

We are reaching out to bring to your attention an area that, when improved, could yield tangible benefits for both its neighborhood and the City.

Please know that it is over 10 years that we have been asking BCYF to address these issues.

The facility is BCYF Henningan, located at 200 Heath Street in Jamaica Plain, close to Brookline and bordering Mission Hill, a growing neighborhood.

As residents of this area, we are beyond grateful to have such a center in the neighborhood.

The purpose of this note is to bring to your attention the deeply run-down conditions of what could be a modern and welcoming facility that neighbors would actually want to use. A revitalization of the overall facility would sustain exercise habits fundamental to one's overall health, encourage an inclusive community spirit, while yielding a more noticeable financial return for the City.

Often people have come and never returned because unwilling to use a facility that is neglected, generally unkept, and minimally supervised. Although more recently there have been very modest changes, the facility does not present itself as an option as it could be, nor it matches the standard of a growing city such as Boston!

Additionally, given that during the day this facility is used by the Hennigan school kids, we feel strongly that it is time to act to ensure that these youths are as well taken care of as other schools and BCYF facilities are already doing.

At the last budget hearing on BCYF, it was concerning to hear Mr. Morales' limited vision for BCYF. He expressed that BCYF center's focus is to ensure kids stay in school and to ready them for the workforce. It was also surprising to hear his refusal for help in securing additional funding!

This facility could be used for a variety of activities to stimulate and support the vibrancy of this neighborhood!

BCYF should be centers to create community, promote social and physical wellness, reduce risky behaviors, and provide a safe, structured environment.

**From:** harris4arts@gmail.com  
**Sent:** Wednesday, October 30, 2019 2:25 PM  
**To:** 'Sandy Holden'; 'Matthew O'Malley'; 'Justin McClarey'; 'Michelle Wu'; 'Cassandra Moreno'; 'Annissa Essaibi-George'; 'Cc: Josh Zakim'; 'michael.f.flaherty'; 'Andrea Campbell'; 'Althea Garrison'; 'Timothy McCarthy'; 'Mark Ciommo'; 'Lydia Edwards'; 'Ed Flynn'; Frank.Baker@boston.gov; 'Kim Janey'; mayor@boston.gov; abelizairebla@gmail.com; Amanda.Merricks@hhs.gov; andreatamkin@mac.com; annegreenwald@rcn.com; arccr@comcast.net; BetsyAbrams@hotmail.com; boddenj@seas.harvard.edu; cathy\_aho@comcast.net; cfbologna@gmail.com; christinepoff@gmail.com; cmuhammad@serving.org; Deborah\_McLellan@comcast.net; DinaRsiegel@aol.com; durgadum@aol.com; eghelfi@yahoo.it; ElliottPE@gmail.com; ginnette\_powell@yahoo.com; Janet.dillon@comcast.net; jasbun@yahoo.com; Jbogletree@gmail.com; jdillon@serving.org; JPriders@comcast.net; Judedot@comcast.net; Ladydanita45@gmail.com; Leslielvanc@gmail.com; LPower@partners.org; M9Greenwood@yahoo.com; Mahnaz.Paktinat@gmail.com; Marchray@aol.com; Margaret.Blood@gmail.com; margaret.r.williams@comcast.net; massachusetts62@gmail.com; mduffy333@gmail.com; Merricks2013@gmail.com; Ministergrace@gmail.com; muluembeta4@gmail.com; Nancyrouth@gmail.com; natashater@yahoo.com; niamh\_foley@yahoo.com; nristmusic1@gmail.com; patxavier52@gmail.com; regwhitel@comcast.net; rncurington@aol.com; ro.simpson9@yahoo.com; sarahlsnider@gmail.com; shoshana5th@hotmail.fr; simplyloris@aol.com; skratzig@gmail.com; StricklandAngelam@gmail.com; susan@viniyogajourney.com; tammyb29@gmail.com; tolle.graham@gmail.com; usha1@comcast.net  
**Cc:** 'William Morales'; 'Pat McDonough'; 'Martha Salamanca'  
**Subject:** RE: BCYF Henningan facility in Jamaica Plain

Good afternoon Ms. Holden,  
Thank you for your response.

