



THE PIPELINE

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Cover

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– Rick Carter, Local 12

Cover



The COVID-19 pandemic that emerged earlier this year turned life upside down for everybody. It brought the economy to its knees and had an impact on virtually every sector, including the construction industry. What had been an especially prolonged and robust boom cycle for the region’s building trades came to an abrupt halt in mid-March when most major job sites temporarily closed down.

Nearly all GBPCA contractors suddenly found themselves with little work. And Local 12 plumbers went from essentially full employment to about 80% unemployment almost overnight. Most sites have

Plumbers are also essential workers

Lawn signs, banners, billboards, ads, social media posts, and more have been thanking essential workers such as doctors, nurses, grocery store employees, and others on the front lines during the pandemic. For good reason. While others were quarantining at home, these critical workers never stopped going to work. They have been providing a lifeline—sometimes literally—for people.

But consider this: Have you been following the CDC’s guidance and cleaning your hands much lately? You have plumbers to thank for that.

When COVID cases began surging, temporary hospitals were quickly erected to help address the pressing need for medical care and avoid overwhelming the region’s health care system. Did you know that GBPCA contractors and Local 12 plumbers helped construct the facilities?

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since reopened, although they have been operating under a new wave of regulations and restrictions.

The pandemic has presented a variety of unique and urgent challenges. For example, Local 12’s training center had to quickly replace in-person classes with remote learning. “In modern times—certainly in my lifetime—this has been unprecedented,” says Tim Fandel, Local 12’s business manager.

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Local 12 member Arthur McIntosh beat COVID-19 and marked his 101st birthday with a drive-by celebration. *See page 7.*

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Local 12 welcomes Patrick Mulkerrin as new business agent



Patrick Mulkerrin

To fill the business agent position vacated by Tim Fandel, Local 12 members elected Patrick Mulkerrin earlier this year. Fandel is serving as the local's business manager.

Mulkerrin is the first plumber in his family, but not the first union member. "That's what we do in my family," he says, noting that his father is a laborer and his grandfather was business manager of the laborers local.

Growing up, Mulkerrin says that his family did most of the repairs and work at their house. He remembers pitching in with projects such as rebuilding the deck and replacing water heaters and says that he was always handy and interested in the trades.

To help pay for college, Mulkerrin worked nights doing construction. While on the job, he became fascinated by and drawn to the mechanical trades. "Seeing a project start from nothing and watch as the whole system got built was almost like artwork," Mulkerrin recalls. He decided not to return to college and pursued plumbing as a career instead.

Joining Local 12 in 2006, Mulkerrin apprenticed with GBPCA contractor, Kennedy Mechanical, and worked on the Renaissance Boston Waterfront Hotel, one of the first major projects in the Seaport District. He says he loved the trade from the start. "I had fun every day and came home smiling."

The Great Recession intervened in 2008 and temporarily derailed Mulkerrin's apprenticeship. He was out of work for ten months. The experience, which illustrated the sometimes-cyclical nature of the construction industry, left a deep impression on him. He returned to work and finished his apprenticeship with Cannistraro.

Soon after becoming a journeyman, Mulkerrin got involved with Local 12 and was appointed to the Joint Conference Board, which is comprised of both union officers and contractors. That gave him the opportunity to meet and work with many GBPCA contractors and get to know the management side of the business.

Mulkerrin subsequently ran for and was elected recording secretary for Local 12, was a delegate for the New England pipe trades at the 2016 United Association (UA) convention, and then got the nod as the local's vice president. When the UA asked former business manager Harry Brett to serve as its special representative in New England, the local appointed Mulkerrin as interim business agent at the start of 2020. He was elected to the position in February.

Soon after Mulkerrin became a business agent, the pandemic created chaos and caused 80% unemployment among Local 12 members because of construction site shutdowns. It's been something of an extreme trial by fire.

"There's nothing in any UA manual to prepare anybody for this," Fandel says, referring to the COVID-19 crisis. "Nonetheless, Patrick has been extremely focused and engaged. He is doing a great job despite the circumstances."

