



# Bellingham BULLETIN

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## Municipal Spotlight: Gentile Retiring after 13 Years as Bellingham's Fire Chief

By KEN HAMWEY,  
BULLETIN STAFF WRITER

Steve Gentile, who'll be retiring on June 14 after 13 years as Bellingham's Fire Chief, relied on resilience and adjusted

quickly to the changes he faced. COVID-19 greatly altered the way Gentile's department performed its duties, and unfunded state mandates played a role in complicating the budget-

ary process. But, regardless of what curve balls came Gentile's way, he stayed focused and was diligent in providing the town's residents with dependable public safety.

The 61-year-old Gentile, who previously served as a lieutenant and deputy chief with the department, finishes after 37 years as a Bellingham firefighter.

"I've enjoyed working with dedicated personnel — professional firefighters who do an excellent job," he emphasized. "And, I want to thank the citizens of the community for their support, especially at town meetings, where they always voted to give us the needed equipment. I speak for the entire department in thanking the public for dropping off

**RETIRING**  
*continued on page 2*



Bellingham Fire Chief Steve Gentile will retire on June 14th after 37 years in public safety.



VFW Commander Kevin Calnan conducts business from his office at the Post. "I know how to be an advocate... I can listen, connect with people... I want to keep as many people as possible happy."

## Kevin Calnan Installed as VFW Post 7272 Commander

By DAVID DUNBAR

"I know how to be an advocate... I can listen, connect with people... I want to keep as many people as possible happy," says Kevin Calnan, who was

confirmed last month as the new Commander of VFW Post 7272 in Bellingham.

**COMMANDER**  
*continued on page 3*

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**RETIRING**

*continued from page 1*

food and desserts to show their appreciation.”

Gentile labeled COVID-19 as a “brutal force” that wreaked havoc with the firefighting profession.

“We not only transported the sick, but we also had to deal with limited PPE (personal protective equipment),” Gentile said. “A big problem was keeping our firefighters healthy. About 10 members of our staff contracted the virus. When the vaccine was available, our department was at the senior center giving shots.”

COVID-19 created changes but Gentile also had other concerns as chief.

“Since we no longer have call firefighters, there often were manpower shortages when we battled a fire,” he noted. “Years ago, we would call off-duty personnel to assist, but most of our firefighters now live out of town and some travel long distances to Bellingham.

“People have talked about regionalizing firefighting, and that’s what’s happening with mutual aid. If we’re dealing with

a major fire in the north part of town, Medway will assist. If we’re at a fire in the south, we rely on Woonsocket for help. In the central part of town, Milford would assist. Mutual aid has become regionalized firefighting.”

Two unfunded mandates have added new wrinkles.

“Nero’s Law now forces us to get training so we can treat and transport police dogs if they’re injured in the line of duty,” Gentile said. “Going forward, the cost of instruction will be a line item in the fire department’s budget.”

Another new development is the lack of reimbursement fire departments face when using ambulance equipment during a transport to a hospital. “If we use an IV bag, medications or needles, for example, hospitals replaced what was used,” Gentile said. “Now, hospitals don’t replace what we use.”

Gentile pointed to another situation that’s changed from when he began his career.

“Since I became chief, we rarely had the opportunity to hire a new firefighter from Bellingham,” he said. “Early on, many of our firefighters grew up here and were invested in the community. Now, all firefighters are paramedics and can move anywhere. We lost six to Franklin.”

Gentile is optimistic that the turnover rate will diminish. “Our last contract is beneficial to firefighters,” he said, “and hopefully that will be a plus.” When Gentile became chief in 2012, his staff numbered 22. It’s now 28.

Besides thanking his staff and

the community, Gentile admired the way the town backed his desire to upgrade equipment.

“We were able to replace two ambulances, three fire engines, we acquired two brush trucks and replaced a ladder truck with a tower truck,” he noted. “I appreciated the boards I dealt with and Town Administrator Denis Fraine, who was always tuned in to our needs.”

Gentile also was pleased that he was able to garner grants to educate and make school children aware of fire safety. “I also got grants for educating senior citizens,” he said. “Our staff offers programs at the senior center to show them how to protect themselves.”

Gentile’s favorite achievement during his 13 years as chief was the opening of the South Fire Station on a fulltime basis in 2013. His No. 1 regret was the closing of the north-end fire station five years ago due to age.

“I had to make some concessions, but getting the South Fire Station open full time was a win for the town,” he said. “The town was receptive to opening it, and \$375,000 was spent to refurbish it. I believe that station and its personnel saved many lives. I regret that we couldn’t get the manpower needed to keep the north-end station open.”

Gentile was born in Ipswich, moved to Bellingham when he was in Grade 3 and graduated from Bellingham High in 1980. He played baseball and hockey for the Blackhawks. A wing in hockey, he competed on the 1979-80 team that played at the

# Bellingham Business Assoc. to Name Scholarships, Unsung Hero Awards June 7th

Join the Bellingham Business Association on June 7th for its annual presentation of scholarships and Unsung Hero awards. The meeting will take place from 6-8 p.m. at Lowell’s

Restaurant, 75 Cape Road, Rte. 140, Mendon. The cost for members is \$25. RSVP by June 5, 2023 at [contact@bellinghambusinessassociation.org](mailto:contact@bellinghambusinessassociation.org).

old Boston Garden against Oliver Ames in a state quarterfinal game. He later returned to his alma mater and served as an assistant hockey coach for 10 years. BHS won two Tri Valley League titles during that stretch.

His college degrees include an associate’s and bachelor’s in Fire Science from Columbia Southern University and a masters in emergency services management, also from Columbia Southern. Gentile earned all three degrees online. The father of two daughters, he has two grandchildren.

While in high school, Gentile worked part-time for the town reading water meters and also for the parks department. In his mid-20s, he worked part-time as an assistant for animal control. In 1986 he became a call firefighter/EMT in Bellingham, then joined the Blackstone Fire Department fulltime as a firefighter/EMT. In 1994, Gentile returned to Bellingham in a full-time role as a firefighter/EMT. He became a lieutenant in 2001 and advanced to Deputy Chief in 2010.

The Selectmen announced last month that Bill Miller, who’s been with the Hopkinton Fire Department for 27 years, will replace Gentile.

Still undecided what the future holds, Gentile plans to spend more time with his family. He’s had offers to work for the Mass. Fire Academy and the Mass. Emergency Management Agency.

Gentile revealed that, although he experienced positive times during his career, there were also some difficult situations. “It was always tough to see a family lose its house by fire,” he said. “Everything they worked hard for was lost, and all we could do is console them. Another difficult time occurred when I was a lieutenant. A role model of mine, Deputy Chief Steve Garon, passed away.”

Steve Gentile knew he wanted to be a firefighter as a youth. He worked hard, learned the nuances of the job, and eventually became the chief.

His ability to adapt and adjust were the keys to a successful career.

## localtownpages

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# Full Steam Ahead! Co-op & Careers Celebrated at Annual Signing Ceremony

The Cooperative Education Program (Co-op) at Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School (BVT) held its 3rd annual Career Signing Day on May 12th. The ceremony celebrated its senior co-op and career placement students who announced their career plans and signed a commitment letter to work with their employer after graduation.

Vocational Director Michele Denise welcomed the graduating seniors, their parents, instructors, industry partners, and school administrators before recognizing individual student achievement in their trade areas and the Co-op program, which had 134 seniors participate this year, representing double the number of job placements from the previous two years and illustrating the local demand for skilled employees. These employable young adults have worked 54,500 hours collectively since April 2022, earning an estimated salary of \$874,000 over the past year.

During the ceremony, employment contracts were signed with representatives from local companies. **Bellingham resident Marek Rutkowski**, a senior in the Plumbing program at BVT, was one of many who signed a contract. Marek will take his vocational-technical training as a plumbing apprentice to his Co-op employer, **A Custom Company Plumbing & Heating in Bellingham**. Next, he will work towards his journeyman's

license and then his master plumber license, hoping to open his own business one day.

With all their energy and enthusiasm, these seniors earning nearly a million dollars in one year of co-op placements have found their financial footing using their vocational skills and technical training. Of course, they'll continue to gain more experience with full-time employment and on-the-job training. But they've proven to their employers that they're ready to go, full steam ahead, directly from high school into high-skill, high-wage employment.

While many students signed contracts during the ceremony, several more who could not attend due to work conflicts are also headed directly to industry careers. For more details about the school and this event, please visit [www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/careersigningday2023](http://www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/careersigningday2023).

## COMMANDER

*continued from page 1*

"I have some big shoes to fill," says Calnan in reference to his predecessor, Tom Lane, who passed away late last year. "It's an honor to follow in his footsteps – it's like he's looking over my shoulder – and as Tom used to say, 'Follow through, and follow up'."

The VFW Post, established in 1966, is located at 940 South Main Street and opens Monday through Friday at 2 p.m., and on Saturday and Sunday at 12 p.m. It will stay open on all days until 10 p.m. A full bar is available with prices that will make you smile. And if plans work out, bar patrons soon will be enjoying new, high-top, wooden stools, and tables.

"We want to continue our capital improvements," explains Calnan. "We want to build on our community relationships and offer more scholarships and awards."

Calnan has a message for vets: "Come on down! Stop by and join us for a beverage, a tour of our newly renovated meeting hall, or an event." The Post has about 120 members and "we need an influx of new ones," he says.

The 1,600 square foot hall has new flooring, new lighting, and a fresh coat of paint. The hope is to attract business meet-

ings, family gatherings, wedding receptions, and other events.

If you stop by on a Monday evening, you'll experience Cruise Night, which features 40 or so cool old cars; no charge for admission. If you have a car from decades ago that you're proud of and want to display, bring it! Weekends offer featured entertainment with live singers. Other events include Steak Shoots and raffles. And there's one hour of yoga on Wednesdays at 6 p.m.; the proceeds are shared to help local vets.

The VFW Auxiliary, made up of volunteers, "is vital to Post 7272, and we appreciate their efforts and all they do for vets and the community," explains Calnan.

A recent Facebook post from the Auxiliary began with "wondering what we've been up to for the past few months?" It had provided \$6,350 to eight charitable organizations including K9s For Warriors, Homes for Troops, Disabled Veteran Sporting Events, and Honor Flight. It continued: "We want to thank each and every one of you that supports the Bellingham VFW and our Auxiliary. We can do great things!"

Calnan is one of eight sons. His mother still lives in the home where he grew up in Cambridge. He and his wife of 39 years live in Bellingham and have three children of their own.

The new Commander graduated from Westfield State College and eventually went on to earn a masters degree in criminal justice. Calnan spent time in the U.S. Army, including duty overseas. In 1981, he joined the Boston Metro Police. Thirty-eight years later, he retired as a lieutenant from the Massachusetts State Police.

Over those years, he was a team leader, worked in underwater operations, was a union rep and oversaw the State Police barracks in Milton, Framingham, and Government Center in Boston.

In retirement, Calnan is deeply involved with a charitable foundation that helps families who have children with cancer. "We've dispensed \$5 million to families," he says, "often in \$5,000 increments." The foundation is "Cops for Kids with Cancer."

"At the VFW post, our mission is to serve vets," says Calnan. In addition to just dropping by anytime, vets are welcome to attend monthly meetings on Tuesdays at 7:30 p.m. There's more information on the post's Facebook page and on its website: <https://vfw7272.org> where you can sign up to receive text messages about upcoming events. And you can call the post at (508) 883-9538.



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# Senior Center Staff Learn to Recognize Their Own Unconscious Bias

BY DAVID DUNBAR

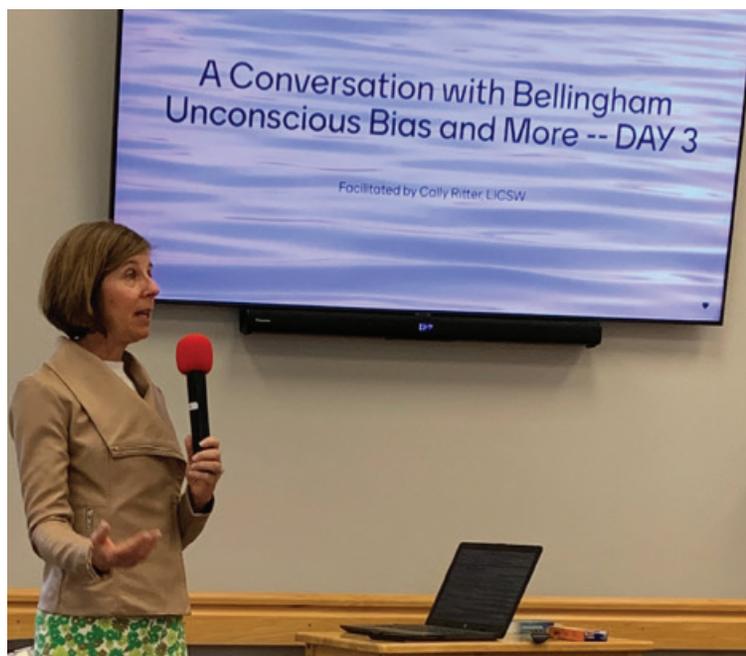
When you Google “unconscious bias,” you will see 42,600,000 results in .49 seconds. Where to start?

