



# Manny Reynoso focuses on partnerships in new role



Manny Reynoso

much-needed services, and seen them flourish way beyond what they ever imagined.

“I always say that if you want to keep a finger on the pulse of the students, you have to stay connected to them,” he continues. “The students’ struggles have become mine, and the gained mutual respect has led to lasting relationships.”

Manny immigrated to the United States from the Dominican Republic when he was only three years old. He had many experiences where he had to translate for his parents. “I spoke English from 8:05 a.m. to 4:45 p.m. while in school, and I spoke

Spanish thereafter at home. Living between the two worlds was the norm. That’s why I feel so attuned to our English language learners—I was in their shoes so many times.”

As an educator, Manny believes that “every moment is a teachable one. There are so many opportunities to teach—about culture, about diversity, so many different things. I hope to bring that spirit to this new position.”

For more information on Corporate and Community Partnerships, contact Manny at [partnerships@ndecboston.org](mailto:partnerships@ndecboston.org), or call him at (617) 268-1912, Ext. 231.

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Spanish Language and Culture. He has held manager roles in both the ESOL and Youth Education Services Departments. Additionally, he piloted a program at NDEC in partnership with World Education focusing on a peer-to-peer (P2P) cohort model.

Manny says that being a teacher has helped him in preparing for this current role. “I’ve gotten to know the students, their stories, their challenges and successes,” he explains. “I’ve shared with their families, been given the opportunity to connect them to



Manny with students in the Learning Circle, and with Red the bear, who serves as a “talking stick.” Manny explains, “If you’re holding the bear, you can speak.”

## All Saints LLC files letter of intent to redevelop NDEC site

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Plans call for NDEC to own and operate the entire ground floor of the nearly 10,000 square-foot facility. Parking will be provided on site and underground.

Public meetings will be held to ensure neighborhood impacts are addressed and that abutters, neighbors, and users of NDEC will have a chance to voice their concerns and support.

Former District 2 City Councilor Bill Linehan, who represented South Boston, is working with All Saints LLC through fruition on the development. “It is my intention to work with neighbors and the school to see that the Sisters of Notre Dame’s 150-year legacy of contribution to South Boston remains viable and impactful for decades to come,” he said.

# NDEC welcomes three to Board of Directors

Three new members have joined NDEC's Board of Directors. They are Sr. Geraldine Burns, SND, former Vice Principal of Bishop Fenwick High School, Peabody; Scott Kirwin, Vice President and Associate General Counsel for Fidelity Investments; and Karen Cohn, Senior Vice President and Senior Loan Officer at Brookline Bank.

"We're delighted to welcome Sr. Geraldine, Scott and Karen to our Board," said Mary Rose Durante, Esq., Executive Director and CEO of NDEC. "They each bring a unique skill set and both depth and breadth of experience."



*Sr. Geraldine Burns, SND*

While at Bishop Fenwick, a college-prep high school, Sr. Geraldine set educational standards and goals, and helped to establish policies and procedures to carry them out. She also collaborated with teachers to develop and maintain curriculum standards, develop mission statements, and set performance goals and objectives. In addition, she taught math and chaired the Math Department.

Prior to joining Bishop Fenwick, Sr. Geraldine was an elementary school teacher at Our Lady of the Angels School in Worcester, Mass. She also taught at Julie Country Day School in Leominster, Mass.

Sr. Geraldine has served on the Board of Trustees of Malden Catholic High school; was a member of the Corporation Board of Notre Dame Academy, Worcester; and is a member of the Visiting Committee of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges. She is a graduate of Emmanuel College, Boston, and earned her Master's degree in Education in Administration from Salem State University.

In his current role at Fidelity, Scott Kirwin acts as lead counsel for Strategic Advisers, Inc., the investment adviser to Fidelity's managed account platforms, financial planning tools, and high net worth products. He counsels business leaders on product development, litigation, and risk issues, and acts as regulatory counsel for both the SAI leadership team and the broader Fidelity organization. He advises on all facets of SAI's investment management activity, including mutual fund and separate account management, wealth management, and financial planning.

