



Magnificent six
They do what they
can to help Boston

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Resolved to making a difference

Jan. 1 is a day when many of us resolve to improve ourselves or to help others. All over, there are people who lead by example, who can serve as our models. From the teen mentor to the elderly hospital volunteer to the executive director of an arts nonprofit, here are a half-dozen folks who are doing what they can to make Boston a better place.



GLOBE STAFF PHOTO/JANET KNOTT

Candelaria Silva

Those who live, work, or socialize in Roxbury may have felt Candelaria Silva's hand at some point this year. Toured art studios in October? That's Silva. Discovered the work of filmmakers of color in August? Silva. Purchased the neighborhood literary magazine filled with teen writing in February? Yep, Silva. Attended a May stage reading of fledgling playwrights' works? Silva, again.

Roxbury Open Studios, the Roxbury Film Festival, the Roxbury Literary Annual, and the Playwright Mentorship program are a few of the programs organized by ACT Roxbury. For almost seven years, Silva has headed this cultural organization created to revitalize Roxbury.

"What we're trying to do," says Silva, 50, "is say there's a rich cultural heritage in Roxbury. We wanted to do events that would showcase the artists who have been here for a while, [the] new artists who are moving into the neighborhood, [and] the young people who may have grown up in the greater Roxbury area."

The Film Festival lured about 3,200 people this year. Less successful — because of weather and signage problems, says Silva — was Open

Studios, which drew about 1,200. More than a year ago, ACT Roxbury started its membership program. For a small fee — \$35 for individuals and artists — participants get weekly e-mails about jobs — auditions, calls for artists, etc. — and grants.

"Having over 130 members," says Silva, "people believe in the work that you do."

And Silva — along with her multitude of volunteers — works hard. In the summers, a 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. day isn't unusual. There's also home work: perusing documents that need careful reading in her Ashmont/Adams Street-area house.

"It's pretty intense," says Silva. "Forty hours a week — that actually feels like a vacation."

She's enjoying a real one right now. Silva, who has two adult children, got married Dec. 11. She and her husband, Tessil Collins, used the holidays to visit Silva's family in St. Louis.

Then it's back to Boston for more work: ACT Roxbury's move into new digs at the Roxbury Center for the Arts at Hibernian Hall, in February.

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