At the Senior Center in Bellingham, the starting point was to bring in an expert and assemble the staff. The expert was Cally Ritter, a 25-year veteran of offering seminars, webinars, leadership and retreat services, and workshop series. The staff was about two dozen employees and volunteers that gathered for three, 90-minute training sessions over the past few weeks.

From the Google search: “Unconscious bias is when we make judgments or decisions on the basis of our prior experience, our own personal deep-seated thought patterns, assumptions or interpretations, and we are not aware that we are doing it.”

“Our training sessions are about raising awareness,” explains Ritter. “We’re opening eyes, elevating and examining the biases we hold so they don’t trip us up.”

Bias can be defined as a preference or aversion to something,



**Cally Ritter presented “Unconscious Bias” to two dozen employees and volunteers at the Bellingham Senior Center. Her appearance was made possible by a grant from the Massachusetts Councils on Aging.**

It can come from life experience, family, the workplace, education, and media resulting in the view that “people who look and sound like us are okay.” And it can influence the way you connect with people at work, family members, as well as folks we see at the grocery store, on the street, at politi-

cal rallies, and anywhere else.

Oftentimes, we gravitate towards people who are like us, whether it be based on appearance, background, or beliefs. “Affinity bias” is rooted in finding belonging and seeking comfort. When we have an affinity for those who are like us, we unin-

tionally shut out those who are different.

“If you feel like you have to walk on eggshells,” says Ritter, “don’t be guided by fear... be thoughtful, mindful, and say something in service to your relationship with the other person.”

“I’ve gotten to know myself better,” explains Senior Center volunteer Gail Milgram who attended the training sessions. “I’ve found biases I didn’t even know I had. And it was great to hear the experiences and thoughts of others in the sessions.”

“We are so grateful for Cally’s contribution to the work we are doing at the Senior Center,” says Director Josie Dutil. “I first met her as a trainer on Zoom and was impressed by her ability to make every person feel seen and heard -- the experience with her in-person was even more powerful.”

When looking for your own unconscious bias, Ritter advises examining the stereotypes you may hold. “The stories we tell ourselves before we meet a new person and oversimplified beliefs can be fueled by bias, and micro-aggressions result.”

“Our brains are bombarded by 11-million bits of information in any moment,” she explains. “But it can process only about 40 bits at any time.”

Be on the lookout for “fast, unconscious sifting that will create snap decisions or slow, conscious thinking that can produce a response instead of a reaction.”

“It was an amazing four and a half hours,” says Kay Page, Chair of the Council on Aging. “My mind has been opened. It was well worth it.”

A Licensed, Independent Clinical Social Worker, Ritter has a bachelor’s degree from Bucknell University and a Master of Social Work from the University of Pittsburgh, is MCAD-certified, and is a certified Motivation Factor practitioner. She is the principal of Positive Ripple Training & Consulting and can be found at [www.callyritter.com](http://www.callyritter.com). You can also check out: <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html> for a test that can reveal your attitudes or beliefs about these topics and provide some information about yourself.

## Concerts on the Grass 2023

### BELLINGHAM TOWN COMMON

**Wednesday June 28. 6pm – 8pm. Kids Night with Wayne Potash and Trevor the Games Man.**

*Sponsored by Bellingham Town Common Trustees*

**Wednesday July 12. 6pm – 7pm – Free pony rides. 6:30pm – 8:30pm Morse Code (classic rock).**

Opening Act: **The Wild Beyond** (classic rock)

**Wednesday July 19. 6pm - 7pm. Free pony rides., 6:30pm – 8:30pm Riverboat Stompers (Dixieland)**

**Wednesday July 26. 6pm – 7pm. Free pony rides., 6:30pm – 8:30pm Back Pages. (rock and pop).**

### MENDON TOWN BEACH

**Wednesday Aug 2. Free Pony Rides 6:30pm – 7:30pm., 6:30pm – 8:30pm. Brass Connection (brass band).**

**Wednesday Aug 9. Free Pony Rides 6:30pm – 7:30pm., 6:30pm – 8:30pm Tobe Rode (60s, 70s, 80s rock)**

**Wednesday Aug 16. Free Pony Rides 6:30pm – 7:30pm., 6:30pm – 8:30pm Jesse Liam (contemporary pop)**



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# Town Honors Sacrifices of Vietnam Veterans in 152nd Memorial Day Service

Bellingham's 152nd Memorial Day ceremony was held on Sunday, May 21, with a focus on the 50th anniversary of U.S. troops withdrawing from Vietnam.

Keynote speaker Lt. Col. Jeremy Johnson, Commander of the 1st Battalion 25th Marine Corps Regiment at Fort Devins, asked attendees, as they reflected "on that significant chapter of this nation's history...to pay homage to all those who served in the Vietnam War, both those who gave the ultimate sacrifice and those who returned. It's also important to recognize the impact that that war had on this nation...the Vietnam War was a difficult and controversial time. It was a war – it lasted over a decade, and it affected the resolve and determination of this nation, and it was fought some of the most courageous and selfless men this nation had to offer." U.S. soldiers in Vietnam, he noted, faced unprecedented challenges of terrain, weather and guerilla tactics "which made every decision they

made a life or death choice." Lt. Col. Johnson noted that by the time the Vietnam War was over, 58,000 gave their lives, three-and-a-half times the population of Bellingham.

In addition to the keynote speaker, Jim Hastings, Chairman of the Memorial and Veterans Day Committee, gave an impassioned speech, recounting the pain he and his fellow Vietnam servicemen felt upon returning to a nation that refused to value their sacrifices, vowing to always support those who've returned from service in places like Iraq and Afghanistan. Rep. Mike Soter gave an emotional and special posthumous recognition from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to the family of the late VFW Post 7272 Cmdr. Thomas Lane before his name and those of Bellingham veterans who had passed on in the past year were read by Sam Cowell of all Bellingham.

Following are some moments from the day:



Veterans salute their fallen brethren.



Marine attendees ready for placement of wreaths.



Jim Hastings, Chair of Memorial and Veterans Day Committees, addresses the crowd.



Bellingham veterans prepare to place wreaths.



Rep. Mike Soter presents the family of late Thomas Lane with a recognition from the Commonwealth for his contributions.



Lt. Col. Jeremy Johnson (MC) served as honored speaker.



The General Henry Knox Color Guard performed a rifle volley at the ceremony.



Pastor Baron Rodrigues offers the Memorial Day invocation.



Bellingham High School Chorus performs.



The Sons of the American Revolution performed the three volley salute.



Students lead in the Pledge of Allegiance.



The Oliver brothers sang The National Anthem.



Young Marines

# Outdoor Personia Celebrates the Opening of Their New Bellingham Design Center

Bellingham, MA - Outdoor Personia, a leading builder of customized outdoor structures including sheds, pool houses, garages, greenhouses, accents, and outdoor furniture, proudly announces the grand opening of their new design center in Bellingham. The state-of-the-art facility, located at 1048 South Main Street, marks a significant milestone in the company's ongoing growth (Outdoor Personia).

To meet the increasing demand and accommodate the expansion, Outdoor Personia has undergone extensive renovations to enhance their existing property. The redesigned showroom and expanded production shop exemplify the company's unwavering commitment to providing a premium customer experience. With a dedicated team of 25 full-time employees, Outdoor Personia is devoted to

delivering exceptional service and constructing top-quality custom-built structures (Outdoor Personia).

Marcus Wenger, the owner and founder of Outdoor Personia, expresses his enthusiasm for the re-opening and the company's future prospects. Wenger acknowledges the remarkable growth experienced in recent years, as well as the challenges that have been diligently addressed. He views the new facility as a significant step forward, enabling the company to better serve customers and satisfy the escalating demand for custom-built structures (Outdoor Personia).

To commemorate the grand opening, Outdoor Personia cordially invites the public to join them at their New Bellingham Design Center on Saturday, June 10th, from 10 AM to 4 PM. Attendees will have the opportunity

to avail exclusive savings on purchases, partake in complimentary giveaways and raffles, and enjoy a delectable array of food truck offerings (Outdoor Personia).

About Outdoor Personia:

Founded in 2006 as a small family-owned farm stand in Bellingham, Outdoor Personia has evolved into a premier provider of personalized outdoor solutions throughout New England. The company takes pride in its skilled craftsmanship and utilization of American-made materials, specializing in the design and construction of custom outdoor structures for both residential and commercial clients. Whether seeking to enhance outdoor living spaces or create functional work environments, Outdoor Personia offers an array of exceptional solutions (Outdoor Personia).

For more information, please visit their website at [www.outdoorpersonia.com](http://www.outdoorpersonia.com) or visit one of their Massachusetts design centers:

Bellingham Design Center: 1048 South Main St., Bellingham, MA 02019. Phone: 508-883-4043. Hanover Design Center: 899 Washington St., Hanover, MA 02339. Phone: (781) 626-2767.

## New Bellingham Garden Beds Create Hands-On Learning



Also, our garden intern, Aiden, is hard at work clearing ground and planting some corn for summer harvest.

Our Bellingham Farmstand is set to open on the 2nd Saturday in June at 200 Center St., Bellingham.

For more information, visit <https://bellinghamgardenclubofma.com> or find Bellingham Garden Club of MA on Facebook.

Photos by Mickey DeFosses

Our Bellingham Garden Club was so excited to have some kids coming in to plant seeds in the beautiful kids raised beds on May 1st that we built thanks to some of the donation funds from Dean Bank this Spring.

In the pictures, some kids are planting green beans, broccoli, marigolds and kale in addition to learning about organic compost, worm aeration and healthy eating.



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## MassCPA's Awards Scholarship to Desrosiers of Bellingham

The Massachusetts Society of Certified Public Accountants (MassCPAs) today announced that Jasmin Desrosiers of Bellingham was awarded the Gregory T. O'Gorman Memorial Scholarship from the MassCPAs Educational Foundation's 2023 Scholarship Program.

Desrosiers, a student at Emmanuel College, was one of 51 students selected to receive a scholarship from the MassCPAs Educational Foundation's 2023 Scholarship Program. The students will be honored for their awards at MassCPAs annual, member-wide networking event, Connect 2023: Conversations & Cocktails, on May 18.

"The Society is honored to support these exceptional students who are the next generation of Massachusetts CPAs," said Amy Pitter, president and CEO of MassCPAs. "Their dedication and talent are truly inspiring, and they make us all feel confident in the future of the accounting profession. We

are honored to be a part of their journey and look forward to their continued success."

Scholarships are funded 100% through donations to the MassCPAs Educational Foundation. The mission of the Foundation is to inspire and support the next generation of CPAs in Massachusetts, and since the program's inception in 2006, the Foundation has awarded over 300 scholarships to aspiring CPAs, ranging from \$2,500 - \$10,000 and totaling more than \$1,500,000. MassCPAs scholarships are available for both undergraduate and graduate accounting students who are attending a college or university in Massachusetts or attending a college or university out-of-state with a permanent residence in Massachusetts. Scholarship funds are issued directly to the students and can be used for tuition, books, interviewing expenses or other needs.

# Community Ties and a Commitment to Customer Service: Affordable Junk Removal

There are plenty of reasons to call a junk removal service. Maybe you're planning to move and need to clear out the basement and attic before your open house. Maybe you've spent way too much time at home lately and are feeling the need to declutter.

But figuring out who to call can be a pain. If you contact one of the big haulers, they route you to a phone center where they've never even heard of your town, plus their pricing seems vague and full of extra fees. No wonder you've let the stuff pile up—it's too much of a hassle to get rid of it!

