

## Hard knocks, aimless walking for homeless

Migrants at Cambridge shelter describe filthy conditions, nowhere to go during the day

By Daniel Kool  
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

CAMBRIDGE — Every morning for almost two months, when the emergency shelter set up by the state in a former courthouse closed during working hours, some newly arrived migrants and other homeless families staying there began a day of wandering.

That may change, though, as an immigrant services organization opens a day shelter in Chelsea on Tuesday, funded by a grant from the state's Safety Net Shelter program

with the United Way of Massachusetts Bay, the organization announced last week. The day shelter will provide services like case management, food and supplies assistance, and — perhaps most importantly — protection from the late-winter cold.

But the opening of the day shelter may not immediately accompany changes in the courthouse conditions, which some of its migrant residents described as densely crowded, “filthy,” and lacking sufficient toilets in interviews last week.

To be sure, many said they were

grateful to have a place to stay at all.

Charilus Charles-Fils described his relationship with the shelter, in Haitian Creole through a translator, as “complicated, very complicated.”

He spoke to the Globe Wednesday morning, before the opening of the Chelsea day shelter was announced, and lamented having nowhere to go after dropping his daughter off at the nearby Kennedy-Longfellow elementary school.

“After I’m done, I just walk around aimlessly until 6 p.m.,” he said. Shivering in a bright-red coat and

holding his hood tight around his face, Charles-Fils said there was “no such thing” as privacy in the courthouse’s single sleeping area, saying that more than 100 residents share one sleeping area. Last week, more than 200 individuals were staying in the shelter, according to the state.

Established in late December, the shelter provides overnight accommodations, with about 60 families currently staying there. It shares the former courthouse building with a county office for the Registry of Deeds, so

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## BFD still struggles with diversity

Current academy class is 71% white

By Danny McDonald  
GLOBE STAFF

The Boston Fire Department continues to struggle to diversify its ranks, with its current academy class being overwhelmingly white and male, in stark contrast to the city it serves, according to new city figures the Globe obtained through a public records request.

The academy class, slated to graduate next month, comprises 46 members. Thirty three of them, or 71 percent, are white. Only three of the academy’s participants are women, meaning that 93 percent of the recruits are men. In contrast, 44 percent of Boston’s population is white, statistics show, while the US census estimates 51 percent of the city is female.

The department has remained stubbornly out of step with Boston’s demographics for years. In 2022, for instance, BFD had a recruiting class of 90 that featured just one woman. Including the ongoing academy class, there will be 27 women among 1,556 firefighters in the city. Seventy-three percent of Boston’s firefighters are white.

“Our city departments are strongest when we reflect the talent and diversity of our communities,” said Boston Mayor Michelle Wu in a statement. “I’m grateful to Commissioner [Paul] Burke and his team for their dedicated efforts to build new pathways for Boston residents into these important jobs and remove barriers to access at all levels.”

But for advocates such as Sophia Hall, the deputy litigation director for Lawyers for Civil Rights Boston, this fire class “continues to show that the City of Boston is not taking seriously its commitment to diversify its public safety agency.”

BFD jobs are among the best paying posts in the city’s 19,000-strong workforce. According to the most recent online payroll records, 11 members of the city’s Fire Department took home more than \$300,000 annually. More than 300 BFD employees made more than

**FIRE DEPARTMENT, Page B5**



DANIELLE PARHIZKARAN/GLOBE STAFF

Linh Nguyen and her daughter Julia, 12, took part in a drumming activity during a Lunar New Year event for families at Florian Hall.

## Amid New Year pomp, a calmer celebration

By Daniel Kool  
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

Dragons and lions danced all throughout Boston Sunday in celebrations of the Lunar New Year, but at Florian Hall, the party had a little less roar.

As thousands flocked to Chinatown to watch the city’s annual Lunar New Year parade, dozens of families of children with intellectual and developmental disabilities filled the Dorchester hall to celebrate the Vietnamese lunar new year in a sensory-friendly environment.

The afternoon event, hosted by the Circle of Vietnamese Parents aimed to provide a comfortable space for children with disabilities and their families, who may otherwise struggle to connect with new year celebrations, according to founder Oanh Bui.

**LUNAR NEW YEAR, Page B2**



PAT GREENHOUSE/GLOBE STAFF

In Chinatown, the Gund Kwok troupe performed a lion dance during the annual celebration.

