



**east bay community
action program**

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(Newport, RI, May 6, 2024) – East Bay Community Action Program (EBCAP) will honor four Aquidneck Island residents at its 19th Annual Seaside Gala, on Thursday, June 13, 2024, at the Wyndham Newport Hotel. EBCAP’s 2024 Public Service Award will be given to Marvin L. Abney, Rhode Island State Representative (Newport/Middletown) and Chair of the House Committee on Finance. Newport residents, Carol and David Bazarsky, and Paula Bradley, of Portsmouth, will receive EBCAP 2024 Vision Awards.

Chairman Abney will receive the 2024 Public Service award in recognition of his ongoing support for safe and affordable housing, business development, and equitable funding for education. During the 2023 legislative session, Chairman Abney was the primary sponsor of the \$14 billion 2024 fiscal year budget that commits funding toward addressing the housing crisis, supports business development, and makes education funding more equitable, while limiting the use of one-time revenue to one-time expenditures. He also introduced a new law which would increase the percentage set aside for affordable units in qualifying projects and increase the number of allowable units per acre for all housing projects subject to inclusionary zoning. In addition, he is a staunch advocate for equity in education, and he has been a key supporter of one of EBCAP’s early childhood education programs.

“Chairman Abney has been a key supporter of the Baby Steps Program for many years. His annual legislative grants provide a reliable source of funds for Baby Steps. Equally as important have

been his eloquent speeches and public support for the program. He has helped to raise the community's appreciation for parents' role as their children's 'first teachers,' which is the basis for all EBCAP's early childhood family programs," said East Bay Community Action Program's President & CEO, Rilwan K. Feyisitan, Jr.

EBCAP's Vision Awards are presented to individuals and organizations that have made a profound impact on the agency, the lives of its clients, and the surrounding community. Carol and David Bazarsky, founders of the Bazarsky Family Foundation, will receive a 2024 Vision Award in recognition of their ongoing support of EBCAP's Baby Steps Program. Their first contribution in 2020 enabled the program to hire an Assistant Coordinator, and to expand from one to two family sessions. With their continued support, the Baby Steps Program again expanded services by offering a new family session in Spanish with the help of EBCAP community partner, Conexión Latina Newport.

"Baby Steps provides a unique kind of support to parents as their young children's 'first teachers,' and it has prepared dozens of Newport families to help their children succeed in school. Carol and David have continued Newport's tradition of generous private support for services, which has created a rich network of resources for the community," said the East Bay Community Action Program Grant Writer, Jim Dealy, who nominated them for the award.

Paula Bradley of Portsmouth, RI, will also be receiving a 2024 Vision Award in recognition of her more than 30 years of service on the Advisory Council for EBCAP's Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP). As a young woman, Bradley initially worked for EBCAP's RSVP. She then later joined the RSVP Advisory Council. Bradley has also served as a member of EBCAP's Board of Directors. For almost 30 years, Bradley has been the Senior Field Representative for U.S. Senator Sheldon Whitehouse's office. In this role she helps Rhode Islanders in accessing federal and state programs geared toward seniors.

"Paula makes things happen for people," said Kim Wetherald, East Bay Community Action Program's Director of Volunteer Services. "If we have a client, volunteer, or person that just can't get

through the red tape, we refer them to Paula. By working with Senator Whitehouse's office, she acts and finds a solution. She is an advocate for the older adult population and a voice for many.”

The following community members will also be honored as EBCAP 2024 Vision Award recipients: United Way of Rhode Island of Providence, RI, for its annual 401Gives event that has helped EBCAP to raise over \$75,000 for its Backpack Feeding Program; and Hope & Main, a Warren, RI business that has provided more than 1,300 prepared meals to EBCAP's Head Start and East Bay Recovery Center families since 2021.

The Premier Sponsor for EBCAP's 19th Annual Seaside Gala is Neighborhood Health Plan of Rhode Island. Tickets for the gala are on sale now on EBCAP's website, www.ebcap.org. For more information contact Maggie Laurianno, Director of Communications and Development, at 401.847.7821 ext. 1539.

The fundraising portion of EBCAP's 19th Annual Seaside Gala will feature an online auction, offering a variety of dining, hotel stays, travel, family fun, sports tickets, and more. Auction items are available for preview now at biddingforgood.com/EBCAP. The top auction prize is a 7-day Holland America Line Cruise for two people to either Alaska, Mexico, the Caribbean, or Canada/New England. The auction opens on May 30 and closes on June 13. All are welcome to register and bid.

East Bay Community Action Program is a private, non-profit 501 (c) (3) corporation that provides a wide array of health and human services to the residents of Rhode Island's East Bay, including the municipalities of East Providence, Barrington, Warren, Bristol, Little Compton, Tiverton, Portsmouth, Middletown, Newport, and Jamestown.

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