

TOWN BULLETIN BOARD

TOWN and SCHOOL EVENTS and HOLIDAYS

December 25 Town Hall Closed – Christmas
 December 25-29 Schools Closed – Winter Vacation
 January 1 Schools & Town Hall Closed – New Year's Day
 January 15 Schools & Town Hall Closed – Martin Luther King Day

February 19 Town Hall Closed – President's Day
 February 19-23 Schools Closed – February Vacation
 March 10 WESC Dinner Dance and Auction,
 7 p.m.-midnight, Lombardo's in Randolph

WESTWOOD PUBLIC LIBRARY

For additional library programs and further information, please call the Main Library Children's Department at 781-320-1042 or the Islington Branch at 781-326-5914 or visit the web site at www.westwoodlibrary.org/home

MAIN LIBRARY — Winter Programs

Programs for Preschoolers

Jan 16-Feb 27 **Preschool Literacy Adventures** —

Mar 20-May 1 Ages 2 and up with caregiver
 Tuesdays, 10:15-11:00 a.m.

Jan 17-Feb 28 **Storytime** — Ages 3 and up

Mar 21-May 2 Wednesdays, 10:15-11:00 a.m.

Jan 19-Mar 2 **Babies & Books** — Under 2 years with caregiver

Mar 23-May 4 Fridays, 10:30-10:50 a.m.

Children must be the appropriate age by the first day of each session. Registration is required and begins December 1, 2006. There are no sessions during public school vacations or holidays.

Programs for School Age Children

Jan 16-Feb 27 **Wishing Well** — Ages 5 and up

Mar 20-May 1 Tuesdays, 3:30-4:30 p.m.

Registration begins December 1st.

Special Programs

TBD

Quilting for Kids — Grades 3 and up.
 Registration is required, materials fee \$10.00.
 Dates and Times TBA

Storytelling Saturdays — Ages 2½ and up with families.

Jan 6, Feb 3 Jan: Diane Edgecomb, Feb: Loretta Eysie
 Mar 3, Apr 14 Mar: Debbie O'Carroll, Apr: Librarian storytellers
 Saturdays, 10:30-11:30 a.m.
 Registration begins 1 month prior.

Oct 19 **A Story for Every Season** —

Dec 14 Grandparents, grandkids and all!
 An Early Childhood Council, Council on Aging and
 Library CPC Program
 Thursdays, 1:00 p.m. Registration will be required,
 please call the ECC at 781-461-9548.

Jan 8, Feb 5 **Massachusetts Book Award Book Club** — Grades 3-5.

Mar TBA Mondays, 7:00 p.m.
 Monthly discussion of MA Book Award title.
 Call library for the title of the month.

Feb 28 **Babysitting Clinic** — Grades 6 and up.

Mar 7, 14 Wednesdays, 3:30-5:00 p.m.

Mar 21, 28 Registration is required beginning January 3rd.

April 4 **Participants must attend all sessions to be certified.**

April 25 **Optional CPR for Babysitters Training**

March 15 **A Story for Every Season** — All ages.

May 17 An Early Childhood Council, Council on Aging and
 Library CPC Program

Registration will be required,
 please call the ECC at 781-461-9548.

ISLINGTON BRANCH — Fall Programs

Jan 18-Mar 1 **Storytime** — Ages 3½ and up

Mar 22-May 3 Thursdays, 9:30-10:15 a.m.

Registration required and begins December 1st.

March **Young Reader's Book Club** — Grades 2-4

TBA Tuesdays, 3:30-4:15 p.m. Snacks provided!

Registration begins February 1st.



Snap Shots

The Westwood Senior Center, known as a busy and versatile community building, has a new bandstand and garden gracing the grounds.



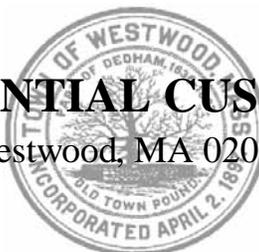
Photos courtesy of Dwyer Photography, Inc.

