

The Boston Foundation



There at the Beginning

An aerial, high-angle photograph of the Boston cityscape, showing a dense collection of buildings, streets, and green spaces. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter. The text is centered and written in a red, monospace-style font.

The Boston Foundation has helped
to spark the kind of change
that makes a city great
by supporting fresh ideas,
encouraging innovation and
providing seed capital for dreams.
This publication tells just a few of
the stories that have emerged
over the last 50 years.

Eleanor Roosevelt interviews
Senator John F. Kennedy on
WGBH-TV's Prospects of Mankind



Introduction

In 1954, television was still new. Only about half of American households even owned a set. When the Boston Foundation contributed \$10,000 to an experiment to see if the new medium might be used to educate as well as entertain the public, it was taking a gamble.

Helping to launch WGBH-TV – now considered the nation’s premier public television station – was the first of many such gambles the Foundation would take. Since its inception in 1915 the Boston Foundation had supported the fundamental work of the city’s health and social welfare organizations. In the 1950s, with Boston in the grips of a crisis affecting cities throughout the country, the Foundation began to support change, supplying seed money for new and often risky ventures that represented fresh approaches to urban needs.

Today, in these pages, the Boston Foundation looks back proudly on some risks that proved well worth taking. Its promise to the Boston community is to take more of the same.



The New England Aquarium

“It was all parking lots back then,” says David Stone, describing Boston’s waterfront in the 1960s. “Pedestrian traffic along the waterfront? There was none.”

Now Chair of North American Management, Stone and a group of Boston business leaders labored ten years to create the nation’s first large-scale modern aquarium on Boston’s decaying Central Wharf. “Few people in the city would support a major new public amenity in that part of town,” remembers Stone. “When we broke ground in 1965, fundraising was still limping along. The Boston Foundation’s \$100,000 grant that year was huge, both in terms of our cash flow, and in the endorsement it provided for the whole enterprise.”

The New England Aquarium opened in 1969 to an enthusiastic public, immediately drawing crowds of nearly a million visitors a year. As the first project completed in the area, the Aquarium played a key role in the rejuvenation of Boston’s historic waterfront.





ASSALLO FRUIT CO.

JOHN CERASUO CO.

SOUTH MARKET LUNCH
BREAKFAST HOME COOKING (DINING ROOM)



Faneuil Hall Marketplace

Deteriorating, strewn with trash, and largely abandoned, the old market buildings near Faneuil Hall had been slated for demolition when, in 1968, the Boston Redevelopment Authority decided to fund a feasibility study of preserving and re-using them.

The \$30,000 contract, which went to Roger Webb, of the nonprofit Architectural Heritage Inc., required matching funds of \$10,000. The Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities contributed \$5,000. The Boston Foundation provided the remaining \$5,000.

Making a powerful case for re-use of the buildings, the study supplied the BRA's case for federal preservation funds. "The study was one piece of a very large project," says Paul McCann, of the BRA " – but it was a critical piece."

Widely recognized for its role in sparking the revitalization of downtown Boston in the 20th century, and imitated in cities across the country, Faneuil Hall Marketplace and has become a symbol of the urban renaissance of the last half century.





Governor Michael Dukakis
greet ABCD Head Start children
in his State House office in 1983.



Action for Boston Community Development

As federal funding flowed into cities across the country in the 1960s, the Boston Foundation took the local lead in a major Ford Foundation initiative to assure low-income people a voice in making the decisions that were affecting their neighborhoods.

With grants topping \$200,000 between 1961 and 1963, the Boston Foundation helped create Action for Boston Community Development, supporting the new agency's concept of neighborhood-based planning councils elected by local residents to help set policies on the allocation of federal funds in their communities.

Now operating hundreds of programs to address individual, family, and neighborhood poverty in Greater Boston, ABCD is the nation's oldest – and New England's largest – anti-poverty agency. With a total budget of over \$100 million a year and more than a thousand employees, its programs reach into the daily lives of virtually everyone living below the poverty line in Boston today.



