

*God's work is the work of releasing lives in healing and hope and joy. That work must be ours also no one church is able by itself to do the work that is needed. A group of members from churches in Jamaica Plain are working to find ways we can work more closely to serve local people. The Ecumenical Social Action Committee has grown out of this concern. Now a new opportunity has been given us all.*

From "To Plan for Church Action," circa 1965



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Community-minded activists from local churches join together to affect positive social change in Jamaica Plain's neighborhoods. Working through the Action Planning Project, the Ecumenical Social Action Committee was born in 1965 and incorporated in 1969.



1969

Working with local churches through the Model Neighborhoods Program, ESAC initiates the Youth Drop-in, Homeownership, Hispanic Outreach, Elderly Concerns and the Creative Urban Encounter projects.



1970

Working with Blessed Sacrament Church, ESAC's Hispanic Committee establishes Oficina Hispana as a new organization to offer social services to the community.



1974

Restoring vacant housing and assisting homebuyers in Egleston Square, ESAC's Homeownership Committee establishes the foundation for Urban Edge, which later incorporates as a separate housing development agency.



ESAC initiates a CDC steering committee that develops into the Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Development Corporation. JPNDC elects its own Board and spins off from ESAC in 1977.



The Senior Team is established to address the needs of seniors through support services, advocacy, counseling, and a Hispanic lunch program.



ESAC begins REACH, a three-tiered program designed to help local youth prepare for and pass the GED exam, assist with job searches and achieve long-term employment.



Jamaica Plain's Senior Home Repair program is started by ESAC through funding from HUD and the Boston Foundation. In 1984, the City of Boston expands ESAC's Jamaica Plain program to include all of Boston's neighborhoods.



The Community Housing Task Force is launched as a forum for creating innovative solutions to housing issues. The Task Force is credited with developing the Boston Citywide Land Trust, the Housing Assistance and Renter's Revolving Loan Funds, and the Foreclosure Prevention Pilot Project.



ESAC partners with 1st American Bank to develop the first reverse equity mortgage in the Commonwealth. It was first designed for an 87 year old Dorchester homeowner and later became a model of financing used to help seniors remain safely and affordably in their homes.



**1985**

With funding from the Massachusetts Bar Foundation and Boston's Elderly Commission, ESAC establishes the first advocacy program specifically for homeowners in Boston Housing Court.



**1989**

ESAC pioneers foreclosure prevention counseling to the growing number of homeowners impacted by Boston's second mortgage scam crisis. The program continues to develop with support from the National Consumer Law Center, Freddie Mac, HUD and many private funders.



**1990**

Designated as a Local Rehabilitation Agency by MassHousing, ESAC begins a deleading program aimed at low- and moderate-income homeowners. ESAC is recognized for excellence for three consecutive years from 1997 to 1999.



Working with BayBank, ESAC initiates a special refinancing program for homeowners with problem credit. Building on the solid performance of the ESAC/BayBank portfolio, the initiative is expanded to include other area lenders, including Citizens Bank, Hyde Park Savings Bank and Wells Fargo.



The Greater Egleston Community High School is started as an alternative school for youth at risk. ESAC serves as the lead community agency for ten years. GECHS is named a pilot school of the Boston Public Schools in 1997 and becomes independent from ESAC in 2004.



ESAC hosts its first *A Taste of Jamaica Plain*. The annual event, supported by local restaurants and caterers has become ESAC's signature community fundraiser.



1997

The Sustainable Homeownership Center is established, consolidating Foreclosure Prevention, Senior Homeowner Services, Housing Court Advocacy, and Lead Abatement Assistance. In 2000, ESAC expands its homeowner services with *WiseBuys*, offering individual home purchase counseling for first-time homebuyers.



1997

ESAC spearheads a collaborative with Roxbury Youthworks and Federated Dorchester Neighborhood Houses launching GED Plus, an alternative education program for at-risk youth in three Boston neighborhoods. ESAC expands GED Plus in 2005 forming a new partnership with Youth Opportunity Boston.



1999

ESAC works with the Massachusetts Community and Banking Council and the City of Boston to develop *Don't Borrow Trouble*, a campaign to help homeowners avoid predatory loans and lending scams. *Don't Borrow Trouble* is soon adopted by Freddie Mac and becomes a model for similar programs in cities across the United States.



2001

Norma F. Moseley, ESAC's former Housing Director is honored at a retirement celebration held at the JFK Library. The Norma F. Moseley Endowment Fund is established to provide ongoing support for ESAC's Sustainable Homeownership Center.



2002

ESAC along with neighborhood leaders dedicate Egleston Square's Peace Garden with the unveiling of a six-panel mural called *Peace Throughout History*. Two years later, the Garden is named the best community garden in Boston in Mayor Menino's Garden Contest.



2005

Joining forces with Urban Edge, Dorchester Bay EDC, the Lead Action Collaborative, and the City of Boston, the Boston 2010 Collaborative is established, it's goal to eliminate childhood lead paint poisoning in Boston by 2010.