

Mattapan United looking for ways to engage neighborhood

By Patrick Rosso, Town Correspondent, YourTown Mattapan, boston.com, August 24, 2011

Members of [Mattapan United](#), the year-old organization working to improve the quality of life in the neighborhood, discussed ways Tuesday night to engage in conversations with residents about their top concerns and how to distribute grant money.

Mattapan United was organized in August 2010, by a small group of community activists working to submit a application for funding from the [Boston Local Initiatives Support Corporation's](#) (LISC) Resilient Communities/Resilient Families program. Mattapan United received further community interest and support, after a horrific quadruple homicide on Woolson Street in September. Now the group is working to distribute the \$25,000 "Early Action" grant they received from LISC along with a \$5,000 public safety grant from LISC.

Along with determining where and who to distribute funds to, Mattapan United members have been conducting one-on-one interviews with residents, clergy and others with a stake in Mattapan. At the Tuesday evening meeting, at the [Mattapan Family Service Center](#) on River Street, many discussed who they have been interviewing and who might have been left out of the process.

"Where are the people that only speak Creole? Where are the people who only speak Spanish? What can we learn from them?" asked Dony Destorel.

Destorel, along with other members, stressed many who might not speak English fluently could be left out.

"There are people in the community that are not here and we need to get them involved," added Richard Matra.

The group also set up some preliminary committees to make sure tasks and projects were evenly distributed. They include committees on community engagement, events and activities, and public safety.

"People have many different concerns, some overlap and some don't and even though people came at it from different directions we were able to find a lot of common ground this evening," said Jeff Stone, Mattapan United project coordinator.

Anyone looking to get involved in the group or to contribute to the one-on-one conversations are encouraged to join the group at its public meeting, tentatively scheduled for Sept. 27 at 6 p.m. at Mattapan Family Service Center, 535 River St. Contact MU at mattapanunited@bostonabcd.org.

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