Tent City

The Community Builders

In 1964 a grant of \$75,000 from the Boston Foundation helped urban housing pioneer Bob Whittlesey launch South End Community Development, now known as The Community Builders. “I remember talking with the director of the Boston Foundation about involving the tenants themselves in the ownership and design of new housing,” Whittlesey recalls. “That idea was almost revolutionary at the time.”

The new organization demonstrated the feasibility of rehabilitating row houses in the South End, then began offering assistance to nonprofits, including Tent City Corporation and Inquilinos Boricuas en Accion, carrying out large-scale community redevelopment in Boston. “It is not an exaggeration to say that the Boston Foundation has walked the trail with us side-by-side since the very beginning,” says Whittlesey today. “It has played a tremendously significant role in the nonprofit housing development phenomenon in this city.”





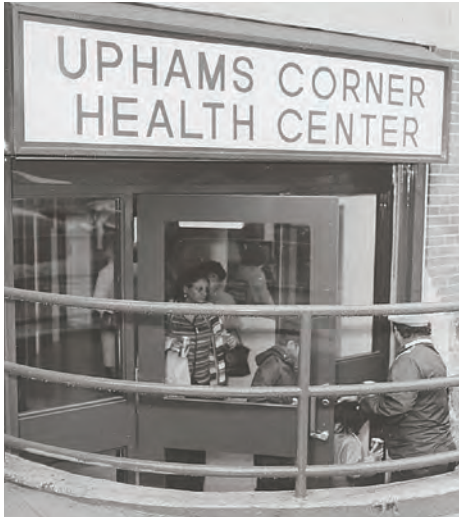
Inquilinos Boricuas en Accion

With the help of \$25,000 in start-up assistance from the Boston Foundation in 1968, a largely Puerto Rican neighborhood in the city's South End established Inquilinos Boricuas en Accion. Through the organization, community residents opposed the city's plans for their neighborhood and won the right to redevelop the community themselves.

The result was Villa Victoria, an 884-unit low- and moderate-income complex which today houses more than 3,000 residents and provides a range of social, educational, arts and cultural programs. At present, IBA is wiring the entire Villa Victoria community for the Internet and offering residents the technical training they need to take part in the knowledge-based economy.

Focused for more than three decades on building community, developing human capital, and supporting artistic creativity, IBA has come to be regarded as one of the most successful models of community development in the United States.





First Lady Rosalynn Carter visits Uphams Corner Health Center in 1991 for the "Every Child by Two" campaign for early childhood immunization.

Uphams Corner Health Center

As suburbanization drained cities across the nation of local medical professionals in the 1960s, residents of many in-town neighborhoods were left with hospital emergency rooms as their sole source of health care. Responding to this crisis, Boston established the first neighborhood health centers in the country, creating a model that would be widely replicated.

The Boston Foundation helped launch seven centers including Uphams Corner Health Center, which today receives more than 180,000 patient visits per year. "The Foundation's original grant of \$18,000 in the early '70s was absolutely pivotal in our start-up," says Ed Grimes, Executive Director of Uphams Corner, adding that the health center itself became pivotal in the revitalization of the entire neighborhood.

Today, Boston's 26 neighborhood health centers not only provide health care but function as engines of local economic growth, generating over 6,400 jobs and stimulating more than \$345 million in economic output every year.





UPHAMS CORNER
HEALTH CENTER
45 COLUMBIA ROAD





After establishing The Samaritans in Boston, Monica Dickens created the second American branch of the organization on Cape Cod.

The Samaritans of Boston

“Without seed money from the Boston Foundation, we couldn’t possibly have made it,” Monica Dickens told the *Boston Globe* in an interview after establishing The Samaritans in Boston.

The great grand-daughter of Charles Dickens, and herself a writer, Monica Dickens had worked as a volunteer for The Samaritans in England, where the hot-line suicide prevention organization had its origins. When she came to live in Boston in the early 70s, Dickens launched the first American branch of The Samaritans with the help of a \$10,000 grant from the Boston Foundation.