For his part, Mulkerrin says that he knew business agents assisted members, but he didn't realize the extent of the involvement—especially amid the

pandemic. At the height of the layoffs, the business agents were kept busy helping members navigate the unemployment system and apply for benefits.

The most frustrating fallout from the pandemic has been the inability to meet face-to-face with members, Mulkerrin says. With in-person union meetings cancelled and most other communication limited to text messages, Facebook posts, phone calls, and other remote means, it's been difficult for the new business agent.

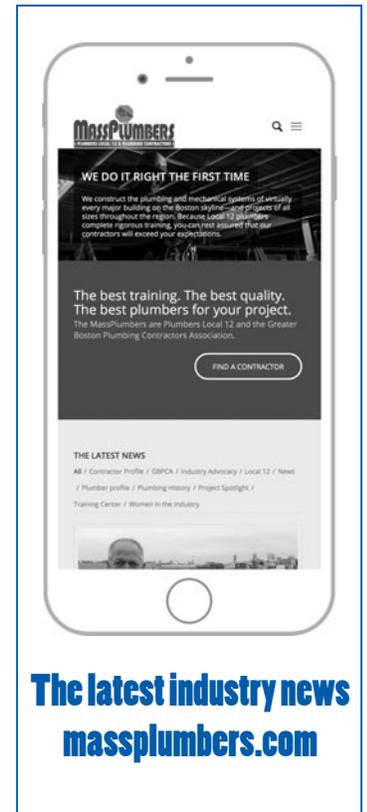
"I look forward to things re-tuning to normal," says Mulkerrin. "I want to meet people at the hall and have personal interactions where we can be with one another."

America's most famous tool was invented here

The next time you reach for a pipe wrench, you might want to consider that you owe a debt of gratitude to Daniel Stillson. He was an engineer at the Boston company, J.J. Walworth Manufacturing, and invented the Stillson wrench in 1869. Some 150 years after he helped revolutionize plumbing, modern-day versions of Stillson's ubiquitous tool remain virtually unchanged.

A recent Boston Globe article written by Michael Fitzgerald featured the Stillson wrench. Bearing the headline, "The best local invention we've forgotten," Fitzgerald traced the tool's development. He indicated that the wrench gained such currency, people referred to it generically as a "Stillson," much the same way that we use the term "Google" today. According to the writer, it became America's most famous tool.

Stillson did not invent the first adjustable wrench. Credit for that goes to Solymann Merrick of



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Springfield, Massachusetts, who, in 1835, patented a wrench with jaws that could be moved by turning a screw. What Stillson did was add angled teeth to the jaws and make the head loose. Those two innovations enabled his wrench to more firmly grip metal pipes, which were replacing wooden pipes in the plumbing trade. The versatile tool allowed plumbers to work with a variety of pipes and fasteners, including ones that were worn. Because of its flexibility, plumbers could replace whole sets of fixed wrenches with a single Stillson.

According to Fitzgerald, "In the mid-19th century, there was no more exciting place to work in the plumbing industry than Boston." In addition to the Stillson wrench, the Walworth company also developed the concept

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Adapting to the new normal

“THIS IS A UNIQUE AND CHALLENGING TIME,” says Jeremy Ryan, executive director of the Greater Boston Plumbing Contractors Association (GBPCA), referring to the conditions that the coronavirus pandemic has imposed on the construction industry. “Our contractors have had to put on new hats. Now they are not just construction and business experts, but also contagious disease and medical health specialists.”

Welcome to the new normal. Once GBPCA contractors and Local 12 plumbers processed and dealt with the initial shutdown of most projects on which they had been working and other immediate effects of the pandemic in mid-March, they then had to figure out how to cope with the longer-term fallout. Like everybody else, they are anxious for a vaccine or treatment to emerge so the virus is no longer a threat. Until then, it’s not exactly business as usual.

