, “It’s the wettest fifty I’ve ever seen, but it works for me.” Reaching into the cash drawer, he handed Bonnie \$40.25. “Here you are, Lady. Forty and a quarter change. Enjoy the show.”

“Thank you,” she said gratefully.

As she walked away, tears filled Bonnie’s eyes and rolled down her cheeks. She hoped no one would notice, but what if they did? In the last fifteen minutes, she was a warrior who had conquered not only the storm outside but some persistent demons within. Fears that had held her captive, roadblocks that had restrained her freedom for years, had magically disappeared. She felt proud and strangely light. The evening’s victo-

ries had been capped by an unexpected gift found floating in the water. “Everything works together, doesn’t it?” she thought. And, in spite of the lingering chill of her wet clothing, Bonnie was filled with the warmth of a newly-realized universe which only this night she had begun to understand more completely. It was her universe after all, and it had rewarded and supported her most generously tonight. It had even paid for her entertainment. There is a friendly spirit of caring in the universe that will meet our needs if only we give it the opportunity. The choice is up to us, after all. The only difference between the miraculous and the ordinary is in our minds.

These occurrences are more frequent for those who, as Joseph Campbell said, are “following their bliss”.

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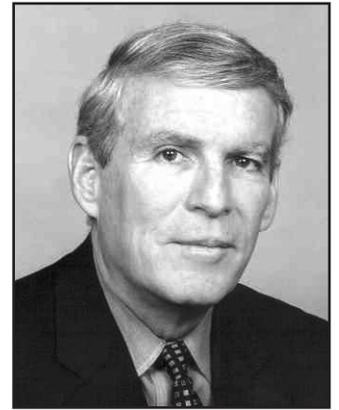
## Medicare and Prevention: Take Charge of Your Health

By: Ron Pollack,  
Executive Director, Families USA

Experts tell us the key to making New Year's resolutions is to make your goals realistic. So if walking a mile is a challenge, don't tell yourself this is the year you're going to run a marathon. Instead, how about something more attainable - something that will serve you better in the long run? Let this be the year you take charge of your health. Thanks to the new health care law, Medicare can now help you do just that. As of January 1, 2011, most preventive care covered by Medicare is now free: no deductibles, no coinsurance. And Medicare is now covering a free annual physical exam, or what they're calling a "wellness visit." These changes are good news for your wallet and for your health. Here's why:

Medicare has always done a pretty good job of covering you when you get sick. But it has not focused as much on keeping you well. That's because Medicare covered doctors' visits when you got sick, but oddly did not pay for your doctor to take the time to assess your health and talk with you about staying healthy. That approach is finally changing.

If you have traditional Medicare, you're now entitled to a free annual wellness visit (if you have a Medicare Advantage plan, your coverage is similar, but check with your plan for details). You can meet with your primary care doctor and go over your personal and family history. You should share with your doctor a list of all the other health professionals you see and all the prescriptions you take. Your doctor should take your height, weight, blood pressure, other vital statistics, and check to see if you're up-to-date with preventive screenings and services like vaccines and cancer screenings. Make sure you take time to share what's on your mind and develop a plan with your doctor for preventing disease and improving your health.



What's more, under the new law, you do not have to pay out-of-pocket for most of the preventive services and screenings your doctor recommends. Some of these can literally save your life: Did you know that over 40 percent of seniors do not get their recommended pneumococcal vaccine - a vaccine that prevents pneumonia, which kills about 40,000 Americans each year? Other services have long-term benefits. Getting a mammogram or colorectal

cancer screening is nobody's idea of a good time, but it's a small price to pay for finding cancer early when it can be treated more successfully. And with the new health care law, the price you pay for these tests and services is literally zero.

Of course, if you do get sick, Medicare will cover your doctors' and hospital bills the same as it always has. Make sure you understand what's covered and what's not, and how Medicare works with any secondary coverage you have, like a Medigap policy, coverage from your former employer, or Medicaid. If you have questions, call Medicare at

1-800-MEDICARE. You can ask for the name and number of your local State Health Insurance Counseling and Assistance Program (SHIP), which offers free insurance counseling to everyone with Medicare.

Medicare's improved preventive benefits under the new law might seem like a small thing. But if seniors take full advantage of them, they can mean the difference between sickness and health, and in some cases between life and death. And who knows? With the right advice from your doctor, by 2012, maybe you will be able to walk that mile or even run that marathon.

