



Children's Services of Roxbury Announces the Passing of Rev. Richard Richardson, Co-Founder of CSR and Minister of the St. Paul AME Church

'A humble man who worked tirelessly on behalf of people in need'

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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BOSTON, MASS — Rev. Richard Richardson, the former pastor of the St. Paul African Methodist Episcopal Church in Cambridge and a member of the Black Ministerial Alliance of Greater Boston, who with his wife Jestina raised six children and served as foster parents for more than 50 children of color while founding one of Massachusetts' largest Black-run human service agencies, has passed away at the age of 95 at his home in Lakeland, FL.

The Richardsons founded what would become [Children's Services of Roxbury](#) (CSR) in 1972, after a career that included jobs at Digital Equipment Corporation and General Electric and a call to the ministry that Rev. Richardson said he had to answer. In a 2022 interview commemorating CSR's 50th anniversary, Rev. Richardson said he never set out to create an organization that would become a beacon of hope and comfort for children and families in crisis, nor did he envision the many ways the organization would impact people's lives. It started when the couple welcomed foster children into their home.

"We just felt that was the right thing to do to try to help these children, you know, feel like they, like, like they're being valued and most foster kids will tell you that, you know, they never felt valued," Rev. Richardson said.

Reflecting Rev. Richardson's passing, CSR Chief Executive Officer Sandra McCroom said he was a humble man who worked tirelessly on behalf of people in need, who were sometimes overlooked and underappreciated. "Rev. Richardson was a rare and extraordinary leader who built CSR on the belief that service is sacred and that our work must always recognize everyone's humanity, and dignity, despite their circumstances," said McCroom "He expected excellence from all of us, not for ego, but because he understood the stakes. He infused in all of us his passion for the unconditional love for all people and our responsibility to be of service to each other and our community. We feel his loss so profoundly, and it is an honor to carry his legacy forward with the same fierce love and purpose he exemplified."

Today, CSR brings peace of mind to Massachusetts' most vulnerable families, serving 6,500 children and families in Greater Boston, in addition to running programs across the state, in Worcester, Lowell, Springfield, Pittsfield among others. Rev. Richardson served on the organizations-board up until his death, providing strategic direction, insight and guidance.

Rev. Richardson spoke of his mandate to take care of children in order to strengthen families and communities. "If you take care of the children, [the] adults will end up being okay," he said. "You hope that kids who are supported by these programs become citizens [and] contributors" to their world. "You've got to build hope, let them know this is what's available for you, and instill in children the desire to be the best that you can."

Former [Gov. Charlie Baker](#) would often visit Children's Services of Roxbury offices, particularly during his time as Massachusetts Secretary of Administration and Finance, for a change of pace from his office and enjoy paper bag lunches with Rev. Richardson. In 2024, Rev. and Mrs. Richardson received the Drum Major Award at the 2024 Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Breakfast.

"His imprint on CSR is a set of core values and a spirituality that supersedes religion. It is the spirit of loving and caring for our community that remains the essence of CSR—and we will continue that work in Reverend Richardson's honor," McCroom said.

Photos of Rev. Richardson are available [here](#).

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About Children's Services of Roxbury:

Children's Services of Roxbury (CSR) is celebrating over 50 years of providing wraparound programs for children and families that include family shelter, culturally attuned behavioral health services, foster care and family support services, early education and childcare, and youth development programs. CSR is one of Massachusetts' largest Black-run nonprofit organizations, led by a Board and staff that represent the diverse communities it serves. CSR's programs and services demonstrate practices that break the cycle of systemic racism for future generations and empower families and young adults on their journey from poverty to stability and wealth-building. Learn more at www.csrox.org

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