**Friends of Boston’s Homeless Raised More Than $120,000 at Annual “Beyond Shelter Housewarming Party”**

*Friends of Boston’s Homeless gala funds provide $100,000 grant to support the City of Boston’s successful Housing First Initiative to help end long-term homelessness in the city.*

BOSTON (May 1, 2015) On April 16, [Friends of Boston’s Homeless](http://www.fobh.org/)—a nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting solutions-oriented programs that help people transition from the streets and shelters to lead stable independent lives—held its annual “Beyond Shelter Housewarming Party” gala at the House of Blues Boston. More than 700 people attended the gala, which raised in excess of $120,000. This allows Friends of Boston’s Homeless to provide a $100,000 grant to the City of Boston’s successful [Housing First Initiative](http://www.fobh.org/what-we-support/housing-first/) to help end long-term homelessness in Boston.

For 28 years, Friends of Boston’s Homeless has supported a number of vital programs in Boston that help homeless individuals transition from the streets and shelters to independence. The organization’s Housing First Start-up Fund helps remove the final barriers to housing for people who have struggled for years on the streets and in shelters. Once housed, people are connected with the support they need to rebuild their lives and not return to homelessness.

Proceeds from this year’s gala will support the City of Boston’s successful [Housing First Initiative](http://www.fobh.org/what-we-support/housing-first/), which works to end homelessness by placing people in housing first and connecting them with the community supports they need live stable, independent lives. Over the last five years, this initiative has helped 608 people move off the streets and out of shelters into homes of their own and have access to the support they need to rebuild their lives. Today, more than 90 percent of those helped through this initiative have not returned to the streets or shelters. Further, once people are housed, the community saves more than $9,000 a year per person in health care and public safety costs alone.

“The Friends of Boston’s Homeless are extremely proud to be donating more than a quarter of a million dollars this year to help end homelessness in Boston,” says John Rosenthal, founder and chair of Friends of Boston's Homeless. “The funding raised at the Beyond Shelter Gala will allow us to help more than 100 people transition from the streets and shelters into their own homes through the City of Boston's Housing First initiatives. Housing First works and I am delighted that Friends of Boston's Homeless is supporting this successful initiative to end homelessness."

This year’s annual “Beyond Shelter” gala event, named one of BizBash magazine’s top 100 events in Boston for four years running, was hosted by John Rosenthal, founder of Friends of Boston’s Homeless alongside lead sponsor [Charles River Apparel](http://www.charlesriverapparel.com/). Charles River Apparel has been a long-term partner of Friends of Boston’s Homeless, donating generously through product and monetary contributions for several years. Most recently, Charles River Apparel responded to a critical need following the shutdown of the Long Island Shelter, and within 48 hours the company provided $25,000 worth of clothing for homeless guests.

“We are proud to continue our relationship with Friends of Boston’s Homeless and each year try to surpass our efforts and support of the cause,” says Deb Lipsett, community relations director

for Charles River Apparel. “As a family-owned business, the local community is our top priority, and we strive to assist our neighbors in need. Everyone deserves a warm place to live and clothing on their backs.”

Gala attendees viewed a special video message from Arley, a former homeless man who has a new home and a new life thanks to Friends of Boston’s Homeless. He urged people to help keep the programs going because “all programs aren’t the same, some really help. “Some really are concerned about allowing other people to make a change in their life—and that’s what I was given.” He is currently studying to become a substance abuse counselor and wants to give back.

The Beyond Shelter Gala was emceed by Jonathan Soroff of The Improper Bostonian and TJ Taormina of 103.3 amp radio, and featured gourmet tastings by Boston area’s top chefs with live music by the Berklee Bob Marley Ensemble. Gordon Hamersley, one of Boston’s top chefs was honored at the event. In addition, event attendees had tastings from some of Boston area’s best restaurants including Ashmont Grill, Cinquecento, City Table, Eastern Standard, Flour Bakery + Café, The Fireplace, Sweet Basil, and Sweet Tooth Bakery along with passed hors’ doeuvres by House of Blues Boston. The event also featured a 50/50 raffle and live auction.

**ABOUT FRIENDS OF BOSTON’S HOMELESS:**

Friends of Boston’s Homeless supports solutions-oriented programs with proven track records that help people transition from the streets and shelters to lead stable independent lives. The organization focuses on removing the final barriers of transition that often city and state programs don’t have the means to cover. The final transition steps out of homelessness are often the most crucial, and Friends of Boston’s Homeless helps to make them happen.

The organization supports a number of vital programs in the City of Boston that help end homelessness including Housing First, vocational training, workforce development, adult education, transitional and permanent affordable housing, and the Woods Mullen and 112 Southampton (formerly Long Island) shelters run by Boston Public Health Commission. These programs help hundreds of people each year move beyond shelter to lead independent lives in our community. For more information, go to [www.fobh.org](http://www.fobh.org).

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**RESOURCES FOR THE MEDIA**

Photos available for download by the media: <https://goo.gl/u9KVwV>

Video of a client success story (that was shown at the gala): <https://goo.gl/gXktmT>

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