



COURTESY UTEC

Celebrating at Gillette Stadium on Sept. 8 were, from left, Desiree Thornton, UTEC young adult; Carlos Collazo, UTEC streetworker; Filix Nieves, UTEC young adult; Armando Melo, UTEC young adult; Francellis Quinones, organizing program manager; Will Vilas-Novas, director of workforce development; and Gregg Croteau, chief executive officer.

## Patriots Foundation picks UTEC as 'Community Captain'

### Staff Report

**LOWELL »** A well-known and respected Lowell nonprofit features prominently in a new initiative created by the New England Patriots Foundation and Bank of America designed to build deeper relationships with the agencies and the populations they serve.

The new program is called

"Community Captains." It was launched last week at Gillette Stadium and includes Lowell's own UTEC.

The Patriots Foundation and Bank of America hand-selected each of the nonprofit organizations, which, besides UTEC, includes Abby's House in Worcester; La Colaborativa in Chelsea; The Food Bank of Western Mass in Hatfield;

Girls Inc. of the Valley in Holyoke; and Sojourner House in Providence, R.I.

Over the next two years, the Patriots Foundation and Bank of America will work closely with the six nonprofit organizations. The goal of the program is to establish a deeper understanding of the community efforts of each and to help each charity serve their con-

stituents more effectively.

A total of \$300,000 in donations will be granted to the Community Captains — \$50,000 for each organization. In addition to financial support, each of the nonprofits will receive in-kind donations, visits from the Patriots Foundation and Bank of America, access to additional support,

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including Bank of America's Better Money Habits program, and much more.

"It was my first time at Gillette Stadium, and it was an amazing experience!! I felt really proud to be a part of the group being recognized for their work in the community," said Armando Melo, a UTEC young adult.

"We are thrilled that UTEC has been selected as

a Community Captain by the Patriots and Bank of America, who have each been incredible uplifters of our communities," said UTEC CEO Gregg Croteau. "Our young adults work hard to show up everyday and work toward their goals, and we really appreciate this investment in their future."

"We are excited to launch this new charitable initiative with our great partners at Bank of America," said Josh Kraft, New England Patriots Foundation president. "We are all

about building stronger communities, so we are excited to join forces with these six grassroots organizations and support the essential programs they provide to thousands of individuals across New England."

"The nonprofit organizations supported by this new initiative are doing vital work in the community. The positive impact they have on the people and families they serve is extraordinary," said Miceal Chamberlain, president at Bank of America

Massachusetts. "Together with the Patriots Foundation, our goal is to provide them with the tools and resources they need to succeed at a time when the demand placed on nonprofits throughout the region has greatly increased."

Staff and board members from each of the six organizations attended a special kickoff event at Gillette Stadium on Sept. 8. The presentation was led by Kraft and Chamberlain. Of course, UTEC was well represented.