

# The West End Museum

150 STANIFORD STREET, SUITE 7, BOSTON, MA 02114

## **Art Exhibit is Memoir of Life, Death, and Healing in the Old West End of Boston**

**For Immediate Release  
August 12, 2011**

Boston, MA—On September 1, 2011, the West End Museum will premiere a new art show featuring works of Boston artist Evelyn Berde. “Leaving the River” is a multi-media art installation which explores the impact the government-ordered condemnation and destruction of Boston's thriving West End neighborhood in the late 1950's and early 1960's had on its residents, including Berde's family, and, ultimately, on the artist's life and artistic development.

Berde's works focus on three overlapping events from her childhood: her family's forced eviction from the neighborhood as part of Boston's urban renewal; the tragic drowning of her brother in the Charles River; and her medical battle with congenital scoliosis. Berde's art reflects how, as a young girl, she witnessed the tragedies of death and disability that befell her family and herself.

The exhibit uses painting, sculpture, collage, period furniture and clothing, sounds, and other media to recreate the life and death of the neighborhood, and to document how Berde came to terms with its destruction at the same time she confronted the death of her 9 year-old brother.

As her family sought comfort in the Church, Berde used art as a therapeutic tool and a path to healing. Among the works included in “Leaving the River” are unconventional renderings of familiar religious images.

The installation captures the reminiscences of surviving West End residents who describe the pain of watching the wrecking ball destroy the neighborhood—and the sense of home and family they lost. “Leaving the River” interposes these sad reminiscences with other, happier ones through photographs and works of art documenting the stark contrast between the vibrancy of the West End of the 1950's and the desolation and rubble that remained after it was bulldozed to the ground.

Duane Lucia, Executive Director of the West End Museum, will serve as curator for this exhibit which runs through October 8, 2011.

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*About the West End Museum:*

*The West End Museum is dedicated to the collection, preservation and interpretation of the history and culture of the West End neighborhood. The Museum's permanent exhibit, "The Last Tenement," highlights the immigrant history of the neighborhood through its decimation under Urban Renewal in 1959; two additional galleries feature rotating exhibits. The Museum is located near North Station at 150 Staniford St. Suite 7. Hours: Tuesday – Friday 12:00am – 5:00pm, Saturday 11:00am – 4:00pm. Admission is free*

## **Schedule of Events**

### **"Leaving the River" Opening Reception**

Thursday, September 8, 2011 at 6:30pm

@ West End Museum

FREE

View the exhibit and meet the artist; refreshments will be served.

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### **Movie: "Understanding Urban Renewal..."**

Tuesday, September 13, 2011 at 7:00pm

@ West End Museum

FREE

One of Jane Jacobs' only Boston appearances on film will be shown along with Ric Burn's episode 7 of his documentary "New York", which outlines the federal Urban Renewal program: Title 1, Title 2 and the Federal Highway Act.

### **Artist Talk: "Leaving the River"**

Thursday, September 15, at 6:30pm

@ West End Museum

FREE

Artist, Evelyn Berde, speaks about the process of creating her installation: how the pieces evolved, the role art plays in helping to heal the memories of post-traumatic stress disease and how telling her story has invited others to share their memories through art.

### **West End Mass**

Sunday, September 18, 2011 at 10am

@ St. Josephs Church, 68 Cardinal O'Connell Way, Boston, MA 02114

<http://stjosephboston.com/> 617 523 4342

**"Leaving the River": West Ender Reception**

Sunday, September 18, 2011 at 12pm

@ West End Museum

FREE

"Leaving the River" family reception; art installation by former West Ender Evelyn Berde. View the exhibit and meet the artist; refreshments will be served.

**Artist Talk: "Art as Healer..."**

Tuesday, September 20, 2011 at 12pm

@ West End Museum

FREE

Magical Thinking and Play Evelyn Berde and Dr. Susan Linn talks about how the creative process helps people survive. How do children survive in the midst of trauma and depression in a family? This talk will focus on the use of art and play as coping methods for children.

**Artist Talk: "Telling Our Stories..."**

Thursday, September 22, 2011 at 6:30pm

@ West End Museum

FREE

Artist Evelyn Berde and Writer Susan Monsky discuss the value of art as memoir, the connection of words and images in creating a memoir and the different ways of telling our stories. How do we begin? What direction should I go in? What tools will help me? Why do we tell our stories?

**Children's Day: "Creating Stories"**

Saturday 9/24 at 11am

@ West End Museum

FREE

A Workshop for Children to create their Stories, with artist Evelyn Berde, photographer Ariel Kessler, and puppeteer and ventriloquist Susan Linn and her beloved puppet 'Audrey Duck'. Great Materials will be supplied.

**Jazz: 'Return of the Bright Moments Band'**

Saturday 9/24 at 7:30pm

@ West End Museum

FREE

Playing the music of Rahsaan Roland Kirk and Charles Mingus; Featuring multi-instrumentalist Bob Drinkwater along with, Bob McCloskey (Tenor Sax), John Licata (Trombone), Dave Gold (Bass), Rick Lynch (Piano), John Nourse (Drums).

**Tour: "Remarkable Jewish Women in Boston's West End"**

Sunday, September 25, 2011 at 1pm

@ West End Museum and Vilna Shul

**Helaine Davis & Linda Stern** / Tour Guides

Cost: \$10

This event will be co-sponsored by Jewish Women in Boston History and Boston Women's Heritage Trail. 1:00pm Attendees gather at Vilna Shul 1:10-1:30pm Tour of Vilna Shul; 1:30-2:30pm Walk of West End (BPL/West End Branch, Puffers Building, West End House, African Meeting House and Smith Court Residences, O'Connell Way (Formerly Allen Street)); 2:30pm arrive at West End Museum for tour of exhibits with a focus on Jewish history. Led by librarians Helaine Davis & Linda Stern; suggested donation \$10.

Vilna Shul is closest to MGH T stop.

RSVP [helainedavis@gmail.com](mailto:helainedavis@gmail.com)

**Artist Talk: "Surviving Our Losses"**

Tuesday, October 4, 2011 at 7pm

@ West End Museum

FREE

Join in a discussion focusing on the many ways that we grieve and survive traumatic losses. Deborah Rivlin, Bereavement Educator, Dianne Cella, Pediatric Nurse, and Evelyn Berde will speak.