



LINDOS SUEÑOS program participants working in the Dominican Republic

Sox Help Build Field of Dreams

by Jim Cronin
Courant News Writer

The Red Sox are taking local teens to the Dominican Republic to perform community service and play baseball with their island nation counterparts each summer.

The program, "LINDOS SUEÑOS," which means "Beautiful Dreams,"

breaks down cultural barriers and helps improve conditions in areas of the Caribbean country while allowing teenagers from the States to team up with athletes from the Dominican, according to Mike Olano, who directs the program for the Sox.

This July, nine youths ages 15 to

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Are Call Boxes Just Relics of the Past?

by Molina Schuler

Imagine seeing smoke billowing out of a Boylston Street storefront. What do you do? Do you call for help from your cell phone? What about using the bright red fire call box next to you? The Boston Fire Department reports that 74 percent of the calls made from these last year were false.

Is Boston burning city bucks on antique technology?

"People might use them to report a fire or accidents, or if they feel nervous walking in the dark at night," said Boston Fire Department spokesperson Steve MacDonald. There are 1,259 fire call boxes on street corners around Boston. When activated a fire truck is dispatched to the location within three to five minutes.

According to MacDonald it costs \$1.1 million a year to pay



price tag of \$100,000.

"I've seen them and always wondered about them," said Sandeep Singh while on his way to work in the Back Bay. "If people are aware of them, then I can see why money would be invested to maintain them."

The Boston Municipal Research Bureau, a privately funded group that monitors city finances, has questioned the value of the fire call box system over the years. In their FY2011 budget analysis they recommend that the city discontinue the maintenance of the boxes to save money.

"Because technology advanced, there are so many ways to communicate," said Bureau president Sam Tyler. "First calls for fires are rarely from the fire-box."

But the Boston Fire Department is adamant that the system is needed in this wireless age.

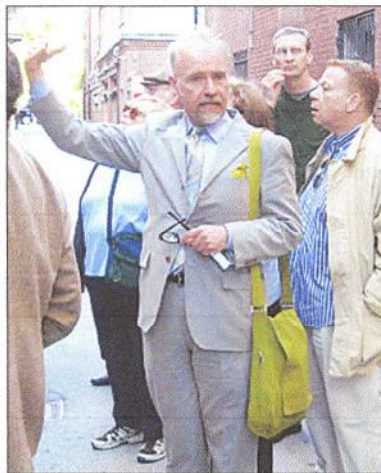
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the salaries of the 15 Fire Alarm Construction Division employees who maintain the system. On top of that annual repairs for problems like burned-out bulbs and vandalism carry an estimated

A Good Pair



Peter Sherin



William Young

The Neighborhood Association of the Back Bay will present two community service awards at its annual meeting on Wednesday, September 16 at the Algonquin Club. Peter Sherin will receive the Paul Prindle Community Leadership award for his contributions in Little League Baseball, as a past chair and a board member of NABB, as well as promoting improved and affordable transit systems. William Young, senior preservation planner for the City of Boston's Environment Department, will be given the Mary Natale Citizenship award for almost two decades of service with the Back Bay Architectural Commission.



Traffic signal box in the South End painted by Christos Hamawi

BBAC Rejects Plan For Artsy Signal Box

by Jim Cronin
Courant News Writer

An artist's petition to turn an electrical box in the Back Bay into a piece of public art was rejected by the City Hall body appointed to judge proposed changes in the neighborhood's historic district.

The Back Bay Architectural Commission (BBAC) denied South End artist Christos Hamawi's proposal to paint clover, wild grasses and other urban flora on a traffic signal box at the corner of Boylston and Dartmouth Streets at a hearing Wednesday.

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Field of Dreams

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18 from around Massachusetts flew to the island country and met nine Dominican teammates they would spend nine days with, playing baseball every afternoon after working together to build a baseball field, laying sod, painting benches and dugouts, and planting bushes, for use by an orphanage in the town of San Pedro de Macoris.

In the afternoons, the teens play baseball at the Red Sox Baseball Academy in El Toro under the tutelage of former baseball star and current Red Sox Director of Dominican Summer League Jesus Alou.

