Five tips for buying a home

BY LING-MEI WONG

Home buying is a daunting process. Buying property is one of the biggest purchases for individuals, which is unfamiliar for most people. We spoke to Realtor Patti Salem of Barrett Sotheby’s International Realty for her tips from nearly 20 years of experience.

Salem is a registered nurse by training, who starting selling homes after her youngest child went to school. She also volunteered for the Lincoln School Committee, Unicef and Tufts Medical Center. She has found countless homes, including retired Boston Celtics star Paul Pierce’s property in Lincoln.

“After 20 years of experience, I help people negotiate the process of buying and selling real estate,” she said. “It’s a big transaction for most people and it makes them nervous, as well as excited.”

1. Find out how much you can spend and how much you want to spend

Everybody’s circumstances are different. A single working professional is going to need a different home from a married couple living with two children. People need to know what they can afford and what’s comfortable for them.

Salem advises customers to meet with a mortgage professional before looking at homes. Some people want to spend as much as they can on a house, while others want to spend less. “I don’t want people looking for homes they cannot afford,” Salem said.

2. Identify three to four priorities for your home

All people have dream homes in mind. It’s important to come up with three to four requirements before stepping onto a property. It’s not about whether they like it, it’s whether it meets their needs.

Everyone has to make compromises. Once customers are in properties, they will realize what matters most and the home search often changes. A customer may say they don’t want to live on a busy street, but Salem will have them look at properties on busy streets which meet all their other requirements. They may realize a busy street is OK because it gives them two parking spaces.

*After you go into five, six or 10 condos, you will know exactly what you can get for your money, then decide what you are willing to give up,* Salem said.

Everyone lives a little differently. If you like coffee, then it will matter whether there are coffee shops nearby.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8
Mayor Walsh announces release of Climate Ready Boston report

BY THE CITY OF BOSTON

Mayor Martin J. Walsh announced the release of the latest report for Climate Ready Boston on Dec. 8, the City’s ongoing initiative to prepare Boston for the impacts of climate change. The report shows that Boston can tackle the challenge of climate change while creating new economic opportunities and improving quality of life in neighborhoods across the city.

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“Boston residents are already impacted by extreme heat, rain, snow and flooding,” said Austin Blackmon, Chief of Environment, Energy and Open Space. “Climate Ready Boston shows that these trends are expected to continue and now we have a better understanding of what we need to do to prepare.”

The Castle Square Tenants Organization had a youth art show, Perspectives of Power, on Dec. 9 at its Community Center. Youth produced digital artwork on Civil Rights unsung heroes. (Image courtesy of CSTO.)

Castle Square Tenants Organization presents Perspectives of Power

BY THE CASTLE SQUARE TENANTS ORGANIZATION

The Castle Square Tenants Organization (CSTO) hosted a youth art show, Perspectives of Power, on Dec. 9 at the Castle Square Community Center. The public event featured performances and a showcase of youth artists from across Boston. The event premiered the teen-made original podcast, Castle Speaks, and concluded with a live podcast recording and panel discussion. In addition, there was a performances from Yulian Rodriguez, the A-WAY Youth Slam Team, and youth from Inquilinos Boricuas en Acción (IBA.)

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Santa and Mayor Walsh come to Chinatown

Boston Mayor Marty Walsh greets Chinatown residents during the tree lighting at Phillips Square on Dec. 4. (Image courtesy of Arturo Gossage.)

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Free mediation class
Sunday, Dec. 18
10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
101 Mystic Avenue
Medford, MA 02155
Free mediation classes will take place Sundays and Thursdays (7 a.m. to 8:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.) at Boston Bodhi Meditation. People with limited mobility are welcome to join. For more information, call (781) 874-1023.

Christmas party
Sunday, Dec. 18
11 a.m. to 12:45 p.m.
120 Shawmut Street
Boston, MA 02210
A children’s Christmas celebration, along with an adult program, will be hosted by Boston Chinese Evangelical Church. RSVP with Lorraine Ho at bcechlds@gmail.com.

