



Gov. Deval Patrick (left) passes House Speaker Salvatore F. DiMasi (second from right), speaking with Massachusetts Institute of Technology President Susan Hockfield (right), as he leaves an auditorium after delivering a speech outlining an economic stimulus plan at MIT's Sloan School of Management in Cambridge on April 9. In the speech, Patrick announced that the Commonwealth will spend \$20 million to acquire vacant foreclosed properties and seek a \$3.8 billion bond issue to repair the state's bridges, creating an estimated 23,000 construction jobs. (AP photo/Josh Reynolds)

Wal-Mart raises funds, questions in black Hub

Talia Whyte

Retail giant Wal-Mart is the world's largest private employer, with estimated net revenues of \$378.8 billion for 2008. It is also one of the world's most generous companies. Last year, its philanthropic arm, the Wal-Mart Foundation, donated \$296 million to charities around the world — including many organizations geared towards African Americans.

Over the past few months, the foundation has turned its charitable gaze toward the Boston area. In February, the Museum of African American History received \$250,000 from the Wal-Mart Foundation to help restore the African Meeting House. While the donation was

made during Black History Month, a press release accompanying its announcement noted that "Wal-Mart has a long tradition of supporting diverse communities throughout the year."

A few weeks later, the foundation made another donation, this one to the Grove Hall Youth Outreach Connection (GHYOC), a program of the faith-based Boston Ten Point Coalition that helps local at-risk youth through one-on-one mentoring, exploratory trips, peer leadership counsels, court advocacy and social activities held at the Roxbury YMCA. According to the coalition, the donation will be used specifically to purchase bicycles for GHYOC youth workers, allowing them to be

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MIRA's Ali Noorani feted at State House

Victoria Cheng

Standing in the empty Senate Chamber located directly beneath the State House's iconic golden dome, a dozen tourists gaze in awed silence at the room's sunburst ceiling and august marble busts. Emerging through the wooden double doors into the hall, the tourists marvel at the chamber's history and architectural beauty.

Ali Noorani, executive director of the Massachusetts Immigrant

and Refugee Advocacy Coalition (MIRA), has distinctly different memories of that hallway. He remembers standing in the carpet-lined corridor, overcome with a sense of bewilderment, during one of the first Senate budget debates he attended four and a half years ago when he took the reins at MIRA.

"Standing just outside this hallway surrounded by lobbyists who never really looked like me, [who] didn't really care about the same

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Council to hold hearing on school street worker plan

Micah Nemiroff

Amid growing concerns over youth violence in Boston, City Councilor-at-Large Michael F. Flaherty will convene a hearing next Wednesday to discuss a pilot program designed to bring city street workers into the Boston Public Schools (BPS).

BPS Superintendent Dr. Carol Johnson is scheduled to attend the hearing, slated for April 23 at 4 p.m. at the City Council Chambers, according to Flaherty spokeswoman Emily Robbins. Councilors are ex-

pected to discuss implementing the pilot program in schools that have experienced the most incidents of youth violence.

According to Flaherty, the pilot program would authorize two street workers from the Boston Center for Youth and Families (BCYF) per school in four of the most troubled schools in the BPS system. He hopes to expand the initial effort soon after the pilot is launched.

"If successful, I hope the program can expand to more schools citywide," Flaherty said during a phone interview.

The pilot program is a "strategy to address the epidemic of youth violence and curb the dropout crisis," explained Flaherty, who said he believes that "more intensified supervision will help students in the schools and the communities at large" and could have "wide-sweeping effects."

The South Boston councilor said his interest in getting more street workers in city schools is as much personal as it is political.

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Children's doc gives back with Ghana trip

Robin Hamilton

They came from every corner of the country. Parents and children walked for miles and miles across the Ghanaian terrain to meet the man who could give them hope.

With a team of his colleagues from Children's Hospital Boston, cardiac surgeon Dr. Francis Fynn-Thompson became known as the miracle man who could restore a child's beating heart.

While Fynn-Thompson is a full-time physician at Children's, he is offering his talents, as well as those of his peers, to some of the neediest children in Africa. Just last month, he and a team of surgeons, nurses and other staff traveled to Ghana's capital, Accra, to perform surgery on children suffering from congenital heart defects.

"I felt that it would be particularly important to

have a mission like this for Ghana," he says. "There isn't a center per se to perform pediatric heart surgery."

Fynn-Thompson's affinity for Ghana is natural.

He was born and raised there by parents who were both physicians. He left his country at 18 to attend college at the University of Pennsylvania, majoring in biology and health care development. He would later attend Harvard Medical School.

His training eventually led him to Children's Hospital, where he is working as a cardiac surgeon at the age of 36. But he always knew he would return to his homeland and give back.

"Obviously I was from there, and I saw the need," he said. "I knew what the need was."

Initially, he wasn't sure how he would give back. One day, he heard several nurses talking about a medical mission trip they took to Nicaragua, and he asked how they went, and who funded them.

That's when he was introduced to the Variety

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Aerosmith bassist Tom Hamilton (with guitar) visited the Blue Hill Boys & Girls Club in Dorchester last Wednesday to play music with club members and provide professional tips. Hamilton also donated an electric guitar, keyboard and junior drum set to the Club's Music Clubhouse. The session was made possible through a partnership with the Music & Youth Initiative. (Photo courtesy of Boys & Girls Clubs of Boston)

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