Or you can call Affordable Junk Removal and let a local small business with deep community roots take care of everything.

Jay Schadler started his business in 2003. Back then, it was just him and a beat-up pickup truck taking small jobs and working nights and weekends when he could. As the years rolled on, his business grew, but his commitment to customer service never wavered. Now he's got a staff of ten, along with ten trucks, servicing eastern and central Massachusetts and northern Rhode Island.

Affordable Junk Removal specializes in house and estate cleanouts. If your garage, attic, or office is overflowing with stuff, take back your space and let the pros do the heavy lifting.

Jay and his team have handled it all. They've dismantled above-ground pools, hauled away ancient hot tubs, taken down old fencing, and stripped away worn carpeting. They'll come for a single item, or they'll clean out an entire house. And they can take

## Business spotlight

almost anything. They can't accept hazardous materials, brush, dirt, or concrete, but everything else is fair game for them to take away.

Not everything ends up in a landfill—not if Jay can help it. He first tries to either recycle or donate items. Only after he tries to repurpose items do they end up at the transfer station.

Working with Affordable Junk Removal is simple. First, you can load stuff yourself if you want by renting a 15-cubic-yard dumpster for a week and chucking up to a ton of your unwanted stuff. If you need to get rid of more weight, then Jay prorates that tonnage—you never pay for what you don't use.

If you don't want to be bothered with the dumpster, they've also got a driveway special where they'll take away a truckload of your unwanted things if you pile it up. Or if you don't want to lift a finger, then you can point at the items, and the team will fill up their truck and haul away your unwanted things. However you do it, you're left with more space and more peace of mind.

Jay and his team beat the big waste haulers on both price and customer service. When you call Affordable Junk Removal, you aren't connected to an anonymous call center. Your phone call goes right to Jay.

And speaking of pricing, Jay is upfront about it. His website shows the truck sizes and prices,



so you can save time knowing your costs before you call for an appointment. There aren't any hidden costs or surprise fees with Affordable Junk Removal.

Affordable Junk Removal is fully licensed and fully insured, and they'll treat your property with care and respect.

They also have a thriving commercial business, working with contractors and roofers to clear away debris and keep the job site clean. They can even handle commercial and residential emergencies with same-day service.

Jay and his family are deeply involved in the community. He and his wife, Christine, run the Corner Market restaurant in Holliston as well as Resellables, a thrift store in Bellingham. It's not uncommon for someone to reach Jay at the restaurant, order a sandwich, and then schedule a junk removal appointment. Yes, the local small business really can handle everything!

For more information, contact Jay Schadler at (774) 287-1133 or visit Affordable Junk Removal online at [www.takeawayjunk.com](http://www.takeawayjunk.com). PAID ADVERTISEMENT

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# Coming Up at the Bellingham Senior Center

The Bellingham Senior Center is located at 40 Blackstone St., Bellingham. Reach them at (508) 966-0398 or visit [www.bellinghamma.org](http://www.bellinghamma.org).

**COMMUNITY HEALTH ASSESSMENT:** The MetroWest Health Foundation is conducting a survey across its coverage area (including Bellingham) to collect residents' thoughts about health issues and services. The data collected will be used in program development and funding requests. Full results are expected to be available this fall. If you'd like to participate in the survey, then please visit: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CHA23Eng>

**DRIVE-BY LUNCHESES:** Continuing this month will be the popular lunches delivered at the Senior Center. Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. lunches will be provided by Mickey G's. \$3 per meal for Bellingham residents.

**COFFEE & CONVERSATION:** Every Tuesday at 9:30 a.m. Sometimes, we'll have a surprise guest or two that you will not want to miss. Call ahead, please, and reserve your seat at the table.

**TALES OF AMERICAN PRESIDENTS:** Crowd-pleaser Paul Arsenault will be back on Friday, June 9, at 11 a.m. with more stories about the inhabitants of the Oval Office... this one will be Teddy Roosevelt.

**THE AFFORDABLE CONNECTIVITY PROGRAM:** is a federal program that offers financial assistance to low-income households for their broadband services and internet connected devices. If you'd like to know more about it, please call Lisa Loo at (508) 657-2714 or email [lloo@bellinghamma.org](mailto:lloo@bellinghamma.org)

**TED TALKS:** Want a more just world? Be an unlikely ally. Join Josie Dutil for a video presentation by Dwinita Mosby Tyler and discussion on Thursday, June 22 at 1 p.m.

**BELLINGHAM MEMORIAL SCHOOL 6TH & 7TH GRADE CHOIRS:** On June 9th, at 1 p.m., these students will perform portions of their Spring concert. Let us know if you will be attending.

**FREE SELF HEALING ASSISTANCE:** Join COA Board member MingMing He and experienced "self healer" to learn some simple Qi Gong movements at 1 p.m. on June 15th. Call ahead to reserve your spot.

**FREE LEGAL ASSISTANCE:** Attorney Melissa Howitt of Franklin will discuss a range of issues affecting seniors' lives at 1 p.m. on June 16th. Call ahead to let us know you'll be attending.

# Concerts on the Grass – 2023 Schedule

## Bellingham Town Common

### Wednesday, June 28

- 6 p.m. – 8 p.m. Kids Night with Wayne Potash and Trevor the Games Man. Sponsored by Bellingham Town Common Trustees.

### Wednesday, July 12

- 6 p.m. – 7 p.m. – Free pony rides
- 6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. – Morse Code (classic rock)
- Opening Act: The Wild Beyond (classic rock)

### Wednesday, July 19

- 6 p.m. – 7 p.m. – Free pony rides
- 6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. – Riverboat Stompers (Dixieland)

### Wednesday, July 26

- 6 p.m. – 7 p.m. – Free pony rides
- 6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. – Back Pages. (rock and pop). Mendon Town Beach

### Wednesday, August 2

- Free Pony Rides – 6:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.
- 6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. – Brass Connection (brass band)

### Wednesday, August 9

- Free Pony Rides – 6:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.
- 6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. – Tobe Rode (60s, 70s, 80s rock)

### Wednesday, August 16

- Free Pony Rides – 6:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.
- 6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. – Jesse Liam (contemporary pop)



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## June Quiz

1. Paul and Andy are neighbors. Paul's giant beech tree falls onto Andy's shed during a windstorm and destroys it. Would Paul's insurance help pay for the damage since the tree was on his property?
2. Nick and Stephanie live next door to one another. Nick is outside cutting down trees with his chainsaw when one of the trees falls the wrong way and lands on Stephanie's patio furniture. Would Nick's insurance help pay for the damage since he caused the tree to fall?
3. Gemma's tree falls in her backyard and lands on the grass. Luckily it did not hit any structures or cover any pathways. The estimate to remove the fallen tree is \$2,000. Would her insurance company help pay the cost?

Answers:

1. No, Andy's insurance would pay. This is considered an 'act of god' and Paul is not liable.
2. Yes, Nick's insurance would help pay because he is responsible for the tree falling.
3. No, a fallen tree not touching a structure or covering a pathway would not be covered.



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Your Money, Your Independence

# Establish Access When Things Are Good, Not When Times Turn Bad



Glenn Brown

tax-deductible. But there's other benefits to consider in using access to the equity you've built as a tool.

Let's take a step back, make we sure understand the tool.

**What's a HELOC?** - A second mortgage that allows you to borrow money using the equity in your home as collateral - a secured line of credit. There is an underwriting approval process with a hard credit pull and home appraisal, which determine terms including duration (usually 10-15 years), variable rate benchmark (-/+ Prime Rate) and credit limit.

Most banks/credit unions allow 70% or 80% Loan-To-Value (LTV) minus mortgage balance. For example, your house now appraises for \$800K. At 70% LTV is \$560K less mortgage balance of \$400K means potential \$160K HELOC. At 80% LTV, \$640K - \$400K = \$240K HELOC.

Upon closing, you're provided a checking account to move money into and out of the HELOC as you please. If you do borrow, you will only owe interest for a monthly payment. However, keep the balance at \$0, then no interest or fees.

**And that's the strategy - keep the balance at \$0 for the "what ifs" in life.**

Take a dual-income household with slightly positive cash flow each month. When bonuses or RSUs vest, they build savings, pay cash for big expenditures, take vacations, etc. They could be approved for ~\$150K HELOC but choose not to plan and apply.

Then the following happens:

**Job-Loss** - Instead of coming from a position of strength, you're now at the mercy of a lender - good luck on those terms, even if approved.

**Bank Balance Sheets Gone Mad** - Fall 2008 saw banks stop issuing new HELOCs almost 2 years. Some tried to reduce, even close HELOCs, but regulators stepped as it is secured line of credit. As long as the collateral (house) and borrower uphold terms of agreement, the banks couldn't change terms - even if you lost your job. Same is not true for credit cards.

**World Gone Mad** - Remember when we'd shut down for 2 weeks to end a pandemic but instead laid off 38 million by end of April

2020? Banks stopped issuing new HELOCs and slowed new mortgages until October. And those with high limit HELOCs at \$0 balance became cash buyers of vacation homes from cash-seeking sellers. More opportunistic planning occurred using cash-out refi in 2021 on new property to lock in a low, fixed rate.

**Economic Downturn** - Banks reduce lending in anticipation of economic slowdowns. Regardless of your opinion on recession, we can all agree banks need deposits in order to underwrite new loans/lines. What's been a recent problem banks are having to maintain? Deposits. Declining deposits equals declining new lending applications.

There are more strategies to consider for HELOCs. Like using as an emergency savings

proxy to reduce opportunity costs or delay/spread out taxation from selling investments over calendar years to meet unexpected cash needs.

Talk to your Certified Financial Planner to learn more.

The opinions voiced in this material are for general information only and are not intended to provide specific advice or recommendations for any individual.

Glenn Brown is a Holliston resident and owner of PlanDynamic, LLC, www.PlanDynamic.com. Glenn is a fee-only Certified Financial Planner™ helping motivated people take control of their planning and investing, so they can balance kids, aging parents and financial independence.

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Planning for the unexpected when things are good is a necessary evil.

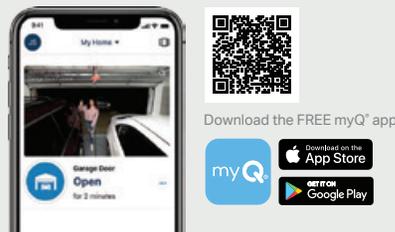
This is true for electing work benefits, insurance, estate planning and access to equity.

When engaging in discovery with new clients, I often encounter misconceptions or bias against Home Equity Line of Credit (HELOC).

Their mindset is to seek one only when there is a large home repair or renovation project. True, it can be used for this purpose and the interest could be

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# Bellingham Students to First to Perform Piece by Composer Boysen, Jr. June 6th

**PLEASE JOIN US**

**BELLINGHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
GRADES 5 - 8 BAND CONCERT  
& AD LIB WORLD PREMIERE**

**TUESDAY, JUNE 6, 2023  
BELLINGHAM HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM  
7:00 PM  
FREE & OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

Bellingham Memorial School commissioned a new piece of music titled "Ad Lib" from composer Dr. Andrew Boysen, Jr. in honor of Ian Shumaker, a BMS student who passed away.

Please join us for the world premiere of this special piece performed by music students in grades 6 through 12.

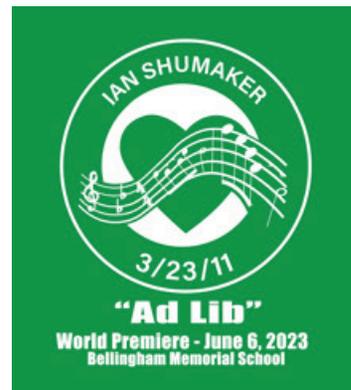
Special thank you to the  
**Bellingham Educational Foundation,  
Bellingham Memorial School PTO,  
Bellingham Friends of Music,  
BHS National Honor Society and  
Vic Firth Percussion Company**  
for their donation to this project.

The concert will also feature performances by the BMS 5th Grade Band, 6th Grade Band, 7th Grade Band and BHS 8th Grade Band.



