

The following article appeared in www.townlineonline.com:

SHA tenant wins first Nice scholarship

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When a former tenant of the Somerville Housing Authority runs her own charitable foundation for folks who have "fallen through the cracks," one supposes it was just a matter of time before one helped the other.

Elizabeth Weber, a former Somerville Housing tenant and founder of the Weber Foundation for Helping Hands, has joined with SHA Chairman and former SHA tenant Ronald Bonney Jr. to create a Somerville Housing Authority Tenant Scholarship in memory of Harold Nice, Weber's father.

The Weber Foundation of Helping Hands Inc is a nonprofit public charity founded in October 2000. The foundation provides direct financial assistance to individuals and families facing life-threatening illnesses or other catastrophic situations. The goal is to help as many people as possible and not limit the foundation to a particular cause or specific illness. The foundation helps those who have fallen through the cracks and have nowhere else to turn.

Weber, who was a tenant in the early 1970s and is now a Melrose resident running her own company, has secured considerable personal donations to the fund from Governor Willard Mitt Romney and Lt. Governor Kerry Murphy Healey, Ronald and Dr. Iwona Bonney to establish this fund. Donors of the Weber Foundation itself include members of the Boston Celtics and the New England Patriots, among other New England notables.

The scholarship will benefit a Somerville Housing Authority tenant who has a desire to give back to community. Applicants must have a high school diploma or GED, and have passed the MCAS if that was required for graduation. The scholarship will cover in-state tuition, fees and books to Bunker Hill Community College for one year and is renewable for a second year as long as a C average is maintained.

The recipient of the first Somerville Housing Authority Tenant Scholarship is Allen Lambert. Lambert, 28, a Somerville High graduate, was recently laid off from a health-care firm. She volunteers as a patient advocate at the Cambridge Hospital, and assists her mother since her recent injury. Lambert hopes to fulfil her dream of becoming a registered nurse. Lambert was presented with her scholarship at the Third Annual Weber Foundation Dinner at Boston's Fairmont Copley Plaza Hotel. Kevin Bumpus, deputy director, accompanied her to the event, along with Idyle Blanc, resident services coordinator, and Bonney. The scholarship was proposed by Bonney, who also serves as the vice chairman of Bunker Hill Community Colleges Board of Trustees. The scholarship is designed to assist tenants to improve their education and their lives.

"Elizabeth and I are both former tenants of the Somerville Housing and know that education has helped us to be in a position to help others. Elizabeth wanted to help people from the community she grew up in, and the SHA Board of Commissioners wanted to add another option to offer to tenants. I hope that this will be the first of many scholarships offered to benefit our tenants. We are also working with the Bunker Hill Community College Foundation to endow another scholarship," said Bonney.

Anyone interested in donating to the Somerville Housing Authority Scholarship Fund can mail checks to 30 Memorial Road, Somerville, 02143, in care of SHA Scholarship Fund. Please indicate to which scholarship you would like to make your donations (the SHA Harold Nice Scholarship or BHCC Foundation Scholarship). Both donations are tax deductible.