

THE AMERICAN ARABIC BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATION (AABA)

Celebrates the Ceremonial Groundbreaking of Cheriton Heights.

On Wednesday, October 6, 2010, at 1:00 p.m. the skies were open, the rain was coming down in torrential downpour, the wind was howling, but nothing would dampen the spirits of those gathered in the tent for this joyous occasion. The "Ceremonial Groundbreaking of Cheriton Heights" was finally happening. After fourteen long years of timeless effort, planning and negotiating with the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and the City of Boston, funding for the 70-unit elderly housing facility had been realized.

The program began with the singing of the Star Spangled Banner by seven-year-old Jessica Jade Stutman. Olivia A. Waishek President of AABA, and Mistress of Ceremonies, gave the welcoming remarks and introduced notable speakers which included the Honorable Mayor Thomas M. Menino, Senator Marian Walsh, Representative Mike Rush and former City Councilor, John Tobin. David E. Hajjar, Chairman of Planning and Development, gave remarks informing all present of the history of Cheriton Grove (AABA's 60 unit elderly housing facility) and the renovations in progress, which would make Cheriton Grove a state of the art facility. He went on to tell about Cheriton Heights the 70 unit housing facility and how it would complement and offer many new amenities to residents of both buildings.

The president then gave a brief history of AABA, its mission, and what has been accomplished over the past 36 years. She also stated that the land Cheriton Grove was built on and which will house Cheriton Heights was donated by Teddy and George Saegh. Members of their families were present and acknowledged.

Finally, the minute all were waiting for—as indicated on the program—the Surprise Guest. The president then asked Noreen Salah Burpee to come to the podium. Ms. Burpee then asked her father, George Salah; her brother, Joseph Salah; and her husband, Willard Burpee, to join her. Ms. Burpee stated: "I would personally like to reflect on my ancestry and honor traditions unbroken by time. We (my father, brother and I) embrace those loves ones who have passed on before us, who are undoubtedly with us today, both in spirit and in our hearts." The Salah family then presented on behalf of the James M. Salah Foundation a check to AABA in the amount of \$500,000 for the naming rights of Cheriton Heights, which will now be known as the James M. Salah Family Housing at Cheriton Heights.

The rain did not stop, but the tears, smiles and enthusiasm of those gathered could have illuminated the entire sky and surrounding area. **Construction is scheduled to begin in late January – early February 2011.**
For more information on how you can become a member of AABA or how you can help visit our website at www.aabausa.org