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Vol. 9 No. 11

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November 2024



# Seasonal Sights and Frights

see more on page 12



## Autism Center Offers Freedom, Welcoming Space

BY SEAN SULLIVAN

Last month, the Natick Mall cut the ribbon on its new autism center, opening doors and access to our neighbors facing that chal-

that societies and their peoples should strive toward positive freedoms, and eschew negative ones.

Take taxes as an example. Not having to pay them might sound



lenge. The “Autism Welcoming” facility promises more freedom for families to engage in the social spaces most of us take for granted.

In his new book, “On Freedom,” Timothy Snyder counsels

appealing for a few seconds, until we consider the dire downstream implications of such a policy. It’s a negative, a freedom from hav-

**AUTISM CENTER**

*continued on page 3*

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# Family Promise Metrowest Honored with Community Partner Award by MetroWest Legal Services

October 10, 2024 — Natick, MA — Family Promise Metrowest is proud to announce that we were honored with the Community Partner Award at the Together for Justice event, hosted by MetroWest Legal Services on Wednesday, October 10, at The Center for the Arts in Natick. This recognition highlights our ongoing partnership and shared commitment to supporting families in need across the region.

Family Promise Metrowest is dedicated to providing shelter, resources, and support for families experiencing homelessness, empowering them to achieve lasting stability. The collaboration with MetroWest Legal Services has strengthened our ability to address the complex legal challenges families face on their path to stability and success.

“We are honored to receive the Community Partner Award from Metrowest Legal Services, and be recognized along with the other honorees. This recognition reflects our collective commitment



to pursuing justice and supporting families in need. As we gather together for an evening of music and gratitude, we celebrate not only our achievements but also

the partnerships that empower our communities.” said Family Promise Metrowest’s Executive Director, Danielle Conti. “Together, we are creating brighter

futures for families in our community.” Eliz Portal, LIFE Program Coordinator and Cristina Carrion, Family Support Specialist accepted the award on behalf

of Family Promise Metrowest.

To learn more about the Family Promise Metrowest programs, and how to become involved, please visit [www.familypromisemetrowest.org](http://www.familypromisemetrowest.org) or email [info@familypromisemetrowest.org](mailto:info@familypromisemetrowest.org).

Founded in 2008, Family Promise Metrowest (FPM) offers a spectrum of services to families that are facing housing instability and homelessness. From a family shelter based in Natick Center to a homelessness prevention program that serves families across the region, FPM has grown exponentially in recent years, now helping close to 100 families per year access stable housing, sustainable employment, affordable childcare, and educational opportunities. By partnering with local businesses, congregations, foundations, schools, and dedicated volunteers, FPM is creating real solutions to the housing crisis facing families.

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### AUTISM CENTER

*continued from page 1*

ing to do a thing.

On the flip side, consider all the paved roads and highways our taxes have paid for. Those byways have enabled a positive form of freedom for more than a century, a freedom of movement.

Mobility is one master freedom that Snyder cites as a positive. There's economic and social mobility—the freedom (opportunity) to better our lives and those of future generations. And then of course there's that geographic mobility, facilitated by all those publicly funded roads and bridges.

We often take for granted our freedom of movement, one that allows us to travel around our country, state, town, neighborhood. Yet for our neighbors coping with autism, that freedom can be curtailed by the volume and bustle of a busy and complex world.

That's where the new Autism Welcoming resource center can help. The facility is located on the Natick Mall's upper level, next to the space formerly occupied by a

branch of Wegman's.

The center's mission, said Alison Daigle, is threefold. She is Executive Director of the Autism Alliance, a group that's worked to make the new Autism Welcoming

that's aimed at selling can have the opposite effect on people with autism. It can be an overload of sights and sounds, one that can inhibit the positive freedom of movement.

Several stations have been set up, tables where children can occupy themselves with visual and tactile activities. The Natick Mall renovated the new space for Autism Welcoming.

"We wanted to keep it keyed into kids who have autism who come into the space," said Daigle. "We're providing a space that's going to be comforting and supportive."

To that end, kits can be loaned out to visitors to help them cope with the strain on the senses that's often on offer within walls of the mall. Kits are customized

based on the needs of each child. They may include a noise-cancelling pair of headphones, fidget toys, and other devices.

Another mission of the center is to connect visiting families with resources that may benefit them. Autism Welcoming is a production of Advocates, a local non-profit human services provider. The latter can advise our neighbors in need about programs geared toward their special challenges.



### AUTISM CENTER

*continued on page 4*

location a reality.

First, the center seeks to be serene space for people living with autism. Retail spaces like the Natick Mall are an arcade of the audio and visual bells and whistles that go into marketing goods and services.

But all the sensory output

The Autism Welcoming center was designed to dampen those ill-effects. There, parents can bring autistic children to decompress from the inputs of a busy mall. A wooden play structure is the centerpiece of the facility, which is otherwise sparsely furnished (deliberately so).

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# Bacon Free Library November 2024

## Library Hours

Monday through Friday, 9:30-5:30 with extended hours on Tuesday until 7:00pm

Saturdays 9:30-1:30

Curbside pickup is available during all open hours

Check our website for the most up-to-date information and to register for programs: <https://baconfreelibrary.org>

## Children's Programs

### Story Time

Mondays and Tuesdays @ 10am -- We'll feature a combination of stories for listening and songs for singing & dancing.

### Baby Time

Wednesdays @ 10am -- Join us for a cozy story time filled with lap bounces, rhymes, songs, and simple stories. Geared toward infants and young toddlers with their grownups.

### Jammin with You

Fridays, Nov 1st & Nov 15th @ 10:30am -- Be prepared to laugh, dance, sing, and jam your way through 30 minutes of non-stop family fun!

## All Ages Programs

### Featured art display:

Oct 31 - January 11, 2025: Lia Vito Nature Photography

## Adult Programs

### French Conversation Club

Saturday, Nov 9th @ 10am -- Vous parlez français? un peu, beaucoup, pas de problèmes. Venez nous rejoindre pour parler ou pour écouter.

### Holiday Baking Demonstration with Heidi McIndoo: Mini Pumpkin Pie Tartlets

Monday, Nov 18th @ 7pm on Zoom -- The BFL is partnering with the Ashland Public Library to bring you this scrumptious cooking demonstration. If you are looking for a sweet treat for the holidays that won't sabotage your healthy eating goals, join registered dietitian Heidi McIndoo to make mini pumpkin pie tartlets. This program will be held on Zoom; register to receive the meeting link.

## Q&A with Author and Historian Kathleen DuVal: "Native Nations: A Millenium in North America"

Monday, Nov 25th @ 7pm on Zoom -- The BFL is partnering with the Ashland Public Library to bring you this conversation with Native American historian Kathleen DuVal. Listen in to



learn more about the history of local Indigenous Peoples as well as for insight into their resilience and battle for self-sovereignty. This program will be held on Zoom; register to receive the meeting link.