A building trades group convened to help prepare for the reopening of construction sites that had been closed in Boston, Cambridge, and Somerville (where the bulk of the region’s major projects are based). Among the participants were general contractors, plumbing and other subcontractor reps, and business agents. They met via conference calls, videoconferencing, and other remote means to talk about issues such as safety and hygiene protocols. Discussions centered on CDC and OSHA guidelines and recommendations.

Taking temperatures, staggering starts, and other modifications

Sites began reopening in May, and most have since resumed. So what do they look like? The details vary slightly from project to project, but they typically include

a core group of updates and changes. Most of them mirror the kinds of safeguards that can be found at many places where people now gather. These include:

- Screening procedure – People admitted onto construction sites have to confirm that they do not have a fever by having their temperatures taken. They also have to answer a series of self-identifying questions indicating that they are symptom-free and have not been exposed to anyone with the virus.
- Staggered starts – Workers from different trades arrive at job sites at different assigned times in the morning so as not to overwhelm the screening process and to prevent large groups from having to congregate in one place.
- Personal protective equipment – Everyone has to wear a facemask, which sometimes has to be an N95 mask, as well as work gloves. In some cases, face shields are also specified.
- Social distancing – Where possible, workers are required to remain six feet apart from others. For high-rise jobs, only five people are allowed in service elevators, including the operators, and they are asked to face away from one another.
- Hand washing – All sites have hand washing stations with soap and hot water (installed by Local 12 plumbers) and hand sanitizer stations.

It may sound like a lot, but those on the ground say that workers at job sites have gotten into a routine and have been able to carry on with their work without too much interruption.

“It’s different, no doubt, but we can adapt,” Barry Keady, Local 12 business agent, says. He notes that when he started, workers at construction sites didn’t al-



ways wear hardhats or safety glasses. With regulations and guidelines now universal, nobody gives donning items like that a second thought. “The masks we have to wear are just another piece of PPE,” adds Keady. “It’s a matter of safety. With COVID-19, we have to be aware of the conditions and deal with them to the best of our training.”

One thing that is different is the size of crews. To accommodate social distancing, there are often limits on the number of workers that can be together on a floor or in a space at any one time. According to Paul Dionne, president of GBPCA contractor P.J. Dionne Company, project timelines are longer because there are less people doing the work. While almost 100% of the jobs that the contractor had been working on have resumed, Dionne says he has less people in the field.

There is also the extra cost of conducting business. Contractors

say that they often have to pay a premium for items such as N95 masks and disinfectant wipes that are in high demand and short supply. There is also the time and energy they have to spend sourcing the items.

There is a new normal at Local 12’s training center as well. With physical classes cancelled, the instructors have shifted to remote learning. The apprentices and teachers have adapted, but the situation is not ideal, says Rick Carter, the center’s director.

“It’s been a challenge. It’s unconventional for us,” Carter says. Much of the curriculum is developed around practical, hands-on instruction presented in a shop setting. Lessons like that do not translate well when presented online.

With the fall session slated to resume in September, Carter is hopeful that at least some of the classes can be held in person.

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New normal

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“We don’t want to do remote unless it’s absolutely necessary,” the director says. The training center will keep an eye on how state guidelines progress for getting back in the classroom. It is possible that the session may be a hybrid of in-person and remote classes.

What might the future hold?

The pandemic has not only presented immediate health and safety concerns. It has also wreaked havoc with the economy and may lead to lasting changes that could have an impact on the region’s construction industry. After many years of unprecedented growth and expansion, there could be a pullback on new projects—or not.

“Medium-term, I don’t expect much to change,” says Ed Strickland, president of William M. Collins Company. “All of our contractors have a pretty good backlog of work. Longer-term, the impact remains to be seen.”

Dionne is bullish on the future. “I’m an optimist. I see things bouncing back,” he says. There has been speculation that with so many people working remotely as a result of the pandemic, the practice may become more ingrained and the demand for office space may decrease. Dionne isn’t so sure. “I think people want to be in social environments. Yes, people can work from home. But I don’t think we’re wired to work there for the rest of our careers.” Office towers and mixed-use projects that include office space have been driving much of the construction boom in the Boston area.