## "Ad Lib" Commissioned in Memory of BMS Student Ian Shumaker

Bellingham Public Schools invite all to join them for a Bellingham Public Schools band concert performed by students in grades 5-8. The free event, open to the public, to be held at the Bellingham High School auditorium on Tuesday, June 6, 2023 at 7 p.m., will also be a world premiere of "Ad Lib," by composer Dr. Andrew Boysen, Jr., which was commissioned in honor of Ian Shumaker, a BMS student who



passed away. That piece will be performed by Bellingham music students in grades 6-12.

A special thank you goes to the Bellingham Educational Foundation, Bellingham Memorial School PTO, Bellingham Friends of Music, BHS National Honor Society and Vic Firth Percussion Company for their donation to this project.

The concert will also feature performances by the BMS 5th Grade Band, 6th Grade Band, 7th Grade Band and BHS 8th Grade Band.

# Representative Soter Supports \$56B-plus House budget for Fiscal Year 2024

State Representative Michael Soter (R-Bellingham) recently

supported a \$56 billion-plus state budget for Fiscal Year 2024, which provides for increased local aid, free universal school meals, childcare provider assistance, and eviction protections for renters.

The preliminary House budget was approved on a vote of 156-0 on April 26, following three days of debate on 1,566 amendments that were filed by members. During floor debate, Representative Soter successfully advocated for the inclusion of several local initiatives for his district, including:

- \$25,000 – Medway Community Farm, Inc.

Representative Soter said that the proposed House budget funds Chapter 70 education aid at \$6.58 billion, an increase of \$595.8 million, which fully funds 3/6ths of the goal rate mandated under the 2019 Student Opportunity Act, while also providing an additional \$7.86 million in minimum aid supplemental funding to boost per pupil minimum aid from \$30 to \$60. Unrestricted General Government Aid (UGGA), which can be used by communities to support a wide range of municipal services, is funded at \$1.25 billion, an increase of \$19.7 million. According to Representative Soter, the House spending proposal will provide the 8th Worcester District with \$33,018,785 in direct education aid and \$7,142,648 in unrestricted state aid for the new fiscal year that begins July 1.

- \$15,000 – Bellingham Public Library Electronic Sign
- \$15,000 – Blackstone Town Hall Public Safety Upgrades
- \$15,000 – Millville Fire Hydrant Repair/Replacement
- \$15,000 – Uxbridge Youth Soccer League Field Design
- \$20,000 – Uxbridge Youth Sport and Public Park Infrastructure Projects

Town Chapter 70	Unrestricted General Government Aid:
Bellingham \$9,974,432	\$2,004,899
Blackstone \$234,189	\$1,617,259
Millville \$73,662	\$481,284
Uxbridge \$9,639,224	\$1,625,805
Medway \$10,754,949	\$1,441,522

## Green Lawns Without Green Waters!

Applying more fertilizer than the label recommends or your soil needs won't improve your lawn, and instead the extra fertilizer may wash off into nearby waterways. Just as fertilizer helps plants grow on the land, it encourages algae and other aquatic plants to grow in water. Dense weeds and algae reduce oxygen in the water, which in turn harms fish and other aquatic life. "Green water" is also much less attractive for boating, swimming and other human uses.

**Please help keep our local waters clean:**

- Test your lawn soil and calibrate your spreader.
- Use fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides sparingly. Sweep any overspray back onto the lawn.
- Mow 2.5 to 3 inches high with a sharp blade to encourage dense growth and deter weeds.
- Leave grass clippings on the lawn to lessen the need for fertilizer.
- Never discard yard waste down storm drains or into waterways.
- Water deeply and infrequently, and time watering to avoid evaporation and runoff.
- Reseed bare areas with drought-tolerant varieties of lawn grass.

 **For more information, visit our community's website or go to [www.stormwatermatters.org](http://www.stormwatermatters.org).**

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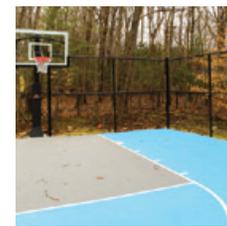
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# Macular Degeneration

## Causes, Symptoms, and Treatment Options

By ROGER M. KALDAWY, M.D.  
MILFORD FRANKLIN EYE CENTER

Macular degeneration, also known as age-related macular degeneration (AMD), is a progressive eye condition that affects millions of people worldwide. It is a leading cause of vision loss, particularly among older adults. Macular degeneration primarily affects the macula, a small area located near the center of the retina responsible for sharp, central vision. This article aims to provide an overview of macular degeneration, including its causes, symptoms, and available treatment options.

### Causes of Macular Degeneration

While the exact causes of macular degeneration remain unknown, several risk factors have been identified. Age is a significant factor, as the condition predominantly affects individuals over the age of 50. Genetic factors, family history, smoking, obesity, high blood pressure, and

prolonged exposure to ultraviolet light are also associated with an increased risk of developing macular degeneration.

### Types of Macular Degeneration

There are two main types of macular degeneration: dry (atrophic) AMD and wet (neovascular) AMD.

#### Dry AMD

Dry AMD is the most common form, accounting for approximately 85-90% of cases. It is characterized by the gradual breakdown of the macula due to the accumulation of drusen, yellow deposits beneath the retina. As the condition progresses, central vision becomes blurred, making it difficult to perform tasks such as reading or recognizing faces.

#### Wet AMD

Wet AMD is less common but more aggressive than dry AMD. It occurs when abnormal

blood vessels develop beneath the macula and leak blood or fluid, leading to rapid and severe vision loss. Individuals with wet AMD may experience distorted or wavy central vision, a dark spot in the center of their visual field, or rapid visual decline.

### Symptoms and Diagnosis

The early stages of macular degeneration often present no noticeable symptoms, making regular eye exams crucial for early detection. As the condition progresses, symptoms may include:

- Blurred or distorted central vision
- Difficulty reading or performing activities that require fine detail
- Dark or empty areas in the central visual field
- Decreased brightness or intensity of colors
- Difficulty recognizing faces

A comprehensive eye examination, including a dilated pupil examination, visual acuity test, and imaging tests such as optical



Normal Vision



View with AMD

coherence tomography (OCT) or fluorescein angiography, can help diagnose macular degeneration and determine its type and severity.

### Treatment options

Macular degeneration is a progressive eye condition that affects the central portion of the retina, called the macula. Although there is no known cure for macular degeneration, there are several treatment options available that can help slow down its progression and manage the symptoms. Here are some of the common treatment options:

#### Anti-VEGF Therapy

Anti-vascular endothelial growth factor (anti-VEGF) drugs are injected into the eye to reduce the growth of abnormal blood vessels in the retina. These drugs include medications like ranibizumab (Lucentis), bevacizumab (Avastin), and aflibercept (Eylea). Anti-VEGF therapy has shown significant success in stabilizing or improving vision in many cases of macular degeneration.

#### Photodynamic Therapy (PDT)

This treatment involves the use of a light-activated medication called verteporfin (Visudyne). The medication is injected into a vein, and then a laser is applied to the abnormal blood ves-

sels in the retina to activate the drug, causing the vessels to close and reduce their leakage.

#### Laser Therapy

In some cases, laser therapy may be used to target and destroy abnormal blood vessels in the macula. This treatment is known as focal laser photocoagulation.

#### Implantable Miniature Telescope

For individuals with end-stage macular degeneration in both eyes and severe vision loss, an implantable miniature telescope (IMT) may be an option. The IMT is surgically placed in one eye to improve central vision by magnifying the images that reach the healthy portion of the retina.

#### Low Vision Aids

These include devices such as magnifying glasses, telescopic lenses, and electronic visual aids that can help individuals with macular degeneration make the most of their remaining vision.

#### Lifestyle Changes

Certain lifestyle modifications can help manage macular degeneration. These include quitting smoking, eating a healthy diet rich in antioxidants and nutrients

EYES

continued on page 13



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**EYES**

*continued from page 12*

(e.g., leafy green vegetables, fish, and fruits), exercising regularly, maintaining normal blood pressure and cholesterol levels, and protecting the eyes from harmful ultraviolet (UV) light.

**Supplements**

The AREDS study conducted by the National Eye Institute and concluded in 2001. It showed that the AREDS formula can reduce patients' risk of the advanced form of AMD by about 25 percent. The formula helps protect people's central vision, which is needed for reading, driving, recognizing faces and other daily activities.

The AREDS 2 study, which concluded in 2011, tested several antioxidant nutrients that earlier research had suggested might protect the eyes: lutein, zeaxanthin, and omega-3 fatty acids. Omega-3 fatty acids are produced by plants and are present in oily fish such as salmon. Lutein and zeaxanthin are carotenoids, a class of plant-derived vitamins that also includes beta-carotene, and are present in leafy

green vegetables. The body uses these nutrients to maintain the health of the retina, the part of the eye that can be damaged by AMD. The AREDS 2 research team did find that the risk of developing advanced AMD was reduced by about 18 percent in study participants who took the variant that included lutein and zeaxanthin but no beta-carotene, compared with participants who took the variant that had beta-carotene but no lutein or zeaxanthin. And those participants whose diets were low in lutein and zeaxanthin at the start of the study, but who took a variant with lutein and zeaxanthin during the study, were about 25 percent less likely to develop advanced AMD, compared with similar participants who did not take lutein and zeaxanthin.

The researchers say that removing beta-carotene from the AREDS formula and adding lutein and zeaxanthin will result in a single formula that is safe and effective for all AMD patients. Another recent AREDS report showed that the benefits of taking the AREDS formula appear to be long-lasting. Participants in the first AREDS study who took the original formula daily for

five years continue to enjoy a 25 percent lower risk of developing advanced AMD.

It's important to note that the choice of treatment depends on the type and severity of macular degeneration, as well as individual factors. If you or someone you know has macular degeneration, it's crucial to consult with an ophthalmologist or retina specialist who can provide personalized recommendations and guidance based on the specific situation.

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# News from Bellingham Public Library

## Summer Hours

Monday - Thursday 9:30 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Friday & Saturday 9:30 a.m. - 3 p.m.

The library will be closed on Monday, June 19th for the Juneteenth Holiday. The library will be closed on Saturdays starting June 24th, resuming Saturday hours on September 9th.

## Special Programs

### Bellingham is Open for Business Programs

The library has updated our website, <https://www.bellinghamma.org/library/pages/business-resources>, with information for local businesses and entrepreneurs, including a full schedule of workshops through June. These programs are made possible by a federal Institute of Museum and Library Services grant the library was awarded, through the Library Services and Technology Act. The grant is administered by the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners.

- **Diverse & Small Business Certification with the Massachusetts Supplier Diversity Office** - Monday, June 12th at 6:30 p.m.

Across the state of Massachusetts, government entities and private companies are looking to do business with certified diverse businesses. In this workshop, business owners will learn about the different types of diversity certifications available, how having a diversity certification may be a useful tool to help market their business, and what the Supplier Diversity Office (SDO) does to encourage the participation of diverse businesses in the State procurement process. This workshop is geared towards business owners who may fall into one or more of these categories: Minority business enterprise (MBE); Woman-owned business enterprise (WBE); Veteran-owned business enterprise (VBE); LGBT business en-

terprise (LGBTBE); Service-disabled veteran business enterprise (SDOVBE); Persons with disabilities-owned business enterprise (DOBE). This will be a hybrid program, with a limit of 12 people in person. Registration is necessary. When 12 in-person seats are full, everyone else will be virtual through Zoom. Visit <https://www.bellinghamma.org/library>.

- **Using Video for Advertising** - Thursday, June 15th at 6 p.m.

In this session, we'll debunk the myths about video, demonstrate some of the tools that can help you create great video content in your own office and give some basic advice on video editing. Bring your device and we'll give it a try. Any device with a camera and microphone will work! This will be a hybrid program, with a limit of 12 people in person. Registration is necessary.

When 12 in-person seats are full, everyone else will be virtual through Zoom.

### Virtual 50+ Job Seekers Networking Group - June Topics:

- Thinking Outside the Box, Wednesday, June 7th, from 9:30 am to 11:30 am or Wednesday, June 14th from 6-8 pm
- Networking 2.0 - Give to Get! - Wednesday, June 21st from 9:30 am to 11:30 am or Wednesday, June 28th from 6-8 pm.

These two workshops conclude this 6-month program.

The Massachusetts Library Collaborative 50+ Job Seekers Networking Group meets on the above days/times, via Zoom. To register for each workshop, go to the library calendar, select the workshop date and click on the link to register directly via Zoom. This group is sponsored by more than 60 Massachusetts public libraries.

