

## CHAI Works-South helps local seniors displaced by fire

"We take care of our neighbors," said Heidi Isler, the manager of JF&CS CHAI Works-South in Canton. "It's as simple as that."

When Isler found out about the recent fire at a housing complex for senior citizens in nearby Stoughton, she knew that the participants in the community-based day program for adults with disabilities would want to help.

According to WBZ News, a lightning strike likely sparked the July 18 fire at the Stoughton Housing Authority on Capen Street. Firefighters safely evacuated 53 people from the senior housing complex, but the building suffered extensive damage.

"Some of the older adults affected by the fire lost everything," said Isler. "We had to do something to show our neighbors that we were thinking of them."

### Bringing Something Beautiful

On Monday, July 22, Isler and a group of CHAI Works-South participants visited the two hotels where the displaced seniors were staying. The CHAI Works crew arrived with a bounty of colorful flowers that were donated by the Shaw's supermarket in Cobb's Corner.

"We brought flowers because we wanted those affected by the fire to have something beautiful during this difficult time," explained Isler. In addition to the flowers, the CHAI Works-South group also donated a variety of board games so the fire victims would have something to do during their hotel stay.

The guests and staff at the two

hotels were surprised and deeply touched by these donations. A staff member at one of the hotels told the CHAI Works participants that they were heroes for their work that day. The participants took great pride in knowing that their volunteering had brightened the days of the people displaced by the fire.

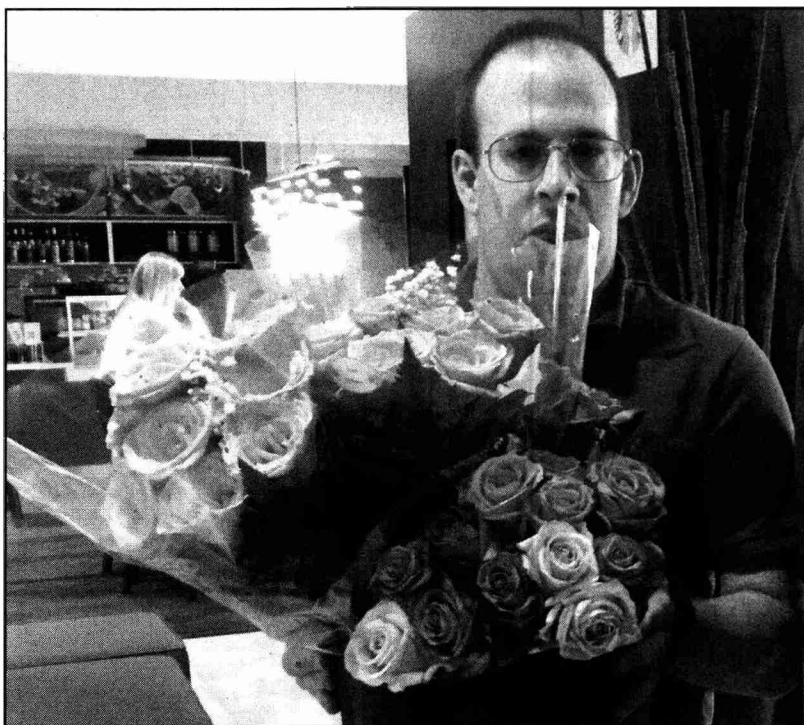
### Part of the Community

Isler is already planning more ways for CHAI Works-South to assist the older adults who lost their homes. CHAI Works participants have created cards for the seniors, and Isler is in contact with the Stoughton Council on Aging and the Old Colony YMCA as they coordinate their response to the fire. The YMCA is spearheading an effort to collect toiletries for the displaced people, and CHAI Works has volunteered to deliver these items.

"CHAI Works-South wants to help in any way we can," said Isler. "We have been talking a lot with our participants about being grateful for what we have and the importance of lending a hand to those in need. CHAI Works is part of this community, and we are here to lift our neighbors up."

*JF&CS Day Programming and Employment Services create meaningful and fulfilling opportunities for individuals with disabilities to lead productive and integrated lives in their communities and increase their feelings of self-worth and confidence. For more information, call 781-647-5327 or go to [www.jfcsboston.org/Our-Services/CHAI-Services/Day-Programming-and-Employment-Services/CHAI-Works](http://www.jfcsboston.org/Our-Services/CHAI-Services/Day-Programming-and-Employment-Services/CHAI-Works).*





**A CHAI Works-South participant delivers flowers to the Stoughton seniors displaced by a recent fire.**