Your promptness in looking into certain aspects of the matters we brought to the attention of Councilor O'Malley and Councilor Wu is appreciated.

We understand from your response that an effort to apply some changes to the common areas shared by BPS and BCYF are in the works. We are certainly thankful for it, but we also want to stress the importance of the overall message we have sent.

We might be mistaken, but it seems to us that your response didn't share in how appalling is the situation of the Henningan's BCYF.

The BCYF facility has been overlooked for too many years, these same requests have been submitted for the past 10 years, and short term fixes will not necessarily improve the desire for people to make good use of it, nor it will make the youths who frequent it feel supported, as BCYF seeks to achieve.

But it is our hope, as stated previously, that the time has come to take extremely good care in actively managing this center for the benefit of its community.

We look forward to a meeting with Mr. Morales and other city officials where, together, we can devise a comprehensive addressing of the immediate needs we have -once again- submitted for review.

Thank you again for your prompt reply.  
Best,  
JP Community

**From:** Sandy Holden <sandy.holden@boston.gov>

**Sent:** Wednesday, October 30, 2019 10:21 AM

**To:** harris4arts@gmail.com; Matthew O'Malley <matthew.omalley@boston.gov>; Justin McClarey <justin.mcclarey2@boston.gov>; Michelle Wu <michelle.wu@boston.gov>; Cassandra Moreno <cassandra.moreno@boston.gov>; Annissa Essaibi-George <A.E.George@boston.gov>; Cc: Josh Zakim <Josh.Zakim@boston.gov>; michael.f.flaherty <Michael.F.Flaherty@boston.gov>; Andrea Campbell <Andrea.Campbell@boston.gov>; Althea Garrison <ALTHEA.GARRISON@boston.gov>; Timothy McCarthy <Timothy.McCarthy@boston.gov>; Mark Ciommo <Mark.Ciommo@boston.gov>; Lydia Edwards <lydia.edwards@boston.gov>; Ed Flynn <ed.flynn@boston.gov>; Frank.Baker@boston.gov; Kim Janey <kim.janey@boston.gov>; mayor@boston.gov; abelizairebla@gmail.com; Amanda.Merricks@hhs.gov; andreatamkin@mac.com; annegreenwald@rcn.com; arcrc@comcast.net; BetsyAbrams@hotmail.com; boddenj@seas.harvard.edu; cathy\_aho@comcast.net; cfbologna@gmail.com; christinepoff@gmail.com; cmuhammad@servings.org; Deborah\_McLellan@comcast.net; DinaRsiegel@aol.com; durgadum@aol.com; eghelfi@yahoo.it; ElliottPE@gmail.com; ginnette\_powell@yahoo.com; Janet.dillon@comcast.net; jasbun@yahoo.com; Jbogletree@gmail.com; jdillon@servings.org; JPriders@comcast.net; Judedot@comcast.net; Ladydanita45@gmail.com; Leslievanc@gmail.com; LPower@partners.org; M9Greenwood@yahoo.com; Mahnaz.Paktinat@gmail.com; Marchray@aol.com; Margaret.Blood@gmail.com; margaret.r.williams@comcast.net; massachusetts62@gmail.com; mduffy333@gmail.com; Merricks2013@gmail.com; Ministergrace@gmail.com; muluembeta4@gmail.com; Nancyrouth@gmail.com; natashater@yahoo.com; niamh\_foley@yahoo.com; nristmusic1@gmail.com; patxavier52@gmail.com; regwhitel@comcast.net; rncurington@aol.com; ro.simpson9@yahoo.com; sarahlsnider@gmail.com; shoshana5th@hotmail.fr; simplyloris@aol.com; skratzig@gmail.com; StricklandAngelam@gmail.com; susan@viniyogajourney.com; tammyb29@gmail.com; tolle.graham@gmail.com; usha1@comcast.net