Prior to joining Fidelity, Scott was an associate in the corporate and investment management groups at Ropes & Gray, LLP. While there, Scott represented open- and closed-end mutual fund complexes,



*Scott Kirwin*

registered investment advisers, hedge fund advisers, and private fund sponsors. He also represented corporate clients in debt financing, mergers, and leveraged buyout transactions.

Scott is a frequent speaker on investment management, adviser risk, and regulatory issues. His recent engagements include presentations with the Boston Bar Association, Practising Law Institute, Money Management Institute, and the

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**The new Board members have extensive backgrounds in education, banking, law, and finance.**



# Youth Education Services Program meeting learners' needs

When people think of “alternative education,” they may think of concepts like open classrooms, no homework, or no grading.

NDEC's Youth Services Program staff thinks exactly the opposite. Explains Leslie Feeney, Youth Services Program Manager, “Our academic requirements are equal to or greater than what many students are exposed to in a traditional setting. We differentiate our instruction so every student can learn the same content, in the way that works best for them.”

The Youth Education Services Program is comprised of the High School Diploma Program (HSDP) and a high school equivalency certification class for youth. The HSDP enables students ages 16-24 who have earned at least 10 credits to complete their studies and obtain a diploma from Cathedral High School, a college-prep high school in Boston's South End.

The youth high school equivalency certification class is also designed for ages 16-24 and helps students to prepare for the high school equivalency tests. Students in both programs participate in a “College and Career Exploration” course.

Leslie says that the Youth Education Services Program's mission is identical to that of NDEC: “to build sustainability through community.” To that end, the program reaches out to other areas of NDEC to support students in areas such as Workforce Readiness, College and Career Pathways, counseling and case management – “a microcosm of the greater NDEC.”

The academic curriculum and the class schedule for students in the HSDP are based on Cathedral High School's requirements. “For example, Cathedral requires a course in the human development/theology sector,” says Leslie. “Courses which satisfy that requirement include World Religions, sociology and psychology. So this semester, we're teaching World



From left, Leslie Feeney, Youth Education Services Program Manager; Mary Tower, Program Assistant, and Adam Berndt, Case Manager. Leslie says that the staff works to differentiate instruction so that each student can learn the content in the way that works best for them.

Religions, but in years past we have taught sociology and psychology.”

To add to the “college prep” atmosphere, HSDP classes are structured like a college semester. “It's hard to learn a year's worth of biology in half a year,” Leslie says. “These courses are challenging, and our students can hold their heads up with the best of them.”

Perhaps the biggest difference between NDEC's high school programs and traditional programs is the amount of support students receive. “It isn't an individualized educational opportunity,” explains Case Manager Adam Berndt. “Our classes are small enough so that we know when someone is struggling. We can step right in and help that student out, so that they don't lose any instruction time. We offer the kind of wrap-around social and emotional support that young adults need.”

The staff agrees that the challenges facing urban and opportunity youth are immense. “Many students have self-esteem issues that aren't apparent until you start to teach them,” Adam notes. “They seem confident socially, and they are, but that confidence disappears when they get into the classroom. Some of them are satisfied with getting poor grades because they believe they can't do any better.”

The staff is working with students to develop what educators call “academic confidence,” says Leslie. That's the ability to attack a problem and solve it, with a focus on success. “We're developing ‘Ladders of Success’ for them so that they can take advantage of opportunities outside of high school. It's a series of stepping stones – life skills like time management, cooperation, and accountability. These are so important for success outside of academics.”

Part of teaching accountability includes showing students the importance of regular attendance. Here, too, the staff accentuates the positive. “We're moving away from the ‘you must be here’ approach to one that makes the student understand they're part of a community. We're concerned about what happens to them when they're not here,” Leslie says.

For the future, Leslie says, “The program will continue to partner with community organizations that can create pathways and partnerships for enrollment and service. For example, we're continuing our partnership with the Re-Engagement Center at the Boston Public Schools in order to better serve students with learning disabilities.”

Visit our website, [www.ndecboston.org](http://www.ndecboston.org), for more information about NDEC's Youth Education Services Program.

# Leslie Feeney named Youth Education Services Program Manager



Leslie Feeney

Leslie Feeney has been named Youth Education Services Program Manager at NDEC. In this role, Leslie will manage all aspects of the High School Diploma Program and the High School Equivalency and Postsecondary Preparation Program.