Some of the American and Dominican teens are from wealthy families, while others are from impoverished backgrounds, Olano said, to show kids from both nations what life is like for their confederates. Although often one or two Americans in the program are near or fully fluent in Spanish, a language barrier remains that they are forced to overcome while working and playing together.

"Initially I think they find it very challenging," Olano said. "Once you get past that awkwardness and establish a connection, it just builds from there."

At least a dozen players from South End Youth Baseball have traveled to the

Dominican through Lindos Sueños, said Paul Rinkulis, executive director. He said it offers many of his players of Latino descent a chance to experience their heritage firsthand while they are young, and that it offers them an enlightened perspective on poverty.

"They see how people can get by with what they need, which is not necessarily what they want," Rinkulis said. "It's been a great opportunity in many cases to experience their lineage and give back to a community ... and at the same time play baseball every day."

In 2004, the program's inaugural year, the American and Dominican teens built a baseball field and a day-care center in the small Dominican village of El Mamón, which neighbors the Red Sox Dominican Academy, returning to that village each year until 2007.

In the fourth year of the program, the participants ventured to an Oceanside town called Haina. The town was chosen in part because it is the hometown of both David Ortiz and Jesus Alou. While in Haina, the participants made drastic renovations to an existing baseball field.

In 2008, the participants worked at the orphanage in San Pedro de Macoris, a town known as "the hotbed of Dominican baseball," according to the program's website, to build a baseball field, which the teens helped complete this year.

Call Boxes

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"If there was a blackout [or if] cells went down, the fire box system would still work," argued MacDonald. He added that there is never a language barrier when a call box is used.

In 1852 Boston was the first city in the

country to install a telegraph-based fire alarm system. Wires run from each fire call box under the streets to the 9-1-1 dispatch center at 59 Fenway.

"Other cities may have eliminated them because their systems were rundown, but we have always maintained them," said MacDonald.

To report a problem with a fire call box, call BFD dispatch at 343-2880.

Signal Box

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However, Hamawi has received permission from the city's Art Commission to cover another signal box at the nearby corner of Huntington Avenue and Dartmouth Streets, a part of the neighborhood not under the BBAC's purview, with similar urban wildflowers and other plants.

The Art Commission operates a traffic signal box painting program to enliven street corners where the boxes stand, usually gray in color and approximately 4.5 feet tall and 3.5 feet wide. Representatives of the city's architectural commission could not be reached for comment about their rejection of the proposal.

Flanking either side of the Boston Public Library (BPL), the boxes would have made a strong statement encouraging passersby to contemplate, and hopefully consider, the benefits of preserving local ecosystems by providing a more conceptual project than much of the city's public art while bringing awareness to local environmental issues, Hamawi said.

"It would take the city's [traffic signal box painting] program a step further," Hamawi said. "I was really frustrated. There are people in our city who can't afford to go to galleries," or museums to view and be inspired by fine art.

The Neighborhood Association of the Back Bay's architectural committee approved the concept for painting the box

at the corner of Boylston and Dartmouth Streets.

"It could enliven a really barren area," said Sue Prindle, chair of that committee, in reference to the plaza at the entrance to the BPL. "It seems like it could be a good idea."

Hamawi will begin painting the box at the corner of Huntington Avenue and Dartmouth Street the first week of October and should be finished in about a week, estimating it will take at least 30 hours to complete.

Additionally, Hamawi has painted and maintains another signal box at the corner of Harrison and Massachusetts Avenues, and cities like Tampa Bay, Fla., and Missoula, Mont., as well as Dublin, Ireland, have similar signal box painting programs.

He hopes the box's concept of promoting environmental awareness will push abutting businesses to donate to the city's Urban Wilds Initiative, run by the Parks and Recreation Department, which seeks to protect city-owned urban wilds and other natural areas from development while developing administrative, fiscal and programmatic resources to ensure ongoing, long-term maintenance and management of city-owned urban wilds and other natural areas.