**Cc:** William Morales <william.morales@boston.gov>; Pat McDonough <Pat.McDonough@boston.gov>; Martha Salamanca <Martha.Salamanca@boston.gov>

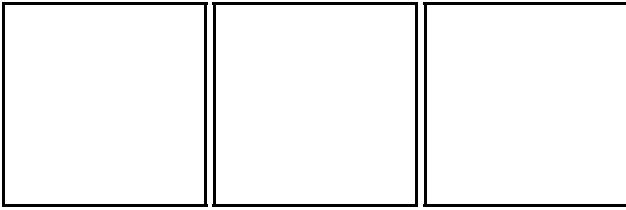
**Subject:** Re: BCYF Henningan facility in Jamaica Plain

Good morning all! Our Commissioner, Will Morales of Boston Centers for Youth & Families, is part of this email thread so he shared your concerns with Boston Public Schools who own and maintain the building. Right away BPS' assistant director of facilities management emailed his staff directly and asked them to look into the exterior light situation, the heating issues and changing the glass in the changing room. The first response shared from BPS last night was that the temperatures in the locker room were fine and the pool and pool space temps were in the low 80s so it is cooler in the locker and changing rooms as it should be. We're going to check on that too to make sure there aren't fluctuations. Another update that came in is that a bucket truck is heading over to the Hennigan to check on the exterior lighting as soon as it finishes up a job at the Irving.

Thank you all for being advocates of the center and school. As I receive other updates on other issues that were mentioned I will share them.

Sandy

**Sandy Holden** (she, her, hers)  
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*Every Neighborhood, One Mission*



This email is subject to [MGL: Chapt.66, Sec.10 Public Records Law](#)

----- Forwarded message -----

From: <[harris4arts@gmail.com](mailto:harris4arts@gmail.com)>

Date: Mon, Oct 28, 2019 at 3:00 PM

Subject: RE: BCYF Henningan facility in Jamaica Plain

To: Matthew O'Malley <[matthew.omalley@boston.gov](mailto:matthew.omalley@boston.gov)>, William Morales <[william.morales@boston.gov](mailto:william.morales@boston.gov)>, Justin McClarey <[justin.mcclarey2@boston.gov](mailto:justin.mcclarey2@boston.gov)>, Michelle Wu <[michelle.wu@boston.gov](mailto:michelle.wu@boston.gov)>, Cassandra Moreno <[cassandra.moreno@boston.gov](mailto:cassandra.moreno@boston.gov)>, Annissa Essaibi-George <[A.E.George@boston.gov](mailto:A.E.George@boston.gov)>

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Good afternoon Matt,

First of all, we all want to express our true appreciation for have taken the time to meet with us and have taken a quick survey of the Henningan facility.

As we all expressed to you personally, we feel that this facility is extremely important to our growing neighborhood.

Those of us who are more habitual users have experienced that adults, youths, and families would be so much more interested in utilizing the facility if more attention is placed to issues that have been brought to the administration's attention for the past 10 years.

Additionally, given that during the day the BCYF facility is utilized by the Hennigan school kids, we feel strongly that it is time to act to ensure that these youths are well taken care of as other schools and BCYF facilities are already doing.

We are grateful to have been able to state some of our concerns to you directly and we are confident that you will take them into careful consideration.

Following your suggestion, we have compiled a list of issues that require immediate attention. Please see below in blue.

With that, there is also a reminder that the BCYF facility has not been addressed in probably 30 years and it is in need of an upgrade and/or plan to revitalize it.

As discussed, we would also welcome an in-person meeting with Mr. Morales, sometime in the next 2 weeks, to review actionable decisions with regards to the items for immediate attention.

**It is our hope that in the very short term viable solutions can be put in place for the items listed below, for the sake of the Henningan school kids and the BCYF members.**

Thank you again for your time and attention to this vital center of our community!

We look forward to hearing from you in the short term.