In Massachusetts today, where more deaths result from suicide than from either homicide or automobile accidents, the twenty-four-hour hot-line remains a vital link to life for more than 45,000 Greater Boston residents who dial the Samaritans’ number every year.





BosTix



A \$30,000 grant from the Boston Foundation in 1979 supported construction of the BosTix kiosk at Faneuil Hall Marketplace to sell half-price tickets on the day of dance, music, and theater performances in Boston.

An ingenious device for increasing audiences by decreasing ticket prices – and of boosting the city’s performing arts by filling seats that would have remained empty, BosTix has been so successful it has spun off a second kiosk in Copley Square. Both are operated by Arts/Boston.

Returns have been impressive. Between 1979 and 2001, the kiosks sold 1,683,649 tickets, netting over \$27 million in otherwise lost income to the Boston arts community.



American Repertory Theatre

“**B**ecause of Robert Brustein and the national recognition that came with him,” Spiro Veloudos of the Lyric Stage Company told the *Boston Globe*’s Ed Siegel on the occasion of Brustein’s retirement from the American Repertory Theatre in 2002, “ART’s arrival twenty years ago [became] a major factor in the renaissance of Boston theatre.”

In 1979, with a grant of \$50,000, the Boston Foundation helped bring Brustein’s innovative company from New Haven. “This important grant provided a tremendous boost in establishing the ART in Cambridge,” says Brustein, “and I will always be grateful to the Boston Foundation for its timely assistance.”







LISC assisted in rehabilitating historic Palladio Hall (right) and will be supporting development of the long-vacant Dartmouth Hotel, key structures in the revitalization of Dudley Square.

Local Initiatives Support Corporation

The Local Initiatives Support Corporation, today the nation's largest community building organization, was established in 1979. The key element of LISC's approach – a national-local matching of funds – took shape the following year as LISC formed its first local branch in Boston, with a \$500,000 commitment from the Boston Foundation. It was an approach later described by President Bill Clinton as “years and years ahead of government.”

LISC works with community development corporations – grassroots organizations of which Boston's IBA and other 1960s groups were forerunners – that represent the interests of community residents in redeveloping their own neighborhoods. LISC builds the capacity of CDCs and connects them with the financing they need to carry out large-scale development.

The result in Greater Boston: local LISC has helped CDCs finance 5,000 units of housing and over one million square feet of commercial space, in turn leveraging three-quarters of a billion dollars in additional public and private investment. Continuing and expanding its work today with ongoing support from the Boston Foundation, LISC has clearly served as a major force in the revitalization of Boston's neighborhoods.





The Greater Boston Food Bank

In 1981, with a grant of \$20,000, the Boston Foundation helped the fledgling Boston Food Bank move from its original site in a church basement to a 10,000-square-foot warehouse. Two years later, as the organization expanded its work, the Foundation supplied \$100,000 toward a move to a yet larger facility.

Today, as one of New England's largest hunger relief organizations, The Greater Boston Food Bank distributes more than 18 million pounds of food annually to 750 food pantries, soup kitchens, homeless shelters, and day care centers throughout eastern Massachusetts. As hunger continues to haunt our society – with more than 30 million Americans living in households that experience hunger or the risk of hunger – the work of The Greater Boston Food Bank remains fundamental to the well-being of our community.

