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JAMAICA PLAIN

Jamaica Plain Main Streets group wins 'Walkers' Choice Award'

Posted by Matt Rocheleau December 8, 2011 02:21 PM

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(Gloria Carrigg)

JP Centre/South Main Streets board member Mary Hannon shows the Main Streets organization's director Randace Moore and Wendy Landman, director of WalkBoston, their "Walkers' Choice Award." The award was presented at JP's newest art gallery, UFORGE on Dec. 1.

By Matt Rocheleau, Town Correspondent

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A Jamaica Plain nonprofit that receives city funding and assistance has been awarded the second annual "Walkers' Choice Award" from a local organization that aims to improve walking conditions across the state.

JP Centre/South Main Streets received the distinction from WalkBoston at a ceremony last week.

Introduced in 2010 to promote the theme "good walking is good business," the award honors business communities' efforts in creating lively, walker-friendly places, officials said. The award is given annually to recognize businesses that provide inviting public spaces to encourage pedestrians to linger as they walk through their communities.

The Main Streets organization won the honor for its "First Thursday" program. On the first Thursday of each month, participating Jamaica Plain businesses along Centre Street and South Streets, a stretch where foot traffic is heavy, stay open later than normal allowing area residents to shop, dine, or attend art and music events, while getting exercise.

Now in its seventh year and recently expanded to a year-round event, the "First Thursday" program has grown from six businesses to more than 35 participating retailers, restaurants and art galleries.

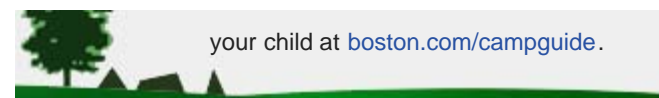
"What Jamaica Plain has done with First Thursday is to give businesses and Boston residents another way to connect," said a statement from Wendy Landman, executive director of WalkBoston, a nonprofit founded 21 years ago. "To walk the sidewalks and catch up with their neighbors, get some more exercise and truly build a stronger community through something as simple as strolling and walking. As one of the most livable neighborhoods in Boston, First Thursday is a great, simple idea that strengthens both communities and your leg muscles."

The Main Streets organization is part of the citywide [Boston Main Streets](#) program started by Mayor Thomas M. Menino in 1995 that now consists of 19 districts.

"We are really honored to have WalkBoston give us the Walkers' Choice Award," JP Centre/South Main Streets' executive director Randace Moore said in a statement. "'First Thursday' is a community-building event where the sidewalks are busy with foot traffic and more active than usual.

"Hundreds of JP residents and people from other Boston neighborhoods walk, browse shops, eat dinner or dessert out, and spend locally," Moore added. "The 'buy local' movement is very close to our hearts in Jamaica Plain and I know how much the local businesses all appreciate that dollars are being spent here."

Last year, Borders Books in Downtown Crossing won the first-ever Walkers' Choice Award. The large bookstore closed this past summer after the Borders



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E-mail Matt Rocheleau at mjrochele@gmail.com.

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