Best,

JP community and neighbors

Items for **IMMEDIATE ATTENTION** at the BCYF Henningan facility (asks that have been submitted for the past 10 year - at least):

- **Men and women's changing room:**
  - showers, toilets, and sinks need to be **kept clean** - remove hair, garbage, feces, apparel that is left behind, clean ventilation outlets, etc.
  - showers, toilets, and sinks need to be **kept functional** – ensure there is toilet paper, paper towels, and ensure they are working and working properly
  - the heating system needs to work especially in the winter. (Coming from the pool into the changing room is like going into a freezer!)
  - women changing room: part of the access door has glass and the plastic covering the glass is old and cracked, not allowing for privacy. It also part of an area where men can walk by. Quite dangerous for children and young women!
  
- **Pool area:**
  - Pool floor: it needs to be kept clear of objects that can hurt feet (currently users have to use water shoes to avoid cuts, bruises, etc.)
  - Area around the pool: often unkept and not clean.
  - Pool equipment: unorganized, broken or old and no longer useful

There are other BCYF facility that are good examples of a quality maintenance.

- **Security and overseeing:**

- A supervising office in the BCYF area and entrance is essential. This allows for direct observation of the attendees as well as control of their movements.

Currently there is no immediate supervision of the area. There is only a supervisor by the school entrance which is quite far from the BCYF facility. Consequently, it is incredibly easy to enter or exit through the BCYF facility's access door without being detected, posing a danger for anyone (kids and adults) using the facility.

- Kids are often unsupervised and left roaming by themselves, which occasionally creates a misuse of the facility

- **Exterior:**

- The whole exterior area surrounding the facility needs to be maintained. There is always garbage, leftover food, broken boxes, furniture, appliances, etc.
- The walkway right outside the BCYF access door has no light fixtures in its entire length, making it very dangerous given its current set up. There is a light above the access door, but it doesn't always work. A full light system must be installed

- **Payments:**

For everyone benefit (BCYF and members), we suggest to add online payments or debit/credit card option for membership and classes.

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**From:** [harris4arts@gmail.com](mailto:harris4arts@gmail.com) <[harris4arts@gmail.com](mailto:harris4arts@gmail.com)>

**Sent:** Monday, September 23, 2019 10:29 PM

**To:** 'Matthew O'Malley' <[matthew.omalley@boston.gov](mailto:matthew.omalley@boston.gov)>

**Cc:** 'Cassandra Moreno' <[cassandra.moreno@boston.gov](mailto:cassandra.moreno@boston.gov)>; 'Michelle Wu' <[michelle.wu@boston.gov](mailto:michelle.wu@boston.gov)>; 'William Morales' <[william.morales@boston.gov](mailto:william.morales@boston.gov)>; 'Josh Zakim' <[Josh.Zakim@boston.gov](mailto:Josh.Zakim@boston.gov)>; 'michael.f.flaherty' <[Michael.F.Flaherty@boston.gov](mailto:Michael.F.Flaherty@boston.gov)>; 'Annisssa Essaibi-George' <[A.E.George@boston.gov](mailto:A.E.George@boston.gov)>; 'Andrea Campbell' <[Andrea.Campbell@boston.gov](mailto:Andrea.Campbell@boston.gov)>; 'Althea Garrison' <[ALTHEA.GARRISON@boston.gov](mailto:ALTHEA.GARRISON@boston.gov)>; 'Timothy McCarthy' <[Timothy.McCarthy@boston.gov](mailto:Timothy.McCarthy@boston.gov)>; 'Mark Ciommo' <[Mark.Ciommo@boston.gov](mailto:Mark.Ciommo@boston.gov)>; 'Lydia Edwards' <[lydia.edwards@boston.gov](mailto:lydia.edwards@boston.gov)>; 'Ed Flynn' <[ed.flynn@boston.gov](mailto:ed.flynn@boston.gov)>; [Frank.Baker@boston.gov](mailto:Frank.Baker@boston.gov); 'Kim Janey' <[kim.janey@boston.gov](mailto:kim.janey@boston.gov)>

**Subject:** RE: BCYF Henningan facility in Jamaica Plain

Hello Matt,

This is great news!

Thank you for letting us know and for your constant support!