## Adult Book & Film Clubs

Registration required for all clubs

<https://baconfreelibrary.org/clubs-programs/>

### Mystery Book Club

First Thursday of the month @ 1pm on Zoom

November 7th: Bluebird, Bluebird by Attica Locke

### History Book Club

Second Thursday of the month @ 11am on Zoom

November 14th: Empire of the Summer Moon: Quannah Parker and the rise and fall of the Comanches by S.C. Gwynne

### Environmental Book Club

Third Tuesday of the month @ 7pm at the library

November 19th: Fuzz: when nature breaks the law by Mary roach

### Nonfiction Book Club

Fourth Saturday of the month @ 10am at the library & on Zoom

November 23rd: First Friends: the powerful, unsung (and unelected) people who shaped our presidents by Gary Ginsberg

### Cinephile Mondays

Last Monday of the month @ 4pm on Zoom; watch and discuss films. Check the BFL website for the film of the month and to register.

## Museum Passes

The Bacon Free Library and Morse Institute Library offer passes for free or reduced-admission to 30 local museums. Check one out and plan your next day trip!

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## AUTISM CENTER

continued from page 1

"We want to be forward-facing," said Daigle. "We want to talk to them."

Also under the center's remit is training local businesses to be more welcoming to families living with autism. Just across one mall intersection and down a level, California Pizza Kitchen has recently been certified by Autism Welcoming. Cosmetics company Lush has been sanctioned also by

the organization.

The staff of Dave & Busters too have been coached and certified. It's hard to imagine a more rowdy arena for families living with autism—a cavernous arcade hall filled with video games and excited children.

But Dave & Busters now offers "sensory-friendly times," special hours of access for people sensitive to such a din. Presumably then, blinking lights and sound effects are dialed way down, as are the crowds.

Other businesses working with the new center have also designated hours to accommodate our autistic neighbors visiting the mall. These tend to be windows outside of peak service times when customer traffic is low.

And equipped also with those personalized kits provided by Autism Welcoming, people coping with the condition have more freedom of mobility. They can cross a border into another country of experience, one they'd been practically barred from entering their whole lives.

"We know there's a need for it," said Daigle. "If you provide it. We're excited to see what the future holds."



# Helping Their Communities, One Heating System At A Time

BY SUSAN MANNING  
STAFF WRITER

Ryan and Alexandra McKernan noticed a disconnect between those who needed heating help and those who qualified for it.

The husband and wife duo co-own Pro Comfort Control, an HVAC company based in Ashland that serves all of MetroWest.

“We were seeing people who couldn’t afford to fix their heat, but they also didn’t qualify for low income help,” said Alexandra.

They decided to do something about it.

The Holliston couple decided to design a program called “We Care: Neighbors Heating Neighbors.”

According to Alexandra, “It’s designed to help local families in need in a hyper local fashion (most of our customers are in Natick, Framingham and Wayland). They are nominated by either a friend, neighbor or even a technician if we go to their home

and recognize their hardship.”

This year, she said, the recipient is a senior citizen living in Natick. The woman is caring full-time for her daughter, who is undergoing cancer treatment. The homeowner is unable to work because of her own medical emergencies.

“She lives on a fixed income, with barely enough to cover everyday necessities, let alone unexpected emergencies. In April, their furnace was shut down due to dangerously high carbon monoxide levels detected by another HVAC company.

“Since then, she has been without heat, a situation that’s becoming dire as colder months approach. She was in urgent need of help to restore comfort and safety to their home. She reached out to Pro Comfort Control to find an affordable replacement system.

“We provided her an estimate and an employee nominated her for this program. She was cho-

sen as the award winner of a few days later. She now has her heat fully restored!” said McKernan.

“We believe that a strong community is built on care, compassion, and connection. Our founders, Ryan and Alexandra, know firsthand the power of giving back, and that’s why we created our “We Care: Neighbors Heating Neighbors” program. As a local business rooted in Framingham and surrounding communities, we understand the importance of being there for one another, especially in times of need,” said its website.

Through this program, Pro Comfort offers a new heating system to families or a local charity facing hardships, ensuring that everyone has access to a comfortable and safe home. Whether it’s a local family in need or an elderly neighbor needing to the frigid temperatures, there is help.

“We’re proud to live and work in the same neighborhoods we serve, and giving back is our way



of saying thank you,” said Alexandra.

If you or someone you know could benefit from the program,

visit the website and fill in the form to nominate them.

<https://procomfortcontrol.com/nominate/>

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# Winter Yard Preparation



Chris Hopkins

## LANDSCAPE INSIGHTS

This winter season in New England is shaping up to be warmer than normal, according to NOAA's outlook for December through February. Here are some key take-aways from the forecast:

### Key Insights

- 1. Warmer Temperatures:** Expect a notable warm trend this winter, with temperatures likely higher than the historical average. This could mean fewer extreme cold days.
- 2. Recent Trends:** The forecast is based on recent climate data, indicating that New England is experiencing some of the nation's most vital warming trends.

**3. Snow:** While warmer temperatures could lead to less snowfall overall, significant snow events are still possible, particularly if cold air masses interact with moisture.

**4. Potential for Ice Events:** The warmer conditions could lead to more mixed precipitation, including rain and ice, especially during transitional weather events.

**5. Seasonal Variability:** While the general trend is warmer, it's essential to be prepared for variability, including the possibility of colder snaps or winter storms.

Preparing your landscape for a New England winter involves several steps to protect your plants, trees, and outdoor spaces from harsh weather conditions. Here's a guide to help you get started:

- 1. Clean Up Your Garden**
  - a. Remove Debris:** Clear fallen leaves, dead plants, and debris that can harbor pests or diseases.
  - b. Cut Back Perennials:** Trim back perennials to prevent them from becoming shelters for pests.
- 2. Mulching**
  - a. Apply Mulch:** Add a layer of mulch around your pe-

rennials, shrubs, and trees. This helps insulate the roots and retains moisture.

### 3. Winterizing Trees and Shrubs

**a. Wrap Sensitive Plants:** Use burlap or protective tree wrap around young or vulnerable trees to shield them from wind and frost.

**b. Prune Wisely:** Prune any dead or damaged branches, but avoid heavy pruning in late fall as it can stimulate new growth that won't survive the winter.

### 4. Protecting Lawns

**a. Mow Your Lawn:** Before the first snowfall, keep your grass at a height of about 2-3 inches.

**b. Aerate and Fertilize:** Aerate the lawn and apply a winter fertilizer to promote strong roots.

### 5. Preparing Hardscapes

**a. Check Walkways and Patios:** Ensure that walkways are clear of debris and in good condition to prevent slipping.

**b. Store Outdoor Furniture:** Clean and remove or cover any outdoor furniture to protect against snow and ice.

### 6. Watering

#### a. Water Before Freezing:

Make sure your plants are adequately watered before the ground freezes, as dry roots can be more susceptible to winter stress.

### 7. Plan for Snow Management

**a. Identify Snow Storage Areas:** Plan where you will pile snow to avoid blocking plants or walkways.

**b. Use Salt Alternatives:** Use sand or kitty litter to provide traction without damaging your plants.

### 8. Planting for Winter Interest

**a. Choose Evergreens:** Incorporate evergreens for year-round color and interest.

### b. Winter-Blooming Plants:

Consider planting winter-blooming flowers like hellebores for seasonal appeal.

By taking these steps, you can help your landscape thrive through the cold New England winter and emerge healthy in the spring.