## June Children's Program Schedule

**Sensory Story Time with Miss Melissa** - Mondays at 10:30 a.m., through June 12th

Join us for stories, songs, crafts and open play! Similar to a traditional story time, with movement breaks and supports built in. For children ages 2-5 of all abilities. Space is limited and registration

is required for each session, so please register early!

**Picnic Stories on the Town Common** - Tuesdays at noon.

Join us on the town common, at the gazebo, for a story and some outdoor fun! No class on June 27th.

**Rhyme Time with Miss Laura** - Thursdays at 11 a.m. through June 22nd. Join us for some rhyme fun! We'll read, sing, dance, do fingerplays, all as we build pre-reading skills. There will be a themed activity after circle time to extend the learning! Intended for ages 3-5 but bigs and littles are always welcome. Drop in, no registration! NO class on June 15th,

**Ring a Ding** - Fridays at 10 a.m. through June 23rd. For ages 0-5. Songs, a story, music, instruments, and beach balls = a lot of noisy fun! Join us! No registration required.

**Baby Time** - Wednesdays at 11:30 a.m. through June 21st

For children under 2, older siblings welcome. Songs, stories, and play/discussion time for you and your baby/toddler. Drop in!

The above programs will continue in late June through mid-August, check the library calendar for their new days and times.

**1st Saturday Family Fun** - Saturday, June 3rd from 10 a.m. to 12 noon

Check the library calendar for details on this program.



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**Teddy Bear Picnic on the Town Common with a Concert by Elijah T. Grasshopper** – Thursday, June 15th at noon

Join us on the town common, at the gazebo, for a Teddy Bear picnic and concert with Elijah T. Grasshopper. You can also register for our summer reading program “Find Your Voice” which includes some literacy activities fun for pre-readers! This is a library sponsored program and is brought to you by the Massachusetts Cultural Council. Drop in!

**Adult/Child Book Club** – Thursday, June 15th at 6:30 p.m. Email Diane Nelson, [dnelson@cwmares.org](mailto:dnelson@cwmares.org) for details.

**Starlight Story Time** – Thursday, June 29th at 6:30 p.m.

Drop in the library after dinner for a story to help everyone unwind from the busy day. Come in your PJs if you want and feel free to bring a blanket and a stuffed friend. After School Programs – end on Thursday June 15th

**Please note:** Our Fun Friday program ended in March. There are no library afterschool programs on Fridays for the remainder of the school year. A reminder to parents, the library closes at 3 p.m. on Fridays.

Our Monday through Thursday After School Programs are continuing! We have two programs for kids in grades 4 and up.

- **After School Kids (ASK)** – for grades 4-6. When school is in session, ASK meets Monday-Thursday from 2:30 p.m.-4:45 p.m. Stop by the Community Room after school to make crafts, use a Chromebook, play on the Wii, play board games and hang out with friends! Registration is required for this program. Questions? Contact Diane Nelson, [dnelson@cwmares.org](mailto:dnelson@cwmares.org). Parents/caregivers of all registrants are signed up for our Constant Contact Newsletter.
- **Teen Room Activities** – for grades 7-12. When school is in session, Teen Room Activities are available Monday-Thursday from 2 p.m.-4:45 p.m. There is no registration needed to attend this program. Questions? Contact Amanda Maclure, [amaclure@cwmares.org](mailto:amaclure@cwmares.org).

**Summer Reading**

Registration begins on June

1st for the Summer Reading Program with the theme “Find Your Voice” and will run through August 18th.

- This is an 8-week program featuring Read and Bead, concerts, storytelling, a ukulele class, bubble parties, weekly prizes to win, and a weekly passport stamp along with lots of reading fun as we explore the many continents and cultures that make up our world!
- The program will run from June 26th through August 18th. Stop by the Children’s Room for information and registration forms.
- **NEW THIS SUMMER! STALLBROOK AND DIPIETRO STUDENTS** - You can turn in your summer reading Time Tracking Sheet to your school in September as proof of your summer reading time!

**Special June/Summer Programs for Children**

School Skills – Mondays at 10 a.m. starting on June 26th”

For ages 2-5. Join Miss Melissa this summer for some school

skills fun! One registration is required and will cover your attendance to all 8-weeks/sessions of the program.

**Mr. Vinny Bubble Show** – Summer Reading Kickoff – Monday, June 26th at 6 p.m.

Using giant homemade bubble wands, a sound system full of music, and a lot of funny family entertainment experience, Mr. Vinny get kids and adults involved in bubble chasing games. Truly best for all ages.

**Kraffy Kids with Miss Diane** – Wednesdays at noon

Each week there will be a new craft with Miss Diane. Please register so we can make sure we have enough supplies on hand for all!

**Learn about COKO, an orphanage in Tanzania, Africa** – Thursday, June 29th at 11 a.m.

Bellingham resident Jay Rowe, founder of COKO (Children of Kilimanjaro Orphanage) will be sharing information about the work his nonprofit orphanage, COKO, is doing in Tanzania. If all goes well, we hope to live stream a meeting between the children of Bellingham and the residents of the orphanage. Please register.

**Other Adult Programs**

Additional details of these programs are available on the library calendar (<https://bit.ly/3xMECCt>)

- **Book Club** generally meets on the first Monday of the month. Email Reference Librarian Cecily Christensen at [cchriste@cwmares.org](mailto:cchriste@cwmares.org) for details.
- **Friends of the Library** generally meet on the second Tuesday of the month at 7 p.m. Email [library@bellinghamlibrary.org](mailto:library@bellinghamlibrary.org) for details.
- **The Library Board of Trustees** generally meets on the second Thursday of the month at 7 p.m. Email [library@bellinghamlibrary.org](mailto:library@bellinghamlibrary.org) for details.
- **Adult Writing Group** meets at the library on the second Tuesday of the month at 6:30 p.m. Email [marjorie@marjorieturner.com](mailto:marjorie@marjorieturner.com) for details.

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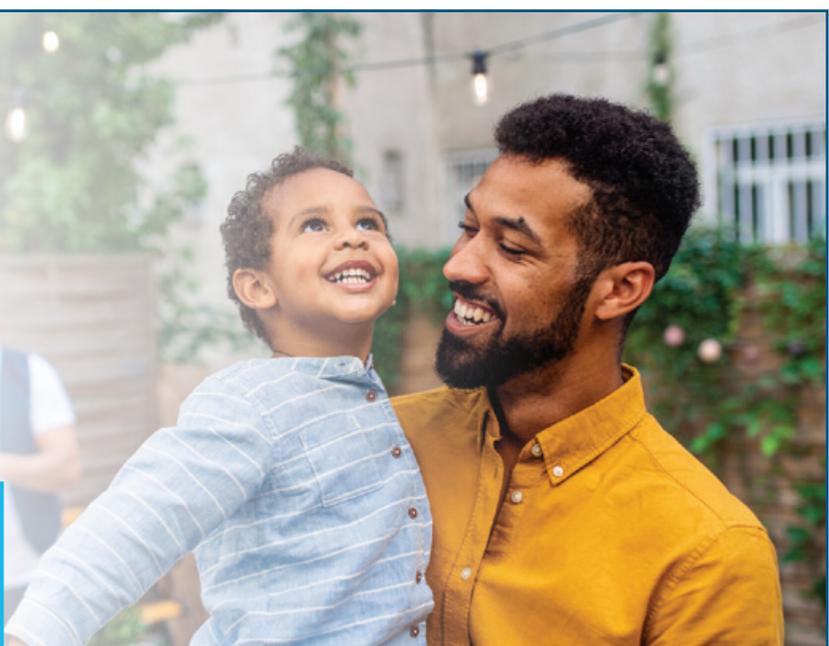
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# Ladies of St. Anne Sodality Enjoy Paint Night Fun

After some instructions and an hour of fun, 20 members of the Ladies of St. Anne Sodality produced individual wooden signs to take home to display. Crystal-Lee Trudeau, owner/instructor of Listen to Your Art, provided a variety of paints and signs including summer, flower and patriotic themes. After choosing a sign, each lady picked out paint colors to make her sign unique. The Ladies and signs are pictured.



LoSA members enjoyed creating wooden signs at the last meeting. Crystal-Lee Trudeau offered artistic guidance.

The Ladies Sodality also received "a special thank you" from Abundant Hope Pregnancy Resource Center in Attleboro, Mass., to our members for donations made during our April meeting. The picture here shows the clothing, bibs, blankets, soft toys, diapers, etc., to be distributed to families in need in surrounding communities.



Abundant Hope Pregnancy Resource Center of Attleboro offered a special thank you to members of the Ladies of St. Anne Sodality for their generous contributions in April.

The LoSA Officers' Recognition Banquet will be June 8, at 6 p.m., at Box Seats, 391 East Central St. in Franklin, Mass.



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### Bellingham Town Wide Shred Event

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# Bellingham Pridefest June 24th

Bellingham will hold its first Pride Festival Saturday, June 24 from 2-6 p.m. at the Town Common to celebrate different generations of the LGBTQ+ community friends of the community.

The event will include sponsors and vendors, a bouncy house provided by the YMCA, children's activities including painting and coloring of community flags, a dance troupe and karate demonstrations, performance, a "balloon person," and tee shirts for sale with the PrideFest logo on them. There will be a shuttle bus for the vendors, and Micky G's will be cooking and serving food.

A special Facebook page has been designed to help get the word out at "Be You Bellingham."



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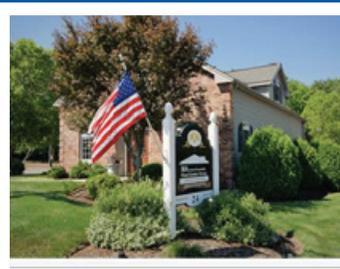
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# 24 BVT Students Headed to National Competition in Atlanta

The SkillsUSA Massachusetts 49th Annual State Leadership & Skills Conference was held at Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School (BVT) on April 28th. SkillsUSA welcomed contestants across the Commonwealth, representing the talent pipeline for skilled trades, to test their occupational training in the Massachusetts SkillsUSA Championships Career Competitions, a showcase of talent for students enrolled in vocational, technical, and health education.

It was the seventeenth consecutive year BVT had hosted the prestigious Olympic-style career competition, with thousands

of students judged by business professionals according to industry and employment standards. The Massachusetts Secretary of Education, Mr. Patrick Tutwiler, visited the campus to experience the event. It was the first time he had visited the campus since his appointment to the position in January.

The annual event was an impressive display of vocational-technical training at its finest. BVT had 128 students test their vocational-technical ability in 60 competitions with remarkable results: 25 Gold, 19 Silver & 18 Bronze for a total of 62 medals.

The gold medalists earn the right to represent SkillsUSA



Massachusetts and compete with champions from all over the country at the SkillsUSA National Leadership and Skills Conference in Atlanta, Georgia, this June. The exception is the Cosmo under 500 and Safety Poster Design Team gold medalists who only compete at the state level and do not advance.

However, Kallie Allen and the Safety Poster Design Team winners will serve as National Voting Delegates. The complete list of medalists is available at [www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/skillsusa](http://www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/skillsusa).

The Bellingham students who earned medals at the State Leadership & Skills Conference are listed below:

**Gold:** Lucien Stenehjem; Robotics and Automation Tech.

**Silver:** Nicholas Cummings, CNC 3 Axis Milling Programmer; Sophie Jacobson, Promotional Bulletin Board; and Sara Lewis, Principles of Technology.

**Bronze:** Dimana Hristova, Mechatronics.

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# BVT Student Council Earns National Recognition Fifth Year in a Row!

For their exemplary record of leadership, service, and activities that assist the school and community, the Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School (BVT) Student Council has once again been recognized as a 2023 National Gold Council of Excellence by the National Student Council (NatStuCo). It is the fifth consecutive year the council at BVT has earned this top award.

“Exceptional student councils are a hallmark of exceptional schools,” said Ronn Nozoe, CEO of the National Association of Secondary School Principals, the parent organization of NatStuCo. “The student council at BVT has taken student leadership to the next level, creating a culture promoting scholarship and citizenship that resonates far beyond their team. I’m delighted to recognize their hard work with the National Gold Council of Excellence Award for their commitment to service, leadership, and uplifting the voices of their peers.”

To meet the National Council of Excellence Award requirements, a student council must meet various criteria, such as crafting a written constitution, conducting regular meetings, and adopting a democratic election process. Additionally, demonstrate successful sponsorship and participation in leadership development and activities that serve its school and community.