A visit would certainly provide you with a more direct experience of the current conditions, as well as an opportunity to envision how the facility can become more efficient, in step with the times, and ultimately more conducive to our growing neighborhoods and their residents.

We look forward to know about your availability for a visit in October.

Your interest and time given to this matter is very appreciated and valued!

Best,

Luisa

**From:** Matthew O'Malley <[matthew.omalley@boston.gov](mailto:matthew.omalley@boston.gov)>

**Sent:** Monday, September 23, 2019 5:14 PM

**To:** Margaret Blood <[margaret.blood@gmail.com](mailto:margaret.blood@gmail.com)>

**Cc:** LuisaH <[harris4arts@gmail.com](mailto:harris4arts@gmail.com)>; Cassandra Moreno <[cassandra.moreno@boston.gov](mailto:cassandra.moreno@boston.gov)>; Michelle Wu <[michelle.wu@boston.gov](mailto:michelle.wu@boston.gov)>; William Morales <[william.morales@boston.gov](mailto:william.morales@boston.gov)>; Josh Zakim <[Josh.Zakim@boston.gov](mailto:Josh.Zakim@boston.gov)>; michael.f.flaherty <[Michael.F.Flaherty@boston.gov](mailto:Michael.F.Flaherty@boston.gov)>; Annissa Essaibi-George <[A.E.George@boston.gov](mailto:A.E.George@boston.gov)>; Andrea Campbell <[Andrea.Campbell@boston.gov](mailto:Andrea.Campbell@boston.gov)>; Althea Garrison <[ALTHEA.GARRISON@boston.gov](mailto:ALTHEA.GARRISON@boston.gov)>; Timothy McCarthy <[Timothy.McCarthy@boston.gov](mailto:Timothy.McCarthy@boston.gov)>; Mark Ciommo <[Mark.Ciommo@boston.gov](mailto:Mark.Ciommo@boston.gov)>; Lydia Edwards <[lydia.edwards@boston.gov](mailto:lydia.edwards@boston.gov)>; Ed Flynn <[ed.flynn@boston.gov](mailto:ed.flynn@boston.gov)>; [Frank.Baker@boston.gov](mailto:Frank.Baker@boston.gov); Kim Janey <[kim.janey@boston.gov](mailto:kim.janey@boston.gov)>

**Subject:** Re: BCYF Henningan facility in Jamaica Plain

Hi Margaret, Luisa, et al.,

I had a terrific meeting with the JP Community Center Council's Board last month wherein improvements to the Hennigan (as well as EHS) were part of the discussion. Would love to connect at some point in October for a site visit. Luisa and I worked to fix the Lawn Street stairs, so I think this could be a wonderful compliment!

All the best,

Matt O'M

On Mon, Sep 23, 2019 at 1:56 PM Margaret Blood <[margaret.blood@gmail.com](mailto:margaret.blood@gmail.com)> wrote:

Thank you so much, Luisa, for reaching out to our municipal leaders on behalf of our community and the Henningan School Community Center. I have just returned from an extended trip and was delighted to learn that Cassie Moreno of City Councillor Michelle Wu's office has been so responsive. Thank you, Cassie!

I am happy to help in any way that I can to see that the pressing concerns at this facility get addressed. It is sad that such a special community resource that has potential to help so many has fallen into such a terrible state - the children, staff, and community deserve better.

I look forward to hearing about next steps.

Warm regards,

Margaret Blood

Jamaica Plain

On Thu, Sep 19, 2019 at 7:24 AM <[harris4arts@gmail.com](mailto:harris4arts@gmail.com)> wrote:

Good morning Cassie and again thank you for your interest in this matter!

Myself, my neighbors, and those who use the Henningan facility are very appreciative of the time and attention you have offered to explore solutions toward improving the facility and increase community utilization of it.

In updating everyone on our meeting last week, the suggestion was made to include them in the email conversation.

This will allow them to express their thoughts and so providing additional perspectives.

They are BCC'd and will reply directly to everyone.

We look forward to be of help and to support the effort to make this facility a true gem of our expanding neighborhoods (JP, Mission Hill, Brookline).