Information was provided by Chris Hopkins, Greenleaf Landscaping, who has 30 years of experience building everything from fire pits and pools to outdoor kitchen/entertaining spaces. Talk to Greenleaf today: 774-421-9570

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# Heating Tips to Help Save Money



Alexandra McKernan



Ryan McKernan

## HEATING INSIGHTS

As temperatures start to drop and the vibrant foliage transforms our neighborhoods, it's the perfect time to cozy up your home for the fall season. It's important to keep your space warm and inviting, and here are some easy heating, air conditioning and ventilation (HVAC) tips to help you stay comfortable as the leaves change colors.

### Reverse your ceiling fans

Did you know that ceiling fans can help in the winter, too? By reversing the direction of your ceiling fan blades to clockwise, you can gently push warm air down from the ceiling into the living space. This simple adjustment can improve circulation and make your rooms feel warmer without increasing your heating costs.

### Change your filters

Regular heating maintenance is crucial for ensuring your system operates smoothly throughout the season. The most important thing you can do as a homeowner is to change your air filters to ensure proper air flow.

### Harness the heat with heat pumps

One of the most efficient ways to heat your home is with a cold-climate heat pump. Start by choosing a certified Mass Save heat pump installer who specializes in installing these energy-efficient systems that not only keep your home warm but also save you money on energy bills. Heat pumps work by transferring heat rather than generating it, making them incredibly efficient even in chilly Massachusetts winters.

### Ensure unobstructed air flow

Check that your radiators and heating vents are not blocked by furniture, drapes or other objects. Blocked air flow

can reduce the efficiency of your heating system and prevent rooms from reaching their desired temperature. Keeping these areas clear allows for optimal heat distribution throughout your home.

### Seal in the warmth

Before the cold really sets in, take some time to inspect your windows and doors for drafts. Simple weather stripping or caulking can make a big difference in keeping warm air inside where it belongs. Mass Save also offers assistance with air sealing and insulation at very low costs.

Pro Comfort Control is a proud family-owned and operated business based in Framingham, MA. Our friendly team is standing by to assist you with expert advice and professional services tailored to meet your home comfort needs.

Alexandra McKernan, Co-owner  
Ryan McKernan, Co-owner  
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# MathWorks to be Honored with Community Leadership Award by the Community Foundation for MetroWest

Natick, MA (September 10, 2024) – The Community Foundation for MetroWest is thrilled to announce MathWorks, the leading developer of mathematical computing software, as the recipient of the 2024 Community Leadership Award. This prestigious award recognizes the organization’s unwavering commitment to develop and enrich the MetroWest community through its partnership with the Foundation’s Equity in Education Action Project. The Community Leadership Award will be presented at the Foundation’s Community Leadership Reception on Thursday, October 10, 2024, at the Residence Inn in Natick.

## Investing in an Equitable Future

Launched in 2021, the Equity in Education Action Project is a collaborative initiative aimed at tackling educational disparities faced by students in underserved communities. The project prioritizes increasing access to high-quality, evidence-based programs that create a strong foundation for academic success in literacy and

STEM fields. The multi-year investment of close to \$1 million from MathWorks has allowed the Foundation to create and sustain these programs with the Framingham and Milford Public Schools with a goal to reach more districts. “By investing in these solutions, we’ve witnessed a significant increase in our education system’s ability to address gaps and inequities in student achievement,” said Jay Kim, Executive Director at the Community Foundation for MetroWest. “We believe that equity in education is a key to fostering a stronger, more equitable society for all.”

## Beyond Funding: MathWorks Partnership Fuels Effective Equity in Education

The organization’s dedication to the Equity in Education Action Project goes beyond providing financial support. MathWorks formed an internal and external stakeholder Equity in Education steering committee, demonstrating their deep commitment to the initiative. This committee played a crucial role in assess-

ing needs, developing a strategic plan for resource allocation, and ensuring the effective implementation of the project’s initiatives. “At MathWorks, we believe that everyone deserves access to a quality education that unlocks their full potential,” said

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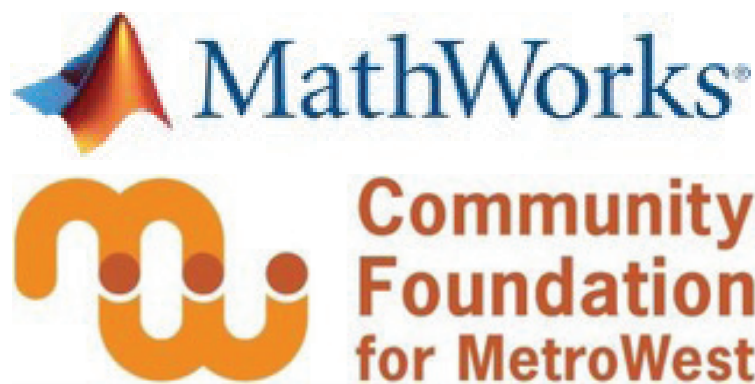
## About The Community Foundation for MetroWest

In 1995, the Community

and future impact. To learn more about the Foundation’s commitment to improved quality of life in MetroWest, visit [communityfoundationmw.org](http://communityfoundationmw.org) or call (508) 647-2260.

## About MathWorks

MathWorks is the leading developer of mathematical computing software. MATLAB, the language of engineers and scientists, is a programming environment for algorithm development, data analysis, visualization, and numeric computation. Simulink is a block diagram environment for simulation and Model-Based Design of multidomain and embedded engineering systems. Engineers and scientists worldwide rely on these products to accelerate the pace of discovery, innovation, and development in automotive, aerospace, communications, electronics, industrial automation, and other industries. MATLAB and Simulink are fundamental teaching and research tools in the world’s top universities and learning institutions. Founded in 1984, MathWorks employs more than 6,000 people in 34 offices around the world, with headquarters in Natick, Massachusetts, USA. For additional information, visit [mathworks.com](http://mathworks.com).



Jeanne O’Keefe, CFO and SVP at MathWorks, “Receiving the Community Foundation for MetroWest’s Community Leadership Award for our work on the Equity in Education Action Project is a tremendous honor. This award validates our commitment to fostering educational equity in MetroWest and inspires us to continue collaborating with the Foundation to help all students in the region thrive.”

The Community Foundation for MetroWest will leverage this partnership, and others, to continue implementing and ex-

Foundation for MetroWest became the trusted philanthropic partner for individuals, families, nonprofits, and businesses in the region who are driven to enhance the quality of life for all in MetroWest. Since then, the Foundation has developed extensive programming (including Equity in Education, Housing and Homelessness Prevention, Workforce Development and Arts & Culture) and awarded more than \$34 million in grants to charitable organizations. The Foundation currently stewards more than \$30 million in charitable assets for current needs

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# Use November to Finalize Year-End Success and Plan for 2025



Glenn Brown, CFP

November is a pivotal month for financial planning. An opportunity to measure against financial goals, make final strategic decisions for tax year 2024, and prepare for the upcoming year.

Wait until December, you risk falling into the apathy and distractions common from Thanksgiving to the New Year. Do you want that for your finances?

Here are key financial planning topics to consider now.

### Review Your Planning Goals.

Take stock of your progress: have you met your savings targets? Made headway on debt repayments? Improve upon experience spending? Expand investing to asset allocation? This review can help identify areas to accelerate efforts before the year ends or be of greater priority in 2025.

### Tax Planning Strategies.

Does Roth Conversion or switching 401(k) contributions to Roth make sense?

