



OUTDOOR EXPLORATIONS

for people of all abilities

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May 19, 1996

Dear Members of the Cambridge City Council:

This letter is to bring to your attention the strong support that Outdoor Explorations, a Cambridge-based non profit organization, receives from Arthur D. Little, and to encourage you to support other such relationships in the Cambridge area.

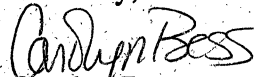
As many of you know, Outdoor Explorations brings together people of all abilities, including individuals with cognitive and physical disabilities, to protect and enjoy the natural environment. OE's adventure trips, environmental service projects and disability awareness trainings build bridges between people with and without disabilities by promoting outdoor leadership, community inclusion and stewardship of our natural resources.

We work in East Cambridge at 31 Monsignor O'Brien Highway (Greater Boston Rehabilitation Services), giving us excellent access to Cambridge-based organizations, individuals and corporations. Some outstanding examples of Cambridge partnerships include our work with Magic Me, the Christ Church Cambridge, Teen Media Video (at the Cambridge Multi-cultural Art Center) and the Mystic River Watershed Association. We have worked on environmental projects at Alewife Reservation and Fresh Pond Reservation.

Vital to our work has been the corporations and resources unique to Cambridge. Among the leaders in this area, Arthur D. Little ranks quite high in our books. The first time we approached them for volunteer support, financial assistance and in-kind services in 1993, they responded eagerly and easily. We didn't have to jump through hoops and write long reports to catch and maintain their attention. Since that initial contact, Ann Gillespie, head of the public affairs department, has continued to do whatever she can for Outdoor Explorations -- giving us office furniture, making contacts or simply spreading the good word about us.

For this reason, I in turn am writing to you to spread the good word about them. In the near future we hope to work with ADL on a one-day corporate sponsored environmental day at Alewife Reservation. As this relationship continues, and we all work together as public, private and non-profit entities, I hope to see the Cambridge community come together to protect our green space areas and advocate for the active community involvement of all people, regardless of ability.

Sincerely,


Carolyn Bess
Executive Director

cc: Ann Gillespie

Leaders take to the streets

LeadBoston provides new perspectives on urban issues

By Kurt Blumenau
TAB Staff Writer

WINCHESTER — Most days, Suzanne Cashman can be found in her Boston office, working as a public health administrator and teacher.

Last Wednesday Cashman was found with her sleeves rolled up, bagging last fall's leaves on the shore of Upper Mystic Lake in Winchester as part of a community leadership program called LeadBoston.

"I like being in the office, but this is so different," she said. "One day a month to be here is a nice contrast to what I'm usually doing."

According to both participants and officials, the 5-year-old LeadBoston program provides a unique focus on the problems of the city. In it, 30 to 40 rising leaders from all areas of public life come together to spend 10 months visiting sites and learning about issues like health care, housing and last Wednesday's twin topics of disabilities and the environment.

Executive Director Susan Musinsky of the National Conference of Christians and Jews, the organization that developed LeadBoston, said the non-sectarian program gives business and community leaders new perspectives on urban issues by introducing them to people they would not otherwise meet.

Since last September, the current crop of LeadBoston participants have met with Boston Schools Superintendent Thomas Payzant, toured Boston City Hospital and talked with inner-city high school students about race, among other meetings.