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# Healthy Recipes

## Mustard Greens & Bulgur

### Ingredients:

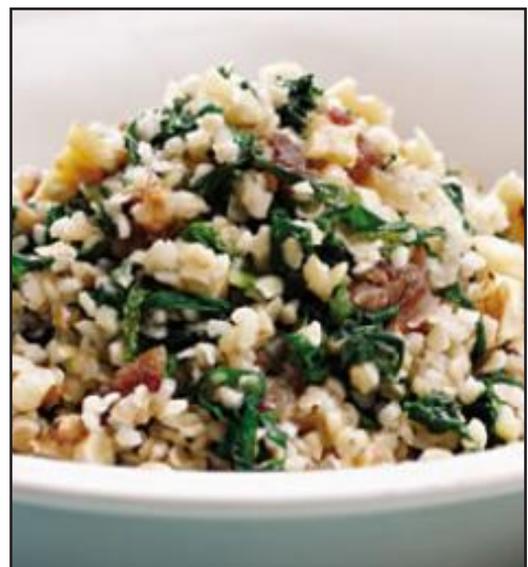
- 1 cup bulgur
- 2 tablespoons chopped walnuts
- 6 teaspoons walnut oil, or extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- 2 shallots, chopped
- 1 tablespoon finely chopped garlic
- 12 cups thinly sliced mustard greens, (about 1 bunch), tough stems removed
- 1/3 cup chopped pitted dates
- 2-3 tablespoons water
- 4 teaspoons white-wine vinegar
- 1/2 teaspoon salt

### Preparation:

1. Prepare bulgur according to package directions. Transfer to a colander and rinse under cool water; drain. Toast walnuts in a small dry skillet over medium-low heat, stirring, until lightly browned and fragrant, 2 to 3 minutes.
2. Place 5 teaspoons oil and shallots in a large skillet over medium-low heat. Cook until the shallots start to brown, 4 to 6 minutes. Add garlic and cook, stirring, until fragrant,

about 15 seconds. Add mustard greens, dates and 2 tablespoons water and cook, stirring occasionally, until the greens are tender and the water evaporates (add another tablespoon of water if the pan is dry before the greens are tender), about 4 minutes. Stir in vinegar, salt and the prepared bulgur; cook until heated through, about 1 minute. Drizzle with the remaining 1 teaspoon oil and sprinkle with the walnuts before serving.

**Serves:** 6, about 2/3 cup each



# Corn and Bacon Chowder

## Ingredients:

- 2 bacon slices
- 1/2 cup refrigerated prechopped celery, onion, and bell pepper mix
- 2 (16-ounce) packages frozen baby gold and white corn, thawed and divided
- 2 cups 1% low-fat milk, divided
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 3/4 cup (3 ounces) reduced-fat shredded extra-sharp cheddar cheese (such as Cracker Barrel)
- Freshly ground black pepper (optional)



## Preparation:

1. Cook bacon in a Dutch oven over medium heat until crisp. Remove bacon from pan; crumble and set aside. Add celery mixture and 1 package corn to drippings in pan; sauté 5 minutes or until vegetables are tender.
2. Place remaining 1 package corn and 1 cup milk in a blender, and process until smooth. Add pureed mixture to vegetables in pan; stir in remaining 1 cup milk, salt, black pepper, and cheese. Cook over medium heat (do not boil), stirring constantly, until cheese melts. Ladle chowder into bowls. Top each serving evenly with reserved crumbled bacon. Sprinkle with additional black pepper, if desired.

**Serves:** 6, 1 cup each

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# First Night



A special thank you to: Carla Osberg Photography

# Memoir Project



## Mayor Menino Gives Recognition to 3 Latino Employees for Three Kings Day



On behalf of Mayor Thomas M. Menino, Boston Centers for Youth & Families Director, (from left to right) Daphne Griffin presents the awardees Edward Ruiz - BTB, Margarita Muñiz - BPS and Jesse Hechavarria - BWSC with their awards.

# North End Holiday Luncheon

Photos by: Bridget



# Jerry Remy's Luncheon



# St. Gregory's Seniors



## Martin Luther King Tribute



# Happy Valentine's Day

from  
Mayor Thomas M. Menino  
& The Elderly Commission

*"For it was not into my ear you whispered, but into my heart.  
It was not my lips you kissed, but my soul."*

- Judy Garland