Tim Fandel, Local 12’s business manager, is optimistic as well. “On the residential side, we see a significant lineup of projects and every indication that there will be more to come,” he says. “Talking with our contractors, they are bidding on plenty of new projects.”

Plumbers on the front lines



(L to R) Pat Dean, Mike Cattaneo, and Jim Reddy, Local 12 plumbers working for American Plumbing, helped install a temporary bathroom at Hope Hospital.

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They may not be as visible as doctors and nurses, but, whether there is a pandemic raging or not, plumbers are essential workers.

“If people don’t have hot water, they can’t clean their hands properly. And clean drinking water is absolutely essential for human life,” notes Rick Carter, the director of Local 12’s training center. “That’s always been the plumber’s role. Sanitation is the key to civilization.”

In response to the outbreak, virtually all private construction industry projects came to a halt in the middle of March throughout the cities of Boston, Cambridge, and Somerville. Some Local 12 plumbers were among the first to be called back to work when job sites were cleared to reopen in May. That’s because hand-washing stations are among the new COVID safety standard requirements.

“We’ve installed hundreds of sinks. As specified, every job has a lot of them,” says Barry Keady, Local 12 business agent. He notes that all of the hand washing stations at construction sites have hot water.

Bringing oxygen lines and hope

American Plumbing and Heating helped build Boston Hope, the temporary field hospital built inside the Boston Convention and Exposition Center. In response to the urgency of the pandemic, the

1,000-bed facility was constructed in less than ten days to treat patients with the virus.

The contractor provided certified brazers and medical gas installers for the oxygen system at Boston Hope. Much has been made about ventilators, which have sometimes been in short supply for patients battling the respiratory virus. But oxygen plays an important role as well.

“It’s part of the hierarchy of treatment with respiratory patients,” says Jim Bent, senior project executive for American. “They are put on oxygen before moving to a ventilator.”

According to Lawrence Garside, the American foreman that oversaw the work on the oxygen system, the plumbing crew only had four days to complete the job. Although the turnaround was remarkably fast, the protocols for medical gas, including strict guidelines for installing, purging, and third party testing of the lines, were the same as at permanent medical facilities. “It has to be,” Garside says. “It involves human life.”

“Medical gas is one of the backbones of any hospital—and it is all under the guise of plumbers,” adds Bent. American, which does a lot of health care projects, is currently working on a large expansion for Boston Children’s Hospital that includes 13 operating rooms. “They have miles of pipe in them,” Bent says.

The 1,000 rooms at Boston Hope were in eight-foot-tall cubicles. In order to pipe gas from the oxygen farm placed outside the convention center, the American plumbers hung lines along a temporary truss system and into a service alley behind the cubicles.

Once the field hospital was up and running, American was called back to the site to quickly install three bathrooms. Nurses were having a difficult time constantly walking hundreds of feet to empty bedpans. The makeshift bathrooms were strategically placed close to the patients’ rooms. The plumbers installed ejector pumps and 300 feet of pipe that emptied into holding tanks outside the convention center.

“We’ve ‘temporarily permanently’ installed the lines,” is how Garside explains the job. Boston Hope opened on April 10 and closed on June 3. The plumbing and medical gas systems will eventually come down, but for now, everything has been capped and left in place in case the overflow hospital needs to be reactivated.

“In all my years as a plumber, I’ve never been involved in anything as unique as this project,” says Garside, who has been working in the industry for 19 years. “I liked the challenge.”

What about office buildings and other places that may have been dormant for months during the pandemic? As buildings prepare to reopen, plumbers often work behind the scenes there as well. They know the protocols to test and run plumbing and water systems that have been sitting idle.

“We make sure that Legionnaire’s and other bacteria hasn’t grown in stagnant water,” says Local 12’s Carter. “People take for granted that you can just turn on the faucet and you get clean drinking water.”