Intermediate English information session
Monday, Dec. 19
8:30 a.m.
87 Tyler Street
Boston, MA 02111
The Asian American Civic Association offers a free intermediate English program (Next STEP) for people who need to improve their English to attend college or training. Applicants must come on time to one of our scheduled information sessions and take the assessment, which lasts 2-2.5 hours. No one else will be admitted once the test starts. For more information, visit www.aaca-boston.org/programs-services/english-language-classes/.

Free information clinic
Monday, Dec. 19
10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
275 Hancock Street 2F
North Quincy, MA 02170
Chinese American Citizens’ Rights Alliance will help clients at Quincy Asian Resources Inc. to provide information and referral services to Chinese Americans. For more information, call QARI at (617) 472-2200.

Citizenship workshop
Monday, Dec. 19
1 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.
87 Tyler Street
Boston, MA 02111
The Asian American Civic Association naturalization workshop provides free instruction on filling naturalization applications, translated study material and much more. Please register with Melody Tsang at (617) 426-9492 x 0 or melody@ aaca-boston.org.

Event Calendar
Gov. Baker voices support for immigrants

BY LING-MEI WONG

Gov. Charlie Baker held a press meeting for members of the ethnic media on Dec. 7 at the Statehouse.

Baker said he was a “big supporter” of immigrants in Massachusetts, as many founders of local businesses are foreign-born.

“Massachusetts will remain a welcoming state,” Baker said. “Our diversity is our strength. We enjoy educational and economic success because we are a global community.”

Lt. Gov. Karyn Polito spoke about the Massachusetts School to Career Connecting Activities program to connect high school students to internships in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) skills. The STEM internships will address the skills gap and develop a future workforce to feed the state’s rapidly growing innovation economy, with the expanded initiative launched Nov. 21.

“If Massachusetts is going to be the most innovative state and continue to be, then we must make sure we have people with right skills for industry,” Polito said.

The driver’s learner permit test will be available in 26 languages on its electronic system by Christmas week at the earliest, said Registry of Motor Vehicles Registrar Erin Devaney. Previously, the automated system supported English and Spanish, with other languages administered on paper tests. The 26 languages were determined by state population for the highest demand, with support for Spanish, Korean, Portuguese and Chinese in simplified and traditional form.

MassWorks director Erica Kreuter said the initiative received 114 applications for $287 million in public infrastructure grants in 2016 and awarded 34 grants for $84.8 million.

Baker said, “This is one of the coolest things we do to develop Gateway Cities.”

A special committee report on the 50 Herald Street property, which is leased to C-Mart, was presented at the Sept. 23 meeting. The committee of three CCBA director found the 2012 lease did not match the terms voted on by the board in 2011. The old lease was up August 1, 2013, and was renewed for 10 years on June 14, 2012, with the option to renew for another 10 years.

The board voted for the monthly rent to be $27,000, for C-Mart to cover capital improvements for its leaking roof and parking lot potholes, and for the lease to have a demolition clause taking back the property with six months of notice. The committee found the actual lease set rent for $24,500 a month, did not require capital improvements and did not include the demolition clause. Former CCBA president Rick Wong called for a vote at the March 2012 meeting to pass the lease during his two-year term and did not submit a written report to the committee’s report. The Election Committee will determine what recourse the board has, as the lease represents an annual loss of more than $30,000, said CCBA president Paul Chan. The site is leased to develop affordable housing.

A presentation on the Wynn Boston Harbor was given by John Tocco. The Everett site broke ground and Wynn is hiring for 4,000 construction workers ahead of the June 2019 opening. For more information on resort employment, visit the Wynn Talent Network at WynnCareers.com.

CSC

The Chinatown Safety Committee met at the DoubleTree Hotel.

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The Chinatown Resident Association met at JQES.

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Boston Councilors Wu and Jackson discuss Boston Public Schools, neighborhood development

BY LING-MEI WONG

Boston Council President Michelle Wu hosted a monthly press meeting Dec. 2 at City Hall. District 7 City Councilor Tito Jackson discussed his advocacy for M-7 MBTA passes for all Boston Public Schools (BPS) high school students, grade-appropriate computer science instruction for all BPS students, and Reclaim Roxbury, a process by the Roxbury community to chart their own future neighborhood development.