This Winter in Westwood
 580 High Street
 Westwood, MA 02090

Presort Standard
 U.S. Postage
 PAID
 Permit #22
 Westwood MA 02090

RESIDENTIAL CUSTOMER

Westwood, MA 02090





WESTWOOD

A COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

Winter 2006
Volume 19 Number 2

The community newsletter keeps us connected to each other and to our town...
– Barbara Friedman
Newsletter Editor from 1988-2006

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Photo courtesy of Dwyer Photography, Inc.

After renovations and updates, the Westwood Community Swimming Facility is clean and sparkling.

Community Pool Waiting for Swimmers

It is with great excitement the Westwood Recreation Department announces the opening of the **Westwood Community Swimming Facility**. The newly renovated 25-yard swimming pool is located at 240 Nahatan Street, adjacent to the Westwood High School. With state-of-the-art filtration, ventilation, and heating systems, the pool will provide a safe and comfortable environment for all ages.

Now a community resource, the swimming facility will have a wide variety of aquatic programs throughout the year. From general lap, open and family swims to specialized swimming and diving programs, the course offerings will meet the full spectrum of the community's needs.

Upon your first visit to the newly renovated facility, you will immediately notice the convenient parking just outside the facility. As you enter the building through Door 30, the Recreation Department office is easily located just outside the pool at the foot of the stairs. Beyond the Recreation office you will find the entrances to the pool locker rooms on the left.

They are brand new from the slab up! Bright, clean and efficient they are a sharp contrast to the original locker rooms. The locker rooms, and the entire facility, are handicapped accessible.

// Now a community resource... //

From the locker rooms you will appreciate the direct access to the swimming pool deck. When you enter the pool area there will be a sense of familiarity as the deck and pool shell are virtually the only remaining features from the old facility. The pool has been cleaned and grouted. The water is sparkling and calling for swimmers. The new filtration system is dynamic and the water quality is excellent.

Air and water temperatures are now regulated by two new heating systems. These systems are maintaining the water and air at comfortable temperatures for both competitive and recreational swimmers. The temperature and humidity of the air is managed on the pool deck as well as in the locker rooms.

Looking up in the pool area you will notice four new sky lights filtering in natural light. The original pool windows were removed to better control the environment. Additionally the ceiling tiles were removed and the natural height of the building can be viewed. This gives a more spacious feel to the pool area.

Another enhancement are the new public address and music systems. With four beehive-shaped speakers suspended over the pool and spectator area, you will appreciate amplified communication whether it is a swim team announcement or soothing music accompanying your program.

The spectator area has been expanded to provide seating for all. The seating area has been designed for easy access from the pool lobby. As you enter and exit the spectator area you will notice the glassed-in pool lobby/activity area. This area is a comfortable location to read, relax, or just sit and enjoy the view while waiting for a program participant.

The pool is in use seven days a week. The programs offered are designed to meet the needs of all ages and abilities. For the very

continued on page 2

Did You Know . . .

- Once again, residents will see the yearly **Census Forms** arrive in their mailboxes. The 2007 Census Forms will be sent out right after the first of the year. **All residents are asked to please return the forms to the Town Hall in a timely manner.** A prompt response to the census is very appreciated and will save the town time and money trying to contact the non-respondents. The census provides very important information for various applications such as schools and federal reimbursements.
- **Rubbish and recycling collection will be on a holiday schedule during the weeks of Christmas and New Year's.** This means that since Monday is a holiday during both weeks, all collections for that day and all remaining collections for the week will be delayed by one day. Friday's collection will be on Saturday.
- **Christmas tree collection** will take place the week of January 8, 2007 on your regular rubbish collection day – weather permitting.
- Parking is not allowed on any street for a period of time longer than two (2) hours between the hours of 2 a.m. and 6 a.m. of any day during the period of November 1 through April 30 of any given winter season. This is for the purpose of unimpeded snow plowing during a winter storm. Violations are subject to a fine. If you have a disabled vehicle, please inform the Public Safety Dispatcher at 781-329-1903.

Snow Removal Information

Storm Drain Cleaning

- There are over 1500 catch basins (storm drains) in the town, making it almost impossible to clear snow and debris from all of them. The Department of Public Works would appreciate it if residents could keep the drain in front of their property clean, so it won't cause an ice hazard or puddle on the street.
- Similarly, any fire hydrant in town should to be kept clear of snow in case of a fire emergency. During the winter, if a resident with a fire hydrant near their home is physically able, keeping the hydrant clear of snow is a safety measure appreciated by the fire fighters and the town.

