

# Roxbury

76° | traffic | transit

Ad Choices

home news events discussions search

< Back to front page

Text size - +

DORCHESTER, NEEDHAM, ROXBURY, WEST ROXBURY

## Local Boy Scouts help save Roxbury health center's reading program

Posted by Matt Rocheleau August 11, 2011 09:46 AM

Print | Comments ()

Share 0 Tweet 6 Share 0 ShareThis 5

### Connect to Roxbury

Connect to Your Town Roxbury on Facebook

Like

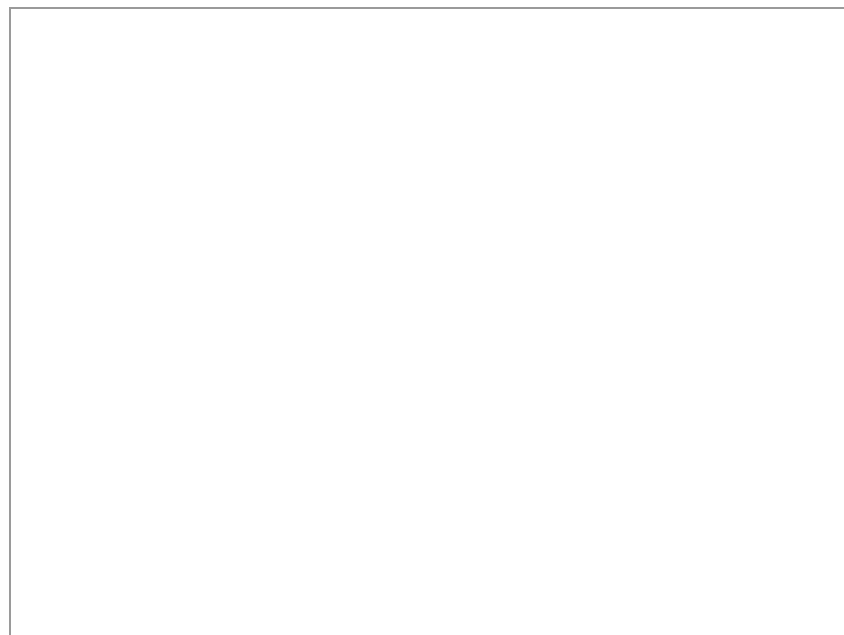
You like **Your Town Roxbury** · Admin



Follow @RoxburyUpdate on Twitter

Click here to follow Your Town Roxbury on Twitter.

ADVERTISEMENT



(Courtesy: Alexander LeGendre)

Boy Scout Alexander LeGendre, 16, of West Roxbury, stocks shelves in a pediatric waiting room at the Roxbury Comprehensive Community Health Center (RoxComp).

By Matt Rocheleau, Town Correspondent

As teenagers Alexander LeGendre and Brendan Chin each filled a Roxbury health center's waiting room shelves with donated books, they witnessed how much their efforts meant to the center's early childhood literacy program that in recent months seemed to be on the verge of extinction.

LeGendre recalled how a young girl approached him as he was stocking books, asked him if she could have one and sat on the floor nearby to read.

"The look on this girl's face – she was so happy to be able to pick up a book and read it," the 16-year-old from West Roxbury said. "I was able to do that every day as a kid, so it was so rewarding for me to give that back to someone else who I could see really appreciated it."

# RED SOX AT MARINERS

TONIGHT 9p ET



The two local Boy Scouts each launched their own Eagle Scout Leadership Projects that earlier this spring brought some 4,500 children's books to a waiting room at the Roxbury Comprehensive Community Health Center (RoxComp).

The effort not only saved, but also expanded the health center's 12-year-old early childhood literacy program, which after several years of reduced financial support saw more drastic cuts this past year to state funding it had relied on to restock books.

Through its partnership with the Boston-based [Reach Out and Read](#) nonprofit that serves pediatric exam rooms nationwide, the health center promotes early literacy and school readiness by providing free new and used books for children. The program also offers guidance for parents on how to help children develop critical early language skills, including by reading aloud.

Dr. Wendy Pavlovich, a pediatrician at the medical facility that primarily serves patients from Roxbury and Dorchester, helps oversee the literacy initiative. When she made a cold call to the Boy Scouts Boston Minutemen Council last fall asking for help, she said the "once-robust" program was in rough shape.

## ROXBURY REAL ESTATE »

67

Homes for sale

20

Rentals available

0

Open houses this week

0

New listings this week

## CAMP GUIDE »

**A camp for every kid!**

Adventure, sports, theater, music, arts or technology—find the perfect camp for your child at [boston.com/campguide](http://boston.com/campguide).