Jackson is chair of the schools committee. “We have to think about how to put our young people in a position to compete,” he said. BETSY RIBLE of the Department of Innovation and Technology asked for input on making the legislative docket more accessible, with suggestions to make the docket searchable. Wu wished the press representatives happy holidays.

BCNC receives grant for community art center One Chinatown

BY BOSTON CHINATOWN NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER

“One Chinatown,” a community-based center for arts developed in partnership with Bunker Hill Community College (BHCC) slated to open in January 2017.

“I am humbled to be a part of this project, because I believe it is important for this moment in history,” said Giles Li, executive director of BCNC.

“BHCC is proud to partner with BCNC in the creation of One Chinatown,” said BHCC president Pam Eddinger.

The third annual Asian Health Symposium “From collecting data to collective impact” took place Dec. 6 at Tufts University’s Sackler Auditorium.

One Tufts Clinical and Translational Science Institute (CTSI) shared its work with its community partners in its Asian Populations through Translational research (ADAPT).

“We really need to work together for an agenda-driven plan for the health of Boston’s Chinatown,” said Carolyn Rubin, ADAPT director at CTSI. “Doing this kind of work is more than just one grant here and there. It’s an investment in long-term relationships.”

Panel discussion on data disaggregation looked at the need for data on Asian Americans, with more information on specific groups such as Chinese, Korean and Vietnamese individuals.

“We are on a journey to get the data we need,” said Carolyn Wong, research associate at the Institute of Asian American Studies, University of Massachusetts, Boston. “Here in Massachusetts, we have the Chinatown community where there are a lot of low-income folks. People don’t see that and think of Asian Americans as those in academia, prominent people. If the data doesn’t represent people, it’s bad data.”

Tackey Chan, state Representative for the Second Norfolk district and Asian American Legislative Caucus member, spoke about being a lifelong Quincy resident. Chan said, “One of the major challenges of people like me who are community activists at heart is anecdotal data. If I want something done at the state level, then people want hard data. Quincy’s poverty rate for Asians is 11 percent, which is higher than average population. But the perception is we’re well off.”

Sherry Dong, director of Community Health Improvement Programs at Tufts Medical Center, said the medical center had data from its many senior patients, but limited data from working families and children.

A survey on Chinese Americans in Chinatown took place last year, with the results to be published in an upcoming report, said Susan Koch-Weser, assistant professor of public health and community medicine at Tufts University School of Medicine. Chinese individuals were identified from U.S. Census data, with researchers knocking on doors and conducting surveys in Cantonese or Mandarin with 300 randomly selected people. The survey took six months and was funded with a $50,000 grant from Tufts University, covering information on the residents’ health status from their last doctor’s visit, dental health and mental health screening, along with demographic information.

Neighborhood agencies Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center (BCNC) and the Asian Community Development Corporation (ACDC) spoke about their services and work with ADAPT.

Tufts researchers host symposium on Chinatown’s health

BY LING-MEI WONG

Alice Rudforth, Tufts Clinical and Translational Science Institute executive director, spoke at the Asian Health Symposium on Dec. 6 at Tufts University. (Image courtesy of Ling-Mei Wong.)
Mayor Walsh announces 2016 Spark Impact award winners

BY THE OFFICE OF BOSTON MAYOR MARTIN WALSH

Mayor Martin Walsh and SPARK Boston announced the five 2016 SPARK Impact Award winners at an award ceremony on Dec. 1 at MassChallenge.

"Congratulations to the winners of the 2016 SPARK Impact Awards, and thank you to all who submitted nominations," Walsh said. "The young men and women who impress us the most are those who are working to bring innovation and solutions to our City."

 Walsh put out an open call for nominations for the 2016 SPARK Impact Awards this summer. A selection committee comprised of SPARK Boston Council members reviewed more than 100 nominations to select these finalists, whose personal stories can be found on SPARK Boston’s website. A round of online voting determined the winners in each category.