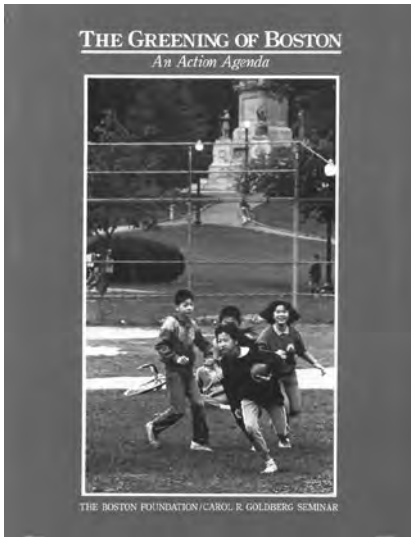




The Boston Plan for Excellence in the Public Schools

The stark critique of America's public schools in the 1982 report *A Nation at Risk* – citing the “mediocre educational performance” of the public schools as a threat to the nation’s long-term security – sparked a new willingness by private institutions to help support reform. When Bank of Boston celebrated its 200th anniversary the following year by setting up a \$1.5 million fund for the city’s schools, other businesses quickly joined the effort. The Boston Foundation contributed \$100,000, issued challenge grants to raise yet further funding, and offered to house and administer the fund – which it did for the next dozen years. The endowment for the Boston Plan, one of the first of its kind in the country, now stands at \$29 million.

Today, as the long and difficult effort at reform begins to yield measurable benefits, the Boston Plan continues to refine its work – and the Boston Foundation still holds the endowment and continues to play a part through grantmaking. In the words of Ellen Guiney, Executive Director of the Boston Plan, “The Foundation’s steadfast support has helped the Boston Plan play a leading role in helping to turn around Boston’s public schools.”



Boston GreenSpace Alliance

In the wake of Proposition 2^{1/2} in the early 1980s, cuts in municipal spending left Boston's Parks and Recreation Department with funding equivalent to its budget in 1912. Parks and playgrounds throughout the city deteriorated rapidly.

With a grant of \$45,000 in 1985 the Boston Foundation helped launch the Boston GreenSpace Alliance, which pressed the City to restore funding, contributed to a dramatic restoration of Boston's parks and playgrounds, and empowered a permanent constituency for Boston's beloved green spaces.





Save the Harbor / Save the Bay

Regarded as the filthiest harbor in the nation in the 1980s, Boston Harbor today is among the cleanest, thanks to the unflagging leadership of organizations like Save the Harbor / Save the Bay.

Established in 1986 by Globe columnist Ian Menzies, Quincy City Solicitor Bill Golden, and Paul Garrity – the famed “Sludge Judge” – Save the Harbor / Save the Bay took off with a grant of \$60,000 from the Boston Foundation, rallying citizen support for the massive multi-year clean-up that has restored historic Boston Harbor for fishing, swimming, and recreation for the entire Greater Boston community.

Today, Save the Harbor / Save the Bay is conducting a “Campaign for the Water’s Edge” to increase accessibility to the newly swimmable and fishable harbor for all Boston residents.





Boston AIDS Consortium

In the 1980s medical authorities began comparing the AIDS pandemic to the Black Plague that decimated Europe in the Middle Ages, but discussion of the subject by high level public officials in the United States was notoriously muted.

AIDS was still “the problem no one wanted to deal with,” in AIDS activist Larry Kessler’s words, when the Boston Foundation stepped forward in 1988 with a planning grant of \$11,000, soon followed by a start-up grant of \$50,000 to create the Boston AIDS Consortium. Bringing health and human service providers together with planners and policy-makers from community, city, and state agencies, the Consortium was, as Kessler said at the time, “the perfect arena for evaluating where we are, planning for the immediate future, and assessing what we’re going to need over the long run.”

Today the Boston AIDS Consortium continues its vital work in planning and developing strategic community-wide responses aimed at ensuring the availability of services to people living with HIV / AIDS throughout Greater Boston.



Health Care Providers
and AIDS

PUBLIC HEALTH
FACT SHEET

The Message
to the people of Massachusetts
is that some of the
physicians and ex-

AR
AIDS
RELATED
COMPLI

What the
well dressed
man is
wearing to
bed.

before you

spor...
for the...
active man...



"I'd like to
see you
again..."



Sleep with
lifeguard

USARIOS DE DROGAS...
DETENGAN
EL SE...

CALL...
WHAT
EVERY
SHOU...



Making
SEX S...



action

ENITELINE
AIDS

Straight Talk
about Sex and
AIDS



ANNUAL REPORT 1987

ación a las
parejas sobre
AIDS/SIDA



Stops
transmission
fluid leak



Don't forget the chapter on AIDS.