Winter Parking Restrictions

- The Superintendent of Streets or the Chief of Police, for the purpose of removing or plowing snow, or removing ice, from any way, may remove or cause to be removed any vehicle interfering with such work, and the cost of such removal and of the storage charges, shall be imposed upon the owner of such vehicle.

Snow Clearing

- No person shall lay, throw, place or cause to be placed any snow or ice on any town street or sidewalk so as to create a hazardous condition or public safety concern. If after having received notice from a duly authorized agent of the Town that such a condition exists, the owner of the property from which the snow or ice was removed (or his agent having charge thereof) fails to correct the condition within a reasonable amount of time, the owner or agent shall be deemed to be in violation.

Town Layout Information

- Nothing damaged by the Town that is constructed, built, or placed on the Town layout will be repaired or replaced, i.e.: mailboxes, fences, stone walls, etc.

Westwood's New Community Outreach Service Connect-CTY™

On the afternoon of Monday, October 23, 2006, four thousand five hundred (4,500) telephones rang in Westwood. Police Chief William Chase was on the phone, letting people know that High Street was going to be paved on Tuesday and Wednesday of that week. The message was listened to "live" by 2,400 people and 1,500 got the message on their answering machines.

This was the second call that the town had sent to the businesses and residents of Westwood. A test call was made a few days earlier, on October 19th, to announce that the town had adopted the Connect-CTY™ system from the NTI Group. Connect-CTY™ allows the Police and Fire departments, and other town agencies, to notify residents and businesses of important events happening in town. It enables town officials to schedule, send, and track personalized voice messages to several phone numbers per household, including home phones, work phones and cell phones. Chief Chase says that the implementation of the Connect-CTY™ system represents another important step forward for emergency preparedness and communication leadership in the Town of Westwood.

With Connect-CTY™, community notification calls can go to only one phone per household, or priority calls can be sent to all phone numbers and email addresses that citizens and businesses have added to the database. A call can also be made based on an address, sending calls in a radius from a specific location or area of town.

The initial phone list contained the public phone numbers of all the businesses and residents in town. The Town of Westwood is now collecting e-mail addresses, cell phone and unlisted landline numbers to include in the Connect-CTY™ communication service.

Residents with unlisted and non-published numbers who have not received any calls so far can sign up to receive them at the Westwood police web site (<http://www.westwoodpd.org>) using the "Connect-CTY" form. Any phone numbers provided will not be used for any other purpose. Citizens can also use this form to add two additional phone numbers and two email addresses for emergency notifications.

Anyone who has received a call and does not wish to be called in the future can use the same "Connect-CTY" form, or call the police business line (781-320-1000), to request their phone number be removed from the list.

With this service, the town now has an easy-to-use, reliable tool that allows town officials to make certain that community members will be accurately and quickly informed during emergency situations. ❖

Community Swimming Pool Opens – continued from page 1

young, we have parent and child classes. Teaching docks are available for small children who are ready for an independent water experience. American Red Cross swimming lessons are scheduled for all ages and abilities. Beginner diving, Junior swim team and Fun & Fitness are just a few of the programs for children. Adults will enjoy adult swimming lessons, Aqua Fitness and Masters swimming programs. Individuals requiring water time to strengthen, stretch or rehabilitate will benefit from Beyond Therapy. Lap, open and family swims are also offered regularly.

Our goal at the Westwood Recreation Department and Swimming Facility is to provide the community with a safe, fun, and creative aquatic environment for all to enjoy. Please visit the Westwood Community Swimming Facility and view this wonderful resource available to you. ❖

Redevelopment of University Ave.