The event featured a networking reception, a keynote speech by award winner Ian So, nominated for spearheading the Chicken & Rice Guys Foundation and founding of the Boston Asian Entrepreneurship Foundation.

Community Building and Neighborhood Improvement: Ian So, nominated for leadership as Executive Director of the North End Music & Performing Arts Center.

Activism and Issue Advocacy: Mario Paredes, nominated for serving as Centro Presente’s youngest board member.

Unsung Heroes: Taylor Curley, nominated for going above and beyond to support her special needs students at the Mattahunt Elementary School.

2016 SPARK IMPACT WINNERS

Entrepreneurship and Innovation: Ian So, nominated for spearheading the Chicken & Rice Guys Foundation and founding of the Boston Asian Entrepreneurship Foundation.

Arts & Culture: Matt Parker, nominated for using poetry as a tool for effective community building and violence prevention.

A presentation about a possible electronic billboard at the Voiles Energy building on 165 Highland Street was given by Mariloid Snowman, president of Boardtruction. The electronic billboard would face the Mass Pike exit ramp, while donated artwork from billboard proceeds would face the Reggie Wong Memorial Park.

TCC The Chinatown Coalition met to discuss language access at Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center.

Boston signed the Language and Communications Access Ordinance on Sept. 17, said Sophia Wang of Boston City Council President Michelle Wu’s office. The ordinance requires every Boston municipal department to have a translation and interpretation language policy. Before, there was no guarantee of interpreters for residents, as City Hall depended on a volunteer interpreter pool of bilingual city staff.

Asian and Pacific Islanders Civic Action Network (APIs CAN)’s coordinator Wayne Yeh spoke about language access for Asian Americans in Massachusetts. The Civil Rights Act prohibits discrimination based on race, color or national origin, with a ruling in 1970 including language access as a legal right for constituents whose first language is not English.

APIs CAN is a coalition of organizations serving Asian Americans in Massachusetts to further equity and oppose discrimination. Massachusetts is home for 475,000 Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, a 74 percent increase from 2000.

CCC The Clean Up Chinatown Committee met to discuss street cleanliness at the Asian American Civic Association.

Executive Director Needed

The Everett Housing Authority (EHA) seeks a dynamic, passionate, technically-skilled individual to become its next Executive Director. The Executive Director will report to a five person Board of Commissioners. This person must be thoughtful and sensitive to the needs and concerns of a diverse population and must possess strong leadership and an ability to resolve conflict. The Executive Director will be responsible for the management of a total of 1068 housing units and vouchers; 671 State-Aided public housing units in 6 developments, and the administration of 365 Housing Choice Vouchers and 32 Massachusetts Rental Vouchers. A demonstrated ability to work independently with minimal day-to-day supervision is essential. The EHA has a full-time staff of 22 employees, and receives its funding from the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development and United States Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Qualifications: Eight years’ experience in housing management, community development, public administration, or a closely related field. Must have a working knowledge of fiscal management, maintenance systems, personnel and administrative management systems, either public or private housing. One year’s supervisory experience of a staff of ten or more is required. Written and verbal skills required. Substantial background in the implementation of management controls and systems. Considerable knowledge of local, state, and federal governmental procedures and regulations as they relate to housing development, construction and the management of local housing authority operations. Experience working with people of various socio-economic backgrounds. Must be bondable. Certification as a Public Housing Manager from a HUD approved organization is required, but may be substituted by certification as a property manager or similar classification by a nationally recognized housing or real estate organization or by certification as a MPAH of a DHCD-approved Massachusetts Public Housing Administrator Certification Program. A bachelor’s degree may be substituted for up to five years of experience. Salary range: $49,342 to 103,020. Salary is subject to DHCD Salary Schedule and HUD guidelines.

Instructions: Resumes must be received by January 19, 2017.

The Everett Housing Authority is an Equal Opportunity Employer.
Holiday meal meals tend to be large, buffet-style gatherings where it is easy to overeat and fill up on unhealthy options. (Image courtesy of Golubovy - Fotolia.com.)