If doing Roth Conversion, what's your expected Federal tax bracket and how much to convert to ensure you're not bumping up a level or two?

Do you or a grandparent want to gift more than \$18,000 to a child's 529 Plan?

If self-employed and want to open a Solo 401(k) plan, it must be done by December 31. Know that isn't required until April tax filing deadline.

Recall 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act lowering federal tax brackets will expire end of 2025. Current % will revert back (%): 12% (15%), 22% (25%), 24% (28%), 32% (33%), 35% (35%) and 37% (39.6%). Furthermore, the Standard Deduction \$ amount for tax returns nearly doubled, it too reverts. Are there circumstances to plan for splitting realized gains over 2024 and 2025?

### Open Enrollment for Work Benefits.

Does your current health plan meet you and/or your family's health and financial well-being? Does FSA or HSA make sense? If so, how much to contribute?

Should you utilize supplemental Life or AD&D insurance? Are you opting into long-term disability insurance?

Are you enrolling in dependent care and/or transportation flex spending accounts?

### Use your Medical Flex Spending Account (FSA).

Unlike Health Savings Accounts (HSA) that rollover each year to accumulate, FSA is a "use it or lose it" benefit program. Some allow ~\$500 carried the following year, others \$0. If you're low on qualified medical expenses, schedule elective appointments, renew prescriptions and/or spend on wellness. Don't spend New Year's Eve panic shopping in CVS.

### Evaluate Investment Portfolios.

Assess your asset allocation, then rebalance and/or tax-loss harvest, if necessary. Remember, asset allocation is different from diversification. Owning a S&P 500 Index fund is diversification, as it owns 500 largest U.S. companies, but it's not an asset allocation model. Ensure asset classes are near their targets.

Nearing retirement or have major life changes requir-

ing funds? Identify source of funds, develop a tax-efficient distribution strategy and allocate remaining long-term assets to grow over time relative to need, not greed or fear. Meaning your asset allocation may (and likely should be) different within taxable accounts versus 401(k), 403(b), pre-tax IRA accounts versus Roth IRA, HSA accounts.

### Don't Forget Your RMD.

For 2024, the age for Required Minimum Distributions (RMDs) from retirement accounts is 73, up from 72 due to changes enacted by the SECURE 2.0 Act.

Also new, per finalized IRS regulations, Inherited IRAs from a non-spouse (i.e. parent) in 2020 or later where the deceased was taking RMDs, then you must also take RMDs within the 10-Year Rule. If previous years were missed, the IRS will not penalize, however they will after December 31, 2025.

### Conclusion.

November is a month of reflection, giving thanks and preparation in the realm of financial planning. If feeling overwhelmed, connect with your Certified Financial Planner to finish the year strong and set a solid foundation for a prosperous 2025.

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](http://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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# MetroWest Boston Visitors Bureau announces grant program

The MetroWest Boston Visitors Bureau (MBVB) recently announced its annual mini grant program is now accepting applications.

Designed for marketing and advertising projects that will promote tourism in MetroWest, grants from \$1,000 to \$10,000 each are available. The MBVB will consider applications for projects devoted to marketing a MetroWest event, attraction, restaurant, shop, or cultural or recreational offering. The applicant does not need to be a 501(c)3 charitable organization, but must be based in one of the 19 towns that comprise MetroWest or be devoted to attracting potential visitors to those 19 towns.

Eligible projects include brochures and other printed collateral; print, TV, radio, outdoor or online advertising; and websites. Advertising in the Bureau's co-op advertising program is also eligible. The marketing project must be targeted, at least partially, at potential visitors who live more than 50 miles from the event or business location.

Non-profit organizations are

eligible to apply for 25% of their campaign, up to \$10,000.

For-profit businesses are eligible to apply for 10% of their campaign, also up to \$10,000.

Grant applications can be submitted at [www.bit.ly/FY25minigrant](http://www.bit.ly/FY25minigrant) and will be reviewed on a rolling basis from now until Dec. 1. Awarded grant funds must be spent prior to June 30, 2025. For questions, or to discuss your project idea prior to submitting an application, please contact MBVB Executive Director Stacey David at [sdavid@metrowestvisitors.org](mailto:sdavid@metrowestvisitors.org).

The MetroWest Visitors Bureau promotes travel and tourism throughout the 19 towns of the MetroWest region: Ashland, Bellingham, Framingham, Franklin, Holliston, Hopedale, Hopkinton, Hudson, Marlborough, Medway, Milford, Millis, Natick, Northborough, Sherborn, Southborough, Sudbury, Wayland, and Westborough. For more information, please visit the MBVB website at [www.metrowestvisitors.org](http://www.metrowestvisitors.org).

## Pet of the Month

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With the fluffiest, wildest hair that perfectly matches his big, goofy personality, Jameson is a playful pup who loves his toys and never misses a chance to make you laugh. He's been a delight on walks with our dog volunteers and absolutely loves playing with other dogs. Smart and food-motivated, Jameson already knows basic commands like sit, which makes training a breeze. Jameson would thrive in an active household that can keep up with his energetic, fun-loving nature and comfortably handle his size. He's a huge fan of attention, pets, and snuggles - and he'd happily consider himself an XL lapdog! Ready to meet Jameson and his amazing friends who are looking for their forever homes? Check them out at [baypathhumane.org/available-dogs/](http://baypathhumane.org/available-dogs/)

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# 32 Local Firefighters Graduate from Firefighting Academy

## Graduates of Class #324 Represent 16 Massachusetts Fire Departments

STOW—State Fire Marshal Jon M. Davine and Massachusetts Firefighting Academy leadership today announced the graduation of 32 firefighters from the 50-day Career Recruit Firefighting Training Program.

“Massachusetts firefighters are on the frontlines protecting their communities every day, and today’s graduates are needed now more than ever,”

Devens, Easton, Haverhill, Hopedale, Hull, Lawrence, Lincoln, Maynard, Medford, Natick, Southborough, and Swampscott.

### Basic Firefighter Skills

Students receive classroom training in all basic firefighter skills. They practice first under non-fire conditions and then during controlled fire conditions.



said State Fire Marshal Davine. “The hundreds of hours of foundational training they’ve received will provide them with the physical, mental, and technical skills to perform their jobs effectively and safely.”

“Massachusetts Firefighting Academy instructors draw on decades of experience in the fire service to train new recruits,” said Massachusetts Firefighting Academy Deputy Director Dennis A. Ball. “Through consistent classroom instruction and practical exercises, today’s graduates have developed the tools they’ll need to work seamlessly with veteran firefighters in their home departments and in neighboring communities as mutual aid.”

The graduating firefighters of Class #324 represent the fire departments of Auburn, Bedford, Burlington, Chelsea,

To graduate, students must demonstrate proficiency in life safety, search and rescue, ladder operations, water supply, pump operation, and fire attack. Fire attack operations range from mailbox fires to multiple-floor or multiple-room structural fires. Upon successful completion of the Career Recruit Program, all students have met the national standards of NFPA 1001, Standard for Fire Fighter Professional Qualifications, and are certified to the levels of Firefighter I/II and Hazardous Materials First Responder Operations by the Massachusetts Fire Training Council, which is accredited by the National Board on Fire Service Professional Qualifications.