A Community Update

After more than a decade of effort to revitalize the commercial zone along University Avenue, the Town expects to soon see the most tangible result to date – the filing of a comprehensive application to create the much discussed Westwood Station development consisting of 135 acres along University Avenue. As has been explained in several venues, the Town's strategic plan has included having a major redevelopment project that enables a development group (and not the Town) to fund the necessary infrastructure improvements to revitalize the largest commercial district of the Town. These improvements include enhanced highway access to the commercial district without using the neighborhood streets, updated utilities infrastructure and an expanded road system within and near the development area. By succeeding in attracting one group of developers to assemble this much acreage for one comprehensive re-development plan, the Town will have much lower direct costs to provide the necessary infrastructure thereby assuring significant additional tax flow-through for the Town.

In addition to reestablishing this commercial area as the major economic contributor to the Town, another goal was to convert this outdated warehouse district into a vital, functioning part of the Town...a place that all residents can enjoy and be proud to have within our community. The Town expects that the developer's permit application will be responsive to the extensive input the Town has received in the past two years leading up to this filing.

There are many dimensions to the Town's review of the possible redevelopment of University Avenue. You might be interested to know that...

- ...the effort to improve the University Avenue business area has been taking place for more than ten years.
- ...in 2001, the Town succeeded in attracting NStar to the University

Avenue Business Park. NStar has redeveloped the almost 40-acre site for their corporate headquarters building and since then has contributed almost \$1 million to the Town's annual tax revenue.

- ...since 2001, not only has there been no new development along University Avenue, but the Town has seen vacancies increasing. Several months ago, General Motors, one of the largest users of the business park, vacated its University Avenue location. (GM had comprised ten percent of the acreage.)
- ...recognizing the need to redefine University Avenue, the Town passed numerous zoning change articles at the past two Town Meetings to encourage major development. These changes allow for additional uses (such as residential) and a redistribution of density within the University Avenue Park; however, the zoning changes do not allow for an increase in the total square footage of development.
- ...in the past two years, there have been over 70 public hearings, meetings, and forums to either educate or solicit input from the residents of Westwood. Hundreds of residents from across the community have offered vital input to the University Avenue redevelopment plans.
- ...the Board of Selectmen formed the *University Avenue Steering Committee* in the fall of 2005 to ensure a coordinated effort to redevelop University Avenue based on Town Meeting direction and direct input from the public forum process. The Steering Committee consisted of over 75 people – residents, members of elected and appointed Town Boards and Commissions, and professional consultants to the Town. This steering committee focused on transportation (traffic), design, environment and financial concerns and considerations.

...in addition to the earlier mentioned consultants, Westwood has engaged consultants who are currently studying school space needs and demographic trends. This study is being funded by, and conducted as part of, the permitting process.

...the proposed plan is expected to have an attractive appearance and include a nice array of retail shops/stores, restaurants, residential condominiums, a full-service hotel and a complement of office buildings. In addition, there will be amenities for the entire community to enjoy.

...once the application is filed, each component of the development plan will be reviewed by Town Boards (and the Town's consultants). Only when this review process is completed, and the Town Boards issue their respective permits, will the proposed Westwood Station proceed. The Boards participating in the permitting of the project include the Planning Board, the Conservation Commission, the Zoning Board of Appeals and the Board of Selectmen.

The Board of Selectmen has directed the Steering Committee to conduct an open and inclusive process. The amount of participation and preparation for this major project is unprecedented for a town of Westwood's size. Westwood has set the pre-permitting process standard and looks forward to a permitting process based on this strong foundation.

The Town has more work ahead, but as this article has described, so much work has already been done. Many thanks should be given to all who have given so much time and energy to this important redevelopment goal. ❖

Newletter correspondence can be sent to:
 Westwood Community Newsletter
 580 High Street
 Westwood, MA 02090
 or email:
newsletter@townhall.westwood.ma.us
 Thank you,
 Diane Thornton, *Editor*

“Westwood Has A Dream...”

Experience the excitement,
Tuesday, January 16, 2007
at Westwood High School Auditorium

Westwood's No Place For Hate in partnership with METCO, is proud to present an energizing evening in celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and civil rights. Music lovers in and around Westwood will have the opportunity for an unparalleled entertainment experience. Just try and keep still when East Africa's Watoto Children's Choir from Uganda electrify the stage with a series of rousing performances.



Anticipation! Right now, the Watoto Children's Choir is singing their way to Westwood, MA; we can hardly wait!

