

**Serving Special Populations  
Best Practices at CHCs Meeting the Needs of  
Communities and Engaging Patients**

**Edward M Kennedy Community Health Center  
Serving Residents of Public Housing**

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**Massachusetts League of Community Health Centers  
Health Centers at 50 – Leading the Next Evolution  
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## EMKCHC Organizational Values

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We believe that everyone has a right to accessible, high quality, comprehensive, integrated, and compassionate health care.



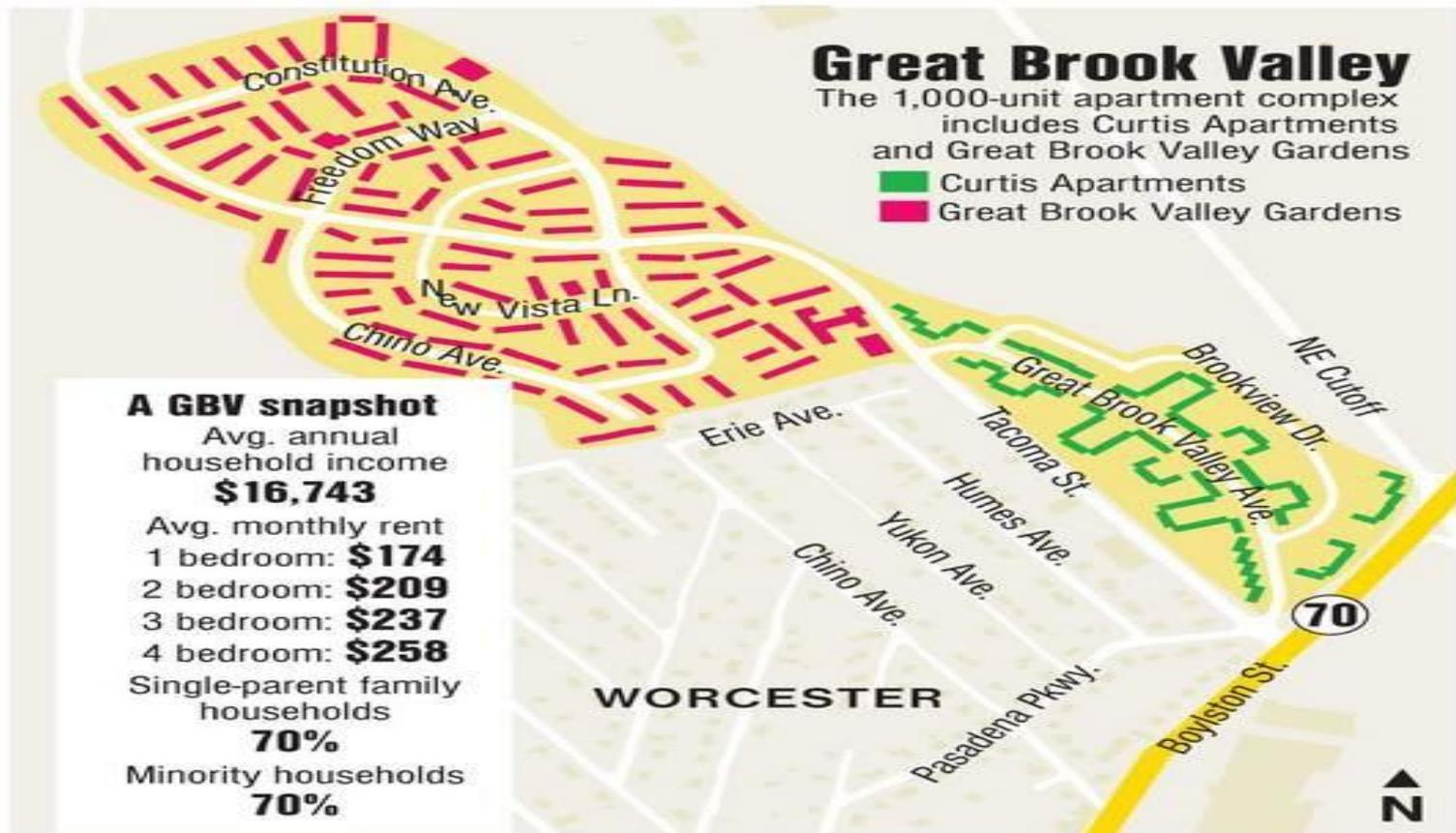
## History

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- EMKCHC formerly Great Brook Valley Health Center was founded in 1972 by seven women who were seeking better access to health care for their families.
- These women lived in the largest public housing complex in Worcester and relied on the hospital emergency room for care. As a result, they did not have access to regular, preventive, and primary care services for their families.
- They founded a corporation, obtained space from the Worcester Housing Authority, and negotiated for a Nurse Practitioner to come to the Valley.



