



Wallace-Benjamin feels right at Home

David Cogger

One Saturday morning in the fall of 2005, Joan Wallace-Benjamin and Gloria Nemerowicz shared cups of coffee at a Starbucks in Chestnut Hill.

The two friends discussed the so-called "aged-out" population of young served by The Home For Little Wanderers, the Boston-based non-profit where Wallace-Benjamin was president and chief executive officer. Nemerowicz was the president of Pine Manor College in Chestnut Hill.

The young people the two women talked about had been a part of the social services system for their entire lives, in either residential programs or foster care. But despite having foster parents and outreach workers, many had reached the age of 21 without the requisite skills to

get a good job or attend college. Deemed too old to receive city and state social services, many ended up in homeless shelters or living on the streets.

For her part, Nemerowicz recognized a similarity between some of the students enrolled at Pine Manor and the youth described by Wallace-Benjamin.

At that Saturday morning meeting, Wallace-Benjamin and Nemerowicz came up with a solution. They created a post-graduate residential program known as the Academic Support of College Life Program (ASCL), combining some spare dormitory rooms, the resources of the Boston University School of Social Work and a desire to create a "virtual group home" on the Pine Manor campus to house some of the esti-

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Children escape the 90-plus degree heat last week by frolicking in the wading pool at the Christian Science Center on Massachusetts Avenue. (Don West photo)

Black HISTORY

Boston-born Potter was country's first magician

Mario Valdes

Some said he rode in "a fancy cart pulled by a pair of ganders."

Others claimed to have seen him "crawl through a solid log," while there were those who whispered that he could "take a rooster from his pocket, hitch it to a wagon and pull a load that would have strained a team of horses."

During the first part of the 19th century, according to Milbourne Christopher, author of "The Illustrated History of Magic," such tales were circulated around a dark complexioned

young man from Massachusetts whose prowess as a conjurer and a ventriloquist had, for well over three decades, amazed and dumbfounded the young Republic.

The first American to receive such widespread acclaim in his own country, even the facts surrounding Richard Potter's family background are almost as fantastic.

Richard's father was Sir Charles Henry Frankland, the royal customs collector stationed in Boston whose open affair with the barmaid Agnes Surridge had scandalized local colo-

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Mattapan high school not in Hub's foreseeable future

Howard Manly

For the last several years, City Councilor Charles C. Yancey has talked about building a new high school.

Armed with a 1996 report commissioned by Mayor Thomas M. Menino, Yancey has whispered and screamed from citizens group meetings to City Council sessions that the Boston Public Schools were short at least 1,100 seats.

The answer, Yancey argued, lay in the grounds of the old Boston State Hospital, where 20 acres of land had been set aside by the state for "mandatory educational uses."

Yancey tried to build a consensus, tried to get community groups involved and tried to sell the story of a deserving neighborhood in Mattapan that was a prime site for what he considered to be more than a simple high school but a state-of-the-art community and adult learning center.

To the bitter end, Yancey remained a true believer. Just last month, the man first elected as District 4's representative 24 years ago stood before a community meeting at the Mildred Avenue Middle School and publicly answered what attendees were privately questioning.

"If some of you are concerned about why Charles Yancey is focus-

ing so much time on the high school, it's because I know high school can be an equalizer," he said, according to published reports. "I believe that we should have at least one state-of-the-art high school built in the city of Boston."

Yancey might be right, but very few of the city's power brokers have jumped on board.

In fact, Menino has questioned where the funding would come from; Boston public school officials argue that they don't need a large high school at a time when they are moving toward smaller, "theme-oriented" learning clusters; and, worse,

Mattapan, continued to page 25



Maseo and Dave of De La Soul remind us that from time to time, we all need somebody to lean on. The legendary Long Island, N.Y., hip-hop outfit shared headlining duties with Slick Rick at

last Saturday's Peace Boston 2007 Hip-Hop Festival. The festival, produced by the Mayor's Office of Arts, Tourism & Special Events, was held at City Hall Plaza. (Gwendolyn Rodriguez photo)

Hip-hoppers give Peace a chance

Lauren Carter

It was probably the only place you'd find hip-hop artists noticeably avoiding curse words and praising a local government official while on stage.

At least, since the last festival. Held last Saturday at City Hall, the Peace Boston 2007 Hip-Hop Festival, produced by Mayor Thomas M. Menino's Office of Arts, Tourism & Special Events, attracted thousands of attendees, lasted over four hours and celebrated the hip-hop art form while promoting a message of peace and unity through music.

The environment was both child-friendly and diverse, with a variety of ages, ethnic backgrounds and

personal styles represented, and artists noticeably respecting the family environment by eliminating negative words and messages from their sets.

The event featured a variety of acts leading up to legendary headliners De La Soul and Slick Rick, including the dance troupe Funk Phenomenon, who popped and locked over cuts ranging from Diggable Planets to the Notorious B.I.G., local rapper Omega Red, and Sullee — you may remember him from ego trip's "The (white) Rapper Show" on VH1 — who described himself as "pure hip-hop with a little bit of rock" and delivered an impressive a capella spit session following the musically-backed portion of his performance.

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