Called Concerts of Hope, these performances, which are open to the public, epitomize the triumph of the human spirit over tragedy through the joyful actions of orphaned Ugandan children. The children provide a captivating blend of native African rhythms, contemporary gospel music and ethnic dance.

The special mission of the choir is to heighten awareness of the mounting AIDS problem in Africa, publicize the vision of Watoto Child Care Ministries (WCCM), and raise funds and support for ministries initiated by WCCM. WCCM works to take care of Ugandan children left orphaned by the AIDS epidemic, civil strife and other catastrophic events. Thirty of the forty million people infected with HIV/AIDS in the world today live on the African continent. With each 24 hours that pass, 6,500 more people there will die from AIDS. Currently, there are two million plus orphans from AIDS in Uganda alone.

WCCM is the vision of Canadian native, Pastor Gary Skinner and his wife, Marilyn Skinner. While working with their church, the Skinners were so moved by compassion for Uganda's parentless children that they started Watoto Child Care Ministries in 1992 to address the Ugandan orphan crisis.

“Our mission is to provide these precious children with their physical needs, as well as values and life skills,” says Pastor Gary Skinner, Director and Founder of WCCM. “We will provide all we can to ensure that these children reach their full potential, so that one day they will be able to help their fellow countrymen and heal Uganda from the damage done by the tragedies these children have experienced. We are raising the next generation of Ugandan leaders.”



Concerts of Hope performed by Watoto Children's Choir are WCCM's primary way to raise funds to improve the lives of Ugandan orphans. Currently, Watoto (pronounced Wah-toe-toe) Child Care Ministries is bringing hope to 1,300 parentless children in Uganda through a proven program of services and the efforts of the Watoto Children's Choir. The long-range goal is to build homes and schools for 10,000 parentless children.

Orphans are cared for in WCCM's Watoto Children's Villages and many are in the homes of their extended families. Each village is designed as a community and

provides homes, schools, a medical clinic, a clean-water project and a multi-purpose hall for the children. Existing Watoto Children's Villages include Bbira (pronounced Beer-ah), Buloba, and Suubi, which means hope in Luganda.

Concerts of Hope are breathtaking. As African drums resound, the children dance down the aisles, one-by-one, in their colorful Ugandan costumes with glowing smiles on their faces. Audiences typically find themselves caught up in the energy of performances as they sense the joy and hope these beautiful Ugandan children have found through WCCM's impact on their lives.

Since the Watoto Children's Choir was formed in 1994, 18 choirs have performed internationally. As a result, approximately 324 children have had the opportunity to develop personally and prepare themselves academically, socially, emotionally and spiritually to become leaders. Concerts have been performed in the USA, Canada, England, Scotland, Scandinavia, Australia, New Zealand and Rwanda.

Tours by the Watoto Children's Choir are self-supporting and paid for by the sale of Watoto CDs, DVDs, T-shirts and African jewelry. For more information visit the website <http://www.watoto.com>. ❖

The Westwood **No Place For Hate** Program is dedicated to our community's many people by discouraging all forms of bigotry and prejudice and by promoting the celebration of diversity and appreciation of differences through education and enrichment activities. Westwood is part of the No Place For Hate (NPFH) statewide campaign that empowers New England communities to respect diversity and prevent and respond to hate crimes by mobilizing its citizens to challenge racism, anti-Semitism, homophobia, and ethnic bigotry, and to promote a prejudice free community in which all people are appreciated for their differences. The NPFH statewide campaign was created through a collaboration of the Anti-Defamation League and the Massachusetts Municipal Association.



The **Metropolitan Council For Educational Opportunity (METCO)** program is a grant program funded by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. It is a voluntary program intended to expand educational opportunities and reduce racial imbalance, by permitting students in certain cities to attend public schools in other communities that have agreed to participate. METCO's purpose is to provide the opportunity for an integrated public school education for children of color from racially imbalanced schools in Boston by placing them in suburban schools. Another purpose is to provide a new learning experience for suburban children. METCO also seeks to provide closer understanding and cooperation between urban and suburban parents and other citizens in the Metropolitan Boston area.