“Leslie’s experience in youth education and in curriculum design makes her an excellent choice for this role,” said Mary Rose Durante, Esq., Executive Director and CEO.

Leslie comes from a family of educators. “I look for learning and learning looks for me,” she says. Indeed, her earliest memories are of debating the issues of the day—political, economic, and social — with her family at long holiday dinners.

“The only rule was, no ‘I don’t knows’ or worse, ‘I’m boreds,’ she recalls. “Everyone’s opinion was encouraged, expected, and debated.”

With such a background, you’d think that Leslie would have headed straight for academia, but this graduate of Bucknell University and Northeastern University took a slight detour into commercial real estate at the law firm of Gimartin, Magence & Ross, LLP. But even there, the educator in her was clamoring to come out. While at the firm, Leslie implemented customized software for coordination and delivery of training programs.

Leslie joined NDEC in 2012, after several years teaching in the Boston Public Schools and at adult education programs such as the United South End Settlements and the YMCA Germantown Neighborhood Center in Quincy. Throughout her career, she has consistently partnered with local colleges in order to utilize their resources and support services, and has used technology in the classroom.

“Technology gives teachers the ability to bring the world into the classroom at the click of a button,” she says. “It’s engaging, and gives us almost endless possibilities to differentiate instruction to meet each student’s needs.

“Student-centered instruction, when implemented correctly, is just as rigorous and demanding as the traditional teacher-centered lesson,” Leslie concludes. “Life-long education is a change agent for the future.”

## Experience makes you a better teacher, says Mary Tower

Every program needs someone who will turn their hand to any task. In the Youth Education Services Program, that person is Program Assistant Mary Tower.

A 2016 graduate of Emmanuel College in Boston, Mary majored in history and political science. She has taught English and American History, and is glad for the teaching experience she has had at NDEC.

“I’m planning to go to graduate school, and many schools expect grad students to serve as teaching assistants,” she explains. Her graduate school plans remain flexible. “Whatever program I choose,” she says, “I want to be really passionate about what I’m studying.”

This year, Mary is stepping aside from teaching in order to concentrate on “the administrative side of things.” “I’m glad to help out,” she says. “While I love to teach, it’s good to know about education administration. I think all the experiences you have make you a more well-rounded person, which makes you a better teacher.”



Mary Tower

# It's all about students for Adam Berndt



Adam Berndt

Would you trade a full-time job as a custodian for a part-time job as a teacher's aid —and earn less money to boot? Many folks wouldn't, but Adam Berndt did, and it's worked out well for both him and for Notre Dame Education Center.

Let him explain: "One summer, I worked at an elementary school in Belmont as a custodian. At the end of the summer, I was offered a full-time job as a custodian, or part-time work as a teacher's aide. I chose to be an aide, and it was a fun year. I loved teaching, I loved being in the classroom and I loved the students."

Today, 20 years later, Adam is case manager for NDEC's High School Diploma Program, as well as being an English teacher. He determines students' eligibility for the HSDP, and then works with them in and out of class

to ensure that they successfully complete the program. "From time to time, you find situations where people just haven't had a break," he says. "We try to make school a successful experience for them. The beauty of the Youth Education Services Program is that we're better able to look at students as individuals and encourage them to keep persisting until they achieve their goals."

Adam holds bachelor's and master's degrees from Boston University. He has been an English instructor in the Adult Diploma Program at JVS in Boston, and taught Adult Basic Education at JFY NetWorks, also in Boston. He taught at a Department of Youth Services facility in Boston, and has a wide range of experience in adult education and in special education.

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## NDEC welcomes three to Board of Directors

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Securities Industry and Financial Markets Association. He received his Juris Doctor, cum laude, from Harvard Law School, and earned his bachelor's degree summa cum laude from Northeastern University.

Karen Cohn brings a wide range of commercial banking experience to the NDEC Board. She has served as Senior Vice President/Senior Lending Officer of Georgetown Savings Bank, Georgetown, Mass., where she managed and directed the residential/consumer division, and managed the Secondary Market, Loan Servicing, and Collection departments.

While at First Trade Union Bank in Boston, Karen was Senior Vice President, Residential/Commercial Lending. She managed and directed the residential/consumer/collections division, consisting of a \$150 million portfolio.