Nurse entering an ambulance
in the era of the Flu Epidemic

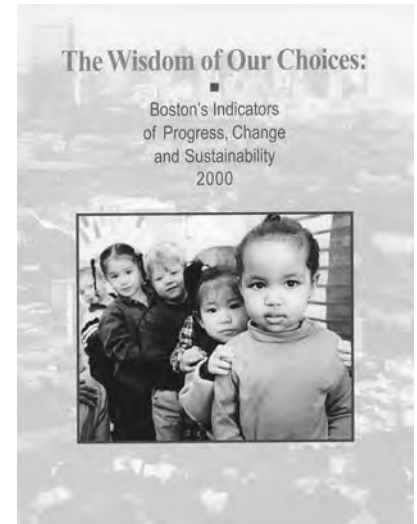


Asthma and Infant Mortality

Early in its history, the Boston Foundation funded efforts to fight the Flu Epidemic of 1918, which took the lives of 6,000 Bostonians. Over the years, major funding has targeted tuberculosis, polio, and AIDS, along with the health-related effects of hunger and homelessness. Recently, the Foundation has taken special aim at illnesses affecting infants and children. Throughout the 1990s, the Foundation funded a number of maternal and infant programs that played an important role in reducing infant mortality in Boston by 28% between 1992 and 1999.

Through the Boston Urban Asthma Coalition, which received start-up funding of \$70,000 in 2001, the Foundation is tackling asthma, the number one cause of absenteeism in Boston's public schools and the most common reason for emergency room visits of school-aged children.

The year of the Flu Epidemic, the Boston Foundation's contribution to health care was approximately \$40,000. In 2001, with the contributions of nearly a century of generous donors, the Foundation gave close to \$7 million to support health care in the Boston community.



The Wisdom of Our Choices: Boston's Indicators of Progress, Change and Sustainability

A joint project of the Boston Foundation, the City of Boston, and the Metropolitan Area Planning Council, *The Wisdom of Our Choices* represents an entirely new approach to thinking about Boston as a community – and a way of planning an urban future based not on a city's deficits but on its strengths.

But what are a community's strengths? And how do we know if our efforts to build on them are succeeding? *The Wisdom of Our Choices* lays out answers to these questions, drawing on three years of community meetings in which Boston residents worked together to find consensus on those fundamental assets, and to translate them into a set of goals for the city's future. Hundreds of data-gathering institutions in the Boston then contributed statistics indicating Boston's status in relation to those goals. As part of the project, the data will be updated every two years through 2030.

With *The Wisdom of Our Choices*, the Boston Foundation hopes to stand at the beginning of the new thinking that will guide urban development in the 21st Century. Fundamental to that aspiration is the desire – reflected in many of the success stories celebrated in this booklet – to include all of the voices of Boston in the conversation about its future.

Established in 1915, the Boston Foundation is Greater Boston's community foundation
—a major grantmaker, a unique giving vehicle and a key convener and civic leader.

If you would like to be a part of the continuing story of the Boston Foundation's
commitment to innovation, contact us at 617-338-1700 or visit our web site at www.tbf.org.

Credits

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City of Boston Archives / inside front cover, pages 4, 5 upper left and lower right

WGBH / page 1

Cambridge 7 Associates / page 2

The Boston Globe via www.Merlin-Net.com / page 3, inside back cover

Richard Howard / pages 5 upper right, 7, 10 lower, 16, 17 left, 22, 24, 25, 27, 28

ABCD Archives / page 6

The Community Builders / page 8, 9 far left

Jason Vienneau / page 9 center, right, lower right

Uphams Corner Health Center Archives / page 10 upper right and left

Paul Johnson / page 11

The Samaritans Archives / page 12

Patricia Brady / page 13 upper right, lower right

Nick Wheeler, Wheeler Photographers / page 14 right

Boston Globe/Barry Chin / page 15 upper left

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LISC / page 17 right

Matthew West Photography / pages 18, 19

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