Youth & Family Services Celebrates 20th Anniversary

Westwood Youth & Family Services (WY&FS) Department, formerly Westwood Youth Commission, recently celebrated its 20th Anniversary with an Open House on October 26, 2006. Many representatives from various community organizations, such as the Schools' Superintendant, the Westwood Community Chest, and the Norfolk County District Attorney, stopped by to help celebrate our two decades of helping kids and families within town. Also in attendance were former directors Drs. Todd Danforth and Rob Stadolnik. Graphs and charts were on display illustrating the growth the department has had over the years. For example, clinical services jumped from 350 hours in 1986 to over 1500 hours in 2005. Structured Playgroups has had steady, increased enrollment over the past several years and the Mentors Program clocked over 2,100 hours last year alone.

Upcoming WY&FS events include:

December 2006 – Holiday Giving Program

This program helps out families who may be struggling at the holidays with gifts for their children.

March 2007 – Body Safety Theater (BST)

An interactive theatrical program that addresses issues related to child sexual abuse. BST Mentors perform three age-appropriate skits for 3rd grade students which depict children in various situations where they are touched in an unsafe way by an adult. Through the process of the skits, 6 rules are emphasized to assist children in keeping their bodies safe and soliciting help from a trusted adult.

WY&FS provides a range of other preventative programming and counseling services to Westwood residents at no cost. Listed below are some of the programs we currently provide.

Community-based programs including:

Parent Support Services. Parent support groups delivered to parents in the community (e.g., Behavior Management Group for Parents, New Moms Support Group, Single Parents Support Group).

Youth Volunteer Program.

Mentors Program: The Mentors Program offers high school aged students the chance to provide meaningful volunteer service to the community through a number of opportunities that include:

- Teen Center at Thurston for Gr. 7 and 8
- Friend's Network (Big Friend/Little Friend) for Gr. 3-5
- Thurston Thursday Club (formerly Drop-In) Program for Gr. 6-8
- Body Safety Theatre Program for Gr. 3

Clinical Services including individual, family, and group counseling as well as mental health consultation to Westwood residents.

If you would like to learn more about a program or seek services, please contact us at 781-320-1006, or stop by the Islington Community Center to visit our office. You can also visit us on the town website at www.townhall.westwood.ma.us. ❖

Westwood Community Chest Responds to 70% Increase in Need

Westwood Community Chest (WCC) has always been around to help Westwood's neighbors in need with short-term financial assistance. This will never change. But who the WCC is and how the organization helps has changed substantially. With a dramatic increase in requests for assistance, the timing couldn't be better.

First, the all-volunteer board has grown. Several new board members have joined, providing new leadership and communication skills. This has led to improved fundraising and an increased ability to reach those neighbors who are in need. Two new co-chairs, Lisa Walker and Lisa Lehan, have taken the helm from Paula McLaughlin and Mary Gens, both of whom will continue to be involved as senior advisors.

This fall marked the first of the WCC's annual fundraising drives. It was a remarkable effort of writing and assembly. An enthusiastic group of 8th graders who helped stuff and seal envelopes deserve a special thank you. The members of the WCC hope area residents were able to give generously.

With all that the WCC has done, there is still much more to do. This year, requests for aid rose 70%. Single parents, families and the elderly can easily become strapped these days and are often just one paycheck away from financial crisis. The WCC will continue to strive to make a difference through fundraising, fund distribution and outreach. Your support can help make that happen. Please contact the WCC to help, or to ask for help, at 781-326-3217. ❖



WCC 8th grade volunteers: (front row) Kelly Steeves, Molly McLaughlin, Katie Ginsberg, Rachel Berluti; (back row) Mike Filbin, Kevin Liebrock, Brandon Tonsberg, Michael Phillips