As Vice President of Eagle Bank in Everett, Mass., Karen managed the residential and consumer portfolio, and restructured the retail residential lending division. In her role as Senior Loan Officer at National City Mortgage, Waltham, Mass., she designed and implemented a production program utilizing non-traditional sources for loan generation. She also developed previously neglected markets and worked with the Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation to facilitate financing arrangements for their property auctions. She attended Bentley College.

"Sr. Geraldine, Scott, and Karen each bring passion, commitment, and energy to the Board," Mary Rose concluded. "They are great additions to the Board. We're fortunate to have them on our team."

# NDEC students interning at area businesses

Once again, Boston-area businesses have teamed up with Notre Dame Education Center to provide internships for students in the Office Skills and Technology Training class.

The interns and businesses are Ruth Martignetti, interning at the ABCD South Boston Action Center; Jorge Villar and Corthis Noel, interns at Roxbury Tenants of Harvard; Angela Pearson and Abera Mengiste, who are working for the North American Indian Center of Boston; and Stephanie Paredes, social media intern at TriWellness Holistic Center. Roxbury Tenants of Harvard and NAICOB are longtime NDEC partners.

“The exciting part about the internships is, the interns are returning to class and discussing their experiences in the workplace so that everyone in the class can benefit,” says Manny Reynoso, Assistant Director for Corporate and Career Partnerships. “That kind of synergy fosters a melding together of classroom skills and real-world experience and allows all students to continuously improve their lives.”

“The students are in class with me on Mondays and Wednesdays from 11:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.,” explains teacher and NDEC Career Coach Nathan Hoffman. “Each of them attends their internships for another two days a week, and that day depends on the needs of the individual businesses.”

The interns’ duties range from basic clerical work, such as data entry, to social media. “For example, TriWellness is a new business which is located close to NDEC in South Boston. They reached out to us to find an intern who could handle their social media needs,” Nathan says. “Fortunately we were able to link them up with Stephanie. That kind of request for an intern with specific skills is a little unusual, but it gives you an idea of what companies are looking for and will be looking for in the future.”

A personal connection helped to create the intern



Students in NDEC’s Office Skills and Technology Training class are getting a taste of real-world business experience. From left are interns Jorge Villar, Angela Pearson, Ruth Martignetti, and Abera Mengiste; NDEC Career Coach Nathan Hoffman; and intern Stephanie Paredes. Not pictured are interns Nigera Hyseni and Corthis Noel.

slot that Ruth is filling at ABCD South Boston Action Center. “A friend of a friend works there,” explains Nathan. “When I mentioned our internship program, they were interested right away. It’s worked out well for Ruth personally, it’s worked out well for the agency, and it shows local businesses that we’re serious about working with them.”

“It’s great that these companies are partnering with us to develop these students’ employability skills. We’re looking for more companies to team up with us,” says Manny. “The commitment and work ethic of our students are second to none.”

“These interns reflect well on NDEC and the quality of the instruction we offer. Any one of them would be a huge asset to a company,” Nathan concludes.

For more information about NDEC’s career services, contact Nathan Hoffman, [nhoffman@ndecboston.org](mailto:nhoffman@ndecboston.org).

## Thank you, volunteers!

One of the things that makes NDEC so special is the commitment and spirit of our volunteers. We’ve been fortunate to have volunteers from the Boston College PULSE program; Emmanuel College; Ignatian Volunteer Corps; and dozens of volunteers from the South Boston and the wider Greater Boston community. While their service won’t conclude until June, we wanted to thank them now for their many contributions. You make a difference!



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# NDEC, students welcome visitors

*It was a very busy winter at NDEC. In March, the Attorney General's Office presented to students on "The People's Law Firm: Unauthorized Practice of Immigration Law and Workers' Training." In the photo below are Yarlennys Villaman (second from right) and Tyler Belt (third from right) of the AG's office. Shown with them are students from the College and Career Pathways Program.*



*In the photo above, Kimberly Burke (center), Program Coordinator for Bunker Hill Community College's Allied Health Certification Programs, is pictured with NDEC students Dilva DaSilva (left) and Magalie Alphonse (right). Kimberly discussed the program's requirements and opportunities with students.*