Warm regards,

Luisa Harris



**From:** [harris4arts@gmail.com](mailto:harris4arts@gmail.com) <[harris4arts@gmail.com](mailto:harris4arts@gmail.com)>

**Sent:** Tuesday, August 6, 2019 10:33 AM

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**Subject:** BCYF Henningan facility in Jamaica Plain

Dear all,

Hope you are enjoying this beautiful summer!

First of all, thank you for your constant and persistent work for our beautiful growing city! It is such a pleasure to see and personally experience the progress and improvements that your work has produced. It makes me truly proud to be a Bostonian!

I am reaching out to bring to your attention an area that, if improved, could yield tangible benefits for both the neighborhood and the City.

In Jamaica Plain, close to Brookline and bordering Mission Hill, there is a facility dedicated to encouraging sports and physical activities for all, teens, individuals, families. The facility is [Boston Center for Youth & Families Henningan](#) located at 200 Heath Street. It offers a basketball court, a baseball court, and an indoor swimming pool.

As you know, this part of Jamaica Plain, Mission Hill, and Brookline is growing, and young families and professionals are moving in, re-balancing what used to be a more student populated area of years back.

The purpose of this note is to bring to your attention the run-down conditions of what could be a modern and welcoming facility that neighbors would actually want to use. A revitalization and upgrade of the overall facility would sustain exercise habits fundamental to one's overall health, encourage an inclusive community spirit, while yielding a more noticeable financial return for the City.

For example, so often people have come to attend a swimming/water aerobics class, or play a game, and never returned because unwilling to use a facility that is neglected, often unkept, and minimally supervised. Although more recently there have been very modest changes, the facility does not present itself as an appealing option as it could.

As a resident of this area, I am beyond grateful to have such a center available in the neighborhood. And as a neighbor, I'm also saddened to see so many people choosing to travel to further out facilities.

Because I use other facilities in the BCYF network, I have no doubt that general improvements and a more involved management can make the BCYF Henningan just as appealing.

Should you wish to hear more about it, I will be glad to organize a meeting with neighbors who currently use the facility to help you gather specific information.

Grateful for attention you will give to this note, it is my hope that you will be willing to consider my invitation to reviewing BCYF Henningan facility in the near future. Please accept my apologies in advance if a revision of the facility is already on your agenda. My objective is to ensure that you are aware of the attention the facility needs and the benefits it can generate.

In thanking you for your time and collaborative spirit, I look forward to hearing from you.

Best regards,

Luisa Harris

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Matt O'Malley

Boston City Councilor, District 6

Interested in receiving neighborhood specific email updates? Please [fill out this short form!](#)

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**William Morales**

Commissioner

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# Jamaica Plain Gazette

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## Residents Raise Major Concerns About Conditions at Hennigan Center

by Seth Daniel • February 21, 2020

When Phyllis Petruzzelli and many of the other female swimmers that utilize the Hennigan Pool and Community Center on Heath Street come to participate in their bi-weekly class, they don't begin the night by warming up or getting dressed.

Typically, the first thing they do is inspect the locker rooms and hallways for cleanliness. The pre-class ritual has been going on so long that it has almost become a joke for the women, were it not so frustrating as well.

Is the large hairball still in the shower?

Is that brown smudge of "something" still on the lockers?

Will there be toilet paper in the stalls that day, or as is usually the case, not?

Swimming, in fact, has become the last thing on their minds as they put on wet suits and tennis shoes to protect themselves from the increasingly dirty water and rough surfaces in the pool. The conditions have been an ongoing issue for the women and others using the Pool and the Center, run by the Boston Center for Youth and Families (BCYF) and the Boston Public Schools (BPS). For years now, they said, they've been complaining, but only recently when the Gazette began looking into the matter did they start getting any substantive response.

"There's no reason that week after week after week there are the same hairballs sitting all over the showers," she said during an interview on site this month. "They cleaned up a little bit this week, but I went and looked to see if they got the hairballs. They didn't. Still there."