Pandemic throws a wrench into building trades

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As information about the pandemic started to emerge and evolve, everyone was trying to understand the coronavirus and evaluate its threat. When Boston Mayor Marty Walsh initially ordered the shutdown of construction sites in mid-March, it was unexpected, Fandel says. “As painful and disruptive as it has been,” he adds, “it seems like it was the right call. When we look back, the approach and the level of seriousness that the mayor, governor, and others have given this issue will be validated.”

“When we look back, the approach and the level of seriousness that the mayor, governor, and others have given this issue will be validated.”

—Tim Fandel, Local 12

Along with Boston, Cambridge and Somerville officials also shuttered construction sites around the same time. The three cities account for most of the major building projects in the region. Some construction did continue in other locations. And some public projects and others that were deemed essential remained open in Boston and elsewhere. But the impact from the pandemic response was far-reaching.

Contractors confront COVID fallout

According to Paul Dionne, president of GBPCA contractor P.J. Dionne Company, he went from 170 employees down to 50 as projects such as a mixed-use development at Somerville’s Assembly Row closed down. Some work continued in earnest, however.

“We were busier than ever with our office staff,” Dionne says, explaining that employees took advantage of the downtime to focus on upfront work such as

coordination and computer design of projects. To accommodate staff members and allow enough room for social distancing, the company is seeking additional office space. Some employees have been working remotely from their homes.

Likewise, designers and budget managers at GBPCA contractor, William M. Collins Company, also decamped to their home offices while a skeleton crew held down the fort at its Braintree headquarters. Ed Strickland, the shop’s president, estimates that he furloughed

about 80% of his crew when most of the company’s projects shut down. He credits the federal government’s Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) for helping to cover overhead for the employees that remained.

“We didn’t have any income coming in,” Strickland says. “With a three-month gap, we’ve essentially cut out one quarter of our revenue for the year. With the PPP loan, we marched on.”

Training center adjusts

With the pandemic taking hold, the training center cancelled its classes in the middle of March. “We had to scramble to figure out what to do after we shut the doors,” Fandel says. “We had to shift gears quickly.”

According to Rick Carter, the training center’s director, he and his staff had been talking about introducing remote learning options for a while. Like many initiatives that may have otherwise taken months or years but were rapidly deployed due to the conditions imposed by the pandemic, the center began offering elec-

tronic classes by early April for the following session.

The United Association (UA), the national organization to which Local 12 belongs, has been working with the “Blackboard” online learning system and was promoting remote learning well before the pandemic. Local 12’s training center team was able to refer to UA instructional videos about how to use the system and other resources.

GBPCA and Local 12 step up to help the community

- Organizations donate \$80,000 during pandemic

As the COVID-19 outbreak began causing havoc and disrupting the economy, Joe Valante, president of Valante Mechanical, was struck by the suffering it was causing. When he learned that many people suddenly didn’t have the money to buy groceries and saw that food banks were having great difficulty keeping up with demand, he thought that the plumbing industry should try and help out. As president of the Greater Boston Plumbing Contractors Association (GBPCA), he sounded the call to his colleagues in the contractors’ organization as well as to their partners at Local 12.

They came through. Big time. Together, the two groups do-

After a crash course in remote teaching, the center’s instructors moved online. “They worked tirelessly transferring info and getting up to speed,” Carter says. The center got the remote hours approved as fulfilling apprenticeship requirements. Thanks to the staff’s hard work, Local 12’s apprentices were able to complete the academic year by the end of June, and the fifth-year apprentices were able to graduate on time in May.

nated a total of \$80,000 with half supporting the Greater Boston Food Bank and half going to the Boston Resiliency Fund.

“We owe our livelihood to Boston and the surrounding cities and towns,” Valante explains. “I think it’s only right to help the communities at a great time of need.” His plea resonated with his fellow contractors as the GBPCA’s board decided to double the contributions that were originally proposed.

The organization was able to provide the needed support “thanks to many years of responsible, conservative spending and forward thinking,” added

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Representing Local 12, Business Agent Jim Vaughan (R) donated boxes of N95 masks to healthcare workers as part of a Building and Construction Trades Council drive.