Today’s Firefighters Do Much More than Fight Fires

Modern firefighters train for and respond to all types of haz-

ards and emergencies. They are the first ones called to respond to chemical and environmental emergencies, ranging from the suspected presence of carbon monoxide to gas leaks to industrial chemical spills. They may be called to rescue a child who has fallen through the ice, an office worker stuck in an elevator, or a motorist trapped in a crashed vehicle. They test and maintain their equipment, including self-contained breath-

ing apparatus (SCBA), hydrants, hoses, power tools, and apparatus.

At the Massachusetts Firefighting Academy, recruits learn all these skills and more, including the latest science of fire behavior and suppression tactics, from certified fire instructors. They also receive training in public fire education, hazardous material incident mitigation, flammable liquids, stress management, and self-rescue tech-

niques. The intensive, 10-week program involves classroom instruction, physical fitness training, firefighter skills training, and live firefighting practice.

The MFA provides recruit and in-service training for career, call, and volunteer firefighters at every level of experience, from recruit to chief officer, at campuses in Stow, Springfield, and Bridgewater.

**Happy Thanksgiving!**

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# Natick Students Attend HBCU College Fair

On Thursday, Oct. 17, these NHS students attended the largest HBCU College Fair in Massachusetts, held at the Reggie Lewis Center in Boston.

This event provided attendees with direct access to representatives from Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and featured a variety of opportunities, including HBCU info sessions, scholarship and internship programs, and networking opportunities. Students also had the chance to meet special guest speakers and learn about the National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC) of Boston.

They were accompanied by Natick METCO Director Audi Lynch (at right) and METCO Coordinator Christopher Cardoso (second from left, back row).



# Milford Regional, UMass Memorial Health Formalize Affiliation

Worcester, Mass. – As of October 1st, UMass Memorial Health (UMMH) announced, Milford Regional Medical Center, inclusive of Milford Regional Physician Group and its employees, are now formally part of the UMMH system. Milford Regional Medical Center’s name is now officially UMass Memorial Health – Milford Regional Medical Center.

“We welcome Milford Regional caregivers to the UMass Memorial Health family and look forward to supporting Milford Regional as it advances its commitment to providing exceptional healthcare services to the greater Milford community,” said Eric Dickson, MD, President and CEO of UMass Memorial Health.

UMass Memorial welcomes approximately 2,500 Milford Regional employees and providers, which grows the system to more than 20,000 caregivers. Ed Kelly, President of Milford Regional, will continue his role and will join UMass Memorial Health’s senior leadership team.

Some positive benefits offered by this new affiliation are:

Preserving Milford Regional Medical Center as an acute care hospital offering inpatient and outpatient services;

Supporting strategic capital investment in facilities, equipment and other infrastructure to support clinical care and the local community;

Future integration of Milford Regional into the Epic electronic medical record system;

Maintaining Milford Regional’s

role as an employer of choice in the local/regional market, and enhancing Milford Regional’s ability to address workforce challenges; and

Retaining a local community board of trustees, with Milford Regional having representation on the UMass Memorial parent board.

“Since first clinically partnering more than thirty years ago, our two organizations have realized much success through multiple points

of patient-centered collaboration. Taking our longstanding partnership with Milford Regional to this next level allows UMass Memorial Health to meaningfully expand our continued work to provide high-quality, accessible, and affordable care to the communities of Central Massachusetts,” Dickson added.

“This is the right time and UMass Memorial Health is the right partner

to pave the path for our promising future,” said Kelly, who explained further that UMMH and Milford Regional began their collaboration in 1991 when Milford Regional Medical Center became the first hospital to clinically affiliate with UMass Memorial Medical Center. “Since then, many additional clinical and educational programs have been created with UMMH to bolster the level of care offered to the

greater Milford community ...”

The affiliation will preserve Milford Regional’s existing clinical relationships with other academic medical centers, says Kelly.

To learn more about the corporate affiliation between UMass Memorial Health and Milford Regional, visit <https://www.milfordregional.org/about-us/umass-memorial-health-affiliation/>.

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# Arlington's Nick Norcross claims victory in thrilling Outrun The Bear tournament finale; Natick's Justin Waters finishes third

The prestigious Outrun The Bear Candlepin Bowling Tournament took place on Sept. 21 at Ryan Family Amusement in Millis, drawing some of the top candlepin bowlers from across the region.

After an intense day of competition, Nick Norcross from Arlington emerged as the champion, claiming the title after a thrilling final match against Shawn Baker of Exeter Lanes in Haverhill.

Norcross, a seasoned candlepin bowler with a track record of success, added this victory to his impressive resume, which includes five Massachusetts State Open titles, four New Hampshire State Open titles, two International Candlepin Team Championships, and 43 TV appearances.



Nick Norcross of Arlington recently won this year's Outrun The Bear Candlepin Bowling Tournament. Courtesy photo

games, set three house records, and secured two Pro Series titles. His victory at Outrun The Bear holds special significance, having come close to winning in previous years.

"This tournament is incredibly tough to win," said Norcross. "I've had some decent runs before, but to finally get the win is a great feeling, especially to close out such a special year for me."

His performance at the tournament was nothing short of impressive, scoring 1514 pins over 12 strings, with an average of 126.

In the final, Norcross faced off against the formidable Shawn Baker, a future Candlepin Bowling Hall of Famer. Baker took an early lead, but Norcross remained resilient,

capitalizing on late opportunities to finish with three consecutive marks.

"In the semi-finals, after a rough start, I knew it was still possible," said Norcross. "Once I threw a mark in the 8th box, I felt good about my chances. Going up against Baker wasn't going to be easy, but finishing strong sealed the win for me. It was a great match and an unbelievable day."

In addition to Norcross' triumph, Korey Packard achieved the tournament's high single string with an impressive 179, showcasing the high level of talent at this year's event.

Norcross has no plans to slow

down after this victory. "There are a few tournaments I'd still love to win, like the International Candlepin Championship Singles event and the Singles Pro Series event," he said. He also mentioned his goal of hitting 500 for three strings, a milestone within reach for this accomplished bowler.

The Outrun The Bear tournament remains one of the most challenging candlepin knockout events in the region, continuously attracting top talent and thrilling fans. With the 2024 season now concluded, all eyes will be on Norcross and his future accomplishments as he seeks to build on this latest victory.

For more information on upcoming Outrun the Bear candlepin tournaments and events, visit [facebook.com/outrunthebear-candlepin](https://facebook.com/outrunthebear-candlepin)

## OUTRUN THE BEAR 2024 FINAL STANDINGS

1. Nick Norcross (Arlington) – Central Park Lanes
2. Shawn Baker (Haverhill) – Exeter Lanes
3. Justin Waters (Natick) – Ryan Family Amusement
4. Josh Daley (Danvers) – Central Park Lanes
5. Ryan Southall (Rowley) – Riverwalk Lanes
6. Aaron Fontaine (East Brookfield) – Bogey Lanes
7. Korey Packard (Sutton) – Bayberry Bowling Center
8. Chris Jones (Abington) – Webster Timber Lanes

### About Outrun The Bear Tournament

Established in 2014, the elimination-style tournament is known for its high level of difficulty and is praised for its challenging format. After each round, a percentage of the lowest scoring bowlers are eliminated leaving 2 bowlers to battle in the final round. OTB presents 3 tournaments a year with a mix of styles (singles, doubles, teams, scratch, and handicap). The tournament was founded by husband-and wife Dan and Caitlyn Finn of Franklin and has quickly become a fan favorite in the bowling community.

