



ABCD Press

From the Office of Public Information

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ABCD Oct. 30th Gala a Tribute to Retiring President Bob Coard; 19 Community Volunteers Also Honored at ABCD's 35th Annual Dinner

FOX25 News Anchors Maria Stephanos, Keba Arnold to Emcee

Friends and supporters will join together on October 30 at the Annual Community Awards Dinner of Action for Boston Community Development (ABCD) at the Marriott Boston Copley Place to pay tribute to the man who has been called a giant of community action in Boston and the nation – ABCD President/CEO **Bob Coard**. In July, Coard announced that he will retire from ABCD on November 1 after 45 years with the agency and 41 years as President/CEO.

In addition, the ABCD gala event will remain true to its legacy of honoring neighborhood volunteers for their selfless commitment to helping people and building communities. **Nineteen outstanding community volunteers** will be honored for devoting their time, energy and talent to making the world a better place. They were chosen by ABCD/local boards in all of Boston's neighborhoods and by several of the agency's major programs.

At the dinner, prominent national and local luminaries will pay tribute to Bob Coard's 40-plus years of leading ABCD, building the agency into one of the nation's largest and most effective community action agencies and serving as the champion of issues affecting low-income and disadvantaged people and neighborhoods. Coard's voice was always heard on issues of education, housing, homelessness, public safety, fuel assistance, and more.

In July when Coard announced his retirement, U.S. Senator Ted Kennedy said: *"For 45 years, Bob has been an irresistible advocate for the most vulnerable in our city. ...His impact has been felt in ways large and small, from the food pantries and city streets of Boston, to Beacon Hill and Capitol Hill and the White House."*

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Coard's significant institution-building on behalf of the poor is recognized nationwide. In the 1980s he started the National Community Action Foundation (NCAF) to provide a voice on Capitol Hill for community action and disenfranchised Americans who needed hope and opportunity. He went on to found the Urban College of Boston, nationally applauded for offering access to higher education for low-income learners seeking a foothold on the ladder of upward mobility. He also developed CAPLAW, a national organization offering targeted legal assistance to community action programs across America."

"The name Bob Coard is synonymous with 'help for the most vulnerable' across our city, in Washington and throughout the country," said ABCD Executive Vice President John Drew. "He was everywhere, got along with everyone, and he made a difference. Community people, national figures, ABCD staff and supporters – they all love him. We anticipate that thousands of people will want to join in this gala celebration honoring Bob and our 19 outstanding community awardees on October 30!"

For information on purchasing sponsorships, tickets and advertising space in the program book for the 2009 ABCD Annual Community Awards Dinner, please call Sophia Adolphe at (617) 348-6236.

About ABCD:

ABCD serves more than 100,000 low-income Boston-area residents through its central offices and a decentralized network of Neighborhood Service Centers (NSCs), Head Start centers, Family Planning sites and Foster Grandparent sites. Programs and affiliations include Fuel Assistance; Head Start; Child Care Services; Child Care Choices of Boston; Education; Career Development; Housing and Homelessness Services; Health Services; Family Planning; Urban College of Boston; University High – an Alternative High School; Ostiguy High School for high school students in recovery; Weatherization; Foster Grandparents; Elder Services; Intergenerational Programs; management of the Combined Federal Campaign, Commonwealth of Massachusetts and City of Boston employee giving campaigns; advocacy and consumer services.

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