## At Bay State Banner, he was a man on a mission

Melvin Miller is still a vital community voice

By John Hilliard  
GLOBE STAFF

The Bay State Banner has long served Boston’s Black communities as both a source of local news and a vital

**BLACK HISTORY NOW** voice for many of the city’s underrepresented neighborhoods. But for its founder, Melvin B. Miller, the Banner has also

been a way to follow in the footsteps of earlier trailblazers in Boston.

“We can’t ever forget what we’ve accomplished and what we’re capable of doing,” Miller, who served for decades as the Banner’s publisher and editor, told the paper in an interview last year. “Young people need to know where we came from.”

Miller, 89, a lifelong resident of Roxbury, is an Army veteran. He earned his law license in 1964 and worked as an assistant US attorney in the Johnson administration following his graduation from Columbia University Law School, according to an online biography.

Miller, who declined an interview request, has long held leadership roles in the community. He has sat on the boards of OneUnited Bank and the polling firm MassINC, and has been a trustee of the Huntington Theatre Company and a trustee emeritus of Boston University, the biography said.

In the late 1970s, Miller was named a member of the Boston Water and Sewer Commission by then-Mayor Kevin White. He was general counsel for WH-

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### JULIA LIEBLICH 1958-2023

## As a writer, she opened herself to the pain of others

By Bryan Marquard  
GLOBE STAFF

As Julia Liebllich traveled the world to write about the trauma and terror people have lived through, their pain became hers.

“Sometimes the despair was catching, and I would need a break,” she wrote in “Wounded I Am More Awake: Finding Meaning After Terror,” the 2012 book she coauthored with Dr. Esad Boškailo, a psychiatrist who survived six Bosnian concentration camps.

She understood that even interviews for her reporting could make anguish flare anew. An Afghan woman “could not tell me about the death of her son without enduring weeks of headaches.” An American woman, tortured in Guatemala, “had flashbacks

of her assailants not long after we talked. An amputee in Sierra Leone spoke of a young man wielding a machete only to have nightmares of the attack.”

Once, while telling Ms. Liebllich about the horrors he had suffered, Boškailo paused to say: “You have secondary trauma, Julia.” She insisted she didn’t, but relented when he repeated his observation.

“That was the downside, I guess, of being the repository of all things, terrible,” she wrote.

At the beginning of this month, some of her ashes were scattered near the grave of her goddaughter Kendy Carmona outside of Antigua, Guatemala, a community she counted as one of her homes. Ms. Liebllich, who had long struggled with bipolar disorder,

**LIEBLICH, Page B4**



REP3.COM

Ms. Liebllich’s searching articles and books about those who survived trauma resonated profoundly with readers.



# Funding questions remain for \$4.5m child hunger program

By Amanda Gokee  
GLOBE STAFF

CONCORD, N.H. — After advocates raised the alarm, New Hampshire officials submitted a plan Thursday — on the Feb. 15 deadline — for a federal program that would feed kids during the summer months when they're not getting school meals.

But in order to get the \$4.5 million in federal funding, the state has to be able to cover the cost of administering the program. And a bill for that is still pending at the State House.

"We currently lack a funding source for the state's portion of

the to-be-determined administrative costs," Jake Leon, a spokesperson for the state Department of Health and Human Services, said in an email. "Passage of the funding bill would enable participation this year and next year."

Senate Bill 499 would not only direct health and human services to participate in the summer program and fund the administrative costs, it would also provide funding to expand options for free and reduced price meals to students during the school year.

To implement the Summer EBT, or Electronic Benefits Transfer, program in 2024, the Senate bill must pass.

Laura Milliken, executive di-

rector of NH Hunger Solutions, said she is very pleased the state will be eligible to participate in the program and emphasized the importance of getting benefits to families by the summer.

"Unfortunately, summer is the hungriest time for kids because they can't eat meals in school," she said in an email.

She said her organization will work with the state to overcome barriers and get the benefits to those who need them as soon as possible.

Up to 39,000 children in the state would be eligible for the program, according to an estimate from the Food Research & Action Center. Food insecurity is a persistent problem in the

state, advocates say. Food pantries and the NH Food Bank said they are seeing increased demand as prices remain high.

Children can receive free and reduced lunch while school is in session, but the Summer EBT program is designed to help cover that need while students are home between school years. Those who enroll in the program would receive \$40 per month for a three-month period on an electronic benefits transfer card that could only be used to purchase groceries.

The Department of Health and Human Services waited until Thursday's deadline to submit the state's plan, which was required to participate in the program. Leon said the fed-

eral government was slow to answer questions about financial and logistical effects on the state.

That prompted the involvement of New Hampshire's congressional delegation, which sent a letter to US Department of Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, asking his agency to address potential barriers and facilitate New Hampshire's participation in the program.