Submitted by Outrun The Bear

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# Sports

## Sotiri Big Plus In NHS Volleyball Team's Improvement

By KEN HAMWEY  
STAFF SPORTS WRITER

The girls volleyball teams at Natick High are successful so often but sooner or later there

plus for a team in rebuild mode. Seven seniors have graduated from last year's team that lost in the tourney's second round to Andover.

"I enjoy working with younger



Eva Sotiri relies on being aggressive in the front row and she's also able to jump and get some kills.

comes a time when the R-word is used to describe a particular season.

Peter Suxho, the Redhawks veteran coach, has called the 2024 campaign "the first year of rebuilding." There's that R-word.

But he also says that his young squad can win enough matches to qualify for a berth in the state tourney. But, he's also acutely aware that the girls' skills need to keep improving along with the Redhawks' team chemistry.

There's only one senior on the roster — setter Eva Sotiri — and luckily for Suxho she's a captain who welcomes the challenges and difficulties that rebuilding presents. The Redhawks had a 5-6 record at Local Town Pages deadline, still rebuilding but still very hopeful of securing a date for playoff volleyball. Their No. 15 power ranking is definitely a

challenge but I've seen improvement every day. The environment is different when a team loses seven seniors. But, I've got the opportunity to offer tips and hints to help our younger players develop. I also like working with coach Suxho on our team's daily preparation."

Like Suxho, the 17-year-old Sotiri believes NHS can quality for the tourney and be competitive in the Bay State Conference's Carey Division. "My individual goals are to be the best captain I can be, inspire my teammates and improve my play at setter when I'm in the front row. I can jump, so I strive to get some kills."

At the newspaper's deadline, Sotiri had 49 kills, 18 aces, and 119 assists.

No stranger to volleyball, Sotiri started playing the sport as a

12-year-old and has competed at the club level for four years. She's been Natick's starting setter for two seasons.

"I like the role of a setter," she said. "It's like being a quarterback in football. You control and direct the offense and set the tone for attacking. It's a leadership role and the keys are to stay cool under pressure, be instinctive, quick and agile, and maintain confidence."

A native of New York City, Sotiri relies on being aggressive in the front row but more analytical when she's in the back row. "A setter's strong suit should be smart decision-making in the back row," she emphasized.

Suxho, who's led Natick to a state title with the boys team in 2007 and won two other state championships when he coached at Millis High, rates Sotiri highly.

"Eva has a high volleyball IQ, she's got speed and quickness and her technical skills are excellent," he said. "She delivers the ball effectively to the front row and makes smart decisions. She's also a very good student."

Sotiri, who also has played libero and right-side hitter, is a captain who leads by example. "I strive to provide lots of effort and set the tone with a solid work ethic," she said. "Being a supportive captain is important, too."

Natick's two other captains — junior libero Scarlett Jones and

sophomore middle hitter Brooke Barnett — are players Sotiri regards as high-end contributors.

"They're very good leaders who make a difference on the court," she noted. "They play their positions well, they're skilled, have a high volleyball IQ and they're ready to react."

The 5-foot-5 Sotiri also likes the way Suxho directs the squad. "He's very knowledgeable and loves to teach the game," she said. "He's very motivating and he does a good job keeping us on our toes."

A National Honor Society student, Sotiri plans on majoring in bio-chemistry in college, possibly at Northeastern or Boston University. "I likely will play volleyball at the club level in college," she said.

Relying on a competitive philosophy that focuses on winning, reaching one's potential and having fun, Sotiri emphasizes that she's "motivated to do my best to win."

Calling her parents (Daniela and Arian) role models for their support and encouragement, Sotiri also credits her parents for her strong work ethic and dedication.

Valuable life lessons can be learned from sports and Sotiri is quick to list some. "I've learned to overcome adversity and be resilient," she offered. "I've also learned how to lead and to be



Eva Sotiri is a National Honor Society student who plans on majoring in bio-chemistry in college.

confident. Being accountable is also very important, especially when fixing your mistakes."

Suxho says that "since Sotiri is a left-handed setter who plays on the right side, she's able to benefit from that combination. Sotiri fully agrees.

"When I'm on the right side, I see the entire court and the ball is always in front of me," she said. "One advantage is my decision-making will be quicker. And, if the ball is close to the net, I can

**VOLLEYBALL**  
continued on page 16



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# Sports

## NHS Girls Soccer: New Coaches And Still Winning

### Trubiano, Daley Guided Jayvee Teams

By KEN HAMWEY  
STAFF SPORTS WRITER

The Natick High girls soccer team is acutely aware of the expectations for the 2024 season and it's fully cognizant of the change in leadership the program has undergone.

Last year, the Redhawks defeated Bishop Feehan of Attleboro, 2-0, for its second Division 1 state title in the last three years. And, during the last six seasons, Natick has played for a state championship three times.

Winning the 2023 state title was no easy task, considering the playoff opponents. Natick defeated Boston Latin, Weymouth and Concord-Carlisle before getting even with Brookline, the only team to leave a blemish on the Redhawks' overall record of 21-1-1. In the state final, Natick "pitched a shutout" against Feehan and 14 players in that match are Redhawk returnees. That's why expectations are high.

The architect for the program's past success — coach Dave Wainwright — now is coaching the Wellesley High girls varsity, and his departure no doubt will create some adjustments because the transition involves two new head coaches.

Natick's new co-head coaches are not only familiar with the players and the program, but they've both coached the Redhawks jayvees. Denise Trubiano spent 12 years at the JV level and Kari-Ann Daley has been Natick's freshman coach for seven years and the JV coach for the last five.

They're both very knowledgeable about soccer but they also know there's pressure — on the players and the coaches.

"We've got a good core group with experience but we're the reigning champs and any team that beats us will have a feather

in their cap," said Trubiano, who coached as an assistant for the Millis girls for the last three years. "The players and the coaches will have to be prepared every day."

Daley admits the pressure will be huge because "the girls have a target on their backs." But, she's optimistic in Natick's approach.



**Natick's new co-head coaches — Kari-Ann Daley, left, and Denise Trubiano — are very familiar with the Redhawks program. Both coached the Redhawks jayvees.**

"The girls know what's been achieved in the past and that success isn't lost on them or the coaches," she emphasized. "We have to take one game at a time and the players have to focus on their roles."

The new coaches are definitely focused on their goals for this season.

"We want to qualify for the tourney, go deep and have some luck along the way," they said. "We also want to strive to im-

prove daily, in terms of development and leadership, continue to develop our skills, build team chemistry and stay healthy."

The coaches are in a positive place so far, primarily because of the team's strengths and the early returns in Natick's first four matches. The girls have compiled a 4-0 record by taming Brookline, Framingham, Newton North and Weymouth.

"We've got solid senior leadership, the girls have a high soccer IQ, they're instinctive and have speed and quickness," said Trubiano and Daley, who both are on Natick High's faculty. "They're also skilled, have natural talent and know the value of team chemistry."

The Redhawks' captains — seniors Olivia Penn (midfielder), Cassidy Moriarity (midfielder/defender) and Kendall Hacker (defender) — "all lead by exam-

ple, are communicative and supportive."

