

The West End Museum

150 STANIFORD STREET, SUITE 7, BOSTON, MA 02114

New Exhibit Reveals Rich History of West End House *Distinguished Alumni Include Leonard Nimoy, Buddy Clark*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: March 12, 2015

Boston, MA—From March 31 through August 22, [The West End Museum](#) will host a new exhibit in its Main Exhibit Hall. *In Pursuit of Excellence: The West End House* features artifacts, photographs, oral history video and memorabilia representing over 100 years. Among the club's most distinguished alumni are Leonard Nimoy and crooner Buddy Clark. The show reception takes place on Friday, April 10 at 6:00 p.m. The exhibit and reception are free and open to the public. (*Media note: Downloadable show-related images appear [here.](#)*)

Of the West End House, Nimoy said "It was a healthy, thriving place to go. The club offered me an opportunity to be well-rounded. I played basketball and was on a long distance running team. I also got experience in public speaking there. This was something I was particularly inclined to do. The experience helped me in my career because it taught me how to select appropriate material and then perform in front of an audience."

The path to the West End House began in 1903 when a group of immigrant boys formed the Young Men's Excelsior Association to pursue mental, moral and physical advancement. The group met where it could, including the Mayhew School. Impressed by the character and determination of these boys, James J. Storrow—for whom Storrow Drive is named—funded a home for the club in 1906 (at 9 Eaton Street) and changed its name to the West End House. Harvard Law School graduate Mitchell Freiman served as its first director.

The foundation of the West End House was its numerous clubs, which became the responsibility of its young members. There were more than 90 groups formed around athletic, scholarly and other pursuits. The clubs organized sporting events, socials and renowned declamation contests.

"The West End House was a training ground that allowed immigrant boys to enter corporate America with the skills they needed to succeed," said Curator Duane Lucia. "Our collection of records, photos and stories is extensive. It offers a comprehensive look at how the neighborhood changed in the first 50 years of the 20th century."

When Frieman passed in 1916, founding member Jacob "Jack" Burnes took over as director. In 1929, under Burnes' leadership, the club constructed a new building on Blossom Street. In 1966, amid urban renewal, that building was sold to MGH. Determined to continue the legacy of serving immigrant children and families, in 1971, the club opened its doors at 105 Allston Street in the Allston-Brighton neighborhood, where it remains to this day, now known as the West End House Boys and Girls Club.

In Pursuit of Excellence: The West End House is free and open to the public during regular Museum hours.

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About the West End Museum:

The West End Museum is dedicated to the collection, preservation and interpretation of the history and culture of the West End neighborhood. The Museum's permanent exhibit, "The Last Tenement," highlights the immigrant history of the neighborhood through its decimation under Urban Renewal in 1959; two additional galleries feature rotating exhibits. The Museum is located near North Station at 150 Staniford St. Suite 7. Hours: Tuesday - Friday 12:00pm - 5:00pm; Saturday 11:00am - 4:00pm. Admission is free.

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