



JAMAICA PLAIN COMMUNITY CENTERS ADULT LEARNING PROGRAM

Quarterly Update

Jamaica Plain Community Centers Adult Learning Program “Action • Learning • Progress”

Jamaica Plain Community Centers has some exciting and joyful events coming up which contribute to the energy and synergy that characterizes Jamaica Plain as a neighborhood.

We are entering our 50th Anniversary of the Jamaica Plain Community Centers Adult Learning Program which began at English High School. Serving the Immigrant Community has been one of our signature programs. It has always been the crown jewel in our Program offerings.

Kerry Costello, Chair

Board of Directors

Jamaica Plain Community Centers

As we reach the midpoint of the year, I want to take a moment to recognize the incredible dedication of our staff and the determination of our students. Your hard work, resilience, and commitment to learning have created a supportive community where growth is evident every day! Together, you have built a space where goals are pursued, challenges are met with courage, and achievements—big and small—are celebrated. Thank you all for making this a truly successful and inspiring year so far.

Dr. Joyce E. Henderson,

Director



International Women's Month Reflections

Students and staff shared thoughtful reflections honoring International Women's Month, recognizing the strength, achievements, and ongoing struggles of women around the world.

The Impact of Black Women in the United States

Dr. Joyce Henderson

“Black women in the United States continue to redefine leadership, excellence, and possibility across every field—from boardrooms and classrooms to laboratories, studios, and community spaces. Often balancing multiple roles as professionals, caregivers, mentors, and advocates, they bring vision, determination, and creativity to everything they do.

Their influence can be seen not only in historic movements, but also in everyday acts of leadership that strengthen families, businesses, and communities. From advancing education and entrepreneurship to leading social justice efforts and shaping culture, Black women continue to push boundaries and open doors for the next generation.

Their resilience, innovation, and unwavering commitment to equity remind us that progress is built not only through major milestones, but also through daily acts of courage, compassion, and perseverance.

During International Women's Month, we celebrate the power, impact, and legacy of Black women who continue to move the country forward while inspiring future leaders to imagine even greater possibilities.”

Dominican Women Empowered by Education

Rosario Medina

International Women's Month is celebrated around the world to honor women's ongoing fight for equality and liberation. As a woman born and raised in the Dominican Republic, I come

from a culture known for its warm hospitality, strong family values, and vibrant social spirit.

While Dominican women have made significant progress, many still navigate a machista (male-dominated) tradition that shapes expectations in society. Although rates of unpaid care and domestic work are gradually declining, women in rural areas continue to face greater challenges and fewer opportunities.

Despite these barriers, Dominican women are increasingly empowered through education and leadership. Many are completing their studies and pursuing careers as nurses, doctors, lawyers, and politicians, while also entering fields once considered “male-only” jobs.

As more women raise their voices and advocate for equality, they inspire others to pursue their dreams and create change.

Here's to strong women: may we know them, may we be them, and may we raise them. ”

Celebrating the Leadership of Black Women

Mihisha Evans-Henderson

“Black women in the United States have long been leaders, innovators, and change makers despite facing the intersecting challenges of racism and sexism. From the fight for civil rights and voting rights to advancements in education, business, science, politics, and the arts, Black women have shaped the nation’s progress in powerful ways.

Their resilience, creativity, and commitment to community continue to inspire movements for equity and justice. During International Women’s Month, we celebrate the contributions of Black women and recognize their enduring role in building a more inclusive and equitable future.”

The Powerful Contributions of Somali Women

Amina Hillowle

Somali women have long been pillars of strength within their families and communities, sustaining social, cultural, and economic life even in the face of immense challenges. As caregivers, leaders, and cultural stewards, they manage households, raise and educate children, and preserve traditions that hold communities together. Despite the hardships of civil war, displacement, and limited access to resources, Somali women continue to demonstrate extraordinary resilience. In many households—often raising large families—they

carry the responsibility of maintaining stability, providing moral guidance, and ensuring that the next generation grows with knowledge, dignity, and hope.

During International Women’s Month, we recognize and celebrate the powerful contributions of Somali women both within their communities and around the world. From advocating for girls’ education and providing healthcare in communities affected by conflict, to building businesses and participating in peacebuilding and civic leadership, Somali women continue to shape stronger and more hopeful societies. Their courage, perseverance, and leadership remind us that when women rise, entire communities rise with them—and their voices remain essential in building a more just and equitable future for all.

Student Writing Spotlight

Students in the Level 4 ESOL PM class wrote paragraphs in honor of International Women’s Day. Below is a reflection from Maria R. responding to the prompt: *"In today’s world, do you think that women are equal to men? Why or why not?"*

Maria R. – Level 4 ESOL

“We can say that in modern society, women have made many advances. Although, in the economy, women still have a lower salary than men. But they are part of political and civil positions. This means that women have made great progress.”

HiSET Success

We are excited to celebrate the accomplishments of our students who are making progress on the HiSET exam this year.

A special congratulations goes to Felicia P., the first student this year to pass all sections of the HiSET test. Felicia joined the program last year during the second semester and returned this year to complete the math section, allowing her to successfully finish the entire exam.

We are incredibly proud of her dedication and hard work. While we are not yet sure whether Felicia has started community college or entered a training program, we wish her the best as she takes the next step in her journey.

Level 3 Student Success Stories



Marcel S. will have her last day on Thursday because she is joining the CNA program offered by JVS next week.



Rosanna Baez. is a salon owner on South Street in Jamaica Plain. Her business was given best 3 in Jamaica Plain this month. In addition, Rosanna graduated from a chaplaincy program offered through the police and she is now a registered chaplain.



Rosanna Báez - Business

Rosanna Báez was elected to the board in 2025. She is the owner of Prophecy of the Beauty Salon at 152 South Street in Jamaica Plain. Originally from the Dominican Republic, Rosanna has been operating her shop in Jamaica Plain for over 20 years.

Congratulations!
Prophecy of the Beauty Salon
is a **Top 3** business in
Jamaica Plain



Level 4 Student Success Stories

Maria R.

Maria recently interviewed for a paraprofessional position at the Rafael Hernandez School in Jamaica Plain and was successfully hired. Congratulations to Maria on this exciting new role!

Advisor Highlight

Rana Elbeih



I wanted to take a moment to sincerely thank you for your help and support when I applied to the AACA Banking and Finance program. I'm happy to share that I successfully graduated from the program, and I have already started applying for jobs in the banking field. I truly appreciate the guidance you provided throughout the process. Your support made a meaningful difference in helping me move forward with my career goals.

Cristian C.

Level 1 Student Project

Our Recipes

Students collaborated on a project sharing recipes and cultural traditions.

View the presentation here:

https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1_4x820Yyw1hNnmrAFFNgyZCi0F6Y4xgsnVSADGMI N7Q/edit?slide=id.p#slide=id.p

We are proud of all students for their achievements and continued growth.

Warm regards,

Outreach at Jamaica Plain Community Centers

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