“It is an honor to recognize the efforts of our award-winning council,” said Superintendent-Director Dr. Michael F. Fitzpatrick. “We are proud of our advisors, Danielle Cann and Megan Potenti, who consistently assist and empower our council members through annual service projects and fundraising efforts such as Thanksgiving meals and a holiday drive that truly make a difference in the lives of our families and community.”

It has been an exceptional year for the council, earning recognition at the state level, being named a Gold Council by the Massachusetts Association of Student Councils (MASC), and Megan Potenti, MASC Advisor of the Year.

“Our students continue to amaze me year after year,” said Danielle Cann. “I love advising this club. I am lucky to work with an incredible group of students with creative ideas who enjoy collaborating to accomplish goals and create an atmosphere that unifies our school.”

The 2022-23 Student Council Executive Board Members:

- Hunter Claffin, President
- Eleanor Poitras, Vice President
- Lizmary Vidal-Sanchez, Secretary

- Bradley Lyon, Treasurer
- Luke Perier, Historian
- Zabel DerKosroffian, Events Coordinator
- Sara Lewis, Publicity Coordinator

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FOR UPDATES

# Parallel and Black CannaBusiness Work to Shrink the Equity Gap

Despite state-led efforts to promote equity in cannabis, black entrepreneurs in Massachusetts still comprise less than 2% of the owners in the industry, according to a jobs report published by Leafly. Meanwhile, the legal cannabis industry in the United States is forecasted to reach \$50.7 billion by 2028. Given the ongoing equity gap, established cannabis operator Parallel is continuing its partnership with Black CannaBusiness (BCB) to support cannabis owners of color.

BCB and Parallel returned to Boston last week to kick off the second year of their national

education series for CEOs of color in the cannabis industry. The Black Cannabusiness CEO Intensive Program is a free, six-week, executive training program for cannabis business owners, featuring both virtual and in-person workshops and training.

The initiative began with a cohort in Boston on 4/20 of last year with a class of 16 minority cannabis entrepreneurs, and has since trained more than 100 CEOs in cohorts across the country. Developed by Brandon L. Wyatt Esq. and Todd Hughes, co-founders of the BCB CEO Intensive, the curriculum draws

## Mercury.

on the experience of business leaders and advisors in the industry from across the country.

“Our goal is to provide CEOs of color with foundational knowledge and a network of mentors, fellow entrepreneurs, and cannabis executives they can leverage to take their business to the next level. We hope to increase the number of cannabis business owners of color by providing them with resources to thrive,” said Todd Hughes.

CEOs in the Boston cohort commenced the six-week program with a two-day in-person session that introduced them to cannabis industry leaders and their expert mentorship on running a cannabis business. They will next complete twice-a-week virtual sessions designed to provide insights on how to navigate critical business areas like marketing and financing.

“A business education tailored for cannabis executives of color is impactful because it is culturally competent. BCB facilitators of color lead the program and CEO participants get the chance to network with other entrepreneurs of color. These elements help provide a clearer path to success,” said Brandon L. Wyatt Esq.

Parallel, one of the largest privately held, vertically integrated, multi-state cannabis operators in the United States is a partner of the intensive. The company provides industry insights and networking opportunities unique to an established cannabis operator.

“We enter the second year of the program having seen some of the positive impact the program has had upon first year participants. Parallel is hopeful that the collaboration with BCB will help elevate the success of minority business owners in the cannabis industry,” said James Jackson, senior director of Social Equity at Parallel.

“The Black Cannabusiness CEO Intensive Program took me from hobbyist to CEO. It provided me with the tools to create a business plan. It introduced me to a network of mentors and other entrepreneurs who have become a major re-



source as I scale my business,” said Omari Anderson, CEO of Best Dirty Lemonade and a 2022 graduate of the BCB Mastermind CEO Intensive, Boston cohort.

“Minorities played a significant role in cultivating this market long before it became the massive industry it is today, yet now, many of us have been shut out of the cannabis industry and struggle to successfully operate in this new landscape,” said Jonathan Torres, a legacy operator and CEO of OnePR Business Development, who participated in the Boston cohort. “The CEO Intensive teaches you a lot about having the right mindset in a sector where there is so much to learn and connects you with a network of mentors that can help you grow professionally and thrive in the industry.”

“Change won’t happen overnight and we cannot expect equity in the cannabis industry without working together to make it happen. That’s why it is so important that companies like Parallel are stepping up, in addition to the hard work being done by advocacy groups and state

cannabis equity programs,” said Heman Shahi, founder of Legalize Nepal Official and a participant of the Boston cohort. “The BCB Mastermind CEO Intensive is bringing together like-minded people who want to see more diversity and change within the industry and serves as a platform for the next generation of the industry.”

“Being a woman and a person of color in cannabis can be difficult to navigate, and it can be challenging to maintain a positive mindset about growing your business while dealing with the stigmas people have about cannabis,” said Keyla Dehoyos, CEO and head chef of Liquid Gold and participant of the Boston cohort. “Participating in the CEO Intensive Program is empowering because it connects me to a community of enthusiastic peers who understand the potential of cannabis as well as provides me with foundational knowledge on operating a cannabis business. I am grateful to be participating in the program because it is more difficult for people of color to find these opportunities and resources.”

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# State Siting Board Makes Major Decision Impacting Local Clean Energy

A major decision by the state Energy Facility Siting Board (“EFSB”) on petitions by two corporations to Battery Energy Storage Facility (“BESS”) facilities in Carver and Medway signals a new direction for siting energy projects in the state. Today the EFSB voted unanimously to reject the petition of Power Plus of Texas for 150 megawatts of BESS in Carver and of Medway Grid for 250 megawatts in Medway.

EFSB ruled its statute does not give it jurisdiction over these projects because the jurisdiction is limited to “energy generating facilities” over 100 megawatts. It ruled the BESS are storage, not energy generators. The EFSB commented that the energy laws from the 1980s were for a different time when such BESS was not contemplated.

This was a win for Save the Pine Barrens, a Southeastern Massachusetts group that made this legal argument to the EFSB when it intervened in May 2021, joining residents in the neighborhood where the Cranberry Point project is proposed.

Bryan Betram, counsel for Save the Pine Barrens in the EFSB proceeding stated, “The EFSB’s decision shows thoughtful consideration about the new and novel issues posed by battery energy storage facilities. As

the EFSB recognized, the Legislature must carefully consider those issues and enact legislation before State agencies have authority to approve their siting. This decision should spur an important public discussion about how to site and regulate these facilities in a way that balances the Commonwealth’s need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions with the public’s need to ensure these facilities are safely sited and their impacts on communities are minimized and mitigated.”

In discussing the state’s outdated energy siting laws, the EFSB Commissioners recognized that siting large energy projects needs to take into account the voices of community members who have traditionally been marginalized in the process. The proposed residential site for the Carver project has been burdened with a new high voltage transmission corridor and regional substation with no opportunity for those impacted by noise, emissions

of Electromagnetic Fields and light impacts to be consulted.

The BESS would be a third project, making the neighborhood an energy sacrifice zone.

The two BESS projects now go before the Department of Public Utilities (“DPU”) on the companies’ requests to exempt them from all local zoning. The Carver Select Board and Planning Board have asked the DPU to deny the zoning exemption.

The Carver Planning Board recently voted to extend and modify local zoning approvals. The decision is not final.

For more information about Save the Pine Barrens and its project Community Land and Water Coalition, see <https://savethepinebarrens.org/>



# FEMA Awards Over \$5.2 Million to Mass Dept. of Ed for COVID-19 Test Kits

The Federal Emergency Management Agency will be sending more than \$5.2 million to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to reimburse the state education department for the cost of providing test kits to students and staff during the COVID-19 pandemic to help keep schools open.

The \$5,239,327 Public Assistance grant will reimburse the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education for the cost of purchasing and distributing 154,532 at-home COVID-19 diagnostic tests to education facilities across the commonwealth between December 2021 and July 2022.

“FEMA is pleased to be able to assist the Commonwealth of Massachusetts with these costs,” said FEMA Region 1 Regional Administrator Lori Ehrlich.

“Providing resources for our partners on the front lines of the pandemic fight is critical to their success, and our success as a nation.”

FEMA’s Public Assistance program is an essential source of funding for states and communities recovering from a federally declared disaster or emergency.

So far, FEMA has provided more than \$1.7 billion in Public Assistance grants to Massachusetts to reimburse the commonwealth for pandemic-related expenses.

Additional information about FEMA’s Public Assistance program is available at <https://www.fema.gov/public-assistance-local-state-tribal-and-non-profit>. To learn more about the COVID-19 response in Massachusetts, please visit <https://www.fema.gov/disaster/4496>

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# Sports

## Bellingham Hoping to Build upon Historic Season

By CHRISTOPHER TREMBLAY,  
STAFF SPORTS WRITER

In a program that only began four years ago and basically lost a year and half of those four years to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Bellingham boys' volleyball team earned a spot last spring in the Division 2 State Tournament. After going 10-9 on the season, the Blackhawks were awarded an 18 seed heading into the playoffs. Unfortunately, they lost to Holyoke 3-0 in their first round of play.

Despite having lost, Bellingham is hoping to take that playoff experience from a year ago and improve upon it.

"With this technically only being our third year since the program was established, we want to move further ahead this season," Bellingham Coach Steve Mantegani said. "We've brought back a lot of athletes

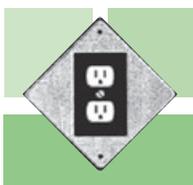


**Bellingham Coach Steve Mantegani is banking on steady improvement among his returning boys' volleyball players.**



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from last year's success including the strength of our team, which are now seniors."

The Blackhawks, at press time, had only one loss thus far, and Mantegani was optimistic that the team would have a real chance at improving upon last year's performance. In the upcoming weeks, Bellingham will see the likes of Millis and Medfield as well as Randolph, a team they have never seen before. The squad will also begin playing three games a week.

Tri-Captains seniors Grant Wojcik and Dan Rose as well as junior Zachary Mantegani will be looked upon to lead the team back to the post-season. Wojcik, a two-time Tri-Valley League All Star setter, will be the catalyst of Bellingham's play. The senior will not only get the team going, but everything will go through him as far as Bellingham is concerned. The setter will be heading to Regis College in Boston to play Division 3 volleyball next year.

Rose will play middle hitter and despite only being just

about 6 feet tall will provide Bellingham with that middle of the court presence.

"Dan is a big hitter and blocker for us and does a really nice job in the front row," the Coach said. "You can count on him to get us out of trouble, and he is the best jumper on the team jumping a lot higher than his size."

The team's only junior captain is also a TVL All Star and will play the right side for the Blackhawks. He is an all-around player that does a lot of different things on the court for Bellingham.

In addition to relying on the captains, Mantegani is also hoping that senior Anthony Campbell takes his game to the next level this year giving the team more production. According to the Coach, the team's libero does a great job passing in the back row and is the anchor of the team in regard to serve and receive. He was named a TVL All Star Honorable mention last spring.

Mantegani is expecting freshman outside hitter Thomas Crandell to provide consistent passing this season now that he will be a full-time varsity player. Last season, he began the year in the junior varsity squad before being called up down the stretch to provide defense.

Through the early part of the season, sophomore transfer Matthews Coehlo, who was a JV player for Milford last year, has surprised the Coach. The sophomore has been moved into the middle for the Blackhawks due to an injury.

Prior to the season beginning, Mantegani's goal was for the team to come out strong while competing for the TVL League Title.

"The league is full of good teams, but it seems to be much more open this year, except for Millis and Medfield, which are always good," Mantegani said. "We also want to get back to the playoffs and win a few rounds this year. Getting into the tournament last year was a good milestone for us."

# Sports

## Pitching Is BHS Nine's Strength for the Playoffs

By KEN HAMWEY,  
BULLETIN SPORTS WRITER

A Major League Baseball manager once said that pitching is 90 percent of the game, and Bellingham High coach Andy Nolan totally agrees with that assessment.

"It all starts with your pitcher," Nolan emphasized. "If he's walking batters or struggling with his control, that affects everyone. It can even affect your team's fielding. But, when a pitcher is on his game, it raises confidence throughout your team."

The 47-year-old Nolan, who's in his second year as the Blackhawks coach, is acutely aware that pitching will play a key role in whatever success Bellingham has in the state tourney.