"Olivia has great field vision, is very good in transition and has endurance," the coaches said. "An adept passer, she gets great touches and is skilled with the ball. Cassidy is powerful, strong and fearless. Tenacious on defense, she's great in the air, handles transition well, her technique is solid and her soccer IQ is high. Kendall is solid on the back line. A smart player, she's the heart and soul of our defense. Confident and strategic, there's no panic in her game."

Two senior defenders — Stella Boggis and Kira Henderson — play key roles. "They had breakout seasons last year," Trubiano and Daley noted. "They round out the defensive line, have great work habits, are very skilled and are hungry for more success."

Seniors Allegra Gagnon (midfielder) and forward Megan Mela are top-notch in their roles. "Allegra is a workhorse and she's tough in the midfield," the coaches said. "Her instincts and endurance are outstanding. Megan provides a nice touch, she's a capable scorer and she knows the game."

Two juniors who provide goaltender depth are Katie McMahon and Leisl Niedermeyer. "They give us experience and depth and they're well-skilled," the coaches said. "Their reactions are quick and they're able to effectively direct the defense."

Three other juniors the coaches are counting on are twins Lydia and Nicole Proia at striker, and Abby McCauley in the midfield. "Lydia and Nicole are phenomenal, fast and skilled," they offered. "They also have good field vision and are prolific scorers. Abby is scrappy and fearless in pursuit of the ball. She's also a capable passer and strong in transition."

Trubiano and Daley will complement one another well but

they'll get input from volunteer coach Erik Hacker who'll instruct the jayvees. He's had three daughters who've played soccer at NHS.

Both Trubiano and Daley have a similar coaching philosophy, which emphasizes reaching one's potential. "If our players are reaching their potential and having fun competing, then winning will be the by-product," they concurred. "We also believe that athletics mirror real life. Some valuable life lessons that can be learned in sports are how to lead and be a good teammate, how to learn from mistakes and how to overcome adversity and be resilient."

Trubiano and Daley are both 47 and have strong links to Natick.

Trubiano graduated from NHS in 1995, was a captain and a Bay State Conference all-star in soccer. She played one varsity season at Lafayette College where she majored in Spanish and economics. She earned her masters from Framingham State in education and Spanish, has been on the Natick High faculty for 25 years and is the chairman of the language department.

Daley is a 1995 graduate of East Bridgewater High where she ran track and played soccer. A four-year varsity competitor in both sports, she was a captain in track and soccer and was a South Shore League all-star in soccer for two seasons. She's been on the NHS faculty for 22 years, teaching psychology and also is an assistant coach for the girls lacrosse team.

The coaches and the players know and understand the challenges of the 2024 campaign. They also know about the expectations, and both the players and the coaches are aware of the adjustments that come when transitioning to a new leadership team.

So far, after four matches, the girls soccer team at NHS is off to a dynamic start.

### VOLLEYBALL

continued from page 1

jump and perhaps register an ef-

fective hit."

Suxho and Sotiri know the Redhawks are a junior-sophomore team that's gaining experience. And as a captain, Sotiri has the right approach to handle

rebuilding because she's tutored younger students in the past.

"I've been a tutor at the Wilson Middle School," she noted. "Last year, I tutored students there once a week for four months. I really

enjoyed working with them."

Eva Sotiri is not only a capable competitor for Natick's volleyball team, but she's also a crucial cog who's helping the Redhawks go from a rebuilding team to a capa-

ble contingent.

A berth in the state tourney would go a long way in helping Natick to forget the R-word.



# Sports

## Joseph Eager To Keep Elevating NHS Boys Soccer

### New Coach Is Natick High Alumnus

By KEN HAMWEY  
STAFF SPORTS WRITER

The Natick High boys soccer team has a new varsity coach but he's no stranger to the players or the program.

Danny Joseph, who worked as the varsity assistant for Alex Mioduszewski, has taken the reins and hopes to build on the success the Redhawks had last year when they compiled a 6-7-3 record and were ranked No. 14 in the Division 1 playoffs. Mioduszewski stepped down to focus on getting his masters degree.

Natick split a pair of games in the state tourney, defeating Cambridge Rindge & Latin before losing to Belmont in the second round

"My first goal is to continue to build on the momentum of last year," said Joseph, who graduated from NHS in 2013. "Our record fell short of .500 but a No. 14 rank showed that our rebuilding plan is on the right track. My other goals are to develop our younger players, look to our seniors for leadership, and qualify for the tournament again."

Joseph's transition to varsity coach should be smooth after three years as a varsity assistant.

"I learned a lot from Alex," Joseph said. "There will definitely be a transition for me and the players because of the late change in coaches. I'm excited for what's to come. We have a strong, young core, balanced with a group of seniors who are leaders.

"Alex bonded really well with the players, and the trust he built with them, especially last season, paid off. I hope to do the same thing — build a 'brotherhood' with this team early on so that team chemistry helps from the start. Alex prepared me well to take over this role. I'll keep a lot of the things he did but I'm also excited to add my own personal touches to building this squad."

The 29-year-old Joseph is confident his goals will be reached in his rookie year. "I'm confident we can achieve our objectives and I'm impressed with our team's talent and ability."

Joseph, who competed in soccer and volleyball and ran track at NHS, is optimistic about his Redhawks because of a plethora of vital strengths.

"We've got skilled players who are athletic, instinctive and coachable," he offered. "And, our team chemistry is good, the players have a high soccer IQ and they've got passion for the game."

and strong, is a stalwart on the back line. He communicates with his teammates and is dynamic and tenacious on defense."

Senior Theo Paxton is a 6-foot-2 center back/striker who's versatile. "Theo is flexible, able to adapt to all situations," Joseph said. "He's fast, plays at a high level and is capable of being a prolific scorer."

A trio of juniors will be key contributors. They include forward Luke Dougherty and twins

Senior midfielders Colby Ciavarro and Joel Duarte are intelligent competitors who have great field vision. "They're super technical with their possessions," Joseph said. "They're also very good in transition, quick, well-skilled and coachable."

Senior Jadon Connors was a back-up last year but Joseph said "I'm happy to have him as our starting goaltender this season." The coach also believes Connors has a great opportunity to show-

(injured senior, team manager)

"I'm excited to welcome these players to our team," Joseph said. "They vary in the positions they play, but all of them are looking forward to contributing immediately. We've had a challenging start this season, so these players are going to get some great experience right away but they're ready for the challenge."

A native of Natick, Joseph considers himself a defensive-minded coach but that doesn't mean he dismisses the value of offense. "I played center back in high school but I know the importance of offense," he said. "Depending on our personnel, I plan to blend both aspects into our attack."

Joseph's assistants will include Bryce Nardizzi at the varsity level and Ivor Ford as junior varsity coach. "Both know the game and I'm pleased to have both on board," he emphasized.

Joseph's athletic philosophy focuses on developing character, building team chemistry, and making sure his players reach their potential. "If those things are in place, then winning will follow," he said.

Life lessons can be learned in sports and Joseph lists several that he believes can be valuable after high school. "Overcoming adversity and developing resilience are important," he noted. "And, sports can also teach how to be a quality leader and a good teammate. Other key lessons are setting goals and a willingness to be accountable."