# Great Brook Valley and Curtis Apartments

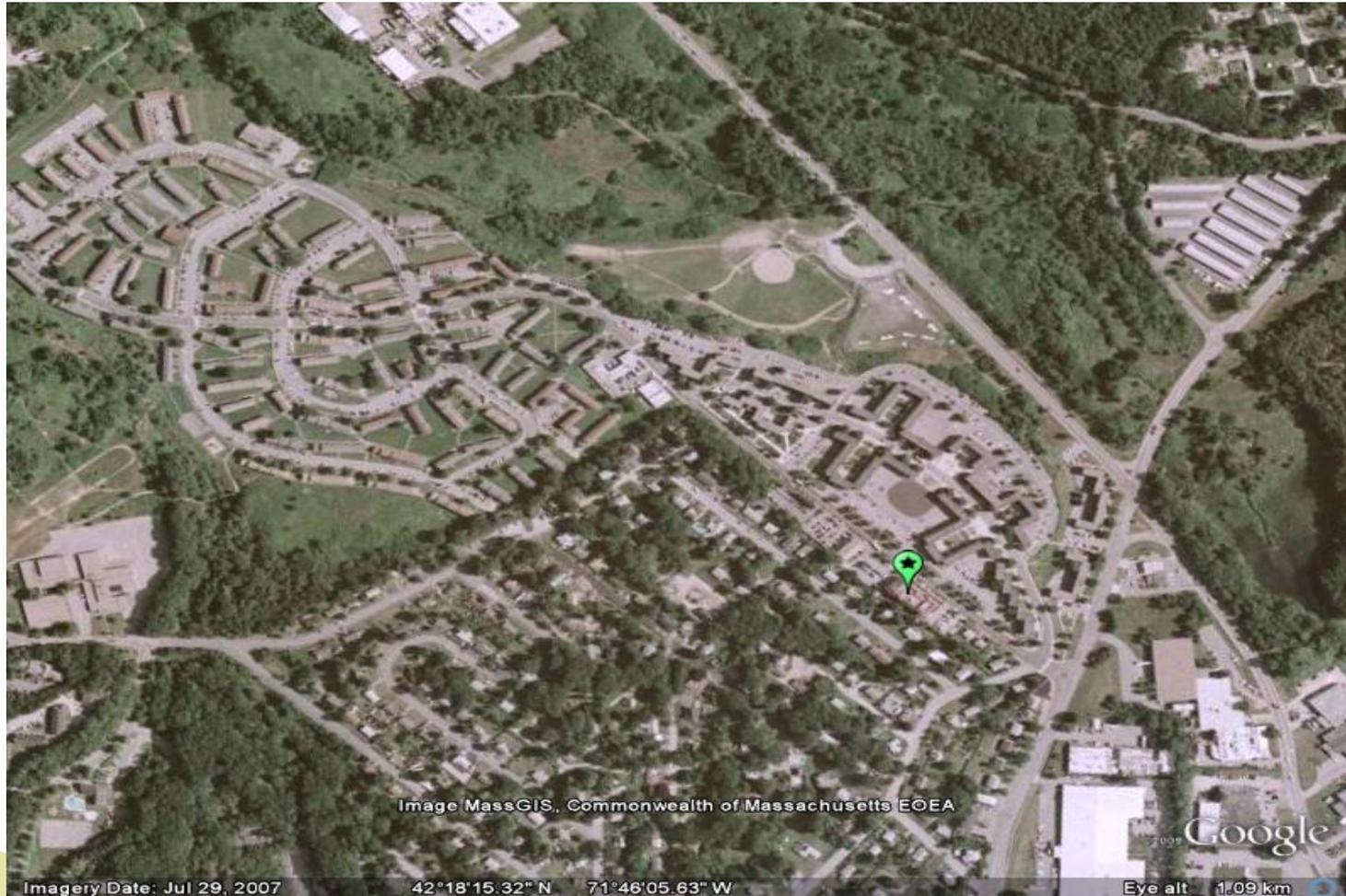


Source: Worcester Housing Authority; Worcester GIS

T&G Staff/DON LANDGREN JR.



# The 'Valley'





# The Health Center and the Valley

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- Original efforts in the streets:
  - Street outreach
  - Rubber Posse / Condom distribution
  - Block parties
  - Informal group education in areas with high traffic and visibility
- Peer Leadership Programs for Youth
- ‘Lemonade stands’



## The Lemonade Stand





## Peer Leaders

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## Peer Leaders and Youth Advisor





## Peer Leaders and Youth Advisor

Ya, right!  
Tough guys!





# Peer Leadership Program

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- Adult Youth Advisors
- Peer Leaders
  - Majority from the neighborhood
  - 15 – 20 years
  - Hired for their ability to relate, desire to learn
  - Employees of the Health Center
- Youth Development activities
  - Curriculum based education
  - Community based environmental strategies



# Building Everyday Leaders (BEL) Graduation

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## Peer Leaders – trip to Co Co Keys





## Health Center and the Worcester Housing Authority (WHA)

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- Security was and is a major issue for WHA
- In the past 10 years – major construction to eliminate areas where gangs and drug use and exchanges occurred.
- Great for the neighborhood – challenged us to change our strategies
- More concrete partnership with WHA efforts



## Today

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- Lemonade Stand continues
- Peer Leadership Program continues
- Mobile Farmers Market
- Provider education to public housing residents
- Community Health Workers / home visiting
  - PWTF
    - Asthma
    - Hypertension
  - Patients lost to care
  - Requested by providers
- A Better Life Program partnership