"The fact that I got the BBAC and others talking about public art was in itself worthwhile," Hamawi said. "The actual outcome of the BBAC hearing does not deter me at all. If anything, it inspires me."

Jazz Fest

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Wally's Café, founded in 1947.

"We were always part of the festival because they did it in our neighborhood, unofficially," said Frank Poindexter Jr., Wally's booking agent whose grandfather opened the club on Massachusetts Avenue after emigrating from Barbados. "I guess this year they decided to include us officially."

Over the years, Wally's has produced percussionists for top talent, such as Kanye West, Beyonce, Shakira and Prince. "Our club is like a training ground,"

Poindexter said. "The best want to play with the best."

Berklee professor Terri Lyne Carrington, a world-renowned drummer, was recently named the festival's new artistic director.

"The festival is testament to Boston's reputation as a music hub and its dedication to jazz and producing and nurturing great artists," said Carrington, a Medford native. "I hope people come out to fraternize with their neighbors, enjoy the delicious food and hear some incredible music."

View a complete list of events, venues and performers at beantownjazz.org/schedule, or follow the minute-by-minute beat at twitter.com/BerkleeNews.

CMCB

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Settlement and the South End Music School, two historic settlement schools that worked primarily with immigrant children.

Today, fixed firmly to its philanthropic pedigree with a music program promoting self-esteem, CMCB continues to serve a multicultural population — particularly those from traditionally underserved, economically disadvantaged neighborhoods, as well as individuals with special needs.

"We used to focus on children and juveniles, the so-called 'great unwashed,'" said David Lapin, CMCB's executive director, as he walked the halls of the center lined with photos dating back to the early 20th century. The framed sepia tones expose students packed into rooms — posing ramrod straight in straight-backed Puritan chairs — playing the violin and piano.

"We've become much, much more broad since then, but the moral mission is the same," Lapin said.

The school, now an accredited, nationally recognized institution, which provides arts education to the Boston Public Schools, serves 5,000 students each week — students like Henry Kwan, a 14-year-old high school freshman and pianist.

In one of the music center's practice rooms on Warren Avenue, Kwan practiced his scales with instructor Yvonne Lee. Last May, the unassuming and unflappable

freshman, accompanied by a full orchestra, performed Mozart's Concerto in A Major. (A video of Kwan's performance and other student recitals can be seen on the CMCB website: cmcb.org.)

Kwan said he also enjoys playing Schubert, Bach and Moszkowski, and he is looking forward to participating in several centennial-themed concerts.

Students like Kwan will perform 60 of the 100 celebratory concerts, many of which will take place in some 20 Boston Public Schools, from Chinatown to Jamaica Plain.

"Where there is need, we're able to meet it," said Lucy Joan Sollogub, who leads the center's school outreach. "We have a great amount of resources, but of course there is always room for growth."

For now, considering the dismal economic climate, CMCB members hope the centennial concert celebrations will enhance the organization's visibility as it simultaneously launches a fundraising campaign. With a \$2 million operating budget, the school doles out \$150,000 in scholarships annually to its 700 full-time students.

In his office, Lapin was thumbing through a dusty book of news clips and minutes from a 1910 CMCB board meeting which references curing the "socially degenerate."

Glancing up from the yellowed pages, Lapin said, "We'll use the centennial to think about who we were but more to bring it into our second century throughout the city."

At the Hynes Convention Center

Sunday, September 13 through Tuesday, September 15
Heart Failure Society of America
Attendees: 2,500

Wednesday, September 30
Space Investment Summit 7
Attendees: 150

Thursday, September 17
Rental Housing Conference
Attendees: 600

Sunday, October 4
National Portfolio Day
Attendees: 2,500

Tuesday, September 22 through Thursday, September 24
Embedded Systems
Conference/Software Development
Attendees: 972

Wednesday, October 14
Labor Arbitration Meeting
Attendees: 250

Saturday, September 26 through Sunday, September 27
CollegeFest 2009
Attendees: 5,000

Thursday, October 22 through Friday, October 23
National Council of Teachers of Mathematics
Attendees: 1,500

Tuesday, October 27
Funny Women...Serious Business
Attendees: 1,600