Holiday party survival guide: Tips to avoid weight gain

BY THE ACADEMY OF NUTRITION AND DIETETICS

Lights decorate streets across the country. The holiday season is officially upon us! However, with the joy of the season comes the tendency to over-indulge. On average, Americans gain approximately one to two pounds during the holiday season. With just a few strategies from nutrition experts, you can avoid weight gain while still enjoying friends, family and holiday feasts.

Don’t skip meals

“In preparation for a holiday feast, do not skip meals throughout the day,” said Heather Mangieri, registered dietitian and Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics spokesperson. “Skipping meals can result in overeating later on.” Instead, Mangieri recommends eating foods full of protein and high in fiber before the feast because these foods will fill you up and satisfy hunger.

Don’t overdo the buffet

Holiday meals tend to be large, buffet-style gatherings where it is easy to overeat and fill up on unhealthy options. To avoid overeating, Mangieri recommends loading your party plate with lean proteins and vegetables. “But that poses a problem at many holiday parties because treats and snacks are often all that fill the countertops. Stay in control by taking your own healthy protein options with you such as turkey meatballs, chicken skewers or a shrimp cocktail platter,” Mangieri said.

Also note that it takes about 20 minutes for your stomach to tell your brain you are full. “Before going back for seconds, take time to savor each bite and enjoy conversation with friends and family,” Mangieri said.

Don’t splurge on sweets

“It is okay to save room for dessert, but try to choose only one splurge item,” Smithson recommended. “These sweet treats can stick to your waistline and the added sugar may make you crash later.” Avoid overdoing it on dessert and limit sugary beverages.

Use these expert tips at the holiday dinner table to maintain a healthful eating plan throughout the entire season. The holidays are a wonderful time of the year, and it is possible to enjoy this special time without weight gain.

Don’t forget to exercise

The holidays are a busy time full of cooking, decorating, shopping and catching up with loved ones. But remember, it is still important to make time for physical activity. “We have set a tradition to include a family walk over the holidays,” said registered dietitian and Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics spokesperson Toby Smithson. “It’s a great time to create memories, share in conversation and sneak in exercise.”

Lung Association in Mass. supports smoke-free public housing

BY THE AMERICAN LUNG ASSOCIATION OF THE NORTHEAST

Just one year after the American Heart Association (AHA) and American Medical Association (AMA) launched Target: BP, more than 400 medical providers, health systems and nurses are now participating in the joint national initiative aimed at reducing the number of American adults who die from heart attacks and strokes every year.

One in three American adults — approximately 80 million people — has high blood pressure, and that number is steadily climbing, despite the fact that high blood pressure can be treated easily using evidence-based guidelines. There is a substantial body of evidence showing that high blood pressure is a contributing factor to many major health conditions, including heart attack, heart failure, stroke, kidney failure and other disease consequences.

Collectively these Target: BP participants, will work together with the AHA and AMA to significantly improve the nation’s current national blood pressure control rate of 54 percent.

“Improving blood pressure control rates will save many more lives,” said AHA president Andrew W. Gurman, M.D. “This is a 10 percent increase in the number of people successfully treated for hypertension would lead to the prevention of an additional 14,000 deaths each year. That is exactly why we launched our Target: BP initiative, to improve health outcomes and save thousands of lives.”

Specifically, participants will work to achieve high levels of control using the latest AHA guidelines on high blood pressure, aiming for readings of lower than 140/90 mm Hg for each patient — with goals adjusted as new data drives future guideline revisions. The AHA and AMA will provide participants with tools and resources, including the AHA-ACC/CDC Hypertension Treatment Algorithm, to help achieve their goals. Beginning in 2017, AHA and AMA will also recognize those who attain high levels of blood pressure control as part of the Target: BP Recognition Program.

During their annual Scientific Sessions conference, the AHA is recognizing 68 health care providers, groups and clinics as early adopters to the program. Although Target: BP is the first major collaborator initiative between the AHA and AMA, both organizations have established practice-based and community-based initiatives and online tools that are already helping physicians and patients improve blood pressure control. This joint initiative will further enhance high blood pressure awareness, understanding and management.