"If you're a lawyer, you tend to meet lawyers when you go to parties

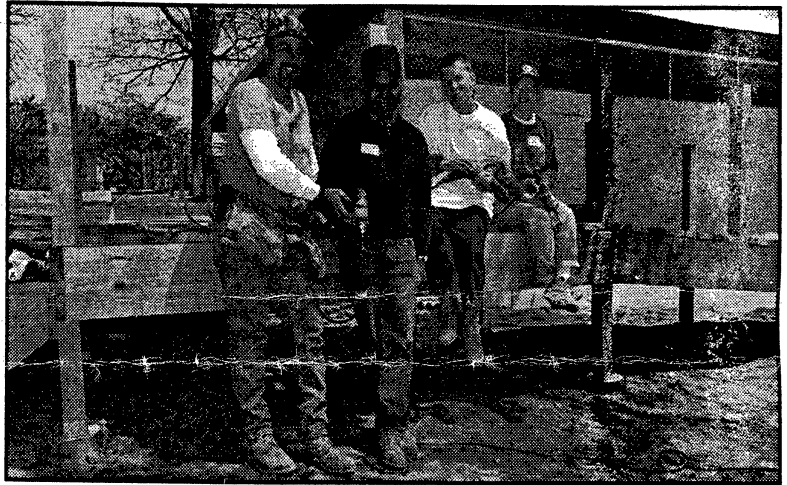


PHOTO BY STEWART WOODWARD

Garrell Summers (left) of the MDC Redesign and Redevelopment Department worked with volunteers from Outdoor Explorations (second from left) Charlie Myers, Danny Moeder and Elycia Borque.

or business meetings," Musinsky said. "Here, someone on a board of directors gets to know someone from government or health care. They have access to people they know quite well to get different forms of input."

Last week, the group worked with about 30 members of Outdoor Explorations, a non-profit Cambridge organization that creates opportunities for able and disabled people to work together on outdoor trips and projects. The executives worked side by side with people of differing abilities to bag leaves, put up signs, paint a bath house and put the finishing touches on a handicapped access ramp to the beach.

"Sometimes you talk so much in class, you're not really doing anything," said Roxanne Pappenheimer, a Brookline High School special education teacher who led a group of students to the event. "To come out

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and actually do this is fabulous."

On the lawn facing the Mystic Valley Parkway, Diversity Consultant Wayne Dunbar worked with Outdoor Explorations member Elliott Budd drilling screw holes for a new sign at the park's entrance. With a little help from Metropolitan District Commission site coordinator Rene Morin, Dunbar and Budd had the sign snugly into its frame in 20 minutes.

"Instead of being a draft for the military, there should be a draft for community service," Dunbar said afterward. "It's a wonderful experience."

Before and after their field work, LeadBoston and Outdoor Explorations participants took part in panel discussions about environment and disability issues. At the first of the two discussions, disabled panelists urged the group to keep working together to promote programs and access for the disabled, while celebrating past victories like the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act.

"Every time I see ramps or curb cuts, I see them as statues to our movement," said Moe Armstrong, who overcame schizophrenia to earn two masters' degrees. "We don't really have statues, like Civil War generals in the park."

Panelists for the second discussion included state Rep. David Cohen (D-Newton), MDC

senior planner Dave Queeley, Andy Kendall of the state Audubon Society, and community legal activist Penn Lowe. The 90-minute discussion touched on the individual's role in environmental protection, the value of education, and the interaction of economic and environmental factors.

"If you think about it and work hard, you can make sure that environmental protection, rather than retarding economic growth, spurs it," Cohen told the group.

LeadBoston and Outdoor Explorations completed their collaboration with an activity in which small groups of participants — each assigned a certain disability, such as blindness or an inability to walk — had to figure out a way to move as a group from one part of the beach to another using each other's strengths.

"I thought it was really effective," National Conference program director Courtney Bowie said. "We think about people with disabilities, but I don't think anybody in the group interacts with them on a daily basis. I learned a lot."

In between bagging and painting last week, members of the LeadBoston class of 1996 praised the program's success in exposing them to new perspectives.

"I think it's been a great year for me, exploring issues of bias and bigotry within myself and hearing more about problems in the city of Boston," said Claudine Bodin, a community service veteran who works in the public affairs department of Reebok International. "This is probably one of the best programs of its kind in the country." □



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

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Councillor Francis H. Duehay
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CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02138
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May 24, 1996

To the Honorable, The Cambridge City Council

Dear Colleague:

I have the privilege of enclosing a letter to the Council from Carolyn Bess, Executive Director of Outdoor Explorations, concerning the good work of Arthur D. Little in supporting their programs for persons with cognitive and physical disabilities in protecting and enjoying the natural environment. I shall offer a resolution commending Arthur D. Little for their leadership.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Francis H. Duehay", is written over the typed name.

Francis H. Duehay

5-311
Comm&Rpts from City Officers #1

Communication from Councillor Duehay
enclosing information from Carolyn
Bess, concerning the good work of
Arthur D. Little in supporting their
progrsma for persons with cognitive
and physical disabilities in protecting
and enjoying the natural environment.

In City Council June 3, 1996

Placed on file