

From: Jane Pham <jpham@mves.org>
Sent: Jan 28, 2025 20:08:30.000000000 UTC
Subject: RE: NFG advocacy
To: Buzby, Maureen <mbuzby@CityofMelrose.org>

Hi Maureen,

No worries, it was Monday and there's a lot going on at the moment, so I totally understand! Thanks for remembering me and reaching out regardless!

Currently I am one of two options counselors with Mystic Valley Elders Services, and our catchman area runs through pretty much all of northeast Boston up to the New Hampshire line. My role is short term case management to connect elders and individuals with disabilities to any resources and benefits that they might be entitled to and assist them with obtaining them. The overall goal is to keep individuals as independent and safe as possible in order to remain in the community. This includes connecting with housing authorities, protective services, healthcare providers, long term care providers, mental health professionals, etc.

The area that intersects most with your initiative, besides health resources, is often housing, which most people wouldn't think of. In fact, I had a call from a woman just yesterday asking for us to help with finding housing because she is getting evicted in two weeks for smoking on her rental's balcony. Prior to options counseling I worked at a vendor agency for DMH and worked with advocating to landlords to get subsidized housing for our clients. In my role I witnessed how many of the population I worked with were chronic smokers with poor impulse control around smoking in prohibited areas that would often result in landlords pursuing evictions. On top of that it is an expensive habit and contributed to financial strain for many of those individuals. I was also there to observe when vapes were introduced, many of our clients signed up to participate in a study where they were provided vapes to replace their cigarettes, an effort to help with quitting smoking, and how little success there was in this. In fact it was more costly as our clients went through the vapes much faster. Just an example of how low the success rate for quitting once you get started, despite most smokers wanting to quit. I worked with the DMH population for 8 years total, most of my clients smoked, and I only knew of one person who fully quit smoking. I also have personal experience in watching my 23 year old cousin admitted for lung collapses and then resuming smoking her vape 2 weeks after her hospital discharge. She started vaping in high school.

I think your early intervention policy approach is quite intriguing and necessary at this point. I would love to learn more about it and stay updated on the progress! If you have anything like a monthly newsletter that would be nice too, I don't necessarily need to jump into your zoom meetings if its not feasible just yet!

Sincerely,

Jane

From: Buzby, Maureen <mbuzby@CityofMelrose.org>
Sent: Tuesday, January 28, 2025 1:13 PM

To: Jane Pham <jpham@mves.org>

Subject: NFG advocacy

I totally forgot to connect with you about last night NFG advocacy group meeting.

I mentioned you to the team. They would like to know a little more about you. What is it that you do? Your background? ☺ I should know.

And how can we provide more info about that we are doing to see if it's something that you have a real interest in and passion for. Right now we're looking to expand our team with folks who are willing to take the time to learn everything there is to know about NFG and then be an voice wherever we need a voice. Sometimes it's making an intro. Sometimes an email (or many emails), or a phone call (or several phone calls, or a letter to a community leader or state legislators. Identifying a city or town where you have family or friends who can be helpful. Etc. Etc. Etc.

Maybe we can start by you and me meeting. I can fill you in and then we can decide what's next, if anything. Would love to see you join the fight!

I feel you could have the same passion as our band of warriors.

Let me know.

Best,

Maureen

Maureen Buzby
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