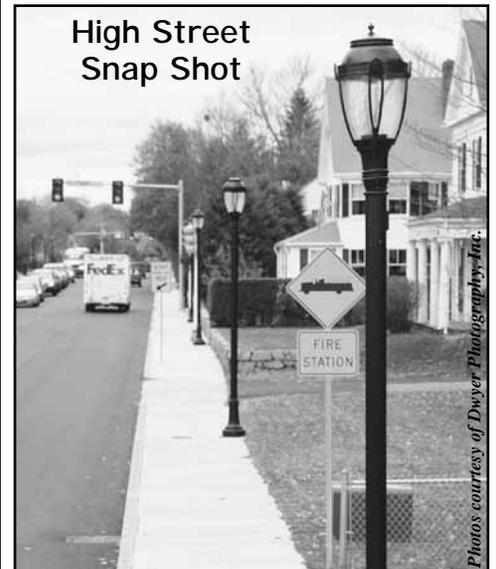
Expansion of Highland Glen

Equity Residential, owners of Highland Glen, have announced that the 102 new units they are constructing at Highland Glen will be available for occupancy in Spring 2007. These new units are in two new buildings at the rear of the current complex. There will be sixty-eight one bedroom units and thirty-four two bedroom units in the new buildings.

Twenty-five percent of the new units will be rented as "Affordable" units to households with an income that does not exceed 80% of the area median income for Boston. The rent for qualified tenants shall not exceed thirty percent of their income. Seventeen one bedroom units and nine two bedroom units will be available as affordable units.

The new buildings at Highland Glen will include a full service fitness room, a business center with internet access, and a community room with a full service kitchen. The apartments will be similar to current units and both buildings will have elevators and tenant parking.

For information you are invited to contact Laura Andrus at Equity Residential at 781-329-7755. ❖



New lamp posts and street lights along High Street mark the completion of the road project.

News from the Westwood Public Schools

Dear Westwood Resident,

This year's budget season is bound to be challenging, as I expect to present to the School Committee a budget request that begins addressing some very significant needs within our school system. The Westwood Public Schools has a long history of providing its students a high-quality education. Our students excel in the classroom, on the stage, on the playing fields, or wherever they can showcase their skills. However, that quality and achievement did not happen by accident; it happened because the Westwood community was committed to providing the students the resources and opportunities they need. With recent budget cuts precipitated by a downturn in the economy and reduced state aid, it has become difficult (and near impossible) to deliver the same level of service our community has come to expect. With that being said, I believe it is time to recommit ourselves to maintaining our high-performing public schools.

As you learn more about the school system or the budget and have questions, please feel free to contact my office at 781-326-7500 x1341 or by e-mail at jantonucci@westwood.k12.ma.us. I am committed to leaving no question unanswered.

John J. Antonucci

SAVE THE DATES — BUDGET CALENDAR

Thursday, January 11: Superintendent of Schools, John J. Antonucci, will be presenting his FY'08 recommended School Department budget to the Westwood School Committee. All School Committee meetings begin at 7:30 pm. in the High School Little Theater.

Thursday, January 18: School Committee budget deliberation

Saturday, January 20: The public is invited to attend this specially-scheduled budget forum. By scheduling it on a Saturday, the hope is that more Westwood residents will be able to attend. A detailed schedule of school and department budget presentations will be advertised in early January.

WESC—Dance Party of the Year!

Westwood Elementary Schools Coalition (WESC) is a not-for-profit volunteer organization which raises funds through one annual fundraiser for the Parent Teacher Organizations of the five elementary schools within Westwood. Over the last twelve years WESC has raised over \$785,000 through the generosity of local businesses and families. These funds enrich and support the educational opportunities of all our young students.

Planning for this year's successful fundraiser is underway and you will not want to miss being a part of this year's event as we go back in time to a favorite decade – THE 70's!! That's right, join us as we go back to the 70's for an evening you will not forget, featuring a fabulous dinner, one of a kind auction items, dancing and fun with our guest, Karen Blake of Oldies 103.3!

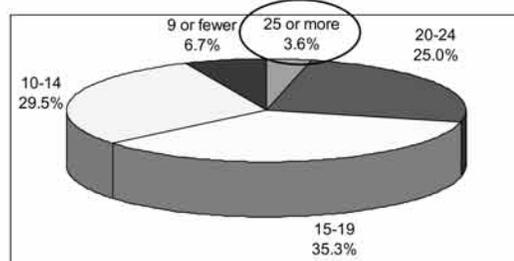
So save the date – Saturday, March 10th, 2007 from 7pm to Midnight in the Grand Ballroom at Lombardo's in Randolph. Tickets will go on sale in January – watch local papers for details or check out our website at www.wesconline.org.

