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T H E R E A R E N O T I M E S L I K E T H E S E T I M E S

Hill House: A community effort celebrates 45 years

By Alexandra Curry

Generations of volunteer leadership and administrative staff have cultivated a sense of urban community through Hill House's programming, outreach and neighborhood events.

Perhaps you've visited 127 Mt. Vernon St. for a stack of pancakes, to volunteer at a senior dinner or to find the perfect Christmas tree. You might know someone whose children grew up attending Hill House's programs and summer camps, or maybe you remember Hill House as a part of your own childhood.

The community center has grown a great deal since its formation in 1966. Hill House's buildings on Mt. Vernon and Joy streets, both located in the heart of Beacon Hill, offer programs of athletic, creative and intellectual nature to children ages 4 months to 12 years old. For families living in Beacon Hill, Back Bay, West End and other downtown neighborhoods, Hill House offers the type of youth activities normally available only to residents of the suburbs.

This fall, 1,050 children enrolled in Hill House programs. While early childhood classes are the organization's most well



HILL HOUSE *(from pg. 6)*

known and heavily populated programs, Hill House continues to promote community involvement through monthly senior dinners, outreach and seasonal events.

The Hill House soccer program, with volunteer coaches leading more than 500 players, has grown to be Boston's largest organized fall soccer program. Each Saturday morning of the fall season, Teddy Ebersol's Red Sox Fields on the Esplanade are filled with an eager group of kids learning to play while being introduced to ideas of sportsmanship and teamwork.

Both internally and through philanthropic focus, Hill House encourages families to give back. The Hill House Outreach Program (HHOP) promotes community involvement through donations of time and assets to various nearby non-profits with a focus on serving women and children in need.

Hill House's scholarship fund makes programs affordable to any candidate. More than \$250,000 in scholarship funding has been awarded to children residing in the Greater Boston area since 1966.

A GLIMPSE INTO THE PAST

Hill House is, and always has been, a community effort.

Neighbors residing in the Beacon Hill area sought 45 years ago to promote a sense of community among the residents of this very unique Boston neighborhood. Now a resource for more than 1,500 families each year, Hill House's mission remains the same.

The community center was incorporated in the spring of 1966 at 74 Joy St, the location where the organization and its mission began to flourish.

In 2001 - following a donation by Mayor Thomas M. Menino and the City of Boston, countless

campaign efforts and three years of renovations - the Mt. Vernon Street firehouse opened as Hill House's new and improved central building.

The building's main staircase bares brass plaques engraved with the names of those whose donations deemed them members of the Firehouse Brigade.

Hill House's existence and success is a result of well-recognized programming and the generosity it has encouraged.

THE FUTURE OF 'YOUR BACKYARD'

Oct. 21 marked the 9th annual Hill-O-Ween celebration - Hill House's largest fundraiser.

This year, the Carnival-themed event took place at the Boston Public Library in Copley Square. Guests enjoyed cocktails, live music and hors d'oeuvres during both live and silent auctions. The evening, as always, was a special one with Hill House's most involved parents, volunteers and benefactors in attendance. Hill-O-Ween encourages the generosity and creativity that have cultivated the Hill House of today.

Meanwhile, the non-profit's mission will remain the same in years to come and its motives strengthened.

Through programming, outreach, and events, Hill House will continue to connect neighborhoods, children, families and senior citizens, adapting to the growth and change of local needs.

Help Hill House remain your backyard in the city for another 45 years.

For more information, call 617-227-5838 or contact Dianne Powers, development associate, at dpowers@hillhouseboston.org.