After graduating from Natick High, Joseph enrolled at Fairfield University where he played volleyball for four years and majored in political science and history. A captain in volleyball as a senior, he also was a New England Collegiate League all-star.

Joseph, who has a masters degree from Boston College in education, has been on the Natick High faculty for six years, teaching history and philosophy.

Danny Joseph's enthusiasm and energy coupled with his knowledge of soccer should make him successful sooner rather than later. The NHS alum looks like a good fit for his alma mater.



Natick coach Danny Joseph (center) with his two captains — Devin Owens (left) and Matty Gordon.

That passion had helped Natick start this season above .500, posting a 3-2 record at Local Town Pages deadline.

The Redhawks lost 11 seniors from last year's team but Joseph has 10 returnees with varying degrees of experience.

Two top-notch competitors are the senior captains — Matty Gordon (midfielder) and Devin Owens (center back).

"Matty and Devin are leaders by example and they're communicative and supportive," Joseph noted. "Matty controls the midfield with ease, is solid in transition and has great endurance. A high soccer IQ player, he's got speed and quickness and is an excellent passer. Devin, who's tall

Austin and Brady Dubeshter. Austin plays left midfield and Brady is a right fullback.

"They complement one another well, they're skilled, tall and fast," Joseph said. "They get terrific touches on the ball, they're strong dribblers and very coachable. Their soccer IQs are high and they understand their roles."

Seniors Richie Moulton and Eddie Anniballi are defenders who get high praise. "Excellent on defense, they're terrific in pursuit of our opponents' offensive players," Joseph said. "They're skilled and their endurance is great. Going up for 50-50 balls, their headers are effective and they win a majority of those efforts."

case his skills and instinctive ability. "He cuts the angles well and is very athletic," Joseph added.

Sophomore Luca Tavilla plays midfield but can also fulfill multiple roles at either forward or as a defender. "He's young but his maturity level is high," Joseph said. "His skill level is through the roof, he's solid in transition and has very good endurance. His versatility is a plus."

New additions to the varsity include Cole Boggis (sophomore, midfield), Owen Ford (junior, forward), Kallon Masse (junior, midfield), Emmett Bradley (senior, defense), Ethan Chambers (senior, forward), Lukas Barreto (senior, defense), Cathal Condon (senior, defense), Collin Meisner



# Selling Your Home During the Holiday Season: Strategies for Success



John McHugh

## REAL ESTATE INSIGHTS

As a seasoned local Realtor, I've witnessed firsthand the unique challenges and opportunities that come with selling a home during the holiday season. While it may seem counterintuitive to list your property during this time, with the right approach, you can attract serious buyers and secure a successful sale.

### Decorating for the Holidays

When selling your home during the holiday season, dec-

orating can be a double-edged sword. On one hand, tasteful decorations can create a warm and inviting atmosphere, making your home feel cozy and welcoming. On the other hand, over-the-top displays can distract from your home's best features and make it difficult for buyers to envision themselves living there.

### To strike the right balance:

- Keep decorations simple and elegant
- Avoid cluttering surfaces with too many decorations
- Focus on highlighting your home's architectural features
- Use lighting to create a warm and inviting ambiance

### Accommodating Seasonal Weather

Massachusetts winters can be harsh, with snow, ice, and freezing temperatures. Ensure your home is winter-ready:

- Clear sidewalks and driveways promptly
- Install handrails for safer stair navigation

- Insulate exposed pipes to prevent freezing
- Maintain a warm and comfortable interior temperature

### Showcasing Your Home's Best Features

During the holiday season, highlight your home's cozy and inviting aspects:

- Showcase your fireplace or woodstove
- Emphasize large windows for natural light
- Highlight storage spaces for winter gear
- Create a warm and inviting atmosphere with soft lighting

### What to Expect

Selling your home during the holiday season comes with unique challenges:

- Fewer buyers, but more serious and motivated ones
- Increased days on market due to holiday schedules
- Potential delays in closing due to holiday-related lender slowdowns

### Pricing Strategies

To attract serious buyers, consider:

- Thoughtful pricing, taking into account the slower market
- Offering incentives, such as seller concessions or home warranties
- Highlighting your home's unique features and upgrades

### Marketing Strategies

Effective marketing is crucial during the holiday season:

- High-quality, professionally taken photos showcasing your home's best features
- Virtual tours to accommodate out-of-town buyers
- Targeted online advertising to reach serious buyers

Despite seasonal fluctuations, the MettoWest Boston real estate market remains strong for sellers, as persistent buyer demand and pent-up interest from previously outbid or rate-sensitive purchasers continue to drive activity. Many potential

buyers, having been priced out or delayed due to rising interest rates, are eagerly awaiting the right opportunity. With reduced competition, savvy sellers can capitalize on this ongoing demand, potentially securing top-dollar sales even during the "off-season." Effective marketing and targeted advertising strategies, reaching the largest pool of qualified buyers, can significantly enhance success rates, making now an attractive time to sell.

Reach out if you would like a complimentary market analysis and pricing for your own property!

John McHugh has been a Senior Agent with Coldwell Banker for 24 years. 978.902.5646 JohnSellsNow@Gmail.com Visit his Website for home- buying/homeselling tips and to SEARCH ALL PROPERTIES: www.JohnMcHugh-RealEstate.com

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# Real Estate Corner

## Recent Home Sales

Date	Natick	Amount
10/15/2024	28 Pauline Drive	\$1.96 mil
10/15/2024	93 Mill Street	\$800,000
10/15/2024	31 Wellesley Ave. #B	\$1.13 mil
10/11/2024	9 Hammond Road	\$799,000
10/11/2024	21 Bradford Road	\$775,000
10/10/2024	8 Kylie Lane	\$1.98 mil
10/10/2024	127 Hartford Street	\$1.44 mil
10/09/2024	29 Virginia Road	\$920,000
10/07/2024	7 Jennings Pond Road	\$1.35 mil
10/07/2024	163 S. Main Street	\$665,000
10/04/2024	69 Wellesley Road. Ext.	\$750,000
10/03/2024	97 Bacon Street #B	\$960,000
10/01/2024	4 Carsha Drive	\$1.94 mil
10/01/2024	7 Chieftain Lane	\$2.05 mil
10/01/2024	19 Western Ave. #C	\$1.28 mil
09/27/2024	11 Stillman Circle	\$683,000
09/27/2024	18 Hampton Road	\$1.15 mil
09/27/2024	134 N. Main Street	\$587,000
09/27/2024	142 Bacon Street	\$585,000
09/26/2024	5 Silver Hill Lane #7	\$406,000
09/24/2024	275 Eliot Street	\$1.45 mil
09/23/2024	16 Walden Drive #13	\$425,000
09/23/2024	20 Manchester Place	\$1.06 mil
09/20/2024	8 Appleton Road	\$770,000
09/20/2024	3 Vale Street	\$1.0 mil
09/20/2024	5 Morgan Drive	\$1.03 mil



The 3-bed, 3-bath 2,000 square foot house at 97 Bacon Street, Unit B, in Natick recently sold for \$960,000, according to Zillow. Image credit: www.zillow.com

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\*Source: MLS Pin UAG + Sold, The Allain Group  
 \*\*Source: MLS Pin Single Family Sales by Volume, Natick 1/1/2018-10/21/2024  
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