“Currently, only about half of those with high blood pressure are achieving our recommended blood pressure readings of below 140/90 mm Hg,” said AHA president Steven Houser, senior associate dean of research at Temple University in Philadelphia, Pa. “With Target: BP, we hope to streamline information, resources and tools for providers and patients, to help keep blood pressure under control. By controlling blood pressure, we can potentially prevent progression to other serious threats to heart and brain health.”

While fewer Americans are dying from heart disease and stroke, the death rate caused by high blood pressure is on the rise, increasing 13 percent between 2005 and 2011. High blood pressure is also associated with significant economic impact, costing the U.S. economy an estimated $56 billion annually in health care services, medications and missed days of work. Health care providers across the country have noted that improving blood pressure control will take a concerted, focused and ongoing effort by many. Target: BP complements and expands on existing work, including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s Million Hearts initiative aimed at preventing one million heart attacks and strokes by 2017.

To learn more about Target: BP and join this innovative movement to save lives, visit http://targetbp.org.
More home buyers are taking advantage of low mortgage rates

BY FREDDIE MAC

Beyond mortgage rates, there are other important aspects to understand before buying a home, such as getting a firm handle on your finances, knowing your credit score, and understanding your down payment options. For more information and tools on buying a home and homeownership, visit myhome.freddiemac.com.

To make your dream of homeownership a reality, consider getting serious about your search. Locking in a great fixed mortgage rate can save you money for years to come.

The required salary to buy a home in the Boston metro area is $86,053.72, according to mortgage resource HSH.com. (Image courtesy of trestletech at Morguefile.com.)

The right mix of lower rates and prices shaved more than $1,500 off the required salary figure in the third quarter. If home buyers in the Boston metro put 10 percent down instead of 20 percent, the required salary increases from $86,053.72 to $100,587.36.

The Boston metro area was defined as Boston, Cambridge and Quincy. Nationally, the median salary needed to afford a home in 27 metro areas including Boston was $51,985.83.

Tim Manni writes for mortgage resource HSH.com.

Everett Villa Co-op
66 Main Street—Everett, MA 02149

Everett Villa Co-op located at 66 Main Street in Everett, Massachusetts 02149 will no longer be accepting housing applications for their one bedroom list as of December 19, 2016.

Everett Villa Co-op will continue to accept applications for their accessible housing list.

Advertising will take place when the one bedroom list is re-opened in the future.

Patti Salem, realtor at Barrett Sotheby’s International Realty. (Image courtesy of Patti Salem.)

3. Visit many properties before deciding on a home

“Home buyers need to get into a lot of properties,” Salem said. “Even if you know you’re not going to buy a home, it gives you a sense of value.”

People have the bad habit of going online to look at pictures, but once they are in the space, it’s very different, she said. Inside a home, they have to analyze the space to see how it works for their needs.

Buyers need to be confident they know the market. Based on properties in same price range, even if the house does not work for the buyer, they can understand how it might sell for a certain price. Salem warned the current greater Boston market is not a buyer’s market, but a seller’s market. Many desirable properties have multiple offers.

4. Find a local broker

If clients are buying outside the community they currently live, such as from the city to the suburbs, Salem suggests working with a buyer’s broker in that town.

There might be things about the location buyers are not aware of. A Boston agent will not know Wellesley, such as plans to put a dump across from your prospective home, because they don’t live, work and read local newspapers every day. It’s important to work with somebody who knows the area well.

5. Trust the home buying process

Once prospective buyers find out how much they can afford, how much they want to spend, identify priorities, look at properties, readjust priorities and know pricing, you will find your house. If you follow the process, you will make a decision that is good for you.

In sellers market, if you lose a house, do not dismay. There’s always more than one house for you.
MBTA NOTICE TO BIDDERS

- Electronic proposals for the following project will be received through the internet using Bid Express until the date and time stated below, and will be posted on www.bidx.com forthwith after the bid submission deadline.

- No paper copies of bids will be accepted.

- Bidders must have a valid digital ID issued by the Authority in order to bid on projects.

- Bidders need to apply for a digital ID with Bid Express at least 14 days prior to a scheduled bid opening date.


- Submitted at www.bidx.com until two o' clock (2:00 p.m.) on January 12, 2017.

