

HomeStart Remarks

June 26, 2019

Brockton City Hall

Thank you, Mayor Carpenter, the City of Brockton, and all of you for being a part of this today. I can't tell you how proud I am to stand here representing the 300,000 members of Boston's Jewish community.

For 126 years, CJP has been committed to taking care of vulnerable members of our community and in the broader world. It is part of who we are as a people and as a community. If you look up the source for the obligation to give in the Hebrew Bible, you find incredibly powerful language. It doesn't just say, "give to those in need." Instead it says, "when you see your fellow-person in need, when someone has fallen on hard times, *do not look away*." The obligation to take care of the vulnerable among us begins with seeing the humanity in every person.

Homelessness is an issue that affects us here in Brockton, Greater Boston, and beyond, and is one from which we cannot look away. Addressing the eviction crisis is one of the most important ways we can work to keep communities whole. It is a moral — and spiritual imperative — that we act.

It's not enough just to help the person in front of us. To repair the world, to pursue justice, is to pursue systemic change: to close the gap between the way the world is and the way that it should be. Homelessness isn't exclusive to any one city or town. No one is immune. One bad break — a health crisis, sudden joblessness, a natural disaster — any can lead to eviction.

What better way to help close that gap than addressing these issues before they arise? That's why HomeStart is such a powerful program — when you keep families in their homes, you proactively address so many issues that would arise if they had no place to live. It's a systemic solution — a win-win-win for families, for landlords, and for communities.

CJP and our Jewish community feels called to this work. In the Jewish tradition, it is not enough for us just to take care of our own. We are called to be a community that is engaged with our broader society and the world, bringing our values to bear on the problems and challenges we all face, and working for the *dignity and well-being of every human being*. It was critically important for my colleagues and me that CJP be at the table, working alongside Bank of America and the United Way to support innovative solutions to homelessness. Eviction prevention is an enormous start.

At a time when our world feels more and more divided and so many organizations are trying to go it alone, the partnerships brought together by HomeStart are an example of what we can do when we work together — to close the gap. It is a truly collaborative effort that brings together the private sector, local governments, nonprofits, and faith communities.

No one organization can or should do this alone, but by working together — city and town officials, faith communities, agencies, nonprofits, landlords, and others — we are taking the first step toward making sure everyone in our communities has a safe, stable, and secure place to call home.

The Jewish community is proud to be here with you today. Thank you to our partners, to HomeStart, the United Way of Massachusetts Bay, Father Bill and Mainspring, and Bank of America. We are honored to work with you. May this be just the beginning!