"It is critical that eligible Granite Staters do not miss the opportunity to access Summer EBT benefits this year," the letter said.

They urged the agency "to exercise maximum flexibility to make New Hampshire's participation workable."

Executive Councilor Cinde Warmington got involved, too, to help address last-minute barriers between the department and the federal agency.

"No child should go hungry and this program will ensure that children across the Granite State have access to the nutrition they need to be successful," she said in an email.

Warmington said she plans to continue working with state and federal officials and that she would "urge them to distribute these benefits as quickly and responsibly as possible so that no child goes hungry."

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# In Dorchester, a different spin on Lunar New Year

►LUNAR NEW YEAR  
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Bui said the families may feel unable to participate in some other events because of stigma surrounding disability within the Vietnamese community, especially regarding conditions that may not be immediately visible, such as autism. And the high-energy, colorful, and noisy atmosphere of Chinatown's celebration — and events like it — may be overwhelming for people with sensory concerns.

"Invisible disability is not a term that has been talked about a lot in the community," Bui said. "If these kids behave differently — like this — out in the world, they can be judged, and they cannot be fully included at all. But at this event, everybody's the same, all [these] parents have kids with special needs."

As she spoke, children paraded across the dance floor, grooving to a mix of traditional and contemporary Vietnamese music. Some pounded on exercise balls stuck in big buckets, emulating the banging drums typical of Lunar New Year celebrations. Others sat in chairs along the edges of the room, recharging after becoming overstimulated.

"The more you see [individuals with disabilities], the more accepted it can be," Bui said. "It takes time, and it takes collective effort."

Dorchester resident Lien Nguyen attended the Tet celebration with her two adult children, both of whom have autism. Nguyen said it can be difficult for them to connect with other members of the Vietnamese diaspora, but events like Sunday's foster a warm community and bolster her children's confidence.

"It's difficult outside," Nguyen said. But the Circle's events have been "really helpful for us."

Nguyen's daughter, Mina Dang, an 18-year-old with autism, danced and mingled with other guests, gleefully handing off her stuffed doughnut, which she named "Bagel Lox," to new friends and public officials, including Mayor Michelle Wu.

As Wu arrived, around 1:15 p.m., dozens of children with Dorchester's Vovinam Quang Trung martial arts school performed a lion dance, a staple of Lunar New Year celebrations. A half-dozen red and gold lion costumes pranced across the hall's



DANIELLE PARHIZKARAN/GLOBE STAFF

Hailey, 2, drummed along with her dad, Phuc Le, during a Lunar New Year event in Dorchester geared toward families of children with disabilities.

'At this event, everybody's the same, all [these] parents have kids with special needs.'

OANH BUI  
Founder of Circle of Vietnamese Parents

dance floor, drawing cheers and applause.

The mayor had just arrived from the celebration in Chinatown, where thousands filled the streets to watch dragon and lion dances, over a chorus of gongs, drums, and firecrackers.

"It's been nice to go from the gigantic [celebration]" to the somewhat mellower scene at Florian Hall, Wu said. "Everyone

[can] feel like they can be part of celebrating the year ahead with the people they love."

The scene in Chinatown hours earlier was characteristically energetic: Children chomped on moon cakes and threw bang snaps onto the pavement; lion dancers bobbed from store to store, as workers "fed" them oranges, lettuce, and red envelopes, signifying good for-

ture. The smell of gunpowder hung in the air.

Derek Yee, of Boston, stood with his 4-year-old son, Oliver, on his shoulders. The young boy watched, transfixed, as a pair of lions danced just a few feet away from him. His mouth hung open; his eyes hardly blinked.

"I think he's been having a good time," Yee said, laughing. Asked what he thought of the festivities, Oliver smiled wide, closed his eyes, and let out a cheer.

Rossana Chung, a lion dancer with Gund Kwok, an all-female performing troupe, stood with her costume head hanging at her side, preparing to take center-stage in Phillips Square. She remarked to her friends that the late-winter weather was perfect

for the intensely physical performance.

"This is good for dancing," she said. "Cold enough?"

Minutes later, the crowd cheered as Chung took over the street, though few saw her face,

observed by her mask and blurred by motion.

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## The Boston Globe

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Daily single copy	\$3.50	3.50	3.50
Sunday single copy	\$6.00	6.00	6.00

## This day in history

Today is Monday, Feb. 19, the 50th day of 2024. There are 316 days left in the year.

