

NEWS

BREAKFAST WITH THE LYNN COMMUNITY SAFETY INITIATIVE

BY STEVE KRAUSE | April 11, 2019



Attendees of the LCSJ Breakfast, from left to right: (Row 1) Maroli Licardie, Marina Videla, Hong Net, Fred Hogan, Rep. Donald Wong, (Row 2) Ramon Vilela, Rep. Peter Capano, Ruben Montano, Lt. Peter Holey, (Row 3) Rep. Dan Cahill. (Carolina Trujillo)

LYNN — As Lynn Police Lt. Peter Holey said Thursday, “hopelessness equals violence.”

Holey, a former Lynn English football coach (and a player for both the Bulldogs and Boston College), was a sergeant on the anti-gang unit 13 years ago when, as he told an audience at the 10th annual Lynn Community Safety Initiative breakfast at the police station, “there was an epidemic of gang violence. We knew we weren’t going to solve it without help.”

Help came along in 2006 with the Shannon Community Safety Initiative Grant. Named for Sen. Charles E. Shannon Jr. of Cambridge, the grant aims to reduce gang violence across Massachusetts.

“Thank God for it,” said Holey.

The breakfast served to update the community on the success of the grant in combating gang violence while also acknowledging those who have worked on administering it.

Lynn School Superintendent Patrick Tutwiler sounded the morning's theme in his keynote address.

"The story of education in Lynn is one of shifting demographics and identities," he said. "Today, in our system, there are 6,000 students who are English learners. Scores are affected by poverty and violence, and other life-altering events.

"The purpose of education is to level the playing field. For historically marginalized people, education means equality."

Ruben Montano-Lopez, project director for the Community Safety Initiative, a collaborative of Lynn agencies, said the grant money has already paid dividends.

"Arrests (for gang-related activity) are down in the city," he said. "But that doesn't mean the risks are not still there. But now we're able to take a more preventative approach. We're hoping to engage youth in positive activities."

Holey mentioned Friday night youth drop-in centers at Lynn Tech as a popular approach in the city.

"In the beginning, we were afraid no one would show up," he said. "Now, we worry that too many people will show up."

Partners in the collaborative include the Lynn Police, Family & Children's Service of Greater Lynn, Catholic Charities North, the Lynn Youth Street Outreach Advocacy (LYSOA), and the Lynn Parks and Recreation Department. All were recognized by Holey for their contributions.

Maroli Licarde, executive director of Family & Children's Service of Greater Lynn, said her organization has been part of a 10-year partnership with the collaborative. The service, which specializes in case management, outreach and advocacy, works to identify at-risk children and teens and intervene when they're still receptive to change. And she says funds from the Shannon Grant help.

"It's our goal to put youth on different paths, and to get them back on track with education," she said.

Tutwiler said that school districts such as Lynn "cannot survive without partnerships with the community. And now, we have a real partnership with new endeavors.

"There's a shift occurring," he said, "and we're moving toward each other. (But) change is a project, not an event."

Lynn, Holey said, "is a different place than it was 13 years ago. And that's thanks to this community partnership."



Steve Krause

Steve Krause is the Item's writer-at-large. He joined paper in 1979 as a copy editor and later created a music column, called Midnight Ramblings, which ran through 1985. After leaving the paper for a year, he returned in 1988 as a reporter and editor in sports. He became sports editor in 1998; and was named writer-at-large in 2018.

Krause won awards for writing in 1985 from United Press International, and again in 2001 from the Associated Press. He is a member of the Harry Agganis Foundation Hall of Fame, a past winner of the Moynihan Lumber Scholar-Athlete Community Service Award, and was the 2012 recipient of the Jack Grinold Media Award for MasterSports, an organization that conducts high school and college coaches' clinics. He lives in Lynn, is active on Facebook, and can be found on Twitter [@itemkrause](https://twitter.com/itemkrause).

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