

A circular portrait of Charles Boateng, a Black man with a short beard and mustache, smiling. He is wearing a blue patterned shirt. The portrait is set against a dark red background that also serves as the header background.

Welcome, Charles Boateng

Drug Free Communities
Program Coordinator

Where did you work prior to coming to Dedham?

Before Dedham, I worked at Manet Community Health Center in Quincy as a prevention specialist. My tasks included constructing plans and procedures for harm reduction material distribution, advertising, and community outreach. In addition, I helped to coordinate with drug treatment facilities, homeless shelters, and local organizations to offer infectious disease testing and risk reduction counseling, as well as referrals to PrEP, MAT, and Naloxone services.

How many years of experience do you have working as a drug and alcohol awareness program coordinator?

I have 3 years of experience working in health and specifically in substance use. This would be my first year working as a program coordinator.

What are your goals as the new DOSA Program Coordinator here in Dedham?

My primary goal is to be myself! I believe being who I am and adding my unique perspective will benefit DOSA. One practical goal I have is to document events, and memorable moments in video form. My background in film and video editing has already been helpful in creating video promotion for our first event named Dunkin' with DOSA and the DYC. I directed the youth ambassadors and the program director Krissy King in a short sketch where we promoted the event. Overall, I want to make a positive impact on this community, and I believe my social identities, natural empathy, and talents will have a positive effect on DOSA and Dedham as a whole.

What aspect of this role are you most excited about?

I am most excited to learn and connect with other people. I have always been a curious person, so, I am really looking forward to building knowledge and finding different ways to apply that information. One of my favorite ways to learn is to connect and network with everyone! I believe everyone's unique experiences offer a different perspective and I am always willing to soak in that information to better myself and those around me.

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What are some challenges you have faced in your role in during the pandemic and how have you overcome them?

Some of the main challenges Covid-19 has created is simply not being able to connect with people. Since humans are so communal, it has been tough to not physically interact with the youth as much as DOSA would like to. This limits the kinds of events and activities we can offer since we are prioritizing everyone's health. Personally, this pandemic has also made me very cautious since I live with my parents who are both at higher risk because of their age and health.

Are there any programs or events you have organized in your past roles that you would like to start here in Dedham?

Something I am interested in is possibly establishing a community garden for young adults to maintain and take ownership! Community gardens bring people together and empower the community through hard work, goal setting and producing healthier food options. This will give DOSA another opportunity to connect with members of the community and share tools and advice for making healthy choices.

What are your hobbies/interests when not at work?

When I am not working, I love to do absolutely nothing! I love to watch shows, movies, and anime. I also love making videos in my free time. Taking walks and enjoying the sun. I really like to do as little as possible in my free time.

Do you have a mantra you often refer to or live by that keeps you motivated and energized?

The only mantra that comes to mind is something my mom has always told me, which is life is a fight! Whenever I am down, frustrated or stressed I tell myself it is not supposed to be easy and that I must keep fighting on. I think this mantra comes from all the hardships my family has gone through in leaving Ghana to come to the United States. We lived in the projects of Cambridge for a long time and experienced the harsh and long-lasting effects of poverty. This has taught me to be resilient and to keep fighting on. Lately, I have been meditating and practicing mindfulness which has been very therapeutic for me!



Dedham Organization for Substance Awareness (DOSA) staff (left to right):

Kristina King (Program Director),
Charles Boateng (Program
Coordinator), and Jessica Tracy (Public
Health Nurse)



To learn more about DOSA,
please visit their website at
www.dedhamcoalition.org