WESC, continued on following page.....

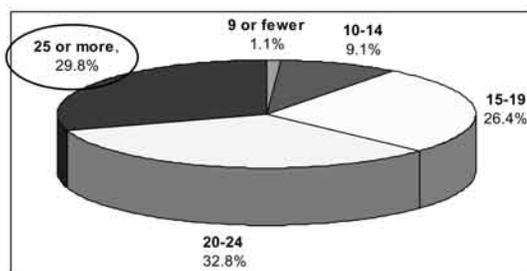
Class Sizes at Westwood High School: How Times Have Changed

The issue of class size is certain to be one that is frequently discussed over the course of the FY'08 budget season. The article (and accompanying chart) on the following page describes why, in an era of high standards, it is so important to keep class sizes manageable. Unfortunately, dwindling resources coupled with increasing enrollment has not allowed the Westwood Public Schools to keep pace. The following is a glaring example of how times have changed, as we compare class sizes at Westwood High School of 1996 to 2006. Note the difference in the percentage of classes with 25 or more students. It has increased to almost 30% from just 3.6% only 10 years ago.

1995-1996: Range of Class Sizes



2006-2007: Range of Class Sizes



News from the Westwood Public Schools

Why is class size so important?

Have you ever heard someone say, or have you thought?: “When I was in school, there were forty kids in my class and we all got a fine education”

People often compare “when I was in school” to what they know about today’s schools. Today’s schools, however, are very different from the schools that most of us attended. In fact, twenty-first century classrooms bear little resemblance to the classrooms of just one or two decades ago. One driving force behind the change is federal legislation that ensures that all students, regardless of disability, receive “free and appropriate education in the least restrictive environment.” For years, Special Education students were isolated from their typical peers. Come into a Westwood classroom today, and you will find a diverse group of students, with many different learning styles and ability levels.

In addition, the landmark Education Reform Act of 1993 changed the landscape of Massachusetts public education. With the creation of curriculum standards and high stakes testing (MCAS), schools are now required to get all students “over the bar”. Similar federal legislation, the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) act, adds another layer to an already complex set of standards.

What does this all mean? Simply, educating children in 2006 is far different than it was even fifteen years ago. This generation of children is getting an incredible education, but it comes with a price. Because of these new challenges, maintaining reasonable class sizes is imperative if we want to reach every student. The following chart illustrates how today’s classrooms differ from yours. I hope you find it informative.

What has changed in regards to:	1950's and 1960's	Mid 1970's to mid 1980's	2006: Today's Westwood Classroom
Class Size	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · 30-35 students per class 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Average middle and high school classes 22 students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Some elementary classes have 25-26 students · Middle School specialist classes have 40-plus students · 30% of all High School classes have 25-plus students
Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · NO national or state curriculum standards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · NO national or state curriculum standards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · National and State curriculum standards and No Child Left Behind mandates
Testing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · NO high stakes testing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · NO high stakes testing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · High stakes testing: MCAS is a <u>graduation requirement</u>
Special Needs Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Students with special needs were either <u>not in public schools</u>, or they were <u>isolated</u> from general education classrooms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Students with special needs were either <u>not in public schools</u>, or they were partially integrated into general education classrooms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Students with special needs are <u>integrated</u> into regular classrooms as <u>mandated by state and federal laws</u>
Instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Whole class lectures · One textbook · One assignment for all students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Whole class lecture · Fixed groups · One textbook · One assignment for all students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Whole class and small group <u>interactive instruction</u> · Flexible grouping of students · Multiple textbooks and supplemental materials · Different assignment for different types of learners

WESC—Dance Party of the Year!, cont'd from previous page

This event offers an excellent opportunity for you or your business to support our children and our schools. You are invited to join us as a WESC sponsor, advertiser or auction donor. Our Event Program is received by over 1,000 families with young students in Westwood and is a showcase for all advertisers as well as highlighting all sponsors and auction items. For information on donor levels and advertising opportunities please consult our website at www.wesconline.org. All donations are tax deductible to the extent provided by law and may be sent to WESC, PO Box 474, Westwood, MA 02090. Working together we can help preserve the quality of our children’s education. Thank you so very much! We count on your support!