- Immediately thereafter, in a designated room, the Bids will be opened and read publicly.

Work consists of the construction of the Blue Hill Avenue Commuter Rail Station, on the Fairmount Commuter Rail Line including, but not limited to, construction of a new 768 foot high level platform, steel canopies, signage, bench/windscreen, elevated walkway structures, sidewalks, lighting systems, communications systems, landscaping, traffic signals, track throws and realignment, track surfacing and alignment, and the retirement or demolition of existing track elements. These improvements will be made while the existing Fairmount Commuter Rail Line maintains revenue passenger and occasional freight service except for weeknight and weekend service shutdowns.

Bidders’ attention is directed to Appendix 1, Notice of Requirement for Affirmative Action to Insure Equal Employment Opportunity; and to Appendix 2, Supplemental Equal Employment Opportunity, Anti-Discrimination, and Affirmative Action Program in the specifications. While there is no DBE goal associated with this contract, the Authority strongly encourages the use of Minority, Women and Disadvantaged Business Enterprises as prime contractors, subcontractors and suppliers in all of its contracting opportunities.

Additional information and instructions on how to submit a bid are available at http://www.mbta.com/business_center/bidding_solicitations/current_solicitations/
‘Journey to the West’ reinterprets Chinese classic with song and dance

BY LING-MEI WONG

The “Journey to the West” is an epic fable of a monk traveling from China to India to retrieve Buddhist scriptures with three companions. Its grand adventures have been shown on the stage, TV shows and movies, with Mary Zimmerman’s adaptation playing at the Central Square Theater until Dec. 31. Zimmerman taps into the comic elements of the 16th century Chinese classic in a lively retelling.

Monk Tripitaka embarks on his quest with three protectors: “Monkey King” Sun Wukong, “Pig” Zhu Bajie and “Sha Monk” Sha Wujing. The protectors accompany the monk to atone for their sins, called by Guanyin the goddess of mercy.

The Monkey King’s wild energy is perfectly conveyed by Lynn R. Guerra, who leaps, tumbles and sings her way across the set. Jordan Clark’s Guanyin steals nearly every scene with benevolent grace and kind smile. Shanaé Burch’s Pig has a disarming country accent. The cast of 13 play multiple roles with genuine enthusiasm, coming together as a seamless whole.

The vibrant set serves as the heavenly realms, the Monkey King’s home of Flower Fruit Mountain, a frozen river and an imperial court. With the audience on either side of the central stage, there’s plenty of interaction with the actors for an entertaining night for all ages.

Tickets begin at $25, with a $5 discount for seniors and students, and $18 for individuals under 18 at (617) 576-9278 or CentralSquareTheater.org.

‘Patriots Day’ film premiere remembers Boston Marathon

BY LING-MEI WONG

The “Patriots Day” film premiere took place Dec. 14 at the Boch Center-Wang Theatre. An account of the 2013 Boston Marathon bombing and the intense aftermath, “Patriots Day” is the story of a community’s courage in the face of adversity.

The premiere was attended by special guests, the cast and film makers. They included Richard DesLauriers (former FBI Special Agent in Charge – Boston), Dun “Danny” Meng (carjacking survivor), Patrick Downes (Boston Marathon survivor), Jessica Kensky (Boston Marathon survivor) and David Ortiz (former Boston Red Sox player).

“It’s pretty real and close to what I experienced,” Meng said. “It was emotional, like I lived that day again … I look at every day different, I’m fortunate to be alive and standing here today.”

Celebrating the average citizens who became extraordinary heroes, the thriller starring Mark Wahlberg, Kevin Bacon, John Goodman, J.K. Simmons and Michelle Monaghan explores the untold story behind the hunt and capture of the bombers before they could carry out a second attack in New York City. Meng’s character was played by Chinese-American actor Jimmy O. Yang.

“Patriots Day” will have a limited release in Boston, Los Angeles and New York on Dec. 21. The film will play in theaters nationwide on Jan. 13.

The Wang YMCA of Chinatown hosted its annual Christmas party on Dec. 4. (Image courtesy of the Wang YMCA.)