Birthdays: Singer Smokey Robinson is 84. Former Sony Corp. chairman Howard Stringer is 82. Singer Lou Christie is 81. Rock musician Tony Iommi of Black Sabbath is 76. Actor Stephen Nichols is 73. Author Amy Tan is 72. Actor Jeff Daniels is 69. Rock singer-musician Dave Wakeling is 68. Talk show host Lorianne Crook is 67. Actor Ray Winstone is 67. Actor Leslie David Baker is 66. NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell is 65. Britain's Prince Andrew is 64. Tennis Hall of Famer Hana Mandlikova is 62. Singer Seal is 61. Actor Jessica Tuck is 61. Rock musician Jon Fishman of Phish is 59. Actor Justice Bateman is 58. Actor Benicio Del Toro is 57. Actor Bellamy Young is 54. Pop singer-actor Haylie Duff is 39. Actor Luke Pasqualino is 34. Actor Victoria Justice is 31. Actor David Ma-

zouz is 23. Actor Millie Bobby Brown is 20.

►In 1807, former vice president Aaron Burr, accused of treason, was arrested in the Mississippi Territory in present-day Alabama. (Burr was acquitted at trial.)

►In 1878, Thomas Edison received a US patent for "an improvement in phonograph or speaking machines."

►In 1942, during World War II, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066, which paved the way for the relocation and internment of people of Japanese ancestry, including US-born citizens.

►In 1945, Operation Detachment began during World War II as some 30,000 US Marines began landing on Iwo Jima, where they started a successful month-long battle to seize control of the island from Japanese forces.

►In 1959, an agreement was

signed by Britain, Turkey, and Greece granting Cyprus its independence.

►In 1976, President Gerald R. Ford, calling the issuing of the internment order for people of Japanese ancestry in 1942 "a sad day in American history," signed a proclamation formally confirming its termination.

►In 1986, the US Senate approved, 83-11, the Genocide Convention, an international treaty outlawing "acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group," nearly 37 years after the pact was first submitted for ratification.

►In 1997, Deng Xiaoping, the last of China's major Communist revolutionaries, died at age 92.

►In 2003, an Iranian military plane carrying 275 members of the elite Revolutionary Guards crashed in southeastern Iran,

killing all on board.

►In 2008, an ailing Fidel Castro resigned the Cuban presidency after nearly a half-century in power; his brother Raul was later named to succeed him.

►In 2017, three former elite US gymnasts, including 2000 Olympian Jamie Dantzscher, appeared on CBS' "60 Minutes" to say they were sexually abused by Dr. Larry Nassar, a volunteer team physician for USA Gymnastics.

►In 2019, President Trump directed the Pentagon to develop plans for a Space Force within the Air Force, accepting less than the full-fledged department he had wanted.

►Last year, Richard Belzer, the longtime stand-up comedian who became one of TV's most indelible detectives as John Munch in "Homicide: Life on the Street" and "Law & Order: SVU," died at age 78.

## Lottery

### SUNDAY MIDDAY 7487

Payoffs (based on a \$1 bet)

EXACT ORDER	
All 4 digits	\$5,240
First or last 3	\$734
Any 2 digits	\$63
Any 1 digit	\$6

ANY ORDER	
All 4 digits	\$437
First 3	\$122
Last 3	\$122

### SUNDAY NIGHT 5850

Payoffs (based on a \$1 bet)

EXACT ORDER	
All 4 digits	\$4,751
First or last 3	\$665
Any 2 digits	\$57
Any 1 digit	\$6

ANY ORDER	
All 4 digits	\$396
First 3	\$222
Last 3	\$111

### LUCKY FOR LIFE

Feb. 18 **18-31-42-46-47 LB 14**  
Jackpot: \$1,000 a day for life  
No winners

### MASS CASH

Feb. 18 **06-15-22-28-32**  
Jackpot: \$100,000; 2 winners

### MEGABUCKS

Feb. 17 **01-03-10-14-20-27**  
Jackpot: \$2.3 million; winners

### PREVIOUS DRAWINGS

	Midday	Night
Saturday	2425	0805
Friday	3565	4631
Thursday	7144	9424
Wednesday	2697	4765
Tuesday	5747	5068

### WEEKEND NUMBERS

#### AROUND NEW ENGLAND

Sun. Maine, N.H., Vermont  
Day: 3-digit **247** 4-digit **2620**  
Eve: 3-digit **478** 4-digit **0081**

Rhode Island

Sunday **4821**

Saturday's Powerball

**06-28-59-62-69**

Powerball **21**

Jackpot: \$330 million; winners