2017 Summer Program Spotlights:

**TAPS (Teaching Assistants in Public Schools)**

TAPS (Teaching Assistants in Public Schools) is celebrating 20 years of service with the Waltham Group! Although we have had a few different names throughout the years, we have always served the same purpose: helping teachers foster the best learning environments for children in the Waltham Public School system. We were started as Waltham Reads in 1997 as a response to President Bill Clinton’s “America Reads” Challenge. In 1996, Clinton proposed that at least half of college students’ work study funds be dedicated to community service (including 100,000 work study slots for reading tutors). His goal was to help all children in the United States be at equal reading levels by third grade. From there, we transitioned to TIPS (Tutoring in Public Schools) in the early 2000s where students served in classrooms and in after school programs. This year, we changed our name to TAPS to more accurately reflect the work our volunteers do to make the classroom experience the best it can be. In addition to our 20th birthday party (which included ice cream) we recently completed mid-semester check-ins with all of our volunteers to share all of the wonderful feedback we received from the teachers they work with. In honor of all of these teachers, our volunteers will be tabling in the Shapiro Campus Center on May 1st to celebrate National Teacher Appreciation Day (May 2nd). We’ll be asking Brandeis students how teachers and professors have impacted them over the years. We will then send these notes and gifts to the elementary schools we serve to express the impact that teachers have on their students and the community beyond.

**Habitat for Humanity:**

Brandeis University’s Habitat for Humanity chapter strives [to ensure] that all individuals have safe, decent, affordable housing through education, advocacy, and volunteering in the national and Greater Boston communities. Throughout the fall and spring, students have volunteered with the North Shore affiliate to work on framing a new single-family home in Lynn, MA. We have also worked in South Hamilton to clear space and frame two new single-family homes throughout the fall and spring. Spring breaks have also kept the Habitat chapter busy: in February, a group of 10 students traveled to Elizabethtown, KY. They spent the week putting up vinyl siding while learning about the local community (the birthplace of Abraham Lincoln, as it turns out). Similarly, a group of students traveled to Rockport, ME during the April break to help with the construction of a single-family home. In the week, they were able to finish the home’s siding. On campus, the chapter co-hosted a successful Deis Impact event to discuss housing insecurity in Waltham, and how we - as a Brandeis community - can be involved. The event provided a great starting point from which to launch future actions that will promote access to affordable housing in our community.