



*From left to right: Namir Kallab-Dick, Mayor Martin Walsh, Kate Walsh and Dr. Piwowarczyk.*

## **BOSTON CENTER FOR REFUGEE HEALTH & HUMAN RIGHTS NEW YEAR'S NEWSLETTER**

The staff of BCRHHR would like to wish everyone a Wonderful New Year! We hope that 2018 will bring positive changes for our clients and communities.

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### **An Electrified Crowd at the 2017 Fall Fête**

Cinquecento Restaurant in South Boston was buzzing with activity on October 25<sup>th</sup>, 2017, the night of the Boston Center for Refugee Health and Human Right's (BCRHHR) Annual Fall Fête. The Fête, which first began four years ago, has grown in popularity and this year was the most heavily attended yet. Staff from Boston Medical Center (BMC), supporters of BCRHHR and the Center's clients all mixed and mingled over appetizers and



*Emcee Reverend Liz Walker*

specialty drinks. The program included an impressive array of speakers, with Mayor Martin Walsh as the 2017 Fall Fête Honoree and Reverend Liz Walker as this year's Emcee. The Mayor "went off script", as he put it, and spoke about the importance of immigrants to the city of Boston. BMC President and CEO Kate

Walsh and BCRHHR's Director and Co-founder Dr. Piwowarczyk, spoke about the work that the Center does to help refugees and asylum seekers who were forced to flee their home countries. They also recognized the resiliency of the Center's incredible clients and thanked everyone present for their support.

Client speaker Namir Kallab-Dick gave an impassioned account of fleeing his home country of Venezuela and coming to BCRHHR for assistance. Several people in the audience wiped away tears as Namir spoke, first of his struggles in Venezuela and then of the strength it took to overcome the adversity he had faced. He continues to fight for the rights of others in his position at MacMurray & Associates and challenged everyone else to do the same.

Reverend Liz Walker kept the night rolling by introducing the different speakers and by putting out a request to the crowd to give as much as they could through text donations. Her appeal was successful as cell phones lit up the room in a flurry of digital donations.



*People giving through text messages.*

All in all, the excellent food, sophisticated ambiance and electrified crowd made 2017 the most successful Fall Fête to date.



*Mixing and mingling with good company.*

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**CONNECTING THROUGH MUSIC: A BENEFIT CONCERT FOR BCRHHR  
JANUARY 19th, starting at 7:30PM**



On Friday, January 19th, a talented young man is putting on a benefit concert to support the Boston Center for Refugee Health and Human Rights.

Avik Sarkar is a junior at Buckingham Browne and Nichols (BB&N). He is also studying at the New England Conservatory (NEC) and received a "From the Top" grant to organize a benefit concert for refugees in the Boston area. His goal is to raise \$5,000 for the Center and to preform a concert that is inspired by the different parts of the world from which our clients have come.

Avik stated that the reason he chose to raise money for the BCRHHR is because, "My grandmother was a refugee from Bangladesh, and, coming from an immigrant background, this cause is very important to me. The goal of this concert is to listen to the stories of, and foster a human connection with, refugees living in Boston. I hope to bring awareness to their art and culture by incorporating music from their countries into the concert. The program will also premiere my original string quartet, which features the voices of Boston-area refugees."

#### **Concert Details:**

Date: January 19th, 2018

Time: 7:30 PM

Location: First Church in Cambridge, MA

**To support his efforts, please visit Avik's Go Fund Me page to donate:**

<https://www.gofundme.com/benefit-concert-for-refugees>

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#### **WINTER WALK & A FUNKADELIC FUNDRAISER - JAN. 19TH from 10pm -1am**

This winter has proven to be bitterly cold, with "cyclone bombs" and record low temperatures throughout the state. As many of us sprint from one heated location to another, it is easy to forget that there are people who don't know if they will have shelter from one day to the next.

Some of the refugees and asylum seekers who come to the Boston Center for Refugee Health & Human Rights (BCRHHR) are homeless, while many others are in unstable housing situations. Often, clients are living with people who are struggling to survive themselves.