The Blackhawks, who had a 10-5 record at the Bulletin's deadline, have eight pitchers and their combined earned-run average was 2.65 after 15 games. Nolan's stable of hurlers includes two seniors and six juniors, and of the eight six are right-handers and two are southpaws.

"Our staff's strengths are experience, athleticism, versatility and a team-first attitude," said Nolan, who pitched for Holy Cross and was its Most Valuable Player as a senior. "They're also very coachable and show concern for each another. Last year, we finished 8-9 and the pitchers were all sophomores and juniors. The experience they've gained is invaluable, and it's been the key to our success."

Nolan plans on using three starters in the playoffs — senior right-hander Ryan Maiorano and junior right-handers Alex Hughes and C.J. Fama.

"It all begins with your ace, and that's Ryan," Nolan noted. "In six mound appearances, he was 1-0, had an E.R.A. of 1.05, walked 10 and struck out 32 in 20 innings. He's a senior captain who's taken on a leadership role. Our junior pitchers respect him. He's calm, poised, and throws his fastball at 88 mph. His slider and change-up are also effective. He'll be competing at Division 1 Fairfield University next year."

Hughes has been solid, compiling a 4-3 record with an



**Bellingham coach Andy Nolan pitched for Holy Cross College and was the Crusaders' MVP in his senior year.**

E.R.A. of 2.90 in 29 innings, he's walked 15 and struck out 33.

"Alex is dependable," Nolan said. "He relies on a fastball, curve, change-up and a sinker. His best pitches have come with men on base. Like Ryan, he's got a high baseball IQ."

Fama was 1-2 with an E.R.A. of 1.24 through 17 innings. He's walked 6 and struck out 18.

"C.J. throws a breaking curve ball that's his bread-and-butter pitch," Nolan said. "I've also coached him in AAU ball, at the youth level and in summer league. Used as a reliever last year, he excelled in that role. C.J. relishes being in pressure situations."

Junior Jack Hildred will be the Blackhawks' prime closer. In 10 1/3 innings, the left-hander was 3-0 with an E.R.A. of 0.68. He's surrendered 5 walks and struck out 15. "Jack's best pitch is his fastball," Nolan offered. "It moves all over the place and it gets to the plate fast. And, it's not on a straight line. He's done a superb job as the closer."

Other hurlers could be called on to close, and the most likely will be Fama. "He definitely can handle the pressure that goes with closing out a game," Nolan said.

The middle-inning relievers include junior left-hander Tyler Ladouceur, senior right-hander Troy Simpson, and junior right-



**Bellingham High pitchers who'll start in the playoffs include, from left, Alex Hughes, Ryan Maiorano, and C.J. Fama. Jack Hildred, far right, will be the closer. Photo courtesy of Noah Sylvia**

handers Joe Corsi and Sean Brown.

"Tyler was a starter last year," Nolan said. "His best pitch is his change-up, and he also is effective with his fastball and curve. Able to play the outfield or first base, he's hitting .292. His E.R.A. (3.07) makes him a reliable middle-inning reliever."

Nolan would also be comfortable calling on Simpson whose nine-inning stats include a 3.11 E.R.A., 5 walks and 13 strikeouts. "Troy's curve ball is his best pitch," he said. "It's his out pitch. A dependable middle-inning guy, he's a good complement to our other pitchers. His fastball also is a plus."

Corsi and Brown have seen limited varsity action, but they've been stalwarts for the jayvees.

"Both Joe and Sean have great team-first approaches to the game," Nolan said. "They both want to compete and were eager to work at the jayvee level to get experience. Joe's fastball has a downward tilt, like his late father who pitched for the Red Sox. Sean's best pitch is his curve ball. Last year, he competed on both the jayvees and the varsity."

Two telling statistics that emphasize the quality of the BHS pitching staff are its walk-to-

our kids' home field, and there's always a good fan base on hand."

Last year, BHS earned a tourney date, then defeated Clinton in its opener when Maiorano threw a no-hitter. A second-round matchup against Abington ended with the Blackhawks bowing out in a 3-2 loss. "We could face Abington again," Nolan said.

Facing Abington is a hypothetical, but there are two sure things that BHS baseball fans can take to the bank.

Nolan's pitching depth has put the Blackhawks in a good place and he'll "go with the formula that got us to this point." Also serving as the team's pitching coach, Nolan calls all the pitches. When he earned MVP honors at Holy Cross, one effort that likely clinched that honor was a four-hit shutout over West Point.

"Having pitched in college is a plus, because I can relate to what's going through a pitcher's mind in a pressure situation," Nolan offered. "I also pitched during summers for the Medford Mustangs and the Watertown Reds in the Inner City League. Another key for us in the playoffs will be to remain poised, calm and relaxed. That's when a team gets good results."

Andy Nolan never looks too far ahead, always focusing on the task at hand and never losing sight of the big picture.

"For me, it's not one game at a time," he said. "It's one-half inning at a time."

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# Tips for Designing and Maintaining a Low-Maintenance Garden

BY MELINDA MYERS

Don't let your spring garden enthusiasm lead to overplanting and the creation of a summer gardening nightmare. A design with maintenance in mind and some strategic care can help reduce the time you spend managing your gardens and landscape.

Consider using fewer plant species when designing perennial flowerbeds. Increase the number of each to boost the visual impact of the garden and reduce maintenance. You'll have fewer species to manage, identify and differentiate from the weeds as they emerge in spring.

Select plants suited to the growing conditions and that do not require deadheading and staking. Avoid pest- and disease-prone plants as well as those that quickly multiply and overtake neighboring plants and the garden bed.

Design garden beds with gentle curves and avoid tight spaces that limit access and will make managing the surroundings difficult. Make sure all parts of the garden can easily be reached for planting, weeding, harvesting, and care. Add a path of wood chips or a few steppers, like Leaf Stepping Stones, to large garden beds as needed for easier access.

Reduce watering needs by growing plants suited to your area's normal rainfall. Group moisture-loving plants together to minimize the amount of water used and time spent watering. Enlist the help of soaker hoses or drip irrigation like the Snip-n-Drip Soaker system (gardeners.com) when watering is needed. This irrigation system applies water to the soil where needed and can be cut with scissors to fit any garden that is planted in rows.



shovel to dig a V-shaped trench around the perimeter of the garden edge. Fill this with the same mulch used in your flowerbed to create a mowing strip around the garden bed.

Join forces with neighbors and rent an edging machine for the day or weekend. These machines can make it easier and quicker to accomplish this task. With a shared rental, you all save money and no one has to maintain and store the equipment.

Keep tools handy to save time and energy spent retrieving forgotten tools from the shed or garage. Weather-proof garden tool bags with multiple compartments make it easy to organize, store and carry hand tools, plant tags, gloves, and other small items to the garden. Or store them right where they are needed. Convert an old mailbox or invest in a small storage container like the waterproof Galvanized Garden Tool Storage Box. Mount it on the end of a raised bed, fence, or post to keep small tools, gloves, safety glasses, and more in a handy location.

Use carts, wagons, or a gardener's summer sled when moving large or heavy loads. You'll be able to accomplish the move with fewer trips and less muscle strain.

Take time this season to implement a few of these strategies. A few changes can save you time that you can instead spend relaxing, enjoying, or adding more gardens.

Reduce watering frequency, suppress weeds, and improve the soil with the help of organic mulches like leaves, evergreen needles, and wood chips. You'll gain multiple benefits with this one task. Spread a one- to two-

inch layer of mulch over the soil surface. Pull it away from tree trunks, shrub stems and off the crowns of flowering plants and vegetables. The finer the mulch material, the thinner the layer of mulch you'll need.

Slow the infiltration of grass and weeds into garden beds and eliminate the need to hand trim with a bit of edging. Use a



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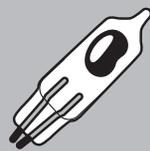
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# Bishop Feehan Opens New Band Facility with New Band Director

Building on decades of music excellence, Bishop Feehan High School is excited to launch a next era for the school's award-winning band & instrumental music program with the planned summer 'of 23 opening of an entirely new band facility, the addition of a new band director and the advent of middle school music partnerships with Feehan's local partner schools.

Feehan's 2019 *Daring to Believe* strategic plan called for this re-investment in music, emphasizing the importance of music and the arts in a well-rounded, classical Catholic high school curriculum. And the results of that plan will really shine as Feehan enters the 2023-24 school year and beyond.

The highlight of the renewed commitment is the addition of John Knasas as Feehan's new band director. John will be teaming with legendary Feehan band instructor, Joe Taylor, to continue the tradition of instrumental music excellence that Mr. Taylor has stewarded on his own for nearly 30 years. Together and under Knasas' new leadership, Knasas and Taylor will be adding courses to Feehan's music offerings, expanding band opportunities for Feehan students and launching an exciting new middle school band initiative in partnership with several Feehan feeder schools.

Knasas – an Attleboro resident, St. John the Evangelist parishioner, and parent of an incoming Feehan musician – comes to Feehan after 20 years as band director in North Smithfield, Rhode Island. Knasas' musicians have received consistent superior and platinum ratings at Rhode Island Music Educators Association (RIMEA), Great East, and Music in the Parks festivals. The North Smithfield Middle School band program received the National Band Association Blue Ribbon "Program of Excellence" award in 2016.

Additionally, Knasas – himself a working musician with the popular band Brass Attack – has been a conductor of the 2010 RIMEA Junior All State Jazz Band, 2015 RIMEA Junior All State Band, and Rhode Island Philharmonic Youth Wind Ensemble.

"We are thrilled to have John join our faculty," said Feehan Principal Sean Kane. "And we are *'all-in'*" on our commitment to excellence in music education. With the construction of our new innovation & performing arts building and teaming John with Mr. Taylor, we can't wait to see where our talented students and their leaders take this program."

This new leadership and these new programs will all be housed in a brand-new band facility, which is a key part of Feehan's 10,000 square-foot Innovation & Arts Center, opening in September. Feehan's new band facility is a featured highlight of the new building, purpose-built for music excellence and connected directly to our auditorium stage and our playing fields. The facility will be home to Feehan's several award-winning instrumental groups, from orchestra to marching band to percussion ensemble, jazz ensemble and more.

"Four years ago, the Feehan community spoke clearly in our planning process," said Feehan president Tim Sullivan. "Music education was a clear priority, and the time was right to give our music spaces a major, major facelift for 2023 and beyond. At the time, we didn't imagine an entirely new building, but – through the generosity of many – today we are poised to write the next exciting chapter in Feehan music history. We can't wait to watch that unfold."

## June 6

**Bellingham Public Schools Grades 5-8 Band Concert and "Ad Lib" World Premiere, 7 p.m.,** Bellingham HS Auditorium, free, performances by students, including special commissioned musical piece by composer Dr. Andrew Boysen

## June 7

**Bellingham Business Association Scholarship and Unsung Hero Award Presentations, 6-8 p.m.,** Lowell's Restaurant, 75 Cape Road, Rte. 140, members \$25, rsvp by June 5, contact@bellinghambusinessassociation.org

## June 8

**Ladies of St. Anne Sodality (LoSA) Officers' Recognition Banquet, 6 p.m.,** Box Seats, 391 East Central St., Franklin, Mass.