Nancy Routh shared a similar story, noting that a giant brown smudge had been on the lockers for more than a year. Often, if it looks like some cleaning has been done, she checks to see if they've tackled the smudge. So far, she said, it persists.

Petruzzelli, Routh, Debra McLellan, Gina White, Luisa Harris, Perlina Mills and Claudine Francois are part of the group that regularly comes to the Hennigan Pool for swim classes with a popular teacher that instructs all over the city – including at nearby facilities like the Mason Pool in Roxbury and the Curtis Hall Pool on Centre Street.

"It's a hidden gem here, but it's a diamond that's definitely in the rough," said Mills. "This is a great time to put some effort into this place. The economy is good and money is coming into the City. Now is the time to get something. We really don't want everything, or a new Center, just some basic cleanliness."

Routh and the other swimmers said they are particularly disturbed by the Hennigan because they go to the Mason and Curtis Hall, and both facilities are far better than the Hennigan.

"I've been coming here for years and I go to other community centers as well," Routh said. "There is a big difference here. There is so much litter all the time. There are four showers that don't work. There's never paper towels or basic things, many times there's not even toilet paper...When you are in the pool and at eye level you can see all the filthy dirt on the deck and the pool isn't much better either. Never mind that the toys are always thrown in the water and in the way."

Added Petruzzelli, "I can't understand why everything is lax here, but not at Curtis Hall or Mason Pool."

Said McLellan, "I was appalled there was no response to major issues that were here and we brought up. It's been going on for a long time. We didn't just start talking about it. It's really concerning to me that (BCYF) Commissioner (Will) Morales or whoever is responsible isn't addressing it."

At the pool, the women say they've been wearing wet suits and tennis shoes while in the pool for protection from the water and the neglected pool floor. The lifeguard chair is unused, as it apparently has been broken for a year. The lifeguards at the pool sit in an old office chair with wheels. None of it seems set up for a high-class user experience.

Security is also an issue.

Lighting on the outside is frequently missing or not operating, creating very dark and isolated corridors for people to exit to as they leave the Center. Also, the ID scanner hasn't worked for some time, and many people seem to enter through a back, emergency exit door that is supposed to be locked.

When the Gazette was there, a lifeguard asked the women to prop the back door open so a food delivery driver could get in to the pool area. That driver arrived, came in the door and delivered the food to the lifeguard, who ate a sub poolside.

No one monitored the delivery man's activities after he made the delivery, and he could have gone virtually anywhere afterward without supervision or detection – including the women's locker rooms or a large youth basketball game going on next to the pool.

"Security is definitely an issue for us and the kids," said Harris. "One thing for me is there is no supervision. Someone could come snatch a kid and no one would know for quite some time...We used to have the ID scanner, but it broke and they don't seem to want to fix it."

Harris and others said they really believe the massive Center could be a huge resource were it taken care of properly and made into the resource it should be.

"More people would come, but they don't because it's filthy," she said. "I have neighbors who came once, but they won't come again. It's a shame because this place could be buzzing with activity. There is so much potential here."

None of the women said they blame the local director, Martha Salamanca, noting that she tries very hard but doesn't seem to have central office support.

Instead, with the help of Councilor Matt O'Malley, they have focused their attention on the higher ups at BCYF and the Boston Public Schools. Numerous e-mails back and forth have produced no results. However, they did report in the days after the Gazette interview that they were able to set up some meetings to address their concerns.

The Gazette contacted the City, who had the Boston Public Schools issue a statement. BPS said they partner with the City's BCYF to try to offer a great experience at the Hennigan and noted that there has been investment in the facility over the last several years.

"The Boston Public Schools works closely with Boston Centers for Youth & Families and our City partners to address any issues within our shared community centers as they arise," read the statement. "Over the last several years, BPS replaced pool heating, ventilation and dehumidification systems and performed upgrades to the locker rooms at the BCYF Hennigan Community Center. We will continue working collaboratively to make sure our facilities are clean, sufficiently stocked, well-maintained and secure for all our students, families, and community members."