ADVERTISEMENT

Ad Choices

There were fewer than 100 used books, and less than 400 new books, left. That was enough to only serve half the program's need, she said. Much of that remaining collection was written in Spanish, but most children involved in the initiative speak and read English. And, for children at some reading levels there were only a handful of books available.

Though the program continued to provide books to young patients, "We were not feeling like we could continue giving out books much longer," said Pavlovich.

"This program is really, really important to us," she continued. "We see the literacy program as a medical priority because exposure to books and reading with caregivers helps children develop the cognitive skills needed to achieve success in school."

Many of the young readers involved are inner-city children who Pavlovich said are most at-risk to struggle with literacy. But, the medical center did not have the internal infrastructure to try to revive the program on its own

The work the two Boy Scouts did to revive the program, "far exceeded my expectations," she added.

The pediatrician had requested help replenishing the program's book supply, but the two Boy Scouts went above and beyond. In addition to collecting 1,500 books by setting up several drop-off boxes, LeGendre, a member of Boy Scout Troop 7, also secured office furniture, including bookshelves, allowing the health center to rehab the waiting room where books are kept.

In addition to donating around 3,000 books he collected, Chin, a 15-year-old from Needham and member of Boy Scout Troop 10, secured donations of children's toys for the pediatric waiting area.

The new toys, books and furniture have transformed the waiting room from having an "institutional" feel to now being "warmer, more inviting," Pavlovich said.

"It was inspiring for our staff to see," she said.

With the promise of assistance from the Boy Scouts, the health center was able to raise money for additional new books.

Each of the teens also credited their parents for helping them out.

"It was really nice to know I had helped revive the program," said Chin, "And, it was for a really good cause."

"When it's complete, it's like 'wow, I can't believe I put this altogether,'" said LeGendre. "It's an incredible feeling."

E-mail Matt Rocheleau at [mjrochele@gmail.com](mailto:mjrochele@gmail.com).

Facebook Share 0, Twitter Tweet 6, LinkedIn Share 0, ShareThis 5

Previous entry Next entry

MORE FROM BOSTON.COM

East Boston cafe, a dream for owners, now faces closure (Your

MORE FROM THE WEB

12 Nice Things You Can Do for Someone in Pain (Health.com)

Roxbury Headlines »

- STAGES: 'Bakersfield Mist' premiere rolls into Wellfleet (12 hours ago)
Nonprofit awarded \$325k to rehab 82 housing units in Roxbury, JP (3 days ago)
BOSTON: Medford man arrested in bank robbery (3 days ago)

Also From Roxbury

COMMUNITY

Notable Roxbury residents

NIGHTLIFE

Diamond in the rough

SOUTH END-ROXBURY LINE

Residents face identity crisis

EATING LOCALLY



On the street where you live



Local advertising by PaperG

Town)

'Faces' to get one last hurrah before the bulldozer *(Your Town)*

Red Sox run down Mariners *(Sports)*

Death after surgery draws concern *(Local News)*

Appeals court rejects health law mandate *(Politics)*

Frugal Retirement: Real-life solutions to limited income. *(CareOne)*

Natural Swimming Pools: 9 Myths Busted *(HouseLogic)*

The Most Embarrassing Places To Lose Your Laptop *(BuzzFeed)*

Confessions of a Car Salesman *(Edmunds.com)*

[Sponsored links]



READER COMMENTS »

[View reader comments \( \)](#) » [Comment on this story](#) »

## Roxbury On Twitter »

Gloucester flag quilt a 9/11 remembrance - <http://bo.st/oxeRDv> 1 day ago

Medford man arrested in bank robbery - <http://bo.st/o68oEI> 1 day ago

Local Boy Scouts help save Roxbury health center's reading program - <http://bo.st/o3d5GS> 1 day ago

Historic New England puts period photos on the map - <http://bo.st/qSd0IF> 2 days ago

Real estate: 2 open houses this weekend in #Roxbury -

[Follow other Boston.com Tweets](#) | [What is Twitter?](#)

[Home](#) | [News](#) | [Events](#) | [Schools](#) | [Sports](#) | [Discussions](#) | [Marketplace](#)

[Contact Us](#) | [Contact Boston.com](#) | [Contact The Boston Globe](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Your Ad Choices](#) | [Help](#) | [Advertise](#) | © 2011 NY Times Co.

Ad Choices