

IN PERSON

Andrea Howard, CEO of West End House, has been on the job for boys and girls for 16 years.



W. MARC BERNSAU

OUTSIDE THE BOX

The kids are alright

ANDREA HOWARD'S GOAL IS TO ENSURE YOUTH ISN'T WASTED ON BOSTON'S YOUNG

When Andrea Howard arrived at the West End House in 1999, it had few clients, a six-figure deficit, and was in imminent danger of closing. An independent club for boys and girls founded in 1906, the West End House relocated to Allston when urban renewal claimed the old West End. It ended up far away from the community it had been founded to serve – as well as the membership subscriptions and alumni donations that had been its lifeblood.

After 16 years under Howard's leadership, the club's future looks brighter than it has in decades. The West End House now serves 1,500 kids a year, with between 200 and 300 coming in every day. It makes 65 year-round jobs available for its teenage members, plus 55 more in the summer. Budget shortfalls have turned to surpluses along the way, and the group's endowment has grown from \$400,000 to \$2.8 million.

To achieve that turnaround, Howard's team has reengaged with West End House alumni, among them the late actor Leonard Nimoy.

They've also secured substantial donations from the likes of New Balance, developer Harold Brown and philanthropists Charles and Fran Rodgers, and are currently in the midst of a capital campaign to expand their staff and facility, they tell BBJ correspondent Brian Hoefling.

How would you describe the West End House? The West End House is a youth development organization that focuses on providing transformational programming for young people aged 7 to 22 in four program areas: academic success, the arts, fitness and nutrition, and leadership development. We provide this in our 38,000-square-foot Allston facility, staffed by talented, highly skilled development professionals, serving kids from throughout the city of Boston.

What do kids look for at the West End House? The interesting piece about (the West End House's members) is that half are teens, which is pretty unique, to be able to attract (that many) teens every single day ... Whether it's

► **CLOSER LOOK**

ANDREA HOWARD

Title: Chief executive officer, West End House

Age: 49

Education: Bachelor of Arts, Boston College, 1988; MPA, University of Southern Alabama, 1994

Residence: Brighton

embark this spring on jobs outside ... we will be working with the corporate community and small business community from Brighton to place our more advanced kids.

In terms of fundraising, how much have you been drawing on people who already have a connection to the place? We were able to find, in some cases reconnect with, alumni. We did a campaign in 2001 and raised about \$8 million; a lot of that was from people who knew us. It did also include \$1 million from Fidelity, who did not know us. I would say for the first five or six years it was reconnecting with folks that may have forgotten about the West End House or not realized the challenges it was facing.

How have you been able to attract donors who weren't already familiar with the West End House? (It) came from demonstrating impact. We were doing outcome measurement far sooner than funders required it. We started measuring impact in 2005 at the grassroots level, with program staff, so we were able to talk about impact in a way that, foundations liked, corporations liked. I think that was really helpful.

support academically, getting into college, getting through college, working on their portfolio for possibly getting into Boston Arts Academy, and in many cases coming in for a healthy meal. We served 96,000 meals last year, all from scratch.

How does the teenage employment program work? It's definitely designed to get them not only job ready from a soft skills standpoint – being on time, dressing appropriately, effective communication amongst co-workers – but also the opportunity to potentially explore different career options. So we're getting ready to

LESSONS LEARNED

What is your number one goal for 2016?



JACK DOHERTY
COLLEGE HYPE

Our number one goal is to grow our wholesale business 10 percent. We will accomplish this by educating our customers that we also offer promotional products, in addition to the embroidery and screen printing services we are best known for.



SCOTT CLIFFORD
EPSTEIN, LIPSEY & CLIFFORD

We have always been active in the communities we serve through our work with charitable organizations and local chambers. In 2016, we will further increase our presence in the communities, and of course continue to be tireless advocates for our clients.



ANDREW OSTASHEN
VULSEC

Through qualitative and quantitative analysis, we will eliminate at least \$10 million dollars of risk for our clients in 2016. Our security life cycle is designed to keep client's critical assets & data protect from unauthorized access.

FUTURE LESSON LEARNED:

How does your company recruit new talent?

Send your 25-30 word answer to gwalsh@bizjournals.com. Be sure to include a high-resolution headshot.