## June 10

**Bellingham Farmstand opens, 200 Center St.,** Bellingham

## June 12th

**Diverse & Small Business Certification with the Massachusetts Supplier Diversity Office – Monday, at 6:30 p.m.,** Bellingham Public Library, 100 Blackstone St., Bellingham, register at <https://www.bellinghamma.org/library>, limit of 12 in-person seats, otherwise through Zoom

## June 7

**Virtual 50+ Job Seekers Networking Group, Thinking Outside the Box, 9:30 am to 11:30 a.m.,** Bellingham Public Library, 100 Blackstone St., Bellingham, register for each workshop, go to the library calendar, select the workshop date and click on the link to register directly via Zoom

## June 14

**Virtual 50+ Job Seekers Networking Group, Thinking Outside the Box, 6-8 p.m.,** Bellingham Public Library, 100 Blackstone St., Bellingham, register for each workshop, go to the library calendar, select the workshop date and click on the link to register directly via Zoom

# Calendar

## June 15

**Using Video for Advertising, 6 p.m.,** Bellingham Public Library, 100 Blackstone St., Bellingham, register at <https://www.bellinghamma.org/library>, limit of 12 in-person seats, otherwise through Zoom

**Teddy Bear Picnic on the Town Common with a Concert by Elijah T. Grasshopper, Thursday, June 15th at noon,** sponsored by Bellingham Public Library and Mass. Cultural Council

## June 21

**Virtual 50+ Job Seekers Networking Group, Networking 2.0- Give to Get, 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.,** Bellingham Public Library, 100 Blackstone St., Bellingham, register for each workshop, go to the library calendar, select the workshop date and click on the link to register directly via Zoom

## June 24

**Bellingham Pridefest, 2-6 p.m.,** Bellingham Town Common, find "Be You Bellingham" on Facebook

## June 26

**Mr. Vinny Bubble Show, 6 p.m.,** Bellingham Public Library Summer Reading Kickoff, 100 Blackstone St., Bellingham

## June 28

**Music on the Grass, 6 p.m. – 8 p.m.** Bellingham Town Common, Kids Night with Wayne Potash and Trevor the Games Man. Sponsored by Bellingham Town Common Trustees

**Virtual 50+ Job Seekers Networking Group, Networking 2.0- Give to Get, 6-8 p.m.** Bellingham Public Library, 100 Blackstone St., Bellingham, register for each workshop, go to the library calendar, select the workshop date and click on the link to register directly via Zoom

## June 29

**Starlight Story Time, 6:30 p.m.,** Bellingham Public Library, 100 Blackstone St., Bellingham

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# Franklin's 4th of July Celebration Begins this Month, June 30th

By J.D. O'GARA

Starting Friday, June 30th and ending on Independence Day, Tuesday, July 4th, Franklin's Fourth of July celebration, complete with Franklin's 3rd Annual Blues Festival, summer concessions and rides, and, of course, fireworks, is poised to kick off a summertime of town fun at the Franklin Town Common. This is the 41st year of the Franklin July 4th Coalition, led by Joe Carmignani and Paul Kortick since 2017, continuing its diligence in creating a rocking 4th celebration.

The festivities aren't limited to one day, however. Fun begins on June 30th, with musical entertainment and a carnival each day and concession booths run by local nonprofit groups.

The carnival rides, run by Fiesta Shows, will run each day, with special-deal wristbands on certain times and days (see schedule).

The highlight of the week will be the Third Annual Franklin Blues Festival happening all day Saturday night, July 1st, followed by fireworks at the high school.



**Sugar Ray and the Bluetones will cap off the 3rd Annual Franklin Blues Festival (Saturday, July 1st, 2023), which will take place during the Franklin 4th of July Celebration (June 30-July 4th). After this, fireworks will be set off from Franklin High School. Photo by Yves Bougardier**

"We've ordered good weather," jokes Carmignani,

as unfortunately, the fireworks have been rained out for a couple of years. "We've been looking forward to having the blues fest, capping it off with the fireworks."

"We all pray for good weather," says Kortick. "If you are a religious person and have direct channels, pray for us!"

The Blues Festival, on Saturday night, promises to be top notch.

"We say this every year, and it's truly true. Joe and I really try to make every year just a little better, and I think we've done that this year. We've got absolutely fantastic music for five days," says Kortick. "If you're not a blues fan, you'll walk out of there a blues fan. We pinch ourselves with how good a lot of these bands are."

"A lot of these people play all over the world. Every band that's playing is great," says Carmignani, "Mikey Jr. is coming from Philadelphia to play this event; Bruce Katz is legendary. He's on the A list of blues pianists and used to play with the Allman Brothers. He's playing in Minnesota, Illinois, Georgia,

## Franklin 4th 2023 Schedule of Events

### Friday, June 30

6-10 p.m.: Rides and food booths open  
(WRIST BANDS 6-10)  
7-10 p.m.: Duppy Conquerors

### Saturday, July 1

12-10 p.m.: Rides and food booths open  
(WRIST BANDS 12-5)  
3rd Annual Franklin Blues Festival:  
12-1:15 p.m.: Ed Peabody  
1:45-3 p.m.: Neal & The Vipers  
3:30-4:45 p.m.: Mikey Junior  
5:15-6:30 p.m.: Mike Crandall Bandblues  
7-8:15 p.m.: Bruce Katz  
8:45-10 p.m.: Sugar Ray & The Bluetones  
10 p.m.: FIREWORKS / Franklin High School

### Sunday, July 2

12-10 p.m.: Rides and food booths open  
(WRIST BANDS 12-5)  
12-1:30 p.m.: Padula Trio Plus One  
2-3:30 p.m.: Attleboro School of Rock  
4-6 p.m.: Zajac Brothers Band  
7-10 p.m.: Neon Wave (80s New Wave Dance)

### Monday, July 3

Rides and food booths open 2-10 p.m.  
(WRIST BANDS FROM 2-6)  
7-10 p.m.: Backyard Swagger

### Tuesday, July 4th

12-6 p.m.: Rides and food booths open  
(WRIST BANDS 12-5)  
12-1 p.m.: Matt Zajac  
1-2 p.m.: Jamie Barrett (solo acoustic)  
2:30-4 p.m.: Hot Acoustics  
4:30-6 p.m.: Jesse Liam Band



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Europe, and he's coming here to Franklin. Sugar Ray and the Bluetones, they put on a great show last year and they were so good it was amazing. While they travel the world in May—they're going to be in Germany, Luxembourg, Italy, and then they're coming to Franklin. I give a lot of credit to Mike Crandall, one of the performers, who helps us put on this event. He's played with a lot of these people for 20-30 years."

Best of all, this event is free.

"You can go enjoy yourself and not spend any money," says Carmignani, "Come, enjoy the music, spend the day, and have a blast. There's not too many events where you can say that," adding, "The other great thing is this is obviously a nonprofit organization. We receive hundreds of donations from residents and all of these local businesses. There's no way we can do this without their support." Residents who wish can even donate online, he says. "We added a Venmo QR code last year, so people can donate during the event."

Supporters can also donate at the website, [www.franklin4th.com](http://www.franklin4th.com),

or they can send a check, payable to:  
Franklin July 4th Coalition  
c/o Dean Bank

po box 307, Franklin, MA 02038

Volunteers are also appreciated. Anyone interested in helping for those five days can reach out via the website.

Organizers want to make sure to thank their local sponsors. Last year, these included: Accurate Baker Elman Plumbing Heating & Air Conditioning, Allegra Printing, Auerr, Zajack & Associates, Daddario Hardware & Supply, Dean College, D.G. Ranieri Real Estate, Fenton Financial Group, Fiesta Shows, Franklin Ford, Franklin Glass, Franklin Newcomers & Friends, Franklin Nutrition, Garelick Farms, George's Oil, Inc., Grove Street Auto Repair, JEM Electronics, Keefe Insurance, Kelly's Landscaping, Mass Cultural Council, Middlesex Savings Bank, Milford Daily News, Power Painting Plus, Rockland Trust, SPS Movers, Teddy Gallagher's Irish Pub, Simon's Furniture, and Vallee's Jewelers.

# Kick Off a Great Season with Franklin's June 9 Strawberry Stroll

The 19th Annual Strawberry Stroll is ready to go. This town favorite is set for Friday, June 9 from 4 to 8 p.m. The rain date is Saturday the 10th from 4 to 8 p.m. It will be held in downtown Franklin.

Start the summer at this popular event! Take pleasure in delicious strawberry shortcakes, listen to lively music, and have fun with the activities for your kids. The fire department and historical museum will welcome visitors to see some interesting items. There will be 95 booths displaying the many treats downtown Franklin has to offer. Main Street will be closed for visitors to easily and safely walk.

Dean Bank's staff will be serving the signature strawberry shortcakes under tents in front of the bank. Fresh strawberries donated and cut by Dean College will top hundreds of shortcakes and be completed with whipped cream. Proceeds from strawberry shortcake sales are allocated to



the Downtown Partnership to help fund the event.

Live music will be provided by Heath Nisbett from 4 to 6 p.m. and Dom DeBaggis from 6 to 8 p.m.

The Franklin Fire Dept will showcase their trucks and equipment on the front ramp, including an antique ladder truck. Sparky will be giving out plastic red helmets to children.

At the Historical Museum, Greenwich Bay Brass will play music on the front porch, fresh popcorn will be served, and vintage wedding dresses will be displayed.

"The Strawberry Stroll always has a 'special vibe' to it because it is one of the first events in town to kick off the summer season," said Kevin Johnson, this year's Stroll Chairman. "We ask everyone to come downtown and enjoy strawberry shortcake, live music, great food and drink choices from local restaurants and the many interesting vendors offering goods and services."

Franklin Downtown Partnership, the organizer of this annual tradition, is grateful for the financial support from community businesses. This year's stroll is made possible by the support of the following sponsors.

**Platinum Sponsor:** Middlesex Savings Bank.



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The Franklin Downtown Partnership is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization made up of more than 350 business owners, residents, and community leaders working to revitalize downtown Franklin. Residents are welcome to join the Downtown Partnership for only \$25. The Partnership manages events like the Strawberry Stroll and the Harvest Festival, and initiatives such as beautification, streetscape design, greenspace, alley murals, and sculpture projects. For more information go to [www.franklindowntownpartnership.org](http://www.franklindowntownpartnership.org).



The Franklin Downtown Partnership Strawberry Stroll, a community celebration, will take place from 4-8 p.m. on June 9, 2023. Photos used courtesy of Franklin Downtown Partnership

## Live Brass Band for Strawberry Stroll!

Bring your blanket or chair to the front lawn of The Franklin Historical Museum and enjoy the music of the Greenwich Bay Brass! Based in Rhode Island and known throughout New England the GBB is an all-volunteer, British style brass ensemble with unique instrumentation. Consisting of a mixture of professional and highly skilled amateur musicians alike, the GBB repertoire includes a variety of music including traditional brass band pieces, orchestral transcription, jazz show tunes, holiday and popular music. The band promotes the brass band style and have been entertaining audiences at churches and unique venues in the area.



There will be two performances during the June 9th Friday night Strawberry Stroll at 4:30 p.m. and again at 6:30 p.m. Enjoy live music and freshly popped popcorn. Stop in and explore our history and discover where Franklin's story begins.

Visitors to the museum are encouraged to donate a non-perishable food item for the Franklin Food Pantry.

The Franklin Historical Museum is located at 80 West Central St., Franklin.

## Take Steps to End Lung Cancer at LUNG FORCE Walk Boston on June 4, 2023

Lung cancer is the leading cancer killer of both men and women in the U.S., and just this year, it is estimated that 5,600 of Massachusetts residents will be diagnosed with the disease. In an effort to end lung cancer, on June 4, 2023 the American Lung Association in Massachusetts is hosting the LUNG FORCE Walk Boston at the Franklin Park Zoo.

The LUNG FORCE Run/Walk is a celebratory and welcoming event that provides critical funds for lifesaving lung cancer research, early detection initiatives, and awareness outreach to vulnerable communities. For the event, participants can run, walk or stroll a 1-mile or 5K route at the Franklin Park Zoo. The Lung Association also offers a "Run/Walk Your Way"

virtual option for those who can't make it to the event.

"Someone is diagnosed with lung cancer every two and a half minutes and four in five of those diagnosed will ultimately die of the disease," said Ashley Carrier, executive director at the Lung Association in Massachusetts. "But there is hope. More Americans than ever are surviving lung cancer. The survival rate has increased by a dramatic 13% to 22.6% in the last five years. At the LUNG FORCE Walk, Boston residents will come together to take small steps to make bold strides to end lung cancer."

This year, the LUNG FORCE Walk Boston welcomes Jessica Brown, WCVB NewsCenter 5 anchor and medical reporter, to emcee the event and help bring attention to the mission of the

Lung Association's local effort to raise funds and awareness in the greater Boston area.

The American Lung Association's LUNG FORCE initiative unites women, men and caregivers across the country to stand together against lung cancer, the leading cancer killer. Through education, advocacy and research, LUNG FORCE works to provide hope to all those impacted by the disease and save more lives.

Money raised at the LUNG FORCE Run/Walk will fund the Lung Association's efforts to end lung cancer and lung disease, as well as support the organization's COVID-19 Action Initiative.

For more information and to register for the Boston LUNG FORCE Walk, visit [LUNGFORCE.org/Boston](http://LUNGFORCE.org/Boston)

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