Inspiring 100-year-old Local 12 member battles COVID-19 and wins

“HE’S A FIGHTER,” says Chip McIntosh, explaining how his father, 100-year-old Arthur “Mac” McIntosh, was able to battle coronavirus and emerge victorious. But the retired plumber, who has been a Local 12 member for 65 years, didn’t go it alone. He also had the help and support of his family.

In mid-March, Chip, who lives with and helps care for Arthur in their Quincy home, contracted the virus and relocated to a hotel to quarantine himself. His sister, Marifrances McIntosh, moved in to take over the care of their father. A couple of weeks later, Arthur developed a fever, fatigue, and other telltale symptoms of coronavirus. Marifrances also fell ill with COVID-19.

“We decided that we would give [Arthur] really good nursing care at home rather than send him to the hospital,” says Chip, who is a nurse practitioner. Marifrances and her two sisters are also nurses. They reasoned that their father wouldn’t have been able to have visitors in a hospital, and that the isolation would be difficult for him. Arthur also wouldn’t have had the loving care that his family was able to offer.

Chip, who had recovered enough to resume caring for Arthur, returned home. It took



The media, including WBZ TV, reported about Arthur McIntosh.

some effort to get his father moving, drinking, and eating, but he persisted.

“He’s famous for saying, ‘I’m not hungry. Leave me alone.’” Chip says about his dad. “Then I’d get him up, bring him to the kitchen, put a big serving of meat loaf in front of him, and he’d eat the whole thing.”

Once Arthur was able to handle the routine, his family would get him outside daily to walk with his walker. Slowly, but surely, they nursed him back to health.

By the middle of May, Arthur was able to celebrate his 101st birthday, which was captured by WBZ TV and broadcast on the news. Practicing social distancing, about 30 cars drove by his home to join in the festivities. Also on his birthday, both Arthur and Chip got test results indicating

that they no longer had COVID-19. That enabled them to gather with other family members to mark the occasion as well. “That was a great birthday present,” Chip says.

Arthur served as an Army sergeant in Europe during World War II. When he returned after the war, he reunited with his girlfriend, Agnes, and married her. Arthur went to work for P.F. Russo Plumbing and Heating Company and pursued a career as a plumber. His father-in-law, Patrick F. Russo, owned the Hyde Park shop. While attending the Franklin Institute in Boston, Arthur learned to read blueprints and developed other industry skills.

He joined Local 12 in the 1950s and worked for Crane Plumbing, eventually serving as an outside super. Among the jobs Arthur worked on was the Prudential Center. He also worked as an outside super for J.C. Higgins. He retired in 1986.

According to Chip, Arthur has “always been a fighter and a problem solver. He’d never give up until the job was done.” That kind of focus and attitude are good skills to have for a plumber. And for someone fighting coronavirus at the age of 100.



Stillson wrench

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of steam heating systems and manufactured the Walworth radiator. The Trimont Company, based in Roxbury from 1902 to 1954, was also known for its wrenches as well as other pipefitting tools.

Following the conventions of the day, when Stillson brought the prototype of his wrench to his bosses at Walworth for consideration, they insisted that the inventor apply for the patent and own the tool. Through a licensing arrangement with the Boston company to manufacture and sell the wrench, Stillson earned fees estimated at \$100,000 throughout the course of his life. That’s equivalent to \$3 million in 2020.

Walworth relocated to Texas in the 1950s and then to Mexico in the 1970s. After the patent expired, other companies issued their own versions of the Stillson.

Interestingly, Walworth’s factory was located in Cambridge in a building that had previously housed a horse-drawn carriage manufacturer. Later, Edwin Land bought the building and used it to develop his Polaroid instant camera. Today, MIT owns the space and runs a company known as the Engine there. It welcomes tech startups in the energy, biotech, and manufacturing fields.

Who knows? One of them may develop something as game changing as the Stillson wrench.

