

# News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **MBHP tenant scholarship opportunity available Fall 2011**

BOSTON – Beginning this fall, a Metropolitan Boston Housing Partnership (MBHP) tenant with a Section 8 voucher and who participates in the Family Self-Sufficiency Program (FSS) could receive a four-year scholarship to UMass Boston.

MBHP has teamed up with MBHP Board Member Matt Martinez of Beacon Hill Property Group, UMass Boston, and other collaborators to sponsor a scholarship for at least one of MBHP’s rental assistance tenants.

The tenant will be awarded a scholarship in the amount of \$4,000 annually (\$2,000 from private funds and \$2,000 in matching funds from UMass Boston) for the school term commencing in September 2011. The award will supplement any financial aid and student loans the student-tenant is awarded. It’s anticipated that the combination of financial aid, loans and the \$4,000 scholarship will cover the full cost of tuition.

Martinez, who is the founder and principal of the Beacon Hill Property Group and a MBHP property owner, said the scholarship has been his dream for more than seven years.

“I’m seeing the second generation of my tenants in the same situation, if not worse off financially, than their parents,” he said. “Many of my tenants’ children would not finish high school. In fact, most were not even considering college. But education, in my opinion, is the way out of the cycle of poverty. That said, housing is critical – it’s the foundation that provides stability for families – but breaking the cycle of poverty requires education, especially a college degree.”

Because the cost of college is out of reach for most families with low incomes, Martinez said he wants to help at least one MBHP family obtain a college degree. After working with MBHP Executive Director Chris Norris and representatives at UMass Boston during the past 18 months, the scholarship finally has become a reality.

To qualify, an applicant must be a single parent receiving rental assistance through MBHP and a participant in MBHP’s FSS program. Additionally, the tenant must apply to and be accepted to attend UMass Boston. MBHP staff are available to assist tenants with completing the necessary applications.

The scholarship would be for one full school year, and it would be renewable for up to four consecutive years as long as the tenant-scholar complied with the program’s continuing eligibility requirements. Vocational assistance to help the tenant-scholar secure gainful and relevant employment between academic years and upon graduation would be provided.

MBHP will provide housing and other stabilization services to the tenant-scholar, who would be expected to work toward increased financial stability. Scholarship dollars not used after tuition, books and fees are paid can be used for other expenses such as childcare and transportation.

The benefits of the collaboration will extend beyond the single scholarship, Norris said.

“Even if an FSS participant applies for the scholarship and doesn’t receive it, a college degree still may be within his or her reach,” he noted. “Through this partnership with UMass, the university will work with everyone who applies to see if they can put together a package that could work for them. We want to encourage folks to seek out higher education.”



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Beacon Hill Property Group donated money to start the scholarship, and Martinez is encouraging other businesses to donate and supplement/expand the scholarship, possibly to more tenants.

“We’re inviting the private sector to become partners to help raise money to fund other expenses,” he said. “If we raise a sufficient amount of money, we could expand the scholarship to more families.”

The following organizations already have committed to contributing money, goods or services toward the scholarship: Boathouse, Boloco, Boston Celtics, D&D Insurance, Mt. Washington Bank, and Rosie’s Place.

For more information about the scholarship – including application deadlines that begin as early as March 1 – contact MBHP FSS Outreach Coordinator Justine Cabrera at (617) 425-6603 or [justine.cabrera@mbhp.org](mailto:justine.cabrera@mbhp.org).

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MBHP is the state’s largest regional provider of rental housing voucher assistance. We serve homeless, elderly, disabled, and low- and moderate-income individuals and families. Our region spans Boston and 29 surrounding communities: Arlington, Bedford, Belmont, Braintree Brookline, Burlington, Cambridge, Chelsea, Everett, Lexington, Lynn, Malden, Medford, Melrose, Milton, Newton, North Reading, Quincy, Reading, Revere, Somerville, Stoneham, Wakefield, Waltham, Watertown, Wilmington, Winchester, Winthrop and Woburn.

Our mission is to ensure that the region’s low- and moderate-income individuals and families have choice and mobility in finding and retaining decent affordable housing; all of our programs and initiatives are designed to encourage housing stability, increase economic self-sufficiency, and enhance quality of the lives of those we serve. To achieve our mission and to promote efficient service delivery, we work collaboratively with a broad array of service providers and neighborhood-based organizations.

We believe that everyone deserves a place to call home.

For more information, contact MBHP Communications Manager Beth Wagner at (617) 425-6691, or log onto [www.mbhp.org](http://www.mbhp.org).

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