## A Better Life Program (ABL)

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- New self-sufficiency Program for WHA residents
- Creative way to break the cycle of generational public housing
- Designed to assist residents to reach higher goals
  - Better housing
  - Education
  - Employment
- Initially voluntary resident involvement, now includes mandatory component for residents on the waiting list
- Can last up to 5 years
- Case manager assigned – ‘Family Life Coach’ (FLC)



## Partnership with WHA and EMKCHC

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- The Health Center has 2 teams of CHW
  - Located within the health center
  - Functioning at off site locations
- CHW will be assigned to take referrals from WHA Director of Family Services for residents who are patients of the health center
- Health Center will participate in Program for employment opportunities for ABL Program participants
  - 2 residents employed at Health Center
    - Pharmacy Technician
    - Optometry Technician
- Coaching the Coaches



## Coaching the Coaches

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- 17 FLC's for 324 clients
- FLCs provide support on issues that are barriers to success for residents:
  - Education
  - Employment
  - Finances
  - Health
  - Personal issues
- CHWs will attend monthly meetings with Family Life Coaches
- CHWs will provide training to WHA Family Life Coaches on issues they address as barriers residents are experiencing
  - Health behavior
  - Dealing with stress



## Successes

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- Re-energized partnership between WHA and EMKCHC
- 'Iliana'
  - Lived in the 'valley'
  - Family were generational residents
  - Became Health Center Peer Leader at 14 years old
  - Graduated High School
  - Became Health Educator at nearby Public Housing
  - Received her Associate Degree as an MA
  - Now works for the Health Center
  - Recently promoted to train new MAs