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Local 12 members donated their time to help work at a food bank established at the Boston Housing Authority. In the wake of the pandemic and the financial crisis it has caused, many people have been experiencing food insecurity.

PCA and Local 12 grant scholarships

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must strive to learn and better themselves.”

The children of employees working for member contractors as well as the children of Local 12 members working for contractors are eligible for the GBPCA scholarships. Funds generated by the organization’s annual golf outing and the generosity of sponsors that support the outing help make the scholarships possible. This year’s golf event will be held on September 28 at the Wollaston Golf Club in Milton.

Local 12 also has scholarship opportunities for sons and daughters of its members. They are awarded through the Massachusetts AFL-CIO’s scholarship program. This year, the union gave 19 high school seniors scholarships totaling \$27,000. The union also offers scholarships through the United Association with which it is affiliated and The Massachusetts Coalition of Taft Hartley Trust Funds.

While the GBPCA’s remote event may have been unusual, it did have at least one benefit. The scholarship dinner typically welcomes about 130 guests, but over 200 people were able to “attend” this year’s ceremony by logging on to it.

Benefits

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ear he and the business agents offer to members.

Gill notes that he has been through downturns before, including the recession of the early 1990s, the 2002 tech bubble burst, and the 2008 real estate market and banking collapse. “Nobody can prepare for these,” he says. But, he notes with optimism, people in Local 12 weathered those storms and will weather the COVID-19 pandemic “thanks to generations of strong leadership and top-notch employers. We’ve been around for 130 years. We’re not going anywhere.”

Organizations donate money, time, equipment

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Jeremy Ryan, GBPCA’s executive director.

Likewise, Local 12 officials responded to the call with equal enthusiasm by matching the donations. “We may not realize how challenging it can be for people to get necessities like food during difficult times,” says Tim Fandel, the local’s business manager. In addition to the making the monetary contributions, the union helped in other ways. For example, a group of Local 12 members distributed groceries at a food bank set up at the Boston Housing Authority. “We have a long history of supporting the community,” notes Fandel.

“We are very grateful for the incredible generosity of the Greater Boston PCA and the Plumbers and Gasfitters Local Union 12,” says Alisha Collins, the Greater Boston Food Bank’s director of corporate and community engagement.

The organization helps address food insecurity in the region, which has been compounded by the pandemic’s effect on the economy. Since March, the food bank has experienced the three largest distribution months in its 40-year history. “This donation will translate into 120,000 meals going to those who need it most and help to ensure that our operations can continue uninterrupted as we respond to historic levels of demand in our community,” Collins adds.

The Boston Resiliency Fund was established by Mayor Martin Walsh to provide food for children and seniors, technology for students engaged in remote learning, and support to first responders and healthcare workers in the city.

“The outpouring of support and generosity that we’ve seen from our partner organizations

has been tremendous,” says Walsh. “I want to thank the Greater Boston Plumbing Contractors Association and the Plumbers and Gasfitters Local Union 12 for their generous contribution, which will go a long way during this difficult time.”

In March, when there was a dire need for personal protective equipment (PPE) among frontline health care workers, the Boston area’s Building and Construction Trades Council organized a drive to collect respirators and other material. It encouraged industry workers and contractors to donate surplus equipment, including N95 masks, which is used at construction sites.

Spearheaded by Jim Vaughan, Local 12 business agent, the union donated boxes of N95 masks. Along with donations from other trades, the Boston Public Health Commission distributed the PPE to first responders and health care providers.

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Plumbers & Gasfitters Boston Local 12
1240 Massachusetts Avenue
Boston, MA 02125
617-288-6200

Editorial Board

Tim Fandel

Business Manager, U.A. Local 12

Roger Gill

Funds Administrator, U.A. Local 12

Barry Keady

Business Agent, U.A. Local 12

Jeremy Ryan

**Executive Director,
Greater Boston PCA**

Joseph Valante

President, Greater Boston PCA

The Pipeline is written and designed by
Arthur Levine, The ART of Communications
arthur@theartofcom.com