In an effort to support these clients, BCRHHR has formed a team to take part in the Winter Walk to help the homeless. The two mile trek on February 11th is a symbolic gesture of walking in the shoes of someone who is homeless. Leading up to the walk, the three BCRHHR team members taking part have also pledged to raise \$1,000 each for this cause.

One of the ways in which Team BCRHHR plans to raise this money is by having a fun and funky fundraiser this Friday, Jan. 19th at the Lilypad in Inman Square, from 10:00 pm - 1:00 am. We hope that you will come enjoy two local bands, participate in a raffle and check out our items for sale in a silent auction - all for a worthy cause!



### Event Details

Date: Friday, Jan. 19th

Time: 10pm - 1am

Cost: \$20 Door Donation

Place: Lilypad in Inman

Address: 1353 Cambridge St, Cambridge

For more information, please refer to the flyer on the left or visit the venue website at:

<https://www.lilypadinman.com>

**Two fundraisers for BCRHHR on the same night in Cambridge! It will be a fun-filled musical night to support the Center and we looking forward to seeing you at one or both events!**

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## **REFUGEE PATIENT NAVIGATOR (RPN) IN THE SPOTLIGHT**

Sara Wagner's first day as a Refugee Patient Navigator (RPN) was slightly unorthodox because, instead of the training and introductions that would usually take place on an RPN's first day,

Sara found herself helping set up for the June Gala, an annual celebration of BCRHHR's clients. Sara had the pleasure of meeting all of the staff, volunteers and interns at the Boston Center for Refugee Health & Human Rights (BCRHHR) as well as several of the Center's clients, all on the same night.

Sara has since stated that while her first day was unusual, she had a profound sense of belonging; a sense that she was in the right place at the right time. That feeling has carried her into her sixth month as a full-time RPN. Her tireless dedication to the BCRHHR and steady presence over the last several months often has the staff wondering how the Center ever managed before Sara started. In addition to her regular RPN duties of greeting clients, managing appointment schedules, gathering donations and entering information into the database, Sara has assisted with several special projects, including fundraising efforts for the Center.



*Sara at a fundraising table in Yawkey cafeteria.*

Fundraising is an area of particular interest to Miss Wagner. She has staffed several tables in the cafeterias within BMC, selling t-shirts, mugs, magnets and other items to help raise money for the Center, while also educating the public about the services that BCRHHR provides. Currently, Sara is one of the Team BCRHHR members participating in the Winter Walk to help our clients who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless (mentioned in the article above).

Sara attained both a Bachelor's degree and Master's degree from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. Her BA in Sociology and Legal Studies and Master's in Political Science helped open her eyes to the inequalities that exist in the world and the plight of those who have been punished for speaking out against those inequalities. It is not surprising that Sara would be drawn to working at BCRHHR as a result. Sara stated that, "While I was completing my Master's Degree at UMass, Amherst, I started noticing how much of an impact the Syrian refugee crisis was having on my life...I was having a hard time enjoying Netflix or even celebrating holidays or friends' birthdays because I felt so guilty that so many other people were suffering unimaginably." That feeling of being helpless to do anything prompted Sara to start looking for places where she could put her passion for this population to work. That is when she found BCRHHR.

Now having found her way to the very heart of the Center, Sara's interest in the field has only grown. She hopes to use what she has learned "from the patients and staff at BCRHHR to make a large scale difference in the world" and aims to "not only create an environment or institution that helps people flourish, but to also help stop the injustices before they are committed". While that might be a lot to ask of herself, Sara will certainly do her best to help as many people as she possibly can. Whatever path Miss Wagner pursues next, she will be assisting people in need and making the world a better place.

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## To Donate:

- 1) Please click the link below, which will bring you to the Development Page
- 2) Under "Gift Designation", click the bubble next to "Direct my gift to"
- 3) Select "Boston Center for Refugee Health and Human Rights" from the dropdown menu.

Thank you for your support!

**[DONATE](#)**